

Good use is made of oral history. This is all the more important as a glance at the list of interviewees includes some very significant figures from the period who have since passed away, including Tom Barrington and Paddy Lynch. In addition very good use is made of state papers and private political collections. The bibliography is poorly typeset in places, with no line spacing to divide three repositories, so it is difficult to differentiate the collections in the National Archives of Ireland, Great Britain and the U.S.A. Another quibble about the use of sources is the over-use of long quotations; there are few pages in this book that do not have at least one quotation of four or five lines if not more. Rather than simply letting the sources speak for themselves, this book would be an easier read if these were integrated more into the narrative.

This is a very valuable work of contemporary history, and an important addition to a growing body of scholarship on later twentieth-century Irish political history that includes the work of Bernadette Whelan on the Marshall Plan, Eithne McDermott on Clann na Poblachta and David McCullough on the first inter-party government as well as political biographies of Taoiseach John A. Costello (also by McCullough), Seán MacEntee (Tom Feeney), Seán Lemass, Noël Browne (both by John Horgan) and James Dillon (Maurice Manning). All of these works show how rich the source material is but also how much work remains to be done in contemporary Irish history that can easily keep graduate students occupied for years to come. The overall message that emerges from this book is that when a country is well-served by its politicians, when they provide good leadership and initiate important policies, they can achieve success and progress. Hopefully the Republic of Ireland will be as well-served by its policy-makers today as it was sixty years ago.

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'INSUBORDINATE IRISH': TRAVELLERS IN THE TEXT. By Michael Ó hAodha. Pp xi, 228. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 2011. £60.

This work is very similar to the author's previous book titled *Irish Travellers: representation and realities* (Liffey Press, 2006) and published under the name of Michael Hayes. The focus is an analysis of 'texts' produced by the Irish Folklore Commission, particularly the responses to its 1952 Tinker Questionnaire, and folktales with Traveller-related themes also gathered by its collectors. Given that the material found in the Tinker Questionnaire has been analysed by other scholars, the potential for new insights would appear to lie in the analyses of the folktales. The back cover of this book suggests that it draws 'primarily on little-explored Irish language sources' – and indeed some of the Gaelic material gathered by the Irish Folklore Commission is translated here – but how Ó hAodha's own contributions augment the work of folklorist Pádraig Ó Héalaí (to whom he is 'much indebted' (p. 104)), remains unclear.

Given the apparent significance of the Gaelic texts for his book, moreover, it is surprising that Ó hAodha offers no discussion of how Gaelic discourses/perspectives regarding Travellers may have diverged from those of English speakers. The Gaelic and English examples provided to us in *Insubordinate Irish* do not appear to differ substantially from each other, but the reader is not given any indication of whether this conclusion is warranted.

Much of the book involves lengthy digressions into (often dated) theoretical, historical and/or comparative topics that offer limited new insight to the topic of Irish Travellers in text or otherwise. The most consistently invoked theoretical frameworks of poststructuralism and postcolonialism are not well developed or consistently applied to the Folklore Commission material.

The overall arguments of the book are often unclear but appear to centre on the claim that anti-Irish colonial discourses and imagery are paralleled by Irish anti-Traveller discourses and imagery and that within both of these sets of discourses/imagery there is ambivalence. Ó hAodha also argues for evidence of resistant reworkings of anti-Irish and anti-Traveller discourse and imagery by the Irish and Irish Travellers respectively. In addition, he pursues a comparative argument about how these processes parallel a broader 'European imaginary' and its constructions of internal Gypsy/Roma Others and colonised populations outside Europe. These arguments are important but are not new.

The book would have benefited from a narrower but deeper focus on the texts produced by the Irish Folklore Commission. There could, for example, have been a useful contextualisation of the impetus for the Commission's work as well as greater attention to the methodologies that produced the varied texts being analysed. Given the importance placed on the Gaelic material, the lack of any discussion of the significance of Gaelic speakers to the national project of folklore collecting in the 1950s, is particularly striking. Locating the Commission's Traveller-related texts within a broader discussion of the complexity of Travellers' lives in mid-twentieth-century Ireland would also have been appropriate. The lack of incorporation of relevant work on this latter topic leads the author to problematically reproduce the Folklore Commission's assumption that Travellers were exclusively rural despite documentation of an urban presence at this time. While Ó hAodha offers a few remarks about Travellers in contemporary Ireland, he offers no systemic analysis of shifts and/or continuities between the period of the Folklore Commission's work and the present day. The striking decline in salience of the religiously-inflected discourse and imagery of the Commission texts is just one of many topics that could have been addressed in this regard.

The author's adoption of a cut-and-paste approach to the existing literature results in a confusing and inconsistent overall presentation and the reliance on the original research, arguments and sometimes actual phrasing of other writers is unevenly acknowledged. The overall coherence of the work is further undermined by a lack of editorial attention. The book includes incorrect dates e.g. the late nineteenth century becomes the late 1900s (pp 9, 61), the Tinker questionnaire is erroneously dated as 1950 (p. 140), and there are numerous odd word usages and typos. Convoluted sentences at times convey a meaning opposite to that intended, and there are many repetitive sections (some verbatim) within the manuscript. The list of references at the end includes repeated entries, incorrect publication dates and titles. Unfortunately this book offers limited new research or insight to the specialist and cannot be recommended as an introduction to the field for others.

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THE IRISH DEFENCE FORCES 1940–1949: THE CHIEF OF STAFF'S REPORTS. Edited by Michael Kennedy and Victor Laing. Pp li, 855. Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission. 2011. €75.

The Irish Defence Forces remain one of the most under-researched areas of Irish history but it is welcome to see that Michael Kennedy, the executive editor of the Royal Irish Academy's Documents on Irish Foreign Policy series, has taken this project in hand. Together with Commandant Victor Laing, the officer-in-charge of the military archives at Cathal Brugha barracks, he has edited a remarkable series of reports on the Irish Defence Forces from 1940 to 1949.

There are two aspects to this significant volume. The first is that it is an indispensable tool for the military history researcher. The Chief of Staff's annual reports were detailed