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Out of His Mind: Masculinity and mental illness in Victorian Britain, by Amy Milne-Smith, 2022, Manchester, Manchester University Press, x + 311pp., £85.00 (hardback), ISBN: 978-1-5261-5503-0.

Out of His Mind is a study of the relationship between madness and masculinity in Victorian England. As its author, Amy Milne-Smith, points out, the history of madness has tended to be dominated by institutional histories and studies which focus on medical and legal constructions of madness. Moreover, when cultural historians have written about madness and mental illness, they have tended to concentrate on the representations and experiences of women. As in the history of science, which has also focused more prominently on the experiences of women in the context of gender, men, as subjects whose identities and life experiences are also profoundly shaped by society's gendered expectations, have received less attention. Milne-Smith points rightly to the valuable work by feminist historians of madness to bring to light the long-neglected experiences of women labelled as mad; yet there remains work to do on how 'insanity [also] highlights the boundaries of masculinity, those who sought to police its borders, and those who contested these definitions' (p. 2). By focusing, as Jessie Hewitt advises, on the 'inconsistencies inherent in gender, disability, and class ideologies', thereby exposing 'the shaky foundations upon which dominant ideas about men, women, and irrationality rested over the course of the long nineteenth century' (p. 4), *Out of His Mind* builds upon and strengthens work already done in the history of science to destabilise gendered notions of scientific and medical authority.

The chapters making up *Out of His Mind* can be divided into three sections. The first two chapters focus on *where* men deemed mad were cared for, whether in the asylum – that institution which grew to dominate the treatment of insanity over the course of the nineteenth century – or at home and in the community. These chapters consider 'the question of autonomy, and how men fought to maintain self-control in the face of a system that was designed to remove that control' (p. 5). Chapters 3 and 4 explore the subjective experiences of those labelled mad, both those who accepted their diagnosis along with the shame and the stigma it brought and those who challenged and refused to accept it. In contrast, the final two chapters consider the broader cultural representations of madness in society at large including 'media panics' (Chapter 5) and depictions in contemporary fiction. The division of the book's chapters in this way was a deliberate choice designed to 'bridge the gap' between lived experience and cultural representation in the history of madness. 'Madness,' Milne-Smith writes, 'was as much a social construct as a medical fact'. Here, the approach taken in *Out of His Mind* is influenced by the work of R.A. Houston which 'allows for recognizing that the term 'madness' incorporates both real disease and social constructions' (p. 4).

In seeking to bring together experiences of madness with cultural representation and perception, the book draws deliberately on a wide and impressive source base, set out in a helpful (and among works of cultural history still rare) statement on methodology. It combines insights derived from (i) 'medico-governmental research' such as asylum records, Lunacy Commission reports, criminal trials, and Chancery records; (ii) medical sources including 'official medical textbooks and journal articles to fringe pamphlets and quack medicine' (p. 10); (iii) newspaper reports, (iv) first-person narratives of madness and (v) works of popular fiction.

While the focus on combining a study of the lived experience of those deemed mad (and those who cared for them) with broader cultural representations of insanity is welcome and important, it is also necessary to recognise the limitations of what is possible, something this book does not shy away from. As Milne-Smith points out, many accounts of the experiences of particular patients are more correctly understood as the recorded observations of others (doctors, friends or family). She aptly quotes Michael McDonald here who declares that '[h]istorians of insanity do not in the first instance study the insane at all: they study observations of the insane' (p. 9). The book is also clear to delimit the boundaries of its own subject matter. While focused on gender, 'Out of His Mind' demonstrates a good intersectional awareness, reflecting helpfully on the ways in which class, in particular, influenced perceptions of masculinity in the Victorian period. There is an acknowledgement at the start that the study is mainly focused on middle-class men and the growing historiography on pauper asylums is helpfully signposted to readers wishing to find out more about the experiences of poor men who were deemed mad.

A little less clear, however, is the decision not to include notions of 'idiocy' within this study. A clearer explanation of this choice would have been helpful for those less familiar with the historiography of madness and mental illness in this period. All we are told is that '[w]hile idiocy was often dealt with by similar legal and medical processes, it existed in a different cultural context. A gendered study of idiocy is beyond the scope of this project.' Without additional information including references to relevant literature in a footnote, the reader is left wondering why this is the case and what exactly was different about the cultural context of idiocy compared with that of madness.

The focus on the family and wider community is a particular strength of this book. As Milne-Smith quite rightly states, to understand the ways in which notions of insanity and mental illness worked to police normative masculinity we need to move beyond a traditional focus on institutions like the asylum. It was the family, she writes, 'where men's behaviour was first judged and found to be wanting; the family set and policed the norms of masculine behaviour' (p. 9). It is this bringing together of different arenas in which ideas of masculinity *and* madness are experienced and represented which defines this book and makes it valuable for historians of gender, mental illness and culture and society more broadly.

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