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Manliness in Britain, 1760-1900, by Joanne Begiato; pp. xii + 225. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020, £80.00, \$110.00.

Manliness in Britain, 1760-1900 explores the role and importance of men's bodies, emotions, and material culture in constructing understandings of manliness and masculinity in the long nineteenth century. In the Introduction, Joanne Begiato situates the book within existing historiography on masculinities, emotions and material culture in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Britain and sets out its aims and how it contributes to the literature. The first two chapters explore how men's bodies have been idealized and made to embody forms of manliness which have exerted attraction for men and women from different social classes, both positively (Chapter 1) and negatively (Chapter 2). The remaining three chapters focus on three 'domains' central to the construction of ideals of manliness: war, home and work.

The book makes a number of claims to innovation: it seeks to queer the history of masculinity, which is defined as viewing it 'sceptically, to pull apart its constitutive pieces and analyse them from a variety of perspectives, taking nothing for granted' (4). In particular, the point emphasized by Begiato, that for men and women 'the enchantment of a manly body might be non-sexual' (4) is important and not acknowledged often enough in works on the history of masculinity.

The book's second claim to originality, that it breaks with 'conventional chronologies', is also justified. It is welcome to see a study adopting a longer than usual chronological period for its focus as it allows more gradual changes to be drawn out for the reader. Another strength of the book is its refusal to isolate a particular facet of life to study in connection with the history of manliness. As Begiato notes, *Manliness in Britain* 'moves beyond families, education, employment, recreation, and print culture' as discrete 'sites of gender formation' to argue that manliness is always and everywhere 'produced, maintained and disseminated' through men's emotionalized bodies and material culture (5). While particular 'domains' are highlighted, the book is also a work of synthesis, bringing together areas of life which are often separated from each other in the historiography of masculinity. Here, for example, it highlights the important role of the domestic sphere and its material culture in promoting warlike qualities and martial manliness. It is also synthetic in bringing together different types of sources which are frequently discussed apart from each other. Begiato calls rightly for greater attention to be paid to 'the intermateriality of text, image, object, and their conjunction with bodies and emotions that facilitated the conveying, reproducing, and fixing of manly values' (17). In combining analysis of literary, visual and material culture, this is an important book not only for scholars working in the history of masculinity, the history of emotions and bodies but also students working at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, seeking an accessible and synthetic overview of manliness in this period.

Manliness in Britain rightly stresses the need to move away from a traditional focus on 'white, literate, middle-class and genteel men' (5) and to move beyond representations, to 'capture masculinities as perceived and experienced by a broad range of men' (5). While there is much in this study on the ways in which the working-class male body was idealized and used in framing ideals and understandings of manliness, in the majority of cases, the perspective analyzed is that of middle-class men or women, something acknowledged by its author. This is, in large part, a product of the sources most widely available to historians and the people who produced them. However, through an interesting analysis of working-class material culture in the final section of Chapter 5, we do begin to scratch the surface of working-class idealizations of worker and other male bodies and some conclusions can be drawn about how these differed from middle class perspectives. This is one

of the most interesting sections of the book, highlighting the analytical potential of material culture as a historical source in its ability to take us beyond the literate classes who tended to write and reflect on their lives.

The concept of the 'emotionalized' body is particularly helpful as it captures some of the intimate ways in which bodies can be invested and imbued with emotional significance. The book succeeds in showing that manliness in Britain in the long nineteenth century was 'more corporeal and material, more emotional, more cross-class, and less heteronormative' than is often assumed. There were, however, times when it felt as though the mind and intellectual life were somehow absent from the discussion. At one point, the book claims to show that 'Georgian and Victorian British manliness was not a composite of cerebral and bloodless values and behaviours, but was conveyed through men's classed, racialised and sexualised bodies' (7). Must there be a hard and fast division between the cerebral and the corporeal? Cerebral qualities surely played an important part in constituting ideals of manliness and were closely connected with both emotions and men's physical bodies.

After such an impressive and wide-ranging survey of manliness, emotions, bodies, and material culture across nearly a hundred and fifty years, I was looking forward to a concluding chapter which would draw out the most important features of the foregoing discussion. Yet the Conclusion is almost entirely concerned with the role of the male body, emotions, and material culture in the present day. While it is important to make connections between the historical periods we study and contemporary concerns, the sudden shift from 1900 to 2020 felt a little surprising. The point that the issues dealt with in the book are still with us today is right, but I wonder if this could have been the subject of an afterword rather than the main conclusion of what is a beautifully written, richly illustrated and valuable work.

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