

Chapters 3 and 4 seek to focus on the experience of external visitors to the gardens. The chapters show how gardens became spaces of leisure for tourists and locals and link this phenomenon with the history of public parks. Chapter 3 focuses on the practicalities of accessing the gardens and what visitors were looking for when visiting them, while chapter 4 explores the way people would interpret and understand, or “read,” the gardens, often through tools such as catalogs, guidebooks, or thanks to the knowledge of the staff. These two chapters make remarkable use of limited sources on these topics. Chapter 5 demonstrates that medical men also used their gardens for agricultural experiments, combining pleasure and usefulness. It highlights their participation in the improvement movement. Chapter 6 is described as an exploration of sociability in the garden but moves on quite quickly from reflections on parties in gardens to more general remarks that bring a conclusion to the overall book. The aptly titled “Epilogue” is then dedicated to a discussion of heritage practices in gardens and how the academic analysis of the book could contribute to them.

Hickman explores many engaging themes that are unfortunately invisible in the table of contents but come back periodically throughout the book. One of these hidden topics is the crucial role of gardeners as expert technicians, which appears first in the very first chapter, but is also discussed in several other parts of the book. There are also some considerations of the entanglement of the medico-gentility with colonial and imperial networks, which is partly the subject of chapter 2, but appears in several other places too. Though they are less numerous, there are also some reflections on the connections between Lettsom’s Quaker faith and his medical and gardening practices.

Hickman has done a remarkable job of working on gardens that have long disappeared and are often not very well documented. She has put together an impressive array of sources on each of the gardens, allowing her to discuss topics like visitors’ reception of the gardens, or the work of gardeners, which are famously difficult to access.

Since the book does not contain any comparison with nonmedical gardens, it is at times difficult to tell if the practices described were specific or unique to doctors. There may also have been space for a reflection on how different actors would make decisions regarding their gardens. Some examples were private gardens in which the owner would have most likely been free to do whatever they fancied, and others, especially botanic gardens, that were attached to institutions or societies with established goals, which would have limited the freedom of their managers. The book does an excellent job of showing what all the examples had in common but does not necessarily highlight the diversity that could still exist in such a sample.

Overall, *The Doctor’s Garden* will likely be relevant for most people working on the period in one way or another, and is an enjoyable read. Through its interdisciplinary lens, it brings a welcome renewal to the field of garden studies.

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Fearless Woman: Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Feminism, and the Irish Revolution.

By Margaret Ward.

Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2019. Pp. lvi+496. \$35.00.

Two intertwined developments have recently helped recast the gaze of Irish history writing. Since 2012, the so-called decade of commemorations has seen a renewed emphasis on the seminal period from 1912 to 1922 (and maybe into the Civil War in 1923). In addition, and reflecting a longer-term shift in Irish social mores, the decade’s public history

has often focused on women's history and on the contributions women made to the Rising, the War of Independence, and nationalism more generally. Margaret Ward's *Fearless Woman*, a well-researched and highly readable biography of the feminist and latter-day convert to Irish Republicanism Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, exemplifies the positive attributes of the recent crop of Irish women's history. But it is also a work that points to some of the blind spots of this literature, as well as the ways it can repeat the problems of an earlier generation of overly empirical Irish historians.

Ward's work is well known to Irish historians. Her 1983 monograph, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries*, has been justly influential and was republished in a new edition last year. Practically all of the current cohort of Irish women's historians are working in the shadow of that book. And while a large thrust of Irish history writing in the nineties was taken up with a clash between academic "revisionists" and more popular, nationalist historians, those working in women's history were far more plugged into international trends, and generally far more interesting.

Where *Unmanageable Revolutionaries* broadly surveyed the Ladies Land League, Inghinidhe na hÉireann (Daughters of Ireland), and Cumann na mBan (The Women's Organization), the current work has a narrower range, focusing on the biography of a single individual, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, but with a similar goal of showing the impact of women in otherwise male-dominated Irish nationalist politics.

Born Hanna Sheehy, she grew up within a politically well-connected family; some Fenians as well as her father, David Sheehy, a member of parliament for the Irish Parliamentary Party. The dominant mood was Catholic, moderately nationalist, implicitly conservative, and very bourgeois. Social events at the family home were open to "everybody," whether "young and old" or "rich and less rich" (15). Hanna's childhood acquaintances had a tendency to grow up into positions of influence and authority: judges, professors, and, most famously, James Joyce, an eccentric but tolerated presence. In Ward's recounting, Sheehy's sensibilities (feminist if haute-bourgeois) are already present by her adolescence, but are not necessarily critically unpacked. As a student, she was a strong voice in debates over important social or political issues. One debate was on the question "What women can do for the city poor" (18), an odd binary that suggested "women" was already a classed concept within Sheehy's feminism, focused in the main on her own middle-class cohort.

At university she met Frank Skeffington, an equally interesting figure in his own right, and both influenced the other's political development. Marrying after graduation, they wore their progressive and feminist politics in their new shared name and their home became a kind of salon for other intellectually minded university graduates from Dublin's increasingly powerful Catholic middle classes. Francis became a committed pacifist, though Hanna, later a supporter of nationalist militancy, did not share that with her husband. The couple's feminism was genuinely felt but had its own idiosyncrasies and contradictions. Hanna's energies initially went into gender equity in higher education, a selectively middle-class concern. Early in their marriage, Francis displayed a violent temper toward his wife and the couple almost parted ways. In time, he seems to have brought this side of his personality under control and they settled into life together. Both working as teachers, what the Sheehy Skeffingtons lacked in actual wealth they made up for in social and cultural capital. Francis's salary, though, was enough to hire a maid. Hanna had "a sublime indifference to domestic concerns" (175) and spoke of her need to have maids to free up her time to write. The maids go generally unnamed in the book and what they thought of this drudgery is not discussed. That Dublin was one of the poorest cities in Europe does not seem to have registered: the Sheehy Skeffingtons remained living in the bourgeois Dublin of Joyce, not the proletarian city of Sean O'Casey. Hanna's exasperated question from 1907, "My gardener and my butler have the vote. Why shouldn't I?" (58), points to a

multitude of sins. Nonetheless, she became a well-known feminist writer and a skilled polemicist, active in Irish suffrage and often at odds with nationalist women who placed the national cause above female voting rights.

Famously, though, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington soon embraced nationalist causes. Francis was one of the first executed prisoners in the Rising of 1916; as a pacifist, he had attempted to organize community defense groups during the violence but was mistaken for a rebel and summarily killed. The government's refusal to prosecute the guilty commanding officer permanently soured Hanna's views of Britain. And yet Hanna still moved with privilege; various stints in prison, whether for nationalist or feminist "crimes," saw her receive special treatment, with her elected family members intervening on her behalf.

By the close of the First World War, Sheehy Skeffington was in the United States, acting as an ambassador for Irish nationalism, denouncing British imperialism, and negotiating the tortuous politics of Irish America. She returned to Ireland during the War of Independence of 1919–21 but would find herself out of place in the Irish Free State, too assertive for the crystallizing conservatism that would dominate the country for the rest of the century. The closing chapters recount a patchwork of activities in the long interregnum after 1922: her work as a journalist, radical republicanism, her moves toward communism.

For the entirety of the book, Ward writes with clear affection for her protagonist. But she also has too much of a tendency to valorize Sheehy Skeffington or to let her off the hook. Hints of Sheehy Skeffington's social snobbery pop up at various intervals but are never probed too deeply. Investigations of race and racism are entirely absent from the book, despite whiteness being an implicit underpinning of early Irish feminism. Ward mentions feminist pageants in which suffragettes cosplayed as "a very masculine Apache" or a "Water Carrier from the East" (158). Irish suffragettes were agnostic about colonialism and Hanna herself felt Ireland was sadly "oriental" (118) in its hostility to women. Such oddities are mentioned but never integrated into the analysis; indeed, neither the pioneering works on Irish women's history nor the more recent crop during the last decade have thought to foreground race in their analysis, even with Ireland today becoming a more multiracial society.

Irish women's history always avoided the tediousness of the revisionist debates of the nineties and Ward's biography does show the strengths of this subset of Irish historiography. But it also shows how much it remains embedded in the same kind of positivist methodologies of revisionism. And any work that seeks to return women to nationalist narratives will always remain circumscribed within the nation-state as its primary category of analysis. Ward's first works demonstrated how much Irish history writing benefits from borrowing the social history and gender history methods of people like Sheila Rowbotham. Irish gender historians would only benefit by again looking outward, beyond the nation-state, for new methodologies.

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Learned Lives in England, 1900–1950: Institutions, Ideas, and Intellectual Experience. By *William Lubenow*.

Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2020. Pp. xii+278. \$99.00 (cloth); \$24.99 (e-book).

In *Learned Lives in England, 1900–1950*, William Lubenow explores the complex and multifaceted ways through which the authority of knowledge was "formed, organised and also dissolved" (246) in the first half of the twentieth century. Having previously focused on