

vated by economic prejudice against the entrepreneur. *The Real American Cowboy* and *Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery* are typical of such works. Writers who live in Massachusetts or Washington, DC, and whose views of the West derive from the Western movie, economic determinism, and the cloistered research library, churn out works about cowboys which refer to the occupation as a "trade fraternity." These books speak about the friendships of the bunkhouse in terms of "male bonding" and portray prostitutes as "enmeshed in a complex web of human attitudes, defined with scorn and jocularity, and circumscribed by rigid societal responses."

Publishers whose offices are congregated in the East (or, in the case of university presses, are staffed with imitators of New York houses) sign contracts with these Ivy League academicians because they all talk the same language—something that makes both of them comfortable. There is a symbiotic relationship. Publishers need manuscripts to fill their spring and fall catalogs, and professors need publications to justify their non-professing in the classroom (that is, released time for research). Moreover, each helps reinforce the prejudices the other already has about the West, either real or mythic. Another way of saying the same thing is that I have never seen a book whose subtitle is *Prostitutes in the American East*.

These publishers and authors remind me—perhaps because most of them are from that generation—of college students of the 1960's who liked to wear blue work shirts and overalls to show their sympathy for the working class. As a friend of mine commented, "If only they had earned those work shirts. Those of us who grew up in them couldn't wait to get out of them." I do not believe these Eastern authors need to have worked as cowboys or prostitutes to gain an understanding of them, but a closer association than sympathetic reading and listening to academic lectures is needed to attune the writer to the regional rhythms and work patterns of the West of reality.

Let me illustrate my point with some stories.

Many years ago I was talking with an old-timer who related to me an

anecdote told by his great-uncle about herding cattle in the Cherokee Outlet in the 1880's. A crew of six was working a herd when one of them, a young cowboy, was killed. His horse stepped in a hole, threw the young man, and then rolled on top of him. The crew dug a shallow grave on top of a nearby hill and gathered around it, hats in hand. After several moments of awkward silence, the foreman asked, "Anybody have anything to say?" When no one responded, the foreman told them, "Well, throw some dirt on him, and let's get back to work."

On another occasion I recall listening to a salty old cowboy in San Angelo, Texas, tell a few of his cronies about the death and funeral of one of their number. The deceased was brought into a nearby small community and properly laid out in church, dozens of his friends coming for the service. The young minister preached a long sermon, perhaps in the hope of making a few converts among people who did not normally attend church. Finally, in a fit of oratorical flight, he thundered, "Old Jake's not really dead. He's just gone to a better world." At this moment from the back of the room came a whispered comment from one of the salty—and realistic—cowboys seated there, "I've got a hundred dollars says the son of a bitch is dead."

I gained greater understanding and insight about cowboys and cattlemen from these two stories than from some two dozen years of academic study,

just as I learned what prostitution must have been like from another story I heard dating from the 1890's. It involved a 17-year-old prostitute weeping because she had been working at a two-dollar establishment until a miner, in a drunken fit of amorousness, had bitten off one of her ears; this automatically had demoted her to a 50-cent-house.

I cannot recommend either of these books as good reading for anyone who really wants to know what the West of yore was truly like. The writers have uncovered no new facts, and they have disclosed no great insights. The author of a best-selling American history textbook once told me, "Show me an American history book, and I can tell you within 10 years when it was written." He meant that by examining what was emphasized in a particular text, he could tell the era from which it came by recalling what was fashionable at any given point in our history. These two books exemplify the sociological-revisionism of the 1980's and those writers intent on raising our racist/sexist/economic consciousness.

Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery is feminist literature designed to prove that prostitutes in the West were used by the "legal, military, church and press establishments" to "maintain their authority," while *The Real American Cowboy* tries to have us believe that cowboys, filled with racial prejudice, were "exploited by their corporate employers."

BOOKS IN BRIEF—POPULAR CULTURE

The Last Metro, directed by Francois Truffaut, edited by Mirella Jona Affron and E. Rubinstein, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press; \$25.00 (cloth); \$10.00 (paper). *Touch of Evil*, directed by Orson Welles, edited by Terry Comito, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press; \$25.00 (cloth); \$10.00 (paper). Great movies often have scripts, and a series to make those scripts available to students would be welcome. A poor choice of films is frustrating the value of the new "Rutgers Films in Print" series. Truffaut's meretricious *Last Metro* was shot without a script. Much of the power of Welles's brilliant *Touch of Evil* comes from Henry Mancini's score. *Caveat emptor*.

My Work in Films by Eugene Lourie, San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; \$29.95 (cloth); \$16.95 (paper). A modest and chatty narrative of the career of the art director of movies that ranged from *Grand Illusion* to *Krakatoa*, *East of Java* will be a film buff's delight.

Seven Pillars of Popular Culture by Marshall W. Fishwick, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press; \$29.95. A professor of humanities and communication studies at Virginia Polytechnic Institute brings together the fruits of a lifetime's research in a wide-ranging and learned book that discusses today's popular culture in terms borrowed from ancient Greek, including *demos* (people), *theos* (god), and *mythos*.

The Gelded Age by Allan C. Carlson

"If the Model Boy was in either of these Sunday schools, I did not see him."

—Mark Twain

Boys Together: English Public Schools, 1800-1864 by John Chandos, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Manhood: A New Definition by Stephen A. Shapiro, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

The Redundant Male: Is Sex Irrelevant in the Modern World? by Jeremy Cheras and John Gribbin, New York: Pantheon Books.

What do men want? In the gloried 1950's, *Sports Afield* and *Rod and Gun* exemplified a male ethos resting on the quest for game by the primeval hunting band. With *Playboy*, Hugh Hefner moved the American male indoors. The plush apartment, the hi-fi, a cultivated taste for Gucci accessories and French cuisine, and a string of willing sex partners became the marks of the compleat 1960's man.

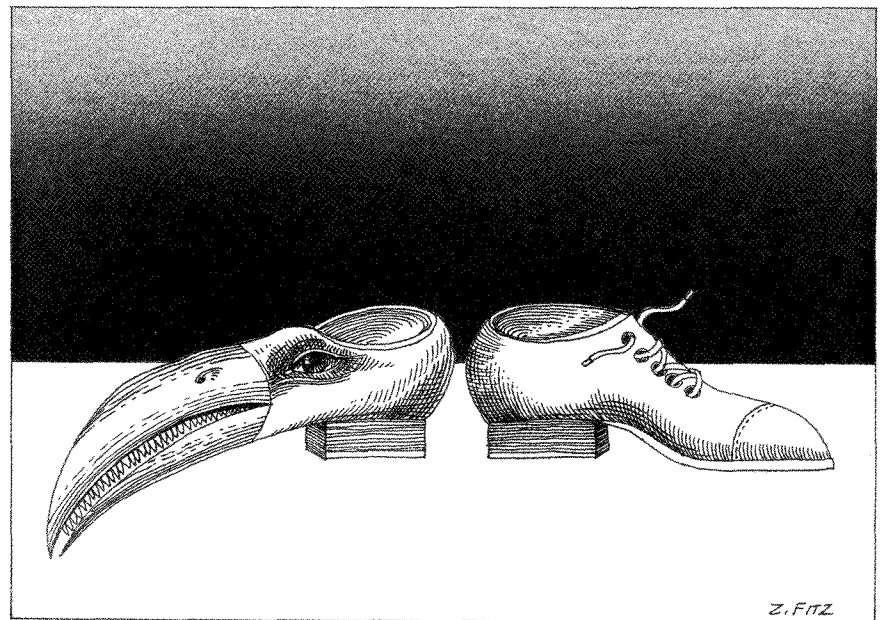
Manhood now faces another redefinition. Judging from the sheaf of new publications on the "men's question," the male of the 1980's simply aspires to equality with the new woman.

Esquire has repositioned itself as the magazine of the psychologically neutered male, seeking to frame a life-style for the nonsexist rich and famous. At the more committed level, *Changing Men*, published in Madison, Wisconsin, seeks to define "a healthy, life-loving, non-oppressive masculinity." Its regular section on "men's history" is edited, predictably, by a woman. California's *Men's Journal* effuses over "the excitement of men interacting with men, celebrating our common masculine heritage." The editors report, with straight faces, that "men are heirs to a rich heritage of myth and ritual." Meanwhile, *The Men's Studies Newsletter*, "written by and for

Allan Carlson is executive vice president of The Rockford Institute.

academics," chronicles the growing field of Men's Studies, a recent outgrowth of the Women's Studies programs that are *de rigueur* on mainstream college campuses.

An old *Saturday Night Live* skit comes to mind, a talk-show spoof entitled "For Men Only," in which Dan Akroyd portrayed the curator of a new men's art museum. He showed his host the *Mona Lisa*, which, he proudly declared, "was painted by a man"; then, *The Last Supper*, also painted by "a man." The museum featured the piped-in music of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven, "who were all men." How many Americans, I wonder, still get the joke?



Manhood, like everything else in modern times, has become the pawn of ideology. Torn from its roots in the genetic code, gender is now a plaything for clever writers with political ambitions.

The tremor began with the ideas unleashed by the French and industrial revolutions of the late 18th century. In his wonderfully entertaining book, *Boys Together*, historian John Chandos shows how class envy, the quest for

political power, and evangelical religion came together to destroy the male ethos of the English public schools through the reform of 1865. Chandos focuses on Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Harrow, and Rugby, most of which began as charity schools. Over the course of the 17th century, though, these institutions were transformed into the incubators of the ruling class, places where young men from good homes were toughened and readied for their leadership roles. In the pre-reform centuries, the public schools held tightly to two distinctions: a curriculum based exclusively on Latin and Greek; and an extraordinary degree of self-government by the boys, allowing seniors or "fagmasters" to rule over juniors or "fags" with near absolute power. At Eton, 50 or more boys would be locked up each night in single dormitories, without adult supervision. Fags would tend to the senior's every need—clip their hair, fetch a candle, wash their clothes, procure

illicit liquor, and so on. Fagmasters, in turn, protected their fags from the demands of other seniors.

The fag system has acquired a reputation for cruelty and sexual exploitation, reflected in the connotation of the word *fag* itself. Chandos shows, though, that fagging usually worked quite well. While sexual misadventure was not unknown among the boys, most of it took the form of heterosexual trysts with village girls, mutual mas-