

members were drawn from all ranks of society. And who were those supposed “brigands” assumed to be? Not the hirelings of enraged noblemen, The author argues, in the course of a very interesting analysis of linguistic usage in 1789, but “outsiders”: men who had little or no connection with any local community in the region, and who were, therefore, perceived to be dangerous.

Toward the end of his book, Ramsay does point to the new militias as possessing within themselves a genuinely revolutionary undercurrent. These new militias, he asserts, may have been established by the elites with an eye to maintaining their traditional control over the potentially troublesome lower orders; but eventually, these militias would become truly ‘national’ and democratic, no longer functioning within the framework of the old society of orders and privilege. Be that as it may, Ramsay’s discussion of the formation of the militias during the Great Fear, like the rest of his book, leaves the reader with the impression that as far as the Great Fear itself was concerned, in the Soissonais at least, it took place within an essentially traditional context.

Ramsay’s study goes against the generally-held perception of the Great Fear as having been fuelled by hostility on the part of the peasantry toward the nobility. He also breaks with the idea, commonly held by historians, that it was an integral part of the widespread rural unrest which had occurred during the preceding months. Ramsay argues that the Great Fear took root only in those areas of the Soissonais which had not experienced the earlier unrest. The reason for this, he suggests, is that the earlier unrest occurred in areas in which there had been a collapse of a traditional consensual ideology — the continued existence of such an ideology being necessary if the rumours which gave birth to the Great Fear were to have an effect.

Ramsay is drawn to the idea that the Great Fear took hold, and could only take hold, in those parts of France in which, in the summer of 1789, some form of traditional collective mentality and traditional community was still operative. But he realises that this is an idea which must remain purely speculative until he has had a chance to extend his research beyond the boundaries of the Soissonais.

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Michael Roper and John Tosh, eds. — *Manful Assertions. Masculinities in Britain since 1800*. London and New York: Routledge, 1991. Pp. x, 221.

Although men are at the centre of much historical writing, their masculinity has not, of itself, attracted particular attention. Perceived, as one source puts it, as “just chaps”, the gender of (heterosexual) men seems either irrelevant or unproblematic. Women and gays, by contrast, are history’s gendered subjects, and the emphasis of recent work has unwittingly centred the “problem” of gender on them. But the latest development bodes for a change by “engendering men”, and this book was conceived to that end. The aspiration of editors and contributors are to demonstrate that masculinity has analytical significance in history. They aim to make the case for its greater prominence in the mainstream of the subject. The editors, moreover, push some fairly ambitious claims to transform historical understanding by a perspective

upon masculinity. If the collection as a whole falls short of this grander aim, each contributor has original and important things to say. Together, they put up a persuasive case for a different way of seeing men in history.

The potential field for examining *Manful Assertions* is vast and one can only imagine that an element of serendipity entered into the final choice of subject matter. Thus biographically-oriented accounts of middle-class shapers and movers Edward White Benson, T.E. Lawrence and Thomas Carlyle appear alongside an autobiographical excursion into the world of the public schoolboy in the 1940s and 1950s. Working-class men are represented by recruits to the nineteenth-century Salvation Army; the ubiquitous “skilled artisan” (seen here in a new light); and the youthful readership of adventure comics in the early twentieth century. Finally, and most different in subject matter and treatment, is a study of the near-contemporary “company man” (the managers of engineering firms, as it turns out).

What do we learn about masculinity and its significance in the post-1800 period from these essays? Most striking, perhaps, is the fragility of masculinity. The physical and emotional strength which constitutes “manliness” isolates and diminishes the individual even as it enhances the social power of men as a class. This, at least, is the messages of those who deal with middle-class masculinity. In public, Benson was the awe-inspiring headmaster; in private, though he adored domestic life, he was incapable of emotional intimacy with his sons. Carlyle eulogized men for their unselfish public achievements whilst, as a hypochondriac, imposing his needs upon a female household. T.E. Lawrence loses and gains by reassessment. He is a more complex, unconventional and sympathetic figure than the public image (less of the standard bearer of British imperialism than we might think). But the personal cost of his manliness was one of repressed sexuality.

Working-class masculinity seems more robust, at least in so far as it involved a greater degree of collective identification and mutual affirmation. As the essays make clear, however, there is no single code of working-class masculinity and the diversity of working-class perceptions of manliness is the central point to emerge here. The Salvationists, for example, found a manly Christianity more attractive than the culture of the public house. The artisan of labour, meanwhile, aspired to the status of family provider as skill was defined as a male preserve and its value weighed in “breadwinning”. The question of middle-class influence is partially discussed in the paper on early twentieth-century boys’ adventure magazines. These set out prescriptions of manly behaviour in stories for the edification of working-class lads, though whether they were won over remains, I think, debateable.

Only one of these essays has been published previously (McClellan’s on the “Representative Artisan”) and for the most part, they represent the first fruits of young scholar’s doctoral research. Bearing this in mind, Roper and Tosh do a good job of spelling out the significance of each and setting them in a larger context. Their introductory essay is particularly valuable for its theoretical content. Although too brief to constitute either a comprehensive review of work done, or a programme for future research in men’s studies, the key issues are identified in a way which should stimulate further debate in this fast developing field. Roper and Tosh see masculinity as a relational construct which cannot be divorced from considerations of men’s social power. In this, they break decisively with the apolitical and self-validating prescriptions of the role model paradigm which shaped men’s studies in its first wave. And yet, whilst they have no inhibitions about acknowledging that a large part of

masculinity concerns the superordination of men over women, they are critical of the men's movement and feminist perspectives which admit of little else. Their volume moves us closer to a legitimate position for men's history and it takes several steps in the direction of the historiographic revolution which Roper and Tosh envisage in their introduction.

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Timothy R. Scully — *Rethinking the Centre. Party Politics in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Chile*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992. Pp. xiv, 287.

As Timothy Scully points out, Chilean centre parties have not received much academic attention despite the crucial role they have played in the development of Chile's political system over the last 140 years. He seeks to remedy this neglect and to shed light on the way the party political system has developed by taking a close look at three "critical junctures" periods during which party politics underwent significant alteration. The three junctures which Scully identifies are 1855-1861, 1920-1932 and 1952-1958. (He also examines the question of whether the Pinochet era should be considered as a critical juncture and rightly concludes that it probably should not be.) The first saw the issue of Church State relations generate a tripartite division of politics into left, centre and right — a division which, for rather different reasons, characterises Chilean politics to this day. The second saw the political incorporation of the urban and mining working-class movements which had emerged as a consequence of economic and social change in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Finally, the third juncture saw the political incorporation of rural workers and the emergence of the Christian Democrats as a new type of centre party. It is Scully's contention that each of these critical junctures had a profound impact on the way the political system functioned in subsequent decades. Further, he also explores the nature of centre parties, distinguishing between two types, the positional and the programmatic. According to author, positional parties are flexible and opportunistic and more interested in acting as brokers between opposing extremes than in imposing their own programmatic demands. He places the Liberals and the Radical Party in this category whereas the Christian Democrats, who have their own agenda and hegemonic ambitions, clearly belong in the programmatic category.

Although a political scientist, Scully has kept the methodological and terminological trappings of his discipline well under control and he has produced a clear and elegantly written book. His treatment of each critical juncture shows a sure grasp of the historical literature and he provides a convincing analysis of how party politics has evolved since the 1850s. His identification of key political cleavages along ideological and class lines and his demonstration of how even new cleavages related to the old are particularly interesting and this reviewer, for one, is grateful to be reminded of the continuing impact and resonances of the anti-clerical divide. Indeed, while not all of Scully's insights and analysis are necessarily novel, this is a well organised and tightly argued study which will stimulate debate where it does not illuminate.