

**THE FEMINIZATION OF  
AMERICAN CULTURE**

by Ann Douglas  
Knopf, 1977, 403 pp. \$15  
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The core of sentimentality nestling within much American popular culture is persuasively traced to ladies and parsons in this thoughtful argument by Columbia Professor Ann Douglas. Concentrating on the early and mid-19th century, she shows how the writing of high-minded novels, stories, and poetry became the preserve of two disestablished groups: women lately turned from being proud, productive partners in the Revolution and on the frontier into dependent consumers, and Protestant clergymen relegated to the company of womenfolk by the rising male business class. The alliance of these two elements and their use of literary outpourings as weapons in a struggle to dignify their enforced passivity is examined through the works of Catharine Maria Sedgwick, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lydia Huntley Sigourney, and many others. Douglas argues that the dichotomy between "culture" and "serious pursuits" established in this period led straight to today's TV soap operas and to the "plots" implicit in modern advertising. Two essays serve to contrast the era's sentimentalists with its most phenomenal literary deviants, Romantics Margaret Fuller and Herman Melville.

**ALEXANDRIA STILL:  
Forster, Durrell,  
and Cavafy**

by Jane Lagoudis Pinchin  
Princeton, 1977, 245 pp. \$13.50  
L of C 76-3014  
ISBN 0-691-06283-8

Many Americans remain unaware of the riches of modern Greek literature. The work of Constantine Cavafy (1863-1933), an obscure employee of the irrigation service in Alexandria (Egypt) and poet second only (some would say equal) to Greece's Nobel Prize-winning George Seferis (1900-71), is not well known in the United States. Even readers of Lawrence Durrell's four novels, *The Alexandria Quartet*, in which Cavafy figures as the "old poet of the city," may be unaware of his achievements. Colgate English Professor Jane Pinchin's book of essays, on the "old poet," on Durrell, and on E. M. Forster (who did much to make Cavafy's work known in England) comes on the heels of Robert Liddell's full, old-fashioned life, *Cavafy: A Biography*, and the fine textual analysis, *Cavafy's Alexandria: Study of a Myth in Progress*, by the poet's