

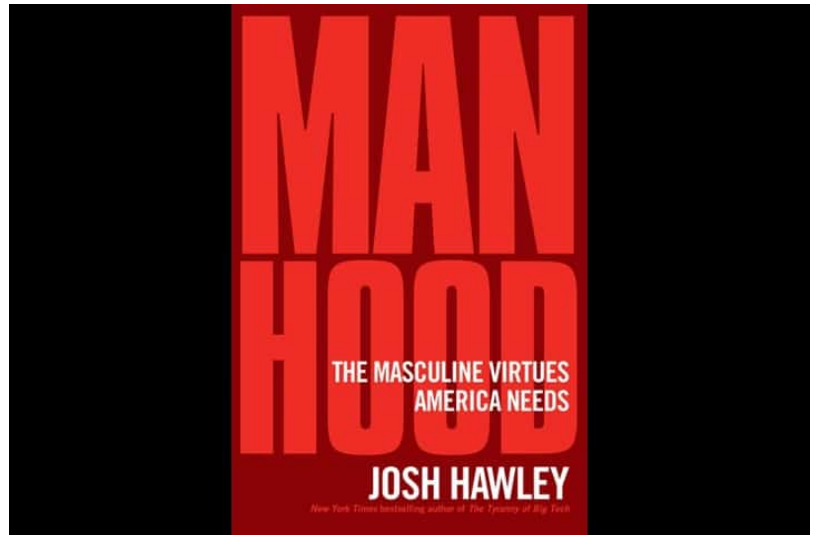


The Girly Man Cometh: Senator Warns of “America’s Manhood Crisis”

The norm for most of history, intellectual Steven Pinker once pointed out, was brutal tribal warfare in which the winner would kill all the vanquished’s men and older boys (and take the women). The principle is simple:

Neuter a society — emasculate it thoroughly — and control is yours.

A similar phenomenon is occurring in America today, though it’s more of an intellectual/emotional neutering. Some call this “America’s Manhood Crisis,” as Senator Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) did in a Tuesday *Newsweek* piece.



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In an excerpt adapted from Hawley’s new book, *Manhood: The Masculine Virtues America Needs*, the senator warns that our men are faltering — and that this bodes ill for our civilization. As he [writes](#):

It has been a perennial question of political philosophy, since the first republics were formed, whether a free nation could survive without soundness of character in its people. The old-fashioned word for that is “virtue,” meaning not just moral uprightness but the personal fortitude and vision such uprightness produces—strength, in other words. Machiavelli called it *virtù*. Practically everywhere one looks in America now, male *virtù* is crumbling, and the consequences for the country are grave.

Crime is on the rise, overwhelmingly committed by men. Disinterest in work is becoming commonplace. And in perhaps the starkest example of male weakness, fatherlessness abounds. The percentage of children living with only their mother—no father present—has doubled since 1968. Today, the majority of children born to women under 30 are born into fatherless homes—a new, ignominious milestone in American history. The epidemic of absent fathers is a social solvent, dissolving the future. Boys raised in fatherless homes face increased odds that they will use drugs, commit crimes, perform poorly in school, live in poverty—and then become absent fathers themselves.

Let’s begin by noting that Hawley is correct to begin where true civilization does begin — with virtue. I’ve [written and talked much about the quality](#) for the same reason [the Founding Fathers did](#): A nation without virtue is like a plane without a guidance system or pilot. It will fly, for a time, but is destined to crash and burn. As Benjamin Franklin [put it](#) succinctly, “Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become more corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters.”

This answers Hawley’s opening question: Without virtue — correctly defined as “that set of *objectively* good moral habits” — what we commonly call liberty is impossible.



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on May 18, 2023

Now, the senator is correct in his second-paragraph depiction of America's social woes. Two things should be said, however. First, crime has *always* been "overwhelmingly committed by men" (just as innovation and invention have always overwhelmingly been birthed by men. Male dynamism *and* dangerousness go together, and which one a boy will exhibit as he matures is determined by how his explosive energy is directed, by how his character is formed).

Second, that the majority of under-30 women's children endure fatherlessness does reflect a dangerous tipping point. Yet it takes two to tango: Apart from the few women who might have been sexually assaulted, these ladies (along with the lads) failed to guard their chastity and were loose with their bodies. The point is, many women today aren't exactly fonts of virtue, either. Yet male sin attracts greater attention because it's more *overt*.

Characteristic male faults such as lust and misplaced aggression are obvious; characteristic female ones such as vindictiveness, vanity, and emotional manipulation are less so. Just consider, for example, anger in children. A boy is more likely to throw a violent tantrum, but will have calmed down and be loving you again 20 minutes later. A girl is more likely to simmer at a "lower temperature" for a longer duration, holding onto resentment. Over time, the amount of negative energy expended may be the same; becoming resentful may ultimately be more dangerous, too. Yet it's the boy's explosive behavior that raises eyebrows.

As for illegitimacy, "patriarchy," that oh-so dirty word and concept, once served to tamp down male lust and female vanity and thus control the young's sexual interactions (and many other things). But whether we call it patriarchy — or national "masculine strength," as Hawley does — it's now gone. The implications?

"As the anthropologist David Gilmore once wrote, 'Manhood is the social barrier that societies must erect against entropy, human enemies, the forces of nature, time, and all the human weaknesses' that threaten social life," the senator writes. "No menace to this nation is greater than the collapse of American manhood, the collapse of masculine strength."

It certainly is a great menace. A feminist slogan common for a decade or two was "The future is female." (Interestingly, its diminishing popularity directly coincides with the "transgender" agenda's rise and the increase in "trans" men dominating women's sports. My, will coincidences ever cease?) Yet as G.K. Chesterton observed, "What is called matriarchy is simply moral anarchy, in which the mother alone remains fixed because all the fathers are fugitive and irresponsible." Thus, if "the future is female," it's also something else: short.

(That is, at least *that* future).

Yet offered in response to this "manhood" crisis is the characterizing of masculinity as "toxic" and the pickling of it in young boys with Ritalin. Of course, the people thus prescribing don't actually understand what a man should be (and often can't even define "woman"); worse still, they reflect a wider confusion.

As psychologist James Hollis [puts it](#), the modern lad "is asked to be a man when [no one] can define it except in the most trivial of terms. He is asked to move from boyhood to manhood without any rites of passage, with no wise elders to receive and instruct him, and no positive sense of what such manhood might feel like."

The answer, of course, is a [return to inculcating the virtues](#). Yet all we now hear are what, essentially, are proposals to further feminize boys (and testosterone levels have declined *30 percent* in the last



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three decades).

In contrast, our main geopolitical adversary, China, has [banned](#) what it calls “sissy men” from TV and has [instituted a program](#) to cultivate masculinity in teen boys.

So is masculinity passé? Is the future really female? Many women [are already crying for male aid](#) because “trans” men are invading their realms. What will be the reaction if Chinese men invade our realm?



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