

Case of the Missing Moon



Manliness, I am told, has been out of fashion for at least three decades, what with the likes of Gary Cooper and Robert Mitchum no longer around.

But Harvey Mansfield's eponymous book has rekindled the controversy over what embodies manliness.

The manly virtues of courage, sacrifice, and chivalry took a beating sometime during the late '60s, with the backlash against the Vietnam War and Women's Lib taking most of the credit for the decline of traditional manliness. Out went the rugged types, in came sensitive, caring, pacifist vegetarians. And, of course, homosexuals.

The gender-neutral society was still in its infancy when a friend of mine, Martin Gross, author of *The Red President* and numerous other books, approached me with an interesting proposal. Martin is a serious writer and editor and asked whether I was willing to run something he had written under my byline. The reason he didn't want the treatise under his own name was because, as an academic, writing the kind of essay he was proposing was a real no-no. It had to do with the difference between men and women. I looked at it and immediately declined. It was a scholarly essay, one that anyone who hadn't been living in Albania for the last 50 years would have known instantly was not my work.

Martin was actually joking. He wanted me to read it and tell him what I thought. What it said was very simple. Men and women had different chromosomes, which make for the difference between them. Oh yes, and another small detail. Women's brains are missing a moon, on the right side, I believe, which makes it more difficult for them to absorb abstract thoughts. The absence of such a moon makes it easier to register emotion, as in the love of a mother for her child, and so on.

Well, the thing was never published and just as well. But what did happen was a lunch at the Chateau de Rougemont, in Switzerland, which at the time was rented by Bill and Pat Buckley during the skiing season. Their son Christopher, the humorist and author of many books including, *Thank You For Smoking*, had suffered from migraine headaches throughout his adult life. After many false diagnoses and lots of pain, one doctor, a brain specialist, discovered a cure. All Christo had to do was stop smoking and—presto!—the headaches disappeared. The parents were obviously delighted and invited the good doctor to Rougemont to stay and for a grand luncheon in his honor. Pat filled the room with ladies who lunch but don't ski, plus Bill, Christo, and myself. Sometime during the three-course meal, I came up with my theory about the missing moon in

Christo, and I gulped down our cups and took off for the slopes. Once on top of the mountain, and while putting on our skis, the doc leaned over to me and said in a rather nonchalant way: "You know, your theory is full of crap, but I simply couldn't resist seeing their faces when I told them." Needless to say, he remains my hero for coming to the rescue when I needed it most.

Actually, I have never bothered to find out whether Martin's theory is full of crap or not, because I really don't care. Men are men and women are women, as far as I'm concerned, and that about covers it. But as we all know—all except those who don't want to—in American universities today there are whole areas barred from discussion. Genetics, race, sex, intelligence are a few of the many unmentionables. Lawrence Summers is the latest example of what happens when someone dares to say what is obvious. The Harvard president is now an ex-president, although I'm sure he could get a job at a moment's notice in Saudi Arabia, for example.

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response to one lady banging on about something some idiotic feminist had said. A friend, Doris Brynner, was outraged. "Listen," she yelled, "Taki is now claiming we're missing half our brains..."

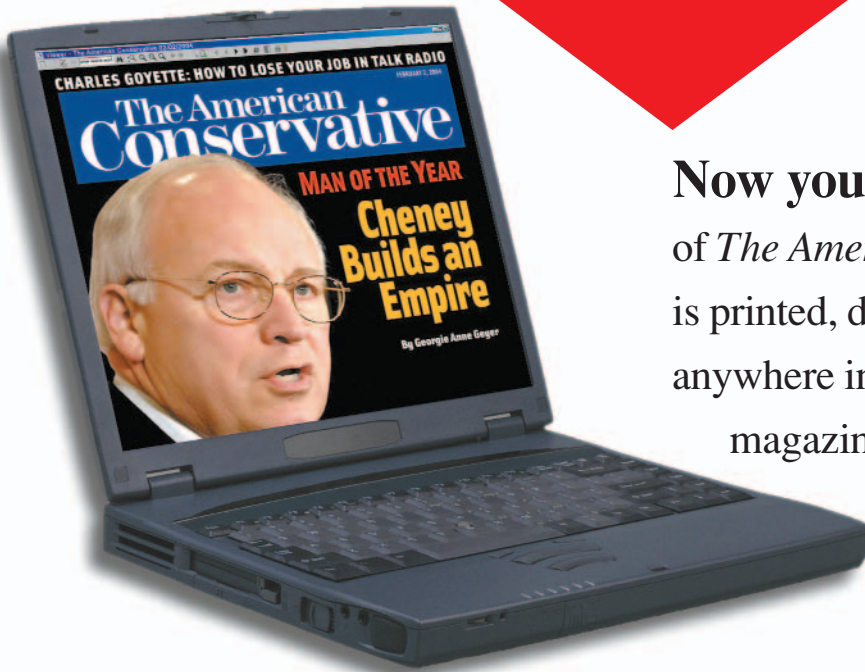
Boos all around and general condemnation followed, until suddenly the good doctor clinked his glass. "I'm afraid the gentleman is right," he said in a serious voice. "I operate daily and, of course, there is a moon missing on a woman's brain."

Deflation of outraged egos and apologies followed. Pat asked for coffee in the drawing room, and Bill, the doctor,

I have not read Mansfield's book on manliness, but from what I hear it's a real winner. The author includes all sorts of female icons such as Plato and Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, and Spinoza in his treatise, and unlike David Brooks, he gets the meaning of the word *thymos* right the first time out.

Manliness, according to Mansfield, is a "house with many mansions," which in my two-moon mind means it includes physical as well as intellectual courage, something not often found in one-moon female minds among American academics. ■

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