

## **Regarding the American Male**

Reflections on the writings of Alan Bloom, "The Closing of the American Mind".

Bloom, the diagnostician, writes, "Abstract moralism condemns certain keystones, removes them, and then blames both the nature of the stones and the structure when it collapses". This succinct and accurate analysis leaps off the pages in his discussion of relationships, and even complements Schaeffer's sleuthing of the state of the contemporary western dilemma. Lost concepts of familial relational keystones has resulted in the condemnation of that which the abandonment produced. Consider the image of the contemporary American male in the so-called cultural expressions of our day.

Concerning the impetus of what I call the current "nebulous zone" of modern patriarchy, Bloom writes, "The souls of men-their ambitious, warlike, protective, possessive character – must be dismantled in order to liberate women from their domination." (129). So in order to "equalize" things which should never be equalized, one sex is to give up something key to that gender's identity, in order that the other sex may obtain something that will cripple its own gender's identity. In the process, feminism (of the stripe Bloom refers to) has failed miserably in achieving its objective for women (which objective was faulty at the outset); and men and fatherhood are now mocked for not being the very types of males that those same women wanted to reshape in the first place.

Television sitcoms and advertisement (including print) are the megaphones announcing the mockery. Fathers (and quite often men in general) are incapable of making good decisions and often need to be instructed by their children! This while mom silently acknowledges dad's childish inadequacy, but loves him anyway. I saw an ad in my wife's Country Living (or some such) magazine for these disposable Tupperware type packages. The ad said, "so simple, even a man can use it". There is nothing comical about this, but very telling. At work, I read a few articles in O magazine by men, telling of the so-called secrets of male feelings, and what women "need to know". It was basically feminized male, intellectual metrosexuality. I felt at once a sense of shame, and a desire to take either of these guys "outside" for some reeducation (and show them what 5'7", 160 lbs of pre-modern, pre-liberal Massachusetts machismo is capable of!).

How shall we then live if the family is reduced to such a state? Is it so that most men actually are not these kinds of fathers, and TV etc only appeals to a certain segment of the population? Is the uncritical thinker just not seeing it? Is there a subliminal emasculation taking place? I think that Bloom is exact in his observation that, "there is nothing left of the reverence toward the father as the symbol of the divine on earth, the unquestioned bearer of authority". (114). But not to be merely dismissed as chauvinist rant, let me insist that this is a result of men abdicating the biblical mandate prescribed for fatherhood and maleness, and women supplanting those same prescriptions for womanhood and maternity. The sum total of this is that the family cannot maintain this present course, and modern notions of redefinition are destined for disaster.