



Livingwise

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AMERICA'S ENDANGERED GENDER



"Boys will be boys" went the old expression. But now they aren't allowed to be.

In this century in America, boys are being refashioned into girls.

It starts in school. DNA going back to the caveman drives boys to roughhouse and be physical with each other. It used to be that boys could get the drive out of their systems in gym class (playing battle ball) or playing strenuously in recess.

That was too much for the politically correct school administrators and female grade school teachers. Gym became bad because some kids developed more slowly than their peers and were embarrassed changing for gym. So gym was eliminated.

Administrators decided to eliminate recess because it didn't help on standardized test scores.

Without gym and recess, boys acted up in class. This upset teachers and administrators who, with the immoral support of psychiatrists and psychologists, decided rambunctious boys needed to be doped into better behavior. In some schools, 25 percent of the boys are on Ritalin or something comparable.

The theory seems to be that a doped-down boy can learn better than a mentally and physically alert boy. (It doesn't seem to matter that all research shows that cognitive skills improve in a healthy, alert body.)

Not being satisfied with the physical impairment of boys, schools choose literature which amounts to "chick lit" while ignoring the literature that interests boys. How can a boy become interested in reading

when presented with stuff like *The House of the Seven Gables* and *Pride and Prejudice*?

While being force-fed stories like those, I used to go to the library and read boys' books like *Stover at Yale*. In an era when women thought it unseemly to dribble a basketball, the books about Stover must have seemed shocking indeed.

What kind of literature would encourage boys to read? Books about sports, war and sex. In my eighth grade we read Chaucer in class. But at lunch, the boys were avidly devouring *Forever Amber* on their own.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, who wrote like a girl, was praised by teachers who denigrated Ernest Hemingway, who wrote like a man. I always loved the hearty, meaty short stories and novels of Hemingway, but could never muster much interest in anything Fitzgerald wrote. Hemingway may have shot himself, but Fitzgerald did far worse. He shot his career in Hollywood.

In my day, girls were supposed to excel at English while boys were said to shine in math. But even that has gone against boys today. The academic world is loaded with English teachers, but it is a rare school which can boast a fine math teacher. Too many boys are forced to endure math instruction from teachers who are barely three pages ahead of the class.

Back in the day, even intellectually challenged (dumb) boys could find jobs after they left high school. Instead of academic studies, they majored in "shop" classes which prepared them to become carpenters, plumbers, machinists and a whole slew of high-paying factory jobs.

But today, those jobs have disappeared along with the shop classes. Today we have a service economy which is perfectly suited to the female. Who needs upper body strength to sit at a desk?

Women dominate former male preserves like real estate, advertising and marketing. They have penetrated law and medicine in huge numbers. They are about to burst into corporate management in large numbers. I have no problem with the progress of women. My only concern is, what's left for the boys?

Males with entrepreneurial natures will thrive. But what will be the course of men who would have formerly functioned in manufacturing management? In highly structured businesses? We have already reached the stage where the male unemployment rate is higher than that of females.

Ask any woman today how hard it is to find a good man. (Which largely explains the growth of dating services and the demise of marriage.)

How can we fix the problem?

We need to revamp our attitudes toward the family and the home so that once more, boys can be boys.

And while we're at it, let's add a whole slew of guy books to the curriculum.

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