

Thirty Seven Essays on Life, Wisdom and Masculinity Quintus Curtius

A classical scholar in today's manosphere, giving depth, meaning and resonance to our resistance to the feminization of society

Return of Kings was just a fuzzy memory (I had reviewed founder Roosh V's book *Bang Ukraine* a couple of years back) until I read Ann Sterzinger's excellent write up on this book on Taki Magazine. I bought it yesterday and couldn't put it down.

Today I read a few articles on Return of Kings. They are good, but Quintus Curtius has to be about the best. This review is therefore just what it says - a take on his 37 essays, and a bit of an aside on a phenomenon of which I've only recently become aware, the "manosphere."

Most of the 37 essays deal with what it is to be a man. Curtius draws on classic sources, most significantly the Stoics, in his attempt to define what a man should be.

Virility, courage and resolve, perhaps best distilled into the single word "character," define a man in Curtius' world. Many of his essays focus on endurance and physical bravery: World War I hero/writer Ernst Jünger, people who survived catastrophes by sheer force of will, and those driven to prove themselves such as the tunnel rats of Vietnam.

Other essays address resolve in getting things done despite the pettifoggery, log rolling and indifference of those around them. The epic search for John Paul Jones' corpse, and that of Everest climber George Mallory. The fights to publish an authentic anatomy of the human body, and photographs of the Civil War. These efforts took courage of a different kind. It took men with the intellect to understand the importance of their missions, and the resolve to carry them out, often over thankless decades of toil.

Quintus only partially addresses the question of how a society forms such men. He is clear that today's society does not. Education and every avenue of socialization weakens, feminizes a man. Quintus is a classicist: he offers valuable pieces on ancient authors who are almost certain to be unknown to modern readers, and whose observations on the human condition and what it means to be a man are all the more relevant today.

He is not afraid to let his sources do the talking. "A Program of Education" presents without much modification Pier Paolo Vergerio's Renaissance era distillation of classical wisdom with regard to how to educate a man. The contrast with today's pedagogues, the likes of Alfie Kohn and the Sadkers, is striking.

Quintus does not delve more deeply into how a society forms men. It is an expensive process. That truly virile men may rise to the top, others must be tested and found wanting. Some die in the process. It takes a society, rather like the classical world, in which women bear many sons in the knowledge that not all will survive to adulthood, and not all of those will achieve manhood.

Contrast that with modern society, in which the little darlings - often adopted from other, more fecund peoples in order to avoid the bother of gestation and lactation - are endlessly shuttled by mothers or their surrogates, in car seats from (female) expert to expert in an effort to teach them how to be human. God forbid that any should perish in the process, or even that parents should conclude, whatever the justification, that any particular kid just doesn't have the right stuff to make it.

The upshot is that raising true men requires the commitment of women just as much as men. Like the women of Sparta, who admonished their sons to come back with their shields, or on them. This, in turn, requires a commitment to the notion that the society transcends the individual. We began losing sight of that truth with the Enlightenment, and it has been wholly ignored for the past century or more. The question is not our personal survival but that of our culture and genome. Putting the individual first, we have lost our society. Quintus is headed in that direction, but in his focus on virility in the individual he does not emphasize why a society so desperately needs it, and how society must achieve it.

Quintus has two essays on learning foreign languages. As I write this, working on my seventh language in my eighth decade, I have to say that he is a bit too demanding and too optimistic. Learning language takes both hard work, which he emphasizes, and talent. I recommend that anybody seeking to duplicate his success first contact 2LTI (Google it) to have your aptitude for foreign languages tested. No sense beating your head against a wall. Once you conclude that it is worth the effort, and you have the ability, his advice is very sound.

This is a beautifully written book. It will make any reader long for the classical education that has been absent from our educations for decades now. Given that you can't have the real thing, this is an excellent substitute. I recommend as well [[ASIN:184737798X Full Circle : How the Classical World Came Back to Us]], which ties the classical era back to our own.

Quintus says that classical authors, especially historians, looked at everything they wrote as a vehicle for moral instruct