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The manliness of Theodore Roosevelt

by [Harvey Mansfield](#)

An essay excerpted from his book on manliness forthcoming from Yale University Press.

The most obvious feature of Theodore Roosevelt's life and thought is the one least celebrated today, his manliness. Somehow America in the twentieth century went from the explosion of assertive manliness that was TR to the sensitive males of our time who shall be and deserve to be nameless.

TR appeals to some conservatives today for his espousal of big government and national greatness, and all conservatives rather relish his political incorrectness. As a reforming progressive he used to appeal to liberals, but nowadays liberals are put off by the political incorrectness that conservatives rather sneakily enjoy. Conservatives keep their admiration under wraps because they fear the reaction of women should they celebrate his manliness. Liberals have delivered themselves, in some cases with discernible reluctance (I am thinking of President Clinton), to the fem ...

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