KNOWING AND NOT KNOWING: REFLECTIONS ON MANHOOD*

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I

One Sunday in January 2003 the lead editorial in the *New York Times* read: 'The war against women.' Its subject was the policies of the Bush administration. The following May, the *Berkshire Eagle* ran a story from the Associated Press under the headline: 'Hillary Clinton still trump card for GOP fund-raisers'. The story began: 'Democratic Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton repeatedly insists she isn't running for president, but a new nation-wide Republican effort aims to raise funds for the 2004 election by suggesting the GOP has to stop her.' A three-page letter sent out by the Republican Presidential Task Force had warned: 'It could happen. But only if you let it . . . If Republicans don't take immediate steps to counter her, Senator Hillary Clinton will continue to rise unimpeded to the very pinnacle of power in Washington . . . [she is] her party's top fundraiser, their top ideologue, their leading voice in opposition to President Bush.' The nightmare vision was of waking one morning to find Hillary on top.

I begin with two questions. First, in the move from monarchy or aristocracy to democracy is manhood a residual problem – how to establish a sense of male potency or efficacy in the absence of hierarchy? My second question is related and follows a line of thinking provoked by a seminar I teach with David Richards, a philosopher and constitution law scholar. We had focused on dilemmas of masculinity, studying four men who notably challenged the linkages between violence and appeals to manhood – William Lloyd Garrison, Tolstoy, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King. At the end of the term, we turned to consider the misogyny of fascism and fundamentalism, reading Hannah Arendt (1950/1968) on *The Origins of Totalitarianism.*

Arendt describes totalitarianism as a new political form that arose in the twentieth century. She never mentions gender, but the misogyny of fascism is clear – in Hitler's table talk, in Mussolini's edicts. Contempt for women was the flip side of the idealization of motherhood, posing the question Claudia Koonz considers in *Mothers in the Fatherland:* why did women vote for Hitler? 'What did this overtly misogynistic regime offer to women?' (Koonz, 1987, 5). I found myself wondering: why is fascism misogynistic?

The violence associated with totalitarianism is irrational in the extreme. In *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic*, James Gilligan (1996) identifies

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shame as the proximal cause of violence, finding in his work with violent men that even the most seemingly senseless acts of violence have a psychological logic, the violent act signifying a symbolic attempt to undo shame and restore manhood. But why the twentieth century?

Hitler's rise to power followed the economic displacements and social dislocations that Arendt describes, but it also followed the rise of the women's movement in Germany. Stalin's communism succeeded a revolution based on a vision of radical equality. Was fascism, or totalitarianism with its fantasy of total control and world domination in part a reaction to feminism, which threatened the last bastion of an endangered manhood: the belief that whatever humiliations a man might suffer in the world at large, at home he was the master?

The question is pressing, given the resurgence of feminism in the latter half of the twentieth century. In the US, a gender gap in voting appeared and grew throughout the 1980s and 1990s with women voting more often for Democratic candidates. In 1996, for the first time since suffrage, women's votes elected the president. The 2000 presidential election witnessed the largest gender gap on record with a 10-point spread between men and women's votes in opposite directions for the Republican and the Democratic candidates. And then, in 2002, it disappeared.

The 'war against women' seeks to restore traditional codes of manhood and womanhood by tightening restrictions on women's reproductive choices and sexual freedom. The disappearance of the gender gap in the mid-term election may reflect the small turnout and the organization of conservative groups in getting out the vote. It also may reflect the overriding priority after 11 September of concerns about national security, the assumption being that when it comes to safety, women and men see eye to eye. But women often know intuitively or through experience that when manhood is threatened, violence is imminent. I suspect that women may have pulled back in the 2002 election in response to the perception that manhood had been threatened.

I have a further question. When the Enlightenment and the doctrine of human rights led to the founding of constitutional democracies, a series of contradictions became troubling: between democracy and slavery, democracy and imperialism, and democracy and patriarchy. Wars against slavery and imperialism were openly fought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Are we now witnessing the battle between democracy and patriarchy? Is this the war of the twenty-first century?

The subject of manhood becomes inescapable. Yet to talk about manhood is to enter a realm of dissociation. This is Virginia Woolf's subject in *Three Guineas,* her essay on men and women and war. Looking at a photograph of dead bodies and ruined houses, she sees another picture imposing itself on the foreground:

> It is the figure of a man; some say, others deny, that is Man himself. The quintessence of virility, the perfect type of which all the others are imperfect adumbrations. He is a man certainly. His eyes are glazed; his eyes glare. His body, which is braced in an unnatural position, is tightly cased in a uniform. Upon the breast of that uniform are sewn several medals and other mystic symbols. His hand is upon a sword. He is called in German and Italian Fuhrer or Duce, in our own language Tyrant or Dictator. And behind him lie ruined houses and dead bodies – men, women and children. (Woolf, 1938, 142)

To Woolf, the human figure of fascism suggests 'that the public and the private

worlds are inseparably connected, that the tyrannies and servilities of the one are the tyrannies and servilities of the other.' Thus she links women's claim to voice with the protest against political violence: '[we] fighting the tyranny of the patriarchal state, as you are fighting the tyranny of the fascist state.' Asking how women can help men prevent war, Woolf ends her essay by calling for new words and new methods to break out of the framework that binds manhood to hierarchy and thus to militarism.

II

The gender dualism – masculine/feminine – maps readily onto a series of splits: mind/body, thought/feeling, self/relationship, culture/nature – all of which have been gendered and hierarchically arranged: mind, thought, self, and culture are gendered masculine and elevated; body, feelings, relationships, and nature are considered feminine and at once idealized and devalued. But now science has entered the picture to show that however culturally embedded these splits, however natural these hierarchies may seem, however much part of an intellectual tradition that we know well and are wedded to, they make no sense either psychologically (what is a relationship in the absence of self?) or neurologically (where is the mind if not in the body?).

In *Descartes' Error,* the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (1994) brings evidence of brain injury to the table to show what happens in fact when people's thoughts are severed from emotion. They can solve logical or mathematical puzzles, but they are unable to function in the human social world, to make reasonable decisions or act rationally. In retrospect it seems obvious: for the most part, emotions enhance rather than compromise thought, they aid rather than derail intelligence

Damasio's second book, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (Damasio, 1999) focuses on the self. Core consciousness, or the core sense of self, reflects our ability to register our experience from moment to moment like a film running continually inside us, and also our awareness of watching the film that extends the sense of self into time and history, memory and identity. Damasio distinguishes the core self, grounded in the body and in emotion, from what he calls 'the autobiographical self', the self that is wedded to a story about itself.

In studying psychological development, my colleagues and I have zeroed in on times of initiation, when the psyche incorporates cultural scripts that shape the stories we tell about ourselves. My eye was caught by evidence of resistance – the psyche's reluctance to take on a false story. Judy at nine says that she knows how her friend will feel because 'I just feel it in my mind.' There is little language for this experience of connectedness or the intuitive knowing to which it gives rise. When asked to explain what seems to her self-evident, Judy says: 'You just feel it. It's hard to explain.' At 13, Judy has learned that knowing and feeling are 'two different things.' Seeking to reconcile this distinction with her experience, she divides her mind, which she locates in her gut, from her brain which is in her head

> The knowing sort of comes from the brain, like your intelligence thing. Like your smartness, your brightness, your education part. And your feeling is something that it doesn't matter if you have an education or not, it's just like something that you can't put into words. That you can't really

> explain, but it's not, I don't know, it's just like a deeper sort of knowing than intelligence knowing.

Following her disclaimer ('I don't know'), Judy explains this deeper sort of knowing:

> A mind sort of has your real thoughts and a brain sort of has the intelligence . . . what you learn in school . . . but your mind is associated with your heart and your soul and your internal feeling and your real feelings.

As Judy splits her mind – her real thoughts and feelings – from her intelligence and her education, she offers an observation about development: 'children,' she says, 'have the most mind, but they are starting to lose it actually' (Brown and Gilligan, 1992, 123–41).

Tracy, her classmate, suggests how this loss comes to be dismissed as inconsequential. 'When we were nine we were stupid,' she observes. But when I say it would have never occurred to me to use the world 'stupid' to describe them when they were nine because what struck me most about them at that time was how much they knew, Tracy says, 'I mean, when we were nine we were honest.'

Parents of four- and five-year-old boys are struck by the directness with which their sons read the human emotional world, including emotions that are being withheld. Speaking of four-year-old Jake, Rachel says: 'He's my barometer' – he registers her emotional weather. Jake said to her one morning, 'Mummy, you have a happy voice, but I also hear a little worried voice.' Alex recalls that when he expressed his remorse for having 'lost it' and hit Nick the previous day, 5-year-old Nick observed, 'You are afraid that if you hit me, when I grow up, I'll hit my children.' Alex, who had been hit by his father, had vowed to break the cycle; Nick registered his father's fear that the pattern will now continue into the next generation.

The honest voice that girls come to call 'stupid' and women will often dismiss as 'crazy' is the emotionally open voice that boys come to hear as 'babyish' and men will cover with a voice that sounds more manly. In couples' therapy, Phil, a man whose marriage is in crisis, says his ultimate nightmare is his wife 'in the arms of another man'. When I ask, 'Why is this your worst nightmare?' he responds, 'I guess the ultimate nightmare really for me was to never have the opportunity to show her how I really feel and to be a family man, to open my heart and to love her.' The emotional perceptiveness so openly expressed by young boys lay hidden under a cloak of masculinity (Gilligan, 2002).

In *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain,* Damasio (2003) asks 'what feelings are and what they provide'. He begins by establishing his framework, which rests on a distinction between emotion and feeling. Emotions 'play out in the theater of the body', they are public; feelings 'play out in the theater of the mind' and like all mental images, they are private (Damasio, 2003, 28). We have emotions whether we want to or not; they are part of the homeostatic regulatory systems of the body and serve an adaptive function by signalling the body's location in relation to objects that can enhance or endanger life. Feelings, our mental map of bodily states and emotions, allow us to arrive at innovative responses, to think about how we will respond to our emotions rather than acting reflexively For Damasio, the connection between emotions and feelings provides the key to solving the mind-body problem, explaining how the body comes to be in the mind and the mind in the body.

Children can read the human emotional world because it is right in front of them. They read it on the bodies of others, in their faces, in the tone of their voices, in their own emotional responses. Children also can learn not to see what they see, not to listen to what they hear, not to know what they know. Not to attend to or to feel their emotions when doing so threatens relationships or creates inner conflicts that feel overwhelming. Children can be taught not to pay attention to their own or others' bodies and emotions, not to register them in their thoughts. And then the human world begins to appear opaque and comes to seem unknowable.

The role gender plays in this process was a discovery of my research, in part because girls' resistance was so articulate and partly because some girls were able to say so clearly what they were doing and what they were experiencing (Gilligan, 1990). Iris, at 17, a participant in a five-year longitudinal study of girls' development (Brown and Gilligan, 1992), describes a paradoxical sacrifice of relationship in order, as she says, to 'have relationships'. She explains: 'If I were to say what I was feeling and thinking, no one would want to be with me, my voice would be too loud.' However adaptive, this move is psychologically incoherent. When I say to Iris, 'If you are not saying what you are feeling and thinking, then where are you in these relationships?' she sees the blind spot. Anne Frank records her strategy of resistance: 'I hid myself within myself and quietly wrote down all my joys, sorrows and contempt in my diary.' When she edits her diary with an eye to publication, these are the parts she tones down or leaves out completely. She knows through experience that her honest voice will be heard as 'unpleasant', her exuberant sexuality deemed 'insufferable'. Observing herself becoming 'two Annes' – one good and the other bad – she confesses to her diary: 'I have, as it were, a dual personality' (Frank, 1989, 697; Gilligan, 2002, 79–107).

With Judy Chu, my colleague in the research with young boys, I saw signs of a similar splitting in boys around the age of 5. Chu observed that in their relationships with one another, and also with her, they were becoming less direct, less authentic, less articulate and less attentive. They were becoming more like 'real boys' (Pollak, 1998; Chu, 2000).

At these times of initiation when children internalize cultural scripts of manhood and womanhood that lead to psychic splits, their resilience is at risk. Among boys around 5 and girls at adolescence, psychologists have noted a sudden high incidence of signs of psychological distress – behaviour problems, depression, speech impediments, learning and eating disorders (Gilligan, 1990, 1996). 'I don't know', girls will say, covering what they know. At 5, boys' resistance is less articulate, expressed more though action than in words, and their moves into dissociation are correspondingly more silent.

Observing these patterns, I became interested in the mechanism of splitting: how children keep their voices from revealing their emotions, how they separate their minds from their bodies, and how they divorce themselves from relationships so that relationships come to appear 'selfless' and the self feels lonely, often without quite knowing why. I became curious about where an honest voice goes when it recedes into silence, what happens to the desire for relationship, how we record our experience when we cannot afford to know what we know, what happens to the sense of truth?

As I explored these questions in my research, I saw the power of association to

undo dissociation, and I came to understand why the sacrifice of relationship is essential in binding people to cultural scripts that do not jibe with what they know through experience. I noticed that loving attention or a shift in resonance prompted by a question or the associative stream of consciousness can release a voice that has been in silence or invite a knowing at once familiar and surprising.

Gender becomes a powerful lever of initiation because cultural codes of manhood and womanhood shape our feelings about our bodies, our desires, our sense of ourselves as well as our relationships with others, and our prospects for advancement in the world. The honest voice that sounds 'too loud', like the emotional openness that seems too soft, reflects a cultural adaptation achieved at the cost of relationship and psychic integrity. Since this adaptation is inherently unstable, it requires a use of force to hold it in place. Boys around the age of 5 who resist the sacrifice of relationship are subjected to often brutal rituals of shaming or humiliated by being called girls or gays or mama's boys. Girls at adolescence, subjected to often vicious games of exclusion, discover that they must sacrifice relationship if they want to be included.

Within cultures bound by these gender binaries and hierarchies, development takes on some of the markers of trauma: a loss of voice, gaps in memory, the inability to tell one's story. I have noticed that the voice women remember as their voice in pre-adolescence or men as the voice of early childhood often differs systematically from the actual voices of children at these times, reflecting the incorporation into the self of accepted gender norms. But I have also noted how readily the lost voice can be recovered.

III

A paradigm shift means a change in the questions, rather than new answers to old questions. It does not mean privileging the feminine rather than masculine sides of the splits (body over mind, emotions over thoughts, relationships over self, nature over culture). It means reframing the conversation.

Masculinities: I think of John Berger: 'Never again will a single story be told as though it's the only one' (quoted in Roy, 1997). The single story told about manhood was a patriarchal story, bound to duality (masculine/feminine) and to hierarchy (fathers over mothers and children) and framed within a paradigm of loss, symbolized by the Oedipus tragedy (loss of love, loss of knowledge). I find it useful to distinguish between patriarchal masculinities, meaning constructions of manhood, which are tied to hierarchy and the gender binary, and democratic masculinities, framed within a paradigm of connectedness (mind in body, body in mind; self in relationship, relationship in self; thought in feelings, feelings in thought) and based on the perception that men and women are inseparably connected (man in woman, woman in man). Freed from hierarchy and from loss, gender becomes more variable, more improvisational, and the shaming of manhood becomes less explosive.

A recent study using brain imaging confirms an impression I had in tracing development: the move out of relationship and into hierarchy is signalled by a loss of pleasure. In a game of prisoner's dilemma, where people could choose cooperative or competitive strategies, the researchers found that the brain image lights up more brightly in response to cooperation than to

gaining competitive advantage. The neural circuits lit up by cooperation are those that respond to pleasure, such as chocolate and a range of licit and illicit delights (Rilling et al., 2002, 395–405). Since we are 'hard-wired to cooperate' (Angier, 2002, D1), pleasure becomes suspect within a competitive culture. The spirit of capitalism, as Max Weber saw, thus becomes yoked to a puritanical, ascetic Protestant ethic.

If manhood can be established without hierarchy, feminism – the movement to free democracy from patriarchy – becomes associated with pleasure rather than threat. What is it, then, that keeps the patriarchal gender system going, given increasing evidence that it is not only neurologically mistaken and psychologically incoherent but also detrimental in the sense of limiting the development of both women and men, setting the stage for neurotic conflicts and political struggles, and heightening the incidence of violence?

IV

In the preface to his book *War and Gender,* Joshua Goldstein (2001), a professor of international relations at American University, writes that he had wanted to study war and gender since he was a graduate student. Of all the research projects he considered, this was the one he found most interesting. In graduate school he made a list of potential research projects, writing on the line next to war and gender, 'most interesting of all, will ruin career – wait until tenure' (Goldstein, 2001). I do not find this surprising. Graduate students at Harvard would tell me that they had been advised by other professors not to study gender if they wanted to get ahead – not even to include gender as a variable in their analysis because it would make their research look political.

Goldstein, now tenured and having done his research, opens his book by presenting a puzzle. Despite the diversity of gender and war separately:

> gender roles in war are very consistent across all known human societies. Furthermore, virtually all human cultures to date have faced the possibility, and frequently the actual experience, of war . . . [and] have met this challenge in a gender-based way, by assembling groups of fighters who were primarily, and usually exclusively, male. (Goldstein, 2001, 3)

Although this is now changing, the puzzle itself deepens: 'The near total exclusion of woman from combat roles does not seem to be explained by women's inherent lack of ability.' It has to do with masculinity: 'Constructions of masculinity motivate soldiers to fight, across a variety of cultures and belief systems. Norms of masculinity contribute to men's exclusive status as warriors, and preparation for war is frequently a central component of masculinity.' Outside war, gender roles vary greatly, but the areas where they 'are most consistent–-political leadership, hunting, and certain coming of age rituals–-are those most closely connected with war' (Goldstein, 2001, 5, 7).

Goldstein observes, 'killing in war does not come naturally to either gender, yet the potential for war has been universal in human societies. To help overcome soldiers' reluctance to fight, cultures develop gender roles that equate "manhood" with toughness under fire.' In other words, gender roles and war are inseparable.

> Across culture and through time, the selection of men as potential combatants (and of women for

> feminine support roles) has helped shape the war system. In turn, the pervasiveness of war in history has influenced gender profoundly – especially gender-norms in child-rearing. (Goldstein, 2001, 9)

To change one means to change the other. But here we come up against a catch-22: 'As war is gendered masculine, so peace is gendered feminine. Thus the manhood of men who oppose war becomes vulnerable to shaming.' They are seen as not men or not real men, and consequently, their objections are discounted and the war system continues. This dynamic played out during World War I in responses to shell-shocked soldiers as well as to men who spoke out against the war; it was dramatized in Pat Barker's (1992) novel *Regeneration;* it underlies the pessimism of Virgil's *Aeneid;* it fuelled the rise of fascism and totalitarianism; it was challenged by men who adopted a politics of non-violence, it was taken on by anti-war protesters at the time of Vietnam; and it has surfaced recently in responses to the unprecedented world-wide peace demonstrations that preceded the war in Iraq.

We may now be witnessing the endgame of patriarchy. Heroic images of patriarchal masculinity (President Bush landing on the aircraft carrier) vie with images of democratic citizenship (people coming out into the streets to voice their dissent). How will these differences be resolved? On what grounds will the contest be fought? How will the issue of manhood be addressed? And will we see a rise in misogyny?

Writing about totalitarianism, Arendt emphasizes its assault on human nature. Conviction and opinion of any sort become

> ridiculous and dangerous . . . because totalitarian regimes take the greatest pride in having no need of them or of any human help of any kind. Totalitarianism strives not toward despotic rule over men, but toward a system in which men are superfluous. (Arendt, 1950/1968, 457)

Since character is a threat, such regimes systematically undertake 'the killing of man's individuality, of the uniqueness shaped in equal parts by nature, will, and destiny, which has become so self-evident a premise for all human relations.' Arendt observes that in totalitarian regimes this destruction of individuality is almost always successful. The assault on the psyche combines with an assault on reality, 'keeping a whole people in slavery, in submission' (Arendt, 1950/1968, 454–5).

The word 'total' in totalitarianism captures this takeover of the human spirit. As instruments of propaganda play havoc with reality and truth, the machinery of terror crushes the psyche, but the shock of democracy falling prey to fascism and the horror of the Holocaust in the centre of Europe revealed a flaw in the heart of civilization.

In *Endgame,* Samuel Beckett (1958) creates a world in which words have lost their meaning, where the past is relegated to the dustbin and there is no future in sight. In this setting, Clov, a servant, moves to free himself from Hamm, his dying master. At the end of the play, as he prepares to leave, he gives voice to despair. 'Ah . . . !' Hamm responds, 'Something . . . from your heart.' 'My heart!' Clov says. Beckett insists on his stage directions. Clov's gaze is fixed, his voice is toneless. He will speak about love and friendship and attention in a voice that bears no trace of emotion.

> They said to me, That's love, yes, yes, not a doubt, now you see how – how easy it is. They said to me, That's friendship, yes, yes, no question, you've found it. They said to me, Here's the place, stop, raise your head and look at all that beauty. That order! They said to me, Come now,

> you're not a brute beast, think upon these things and you'll see how all becomes clear. And simple! They said to me, What skilled attention they get, all these dying of their wounds. (Beckett, 1958, 80)

From this abyss of psychic captivity, a first-person voice begins – 'I say to myself – sometimes, Clov' – only to be met by the internalized voice of oppression: 'you must learn to suffer better than that if you want them to weary of punishing you – one day . . . you must be there better than that if you want them to let you go – one day.' But then, 'one day, suddenly, it ends, it changes.' The old framework falls away. 'I don't understand,' Clov says, 'it dies, or it's me, I don't understand, that either.' What remains are the rhythms of the body, of nature: 'sleeping, waking, morning, evening. They have nothing to say'(Beckett, 1958, 80–1)

Regeneration, the title of Pat Barker's novel, refers to this regeneration of nerves. Barker recreates in fiction the relationship between WHR Rivers, the chief psychiatrist at the military hospital at Craiglockhart during the First World War, and Siegfried Sassoon, the war hero and war objector who was sent to Craiglockhart to avoid court marshal. As a student, Rivers participated in neurological experiments on the regeneration of severed nerves. As a military psychiatrist he is charged with regenerating the nerves of shell-shocked soldiers and sending them back into battle. The issue comes to a head in his relationship with Sassoon: what does it mean to regenerate men's nerves? The question is not what men know but whether they can say what they know. Whether they can literally say it – the novel is replete with stuttering and other speech impediments. Whether they can politically say it – Sassoon is in danger of being tried for treason. Whether they can find words to convey what they have experienced and witnessed – it is a novel about poets, Sassoon and Wilfred Owen.

Mussolini coined the word 'totalitarianism'. In his strutting posture, his compulsive promiscuity, his polarization of men as warriors and women as nurses who attend them when they return from battle, he exemplified what the psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich (1949) called 'phallic narcissism', a virulent form of masculinity reflecting a manhood under siege. 'You already know enough,' Sven Lindqvist observes at the opening of his study of European genocide. 'So do I. What is missing is the courage to understand what we know and to draw conclusions' (Lindqvist, 1992, 2).

The process of psychic liberation hinges on the ability to step out of an old frame. It is the most volatile moment in the course of psychotherapy – the moment when we glimpse the possibility of the new. Suddenly there is no framework, no story, no way of holding past and present together. It is the most difficult moment to be alone, the place where we are most tempted to return to the familiar and restore an old framework at any cost.

The radical implication of Damasio's research lies in the discovery that in our bodies and in our emotions we register the music, 'the feeling of what happens.' Within ourselves, we know our experience, but this knowledge can be overridden, not only by propaganda and terror but also by binding ourselves to a story about ourselves that discounts or discredits our experience. Seeking out Spinoza, Damasio picks up a current of resistance within the Western philosophical tradition and fills in the neurological grounds for insights that led Spinoza's words to be 'deemed heretical and banned for decades and with rare exceptions quoted only as part of the assault on his work.' Connecting reason with

emotion and observing that 'the human mind is the human body in thought,' Spinoza 'anticipated by more than a century the Declaration of Independence and the First Amendment, prescribing freedom of speech as the hallmark of an ideal Democratic state; "let every man think what he wants and say what he thinks," he wrote' (Damasio, 2003, 14–15).

In *The Birth of Pleasure,* I pick up a voice that has been recorded by writers across time and culture. It is the voice of Psyche in the ancient myth of Psyche and Cupid, when she breaks the taboo on seeing and saying what she knows about love, of Iphigenia when she speaks to her father in Euripides' tragedy, to Anne Frank in her actual, unedited diary and of countless girls in women's coming-of-age novels, the voice Proust recovers in his search for a lost time. In my research, I followed a trajectory of resistance that begins with healthy resistance to losses that are psychologically costly (loss of voice, loss of relationship) and turns into a political resistance when these losses are socially enforced and culturally sanctioned. Then a struggle breaks out that holds a potential for psychic and cultural transformation but also for dissociation – for splitting the self from parts of its experience so that it becomes possible not to know what in another sense one knows. As I explored this struggle in my research and also in post-colonial fiction I was repeatedly led to a construction of manhood as the lynchpin, holding a tragic story in place. Pleasure, the daughter of Psyche and Cupid, is born once Cupid is no longer hiding his love (Gilligan, 2002).

Since our seminar, my colleague David Richards has completed a book titled *Disarming Manhood* (in press). It is a study of Garrison, Tolstoy, Gandhi, and King – men who adopted a politics of non-violence. Richards discovered that each of these men was guided by the internalized voice of a loved mother or maternal caretaker whose ethical voice (buttressed by the historical Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount) was accorded unusual authority. The brilliance of non-violence as a strategy of resistance lies in its direct challenge to the honor codes that mandate violence as the honorable response to insults to manhood. If manhood can be defended by non-violent resistance, manhood could be disarmed.

Richards complicates his analysis by adding Churchill, whose clear reading of the psychology driving Hitler's fascism led him early on to recognize its threat and to see the futility of pacifism as a response. But the addition of Churchill also takes the discussion of mother-son relationships in a radically new direction and leads Richards to the provocative question: 'did the problems experienced by Tolstoy, Gandhi and King in their relationships with women and with their own sexuality reflect the return of a repressed patriarchal manhood, manifest in the splitting of women into idealized madonnas and whores?'

I was teaching with Erik Erikson at the time when he completed *Gandhi's Truth* (1969), and he often spoke of the writing block he encountered that almost led him to abandon the project. He literally could not say what he was coming to see – violence where non-violence was professed, untruth where truth was the issue. Erikson broke through his block by writing a letter to Gandhi and inserting it as 'A Personal Word' at the place in his book where his writing had stopped. 'Dear Mahatama,' he begins, intending a man-to-man conversation. He accuses Gandhi of 'patriarchal bad manners' – Gandhi ignored his wife's voice, overriding her truth with his own; he cut the hair of an adolescent girl whose

beauty sexually aroused the boys when they bathed naked together. Erikson does not comment on or seem to notice that in the examples he presents, the contradictions between Gandhi's political philosophy and his personal behaviour occur in his relationships with women, and more specifically in relationships with overtones of sexuality. Both Tolstoy and Gandhi took vows of celibacy; King was a compulsive womanizer. The problem of manhood was unresolved.

In his essay, 'On the Universal Tendency Toward Debasement in the Sphere of Love', Freud (1912/1974) describes men's tendency to split women into the idealized and the debased. He traces this split to the resolution of the Oedipus complex, when the young boy, seeking to secure his manhood, divides his sense of himself from his relationship with his mother and identifies with his father, taking on a father's voice as his own. This resolution becomes the seedbed for neurosis – a template for giving up what one most desires, for becoming entangled in irresolvable conflict, for a life riddled by the inability to love whom one desires or to desire whom one loves.

But idealization and denigration are the hallmarks of loss, marking a manhood achieved by sacrificing relationship and replacing it with identification – a manhood shadowed by loss and bound to separation. Tolstoy, Gandhi, and King all experienced a shattering loss of a loved mother or maternal caretaker. Their marriages were marred by unhappiness. Garrison and Churchill, in contrast, lived in ongoing relationship with a real rather than idealized mother, and their marriages were happy rather than tragic. Richards observes that the splitting of women into the good and the bad is universal only in reflecting the near universality of patriarchal cultures; 'my argument shows that it is not universal among men.'

Churchill then becomes a striking counter example, leading Richards to consider

> How the absence of this splitting of women into the idealized and the degraded enhances the capacity to read the human world accurately (as Churchill read Hitler) and reflects the ability to stay in relationship (manifest again in Churchill's understanding of Hitler and also in his personal life – notably his marriage). (Richards, in press)

But Jennie Churchill not only had a strong ethical voice (tending wounded soldiers, she insisted that her son see the ravages of war), she was also an overtly sexual woman, legendary for her many lovers, some of whom she brought home to be good fathers to her son. The example of Churchill, his forceful leadership and his prescience in opposing Hitler thus

> poses a challenge to what are taken as truths within psychoanalysis about mother-son relationships. In fact, such relationships are crucially important to understanding the resistance of all the men studied to injustice. The study of Churchill reveals a sexual mother and leads us to consider that her very sexuality freed her to enter into a different kind of relationship with her son, neither abusive nor idealized. (Richards, in press)

In The Scarlet Letter (1850/2000), Hawthorne places sexual voice at the centre of resistance to patriarchy. His 'romance', as he calls it, was written in a rush of inspiration following his mother's death and reflects a 'moonlight' visibility that revealed familiar objects in a way hidden by the light of day (see Gilligan, 2004). Hester Prynne's scarlet A is a badge of shame, but in separating her from the 'goodwives' of Puritanism, it places her outside its 'iron framework of reasoning'. Thus she is able to see the frame. As a child Hawthorne saw his mother scorned by the

more aristocratic Hathorne family (Hawthorne added the 'w') after his father died at sea when Nathaniel was approaching four. The word 'patriarchal' runs through the novel, appearing in the introductory sketch where Hawthorne depicts the duplicity of 'patriarchal personage[s]': 'the father of the Custom-House – the patriarch . . . was, in truth, a rare phenomenon; so perfect in one point of view; so shallow, so delusive, so impalpable, such an absolute nonentity, in every other.' It returns ('patriarchal privilege') to explain the psychic imprisonment of Hester's lover, 'the minister in a maze' (Hawthorne, 2000, 16, 199).

Hawthorne sets his story in the seventeenth century, an age, the narrator observes, when 'men of the sword had overthrown nobles and kings. Men bolder than these had overthrown and rearranged – not actually but in the sphere of theory . . . the whole system of ancient prejudice, wherewith was linked much of ancient principle' (Hawthorne, 2000, 149). In the spirit of the time, Hester Prynne, charged by providence with raising a daughter, envisions how the relationship between man and woman could similarly be overthrown and rearranged:

> As a first step, the whole system of society is to be torn down and built up anew. Then, the very nature of the opposite sex, or its long hereditary habit, which has become like nature, is to be essentially modified, before woman can be allowed to assume what seems a fair and suitable position. Finally, all other difficulties being obviated, woman cannot take advantage of these preliminary reforms, until she herself shall have undergone a still mightier change. (Hawthorne, 2000, 150)

The prospect of modifying what has come to seem like human nature makes this 'a hopeless task', more daunting than overthrowing nobles and kings.

The brilliance of Hawthorne's novel – read as a tale of tragic love and the wages of sin – lies in its resistance to this interpretation. It is the minister, the hapless Dimmesdale, and Chillingworth, Hester's hidden husband – both described as sensitive men who adore the truth – who are trapped by patriarchy and its culture of manhood into living a lie. At the end of the novel, Hester avows her 'firm belief that at some brighter period, when the world has grown ripe for it, in Heaven's own time, a new truth will be revealed in order to establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness' (Hawthorne, 2000, 241). Earlier in life, she imagined that she might be a prophetess like Anne Hutchinson, but the narrator steps in to observe that although 'the angel and apostle of the coming revelation must be a woman, indeed', she must be lofty and pure as well as beautiful and wise not through 'dusky grief' but the ethereal joy of sacred love (Hawthorne, 2000, 241). Thus Hawthorne exposes the catch-22 of feminism: the 'lawless' passion that renders a woman able to see through the iron framework of Puritanism and to envision a new order of living also disables her by rendering her, in the eyes of the Puritans, an impure woman, a woman who has been adulterated.

'A' means adultery but in the course of the novel many people come to say it means 'Able; so strong was Hester Prynne with a woman's strength' (Hawthorne, 2000, 146). The framework can shift. Hawthorne never knew his father, and he constructs *The Scarlet Letter* around the questions: who is the father, what does it mean to be a father, what does it mean to love God the father? Hester cannot free her lover but she does succeed in freeing her daughter, the wild and unruly Pearl who by the end of the novel is living in Italy.

V

I return to my questions. Is manhood a residual problem in the move from hierarchical to democratic forms? Is fascism in part a reaction to feminism, which threatens to dismantle the ultimate refuge of patriarchal manhood: the assurance of finding oneself on top of women?

The 'war against women' and the moves to stop Hillary Clinton reflect a manhood bent on hierarchy. In the winter of 2004, Ellen Goodman, writing in *The Boston Globe* (12 February 2004; A19), sees the presidential campaign shaping up as a contest between 'two very different military models of men in leadership': the 'father-knows-best' manhood of George Bush who planned to run as a 'war president' and the 'band-of-brothers' model of John Kerry, the leading democratic contender and a Vietnam war veteran. Goodman notes that 'in our culture, the military is seen both as a hierarchy and as a democracy. It's a top-down, follow-orders institution. And it's a world in which men – and now women – bond as equals across differences. It's a place where troops are ordered into danger. And take care of each other.'

To Goodman, these different images of warriors signify 'two different world views that come out of the Vietnam generation, if not the Vietnam War.' They also reflect another legacy of the twentieth century: the fight between democracy and totalitarianism. It's a short step from the 'I followed my government, I did' mentality expressed by President Bush when asked what lessons he learned from the Vietnam War to the lock-step of fascism or the God-is-on-my-side certainty of fundamentalism. For Kerry, writing in his twenties and carrying the Vietnam tragedy, the lessons were about individuality, friendship, and the need for questioning. 'When a good friend was hurt and perhaps about to die, you'd ask if it was worth just his life alone – let alone all the others or your own' (Goodman, 2004, A19). Questioning authority, far from representing disloyalty, was the only way of not betraying his loyalty to his friends. Kerry went out of his way to support and defend a generation that was being sacrificed by the authorities of that time. The lesson of fascism and also of Vietnam is that an unquestioning subservience to authority may be the ultimate betrayal of one's friends, one's peers, one's generation.

A quick glance at lists of best-selling books in February 2004, roughly half of which are about the Bush administration – for and against – attests that dissent is alive in America. But it also reveals a growing concern across the lines of party division about an assault on reality, the propagation of lies, invasions of privacy, and restrictions on civil liberties that place the future of American democracy in danger. The threat of Islamic fundamentalism becomes the justification for this erosion of democratic institutions.

If the misogyny of fascism is puzzling, that of fundamentalism is clear: the hierarchy of man over woman is taken as foundational, God given. And yet the same dynamic of shame and manhood underlies religious violence. In *Terror in the Mind of God,* Mark Juergensmeyer (2000), a professor of sociology and Director of Global and International Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, analyses the global rise of religious violence. Turning to the terrorists, he writes about humiliation: 'Nothing is more intimate than sexuality,' he observes

> and no greater humiliation can be experienced than failure over what one perceives to be one's sexual role. Such failures are often the basis of

> domestic violence and when these failures are linked with the social roles of masculinity and femininity, they can lead to public violence. Terrorist acts, then, can be forms of symbolic empowerment for men whose traditional sexual roles – their very manhood – is perceived to be at stake. (Jurgensmeyer, 2000, 195)

The clash between democracy and fundamentalism, sometimes cast as a clash of civilizations, thus turns out to hinge on the issue of manhood and, more specifically, on a contest between democratic and patriarchal masculinities. When constructions of manhood are not bound to a gender binary (when being a man does not mean not being a woman), when manhood is not established through hierarchy (when manhood does not mean being on top), manhood is freed from the kinds of shaming that violence seeks to redress. Then masculinity loses its fixed score and, like jazz, can be played any number of ways.

In her collection *Materialism*, Jorie Graham (1995) includes five poems called 'Notes on the Reality of the Self' – improvisations on the meaning of 'I':

> The question of who I was consumed me.
> I became convinced I should not find the image
> of the person that I
> was. Seconds passed. What rose to the surface in me
> plunged out of sight again. And yet I felt
> the moment of my first investiture
> was the moment I began to represent myself–-
> the moment I began to live – by degrees – second by
> second – unrelentingly – Oh mind what you're doing! –
>
> do you want to be *covered* or do you want to be *seen*! –
>
> And the garment – how it becomes you! – starry with the eyes of
> others,
> weeping –
> (Graham, 1995, 60–1)

Manhood and womanhood are garments cloaking a self that may want to be seen. When I speak about my research with four- and five-year-old boys, mothers frequently come up afterward to tell me a story about their sons. I notice how animated they look, their delight in talking about their sons. I think about the quality of these moments. What is it that I find so arresting? The mothers' stories are a gift, given I think in exchange for my affirmation of what they know to be true. Their stories reveal the emotional openness and perceptiveness of young boys, but the twist in the stories – the boy's ability to see what his mother thinks she is not or should not be showing – suggests a mother's relief at her release from idealization, her pleasure in being seen and loved.

I had a similar experience with fathers when I first began speaking about my research with girls. They would come up afterward to tell me about their 10 and 11-year-old daughters, delighting in their girls' astuteness, their honesty, and their freedom in speaking that led to a directness of relationship the fathers savoured. 'I don't ever want her to lose that', father after father would say.

And now, when I think about these moments, I realize that the emotional perceptiveness these mothers cherish in their sons and the honest, intelligent voices these fathers treasure in their daughters, are human qualities that become surprising only because they are so often hidden. I recall the conspiratorial tone of these otherwise innocent conversations and I wonder if mothers of sons and fathers of daughters are positioned to see more clearly the implications for both men and women of keeping these qualities out in the open.

Damasio ends his quest for Spinoza by urging 'a combative attitude toward life',

based on neurological findings that encourage 'the belief that part of humanity's tragic condition can be alleviated, and that doing something about the human predicament is our responsibility' (Damasio, 2003, 283). I end *The Birth of Pleasure* by calling for a stance of resistance, and I provide a map, based on psychological research that highlights the places where a path headed for tragedy can turn into a road leading to freedom.

Last winter, on a grey New York day, I went uptown to speak to a group of women as part of an occasion to honour their work as volunteers in social service agencies: in shelters for the homeless, with people who have HIV/AIDS, with children and families living in poverty. I spoke about my research, my work with adolescent girls and young boys. During the coffee hour afterward, a woman came up to me. 'I have a story for you', she said. It is a story about manhood and knowing. She was sitting in the living room one day when her four-year-old son came up to her and asked: 'Mommy, why are you sad?' Wanting to be a good mother, she thought she should not burden her son with her sadness. 'No, I'm not sad,' she said. 'Mommy,' he said, 'I know you. I was inside you.'

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