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## FREE ASSOCIATION AND THE GRAND INQUISITOR

A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS<sup>1</sup>

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*Abstract:* The discovery that free association can undo dissociation is the psychological equivalent to discovering fire. Psychoanalysis began with this discovery, but its liberatory promise became constrained. With the shift in emphasis from dissociated knowledge to the unconscious, a cure through love became wedded to miracle, mystery, and authority. In the 1970s, as winds of liberation swept through society, the authority of psychoanalysis was questioned and its patriarchal underpinnings exposed. Free association, it turned out, had been bound to the voice and law of the father. The question raised by Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor becomes a question for our time: was he right in his assessment that people find love and freedom too burdensome? Research in developmental psychology and neurobiology suggests he was not and points to the ways that tensions within psychoanalysis mirror tensions between democracy and patriarchy and reflect the dissonance between a voice grounded in the body and emotion and a voice wedded to what we now recognize as a false story about ourselves.

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*Keywords:* psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, dissociation, gender, trauma, development

THIS PAPER HAS THE STRUCTURE OF A PLAY in that it is driven by a dramatic tension. The setting is psychoanalysis, the time period a little over a century, beginning in the 1890s and continuing into the present. You will recognize most of the characters—Freud certainly, the Grand Inquisitor perhaps—and also many of the events, but the story I tell reflects a discovery I made that took me by surprise. I came to see a history familiar to many of you as it was to me in a new light, as reflecting

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a tension within psychoanalysis that mirrors a tension in the history of liberal democracy and also, perhaps, within ourselves.

You may want to know something about me that you will not find on Google. In addition to my research on psychological development, my interest in voice and resistance reflects a long and enduring relationship with psychoanalysis that began when I was two-and-a-half years old. That summer, my mother, a forward-looking woman interested in the latest developments and invested in raising her child, took me to Clara Thompson's summer institute at Vassar College designed to impart psychoanalytic wisdom to parents of young children. Like many such experiments, it was conceived with the best of intentions: the children would attend nursery school while the parents learned about child development. Yet, although set in the midst of American society, it was organized like a kibbutz: the children would live in one building or dormitory while the parents lived in another. It was an arrangement my two-year-old self could not envision, despite the careful preparation. I loved the nursery school and my teacher, whose name I remember to this day, but when it came to bedtime, I wanted my mother, not some *metapelet*,<sup>2</sup> to put me to sleep.

And so, at a very young age, I discovered the power of voice to bring about change. Like Joshua with his trumpet at Jericho, I found that by crying loud enough and long enough walls can come tumbling down. The rules gave way and my mother was summoned. An exception was granted: she could put me to bed and sing me to sleep. I never learned what Clara Thompson thought of this breach in practice and can only imagine what was said about me to justify this irregularity; but my mother always cherished this display of spirit on my part, whatever embarrassment it may have caused her, and it is possible that the other children also enjoyed her singing.

My second encounter with psychoanalysis occurred in graduate school when Freud became my salvation from despair. I was studying clinical psychology with the intention of becoming a therapist, but, having spent my undergraduate years immersed in Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Joyce, Faulkner, and Woolf, I was taken aback by the readings we were assigned: journal articles and clinical cases where the banality of the descriptions of people and their lives was covered by an array of numbers, cloaked in what passed for objectivity or conveyed in a voice of expertise that veiled an attitude of superiority if not contempt. I took to my bed, and playing my

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<sup>2</sup>A *metapelet* takes care of children on a kibbutz.

recording of Handel's *Messiah* over and over to the exasperation of the other graduate students on my hall, I spent days reading Freud along with Chekhov and Ibsen and at night went out with my boyfriend.

A solution to the problem of graduate school appeared early in my second year when I fell in love with Jim Gilligan and on a snowy night in Cambridge, we conceived a child. A messiah had appeared, saving me from my endless obsession over whether to go back to the study of literature, which had been my undergraduate major, or go to medical school, as my mother's friend Sophie advised. Instead I went with Jim to Cleveland where he went to medical school and I was free to hang out with our son Jonathan, supported by a grant to finish my dissertation. I had grown up with a playful grandfather, my father's father, who lived with us; and days spent playing with Jonathan recalled some of the happiest memories of my childhood, providing a welcome respite from graduate training, which my friend, the late psychologist Bernard Kaplan, referred to as dressage. I wrote one of the shortest dissertations on record titled, "Responses to Temptation: An Analysis of Motives," and, with new clarity as to my own desires and values, took my two-year-old with me to register voters in Cleveland's African-American community, where I also joined, at Karamu House (their lively arts center) a performing modern dance company.

Having discovered the joys of making love not war, I became "another mother for peace." When Jim interned at the University of Chicago and I used my Harvard Ph.D. to earn a little money by teaching very part time in the college, my activism led to a brief encounter with the ways psychoanalysis can be used to quell political protest. I was among the mostly junior faculty who refused to submit our grades once they served as a basis for deciding who would go to Vietnam, and I must have been something of a ring-leader in that protest because I was summoned by the provost, a lawyer who was a friend of a friend of my father's. In the chilly formality of his forbidding office, he dismissed my impassioned act of resistance by interpreting my ethical objections as a sign or symptom of my rebellion against my father.

Rebellion was certainly in the air in this time of questioning authority. The Winter Soldiers Movement<sup>3</sup> was followed by the Summer of Love, and many walls were tumbling down. It is hard now to recapture the sudden sense of freedom and all the challenges it posed. Jim and I went

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<sup>3</sup>The anti-Vietnam War protest that started within the military.

back to Harvard, he to do his psychiatric residency and I to care for our now three sons—we were never very adept at birth control—and I had the opportunity to teach with Erik Erikson in his course on the human life cycle.

Again I was reading Freud, but now also finding in Erikson a mentor, a person who in joining psychology with history and clinical work with an artist's sensibility inspired me and showed me a way. But when Jim entered the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute as a candidate and started his analysis, I encountered a mentality I remembered from my experience at Vassar. Again a wall was erected, this time within our marriage as Jim's analyst told him, for the sake of the analysis, not to discuss his experience with me. I will not go into all that followed from this breach in our custom of talking about everything. Suffice it to say that Jim left the Institute to pursue his passion, turning his psychoanalytically trained ear to the study of violence, and I wrote *In a Different Voice* (Gilligan, 1982), largely for myself, in response to a voice welling up inside me saying, "If you want to know what I think . . .," but secure in the conviction that aside from myself and my family and friends, no one really was interested.

I began my own analysis after my book was published, at a time when I was involved in what became the most radically illuminating research I have done. Having discovered that women's psychology, including the feminist psychology of that time, was divorced from its foundation in girls' development, having learned from Joseph Adelson's (1980) *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* that "girls have simply not been much studied" (p. 114), and having observed that of all the voices in *In a Different Voice*, the single voice that women readers found most unsettling was that of an 11-year-old girl, the only girl who appears in the book, I set out to fill in what was, in effect, a missing stretch of psychological history by charting the experience of coming of age from the vantage point not of boys but of girls.

So it happened that as I, in my analysis, was going back through my own life history, I was also listening to girls going forward from childhood into adolescence. What took me by surprise was the Proustean experience of remembering what had been a lost time. Like the taste of a madeleine dipped in tea, the sound of girls' voices at the edge of adolescence opened a vast storehouse of recollection. Through free association and with the help of my analyst, I was undoing dissociations within myself at the same time as I was witnessing the onset of dissociative processes in the girls I was studying, literally hearing them narrate their moves into

not knowing as the injunction “don’t” came to stand between “I” and “know.” In this way, I discovered the extent to which I and other women had rewritten our own histories, and I realized that, with the notable exception of artists, this rewritten history, culturally sanctioned and inscribed in psychological theory, was commonly mistaken for truth. Culture was being read as nature and a process of initiation interpreted as a stage in human development, all this sustained by dissociation and manifest in a loss of voice and memory.

My analysis in the hands of my free-thinking analyst released me from what Hawthorne (1850) called “an iron framework of reasoning” (p. 141), a way of thinking so firmly entrenched that it was readily taken as how things are rather than how things are said to be. *In a Different Voice* was a beginning, but without my analysis and my ongoing relationship with Jim, I would never have done the work that followed: my 2002 book, *The Birth of Pleasure*, written in an associative voice to reveal dissociation and linking myths, dreams, and research to show a path leading to love and freedom; the series of essays on knowing and not knowing that chart my exploration of dissociative processes; my 2008 novel, *Kyra*—in the midst of my analysis I had surprised myself by starting to write fiction, and a therapy and therapist play a central role in the novel; a play (Gilligan and Gilligan, 2007) inspired by Hawthorne’s (1850) *The Scarlet Letter* and written with my oldest son, Jonathan, which we are now turning into an opera; and my 2009 book, *The Deepening Darkness*, written with my NYU colleague David Richards, where we integrate the findings of my research in developmental psychology with David’s studies of ethical resistance and constitutional democracy to expose the roots of an ethically resisting voice, grounded not in ideology but in what might be called our human nature.

Thus I come to the tension in method and theory that runs through the history of psychoanalysis and to the question implicit in my title: whether, as Dostoevsky’s (1880) parable of the Grand Inquisitor and Erich Fromm (1944) suggest, our desire for freedom is countered not only from without but also from within by a desire to escape from freedom. I will draw directly on material from *The Deepening Darkness* (Gilligan and Richards, 2009), and when I use the pronoun “we,” I am referring to Richards and myself. Our subtitle, *Patriarchy, Resistance, and Democracy’s Future*, states our thesis: that democracy’s future hinges on resistance to patriarchy. Our title, however, is indebted to Freud (1966), who observed in a letter to Lou Andreas Salomé (May 25, 1916) that he needed to deepen

the darkness in order to see what has faint light to it.<sup>4</sup> As we embarked on our study of patriarchal institutions and practices with an eye to discerning the shoots of ethical resistance, we came upon a startling observation: the freeing of an ethically resisting voice was often accompanied by the freeing of a sexual voice from the Love Laws (Arundhati Roy's, 1998, term) of patriarchy, the laws "that lay down who should be loved. And how. And how much" (p. 311). This link with sexuality took us to Freud and so, without further ado, . . .

### Act I

*The time is 1895, the characters are Breuer and Freud (1895), coauthors of Studies on Hysteria, and the women who inspired these studies.*

Psyche, the young woman who became an object in Apuleius's (n.d.) *Metamorphoses*, who was forbidden to see or to say what she knew about love, is stage center in *Studies on Hysteria*. In a rush of discovery, Breuer and Freud lay bare the profound connection between our minds and our bodies by tracing the conversion of psychic pain into physical pain. They describe the process of dissociation, the splitting of consciousness so that parts of our experience lie outside our awareness. And, in their treatment of hysterical young women, they discover the power of association to undo dissociation, unlocking secrets held in the psyche. It is the psychological equivalent to discovering fire.

Like Psyche, the young women in *Studies on Hysteria* were not only victims but also resisters; at one and the same time, they internalized and broke the taboo on seeing and saying what they knew about love. The key, Freud's "pick-lock," was to reverse the process underlying the hysteria. Observing that hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences, he moved their memories out of their bodies and into language.

When the "lost" or silenced voice of hysteria was found, however, all hell broke loose—to summon the image from the *Aeneid* that Freud (1900) would choose as the epigraph for his *Interpretation of Dreams* ("If I cannot move the upper world, I will move the underworld"). He had not been able to move the upper world—his colleagues in medicine and in the university—with the insights of his studies on hysteria; instead he would appeal to the underworld, to dreams, finding in his own dreams

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<sup>4</sup>For this phrasing, I am indebted to Marilyn Charles (2009).

the royal road to the unconscious. The path he took is marked by quotations from the *Aeneid*,<sup>5</sup> flagging an identification with Aeneas that provides us with a clue to what follows: the confusion of tongues that Ferenczi (1933), his most beloved and then rejected colleague, was to describe—an identification with the aggressor, the taking on as one's own the voice of the aggrieved or insulted father.

We can see how quickly the discoveries of the *Studies on Hysteria* (Breuer and Freud, 1895) became burdened with radical implications that may well have frightened its authors. Freud referred to his early women patients as his teachers, and what they taught him gave him insight not only into the workings of the psyche but also into the connections between inner and outer worlds, the psyche and the culture in which it is embedded. In *Studies on Hysteria*, the knowing that is carried symbolically by hysterical symptoms resembles what has come to be recognized as the implicit relational knowing of the human infant. In those early, heady days of psychoanalysis, it became the explicit relational knowing of young women and also of their physicians.

In Tennessee Williams's (1947) play *A Streetcar Named Desire*, after Blanche is raped by her sister Stella's husband Stanley, she tells Stella what has happened. Stella then tells her friend Eunice, "I couldn't believe her story and go on living with Stanley." The insight of this realization illuminates the history of psychoanalysis: Freud could not believe the stories of his women patients and go on living in patriarchy. But the issue from our perspective is even more pointed. The discoveries of *Studies on Hysteria* led Freud to see trauma, and specifically the traumatizing of sexuality, as the *caput Nili*, the head of the Nile, the source of neurotic suffering. This is an insight that Ferenczi (1933) and Ian Suttie (1935) would come to, reading the trauma more broadly as the traumatizing of voice and thus of relationship. The traumatized person, experiencing his or her voice as ineffective, as powerless, assumes the voice that carries power and authority. Stella cannot take on Blanche's voice and all it implies within a culture in which Stanley holds the power. Or, rather, to take on her voice would mean protesting the culture on ethical grounds.

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<sup>5</sup>Freud quotes three passages from *The Aeneid*, all of which appear at this juncture in his writing. In addition to the epigraph for *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), he cites Aeneas's line, *Forsan et haec olim mimumisse juvabit* (Some day, perhaps, it will be a joy to remember even these things), in the paper "Screen Memories" (1899) and Dido's curse, *Exoriaris aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor* (May someone arise from my bones, an avenger), in "The Forgetting of Foreign Words," chapter 2 of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901).

It may well be that exposing the psychology underlying patriarchy touches a nerve so sensitive that it becomes inflammatory. It was the separation of women from their own stories that initially caught Breuer and Freud's (1895) eye. "Her love had already been separated from her knowledge," Freud wrote of the woman he called Fräulein Elisabeth von R (p. 157). By connecting women with their knowledge, Freud became a virtual Eve, or, more accurately, the serpent in the garden. He was breaking a cultural taboo, undoing a process of initiation by forging a method of inquiry that placed him in direct opposition to the fundamental rule of patriarchy: the claim on the part of fathers to authority.

At first, Freud suspected that Elisabeth's knowledge was a secret she was keeping from him, but he quickly discovered that she was also keeping the secret from herself. He had come upon dissociation, the splitting of consciousness through which we can come not to know what we know. Gaps in memory, broken trains of thought, something missing in a causal chain were the clues that alerted him to this silence. In a bold move, Freud decided to proceed on the assumption that his patient knew everything of pathological significance relating to her symptoms (see Breuer and Freud, 1895, pp. 110, 145). At moments when Elisabeth would break off her stream of associations or claim that nothing was occurring to her, Freud, observing her tense and preoccupied expression, would press his hand on her forehead and suggest that, in fact, she knew. Noting that his method never failed, he observed that the split-off knowledge was at once familiar and surprising: "I knew it," Elisabeth said; "I could have said it to you the first time" (p. 154). And yet she hadn't.

Freud was using his pick-lock, his psychoanalytic method, to unlock one of the deep secrets of patriarchy: what daughters know about their fathers, including the secret of father-daughter incest. Trauma, seen by Janet (cited in Breuer and Freud, 1895, p. 313) and others to be the bedrock of hysteria, became in Freud's understanding a sexual trauma leading the psyche to dissociate itself from the body, which then became the repository of experiences that remain outside consciousness. As he discovered the power of association—the associative stream of consciousness and the touch of relationship—to undo dissociation, the psyche opened to his investigation.

The challenge Freud faced in his early work lay in relinquishing the voice of the father. As a physician he had a claim to authority, and yet his method depended on giving up this claim. His authority resided in knowing a way—a method for freeing association—but not the endpoint of

the journey. By encouraging Elisabeth to know what she knew in her body, to connect her voice with her experience, Freud was systematically (and paradoxically) undoing a process of initiation that had led her to take on a father's voice as her own. As her "frozen nature" began to melt, the pains in her legs subsided.

The psychology of trauma and the psychology of patriarchy converge at this juncture. The confusion of tongues that Ferenczi (1933) identified as a telltale sign of trauma, the taking on of the aggressor's voice as one's own, becomes the identification with the father that marks the psyche's induction into patriarchy. But the identification is not with the father per se. Rather, it is an identification with the voice of patriarchal authority (the law of the father) and an internalization of its demands. A developmental process that can otherwise appear adaptive thus contains a darkness at its center, and in that darkness we recognize the loss of voice and the confusion of memory that will make it difficult or impossible to say or even to know what actually happened. Freud's discovery of the power of free association to undo dissociation gave him an entry into a cultural blind spot. His dream of aligning his new science with enlightenment and freedom was within his grasp.

## Act II

*The year is 1899/1900. Freud enters carrying The Interpretation of Dreams.*

According to the myth, Oedipus's father, Laius, had sexually abused a young boy. The god Apollo tells Laius that retribution will come in the next generation, at the hands of a son of his own. When Jocasta, Laius's wife, gives birth to a son, Laius enlists her in his plan to protect himself by killing the child. They drive a stake through their baby's feet (hence the name Oedipus, which means "swollen foot") and prepare to leave him on a hillside to die. Jocasta gives the baby to a shepherd to carry out the plan, or perhaps to subvert it, which the shepherd does, setting the plot in motion by giving the infant to a shepherd from Corinth who takes him there to be raised by the king and queen as their son.

As Oedipus grows up, the only sign of the trauma is the telltale mark on his body. There is no voice speaking about what happened; he has no memory. When Oedipus learns that he is fated to kill his father and marry his mother, he leaves Corinth in an effort to avert his fate. At a crossroads, he kills an older man in a fight over the right of way and then

goes to Thebes, where he solves the riddle of the Sphinx and marries the queen, an older woman.

In formulating the Oedipus complex, Freud separated the wishes for incest and murder from the trauma story in which they are embedded and cast them as universal wishes, arising in early childhood, instinctively driven, and reflecting the triangulation of family relationships along with the prohibitions on incest and murder that are a mark of civilization. Set in this nexus of instinct and civilization, the Oedipus complex, shorn of trauma, becomes the seedbed for neuroses and the cornerstone of psychoanalysis.

With this placement, or displacement, an astonishing change enters Freud's writings. A misogyny appears as women, formerly regarded by Freud as his teachers, are described instead as secretive by nature and stunted by civilization (Freud, 1905a, p. 151). We see Freud arguing with his women patients—with Irma (1900) and also with Dora (1905b)—and claiming to know better than they do the meaning of their symptoms. Dissociation, once the focus of his theory and method, yields pride of place to repression and the unconscious, which being by definition unknowable is accessible only through interpretation. Freud now assumes the position of knower, the interpreter of dreams, the conquistador. And fathers, the incestuous fathers of the studies on hysteria, become the arbiters of conscience, morality and law.

How can we understand these changes that set the direction psychoanalysis would follow for much of the 20th century? Marianne Krüll (1979) attributes Freud's renunciation of the seduction theory to his determination following the death of his father that "his father's past must remain a closed book at all costs" (p. 63). She notes that "the Oedipus theory was a complete reversal of the seduction theory," with father and mother "transformed into passive objects of [the child's] wishes" rather than "active seducers" (p. 61) and that this reversal made it possible for Freud to confess his own Oedipus complex while shutting his eyes to certain facts about his father's past that had started to surface in his self-analysis. In Krüll's view, Freud's "failure to appreciate that he had stripped the Oedipus legend of its prelude," as George Devereux (1953) had shown, or to see how his own history resembled Hamlet's rendered him unable to recover "the links between [his] own childhood experiences and his theoretical ideas" (p. 63). Although "the unabridged Oedipal legend might have served as a symbolic account of the seduction theory," Freud dropped the Laius prehistory and "then used [the myth] as a symbolic

representation of his new fantasy theory" (p. 62). Like Hamlet, he was driven by a father's injunction, manifest, in Freud's case, as a sign that appears in a dream on the night of his father's funeral. The sign reads: "You are requested to close the eyes" or, alternatively as Freud notes, "to close an eye," enjoining him either to shut his eyes to or "to 'wink at' or 'overlook'" certain facts (Freud, 1900, cited in Krull, 1979, p. 42).

There is a further point to be made. In Freud's linking the resolution of the Oedipus complex to the formation of the superego and the internalization of the father's prohibitions, we witness the alignment of psychoanalysis with patriarchy, its inherent misogyny, and its equating a father's voice with moral authority.<sup>6</sup> But we can also recognize psychoanalytic processes at work—the very processes Freud (1900) described in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Wishes are disguised; the repressed returns, and displacements conceal what is actually going on.

We notice that at the same time Freud questions the pervasiveness of incest and disavows the voices of his women patients, he places an incest story—the Oedipus story—at the center of psychoanalysis. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, he shifts his attention away from women's experiences of sexual trauma, the focus of *Studies on Hysteria*, to his own fantasies of an incestuous relationship with his mother that involve parricide as well, fantasies reflected in his dreams. As Freud finds in his dreams the same themes he finds in the great tragedies of Sophocles and Shakespeare, he aligns himself with civilization and retreats from the psychically intimate, pleasurable, and fruitful relationships he established with his women patients. The rush of discovery he experienced in these relationships and the deep human sympathy he felt with the women has become associated with danger and vulnerability, with the risk of appearing gullible, incompetent, or intellectually naïve in the eyes of fathers (as the Irma dream attests).

Psychoanalysis is essentially a cure "effected by love," Freud writes to Jung (McGuire, 1974, pp. 12–13) in 1906, but to share authority with women and draw on their experience as a basis for science is to go against the grain of a patriarchal culture. In privileging women's voices over the voices of fathers, Freud placed his claims to manhood in jeopardy, a danger heightened in the Vienna of this period by his being a Jew.

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<sup>6</sup>This alignment continues with the shift in focus to the preoedipal period where the splitting of mothers (or breasts) into the good and the bad reflects the patriarchal division of women into the idealized and the degraded, Madonna and whore.

As a Jewish man, he was caught between the promise of political liberalism and the terrors of an aggressive political anti-Semitism, a dilemma Carl Schorske (1981) describes. Schorske specifically situates *The Interpretation of Dreams* in

Freud's life-long struggle with Austrian socio-political reality: as scientist and Jew, as citizen and son. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud gave this struggle, both outer and inner, its fullest, most personal statement—and at the same time overcame it by devising an epoch-making interpretation of human experience in which politics could be reduced to an epiphenomenal manifestation of psychic forces [p. 183].

Freud regarded his dream book as his most important and path-breaking scientific work. He had discovered the meaning of dreams, their function in the human psyche; he had found that dreams follow a distinctive psychological logic (associative rather than deductive) and that this logic could be deciphered and interpreted through the dreamer's associations. Schorske, however, shows that the work is both personal and political, drawing its data base from Freud's highly autobiographical dreams at a time when he was struggling with the death of his father in 1896 and the frustration of his own professional ambitions.

Read as a developmental narrative, the Oedipus tragedy offers an explanation for a psychology that naturalizes the dissociation, the splitting of consciousness that even in Freud's time had come to be associated with trauma. Suspended in the unconscious, the Oedipus becomes a template of dissociation disguised as a manifestation of our deepest wishes and fears. In his hysterical patients, Freud had observed a kind of healthy resistance to the codes of patriarchal womanhood; he cited as typical of "the characteristics one meets with so frequently in hysterical people" their moral sensibility and "an independence of nature that went beyond the feminine ideal and found expression in a considerable amount of obstinacy, pugnacity and reserve" (p. 161). When they could no longer speak directly about what they knew through experience, they turned to the indirect discourse of symptoms. The most common symptom of hysteria, the loss of voice, carries the political message: I have been silenced.

But the silencing of women or the binding of their knowledge to his own had become critical for Freud's theory. Blinding himself like Oedipus and, like Oedipus, summoning his daughters to accompany him in his blindness, Freud (1933) shows us the power of fantasy to override

reality when he states that women must accept “the unwelcome fact of their castration” (pp. 129–30). His early sense of reaching the headwaters of neurosis lay in locating the source of neurotic suffering in the pathology of fathers, the otherwise respectable men who were implicated in incestuous relationships with their daughters. To ask what explained this “unnatural” turn in the sexual lives and loves of fathers and also to inquire into the silence or complicity of mothers would lead to an explanation at once psychological and political. In the daughters’ symptoms, we see the refusal of an ethically resisting voice to go gently into silence. Yet with the Oedipus complex, Freud naturalized patriarchy, and liberal political resistance became, as Schorske (1981) observes, an epiphenomenal manifestation of psychic forces—one among many signs of father–son or father–daughter conflict.

The quotation from the *Aeneid* that Freud (1900) placed as the epigraph in his *Interpretation of Dreams* expresses Juno’s rage at the upper world, at Jupiter, for driving Aeneas away from Dido and Carthage—from love and shared rule with a woman—to resume his mission of founding Rome and allay the doubts cast on his manhood. The evolution of Freud’s theory from *Studies on Hysteria* (Breuer and Freud, 1895) to *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Freud, 1900) suggests a similar trajectory, reflecting the impact of anti-Semitism. Schorske (1981) traces a path through Freud’s dreams leading him away from the liberal resistance of his youth when he identified with Hannibal. But Schorske does not comment on the highly gendered character of European anti-Semitism, which has, since Augustine, stigmatized the role that both sexuality and gender play in Jewish life. The Jewish acceptance of sexual love as central to religious life led Augustine to see the Jews as “carnal Israel” (cited in Boyarin, 1993, p. 1). The active role played by Jewish women not only in family life but also in business resisted the gender norms of patriarchy that otherwise prevailed among the European bourgeoisie.

In stereotypes prevalent at the time, Jewish men were cast as at once effeminate and highly sexed. Against this background, we can understand Freud’s shift from his early alliance with women and the central role he accorded sexuality to the misogyny of his later views and his increasing focus on aggression. If his goal was to secure psychoanalysis and gain status within a conventionally patriarchal Christian society, this can be seen as a necessary move. Yet with this move, psychoanalysis lost its radical edge.

Both Freud’s alliance with women and his views on sexuality isolated him from the patriarchal culture in which he wanted so desperately to

succeed; indeed, exposed him to ridicule as not a man but as a woman and a Jew, in ways that from the evidence of his dreams clearly stung his manhood. Freud was caught between a rock and a hard place. His most creative voice as a psychologist having emerged in his early relationships to women, his credibility and his manhood hinged on breaking these relationships. As Freud assumed the position of authority—the interpreter of his patient's unconscious—he elaborated a psychology that conformed much more closely to the dominant culture surrounding him, a psychology that accorded moral authority to fathers. Even the most creative men of the highest integrity and intelligence often cannot bear patriarchal pressures on their honor as men and need to establish their manhood in the eyes of other men. Thus Freud dissociated himself from the insights of his early work, in essence separating his love from his knowledge.

Freud gives us only a truncated version of the Oedipus story. In his formulation of the Oedipus complex, the trauma has disappeared. But in a man with as much integrity as Freud, what is so sad and so shocking is his incorporation of a patriarchal voice into the very structure of the psyche in the form of a superego or over-I, an over-voice. Thus Freud did not so much turn away from politics, following Schorske's (1981) argument, as write an essentially patriarchal politics into psychology, to much more devastating effect.

Because his psychology read patriarchy as nature, he did not question why sexual love is so problematic and aggression, including war, so irresistible. He could not solve the riddle of femininity. There is no space within such a patriarchal psychology for even raising the question of whether the traumatic disruption of relationship (so people cannot desire what they love or love what they desire) is what makes male violence and the "universal [by which Freud means men's] tendency to debasement in the sphere of love" (Freud, 1912) so endemic and pervasive. Both war and tragic love come to seem, as it were, as in the nature of things. Reading the history of culture in a way that aligns a patriarchal psychology with civilization, Freud saw its discomfort, or neurosis, as the price we have to pay.

Yet the trauma story lingers. Writing to Fliess that he no longer believes his theory linking hysteria with sexual trauma, Freud focuses on the confusion of reality with fantasy, asserting that there are "no indications of reality in the unconscious, so that one cannot distinguish between truth and fiction that has been cathected with affect" (Masson, 1985, letter to Fliess, September 21, 1897). The implication is that with

something as charged as sexual trauma there is no way of knowing what actually happened. The voices of daughters are pitted against the reputation of fathers and Freud takes what is in effect a hands-off stance.

Here we witness the theoretical shift from speaking about dissociation to speaking about the unconscious, and the difference for our purposes is huge. Dissociated knowledge, split off from consciousness, can be brought back into consciousness through association—the discovery of the studies on hysteria. This is what Freud meant when he claimed that the patient knows everything of pathological significance with respect to her symptoms, though she may not know that she knows it. The unconscious, in contrast, is accessible only through interpretation. A democratic method grounded in equal voice yields to hierarchy, and we watch the formation of a priesthood as the interpreters, the psychoanalysts, now stand between the patient and his or her unconscious.

But we also see a displacement. The shift in emphasis in Freud's theory from reality to fantasy follows a switch in the narrator of the incest story, from the young woman speaking about her experience of an incestuous relationship with her father to the young boy fantasizing about his wish for an incestuous relationship with his mother. By privileging the boy, the wish overrides the reality—or, more insidiously, by assimilating the voices of women to his oedipal theory and focusing on the unconscious, the line between reality and fantasy blurs. We are in the underworld with Aeneas, where “sees” becomes “thinks to have seen,” a world of shades and phantoms.

From this point on, Freud's theory will be at risk from women's voices that are not captive to a father's voice or bound to a patriarchal story.

### Act III

*The time is the 1970s. Enter women who again take center stage, not as patients but as psychologists who, in the spirit of the times, are questioning authority.*

Beginning in the 1970s, the lens of gender brought into sharp focus a psychology so wedded to patriarchy that the omission of women from its research studies had, for the most part, not been seen or if seen, had not been considered consequential. It was an omission “so obvious that no one noticed,” to borrow a phrase from Arundhati Roy (1998, p. 168). That it turned out to be no small thing was the discovery of research that

started with women but extended to girls, to young boys, and to a reconsideration of what had been taken as true about men. Women, enjoined by patriarchy to be selfless, to be responsive to others but to silence themselves, were holding up, it turned out, half of the sky. The long-standing and vaunted divisions between mind and body, reason and emotion, self and relationships, when viewed through the lens of gender turned out to be deeply gendered, reflecting the binaries and hierarchies of a patriarchal culture. Mind, reason, and self were considered masculine and elevated above body, emotion, and relationships, seen as feminine and, like women in patriarchy, at once idealized and devalued. These gendered splits create a chasm in human nature, distorting and deforming both men's and women's natures. The consequence was an argument over which half was better—the masculine or the feminine part—but more deeply, a recognition that the problem lay in the paradigm itself.

In the classical manner of scientific advances, the discrepant data—the evidence that did not fit the reigning patriarchal construction—proved most informative. Thus women's voices were privileged in informing psychologists about aspects of the human condition that by being tagged feminine and associated with women had been at once ignored and devalued. A paradigm shift followed from this research, joining what had been cast asunder. Whereas in the old paradigm women were seen as emotional not rational, as having relationships but no self, and men, conversely, were considered rational insofar as they were unemotional and autonomous in their sense of self, the new paradigm undid the splits. The origin of these insights lay in the different voices of women—different insofar as they were resisting these splits in asserting the relational nature of all human experience.

As the paradigm shift released voices in both women and men that previously could not be heard or understood, the early insights of Freud were retrieved along with those of Ferenczi and Suttie in a reframing of psychology that came increasingly to focus on dissociation and trauma. Studies of women, of babies and mothers, and new studies of boys and men led to a remapping of development as starting not from separation but from relationship. And, in this light, the requisites of love and the consequences of traumatic loss became clear.

But it was the research with girls that illuminated more radically a critical intersection where psychological development comes into tension with the demands of patriarchy, its gender norms and roles and values (see Gilligan, 1990; Brown and Gilligan, 1992). The research highlighted

what previously had been taken as a step in the normal course of development and showed it to be a process of initiation, the induction of the psyche into patriarchy. The finding that was most arresting stemmed from the observation that girls entering adolescence showed signs of a resistance not to growing up but to losing their minds, as one 13-year-old put it. The crisis was one of relationship, and the resistance was to the split between voice and relationship. Paradoxically, girls were discovering that their honest voices were jeopardizing their relationships, not only their personal relationships but also their connection to the culture they were entering as young women. The initiation into patriarchy with its gender binaries and hierarchies required a breaking of relationship, a sacrifice of love for the sake of honor or advancement.

It was this sacrifice that girls resisted in entering womanhood, and the trajectory of their resistance drew attention to the various meanings of the word: resistance in the sense of resistance to disease; resistance as political resistance—speaking truth to power; and resistance in its psychoanalytic connotation as a reluctance to discover one's thoughts and feelings, to know what one knows. Longitudinal studies following girls from childhood through adolescence charted the ways in which a healthy resistance to losing voice and thus sacrificing relationship turns into a political resistance, a protest against the structures of patriarchy, including its equation of selflessness with feminine goodness. When this political resistance can find no effective channel for expression, it goes underground, turning into dissociation or various forms of indirect speech and self-silencing. Hence the depression, the eating disorders, and the other manifestations of psychological distress that seem visited on girls at adolescence. In the passage from *A Streetcar Named Desire* where Stella tells Eunice that she could not believe her sister and go on living with her husband, she captures the dilemma of women in patriarchy. It is necessary not to believe or to know what is happening in order to join a culture that mandates repression, where, as in Tennessee Williams's (1947) play, the streetcar named Desire leads to the insane asylum.

It is hard now to recapture that first elation in discovering that as humans we have within ourselves, within our very nature, the capacities for voice and relationship that are the foundation for love and for democratic politics. In the course of their initiation into gender binaries and hierarchies of patriarchy, with its division of women into the good and the bad, adolescent girls would come to label an honest voice "stupid"—insufferable or unpleasant, wrong or crazy—just as boys, at an earlier time in

their development, the time Freud marked as the oedipal period, would come to hear an emotionally open voice as “babyish,” to associate their relational desires and vulnerabilities with mothers and thereby to forsake them as unmanly. And yet the striking finding of research with adolescent girls and with boys, both in the preschool years and at adolescence,<sup>7</sup> lies in the evidence of a resistance associated with psychological resilience, a resistance that makes trouble in the sense of challenging the necessity or the value of losses that have been taken as in the very nature of things or seen as sacrifices to be made in the interest of growing up and finding one’s place in society.

In the 1990s, these insights from studies in developmental psychology were extended by discoveries in neurobiology, heralded by the publication of Antonio Damasio’s (1994) widely acclaimed *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*. As developmental research had revealed the split between self and relationships to signal a traumatic disruption of human connection, so neurological studies revealed the split between reason and emotion to signal trauma or brain injury. We had, we learned, been wedded to a false story about ourselves, through a process illuminated by Damasio (1999) in *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*.

Exploring the neurological foundations of consciousness, Damasio distinguished core consciousness or a core sense of self, grounded in the body and in emotion, from what he called the “autobiographical self,” the self that is wedded to a story about itself. We are wired neurologically to register our experience from moment to moment in our bodies and in our emotions, like a film running continually inside us, and our awareness of watching the film extends the sense of self through time and history, leading to memory and identity. Thus in our bodies and in our emotions, we register the music, the feeling of what happens.

By bringing the lens of gender to Damasio’s distinction between a core self, grounded in the body and in emotions, and an autobiographical self, wedded to a story about itself, we can understand more precisely how an initiation that splits mind from body and reason from emotion can wed us to a false story about ourselves. Our core self—what we know in our bodies and in our emotions—becomes dissociated or split off from our autobiographical self or story. Here again the research with

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<sup>7</sup> See Gilligan (2002, esp. Part II) for the research with four- and five-year-old boys, and Niobe Way (in press) for evidence of comparable resistance among boys in early adolescence.

girls is instructive, underscoring Apuleius's (n.d.) insight that women can play a crucial role in resisting the Love Laws of patriarchy by challenging the objectification of women, the idealization and denigration, and, above all, the prohibitions on seeing and speaking that keep women from trusting or saying what they know through experience about men and about love.

A gender lens, then, hones the perception that women's heightened capacity for resistance reflects girls' different position with respect to initiation into the demands of patriarchy, typically imposed earlier on boys. Because the initiation of girls into the codes and scripts of patriarchal manhood and womanhood tends to occur at adolescence rather than around the ages of four or five, because it is in adolescence rather than early childhood that girls are pressed to take on a father's voice as the voice of moral authority and to live by the law of the father, girls have more resources to draw on in resisting the trauma, the loss of voice and the dissociation. In fighting for real relationship, women are joined by men who similarly are moved to resist patriarchal constraints on love. It is in this sense that adolescence becomes a second chance for boys, when erotic desire and an enhanced subjectivity may lead them to reveal what they have repressed or hidden—their emotional intelligence, their tenderness—and thus to challenge patriarchal constructions of manhood, as Cupid does in exposing his love for Psyche.

Our ability to love and to live with a sense of psychic wholeness hinges on our ability to resist wedding ourselves to the gender categories of patriarchy. That this capacity for resistance is grounded in our neurobiology heightens the importance of a developmental psychology that provides us with an accurate map with which to chart our course. Once we see where we have come from, we also can recognize more clearly the alternative routes we might follow—one marked by Oedipus and leading to the birth of tragedy, one by the resistance of Psyche and Cupid and leading to the birth of pleasure.

#### Act IV

*The time is now. The characters: Christ and the Grand Inquisitor.*

In *The Brothers Karamazov* (Dostoevsky, 1880), Ivan, the nihilist, tells his saintly brother Alyosha of a prose poem he has written. It is set in 16th-century Spain at the height of the Inquisition. Almost a hundred heretics

had, *ad majorem gloriam Dei*, been burned by the cardinal, the Grand Inquisitor, “in a ‘splendid *auto da fé*,’ in the presence of the king, the court, knights, cardinals, and the loveliest court ladies, before the teeming populace of all Seville” (p. 248). On the day following this conflagration, Christ appears, having returned to earth and reassuming his human form: “He appeared quietly, inconspicuously, but, strange to say, everyone recognized him” (p. 249). “This could be one of the best passages in the poem,” Ivan says,

I mean, why it is exactly that they recognize him. People are drawn to him by an invincible force, they flock to him, surround him, follow him. He passes silently among them with a quiet smile of infinite compassion. The sun of love shines in his heart. Light, Enlightenment, and Power stream from his eyes, and pouring over the people, shake their hearts with responding love. He stretches forth his hands to them, blesses them, and from the touch of him, even only of his garments, comes a healing power [p. 249].

He restores sight to the blind, life to the dead. “There is commotion among the people, cries, weeping, and at this very moment the Grand Inquisitor himself crosses the square in front of the cathedral” (p. 249). Witnessing what is happening,

he stretches forth his finger and orders the guard to take him. And such is his power, so tamed, submissive, and tremblingly obedient to his will are the people, that the crowd immediately parts before the guard, and they, amidst the deathly silence that has suddenly fallen, lay their hands on him and lead him away [pp. 249–250].

That night, the air “fragrant with laurel and lemon,” the Grand Inquisitor visits his prisoner, entering the cell with a light in his hand and gazing into his face. Then slowly he sets the light on the table and speaks: “Is it you? You?” Receiving no answer, he quickly adds,

Do not answer, be silent. After all, what could you say? I know too well what you would say. . . . tomorrow I shall condemn you and burn you at the stake as the most evil of heretics, and the very people who today kissed your feet, tomorrow, at a nod from me, will rush to heap the coals up around your stake [p. 250].

He tells the silent Jesus, "We corrected your deed and based it on *miracle, mystery, and authority*. . . . Tell me, were we right in teaching and doing so?" (p. 257).

My drama ends without resolution, but the question is clear. In discovering the power of free association, psychoanalysis gained the ability to free people from dissociation by connecting their love with their knowledge. With the instantiation of the oedipal theory, this promise was constrained. With the shift in emphasis from reality to fantasy, from dissociated knowledge to the unconscious, a cure through love became wedded to miracle, mystery, and authority. Patients, once seen to know everything of pathological significance with respect to their symptoms, became captive to the analyst, whose authority lay in a seemingly miraculous power to interpret the mysteries of the unconscious. In the late 20th century, as the winds of liberation swept through society, the authority of psychoanalysis was questioned and its patriarchal underpinnings exposed. Free association, it turned out, had been bound to the voice and law of the father.

The Grand Inquisitor's question then becomes a question for our time. Was he right in his assessment that people find love and freedom too burdensome?

I think not. Like a healthy body, a healthy psyche resists disease, and as the tale of "The Emperor's New Clothes" attests, children are by nature lie-resistant. The five-year-old boy who asks his mother, "Why do you smile when you are sad?" and the eleven-year-old girl who observes, "My house is wallpapered with lies," sound a voice that resides within all of us, however buried. The power of free association lies in its ability to release this voice from the forces that would confuse and constrain it. The tensions within psychoanalysis, its practice and its institutional arrangements, mirror the ongoing contradictions between democracy and patriarchy and reflect the dissonance between a voice grounded in the body and in emotion and a voice that is wed to a false story.

More than ever, we need psychoanalysis with its method of free association to undo the dissociations that currently threaten not only our happiness but also our survival. But we need a psychoanalysis freed from its truncated Oedipus story, a psychoanalysis that recognizes trauma, not nature, as the force that turns love incestuous and anger murderous; a psychoanalysis that is at once psychological and political—that joins our healthy resistance to the temptations of miracle, mystery and authority and encourages us to take the risk of opting for love and freedom.

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