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Carol Gilligan

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## Getting Civilized

### Cover Page Footnote

Carol Gilligan is a member of the Human Development and Psychology faculty of the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University. This essay was presented as part of the Noreen E. McNamara Memorial Lecture Series at Fordham University School of Law. It has been lightly edited, and footnotes have been added, but it retains the form and style of the oral remarks. The author thanks Jane Marcus who commented on an earlier draft and made valuable suggestions. The author also thanks the Spenser Foundation, the Lilly Endowment, the Boston Foundation, the Cleveland Foundation, the Gund Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Geraldine Rockefeller Dodge Foundation for their generous encouragement and support of the Harvard Project Research on Women's Psychology and Girls' Development.

## ESSAYS

### GETTING CIVILIZED

CAROL GILLIGAN\*

IN the Fall of 1991, the house across the street from mine was being painted, and the painters brought their radio to work each day, placing it alongside them on the scaffold. At the time, the United States Senate Judiciary Committee, acting under pressure, had called Professor Anita Hill to testify about the nomination of Clarence Thomas for Supreme Court Justice.<sup>1</sup> The radio was turned up loud, and Anita Hill's voice was riveting. The calm, steady sound of her speaking flowed through everyone's life like a river. And then her voice was filtered through the responses of the senators and their expert witnesses. I remembered the two-step process of listening to Anita Hill—hearing her, and then hearing her not being heard.

At the time I began writing *In a Different Voice*,<sup>2</sup> almost twenty years ago, women's voices were conspicuously missing from the psychology that I was teaching. Or rather, women's voices were inconspicuously missing. The inconspicuousness of an omission so huge as to be monumental led me to write. Like clowns looking for elephants under cars, psychologists were saying that we do not know about women, do not know what women want or how women feel, cannot understand what women mean or follow the logic of women's thought.<sup>3</sup>

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1. *The Nomination of Judge Clarence Thomas To Be Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States: Hearings Before the Senate Comm. on the Judiciary*, 102d Cong., 1st Sess. 36 (1991). See generally Nellie Y. McKay, *Remembering Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas: What Really Happened When One Black Woman Spoke Out*, in *Race-ing, Justice, En-gendering Power* 269 (Toni Morrison ed., 1992) (describing the impact of Anita Hill's testimony on Clarence Thomas' nomination); Timothy M. Phelps & Helen Winternitz, *Capitol Games: Clarence Thomas, Anita Hill, and the Story of a Supreme Court Nomination* (1992) (providing background on the lives of Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill and discussing the Senate Hearings for Thomas' nomination to the Supreme Court).

2. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (1982).

3. See Lecture XXXIII: *Femininity*, in *XXII The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 112 (James Strachey trans., 1971); see

Something was clearly askew. A societal and cultural disconnection was being maintained by a psychological dissociation. Thus, when *In a Different Voice* was published, broadcasting women's voices into a world half-composed by women, and changing the interpretative framework from one that highlighted separation to one that picked up connections, the response was astonishing. In many ways, it replicated the process that I went through over and over again in the course of my writing. Hearing something, and then not hearing it. Understanding, and then becoming confused. Because the problem—the disconnection from women on the part of both women and men—was at the center of people's lives and relationships. It was built into the world in which we were living. It is at the heart of patriarchy or civilization.

But it is not the same problem for women and men. Men's psychological disconnection from women has been built into the cultural framework and called the separation of "the self" from "relationships." For women to separate their sense of self from women requires a psychological process of dissociation—the creation of an inner chasm or split within oneself. This dissociation has been the psychological price for women entering patriarchy.

Shortly after *In a Different Voice* was published, I went into a local store to get coffee. The woman behind the counter asked if I was the one who wrote "that book." "You have explained my marriage," she said. On the street one day, I was stopped by a newspaper editor. He said that I had explained his divorce. Women from India wrote to thank me, in essence for providing a resonance, making it easier for them to hear themselves against the baffle of their education. I received similar letters from women throughout the United States. Often people called on the phone. And a General Practitioner from England wrote an elegantly hand-written letter saying that now he understood his practice.

I say all this because these strong resonances in the lives of what in the university world are often called "real people" led to a defense of the very framework—the theories and the methods—which my work called into question. How could I say that women's and men's lives or voices were different? What was my sample? How could I be objective? What were my methods?

I found these questions astonishing, not because they were invalid, but because they jumped over the huge methodological error with which I began: leaving out women from studies of humans. Theories

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*also* Erik Erikson, *Identity, Youth and Crisis* 261, 263 (1968) (stating that it is hard for many women "to say clearly what they feel most deeply"); Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child* 76-83 (1965) (examining children's thinking about the rules of their games to reveal the development of moral development, and describing the logic of girls' thinking as "deficient in the legal sense"). Lawrence Kohlberg, in a personal communication with Carol Gilligan, discussed why he did not include girls in his theory-building studies of moral development. He stated that their response did not fit his schema or make sense in his terms.

of adult development were based on studies which included no women. Girls were missing from studies of adolescence.<sup>4</sup> Men's and boys' lives had served as the basis for theories of identity, morality, creativity, motivation and, most ironically, "social perspective-taking."<sup>5</sup> Yet, women were consuming this psychology, taking it into themselves and their lives.

The blindness to this omission was evident in the fact that these studies of humans which included no girls or women were passing what were said to be the most stringent and objective processes of peer and editorial review.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, they were lavishly funded and published in the most prestigious journals. In the process, they were passing the scrutiny of both women and men.

This explains in one sense how it was possible for therapists to spend hour after hour with women and men in psychotherapy or psychoanalysis, focusing on family relationships, and still not know about the incidence of incest or the prevalence of domestic violence, now deemed epidemic in U.S. society by the conservative American Medical Association.<sup>7</sup> The field of psychology, in its research and clinical practices, was seriously disconnected from reality, and women's voices were revealing the disconnection.

The question of difference in women's voices became so contentious in part for this reason. If women's voices are no different from men's, then leaving out women is no problem. If women's voices are different from men's, then listening to women will change the voice which we hear as human.

This has become most acutely clear in the current debates about sexual abuse and trauma. The women who have spoken or written about their experiences of violation have been followed by men speaking out as well.<sup>8</sup> A voice that had sounded "unmanly" in revealing vulnerability and connecting feelings with thoughts, self with relationships, began instead to sound simply human. The psychologi-

4. See, e.g., Daniel J. Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* 8-9 (1978) (using a study of men to define stages of adult development); Daniel Offer, *The Psychological World of the Teen-ager: A Study of Normal Adolescent Boys* (1969) (using a study of boys to explain the adolescents of today).

5. The term "social perspective-taking" refers to the ability to take the point of view of other people.

6. Studies must conform to certain standards in order to receive federal funding or academic promotion.

7. Teri Randall, *AMA Joint Commission Urge Physicians Become Part of Solution to Family Violence Epidemic*, 266 *JAMA* 2524 (1991).

8. For example, more men have recently been able to come forth and proclaim that they were sexually abused, many by their boyhood priests. See, e.g., Linda Matchan, *Town Secret: The Case of James Porter, Who Has Been Charged with Sexually Abusing Children in his Parish in the 1960s*, *Boston Globe*, August 29, 1993, § Magazine, at 10; Judy Rakowsky, *Vermont Probes Hingham Priest: 3 Men Allege Sex Abuse*, *Boston Globe*, June 14, 1993, § Metro, at 17.

cal dimensions of knowing became more apparent, and the understanding of relationships consequently changed.

But hope is perhaps the most dangerous emotion because it creates such vulnerability to disappointment and despair. It is commonplace in psychotherapy that people often turn back just at the point where they can see the possibility of something new. And this may be true in politics as well. Faced with the new, people often feel the pull of the familiar. The old acts as a beacon leading back into a world where even the worst at least is known.

When women's voices revealed that psychology was disconnected from reality, a backlash was inevitable, especially as the outlines of the "new" psychology and the sounds of a different voice became clearer. To know that research on knowing previously did not include women is one thing. To say that women's ways of knowing change our understanding of knowing and knowledge is more difficult to accept.<sup>9</sup> Yet, if the second sentence is not true, the first is inconsequential. To say that mothers are not "objects," but people with voices, feelings and thoughts is one thing. To say that maternal thinking offers a key to the politics of peace is another.<sup>10</sup> To say that the culture of violence is for the most part a men's culture, and that men are the main perpetrators of violence against women and men, is to say something that is historically true. And yet at a time when newspapers were filled with reports of men killing men and raping women in Bosnia, *The Nation* ran a cover story in which Katha Pollit took exception to women who said or implied that women were less violent or more nonviolent than men.<sup>11</sup>

What is going on here? At best, objections to focusing on evidence of difference represent an appreciation of the complexity and variability, the psychological, cultural and historical specificity of human lives. Statements about women or men readily admit exceptions, and talk about psychological differences has been used to justify injustice or oppression, or to minimize the effects of societal and cultural forces. At worst, attacks on those who bring news of difference are an example of "killing the messenger."

Unless "equality feminism"<sup>12</sup> joins with "difference feminism,"<sup>13</sup> being equal means being like men. That women can think like men

9. Mary Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (1986).

10. Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (1989).

11. Katha Pollit, *Are Women Morally Superior to Men?*, 255 *The Nation*, Dec. 28, 1992, at 799.

12. "Equality feminism" refers to equal access for women to those privileges from which they have been traditionally barred because they are women. See Catherine A. MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified* 32-34 (1987).

13. By contrast to "equality feminism," whereby women seek equality to males, "difference feminism" emphasizes that women and men have different points of view, and thus different voices. See Martha Minow, *Making All the Difference* 377-78

and can fight like men is undoubtedly true, given the instruction women receive in men's ways of knowing and men's practices. For men to think and act like women, men need to know what women want, how women feel, how women know and what women do.

Just as the Renaissance and the Reformation reconnected European cultures with their origins in ancient Greece, North Africa and Southwestern Asia, and by doing so changed the social construction of authority and belief, so the present moment holds the potential for a similar reconnection on a psychological level—a reconnection with women on the part of both women and men that will change the social construction of work and relationships.

Currently, there is serious controversy in the universities about the foundations of knowledge. What is truth? How is truth established? What is taken as evidence that something actually happened—like the Holocaust, or the Middle Passage or an incestuous act? How can the effects of actions be determined? Can one know another person or oneself? What are the channels connecting inner and outer worlds?

Less abstractly, this controversy is about voice and relationship. Who is speaking to whom? Who is being heard by whom? What is the relationship of the voice to the body—isn't the voice part of the body, part of the physical world of breath and sound, vibrations and resonance? What is the relationship between voice and culture—isn't voice in language and culture carrying its sounds, rhythms, intonations, syntax and words?

In contrast to those who ask whether psychological differences are a function of nature or nurture, I have chosen to speak of voice because it reveals a psyche in connection with both the natural and the social world. Listening to voice reveals the relation of the person speaking to what is being said, because voice carries the tell-tale signs of where a person is in relation to what he or she, or she/he, is saying. The resonances, or lack of resonances, reveal the societal and cultural frameworks, and also the connections or disconnections of the voice with breath or sound. The "talking cure" is potentially radical because it offers a way of addressing the problems of relationship and difference which have now become so pressing and acute.

The creation of a new psychology seems an inevitable response to the discovery of the problems in the old, and yet, the old goes on. The new psychology is a relational psychology because the old psychology was out of relationship—with women, with people of color, with gays and lesbians, with the world. Its dynamic was about separation: how to achieve and maintain a separate self.<sup>14</sup> Ironically, in separating

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(1990); MacKinnon, *supra* note 12, at 32-33. For a general discussion of difference feminism, see Catherine MacKinnon, *Sexual Harassment as Sex Discrimination*, in *Sexual Harassment of Working Women* 143, 144-46 (1979).

14. See Jean Baker Miller, *Toward a New Psychology of Women* (1976); Gilligan, *supra* note 2.

powerful men from those with less power, and thus maintaining existing power relationships, it also separated men from their bodies, their families, their communities—or in short, from large parts of themselves.

I have chosen to speak of voice rather than talk about “the self” because voice is an instrument of relationship. The self, in contrast, is an image characterized by borders and boundaries. The move from a visual to an auditory discourse leads to the construction of a more fluid or relational psychology—a psychology that is intrinsically in relation with physical and social/cultural realities, and yet which has a dynamic of its own.

Just as women’s voices reveal that men are not in fact separate or independent, that we do not live alone, gender studies and gay and lesbian studies make it clear that male and female are more limited categories than they have sometimes seemed. Just as women and men are of women born, so neither sex reproduces itself; both sexes contain and infuse one another, much in the way people’s voices flow in and out of one another, carrying psychology and also culture, mixing inner and outer worlds.

The cultural meanings of “masculinity” and “femininity” are socially constructed and far more changeable than they seem at any given time. The psychology of gender is only beginning to be developed,<sup>15</sup> but its development depends on learning from women as well as from men, and also from people who define themselves outside of these oppositional categories. Again, the problem of difference returns. Despite Deborah Tannen’s even-handed book, *You Just Don’t Understand*,<sup>16</sup> which equalizes misunderstanding between women and men, most women are schooled in understanding men and live under threat if they do not do so. The converse is not true for men. Or at least it was not until Anita Hill.

Anita Hill was the Rosa Parks of 1990’s feminism in waking people from their dogmatic slumber, as Kant said about Hume. Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*<sup>17</sup> has an analogue in the feminist critique of pure knowledge. Kant said that we cannot know things in and of themselves, apart from our perceptions and categories.<sup>18</sup> We can only know through our experience of the world—we cannot know through

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15. Compare Janet Shibley Hyde & Marcia C. Linn, *The Psychology of Gender: Advances Through Meta-analysis* (1986) (examining the emergence of meta-analysis as “a quantitative, systematic method for synthesizing the results from numerous studies on a given topic”) with Eleanor E. Maccoby & Carol N. Jacklin, *The Psychology of Sex Differences* (1974) (studying gender differences in verbal ability before meta-analysis).

16. Deborah Tannen, *You Just Don’t Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (1990).

17. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (rev. ed. 1990).

18. *Id.* at 1-2.



reason alone.<sup>19</sup> The feminist critique is that we know in relationship—that we cannot know apart from relationship. It is a profoundly psychological point.<sup>20</sup>

One reason why the subjects of race and gender, and class and sexuality, have now become so loud is that they all affect relationships. Unvoiced, they act like a slow burn. Voiced, they bring conflict into the open, where it can be talked about and seen.

A relational psychology is a talking cure. The greatest difficulty is finding a way to speak that does not silence others by insult, by violation, by the threat or the use of force. The search for such a way explains some of the cacophony of this time, including the fight over political correctness. The image of feminists taking over the universities is so far from any reality that I have seen that the threat must be reinterpreted in other terms—as a change in voice which goes to the very foundations of knowledge and affects the structure of teaching and learning relationships.

Freud's famous summation of the goal of psychoanalysis—"where *it* was, there shall *I* be"<sup>21</sup>—now applies on a societal and cultural scale, as women move out of objectification and into voice. Major contributions to this societal and cultural shift have been made by those who have taken the lead in bringing in women's voices, including: Mary Belenky, Blythe Clinchy, Nancy Goldberger and Jill Tarule, the authors of *Women's Ways of Knowing*;<sup>22</sup> Dana Jack, the author of *Silencing the Self: Women and Depression*;<sup>23</sup> Sara Ruddick, the author of *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace*;<sup>24</sup> and Jane Roland Martin, the author of *Reclaiming a Conversation*.<sup>25</sup> My list is not at all intended as exhaustive, but rather as illustrative of radical theoretical moves that follow from bringing women's voices in the fields of psychology, politics and education. An especially long list could be made in the area of law and legal thinking, where there is such a large, growing literature.

Our ability now to hear a greater range of women's voices, and to hear these voices more clearly, is profoundly indebted to poets, novelists and dramatists, to the many women who have spoken courageously about their lives, and to the scholars responsible for the current recovery of women's history and women's writing, which tends to be buried with sobering regularity in each generational break.

19. *Id.*

20. See Gilligan, *supra* note 2; Miller, *supra* note 14.

21. Lecture XXXI: The Dissection of the Psychical Personality, in XXII The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud 57, 80 (James Strachey trans. 1971).

22. Belenky, *supra* note 9.

23. Dana C. Jack, *Silencing the Self: Women and Depression* (1991).

24. Ruddick, *supra* note 10.

25. Jane R. Martin, *Reclaiming a Conversation: The Ideal of the Educated Woman* (1985).

A relational restructuring of psychology changes the practices of both research and psychotherapy so as to prevent the separations which underlie disconnection and dissociation. The work of Jean Baker Miller and her colleagues at the Stone Center at Wellesley College, and the work which I have done with my colleagues on the Harvard project,<sup>26</sup> provide the outlines of a new theory of psychological development and suffering. This work has been grounded in listening to women and learning from women about what previously was silenced. Judith Herman and her colleagues on the Victims of Violence Project at Cambridge Hospital<sup>27</sup> have broken the silence of dissociation which surrounds what many women and men otherwise know. It is striking to me, in retrospect, to realize that incest, domestic violence, rape and other forms of sexual violence were never mentioned in research or theories about moral development. The gap between hypothetical ethical dilemmas and real human problems has never seemed more huge, or the absence of women more telling.

In the course of our research, Jean Baker Miller and I came to essentially the same formulation of a central paradox in women's psychology: that girls and women, in their efforts to make and maintain relationships, take large parts of themselves out of relationship. This research is situated historically and culturally, but its claim to generality rests on the ubiquity of patriarchal societies and cultures. A key observation, made in clinical research and educational settings, is that women often keep out of relationships those parts of themselves which they most want to bring into relationships—their voice, their creativity, their brilliance, their vitality. The move out of relationships is thus, in part, a protective move designed to preserve from invalidation or attack those parts of themselves which women feel are most essential to preserve, which they most love and value.

One of the most startling discoveries of the Harvard project research was that girls, at adolescence, describe the relational impasse which forces dissociation: that if they speak they will lose relationships, but if they don't speak, they will also lose relationship.<sup>28</sup> Conse-

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26. The Harvard Project on Women's Psychology and Girls' Development, an outgrowth of the Center for the Study of Gender, Education and Human Development, provides a collaborative for studying women's and girls' psychological development. The research of the Harvard Project has uncovered the onset of dissociative processes in girls at adolescence and also girls' resistance to dissociation as they enter adolescence and continue into adulthood.

27. Judith Lewis Herman, M.D., author of *Father-Daughter Incest* (1981) and *Trama and Recovery* (1992), and Dr. Mary Harvey run the Victims of Violence Program.

28. See Lyn M. Brown & Carol Gilligan, *Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girl's Development* (1992) (describing research with girls at the Laurel School in Ohio); Carol Gilligan et al, *Making Connections: The Relational Worlds of Adolescent Girls at Emma Willard School* (1990); *Women, Girls & Psychotherapy: Reframing Resistance* (Carol Gilligan et al, eds. 1991) (detailing various studies of adolescent girls); Lyn M. Brown, *A Problem of Vision: The Development of Voice and*

quently, some compromise between voice and relationship is struck. Girls' awareness at the time of dissociation of what they are doing and why they are doing it reveals an effort on girls' part not to lose relationship. Underlying this effort is a profound optimism that constitutes hope in the face of despair—a belief that someday things will change for the better. This vision of relationship goes against the course of culturally inscribed voices that deny the possibility of human connection, and this hope—that someday, if one keeps part of oneself out of relationship, it will be possible to bring it into relationship—may explain women's surprising resilience in the face of loss.

The setting in of dissociation as a common feature of the psychology of women living in patriarchal settings leads to a reformulation of borderline personality syndromes or multiple personality as extreme manifestations of what is commonplace in many women's lives. Girls and women who participated in the Harvard Project research tended to mark dissociation verbally by saying "I don't know." Because the research was longitudinal and involved clinical interviews, it was possible to observe, both over time and within the time of a given interview session, how girls and women come not to know what they have demonstrably known. Instead of signifying ignorance or humility, the phrase "I don't know" often signified knowledge—that is, thoughts and feelings which girls were covering over. Pressed slightly, the cover opened to reveal what they knew about the human world in which they were living—their families, their schools, their communities and the larger worlds of sexuality and politics which they were entering as young women and seeing, in some sense, for the first time. Girls and women know, we were astonished to discover, a human world which is said to be unknowable. And then they don't know. An obvious question is whether boys and men know as well.

Conversations between girls and women often become volatile at the precipice of adolescence, when girls become acutely concerned with what women know. The contrapuntal phrase "you know" was often used by girls at this time as a way of taking relational soundings, or testing the depths at which it is possible for them to speak without losing connection with women, or silencing parts of themselves. Spoken half in the form of a question, the tag-phrase "you know?" is one way girls assess what they can say in relationships without losing their sense of psychological balance or jeopardizing their sense of what is real or true.

In the course of our work with girls and women, I found myself thinking about political resistance as I observed the struggle on girls' part to maintain relationships in the face of physical and psychological threat. As I watched girls continuing to speak what they were feeling

and thinking, and to talk about what they were seeing and hearing when it went against the grain of what was socially constructed or generally accepted as true, I conceptualized a healthy resistance—that is, a kind of psychological immunity—coming into tension with the maintenance of the *status quo*.

Many of the girls whom I came to think of as political resisters were girls for whom difference was doubled in the way that Carolyn Heilbrun<sup>29</sup> described as protective—a kind of double-waterproofing against the dangers of drowning psychologically in patriarchy. Girls who could not fit themselves into culturally monitored ideals of womanhood—of female beauty, of sexual purity or of feminine goodness—by virtue of their race, or class, or sexuality or culture, were in some sense protected from the deforming effects of these images and ideals.

This was especially true for girls who had close, confiding relationships with women—most often, but not necessarily, their mothers.<sup>30</sup> In our studies, there were girls for whom trauma had left a shard of bitterness and a resistance which combined clear-sighted descriptions of hypocrisy and brittleness in others with a vulnerability that was painful to witness because it was so unprotected. Such girls often showed an acute sensitivity to relational realities, and they often were in real danger.

The reality of violence and violation in girls' and women's lives has generated a discourse of survivor and victim which many people now find offensive because it implies a comparison which generally is not developed or explored: between domestic violence and political violence, between incest and murder, between racism and genocide, between living in late twentieth century America and living in a concentration camp or on a slave plantation. Judith Herman, following Elaine Showalter, has explored the connections between the trauma of women who have suffered at home and the trauma that men suffer in war. In *Trauma and Recovery*,<sup>31</sup> Herman connects women's experience of domestic violence with soldiers' accounts of the battlefield and studies of post-traumatic stress in veterans. While at first sight, the situation of women seems less dire, the very dailiness of their experience and the seeming ordinariness of the surroundings in which the attacks are happening, together with the mixing of love and violence, make women's and girls' experiences in some ways more confusing and terrifying, because it can leave the impression that there is no place or no one with whom they can be safe.

The sense of division which is prevalent now in many areas of the human and social sciences comes from the fact that there is real disa-

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29. See Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny* (1973).

30. See Brown & Gilligan, *supra* note 28.

31. Judith L. Herman, M.D., *Trauma and Recovery* (1992).

greement, not about interpretation, but about reality. Thus people are speaking and writing about different worlds. The experience of double-vision, which W.E.B. DuBois described as necessary for blacks living in white America, is also common among women living in patriarchy.<sup>32</sup>

In the course of our research on women's psychological development, we have heard girls doubling their voices as they became young women and witnessed the development of a dizzying double- or triple-vision in the face of disparities that seemed impossible to reconcile—between what was felt to be happening and what was said to be happening, what seemed real and what was socially constructed or institutionalized as “reality.” For privileged white women who are the daughters and wives and mothers of privileged white men, this double-vision often turns into seeing double because they are standing so close.

Virginia Woolf saw the daughters of educated men as the vanguard—like Marx's vanguard of the proletariat—because they were at once inside and outside of patriarchal structures.<sup>33</sup> Woolf saw this as the group that had the means to get in, which then raises the persisting question: once in, can women keep their double voice and vision?

Ellen Snee, a student at Harvard who has just finished a dissertation, studied women who were at the top of institutional structures and in positions of leadership with or over other women.<sup>34</sup> In her research, she documents the strain women experience when they are continually seeing double and speaking in different voices.<sup>35</sup> The brilliance of her conceptualization of these women's psychological situation is caught in her metaphorical use of the phenomenon of “blind eye”—when the eyes do not focus, one eye goes blind, if it is not patched, in order to preserve the ability to see. Snee documents this tendency toward monocular vision among women in positions of authority with women. In her interviews, she heard the same contrapuntal phrases, “I don't know” and “you know,” that marked relational crises and dissociative moves among girls at adolescence as well as in a study of women who were in the midst of marital crises.<sup>36</sup>

The experience of double-vision or double-hearing and the phenomenon of blind-eye and deaf-ear have spread through U.S. society in response to a series of relational crises which have now become a

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32. W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Dodd, Mead & Co. 1979) (1961).

33. Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (1938).

34. Ellen Snee, *Split Vision: Psychological Dimensions of Authority for Women* (1994) (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University Graduate School of Education).

35. *See id.*

36. Ellen Snee, unpublished paper (1991) (on file with the author); *see also* Birute Zimlicki, *Speaking of Love: From a Study of Relationships in Crisis* (1991) (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University Graduate School of Education) (a study of marital conflict conducted by Carol Gilligan and Birute Zimlicki).

full-scale societal drama. Listening to Anita Hill and then listening to the senators and their expert witnesses was a revelation for many people at the time. "They just don't get it," people said to one another in amazement, hearing experiences that were familiar to many women talked about in ways that sounded truly bizarre.

There was real disagreement among women about Anita Hill, as there is at present about almost every aspect of women's and men's changing lives. But there was enough consensus about the need for more women in the Senate to influence election results, and women for the first time elected the President. Women's voices are now entering the public world with effect. *Emily's List*,<sup>37</sup> and *Take Our Daughters to Work*<sup>38</sup> and the *Company of Women*<sup>39</sup> are among many creative efforts to make this process explicit and carry it across generations.

To take the paradox which Miller and I identified and developed with our colleagues as explanatory, the feminist movement in the United States now seems to have reached a moment of relational crisis. In some sense it has come of age and faces the same tension between voice and relationship that girls face when they begin to let go of their past and not know what they know. Relationships among women then become crucial, and the scenarios of connection and betrayal which are played out in a variety of arenas indicate the volatility of this moment as a turning point, for better or worse.

From my experience in working with girls, I do not find the present conflicts, differences and disagreements among women to be out of the ordinary. For girls, such bad weather is as much part of relationship as the good. But for women, and especially women like myself, who live with men and work in men's institutions, relational conflict among women becomes alarming when it provides the rationale for stopping or undoing a process of radical change. It threatens to shut women out just when women are getting in, or, more perniciously, because less obviously, it threatens to shut women up just when women are finding their voices by reimposing the voices of the disciplines—the old patriarchal voices which are well-known to all natural and adopted daughters of educated men.

The publication of *Meeting at the Crossroads*,<sup>40</sup> encouraged a different voice by encouraging women and girls to meet at the time when girls begin to not know what they know and develop psychological

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37. *Emily's List* is a non-partisan fundraising organization to support female political candidates.

38. *Take Our Daughters to Work* is a nationwide initiative sponsored by the Ms. Foundation in an effort to invite girls into the work place and help them broaden their visions of their future work possibilities.

39. *The Company of Women* is an all-woman theater company created to join the work of Carol Gilligan and Kristin Linklater and to bring women's and girls' voices into the world.

40. Brown & Gilligan, *supra* note 28.

symptoms. Reviews initially focused on the revolutionary potential in this meeting: to prevent or undo dissociations which have seemed necessary or inevitable. These reviews, however, were rapidly followed by a renewed focus on similarities between women and men, specifically countering the evidence and significance of differences. During the year following the publication of *Meeting at the Crossroads*,<sup>41</sup> *In a Different Voice* became the centerpiece for an attack on difference feminism.

The history behind *In a Different Voice* was rapidly distorted or forgotten in what seemed like a process of not-knowing which was covering over an entire intellectual movement. Finding my work labeled "pious maternalism" by Wendy Kaminer in *The Atlantic*,<sup>42</sup> or hearing the "different voice" more generally associated with the voice of the Victorian "angel in the house,"<sup>43</sup> I saw the extent of the dissociation. Hearing these descriptions of my work, you would never guess that the two central chapters of *In a Different Voice* are about women considering and for the most part having abortions in the years immediately following *Roe v. Wade*.<sup>44</sup> The phrase "pious maternalism" reminded me of pious Aeneas, who becomes savage Aeneas in Virgil's epic,<sup>45</sup> as he moves towards fulfilling his mission of founding Rome. And I wondered, are some contemporary feminists becoming savage for similar reasons?

Maybe cynicism is easier than hope, maybe attack is safer than relationship—a better raincoat against the weather of disappointment and loss. I have been living in England for the past two years, and from that distance, the American climate looks hopeful. There are now seven women in the Senate, thanks in part to Anita Hill.<sup>46</sup> We have a President who was raised by an unconventional mother, who defended his mother against a step-father's violence, and who has presented a different image of marriage by giving his wife a central and public voice in his administration. The process of decision-making currently being followed is one of open conversation and discussion. It is called indecisive and naive, in much the same way that I remember from people's comments about eleven-year-old Amy in *In a Different Voice*, who also thought that talking was a good way to solve entrenched and difficult problems—that it opened up the possibility of arriving at something new, a solution that was not imagined

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41. *Id.*

42. Wendy Kaminer, *Feminism's Identity Crisis*, 272 *The Atlantic*, Oct. 1993, at 51, 68.

43. *Id.* at 62.

44. 410 U.S. 113 (1973).

45. Virgil, *The Aeneid* (Robert Fitzgerald trans., 1983).

46. The Congressional Yellow Book I-5 to I-125 (Summer 1994). The seven women senators include: Barbara Boxer, Dianne Feinstein, Kay Bailey Hutchison, Nancy Landon Kassebaum, Barbara A. Mikulski, Carol Moseley-Braun, and Patty Murray. *Id.*

when the conversation began. The world, I thought, may be coming around to Amy.

Clarence Thomas is sitting on the Supreme Court, while Anita Hill continues to be attacked. African-American studies are flourishing at Harvard, while women's studies remain a poor sister. It is as if there is a contest between race and gender, so that the one must win out at the other's expense. "Whose construction is this," I wondered. "Whose interest does this serve?" In reality, the two issues are intertwined: you cannot speak about one—race or gender—without talking about the other, as the situation of black women makes plain. Both race and gender imply radical changes in the ways in which we live with one another; both go beyond the righting of past atrocity or injustice to the very fundament of life: the way we live with others who are different, the way we live with one another in private as well as in public life. Is this in part the power and the threat of black women—that they challenge this retrograde splitting of race and gender, that they hold both cards?

In Toni Morrison's novel, *The Bluest Eye*,<sup>47</sup> two girls set out to take things into their own hands and change the course of events. At the beginning of this novel, which focuses on father-daughter incest and racism, the narrator says that her question is not *why* things happen in the way things do, but *how*.<sup>48</sup> "Why is difficult to handle," she explains.<sup>49</sup> But to explain the "how" of black women's development reveals an opening for a profound cultural transformation.

"How" is the naturalist's question, and also the novelist's question. It is deeply scientific and creative. To understand how something happens may point to how it could *not* happen. The growing body of work on women's psychological development, when joined with the burgeoning of knowledge about race and gender, has opened to our inspection a central paradox of human development: the tendency to give up relationship for the sake of having "relationships." This paradox explains how psychological health, which depends on relationship, comes into tension with the regeneration of patriarchal and racist societies and cultures, which depend on disconnection and dissociation.

We come now to the framing of the next question: What if girls and women of all races and cultures did not give up relationship for the sake of "relationships?" What if their resistance was joined? What if relationships were formed so that young women did not face the impasse of choosing between voice and relationship, or facing political, psychological, and physical attack—or, at least, did not face it alone?

It seems a safe bet that there would be a sharp drop in depression, eating disorders, suicide attempts—all of which rise precipitously

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47. Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (1970).

48. *See id.* at 9.

49. *Id.*



among girls at adolescence. It also seems predictable that what is happening now would be happening: that relationships between women and men would become, at least temporarily, more turbulent and also more resonant, that education would become more vital and more hotly contested, that more women would be doing creative work, and that the vision of a transformed society and culture that has hovered around feminism, from *Lysistrata*<sup>50</sup> to *Three Guineas*,<sup>51</sup> would begin to turn into a reality as more women use their voices and their votes to bring about political and economic change.

The world would change as everyone “got it”—that women are half the population in every generation, and that undoing men’s disconnection from women and women’s dissociation from themselves means the end of patriarchy and the beginning of something which we have barely imagined—something that could wholeheartedly be called Civilization.

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50. Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* (Gilbert Seldes, trans., 1962).

51. Woolf, *supra* note 33.

