



INTRODUCTION

Ethical Voice and Resistance

The inquiry of this work arises within the context of our growing historical understanding of the linkages between violence, including war and terrorism, and appeals to manhood.¹ My interest here is in counter-traditions that arise from resistance to these linkages, a resistance made possible by an ethical voice that questions, either implicitly or explicitly, dominant conceptions of gender, especially the aggressive violence of an insulted patriarchal manhood directed at any challenge to its authority. I focus in particular on the thought and psychology of men who notably resisted such dominant conceptions of violent manhood. Four of them—William Lloyd Garrison, Leo Tolstoy, Mohandas Gandhi, and Martin Luther King—form a tradition of thought, with each earlier figure influencing those who came later. All of them found their ethical voice of resistance through the advocacy of forms of nonviolence (including the pacifism of Tolstoy and Gandhi) that challenged certain dominant conceptions of violent masculinity, appealing, as I show, to the authority of Jesus of Nazareth. But the fifth man I study, Winston Churchill, found his voice in arguing that the dominant pacifism of Britain in the interwar period disastrously failed to resist—and thus encouraged—violent forms of totalitarian manhood. Nonetheless, on the same basis of thought and psychology as the others, Churchill found a voice that, when fascist dictatorships took power in Italy and Germany, recognized and called for resistance against their aggressive violence and in terms that prophetically urged the early need for some measure of resisting response (including the relatively small level of proportionate force required for deterrence) before the violence escalated to the catastrophic levels of World War II. While some of these men famously disagreed (as Churchill and Gandhi did on India's independence from British colonialism), they all shared something extraordinary among men of their periods, namely,

a distinctive thought and psychology capable of both understanding and resisting injustice based on violence, which in turn enabled them to mobilize and lead remarkably successful and sometimes nonviolent movements of public resistance to this injustice. It is very much part of my project to understand how and why their thought and psychology had such an unexpected resonance in terms of empowering others to adopt historically transformative means of resisting injustice.

The Indian novelist Arundhati Roy has recently expressed concern that our contemporary situation, the war on terror, has marginalized such modes of resistance, involving a loss of memory that legitimates pogroms of religious hatred in India (the home of Gandhi) and nuclear threats between India and Pakistan: “Peaceful resistance is treated with contempt. Terrorism’s the real thing. The underlying principle of the War Against Terror, the very notion that war is an acceptable solution to terrorism, has ensured that terrorists in the subcontinent now have the power to trigger a nuclear war.”² We need now, more than ever, to remind ourselves of the traditions that Roy worries we may forget—traditions of nonviolence that, as in the American civil rights movement of the 1960s, were brilliantly successful at a cost in human life that, though deplorable, was small compared with “a single day of battle in the Civil War or World War II.”³ Nonviolence, in comparison to violence, may advance and secure justice at a lower cost: there are often alternative, better ways to achieve justice than violence. Today, as never before, we must understand how such valuable forms of thought and psychology arise, are sustained, and can be encouraged.

I am gripped, as many contemporary men are, by admiration for these men—for the ways in which they endowed their lives with enduring meaning for themselves and others. When so much in the conception of manhood about them pulled them in more conventionally violent directions, they resisted that pull and spoke in a new ethical voice of resistance to injustice that appealed to and moved not only other men but women as well. Four of these men—Garrison, Gandhi, King, and Churchill—found in themselves a voice that empowered important democratic movements of resistance to injustice, and the fifth—Tolstoy—found an artistic voice that, in *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, spoke truthfully to men and women of their false and broken lives. How do men live so well? Why are such struggles with manhood so ethically creative yet so difficult, sometimes even personally disastrous? What explains their

personal psychology as men and how and why it empowered a political psychology of social movements in which women prominently defied conventional gender roles to become moral and political agents?

This work has been written out of a sense that these questions may absorb others as much as they do myself, giving us a better sense of the choices we now have and how we might better make choices in the future. Such resistance in each of their cases arose from the new kind of voice these men found in their associations and experiences with women and developed in ways that made possible a new kind of resisting voice in others. Their innovations both reflected and created views of manhood that blurred the lived sense of sharp psychological lines between the gender binary of manhood and womanhood.

The phrase *disarming manhood* describes the psychological impacts of this shift. The most politically palpable shift was in the psyches of the men who advocated and practiced such forms of resistance. Disarmed of the role violence traditionally played in a man's sense of vindicating insults to his honor, these men spoke in a more truthful voice about injustice, and they experimented in new arts of voice and reasonable persuasion, including literature (Tolstoy) and interpretive history (Churchill). Their experiments encouraged in themselves and in others (often women) a new kind of personal and political imagination, empowering creative forms of moral and political agency (for example, public civil disobedience). Such voices of resistance strengthened the resisting voices of others, suggesting unexpected resources of resistance to injustice in the personal and political psychology of men and women alike.

The study of Garrison in chapter 1 explains how I arrived at the thesis of this work, reflecting on Garrison and his relationship to the abolitionist feminists (the subject of a previous book of mine). I discovered in Garrison's thought and psychology a relationship to the ethical voice of his antipatriarchal mother, the basis of his own remarkable resistance to injustice and his appeal to the women who joined him in resistance. It was the attempt to explain these connections that led me to formulate the thesis I offer in chapter 1 and then to explore the explanatory value of the thesis in understanding the resistance of the other men I study in this work. The extended studies of Tolstoy in chapter 2 and Churchill in chapter 5 present a fascinating contrast between the lives of two remarkable men—one ascetic and tragic, the other marked by pleasure and relationship; in a sense, these are the twin pillars on which this book's

architecture is built. Both were aristocrats who, as young men, were courageous soldiers in the wars of their respective imperial states. Both found their voices in writing—Tolstoy in literature, Churchill in journalism and histories (notably, of the various wars in which he served either in the military or as a political leader) and in his remarkable speeches. In both cases, their thought and psychology arose in unusual relationships with women, as mothers or maternal caretakers and as wives. Yet no two men could be more different in terms of the women in their lives. Tolstoy was tormented by the idealization of women, which fostered his marital misery, celibacy, and pacifism. By contrast, Churchill found his voice in relationship to a mother he knew as a person of powerful sexual voice and life outside marriage, and he married a woman as complex as he and enjoyed a union of unusual happiness. No men in this study better understood the psychology of men in war nor, through that understanding, found a more compelling voice that resisted forms of injustice based on patriarchal violence.

The studies of Mohandas Gandhi in chapter 3 and of Martin Luther King Jr. in chapter 4 explore how my thesis clarifies the thought and psychology of two creative leaders of important movements of political resistance. It is precisely because Gandhi and King found their ethical voices in important relationships to the antipatriarchal voices of their mothers that they were able to form and lead nonviolent movements which significantly appealed to women, who were mobilized by Gandhi and King to participate in transformative movements of moral and political agency to resist injustice.

An original feature of my approach is its inductive, textured exploration of these experiments of voice in the form of biography and, when appropriate, literature and history. This exploration is a new departure for me. The current work certainly draws on my previous books on political and constitutional theory and interpretive history, but the topic has required me to work in a rather different way to do justice to its complexities. I explore the development and impact of experiments in voice as they unfolded in the lives of these men and sometimes clarify my argument about voice in terms of the relevant novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne, James Baldwin, Richard Wright, and Joseph Conrad. In the chapter on Tolstoy, the study of his novels is *indispensable* to exploring psychic shifts and struggles central to my argument. In this connection, David Lodge has recently argued that the art of the novel offers an in-

valuable means of investigating the complexities of human consciousness, a means that students of human consciousness ignore at their peril.⁴ The method of this book powerfully illustrates Lodge's insight.

What is most original in my story about these men and their political impact is the primacy I accord gender and voice in an interdisciplinary theory that combines developmental psychology with feminist liberal political theory. My argument is that this political theory, usually limited to the interpretation of constitutional democracies,⁵ in fact explains important political leaders and their impact in the context of a voice that calls on and expands the values of political liberalism, as King's certainly did in the United States and Churchill's did for Britain and the civilized world.

Feminism, as a serious development within political liberalism, has been of growing importance since the liberal political revolutions of the late eighteenth century, a development reflected in the American struggles that stretch from the antebellum abolitionist feminists to the recognition of many of the central claims of justice of feminism under current judicial interpretations of U.S. constitutional law.⁶ I analyze the ethical voice of Garrison, Tolstoy, Gandhi, King, and Churchill as arising, importantly, in relationship to such developments. Feminism is itself an elaboration of the principles of political liberalism, as the antebellum abolitionist feminists clearly saw. All these men drew implicitly on these principles when, as men, they found their ethical voices through criticism of a conception of patriarchal manhood that legitimated violence as a response to insults, upholding a code of honor that rationalized forms of structural injustice. Each of them struggled to a sense of ethical voice, developed on the basis of the authority of women's voices, that put them in critical opposition to dominant stereotypes of manhood and thus womanhood. What is so striking is the power this ethical voice had for all these men, the courage (inspired by the moral experience of women) they showed in drawing out its implications, and the price they were willing to pay to follow its demands. A contemporary feminism will be richer and more profound when it is able to understand the place of these remarkable men in its project and when it sees the ethical power of its project in terms of the price these men have borne to do justice, as they understood justice, to its liberating insights.

Such a feminism focuses on the impact of unjust gender stereotypes not only on the voices of women and the men traditionally regarded as

feminine (gay men) but also, sometimes ferociously and even catastrophically, on the voices of straight men, rigidly holding them into conformity with the requirements of patriarchal authority (deriving from the hierarchical relationships of sons to fathers). These impacts on men and women have been brilliantly investigated in important works on the effect of patriarchy on mothering, including those of Dorothy Dinnerstein and Nancy Chodorow.⁷ What this book studies in some depth is a group of remarkable men who did something very difficult for men in such situations to do: they resisted the role accorded patriarchal authority in order to follow an ethical voice that arose from the authority they accorded the usually marginalized voices of women, in particular the voices of their mothers or maternal caretakers that placed an ethical value on nonviolent care. At the center of my account is the way these men stayed in real relationship to these women and their voices and how they placed the ethical weight that they did on those voices, which sometimes operated under the radar of patriarchy. Women's voices are often accorded such authority by their sons through the hidden transcript of a personal religion centering on an antipatriarchal interpretation of the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth.

My sense that there is an important, unrecognized connection between liberal feminism, voice, and psychology in the life and works of these men arose from collaborative teaching with the developmental psychologist Carol Gilligan; with our students, we reflected on many of the texts under discussion in this volume. Gilligan's work is sometimes viewed as largely focusing on issues of gender-inflected voice in the development of women, but she has always been interested in comparable issues in the development of men. (Her first book, *In a Different Voice*, was originally to be a study of male Harvard students' ethical dilemmas about military service in Vietnam; she turned to the comparable study of ethical dilemmas of a broad range of women, differently situated, in making the abortion decision when she lost her male sample after Richard Nixon ended the draft).⁸ These interests in gender-inflected voice as such (in men as well as women) are quite clear in her recent *Birth of Pleasure*, framed as a narrative about both Cupid and Psyche, with male and female sexual voices coming into relationship.⁹ Our conversations—between a long-married woman with three sons and a gay man in a partnership of some thirty years—were and are a laboratory of experiments in voice and relationship, and they have led me to a discovery in the

developmental psychology of the voice of certain men. This discovery—that the relationships these men had with their unusual mothers played a critical role in the development of their creative ethical voice—has been missed by others, I believe, in part because the very notion cuts against an ethics and psychology still dominated by patriarchal conceptions that hold such voice in men *must* be linked to other men (in particular, fathers). I use the word *discovery* to express my sense of genuine surprise at what I noticed, and here, I want to capture inductively my excitement at what I discovered, touching on how I came to this finding and what its importance might be. I begin with my order of discovery.

My interest in these five men arose from my work in the history, political theory, and law of constitutional democracy, in particular a long interpretive study of the role of antebellum radical abolitionism in understanding the American constitutional principles embodied in the Reconstruction Amendments.¹⁰ My attention there was on the place of William Lloyd Garrison among these radical abolitionists, including his crucial impact on the development of abolitionist feminism.¹¹ I will, therefore, begin in chapter 1 with the issues of voice and resistance that I found in Garrison and those he inspired. I will also explore the ways in which these issues led me to develop the working hypothesis about his developmental psychology (including his mother's personal religion based on Jesus) and how this in turn caused me to choose and study the other men closely examined in this work.