

Ladylike

White-crowned Sparrows will adopt the call of the Song Sparrow if forced to live with them rather than their own kind (“Vocal Development”).

I went through what they call a “tomboy” stage in middle school. Growing up in a neighborhood full of boys, I spent many afternoons outside playing football and baseball while getting muddy, bruised, and scraped. My style consisted solely of baggy t-shirts, sports jerseys, and basketball shorts. Dresses were out of the question, and doing anything more than throwing my hair in a pony tail (unbrushed, of course) was too much of an effort to bother with.

I felt cool and tough pretending to be “one of the guys.” I considered myself better than the girls wearing flower clips in their hair playing with their dolls. They were silly, scared, and weak. They were just so *girly*.

I could run and jump and kick and hit with the best of them. I could make the diving catch, tackle the fastest runner, and was especially proud of my ability to take a hit. The other girls would cower—I was sure—but not me. I could take it, and I did...

When placed with an adult “tutor,” young White-crowned Sparrows will adopt the song of their mentor (“Vocal Development”).

Heinrich Himmler was a German Nazi leader during World War II, known today as one of the many people responsible for the tragedy of the Holocaust. But before Himmler was the

monster people hate today, he was Heinrich, the young boy, unsure of himself, the world, and his place in it.

Himmler was forced by his father, Gebhard to keep a journal recording his daily activities. No individual thoughts or feelings come through the pages. Everything is precise and formal, not something one would expect from a young school aged boy. If these aren't the child's words, then whose are they? It is pretty obvious that Gebhard greatly influenced Heinrich's writing.

“Did Gebhard lay his hand on Heinrich's shoulder? The weight of that hand would not be comforting. It would be a warning. A reminder” (Griffin 339). Heinrich's father was a watch tower, looming over his child's shoulder as he wrote. *Sit up straight, Heinrich*. Heinrich could not afford to be distracted. *Don't look away from your work*. He had to get everything right or face the consequences. *Make sure to check your spelling*. There was no room for mistakes with the all-seeing Gebhard tapping his foot behind the young boy.

Family tradition demanded that all four of us gather around the kitchen table for dinner every evening. After finishing my third slice of pizza one evening, I finished my cold glass of Pepsi and joined in the conversation with my mother, father, and little brother. My brother, Luke, and my dad were in the middle of a heated discussion about who they were going to choose in the upcoming fantasy football draft when suddenly Luke let out a loud belch midsentence. My mom sighed and said, “How many times do I have to tell you not to burp at the dinner table?” She could have told him as many times as she wanted to, but considering this was an almost daily occurrence at our house, there was obviously no serious penalty for such an offense. My dad just laughed and continued to discuss their options for quarterback.

My mom then asked me how school was that day, and as I started to tell her about the geometry test I had, a burp slipped out as soon as I opened my mouth, followed by a giggle. It is a common side effect when I drink soda. My dad and brother stopped midsentence and glanced at me. My mother set down her fork. “Lexi Rae,” she said, breaking out the middle name. “That’s not something to laugh at. That’s rude and disgusting and not to mention, not very ladylike.”

“Are you serious? If I can’t burp in my own home where can I do it? And besides, Luke did the same exact thing just a few minutes ago!” I retorted.

“That’s different,” mom started.

“Yeah,” dad jumped in. Shrugging he added, “Boys will be boys.”

World-famous philosopher and writer Michel Foucault wrote about the Panopticon, a mechanism designed to maximize the exercise and efficiency of power. With a tower looming in the center circle containing individual prisoners in cells lining the outside wall, every prisoner can easily be observed by an invisible authority in the tower. This looming tower is a constant reminder to those in the cells that their behavior is always being monitored, and the threat of punishment keeps them from deviating from the behavior expected of the observer. Foucault wrote, “But the Panopticon was... a laboratory; it could be used as a machine to carry out experiments, to alter behavior, to train or correct individuals” (291). Eventually, prisoners internalize the rules enforced in the panoptic machine to the extent that it becomes unnecessary for an actual observer to be present.

Young men of the Democratic Republic of Congo don colorful masks as they ceremoniously transition from a child to an adult. After initiation, the colorful mask is replaced by a smaller ivory one to be worn as “a symbol of his manhood” (“History of Masks”).

Paul-Michel Foucault was born in western France in 1926 to parents Paul-André and Anne Foucault. While attending school in his hometown of Poitiers, France, Paul-Michel discovered his passion for philosophy and expressed desires to continue study within that field. His father was less than pleased. Paul-André was a well-respected surgeon and son of a doctor, and he expected his son to continue the family tradition and join the medical field. Paul-Michel had no intention of doing so.

It's easy to imagine the immense pressure Paul-André put on his son to join the line of Foucault men and become a doctor. It must have took a lot for Michel to turn his back on his father's wishes and branch off to follow his own path. It wasn't without a price that Michel pursued his passion. He and his father had a falling out and barely talked to each other until Paul's death, and it is thought that this fight was the reason Michel dropped the Paul part of his name.

Though Michel managed to maintain a good relationship with his mother, she applied pressures of her own. Anne's father was also a surgeon, and she had once held dreams of following in his footsteps. Her dreams were impractical for her time, though. She was a woman, and women never held such prestigious positions in the medical field. The closest thing she could get was to live her dream through her son (Kelly).

Based on author Susan Griffin's analysis of Heinrich Himmer's journal, what is most striking is the lack of emotion in the child's writing. Why is that? Why did he feel the need to lock away his true feelings and hide them from the scrutinizing eyes of his father? "The soul is often imagined to be feminine. All those qualities thought of as soulful, a dreaminess or artistic sensibility, are supposed to come more naturally to women" (Griffin 347). Young German men during Gebhard and Heinrich's time were supposed to be tough, fit, and masculine. Showing any sign of femininity was the same as showing weakness. What kind of father would Gebhard be if he allowed his son to be an emotional weakling? How could Heinrich ever allow his father, or anyone else really, to know his inner feelings? There could be no expression of the inner soul.

By the time Heinrich reached adulthood, he understood quite well the difference between being a man and being a woman. In a later journal entry, he wrote "A real man should love a woman as a child who must be admonished perhaps even punished, when she is foolish, though she must also be protected and looked after because she is so weak" (Himmler, qtd. in Griffin 349). Heinrich was a man; he had to be powerful and could not afford the weakness associated with feminine emotion.

Hut...hut...*hike!* Like a bullet, I took off in a sprint across my front lawn. A cool fall breeze swept my tangled pony tail off my shoulders and stung my eyes as they glanced over my shoulder to my next-door neighbor who was standing at the edge of his driveway pumping his arm forward and back, alternating directions to throw off the other team watching his every move. I stepped to the left, then quickly juke to the right sloshing across the muddy grass finally free of the pursuit of the kid on my tail. I was open!

In a second the ball was in the air, the next it was landing in my outstretched arms. Cradling the football, I took off without hesitation towards the end zone that was my driveway not slowing down until my feet felt the soft grass turn to hard cement. Turning around to celebrate with my team, I noticed that the kid whose job it was to guard me was all the way back where I left him. He hadn't moved since I caught the ball.

“What’s the matter, Zach? Can’t keep up?” I taunted. He could have at least tried.

That’s when he said, “I let you score. I’m not allowed to tackle a girl.”

People in medieval times were forced to wear shame masks in public as punishment for social transgressions such as abusing your wife, failing school, or nagging your husband (Foster).

History has never been kind to the homosexuals. They have been arrested, tortured, killed, diagnosed with mental illness, targeted for protest, and denied basic human rights. Men were supposed to love women and only women while women should only love men. Anyone deviating from this norm was a sinner, an abomination, and simply *unnatural*.

Growing up, I’m sure Michel Foucault heard similar arguments, which could not have been easy for the young homosexual philosophy student. While studying at École Normale in the 1940s, Foucault became severely depressed. How could he not be when the world around him was constantly reminding him that what he was feeling was immoral and wrong? He was unnatural, not fitting in with society’s demands for what a man should be. This conflict between who he really was and who he had to be to fit into society is thought to be the driving force behind Foucault’s suicide attempt (Kelly).

Song birds like the Indigo Bunting will develop a song different from their father's after leaving the nest only to change it again to resemble that of their current neighbors ("Vocal Development").

As an adult, Heinrich Himmler finally found something to do with his life after feeling lost for so long without the control of his father to guide his behavior. Under the rule of Adolf Hitler, Himmler was given the power to sign off on the deaths of Jews, homosexuals, and other groups the Nazis found unworthy. What could allow a man to sentence millions of innocent people to death and still sleep at night? How did guilt not rip him to pieces? Most people would feel disgusted at the idea of being involved in such a crime, yet Himmler did not even hesitate! But Himmler didn't feel anymore. After suppressing his emotions for so long, they became buried so deep that he lost all empathy that comes with being human. There was no guilt, no shame, no sadness. How could there be? From childhood onward he had been trained not to feel and not to care. If anything, this was Himmler's time to shine. He was finally a man, and a powerful one at that. There were no feminine emotions to hold him back and make him weak. His peers praised him, his worshipped leader, Hitler, promoted him, and his father would have been proud.

It was the last day of school before Christmas break during my sophomore year of high school. Our English teacher had let us bring blankets to class to cuddle up while we did out-class reading, and during our lunch break, a friend and I realized we forgot them in his classroom. Since we wanted to take them home with us, we decided to leave lunch early to go

retrieve them. Walking out of his classroom, we wrapped ourselves in the blankets and started walking to our lockers.

That's when we realized that the empty hallways and soft blankets provided a golden opportunity. Why not have some fun? Taking off in a sprint down the hall, we then dove to the ground and slid on the blankets from one end to the other. We did this several times as quietly as we could (there were still classes going on), though it wasn't easy suppressing our giggles. After the third or fourth slide, I was about to take off sprinting again, but this time something caught my eye that made me hesitate. The black security camera in the corner of the hall was aimed right at us. Our whole incident was caught on film and projected on the television screens in our principal's office.

One idea dominated my thoughts: someone could have *seen* us. At any time our principal, her secretary, an administrator in for a meeting, a concerned parent, a teacher checking her mailbox, someone with authority who just so happened to glance up at the screen could have been judging our immature behavior. The idea was mortifying. What would they think of me? I was known as a model student, a leader, and here I was rolling and sliding on the hallway floor like a child.

I could hear my mother's voice in the back of my mind. *Not very ladylike...*

I picked up my blanket without a word, stuck it in my locker, and shuffled back to the cafeteria where I belonged.

If removed from their nest and isolated at a young age, White-crowned Sparrows will develop their own unique song, distinct from those of their native flock ("Vocal Development").

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