

What is a Thinking Girl To Do: Censorship and Masculinities

By Phyllis Chesler

When she cannot post her pro-abortion views at conservative sites—and cannot post her belief in sex based over and above gender rights at liberal/left sites? When she cannot challenge transgender rights on one side of the aisle—but heaven help her if she pleads their cause as individuals on the opposing side. Nothing but mindfields everywhere, enough to straitjacket an independent mind.



I cannot bear to watch the Conventions from start to end. The one currently underway has far too many Alinsky style gesturing, signage, as they bound and bopp along—and from political leaders who might consider that some gravitas might better suit the moment.

America's political parties are battling over two views of manhood. One view believes that the essence of "masculinity" is best embodied by a man who respects (certain kinds of women); has no desire to compete with, replace, or become a woman; a man who is willing to take economic and physical

responsibility for a wife, for vulnerable children, and for his community; a man who will fight crime at home and abroad, who believes in "law and order," a man who puts out fires in every sense of the word. Such a man has, traditionally, believed in God, tradition, his country, and who considers separate spheres for the sexes as sacrosanct.

Another very different view of manhood is characterized by a man who considers it the better part of courage to adopt certain female virtues such as listening to others, especially to women, with compassion; taking care of a child, being able to work for a female boss without feeling that his manhood has been demeaned; a man who does not base his identity on physical strength alone; a man who does not feel his masculinity has been compromised if he discovers that he or his son or daughter are gay, want to marry someone from another religion or race; insist that they are transgender, etc.

Both types of men can be avid sports fans—or theater goers; immersed in the common culture—or in the classics. Both may be hunters, carry guns, engage in similar behaviors.

In the upcoming American election, the war of the masculinities are being fought over cartoon extremes of each type of manhood, between the heavily muscled wrestler, the broken-nosed boxer—and all the Second Gentlemen, the husband of female CEOs or of the first female president.

Some of these different kinds of men can all do everything that seems specific to each kind of man. However, that's really at issue is whether a man is either an anti-abortion fanatic or a pro-abortion fanatic. Whether a man believes that a woman's body is hers and hers alone—or whether he believes that women's bodies belong to men. This constitutes a great and a grave divide.

Women still have a hard time voting for women, still crave the

“protection” of a traditional man. But the winds of change are also out there and both women and men may want something different, something fairer, more open to change (not joy and hope) but to genuine, meaningful change.