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SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME: THE FATHER AS THE ORIGINAL PROTECTOR OF THE MOTHER-INFANT DYAD

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This paper discusses the father's protective watchfulness, particularly as it emerges during his wife's pregnancy and in the early stages of his infant child's life. This preeminent fatherly representation involves watchfulness, holding, containing, defending, *and* providing. *The father, in what has traditionally been considered as his "husbandry" function, furnishes a timely and nurturing holding environment for the mother and their fetus, infant, and small child by enabling the emotional relationship between the mother and her new baby to begin and subsequently to develop naturally. The impact of this fatherly provision for his child's development, as well as its effects on the mother, the marital relationship, and the father himself, are elaborated. The capacity for self-sacrifice, generosity, and servitude are advanced as basic to paternal protective watchfulness. A developmental and psychodynamic basis for this fatherly "holding" is outlined, while both internal and external sources of interference with its attainment are considered. Two case examples are presented. The first illustrates the effects of insufficient early paternal protectiveness on an adult woman, while the second conveys the painful struggle of a man only able to access his initial fatherliness through the therapeutic process. The paper concludes with some reflections on the unique nature of male nurturance evident in this less conspicuous facet of fathering.*

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There's a somebody I'm longing to see
I hope that he
Turns out to be
someone who'll watch over me.

.....

I'm a little lamb who's lost in the wood
I know I could
Always be good
To one who'll watch over me.

.....

Won't you tell him please to put on some speed—
Follow my lead—
Oh! How I need
Someone to watch over me.

George and Ira Gershwin
"Someone to Watch Over Me" (from *Oh, Kay*)

The wish to be watched over and protected is among the most archaic and universal of desires. Its depiction, prevalent throughout classical folklore and mythology, finds its foremost contemporary Western manifestation in the Christian, paternal imagery of "Our Father who art in Heaven." This fundamental longing to be tended to, protected, and provided for is experienced by an individual in both imaginary and actual relationships with others, from birth throughout the life span. These watchful "others" include mothers and fathers, grandparents, caretakers, older siblings and other relatives, friends, teachers and guides, wives and husbands, clergy, and mentors, as well as societal, political, and symbolic leaders, and eventually even one's grown children. Despite the breadth of these roles, however, the preeminent representation of such a protector and provider is that of *the father.*

This fatherly representation rests firmly upon ubiquitous concepts of masculinity which are accompanied by traditional injunctions to achieve "real manhood." For example, Gilmore (1990) concluded from his retrospective cross-cultural study that the vast majority of cultures perpetuate a male role with three main functions—to impregnate, to protect, and to provide. Among contemporary westernized men, the *protective, providing father imago* reflects duties emblematic of such constantly-sought manhood. Expectations remain strong, moreover, even among career-oriented women, that men serve as the primary provider or "breadwinner" (Betcher and Pollack, 1993). The protective, providing, paternal representation arguably occurs even when the traditional gender divisions in parenting, in which the mother is the primary nurturing figure, is modified (cf. Ehrensaft, 1987; Pruett, 1987). Thus, for example, the mother who is involved in a demanding career may serve as the primary provider while the father takes on the primary childcare duties. Although we cannot know the *biological* or *archetypal* basis of this paternal depiction with certitude, it seems evident that this idealization of the father as a delegate of the outside world operates powerfully as

a *cultural* representation even when the real parents do not reinforce it (Benjamin, 1988).[1]

I have discussed elsewhere (Diamond, 1994) how this initial paternal presence of protective watchfulness, when accompanied by subsequent "good enough" fatherly involvement and provision, proceeds to evolve and develop alongside other fatherly representations over the life cycle.[2] Thus, the involved father who is able to "watch over," "hold," and protect the mother and "her" developing fetus, infant and small child is likely in due course to become the father who protects and encourages "his" young toddler's separation and individuation from the mother. Similarly, and years later, he must again "hold," bear, and support with interested restraint his adolescent child's identity experimentation and subsequent distancing from family dependencies. A father's *quiet* strength and *subtle* courage is required, in addition to the more *active mentoring* long associated with good fathering (see for example Bly, 1990, Shapiro, 1993).

The progressive, developmental accomplishments that depend upon this fatherly contribution increase the chances that, even in a grown child's mid- to late adulthood, a healthy, internal sense of being watched over will remain vibrantly alive. This is eloquently illustrated in Philip Roth's (1991) middle-aged reflections following his elderly father's death:

> . . . if not in my books or in my life, at least in my dreams I would live perennially as his little son, with the conscience of a little son, just as he would remain alive there not only as my father but as *the* father, sitting in judgment on whatever I do [pp. 237–238].

In this article I will discuss the emergence of the father as the primordial "protective agent" who enables the emotional relationship between the mother and her new baby to begin and, subsequently, to develop naturally. The value of this function of "husbandry" will be examined as it impacts on the child, the mother, the father, and the marital relationship. Finally, I consider what is required for fathers to assume this function while reflecting upon personal, systemic, and external disruptions to this fatherly "holding." I will begin by sketching out the nature of this protective, watchful function as a man first becomes a father.[3]

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[1]It remains, however, far too early to speculate as to how the psychic representation of mothers and fathers will differ among the children of both single and homosexual parents, and as the gender arrangements of parenting shift over future generations.

[2]Abundant evidence now exists demonstrating specific contributions that involved fathers make to their children's development (e.g., Lamb, 1986; Snarey, 1993). I discuss elsewhere these contributions and the accompanying internalized, paternal representation *for sons* who are sufficiently fortunate to have had such "good enough" fathering at varying points throughout their life span (Diamond, 1994). Both Benjamin (1988, 1991) and Ross (1990) consider the important role played by such fathers *with their daughters*, particularly during the prelatency phases, while Tessman (1982) and Hand (1994) anticipate more specific oedipal and latency phase contributions. Pruett (1987, 1993) substantiates the unique importance of an involved, actively nurturing father during the child's earliest years, whereas numerous other writers point out the relationship between the absence of such active, involved fathering and the many social and familial ills besetting the contemporary family (Mitscherlich, 1969; Herzog, 1982a; Parker and Parker, 1986; Comer, 1989; Lansky, 1992).

[3]My focus in this article is on the father as the *biological* parent, able to accompany his spouse through her pregnancy. Nonetheless, the significance of and main issues bearing on fatherly "protective watchfulness," apply likewise for fathers of *adopted* children and *step-*

FATHER'S PROTECTIVE AGENCY: THE "HUSBANDRY" FUNCTION

A father provides a timely and nurturing holding environment for the mother and the developing fetus, infant, and small child during the period when the mother-child relationship, characterized by primary attunement, is essential for the development of what Bowlby (1988) termed a "secure base." In serving as the dyad's original "protective agent," the father shields the mother from impingement and interference from without while she carries, bears, and suckles their infant. Thus, especially before the infant can make use of him in other ways, the "watchful" father frees the mother to devote herself to her baby. In "holding" the mother-infant dyad near the end of pregnancy and for several weeks after the baby's birth, the father is able to promote the mother's necessary "primary maternal preoccupation," which becomes the basis for the infant's ego establishment (Winnicott, 1956).

A father's respect for, and protection of, this "mothering dyad" is crucial in his child's relationship with mother as the "first other." This fathering position is aptly conveyed by the term *husbandry*, one meaning of which, as defined by *Webster's New World Dictionary* (1970) is "the management of domestic affairs, resources, etc." (p. 686). Indeed, both the *material* aspects of providing and the *emotional-physical* facets of availability and defending are called into play during the father's early, watchful protectiveness. Together, the *material-providing* and *emotional-responsiveness* dimensions reflect the "psychobiological, instinctual" basis of fathering (Benedek, 1970; see also Pleck, 1995).

In his *providing function*, the new father often "feathers the nest" by working diligently to gain greater income or career status in order to look after his wife and "young fledgling" (Betcher and Pollack, 1993; Pollack, 1995). Additionally, in his *empathic responsiveness* to his child's dyadic needs, the new father guards and gives sanctuary to the particulars of maternal biological contact and feeding. Thus, as a delegate of "the outside world" in his "husbandry" function, the father provides for and serves as an external beacon to his wife and child, protecting their intense, primary mutuality with one another (Stern, 1985; Benjamin, 1988).

The attuned father providing this watchful protection is especially able to "parent his wife" at the very time she most needs such care (Herzog, 1982b). Such fathers, moreover, seem better able to connect with their inner lives while maintaining a valuation of the outside world beyond the mother-child primary mutuality (Diamond, 1986). The "alliance of pregnancy" (Deutscher, 1971), characterized by the husband's empathy with his spouse (and vice versa), subsequently evolves at delivery into a sense of the "whole becoming greater than the sum of its parts," while a "feeling of awe" tends to accompany this emerging sense of family and parenting alliance (Herzog, 1982b).

Fathers capable of such engagement, furthermore, are more likely to experience an increased sense of familial worth and personal self-esteem as they become "engrossed" in their newborn (Greenberg and Morris, 1974; see also Pruett, 1993). The selfless generosity, sacrifice, and servitude required by such early forms of fathering strengthen a man's sense of "real manhood," primarily because such fatherly protection and provision fulfill "the ubiquitous code of masculinity" (cf. Gilmore, 1990). Through this engagement, the

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children, as well as for men serving in more surrogate positions, particularly during the child's infancy when the dyadic relationship with the mother is paramount.

father's "inner sense of duty" joins with his "wishes to play," thereby enriching him deeply "at the heart of . . . [his] psychological being" (Betcher and Pollack, 1993, pp. 228). Furthermore, in accepting his caretaking role within the family, fathers are provided an important opportunity for overcoming developmental obstacles and working through intrapsychic conflicts affecting generativity and mature object relations, as well as creating new familial legacies of male nurturance (Benedek, 1959; Diamond, 1986, 1994; Betcher and Pollack, 1993). Such fatherly provision additionally increases marital satisfaction, although the long-term effects remain unknown (Greenberg, 1985; Ehrensaft, 1987; Pruett, 1993; Shapiro, 1993).

An infant is fortunate indeed to have both the mother's ordinary "primary maternal preoccupation" and the father's sufficient "protective agency,"[4] in combination with adequate physical endowment and freedom from unforeseen external trauma. Such an infant essentially is shielded from primitive annihilation threats to personal self-existence, stemming from experiencing an overwhelming sense of helplessness involving terrors of falling apart and dissolving, which severely compromise subsequent cognitive, affective, and intrapsychic development. The fetus and, then, infant provided with "good enough" initial mothering and fathering is thus likely to "go on being," largely unriddled by the more primitive anxieties interfering with each subsequent developmental task (Winnicott, 1956, 1960).[5] Moreover, under these conditions the father's benign, silent yet watchful, protective presence helps establish a "primal I-Thou pattern" by introducing transcendence and unconsciously readying his infant for spiritual development (Thurston, 1991). Such a father accomplishes this by conveying to his infant that there is someone from *outside* the primary maternal-infant bond who can transcend the need for active engagement and mirroring, yet who is capable of providing a selfless form of giving.

Children of fathers who are unable to provide sufficient protective agency during the earliest phases of their lives are unlikely to receive important fatherly provisions at the latter stages, even though there are subsequent opportunities for reparative paternal contributions (Diamond, 1994). The provision of sufficient paternal protective agency early in children's lives is quite pressing, and its absence has wide-ranging social and psychological implications. There is evidence, for example, that children of fathers less involved in these initial phases of fathering are more likely during later childhood (and adult) development to incur paternal sexual abuse (Parker and Parker, 1986), father abandonment (Comer, 1989; Ballard and Greenberg, 1995) and the detrimental effects of uninvolved or ineffective fathering, including "father hunger" (Herzog, 1982a; see also Greenberg, 1985; Shapiro, 1993).

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[4]This "protective agency" can be understood as part of the father's "*paternal preoccupation*"—namely, as an equally meaningful counterpart to the mother's "initial devotion," as distinguished by maternal biological contact, feeding, and attunement.

[5]While either parent can serve *both* mothering and fathering functions (see also Pruett, 1987; Ehrensaft, 1995), it is nevertheless a serious oversimplification to equate sex differences with gender identities and roles. Despite it being unanswerable as to what masculinity and femininity are, it is quite important for a child to experience the presence of *two* parents (or their surrogates) at certain key developmental junctions (Diamond, 1994; see also Abelin, 1975; Herzog, 1982a). Each of these parents should ideally represent the culturally determined mother and father functions, respectively, within a triangular dynamic, in order to provide the child with sufficient opportunity for adaptive splitting and developmentally determined conflict resolution, as well as culturally based group adaptation.

A father's "protective agency" function remains important throughout his child's development, though its forms will alter and its significance recede as other fatherly provisions become more salient throughout the life cycle. Its early emergence is illustrated in the Homeric tale of Telemachus, which embodies a watchful father's loving, protective, and altruistic qualities toward his child.[6] In the myth, Telemachus pretended insanity in order to avoid conscription into a life-threatening war. To ascertain whether he was malingering, however, shrewd military examiners placed his infant son in the path of the plow that Telemachus was guiding. Determined to protect his son rather than himself, Telemachus created a wide arc with his plow around the boy's helpless, infantile body. Thus, he constructed a "semi-circle of protection" to save his son's life, though relinquishing his own cover of insanity.

This capacity for the self-sacrificing role of fatherhood is the backbone for paternal protective watchfulness. Before considering how this capacity grows to fruition and how it may become disrupted, I shall turn to the clinical setting to illustrate how insufficient fatherly protection and provision during a child's early years becomes manifest in that grown child's adulthood. This brief vignette in the case of a female analysand suggests that failed early paternal watchfulness affects adult intimacy by dint of an absent but needed internalization.

Clinical Example: Sarah

Sarah, a middle-aged woman in the latter stages of a lengthy psychoanalysis, had made considerable progress in coming to terms with her severely traumatic early childhood and its intrapsychic and interpersonal sequelae. At this point in her treatment, she arrived for her session reporting that she felt extremely angry with her husband "without having any idea why." She noted the "irrationality" of her anger toward him before lamenting on "how hard life is and how much evil there is in the world."

As the session proceeded, Sarah described an upsetting incident occurring earlier that week. She had purchased a black, Los Angeles Raiders football team jacket for her first-grade son and presented it to him. He was quite pleased and Sarah felt good about making the purchase. Later that afternoon, her husband returned and informed them that the jacket and team insignia were worn by a Los Angeles gang and that, consequently, it would be dangerous for their son to wear. Sarah deplored that children were not even permitted to wear baseball caps to public school because of the gang influence. She proclaimed indignantly, "Can you imagine how fucked the world is that little children could be shot just for wearing certain colors?" She cried in remarking how her small son's "innocence and trust couldn't be protected."

As her associations continued, it soon became apparent that she "blamed" her husband for somehow not seeing to it that the world was safe enough for their son to wear the logo of his favorite football team. She berated her husband for not being stronger and earning more money. "Why can't he

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[6]I am grateful to Mort Shane for introducing me to Kohut's use of the Telemachus myth in order to contrast this fatherly characteristic with the murderous rivalry depicted by the Oedipus myth. It is also noteworthy in this context that Telemachus's absent father, Odysseus, returned only in his son's late adolescence, a reparative act that helped propel Telemachus into a confident sense of manhood.

have everything under control and know exactly what he's doing," Sarah said before continuing, "so we could live wherever we want, have our kids in private schools, and not have to worry at all about bad things happening to us?" She then tearfully observed that he was a good, loving father, nonetheless.

Within a short time, Sarah could see how enraged she was toward her husband, and toward me, for not being "someone who could make me [her] feel completely safe, secure, and protected." As we fleshed out her wishes, she began to experience and understand more deeply how she had always longed for a father who would provide such *watchful protection*. She could recognize how these childhood yearnings were transferred both to her husband and analyst, each of whom became the object of her bitter disappointment, fear, and rage. Her vindictive, yet unconscious, rage toward men to whom she transferred her frustrated childhood longings for "paternal protectiveness" left her feeling completely alone and unsafe in a modern-day reenactment of her early internal object world.

THE CAPACITY FOR PATERNAL PROTECTIVENESS

Attempts have been made over the last quarter century to examine the more instinctual basis of fathering, despite the prevailing belief that fathers are further removed from the instinctual roots of parenting than are mothers (Benedek, 1970; Greenberg and Morris, 1974; Greenberg, 1985; Ehrensaft, 1987; Pruett, 1987; Shapiro, 1987, 1993). This psychogenetic approach to fathering has emphasized both the father's function as a *provider* and his capacity for *fatherliness ties*, which render his relationship to his children a mutual, developmental experience (Diamond, 1986).

Benedek (1970) posited an instinctually rooted character trait termed "genuine fatherliness," which enables a father to act toward his children with immediate empathic responsiveness. Redican (1976) suggested that latent predispositions for paternal caretaking were evident even among nonhuman species. He found that male primates assisted with birth, protected infants and their mothers from predators, and actively nurtured the young to the point of becoming primary caretakers when necessary. Greenberg and Morris (1974) and Pruett (1987) observed such human character trends in the form of fatherly "engrossment" with their newborn and the achievement of father-infant "biorhythmic synchrony," respectively. Ross (1975) examined the genetic precursors to such fatherliness in terms of generativity and nurturance. Nonetheless, the specific developmental forerunners of the father's capacity for *protectiveness*, particularly in its original *watchful* functions, have neither been studied nor elaborated.[7]

The process of becoming a father begins long before conception and birth. Just as the roots of a woman's motherhood are traceable to the distant past

[7]I stress *watchfulness* as the preeminent characteristic of the father's protective function throughout this article in contrast to the otherwise significant aspects of fatherly protectiveness that involve *holding, containing, defending*, and *providing*. The salience of watchfulness is warranted ontogenetically, as evident in its serving as the foundation for these latter protective qualities. Watchfulness develops, moreover, throughout the mammalian species from an earlier precursor in the form of a built-in mechanism. This primordial, adaptive watchfulness is best articulated within Kleinian developmental theory as a paranoid mechanism during the paranoid-schizoid phase—an initial voyeurism in the service of protection from predatory objects. It is beyond the scope of this article, however, to explore the psychodynamic development of this function more fully.

of the little girl's wishes to be like mommy and experience maternal yearning to (re-)create through nurturance, so too can the foundations for a father's attachment and relationship to his infant be observed in the little boy's generative and defensive instincts, wishes, and behaviors linked to his relationships to both his own mommy and daddy. Consequently, a father's actual attachment and relationship to his infant commences long before labor and delivery (Ross, 1975, 1982a; Gurwitt, 1976; Herzog, 1982b).

An examination of studies of adult men's experiences during the course of becoming a father suggest a seven-stage sequence of prospective fatherhood, from getting ready through conception, mid-pregnancy, and parturition (Diamond, 1986). The emerging father must deal with and adequately master a number of emotional and psychological issues that become manifest during the course of this sequence in order to achieve the caretaking role of "genuine fatherliness" (Gurwitt, 1976; Herzog, 1982b; Diamond, 1986; Shapiro, 1987).

There are, in addition, many external sources of interference with a father's holding function. Both socioeconomic factors and unforeseen trauma may create *unfavorable birthing conditions*. These external sources include naturally occurring disasters, physical illness or death, severe psychological illness (particularly to the mother), as well as unavoidable financial, work-related, and/or sociopolitical conflicts, such as war or career circumstances requiring that the father be unavailable or removed from the family. An extreme, although not uncommon, example involves specific adverse birthing situations during "high risk" pregnancies with premature infants or with "high risk" infants per se when extraordinary demands are placed on the father (W. E. Freud, 1995; May, 1995). Almost any father's capacity for "protective watchfulness" is severely compromised during these circumstances, which inevitably involve increased financial burdens and overwhelming needs to provide solid emotional support for his "high risk" pregnant wife in addition to his "at risk" fetus or infant. These fathers must also confront emotionally demanding blows to their self-esteem, painful issues arising from feelings of helplessness, and grief pertaining to potential loss, while at the same time being forced to abdicate their paternal holding functions to the physicians and nurses of the neonatal-infant care units (cf. W. E. Freud, 1995).

In considering the *psychodynamic, developmentally based* issues affecting the capacity for protectiveness, it is evident that many unconscious wishes along with "neurotic" conflicts are triggered for men during pregnancy. These include envy toward the prospective mother, concerns regarding responsibility for impregnation, anxieties pertaining to adulthood and aging, issues involving competition and wishes to reestablish connections with one's own father, wishes to revitalize one's own parents, jealousy and guilt toward the fetus who is the object of the partner's rapt attention, and unresolved conflicts and mutuality wishes in the partnership (Diamond, 1986). Given sufficient spousal and social/environmental support, however, most men are able to weather these difficulties sufficiently so that their fatherly instincts are not undercut (Shapiro, 1987; Jordan, 1995).

I have proposed that a fundamental psychological task for many men during the pregnancy involves the ubiquitous need for *creative expression* and *subliminatory activity* in addition to overcoming and/or "working through" neurotic and other forms of psychopathology (Diamond, 1992). Pleck (1995) describes this process in terms of the naturally progressive healing of the "father wound." The man who can find constructive ways to express his fatherly ties during the time of "wait," while simultaneously protecting his

partner's (and child's) health and privacy by serving as a source of strength and support, emerges more fully with a healthy paternal identity. Such a man is well prepared for the "long and winding road" of fathering.

A father will naturally experience both jealousy and envy of the intense, mother-infant mutuality. His capacity to serve as a protective agent consequently depends on how he deals with his envy. Hyman (1995) emphasizes the need for the "holding" father to successfully integrate both the creative and destructive aspects of his envy of the primary maternal-infant bond. This synthesis results both through his creative expression, which further establishes his tie to the infant (Diamond, 1992), and through his identification with the "blissful union" experienced by the mother and her baby (Hyman, 1995). The mother's sensitivity to the father's needs and her attunement to her husband's feelings of loss help ameliorate his sense of exclusion, envy, and rivalry (Hyman, 1995; see also Shapiro, 1987; Jordan, 1995). Additionally, as I suggested earlier, through the new father's protective agency, involved nurturance, and increasing comfort with his "genuine fatherliness," such a "good enough" father fulfills his culture's code of manhood. This provides the new father with another opportunity to rework his masculine gender identity and enhance his self-esteem, a veritable "second chance" (see Betcher and Pollack, 1993).

The *holding father*, in addition, must be able to perceive his child as representing an opportunity for self-enhancement (i.e., increased self-love) and as being a means for attaining immortality. Wolson (1995) has clarified the crucial importance of paternal, "adaptive grandiosity," which entails both the father's projection of his special, ideal self onto his child (e.g., in ways he feels or wanted to be extraordinarily special himself), as well as his capacity to differentiate himself from his baby. Lacking these adaptive and reality-oriented abilities, more omnipotent, maladaptive grandiose expressions render some fathers unable to maintain empathic sensitivity with their wife and baby as separate individuals. Fathers who are deficient in adaptive grandiosity are unable to provide the necessary holding functions because they are both threatened by exclusion from, and overly needy of inclusion into, the mothering dyad. As illustrated next in the case of Rich, such fathers cannot "defeat [their] childhood narcissism" (Gilmore, 1990) by calling upon a more mature "adaptive grandiosity." This case will also convey the painful internal struggle of a father, who, though initially unable to provide the necessary paternal protectiveness, is able to begin to access his fatherliness through the therapeutic process.

Clinical Example: Rich

Rich was in his early thirties when he entered treatment shortly after his wife became pregnant. He felt "particularly burned out and depleted" by the excessive pressure of running his own business. Although quite successful, Rich felt driven to add extra accounts in order to "prepare for all the rainy days that lie ahead."

Early in therapy, he spoke often concerning his considerable misgivings about having a child. He explained, however, that he needed to accede to his 38-year-old wife's desires, since "her biological clock is running short and she's a 'natural mother.' "

Following his son Daniel's birth, Rich became more agitated and depressed while arranging for increased traveling and other activities that kept him busy outside the home. It had become more and more unpleasant for

him at home because his wife, Nancy, when not exhausted, "always seemed busy with their infant." Rich complained vehemently about Nancy's "devotion" to Daniel as he angrily deplored her "lack of interest either in me or in sex."

Nancy had become increasingly enraged with Rich over his absences and unavailability. He reported how she had told him of her resentment of his "constant neediness and demands upon her, while being so unable to give either to her or to their son." When she insisted that they seek couples therapy, Rich recognized it to be a good idea. He felt terribly hurt, nonetheless, by her angry accusations, though he was able to acknowledge how unavailable he had made himself to Nancy and Daniel.

Rich struggled to reveal to me how ashamed he felt about his withdrawal. He realized that he was repeating his own father's pattern, which he recalled as "leaving me all alone in the hands of my crazy mother." "Thank God that Nancy's not crazy," he added, "but still I can't stand watching her give so much love to Daniel while I feel so unloved and devalued."

Rich and I began reconstructing his sense of being left unprotected by his father only to be, as he recalled, "poked incessantly by Mom." We explored Rich's feeling unloved and its relationship to his shameful withdrawal from his own wife and child. In analyzing the linkage to his childhood grandiosity, he realized that he had made Nancy into an "ideal" version of his mother while re-creating the sense of being left alone without a father's watchful protection (i.e., an inadequate paternal identification). Lacking such an internal paternal presence, Rich could not safely be alone without the idealized "breast" mother he made Nancy into and desperately clung to. He stated, "I was Nancy's *only* man for so long and she was so there for me." "It hurts to admit it," Rich continued, "but I don't want to share her because it feels like I can't—she'll just replace me with Daniel and I'll be all alone again." The "rainy days" Rich had been preparing for could now be understood as his anticipation of being "left out in the cold"—a cold rendering him feeling unprotected and inadequately provided for.

Our work was progressing rapidly in conjunction with Rich and Nancy's conjoint therapy (with another therapist), and due to the increasing opportunities for Rich's meaningful interactions with his growing and responsive young child. Rich's need to withdraw from Daniel and Nancy was lessening as he became better able to recognize, bear, and disclose his deep sense of shame and abandonment. In his transference to me, Rich was beginning to internalize an available paternal representation while identifying with his son as a self-extension in need of fathering. He saw himself more and more in little Daniel and appreciated how much his son needed a father who could "be the umbrella for him and his mother." Rich was well on his way toward developing a mature, "adaptive grandiosity," and he had recovered a sense of time where his past no longer was being so fully lived out in his "new" family. In becoming a father capable of accepting his own caretaking role, he spoke often of how Daniel would need him in various ways in the years to come, while genuinely appreciating Nancy's capacity to give so much love to their son.

In a session just prior to Daniel's first birthday, Rich proudly described the deepening bond between him and Daniel. He then turned his thoughts toward his relationship with Nancy and said, "You know, now that Nancy isn't so tired all the time, I can even imagine her lusting after me again." He added playfully, "But you know what? *I just might not be in the mood myself!*"

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

A father's "watchful protectiveness" helps provide a "good beginning" for his infant child while strengthening his own emerging paternal identity and the evolving parenting alliance with his spouse. The nature of his protective agency, his serving as the "someone watching over" from the outside, is multi-determined and based largely on the unique needs of his child, his wife, himself, and the operative marital, familial, and cultural system. During his protective watching, he must remain sufficiently attuned to an "other" in the form of both his wife and child, to be able to, in the lyrics of Ira Gershwin, "follow my lead."

Though I have given prominence to the significance of this less conspicuous and hitherto rather neglected facet of fathering, it is nonetheless evident throughout the literature that this fatherly characteristic has largely been relegated to those ill-fated realms of discourse where fathers are treated as "the forgotten parent" (Ross, 1982b). Certain parental phenomena, such as providing an ego-supportive "holding environment" (Winnicott, 1956), serving as a steady and responsive "container" for a baby's unpleasant feelings (Bion, 1959), and supplying "empathic mirroring" (Kohut, 1971), have historically been conceived of as "*maternal*" in function. It is not surprising, therefore, that the less "noisy," direct and visible, more receptive and serene *paternal* functions involving "holding," "containing," and empathy, as represented by fatherly "protective watchfulness," have long been ignored, presupposed as "mothering," maternal, or feminine traits (see for example, Schwartz, 1993; Ehrensaft, 1995), or simply treated as insignificant, peripheral facets of "husbandry." After all, the fundamental qualities of this fathering function contravene the more universal gender stereotype of men as active and potent.

The unique nature of men's nurturance, concern for others, and duty to care is particularly evident in a father's "protective watchfulnes." The quiet self-sacrifice and servitude inherent in *primordial fatherly protection and provision* are rendered explicit in Gilmore's (1900) cross-cultural reflections: "Men nurture their society by shedding their blood, their sweat, and their semen, by bringing home food for both child and mother, by producing children, and by dying if necessary in faraway places to provide a safe haven for their people" (p. 230).

I have attempted in this article to emphasize the importance of a father's protective watchfulness, particularly as it emerges during his wife's pregnancy and in the early stages of his infant child's life. This protective agency will moreover be manifest in various ways throughout the course of his children's lives and will be shared with his wife within their parenting alliance. The inherent limitations in his ability to protect his loved ones from the pains and tragedies of fate nonetheless force an involved father to endure the agonizing sense of helplessness in the wake of life's "necessary losses." All the while, yet another form of quiet strength and courage is required of this man, growing to accept his own expendability, as he frequently bears with restraint a position lying "outside" the primacy of his child's (and, frequently, child-mother) dyadic mutualities.[8]

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[8]This should in no way imply that fathers do *not* experience their own unique *dyadic bonding* with their children. The mutual bonds experienced by fathers with their sons and daughters are powerfully rewarding and extremely important in each one's interactive development (see Diamond, 1994). My point, however, is rather that this function of "protective agency" operates largely *outside of* these dyadic bonds, and consequently requires that fathers obtain their gratification from their "watchfulness" less directly and less interactively. Thus, a father's

The essential nature of this complex fatherly provision is powerfully revealed, initially in the delivery room when the father watches his child emerge from within his wife, "while touching anew the unspeakable awe of the miraculous world beyond his control" (Diamond, 1986, p. 466). The rich vicissitudes of this "holding" function are manifest subsequently by a father with his children throughout his life as he increasingly accepts the borders inherently restricting his protective agency. This was most keenly noted by the novelist J. P. Marquand (1937), who poignantly described an aging father's observation about his rapidly maturing son: ". . . as always, his father watched him across the gulf of years and pathos which always must divide a father from his son" (p. 115).

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ability to garner his "rewards" in more vicarious, identificatory forms is essential as his narcissistic investment in his child as a self-object must necessarily be attenuated. A father who is better able to maintain this intrapsychic position, particularly during key junctures in his child's development, is more likely to facilitate his wife's provision of such protective watchfulness, as, for example, during his child's separation-individuation crisis, when the mother is called upon to bear her child's disengagement and yet "watch over" her child's increasing autonomous exploration. The father may be called upon at this stage to "hold" his wife's grief and anxiety while watching over and protecting both her child's and her own developmental trajectory. This "husbandry" function consequently strengthens the husband-wife dyadic bond as well.

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