

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

On John Rowan's 'Patriarchy'

Dear Editors,

How satisfying to read John Rowan's 'Patriarchy: What It Is and Why Some Men Question It' (printed in *S&S* 20 years ago) alongside Manu Bazzano's review of Nick Duffell's book *Wounded Leaders* (Lone Arrow Press, 2014), which I'd saved to read over Christmas and had just finished reading.

In belated response to John's invitation for feedback, I didn't, as he wondered whether women might, '... find it much too brusque and curt, much too cool about the hideousness of patriarchy'. Rather, I felt deeply moved reading about the heavy expectations laid on men (which I suspect may have driven incessant 'teasing' from my brothers); about boys learning 'they are supposed to be *not* like their mothers' (and wondered how this fits with early total dependence); and heart-warmed by truths regarding superiority, 'psychic celibacy', and the 'patripsych' that has been just as deeply ingrained in women as in men. *Especially* in women who, like myself, spent years at boarding school (which might, of course, contribute to my ease with John's 'mainly-written-for-men' presentation) – an institution, as Nick Duffell reiterates in his most recent publication, that became and remains central to the maintenance of patriarchal 'values'.

Best wishes

Jane Barclay

On Sue Gerhardt's 'Hard Times'

Dear Editors,

As a parent of two children under the age of 4, I read Sue Gerhardt's article with both fear and admiration. Fear because, no matter how hard we try as parents to resist neoliberalism's effects, the very act of resistance, while critical, is accompanied by its own kind of insidious stress: that of moving against the grain unsupported. To not be a 'neoliberal family' is to feel the pressure and to take a hit, albeit a hit that many of us are prepared to take. I also feel real admiration for Gerhardt because she crucially emphasizes (because we have a tendency to forget) that developmental dynamics are themselves embedded in, and structured by, pervasive social-cultural forces. To the extent that we remain unaware of such forces, they have coercive power over us. Harry Stack Sullivan reminded us of this in the 1930s, Erich Fromm in the 1960s, Ivan Illich in the 1970s and 1980s, so it is crucial that people like Gerhardt are reminding us today.