

In Praise of (Self) Censorship

Chris Gilmore

I

When you self-censor, who is the “self” doing the censoring, if not an internalized other: Mom/Dad, nosy neighbour, high school bully, ex-gf/bf, tinker, tailor, soldier, spy? Who (and/or what) is doing the tinkering, the tailoring, etc. (ostensibly in service of your “self” and all the other selves that make up what philosophers/influencers call the world) and what are they trying to achieve by doing it? Who does the same for them, and what are they trying to achieve, if not the same thing for someone else, and so on? Is there an un-spied spier, who sees/knows all and dictates—overtly or otherwise—the terms and conditions of our spying?

II

What we reveal to the world (and ourselves, since we are part of the world, even though we’d like to think that we’re above and beyond it, that it’s a charming but ultimately forgettable illusion that we can take and/or leave) is only the tip of the cigar—I mean, iceberg—and who

(and/or what) we really are is so beautiful/profound/
horrifying that we'd rather wait until we're too old
to change to uncover the nature of that "self" we were
so determined to censor, and which may or may not be
our true face behind the mask(s) but might as well be
because we've run out of time, and, frankly, we're tired
of asking—nay, begging—the quest(ions) for
clarification—
at which point the revelation is more consolation
and amusement than revolution, and the barricades
themselves are tired of being stormed and reassembled.