

Conceptualizing Latent Homosexuality as Sexual Identity Diffusion: From the Psychoanalytic Diagnostic of a Distressed Cleric

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Abstract

In our clinical work with patients who are upset by homosexual predispositions, we consistently find distinct markers of biological brain differentiation based on hormonal determinants [1] which interact with problematic preoedipal and oedipal dynamic experiences (e.g. the electal phase, as formulated by Katz [2]). A case diagnostic is presented, where early misinformation of female anatomy enhanced unconscious feminine identification, yielding repressed homosexual fantasies and unique sexual behaviors. Biblical literalism, strict religious strictures, scriptural constructs, and symbolisms intertwined to yield a complex web of sexuality, morality, and world view. The diagnostic entailed the analytic interpretations of behaviors, fantasies, dreams, associations, and memories based on psychoanalytic developmental theory. Diverging from the classic analytic locus where poor parental relationships during the oedipal stage effect an anxious genitally-fixated homosexual profile [3] anchored in the key defenses of projection and reaction formation [4], this patient evinced repressed homosexuality rooted in a phallic stage fixation curtailing psychosexual development and mature relationships, heightened by more primitive splitting and merging defenses. Autoerotic narratives were tracked as they emerged in sexual preferences upon marriage, which entailed an unconscious negation of female sexual anatomy and a preoedipally-derived proclivity toward anal intercourse with others – regardless of their gender. The primary focus of unconscious threat and conflict -- possession vs. loss of his penis -- engendered an unconscious negation of differential sexual identities of himself and others. It is suggested that sexual identity diffusion may often be misdiagnosed as latent homosexuality.

Keywords: Sexual Identity Diffusion; Splitting; Homosexuality; Gender Identity; Religious Doctrine

Initial Patient Presentation

Chris began analysis at age 23 as a seminarian with a generalized anxiety disorder troubled by discordant homosexual fantasies¹. A highly educated renaissance man, his goal was to keep unwanted sexual impulses from invading his actual behavior and

to be a man of God. Chris identified particularly with Kelly's [5] depiction of man as a scientist devoted to the pursuit of truth in order to predict and control life. Resisting temptation was his way of defending truth². He strove to establish an inner sense of justice and truth by following God's word and by interacting morally with others³.

¹This paper was initially formulated as a comprehensive case study including history, analytic process, transference/countertransference, and intervention. Because of the patient's high academic and religious profile, the patient and analyst reviewed and edited the manuscript, excising, and modifying personal and biographic details to insure anonymity. Moreover, since our professional intersections made it likely that some of our colleagues may identify the patient, we deleted key aspects of our relationship, emotional and relational changes (i.e. transference), and non-transference events [6] which unfolded during the analysis. As a result, we were left with an abridged analysis excluding the therapeutic process and its effects. In particular, the affirmative stance in treatment, which entailed helping Chris work through aspects of his sexuality as "natural and developmental endpoint" for him (p. 223) [7], was excised from the paper.

The overall thesis of this work diverges from classic psychoanalysis. It is recognized that there are alternate -- more traditional -- psychoanalytic elaborations; these are recognized but are relegated to footnotes throughout the paper in order to streamline the presentation.

²According to orthodox psychoanalytic theory, enmeshed mothering in childhood promotes a boy's over-identification with mother, engendering feminine self-identity and sexual attraction toward men.

³Chris also cited Epstein's [8] characterization of the chronic cognitive-experiential human effort to reconcile self and world views, to conceptualize his struggle to synthesis his inner reality with his commitment to Christian theology.

He evidenced adequate reality testing, albeit with some borderline features - i.e. splitting defenses and a propensity to choose among different versions of scripture and interpretations to rationalize his attitudes and behaviors. Chris was given to quoting pedantically, in an Asperger-like manner, detailed biblical passages, mostly as metaphorical allusions but sometimes as authoritative and representing truth.

Chris viewed sexual morality literally, citing Biblical condemnations of adultery and effeminacy (I Corinthians 6:9-10) or Scriptural demonizations of homosexuals and criminals (I Timothy 1:8-10). He avoided generally mentioning homosexuality, preferring to call it "Leviticus 20:13" (*If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall be put to death....*). Chris saw homosexuality as an evil anti-God life-style, stressing that Biblical injunctions pertained solely to sexual acts -- not desires or fantasies. Chris rationalized his chronic masturbation history, claiming that it not defined as a sexual practice and that the Scriptures do not condemn it explicitly.

Reconciling homosexual strivings with a life dedicated to God and the Bible, Chris expounded that God censures behavior rather than lust⁴. Presenting his moral challenges on par with those of the Apostle Paul, Chris viewed his homosexual tendencies as a test orchestrated by God who was helping him keep his urges at the fantasy level -- and work them out in analysis.

Chris was an ideal analytic patient, faithfully recording dreams and working through the associations that emerged in the sessions. His honest and minimally defended associations yielded a rich portfolio of fantasy symbolism.

Growing up in a strict religious society

Chris was raised by a puritanical family in an isolated religious town. He had one brother three years his junior, and a number of aunts and cousins in the community. His parents were strict disciplinarians, though not abusive, providing for the boys and showing concern for their education and health. His immediate and extended family members had strong ties, but were emotionally distant and undemonstrative.

He attended religious community-based all-boys schools from pre-kindergarten through seminary which champion strict

religious values based on literal Biblical dogma. The Bible is quoted in daily conversation. Chris' main pastime as a child was Bible reading rather than playing with other children. Chris earned a BA in psychology after high school and his doctorate in Pastoral Counseling while attending seminary. Chris shared that he hated being stereotyped or cubby-holed, and that he enjoys defying religious and academic categories.

Sexuality, as a topic of interest or discussion, is taboo in this culture. Homosexuality is treated as an abomination and viewed as mental illness, evil, and perverted. A youngster who comes out as gay becomes the talk of the town, as people gather in clusters attempting to fathom what went wrong with that person.

Social contact between boys and girls is considered inappropriate. Sex education was totally absent until Chris attended mandatory pre-marriage class in seminary. His sexual information until adulthood included Biblical injunctions, threats, prohibitions, and punishments. Neutral -- let alone positive -- sexual data were non-existent. His attitude toward homosexuality was negative, buttressed by Biblical edicts.

Chris was sheltered until adolescence from knowledge of female anatomy. He was aware that girls lacked male genitalia, but had not idea about their sexual organs. With the custom of public breast-feeding in his community, Chris did not associate breasts with sexuality. Hearing naughty boys refer to a woman as "a piece of ass," he presumed that sexual intercourse referred to anal sex, with an unelaborated understanding that this resulted in pregnancy. Unaware of the vagina, he presumed tacitly that birth occurs anally⁵. In sexual intercourse, as he imagined it, the man was positioned behind the woman, the latter being only passively involved in the process. Having sex with a woman was "exactly the same" as sex with a man, the only difference being that women could get pregnant as a result⁶. His earliest memory of sexual conversation was of a joke he overheard in grade school:

This naughty girl wants to go swimming with the boys. So she makes herself a penis out of clay, and goes to the beach on boys' day. She starts a conversation with a boy, and gets close to him. While they talk, she removes her penis, and sticks the boy's penis into herself without him noticing. When they finish talking, he tries to leave the beach but he finds himself stuck inside the girl and he can't get out.

⁴The defense mechanism of denial was central in this stance. As per Cognitive Dissonance Theory [9], Chris adjusted his "facts" (i.e. Scripture readings) to make them congruent with his drive-originating opinions and attitudes.

⁵Ignorance of sexual anatomy was normative in the community. Chris told of counseling a newly married couple who were concerned about a possible pregnancy because the woman was anxious about having to undergo surgery to remove the baby when she was due.

⁶Chris attributed this perspective to advice his rector gave to a seminarian who was hesitant to marry because he was attracted to men -- that he could engage often in rear entry sex with his wife, since "men and women are exactly alike when viewed from the back".

As a senior in high school, Chris became a dormitory advisor. He gradually became expert in uncovering homosexual activities, specializing in counseling younger students how to adjust properly and avoid evil temptation.

Monthly, a religious Patriarch addressed the community. The local citizenry -- men on one side of the center aisle and women on the other -- would crowd into the seminary's social hall. The clergyman would speak without a microphone, as the crowd surged toward the stage straining to hear him. At one such gathering Chris caught himself fantasizing having anal intercourse with the man he was squeezed against. Initially mystified about the origin of his thoughts, he eventually realized that they originated from his unconscious. This realization also sparked within Chris the insight that his role of anti-homosexual dormitory advisor was serving as vicarious stimulation and that something was amiss with his sexual orientation.

Viewed psychoanalytically, Chris' profound defensive stance toward homosexual strivings was remarkably consistent with the classic social-environmental formulation that argument that "internalized homophobia is... an unavoidable consequence of the developmental experience for homosexual individuals in a homophobic culture" (p. 215) [7].

Elements of Autoeroticism

As a teenager, Chris became obsessed about the meaning of a curse an outside child (i.e. not part of the religious order) yelled at him: "Go screw yourself." Subtle inquiries to the naughty boys in school did not yield any clarification. Chris decided that it referred to performing oral sex on himself, and he attempted repeatedly to touch his penis with his tongue, by stretching his penis up, curving his torso, and extending his tongue. After a year of concerted efforts, he finally made contact. Chris reported disappointingly that it was a *hollow victory* without any eureka effect.

Chris then came up with a secondary interpretation of the invective, which prompted him to work for several months on stretching his penis down between his legs with the aim of inserting it into his anus. When he succeeded, the victory seemed *much less hollow*. Subsequently, he tried to masturbate and ejaculate into his rectum, but this proved difficult (as the erection limited penis maneuvering) and he gradually abandoned the effort.

The idiosyncratic wording of the hollow victory was a red flag for underlying material, eliciting a revealing unconscious structure:

Hollow evokes in me a reference to the anus. It also reminds me about a paper I read about transgender surgery. It described a pro-

cedure where the external skin and nerve endings of the penis are left intact while the inside muscles are removed. The shell of the penis is inverted inward to construct an artificial ex-penis vagina, which is sexually stimulated during intercourse. Hollow connotes to me the absence of penetration. That's why I might have used the word hollow for the meeting of the tongue and the penis, since there was no penetration. In the penile-anal effort, I probably described it as less hollow, since penetration was there to some degree.

Chris offered an intellectualized phenomenological description of his attempt to screw himself and how this related to his overall associations and subjective/symbolic view of intercourse, citing a little mythology book [10] to support his unusual thesis.

In Genesis 1:27, man was first created as a single male-female composite. The same happens in the Greek Zeus and Hera version. Only later, in Genesis 2:21-22, does God surgically separate Adam and Eve into two different individuals. The Bible describes the sex act: "They shall be as one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). What does my unconscious do with all this? If Adam had sex before the surgery, he actually screwed himself. Screwing myself recapitulates the coitus of the original Adam-Eve entity. Man-woman intercourse is a reunification of the two bodies that were once a unity. The Bible states after the surgery: "...man shall ...cleave unto woman, and they shall be as one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). I actually have a fantasy of merging in the typical homosexual scenario as well. When two men have sex, the penis of the rear person is in the anus of the forward person, which is immediately followed by the penis of the forward man protruding erect. In my eye, I blend these two individuals into one, seeing the protruding penis as an extension inserted penis. Basically the rear man's penis is an inner prosthetic device which fortifies the erection of the forward person. They are truly one flesh.

Masturbation was Chris' only sexual activity from puberty until his marriage. In his teens, Chris adopted unique routines/rituals in sex-related activities which were often linked to specific thoughts and concerns. These entailed:

- Masturbating with his left hand exclusively (though right handed)⁷
- Rotating his hand awkwardly while masturbating, so that his the thumb pointed toward his body.
- Masturbating while standing in front of, or adjacent to, a full-length mirror, and observing the process indirectly through the mirror. Alternately, where he would masturbate in the nude between two mirrors, so that he could view his profile from the rear during the process.
- Tucking his genitalia between his legs, and observing that he appeared just like a woman, then suddenly releasing his genitals to transform himself into a man.

⁷In traditional Biblical culture, genitals are handled by the left hand exclusively [11]. This was salient in Chris' sex-aggression connotations as elaborated below.

- After tending to his toileting needs, Chris would remain seated on the toilet for an “inversion procedure”: He would coax his glans backwards into the penis, pulling on the foreskin to envelop the glans and compress most of the shaft, and then pinch the foreskin closed. He would then marvel at the fact that he was just like a woman -- being particularly enthralled with the “artificial pubic mound” which he created over his compressed penis, while the pinched opening of the foreskin resembled a vagina. He would then release his hold, and watch as the glans, followed by the rest of the penis, emerged *magically* (from the “vagina”) in a gradual erection.
- When ejaculating, it was crucial for Chris to ascertain that semen was spurting out actively rather flowing out passively.

Marriage: sexual preferences and heterosexual associations

Chris’ marriage at age 29, while in analysis, occasioned his first interpersonal sexual experience. (The religious order requires all seminarians to be married before ordination.) Chris enjoyed marital sex with his wife, with noteworthy features:

- He never used sex-specific nouns (e.g. penis, testicles, vagina, breast), preferring instead a generic undifferentiated label of genitalia.
- Chris found his wife’s derriere to be the most enthralling part of her body. He also was keen on observing his wife (particularly her buttocks) in the mirror when they had sex.
- Chris had a strong preference for anal sex, although he did enjoy other forms as well.
- In vaginal intercourse, rear entry and the female superior position were preferred.
- During anal or rear entry vaginal sex, Chris felt the need to hold his hand on his wife’s genitalia (which he called “pubic mound”)
- Chris needed his scrotum obscured (in his or his wife’s hand) during intercourse.

His associations to the pubic mound were as follows

I zoom in on Lot’s wife who was transformed into a mound of salt at Sodom’s destruction (Genesis 19:26). I think of salt forming an ossified shell blocking access to Lot’s wife who is trapped underneath. In Biblical times, mounds were often built on top of significant places, to cover up something noteworthy, like a grave. The female pubic mound is mysterious, because it corresponds to where the penis would be in a man, but there is nothing there for a woman. During my inversion rituals, I actually created an artificial mound which then spawned to emit an emerging penis.

Chris offered a recurring dream centering on his removable penis (subsequently associated with that of the naughty girl’s). In the

narrative, Chris would remove his penis and put it in his jacket pocket. Tense moments follow when he inevitably decides to re-attach it to its place, as has a hard time locating it. He becomes frantic in his search, awakening from anxiety. In a later session, further elaborations were offered about the removable penis:

What is special about this penis was that it is has a red glans on each side. That means that it is reversible, so that either end looks like a regular end of a penis. There is no telling which is the front and which the back.

Chris produced a secondary association to the reversible penis – reading the Old Testament story of Ehud, the Israeli who assassinated an oppressive Moabite ruler:

The LORD raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud...the Benjamite, a left-handed man. The Israelites sent tribute by him to Eglon the Moabite King. Ehud made for himself a sword with two mouths... and he bound it on his right thigh under his clothes.... When Ehud finished presenting the tribute, he [s]aid, I have a secret message for you, O King.... Ehud came to him as he was sitting alone in his cool roof chamber.... Ehud reached with his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. The hilt also went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not pull the sword out of his belly; and the dung came out.... When he had gone, the servants came; when they saw that the doors of the roof chamber were locked, they thought he is likely covering his private parts in the cool chamber.... [They later opened the doors].... and there lay their lord dead on the floor (Judges 3:15-24).

Chris added that although the standard Biblical translation refers to a two edged sword, he preferred the correct literal translation as a sword with two mouths. In Chris’ fantasized interpretation, Ehud’s sword had a peculiar design, consisting of a handle attached to a shaft which then culminated in a T-shape, where the horizontal part of the T consisted of two blades pointing away from each other. The edges of these blades were construed by Chris as mouths. The idiosyncratic insistence of referring to the end of a blade as a mouth elicited associations which were sexually aggressive and homosexual respectively: I am thinking of a Woody Allen film, where a fetus is describing his mother having sex:

“This one-eyed bald guy with a big mouth pokes his head in and pulls his head out a couple of times, spits in my face, then disappears.” But it also reminds me of a sin.... When I was a junior, I once snuck into an X-rated movie theater. On the screen two women were having sex, sharing a single 2-foot long dildo that was penis shaped at either end. Each woman had inserted one end of the dildo into her vagina, and they were pumping against each other, each pretending the other was a man.

His recurrent dream of the frantic missing penis search elicited a narrative of another recurrent dream and associations:

I am surprised to find all of my clothing missing in the public bathhouse except for my undershorts. I put those on and run through town feeling very embarrassed and hoping not to be noticed by any parishioners. I know what that dream is all about. In my senior year, I made it a habit to visit the X-rated theater every payday in the big city. One block from the theater, I would look remove my collar, hurry to the theater, pay for my ticket, and take a seat in the back. When it was over, I would leave the theater via a side exit, and then run down the street for a block, hoping I wasn't noticed collarless by any parishioners who may have come into town. I would then put on my collar unobtrusively, while walking to the bus stop.

Chris saw virility as the definition of being a man. This spilled over psychologically to his own sexual identity:

In the Kabbalah, man and woman are characterized as active vs. passive. Obviously, this is based on the icon of sexual intercourse. I have two counterpoints to this distinction. First: The Bible defines gonorrhea (Leviticus 15:2) as passive genital discharges for men and women alike, so there we have semen flowing and not ejaculated. Second: I read somewhere that some women actually ejaculate when they climax. To me, a real man must be able to impregnate a woman. The Talmud teaches that semen can impregnate only when it shoots out. So, if my semen spurts out that shows that I am a virile man. If not, I might as well be a woman, because I can't get anyone pregnant anyway.

Diagnostic conceptualization

Chris does not meet any diagnostic criteria of gender identity disorder, such as sexual identity dysphoria [12], gender distress [13], blurring of gender identity [14], or disputing his masculine identity [15]. What we have here, instead, is a diffusion of sexual identity marked by homosexual elements, idiosyncratic sexuality/intimacy patterns, relationship anomalies, and borderline splitting and merging fantasies.

Early misunderstanding of gender differentiation may precipitate gender diffusion and a disposition toward same-sex attraction

[16]. Chris' lack of social contact with girls during childhood and adolescence increased the likelihood of a sexual focus on boys. Moreover, anatomical misinformation engendered incomplete sexual differentiation, exacerbating sexual identity diffusion. While Chris' physical attraction to men and women reflects functional bisexuality, it derives developmentally from sexual immaturity.

Differential sexual identity becomes fixed at the phallic stage [17]. For a boy, male self-identification is based on his penis and female identification on the vagina. Chris' diffuse sexual identity affected self-identity and identity of women, each yielding sexual anomalies. While Chris' overt sexual self-identity is indeed penis-centered, his female icon never incorporated the vagina. With breasts deemphasized as sexual in his culture, women retained for Chris a pre-phallic undifferentiated sexual identity typical of the anal stage: A woman was essentially a man whose penis was missing. Chris' sexual differentiation was thus asymmetric -- he is different from her in that he has what she does not (penis), but also has what she has (anus).

Chris' fantasy of sexual union with men is not interpersonal, nor is he attracted to men due to a feminine gender identity. Indeed, his sexual attraction to women evinces a limited focus on genitalia, anchored on a distorted female body image. Instead of being disposed toward relationships, he was fixated on anal and phallic body parts -- in contrast to interpersonal attraction built on familial or interpersonal interaction experiences⁸. Rather than being attracted to men and women as such, his attraction was essentially generic.

In fantasizing a sexual partner, the pertinent anatomy of a man (his anus) was equivalent to that of a woman. This enabled non-gender-specific sexual expression, since Chris' internal sexual intercourse template -- where he would penetrate another's anus -- did not intrinsically dictate the sex of the receptive partner⁹. Instead, the sexual delineation of men versus women across the board -- for himself and others -- is diffuse.

It is suggested, furthermore, that his sexual preferences and fantasies are consistent with a goal of achieving a gender-neutral identity¹⁰ which negates the construct of gender identity altogether [18].

⁸Chris shared that he enjoys rear entry sex because it is impersonal and feels more sexual.

Psychoanalytically, Chris' relationship template derived from a constricted part-object focus on the mother's genitalia rather than her person. He was fixated at the sex-organ focus of the phallic stage where genital stimulation is the primary focus of libido, predating the person-oriented cathexis onto a sexual partner of the genital stage. Ordinarily, the oedipal conflict usurps this stage, allowing it to be transformed (via the latency period) into interpersonal sexuality. For Chris, this never occurred.

⁹Analytically, denial of differential male-female sex characteristics enabled the suppression of homosexual wishes. Originating in anatomic misinformation, denial persisted as sexual identity diffusion even after Chris assimilated corrective information in adolescence.

¹⁰The minimal current clinical criterion for Sexual Identity Diffusion is discomfort with one's identified gender [19], though it has also been applied to the personal negation of one's gender and sexual identity, as dramatized in the case of pop icon Michael Jackson [20]. In our terminology, however, sexual diffusion is more than personal, entailing (unconscious) negation of sexual identity for oneself and for all others.

Interpretive hypotheses

At the pornographic theater, the removable collar enabled Chris to transition from man of God to man of flesh. The naughty girl with the removable penis is sinful -- just as the clergyman with the removable collar is lustful and un-God like. Utilizing the defense mechanism of undoing, removing the collar suspends his cleric identity and allows him to indulge in forbidden sexuality (in general), while penis removal enables fantasized sex specifically with men¹¹.

It is suggested that Chris' fantasy when observing his wife in the mirror during sex — that she was actually another person — and not his wife, was not motivated by a voyeuristic motif. His particular focus on her derriere (a body part which is not intrinsically female) allowed Chris to fantasize the gender of the other person as male.

It also emerged that Chris was unconsciously reconstructing sex with his wife by fantasizing himself as the receptive partner (in a female identificatory role) having sex with a man, construing his wife as inserting her penis into his body. Chris' preferred female-superior sex position enhanced this reversed sex fantasy. Furthermore, when he viewed himself with his penis in place, his unconscious construed him as a woman who is being penetrated by a man's (two-sided) penis. His sudden amazing metamorphosis from a woman to a man (during his inversion ritual) had similar connotations, as he actually interpreted the appearance of the penis – not as a change to masculinity but – as a fantasized penetration by a (two sided) penis of another man.

When Chris kept his hand on his wife's pubic mound during rear-entry sex, he unconsciously assumed that the mound was a covering for male genitalia. Possibly, he fantasized that his penetration would force her hidden male genitalia to emerge from her (cf. the prosthetic penis in homosexual penetration). This would parallel the process where he would observe his penis emerging from a simulated vaginal opening under his own artificially created pubic mound during his autoerotic rituals.

It is the behavioral ritual where Chris tucked his genitals away and then exposed them, where Chris transformed himself into a woman and then into a man, that brought the entire fantasy complex into proper focus. Taken in conjunction with the fantasized two-sided detachable penis, it is hypothesized that Chris wished, and fantasized himself, to be a woman.

The question which plagued Chris, and informed much of his neurotic sexual rituals, was: Am I really a man? This did not merely indicate a fear of insufficient virility. Instead, it was his way of expressing an underlying anxiety about his actual gender identity. This anxiety yielded different neurotic sexual rituals which were devoted respectively to demonstrate his masculinity, his femininity, or confabulations of the two, respectively.

Chris' anxiety about his lack of masculinity was characterized by ambivalence. The neurotic masturbatory reassurances about his virility entailed a corollary wish toward femininity as well. The longed for (as well as feared) possibility that his ejaculatory ability would not be confirmed was his ticket to the fantasized option that he was, in essence, a woman after all¹².

Splitting and merging

Chris' associations and reflections on the symbolism of the symmetrical penis elucidated a primary complex of splitting defenses with borderline features¹³.

- Masturbating with the left hand, as well as with a reversed hand position, allowed him to fantasize that he was being masturbated by another man.
- Observing his masturbation via a mirror allowed him to construe the situation that he was, in fact, observing another man masturbating.
- Rear entry sex with his wife, or viewing her buttocks in a mirror during sex, enabled Chris to transform her into as a male alternate.
- Studiously avoiding names for sexual organs and using all-purpose generic words which were non-gender-specific allowed him to avoid committing himself to a male or female gender identity.

¹¹Analytically, Chris' fantasy of being a woman stems from castration anxiety. To validate his virility, Chris would often masturbate to confirm that his semen was spurting out (i.e. that he was capable of impregnating a woman). Transitioning into a woman was his fantasized fallback should he fail to be a real man. Alas, his theory about female ejaculation evoked a secondary fear -- if impotent, he may not qualify as a bone fide woman either. Thus, negation of gender specificity may have been his ego's only recourse.

Chris also attributed the parallel of the removable collar and the removable penis to a singular underlying Biblical dimension equating femininity and immorality.

¹²From a defense mechanism dynamic perspective, the wish to be a woman is a counterphobic response to castration anxiety. Based on reaction formation (i.e. castration fear is worse than castration), it parallels the paradoxical quest by some gay men (bug chasers) to contract AIDS in order to be liberated of the fear of getting infected [21].

¹³Psychoanalytically, Chris' masturbation rituals and preferences -- some dating back to puberty -- served as the basis of a preoedipal formulation of an underlying homosexual complex, which incorporated these defenses.

Splitting was a key dynamic in Chris' gender identity at the unconscious level. There was an apparent confluence between two primary fantasies: that of being a woman who is having intercourse with a man, and that of being a man having intercourse with another man. It is posited that the primary mechanism involved here was splitting (i.e. dissociating) part of himself into an entity who is actually another man with whom he can enjoy homosexual relations. At times, his fantasies entailed inserting his penis into the anus of the man whose buttocks he observed in the double mirror arrangement. As a rule the man was actually a split-off aspect of himself (a subsidiary theme originating from the original self-intercourse scenes of Chris' adolescence). This split-off man represented the same individual who was observed masturbating in the mirror. He was also, at other times, the same man (symbolically) whose buttocks he observed when his wife was standing adjacent to the mirror. He also took the form of the same fantasized man who masturbated him (using a left hand which did not feel personally familiar or using a reversed hand position which implied that it was the hand of another man).

Chris used his wife as a fantasized split-off man in an over-determined defensive maneuver. Beginning with the intuitive attitude that a woman is actually a man with inadequate genitalia, a hallmark of neurotic sexual fantasies according to Horney [22], Chris confounded this premise with the fantasy of women incorporating the penis during intercourse. Since Chris never proceeded beyond autoerotic phallic functioning, this fantasy corresponded only partially with the classic psychoanalytic conceptualization of the woman's incorporation of the penis during intercourse into her feminine identity [23]. For Chris there was no predatory vagina dentata theme. Instead, the transfer of the penis was fantasized by Chris as a role reversal, which entailed his wife owning his very extrajected penis, thus becoming a person with adequate genitalia (i.e., a man) who is having sex with Chris. Moreover, the penis is thus readily available for re-incorporation by Chris. (When this contingency chain was interrupted, as in Chris' night terrors, a reactive anxiety would engender the frantic search for the lost penis.) When the fantasized splitting process of the wife failed, Chris could always resort to his screen memory of sharing a two-sided dildo penis substitute with his wife, with the aim of ultimately transferring to her full ownership of the penis thus transforming her into a veridical male with whom to have intercourse.

In his fantasies, Chris had magically transformed himself into the anecdotal naughty girl who, though appearing as a man, is ac-

tually a person who can detach his penis at will and enjoy relationships with men, only to subsequently resume his male identity. Moreover, when the penis is back in place, it can be fantasized to concretize perpetual intercourse with another man whose penis was stuck within Chris -- just as it had been inserted into the naughty girl. Obscuring the scrotum during intercourse is hypothesized as a method of negating its telltale existence which brands him as male; this allowed Chris to utilize his removable penis fantasy to imagine that he was a woman (without male genitalia) and that the penis he was observing during intercourse was actually that of his partner penetrating him.

Because of his upbringing, women were unfamiliar to Chris. His formative unisex environment pushed him to channel his sexuality unto boys. Due to lack of anatomic information, female genitalia were unfamiliar to him and the notion of intercourse was limited to anal intercourse – which easily accommodated homosexual fantasies¹⁴. Finally forced to confront distinct female genitalia, his adaptations took the on several features:

- To persist in anal sex as a preferred mode, minimizing dissonance with his underlying sexuality framework;
- Unconsciously bequeathing his penis to his wife, by projection and splitting, which allowed him to maintain a seeming attachment unto a (fantasized) male, and also (paradoxically) allowed him to...
- fantasize his own emasculation, as a means of maintaining the erotic attachment to the male from a feminized role.

For Chris, coitus represented the merging of the two individuals into a composite unity with an enhanced penis¹⁵, entailing a predisposition toward anal sex. Moreover, fantasized homosexual merging yielded a composite reinforced penis less prone to loss.

It is hypothesized, furthermore, that Chris also had a merged sexual identity as a composite male-female (though he preferred the gender neutral term), as reflected in his fantasied transformations between genders. His fluid non-cubby-holed religious identity (symbolized by the removable collar) resonates dynamically with his fluid sexual identity (symbolized by penis removal and penis to vagina surgical transformation associations).

Psychosexual factors

In the phallic stage, sexuality is autoerotic [22,24]; others' needs are unrecognized, as sexual interactions are intended solely for

¹⁴Chris also deduced from the Biblical wording of homosexuality (to lie with a man as one lies with a woman) that sex with women must entail anal penetration.

¹⁵In object relations conceptualization, this was a regression to a more primitive selfobject composite re-imposed in fantasy on the adult sexual relational unit.

personal gratification. In mature genital functioning, the stress is on sexual relationships with another person. It is only in the (post latency) de-emphasis of autoerotic phallic focus that one acquires a genuine interest and capacity to appreciate others' needs and feelings¹⁶ [25,26].

In analysis, Chris' key unconscious focus was shown to be the possession or (fantasized) loss of genitalia. Such dynamics are exacerbated when the phallic mode invades heterosexual interactions, as the contrast between the genitalia of the two partners re-evokes repressed oedipal anxieties. These anxieties were symbolized in Chris' hostile confabulation of a fantasized disembodied penis invading the womb repeatedly to spit in his face. It is suggested that much of Chris' disturbing ideation and affect -- imagined penis loss, penis transfer to his spouse, preoccupation with the sexual identity of his partner, homosexual anxieties -- were all subsidiary to a basic pre-genital concern with a single dialectic -- having vs. not having the penis.

The aggressive aspects of penile mastery, symbolized in Ehud's double-edged sword in the Biblical narrative, yielded an analytic key to Chris' anal-sexual structure. The Bible depicts Benjamin (Ehud's tribe) as sexually deviant (i.e. left handed); the entire tribe engaged in gang rape (Judges 19). Miller [27] argues that the characterization of Ehud as a lefty signifies homosexuality. Pointing to the King's dismissal of his attendants so that he be sequestered with Ehud in a locked quarters, and noting the evocative implication of referring to the king as Eglon (a derivative of the Hebrew word for a feminine calf), Miller proposes that Ehud approached the King offering a homosexual interlude. Niditch [28] suggests that Eglon covering his private parts connotes sexual intent, noting that Ehud's dagger was located at his loins, the "seat of male virility" (p.117). As Miller construes it, "Ehud... administers poetic justice by killing [the king] in a violent parody of homosexual intercourse"¹⁷ (p. 116).

Chris' gender change fantasy pointedly reflects Miller's symbolic interpretative narrative of the repercussions to Ehud, entailed in the overdetermined sexual assassination of the king:

Eglon sees all this as a prelude to a homosexual encounter, and his expectations appear to be fulfilled when Ehud reaches ... under his clothes to draw forth the phallic object... a pointed sword, which he then thrust into Eglon's obese belly so deeply that not only the sword but also the hilt (i.e., testicles) disappeared inside and could not be removed (p. 115).

There is an apparent confluence here of homosexual sex and anal function (the king sitting on the toilet and feces emerging as a result of the stabbing), paralleling the phallic conflation of the penis and the dagger. In Chris' fantasized symbolism, the tribute Ehud brought was none other than the male genitalia which he left within Eglon during sex before escaping¹⁸.

Given Chris' sustained masturbation rituals, it appears that his heterosexuality was distinctly of phallic origin. Contrary to the centrality of oedipal issues typically posited in the analysis of homosexual anxieties, Chris' associations focused, not on the avoidance of the castrative threat, but rather on pre-oedipal concerns about penis permanence, ownership, and transfer. Such (unconscious) preoccupation is central in partial impulse satisfaction and pre-oedipal relations, where phallic concerns seek reassurance about penis permanence [26].

Summary

What appears as a case of suppressed homosexuality -- exacerbated by gender separation, strict religious sexual injunctions, sexual anatomy ignorance, and prominent autoerotic fantasies -- was analyzed to reveal gender change wishes overlaid by defensive splitting and merging fantasies. Psychosexual development appears arrested preoedipally, with strong anal and phallic fea-

¹⁶In classic psychosexual dynamics, "the function of latency ... is to serve as a period for the decathecting of the castrative fear (p. 627)" [25]. The transition (over the course of latency) from phallic to genital sexuality, with the concomitant shift from the primacy from masturbation to the primacy of coitus, is predicated on the resolution of oedipal conflict.

¹⁷Homosexual connotations of the Ehud episode have been noted by other biblical scholars [29-31]. The parallel between the two-mouthed dagger tied to Ehud's thigh and the two-sided reversible penis fantasy, suggests a dual oedipal function of the sexual-aggressive penis. Eglon's emerging dung after the stabbing/sexual encounter with Ehud resonates with Freud's [32] assertion that defecation is an icon of the castration complex, rooting castration anxiety in fear of feces loss [25]. Exceeding the scope of fantasized penis loss by the oral sadistic vagina dentata [33], anal sadism features rectum dentata [34] which eliminates the testicles as well; Chris' hiding his testicles during intercourse may represent retributive castration for homosexual fantasies. Experiencing anal penetration reified a fantasized feminine gender identity. The toilet seat is thus an ideal arena for Chris' autoerotic anal sex and penis inversion rituals to allay anal-phallic loss anxieties.

¹⁸It is in the deuterophallic sub-stage [24] that penis possession is central to sexuality while the anxiety from viewing women as castrated is negated by reparative fantasized replacement. The naughty girl is Chris' projection of homosexual ideation, as his penis loss entails a wish fulfillment (to be a girl, and have sex with boys). The frantic search for the lost penis in his recurrent dream symbolizes the guilt-induced anxiety intended to counter this wish.

res. Relationships are severely curtailed, as others (and Chris as a selfobject) are defined by their genitalia. It is argued that Chris' sexual idiosyncrasies cannot be sufficiently explained by the classic psychoanalytic attribution of homosexuality to castration anxiety [35]. Instead, Chris manifests unconscious sexual identity confusion of males and females across the board – not merely of the self. This yields a personality-behavior-fantasy complex devoted to his internalization of a gender-neutral identity. Remarkably, bridging divides is a consistent feature of Chris' personality as he defies categories in his academic to “scholarship (where he resists being cubby-holed), his theology (where he espoused hair-splitting Biblical compromises), and his fantasied transitions in sexual and religious identification (as symbolized by the removable penis and collar respectively).

Chris' inner orientation is functionally bisexual, but his desires for sexual activity are not characterized by attraction to men as such. Instead he shows a phallic fixation mired in fantasied preoccupation with having versus not having a penis¹⁹. The primary memory of a naughty girl with a removable penis (a boy who was “really” a girl) is Chris' icon of gender identity. His primitive defense mechanism profile -- splitting, merging, and denial -- is typical of borderline personalities [36,37]. He devotes his ego primarily toward a gender-neutral identity as his masculinity is unconsciously negated by denial. Moreover, Chris' pattern of sexual identity diffusion echoes demonstrated linkages between splitting and generalized identity confusion [38], confirming Akhtar's [39] formulation of gender dysphoria in his conceptualization of identity diffusion.

Conclusion

This study offers an alternative perspective to the dynamics of overt and symbolic homosexual and bisexual preoccupations within the constructs of psychoanalytic theory. It is argued that children raised under sex-gender, educational, cultural, or familial constraints are predisposed to gender and sexual identity problems. As such, Chris' dilemma may not be unusual. Studies have consistently shown that homosexuality is very common among priests [40]. Tellingly, Diaz and Demczuk [41] report that some clergy believe that as much as 75% of their number are homosexual, with one cleric stating that he assumed every priest was gay unless he definitely knows otherwise. Drawing from our analytic experience with clergy who are troubled by (what they consider) underlying homosexual preferences, it is suggested that we are dealing here with gender identity diffusion (which emerge due to the constraints noted above) rather than homosexuality per se.

Based on conceptualizations emerging from this analysis, it is worthwhile to consider Mendoza's [42] qualification of the dynamic significance of sexuality: “It is not what we do in sex which matters, or whom we do it with, but why we do it” (p. 159).

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¹⁹This facilitated his fantasied transitioning into a woman, since it merely entailed penis loss.

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