

THEORY II: BEYOND WISH AND DEFENSE

EROTIC NARCISSISM

Aim:

The purpose of this class is to acquaint the candidate with the concept of erotic narcissism (the libidization of the narcissistic object). Case material from the Leonardo case, material from analytic cases, and fictional depictions will be used to present essential features of the clinical syndrome. At the end of the class, the candidate should be able to understand the dynamics of mirror perversions, apply them to other forms of narcissistic object relations, and relate them to the mental mechanisms that Freud described in his self-analysis.

Reading:

This handout

Optional Reading:

Bradlow P, Coen SJ: Mirror masturbation. *Psychoanal. Quarterly*, 1984; 53: 267-285.

Coen SJ: Sexualization as a predominant mode of defense. *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.*, 1981; 29: 893-920.

Reich A: Narcissistic object choice in women. *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.*, 1953; 1: 22-44.

Reich A: Masturbation and self-esteem. In: *Annie Reich: Psychoanalytic Contributions*. NY: IUP, 1973; pp. 312-333.

Introduction

Freud wrote *On Narcissism: An Introduction* in September of 1913, having had the paper in mind since June of 1913, and having inserted some references to the subject in the last section of *Totem and Taboo* at the end of 1912. It should be noted that the section on narcissism in *Three Essays on Sexuality* was only added during a revision in 1915. The studies on Leonardo (and Schreber) are therefore earlier than his full-fledged development of the topic, and the discussion in the Leonardo paper is the first overt development of the themes we have traced in *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

1. Two Readings from the Monograph on Leonardo (1910)

In his study of Leonardo da Vinci, Freud conceptualized him as a narcissistic character. As you will see in the following extract from Strachey, Freud's interest in Leonardo originated in his clinical experience with a patient who repetitively demonstrated the formation of a narcissistic object while on the couch:

But the immediate stimulus to writing the present work appears to have come in the autumn of 1909 from one of his patients who, as he remarked in a letter to Jung on October 17, seemed to have the same constitution as Leonardo without his genius.

- From the Editor's Introduction

What this patient showed was a repetitive sequence in which he began to speak of some woman with obvious signs of sexual interest. At this point in the session there would be a silence, and the next association would concern the patient's love for young boys. Freud conjectured that, in the moment of silence, the transference object had been abandoned and replaced by an identification with the mother for whom the object stood. This identification resulted in an internalized self-self relationship in which the patient loved himself (as a young boy) the way his mother had loved him. He then externalized his image of himself onto a young boy that Freud would later describe as an *extraneous figure*. Now, identified with his mother, he could love this young boy. In describing this mechanism, Freud stated:

We should not venture to infer a connection of this sort from Leonardo's distorted reminiscence if we did not know from the psychoanalytic study of homosexual patients that such a connection [between the relation to the mother in childhood and later homosexuality] does exist and is in fact an intimate and necessary one ... In all our male homosexual cases the subjects had had a very intense erotic attachment to a female person, as a rule their mother, during the first period of childhood, which is afterwards forgotten; this attachment was evoked or encouraged by too much tenderness on the part of the mother herself, and further reinforced by the small part played by the father during their childhood ... I was ... strongly impressed by cases in which the father was absent from the beginning or left the scene at an early date, so that the boy found himself left entirely under feminine influence. Indeed it almost seems as though the presence of a strong father would ensure that the son made the correct decision in his choice of object, namely someone of the opposite sex.

After this preliminary stage a transformation sets in whose mechanism is known to us but whose motive forces we do not yet understand. The child's love for his mother cannot continue to develop consciously any further; it succumbs to repression. The boy represses his love for his

mother: he puts himself in her place, identifies himself with her, and takes his own person as a model in whose likeness he chooses the new objects of his love. In this way he has become a homosexual. What he has in fact done is to slip back into auto-erotism: for the boys whom he now loves as he grows up are after all only substitutive figures and revivals of himself in childhood - boys whom he loves in the way in which his mother loved him when he was a child. He finds the objects of his love along the path of narcissism, as we say; for Narcissus, according to the Greek legend, was a youth who preferred his own reflection to everything else and who was changed into the lovely flower of that name.

Psychological considerations of a deeper kind justify the assertion that a man who has become a homosexual in this way remains unconsciously fixated to the mnemonic image of his mother. By repressing his love for his mother he preserves it in his unconscious and from now on remains faithful to her. While he seems to pursue boys and to be their lover, he is in reality running away from the other women, who might cause him to be unfaithful. In individual cases direct observation has also enabled us to show that the man who gives the appearance of being susceptible only to the charms of men is in fact attracted by women in the same way as a normal man; but on each occasion he hastens to transfer the excitation he has received from women on to a male object, and in this manner he repeats over and over again the mechanism by which he acquired his homosexuality.

This, then, is Freud's first definition of narcissism. It is a mode of object relations, a way of relating to other people created by the replacement of a transference object with an identification. As a result the narcissist takes himself, internally, as his own object (i.e., he creates a self-referential loop within his own psychic apparatus, a *self-self relationship*). He then finds an external object "along the path of narcissism", i.e., someone who reminds him of himself.

The process of repression is effected by an alteration of the ego. As Freud noted eleven years later, an identification such as this "remolds the ego in one of its important features --- in its sexual character --- upon the model of what has hitherto been the object" (*Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, 1921, pp. 108-109). Widlöcher calls this "the establishment of a fundamental dualism ... of the wish to identify with the object and the wish to relate to it --- of primary identification and object relation" (Widlöcher, D (1985), *The wish for identification and structural effects in the work of Freud*. *Int. J. Psychoanal.*, 66: 31 - 46).

Note that Freud insists that there is not a complete replacement and that the subject continues to oscillate between transference relations and narcissistic ones; the scene of action is in the present, not in the childhood. Secondly, the very act of identification that serves to repress the original erotic impulses at the same time fixates them so that the individual remains internally true to his original object. The result is a "splitting of the

ego” with an “altered” part marked by identification with the object set off against a “normal” part characterized by a (fixated) direct transference link to the original.

2. Narcissistic identifications in “*Mourning and Melancholia*”

It is precisely this mechanism which lies at the core of Freud’s conception of melancholia:

But the free libido was not displaced on to another object; it was withdrawn into the ego. There, however, it was not employed in any unspecified way, but served to establish an *identification* of the ego with the abandoned object. Thus the shadow of the object fell upon the ego, and the latter could henceforth be judged by a special agency, as though it were an object, the forsaken object. In this way an object-loss was transformed into an ego-loss and the conflict between the ego and the loved person into a cleavage between the critical agency of the ego and the ego as altered by identification (1917, p. 249).

It is the fact that “the object-choice has been effected on a narcissistic basis” that paves the way for the return to narcissism: “hence the narcissistic identification with the object becomes a substitute for the erotic cathexis.” He goes on to talk of “the conclusion, which our theory would require --- namely, that the disposition to fall ill of melancholia ... lies in the predominance of the narcissistic type of object-choice.”

If the object of the self-accusation (the ego as transformed by identification) is the result of narcissistic processes, so is the accusing agency. In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, he traces the “cruel piece” that rages against the ego transformed by identification to “the ‘ego ideal’ ... heir to the original narcissism in which the childish ego enjoyed self-sufficiency” (1921, p. 110).

In *The Ego and the Id* he proposed the same conception, continuous with his thinking since 1910:

When it happens that a person has to give up a sexual object, there quite often ensues an alteration of his ego which can only be described as a setting up of the object inside the ego, as it occurs in melancholia (1923, p. 29)

It is at this time that he stressed the importance of narcissistic identification in his thinking: “the ego is only the residue of abandoned object-relations” (1923, p. xx).

The easiest place to study such erotic narcissistic relations is in the phenomenon of the mirror perversion in which the subject becomes sexually excited by his own mirror image (clearly an object that reminds him of himself). The mirror perversions have the additional advantage of being equally common in women and therefore of not being tied

exclusively to the vicissitudes of male development. In this class, we will concentrate primarily on mirror perversions of various kinds. It is important to remember that we are studying them for the insight they give us into narcissistic relations that are **not** overtly of this kind and **appear** to be with other people.

3. Mirror masturbation in the Rat Man (1909)

In his Original Record of the Case (pp. 302-303), Freud reported that the Rat Man had begun masturbation, including mirror play, following his father's death. He would stand nude before the mirror and sometimes would use a small mirror between his legs to look at his penis while he masturbated. In the published record of the case, Freud reports:

He used to arrange that his working hours should be as late as possible in the night. Between twelve and one o'clock at night he would interrupt his work, and open the front door of the flat as though his father were standing outside it; then coming back into the hall, he would take out his penis and look at it in the looking-glass (p. 204).

The Rat Man thus took himself (his body or his penis in the mirror image) as an erotic object and then pretended that he was his father (i.e., identified with his father) looking at himself while he related to that object. The mirror image here is the external object that reminds the subject of himself. Since this is a case of Obsessional Neurosis in which the analysis of the superego (not yet named in 1909) is a primary concern, we are surprisingly confronted with a personified sexual fantasy at the core of the Ratman's internalized relation with his father, i.e., the sexualized enactment before the mirror has as its purpose the summoning-up of the experience of being looked over by the (dead) father. This is precisely the mechanism at work in the Schreber case.

4. The Case of Schreber (1911)

In addition to the pedophilia shown by individuals of the Leonardo type, another form of erotized narcissism is transvestism. Like all perversions, this is seen almost exclusively in men. Most transvestites are firmly heterosexual in their orientation and most also practice mirror masturbation, becoming excited about their own image when they wear female garb. Transvestism is closely allied to fetishism: in fetishism the woman is made to bear the fetishistic object in order to excite the man; in transvestism, the man wears the object himself in order to excite himself when he looks in the mirror or else to identify with other men who become excited when they see him dressed like that. In addition to the paranoia for which he has become famous, the psychotic jurist Daniel-Paul Schreber was also a narcissistic transvestite who, at one point, described himself as "a man and a woman in one person having intercourse with myself": as succinct a description of an erotized self-self relation as can be made. At this point we will not stress Schreber's paranoia. However, in reading the following material, keep in mind Freud's dictum that "paranoia is that which arises in the place of a self-reproach."

The following material was not available to Freud, it having been first published after World War II by MacAlpine and Hunter in their edition of Schreber's *Memoirs of my Nervous Illness*. On several occasions, Schreber appealed to the court for his release from the Sonnenstein Asylum, and, on each occasion, the Superintendent of the Asylum, a Dr. Weber, wrote to the court explaining his opposition to Schreber's request:

From Dr. Weber's report to the Court (December, 1899):

The patient's delusional system amounts to this: he is called to redeem the world and to bring back to mankind the lost state of Blessedness ... The most essential part of his mission of redemption is that it is necessary for him first of all to be transformed into a woman ... it only remains to mention that also in the patient's behavior, in the clean shaving of his face, in his pleasure in feminine toilet articles, in small feminine occupations, in the tendency to undress more or less and to look at himself in the mirror, to decorate himself with gay ribbons and bows, etc., in a feminine way, the pathological direction of his fantasy is manifested continually.

From Dr. Weber's report to the Court (November, 1900):

The patient (probably in order to evoke the frequently mentioned soul-voluptuousness) moves about his room half-naked, stands in front of the mirror in a very low-cut vest decorated with gay ribbons, gazing at what he believes is his female bosom. He exposes himself to colds by this behavior...

From Schreber's "Grounds of Appeal":

The only thing which could be counted as somewhat unreasonable [is] that at times I was seen standing in front of the mirror or elsewhere with some female adornments (ribbons, trumpery necklaces, and suchlike), with the upper half of my body exposed. This by the way happens only when I am alone, never as far as I can avoid it within sight of other people. The small acquisitions needed (also some sewing material and suchlike), which for the most part were obtained for me by Asylum officials, cost hardly more than a few marks ... The danger of catching cold which the medical expert considers possible, certainly does not arise at usual room temperatures, as the example of ladies in décolleté sufficiently shows.

Schreber insisted that he really was both a man and a woman in one body:

From Schreber's third note to Dr. Weber:

When I exert light pressure with my hand on any part of my body I can

feel certain string or cord-like structures under the skin; these are particularly marked on my chest where the woman's bosom is, here they have the peculiarity that one can feel them ending in nodular thickenings. Through pressure on one such structure I can produce a feeling of female sensuous pleasure, particularly if I think of something feminine.

He further insisted that, appearances notwithstanding, he was truly a man who had fought all the attempts that God Himself had made to destroy his manliness. It was God Himself who was homosexually attracted to the man Schreber and who had attempted to extricate Himself from that attraction by "unmanning" the object that excited him:

All the attacks made over the years, on my life, my bodily integrity, my manliness and my reason, were and still are based on the same idea: to withdraw again as far as possible from the power of attraction of my over-excited nerves, which far surpasses anything that has ever existed before. To that end one at first considered my unmanning ... years after my arrival at Sonnenstein, the idea of unmanning still appeared ... God's rays frequently mocked me about a supposedly imminent unmanning as "Miss Schreber" [in English in the original] ... I myself felt the danger of unmanning for a long time as a threatening ignominy, especially while there was the possibility of my body being sexually abused by other people ...

God Himself had attempted to transform Schreber into a woman (in order to free Himself from His homosexual attraction to Schreber as a man):

During that time the signs of a transformation into a woman became so marked on my body, that I could no longer ignore the imminent goal at which the whole development was aiming. In the immediately preceding nights my male sexual organ might actually have been retracted had I not resolutely set my will against it. Soul-voluptuousness had become so strong that I myself received the impression of a female body, first on my arms and hands, later on my legs, bosom, buttocks, and other parts of my body.

But Schreber has triumphed by maintaining his masculinity and using his imagination to actively transform himself into a woman:

To shave my moustache off had become a necessity to me ... it became necessary for me, at least at nighttime, to support my imagination of being a female, and a moustache would naturally have been an insurmountable obstacle for this illusion.

By vivid imagination I can produce pictures of all recollections from my life ... so that these images become visible either inside my head or if I wish, outside, where I want them to be seen by my own nerves and by the

rays ... for instance while playing the piano I see myself at the same time standing in front of a mirror in the adjoining room in female attire; when I am lying in bed at night I can give myself and the rays the impression that my body has female breasts and a female sex organ. The picturing of female buttocks on my own body - *honi soit qui mal y pense* - has become such a habit that I do it almost automatically whenever I bend down.

Notice that Schreber has here described a process identical to the one that interests Freud: images from inside the head can be sent outside to be seen by the subject's own nerves. In creating this *miracled up* woman, he is offering God Himself (who wants to look at Schreber as woman just as the Ratman's father "wants" to look at the Ratman's penis) the object of His desire:

Rays (N.B., the emanations of God Himself) after all continually want to see what pleases them, and these are foremost either *female beings* [N.B., italics mine], through which their sensation of voluptuousness is stimulated, or their own miracles, which give them the joy of having created something ...

Thus, having resisted God Himself's attempts to unman him, Schreber can take the same sexual pleasure in looking at his mirror image that the rays take (i.e., he can become like God). He exhibitionistically invites an audience to look at his female self:

When the rays approach, my breast gives the impression of a pretty well developed female bosom; this phenomenon can be seen by anyone who wants to observe me with his own eyes. I am therefore in a position to offer objective evidence by the observation of my own body. A brief glance however would not suffice, the observer would have to go to the trouble of spending 10 or 15 minutes near me. In that way anybody would notice the periodic swelling and diminution of my bosom. Naturally hairs remain under my arms and on my chest; these are by the way sparse in my case; my nipples also remain small as in the male sex. Notwithstanding, I venture to assert flatly that anybody who sees me standing in front of a mirror with the upper part of my body naked would get the undoubted impression of a female trunk - especially when the illusion is strengthened by some feminine adornments ...

When he becomes sexually excited by looking in the mirror he masturbates, thinking about himself as a woman. Whereas masturbation may be condemnable in others, it is praiseworthy in him. Note his defense of the moral superiority of narcissistic erotism:

Few people have been brought up according to such strict moral principles as I, and have throughout life practiced such moderation especially in matters of sex, as I venture to claim for myself. Mere low sensuousness

can therefore not be considered a motive in my case ... But as soon as I am alone with God, if I may so express myself, I must continually or at least at certain times, strive to give the divine rays the impression of a woman in the height of sexual delight; to achieve this I have to employ all possible means, and have to strain all my intellectual powers and foremost my imagination.

For me ... *moral limits to voluptuousness no longer exist* [N.B., my italics], indeed in a certain sense the reverse applies. In order not to be misunderstood, I must point out that when I speak of my duty to cultivate voluptuousness, I never mean any sexual desires toward other human beings (females), least of all sexual intercourse, but that I have to imagine myself as man and woman in one person having intercourse with myself, or somehow have to achieve with myself a certain sexual excitement etc. - which perhaps under other circumstances might be considered immoral ... if I can get a little sensuous pleasure in this process, I feel I am entitled to it as a small compensation for the excess of suffering and privation that has been mine for many years past ...

Here again, as in the Rat Man there is a peculiar blend of morality and sexuality. There is a moral duty to cultivate voluptuousness and Schreber is entitled to some "small compensation" (the pleasures of masturbation) for his devotion to duty.

5. Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Jean-Jacques Rousseau had made his reputation in 18th century France by writing essays in favor of Spartan virtue, which condemned the laxities of contemporary civilization. In private life, however, he felt that marriage was incompatible with an artist's freedom, and so took as his mistress a mildly retarded laundress who, together with her mother, ministered to all his domestic needs. His mistress had become pregnant five times, and each time, over her tearful pleas, he had taken the child from her and deposited it in the home for abandoned infants, the *Enfants Trouvés*, where the life expectancy was less than six weeks. Voltaire heard of this and published a tract denouncing Rousseau for hypocrisy. Rousseau defended himself, saying that what he had done was for the infants' sake and that he wished he had been treated that way when he was born. He further wrote the *Émile*, his tome on the natural education of children, to prove that he had true paternal spirit. This did not silence the mockery of Voltaire which, if anything, increased in virulence. Rousseau then decided to undergo a *réforme morale et spirituelle*. He left Paris and retired to the country home of one of his patrons. He abandoned sexual relations and returned instead to his favorite sexual activity, masturbation, a habit, which he call *le vice de mon âge*. He acquired two sets of note paper, one masculine and one feminine and threw himself into an erotic fantasy of a young man engaged as tutor to the children of the beautiful young wife of a much older man. Each day, he would write a letter from one to the other, fold it, put it in his pocket, carry it to the woods where he would read it pretending to be the recipient, and then masturbate. These letters form the first third of his novel *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.

6. A Case Report by Bak

It is important to see how the case of Schreber expands the vocabulary of the narcissistic object. In cases of the Leonardo type the identification was with the loving object but the self who was loved by that object was unmodified. In cases of the Schreber type, both subject and object are modified. The self as object is identified with some abandoned object (a woman) so that an identification can be made with someone (a man) who loved that object. Thus, it is always valuable to consider the extent to which the love of a man for a woman is actually an enactment of a negative Oedipal fantasy in which the woman stands for the feminine part of the man's self and the man has identified with his own father in admiring and desiring that feminized self.

If the transvestite who looks in the mirror (or at photographs of himself in woman's garb) is identified with a man (as subject) becoming excited by himself as a woman, the same transvestite identifies with the image in the mirror and becomes a woman when he goes out on the street and attracts the attention of men who substitute for the (modified-by-identification) man who stood before the mirror (remember Schreber's invitations to the Court to come and look at him in décolleté for at least 15 minutes). This abrupt switching of identification from passive to active, from female to male, and from castrated to phallic is an integral part of most cases of erotic narcissism. It also involves a complex interplay of transference object and narcissistic object.

Notice that when the patient, in the following vignette, cross-dresses he is 1) replacing his sister as a lost transference object, 2) identifying with his sister in her efforts to make him a girl, i.e., loving himself (a boy dressed as a girl) as his sister loved him and 3) identifying with his father and loving himself (dressed as a girl) as his father loved his sister.

The patient was a transvestite who had been combating these urges since the age of thirteen or fourteen. The compulsion to dress up in female clothing, especially to put on his older sister's garments, appeared after a separation from her. Prior to her departure to college, there had been considerable physical intimacy between them, which stopped only at sexual intercourse. Their sex play in bed, however, had consisted mainly in flattening out her breasts. During the masturbatory fantasies that he evolved after her departure, he would wear her clothing, and pretend to be her roommate going out on dates. He preferred to put on dresses in which she had been admired and photographed by the father. The house was full of photographs of the sister, whereas only one of his pictures was displayed. Later, he took pictures of himself dressed up, and then, more boldly, went to photographers to have his picture taken as a woman.

Dressing up and undressing in front of a mirror dominated his practices for a long time. The penis was bandaged and very forcibly tied backward, and the testes pushed back into the inguinal canal. After doing this he became terrified that the penile shaft was broken, that the penis had become crooked, and that the sperm duct was torn and that he would become sterile. The urge to appear in female clothing in public became stronger

and more irresistible.

The patient's older sister had reacted to him with unusually violent envy. She completely abandoned all girlish activities, dressed as a cowboy, carried toy pistols, and, putting some object into her pants, walked around saying she had a penis. She undressed the patient, who was then about three and a half years old, pushed his penis inside, and said, "Now you are a girl."

Bak RC (1968): The phallic woman: The ubiquitous fantasy in perversions. PSC 23: 15-36.

The notion of being turned into a girl by a boy-girl who is one's mirror image was a central fantasy of the writer, Ernest Hemingway.

7. Ernest Hemingway

His mother, Grace Hall Hemingway, who was described by her son as "androgynous", had been a tomboy as a child and was quite possibly homosexual in later life. She appears to have been a dominating, coercive and overpowering woman, an "all-time All-American bitch." Her own father, whom she adored, was named Ernest and, during her career as a concert singer, she took the stage name Ernestine. It is unclear if her son, Ernest was named after his grandfather or after her own independent self. She was intrigued by the possibilities of bisexuality and described her daughter Marcelline as, "As genuine a boy as ever inhabited a girl's personality". She was also fascinated by the idea of twins.

From birth, Grace dressed Ernest as a twin of Marcelline, who was eighteen months older. She always treated them as twins of the same sex, usually as girls. By the time he was six months old, Grace "began to buy two of everything" to dress Ernest and Marcelline. In her scrapbook she labeled a picture of the 2-year-old Ernest "Summer Girl." Speaking of her "twins" she recorded, "The two big children were then always dressed alike, like two little girls." At 2½ Ernest "was quite fearful ... as to whether Santa Claus would know he was a boy because he wore just the same kind of clothes as (his) sister." Marcelline remembered that her mother's desire was to have the two children "feel like twins by having everything alike." Ernest continued to be cross-dressed until he started kindergarten at the age of 5.

Grace also had a preoccupation with hair, in particular, with blondness, which came from her side of the family. This preoccupation seems to have passed to her son (i.e., identification). His "mystical devotion to blondness" and his insistence that she bleach her hair to platinum blond (she already wore it short) puzzled his fourth wife, Mary Welch.

In one of the Nick Adams stories, *The Last Good Country*, Nick has a fantasy about his sister as, "the sister or brother or morbid writer." His sister says, "It's very exciting. Now

I'm your sister but I'm a boy too." Nick responds, "I like it."

In *The Sun Also Rises*, the hero is not quite a man having been rendered impotent by a war wound and the woman who loves him, Brett Ashley, is a masculinized woman with a need to dominate men. She enters the novel in the *bal musette* scene asking, "I say, give a chap a brandy and soda." She is described as wearing her hair "brushed back like a boy's" and, when, at the Cafe Select she puts her hat back on, it is described as a "man's felt hat."

In Book V of *A Farewell to Arms*, Catherine is pregnant with what she imagines as "young Catherine." Henry says of the baby, "and she is a boy, maybe he will be a jockey." Catherine wishes to "be like you." She wishes to cut her hair short and have him grow his hair long "and we'll be just alike." She says, "I want you so much I want to be you too," and Henry replies, "You are. We're the same one." She responds "I want us to be all mixed up."

In *The Garden of Eden* the heroine, also named Catherine, wants to experience herself as a boy and attempts to achieve a male appearance by cutting her hair short and wearing men's slacks. She says her haircut is "Exactly like yours," like her husband David's. She insists, "I'm a girl. But now I'm a boy and I can do anything and anything and anything." He calls her "brother" and that night when they make love she tells him not to feel her breasts but to feel the close-shaved part of her boyish haircut instead. Then she lies on top of him and inserts her finger in his anus. She says, "Now you can't tell who is who, can you? ... You are changing. Yes you are and you're my girl Catherine ... be my girl and let me take you." She calls herself Peter. A month later, David agrees to have his hair cut short and bleached (to look just like hers). He looks into a hand mirror and says to himself, "You've done that to your hair and had it cut the same as your girl's and how do you feel. How do you feel? Say it. You liked it. All right, you like it." They insist that a mirror be installed at the bar in the hotel so they can look at themselves when they drink. Later, Catherine becomes his mirror. She says, "Just look at me. That's how you are and I did it and there's nothing you can do now. That's how you look". Catherine insists that they must think and look the same. David must look like her and his writing must only be about her. She burns all his writing that is not about her.

8. Fenichel on Transvestism

Fenichel stresses that, in the manifest clinical picture of transvestism, identification with the (phallic) woman side by side with love for her are so plain that they constitutes its very essence. In the act of transvestism both object love and identification are present. The act (both before the mirror and also in public) has a twofold significance: object-erotic and narcissistic.

From the object erotic point of view, the transvestite enters into fetishistic relations with a woman's clothes instead of having coitus with the mother or her substitute. At the same time, he identifies with her and represents himself as a phallic woman. Only in a subject of peculiarly narcissistic disposition, Fenichel claims, is it possible for object love to be so extensively replaced by identification [N.B., or else, it is that replacement which defines a peculiarly

narcissistic disposition]. Love for the subject's own self - fantasies that the masculine element in his nature can have intercourse with the feminine (i.e., with himself) are not uncommon. Love for the phallic mother (or her frequent substitute, the sister) is often transformed into love for the ego in which a change has been wrought by identification with her. The deepest stratum of object relations is directed at the father: "Love me, I am just as beautiful as my mother (sister)."

- Fenichel O (1930): The psychology of transvestism. IJP; 11:211-227).

9. The Emergence of a Narcissistic Object during Analysis

The patient, aged 21, was in analysis while attending graduate school in this city for four years. His complaint was "an urge to put on female clothing," with the thought "I am not a man; I am a girl." He would then put on some of his sister's clothes before a mirror, then add a tight belt around the waist and push his penis between his thighs ... These urges were especially frequent when he was under stress, for example an examination or athletic competition, at which times he felt keen envy of women's protected position. The fantasy would end with masturbation and ejaculation, following which he would feel ashamed and humiliated and despair of ever getting married ... He spent much time and energy searching for the "beautiful girl." When he actually found [such a girl] ... he flaunted her before his friends, but each time as he came to know the girl better he would find some grounds for rejecting her...

During the first year of analysis ... [he changed] from his usual hair-cut style and clothes to a crew-cut and black leather jacket and bought a motor cycle ... He stopped writing, telephoning, or visiting his mother as he had always regularly and compliantly done ... [He] broke off with [his girl friend] on the stated ground that now that she wore glasses, she was not so "beautiful" any more, and since she was so outstanding scholastically, she too was "masculine" like his mother and sister. During this period in the analysis ... he would posture before the mirror admiring himself dressed as a girl with big, perfect breasts. The transvestite fantasy, which earlier had emphasized the closeness with mother and sister, now took on the meaning of "I am my own beautiful girl."

Lewis MD (1963): A case of transvestism. IJP 44: 345-351.

10. Two Women before the Mirror

The following two case excerpts reveal the appearance of erotized narcissistic objects in contemporary analytic practice:

When A. was an early adolescent, her mother had recovered from the severe depression, which had afflicted her for a decade and became a loving and supportive figure. With her

transformation, A. was also transformed from a pathetic, whining, clinging child (who had eagerly offered herself as the tormented victim of her brother's sadistic teasing) into an aggressive, argumentative, shrill-voiced, argumentative and anti-sexual girl. She felt superior to all those around her, reveled in her feelings of uniqueness, and pictured herself as her brother in her erotic fantasies, contemptuously fucking a voluptuous but stupid secretary. However, when she transferred to a more cosmopolitan college, she discovered with a shock that she was not unique. Classmates who thought, talked, and acted the way she did surrounded her. She experienced an intense depressive state that caused her to retreat to her bed for 36 hours. When she emerged, her personality had totally reorganized. Henceforward, she was soft-voiced, charming, and sexually provocative. She immediately seduced the most prestigious of her professors and went on to a string of conquests (punctuated by intervening periods of blank depression) until she met her future husband and was overwhelmed by his brilliance, his talents, and his ardor. Terrified by the impression he made on her, she had one last affair with a noted Casanova who was her husband's subordinate at work, and then married, mounting a large nude photograph of herself on the wall at the foot of her marital bed.

In her lovemaking with her husband, she could tolerate almost no foreplay. She never wished to have her clitoris touched, it felt raw, "like a wound." Her breasts (whose size and shape she constantly inspected and worried about) were also frequently too sore to touch. What aroused her was her husband's arousal, only when he had a fully erect penis did she get excited. The idea of him becoming hard while he made love to her left her contemptuous and disgusted. Their lovemaking had begun when he had called on her for their first date and had immediately taken off her clothes. He had practically raped her. She wanted him to duplicate the intense excitement of that first encounter in each episode of lovemaking. When she was aroused she had a "very hard" orgasm. This served to maintain her image of herself as a truly sexual woman and to reassure her that she was not falling into one of her depressed periods (when she anorgasmic). However, her intolerance of foreplay made orgasm difficult to achieve. She learned to stand in front of a full-length mirror and watch herself as her husband undressed and caressed her from behind. Watching herself as she was made love to excited her. That was when intercourse was best. As orgasm approached she would fantasize that she had the penis and was penetrating her husband.

In a dream that touched on the same fantasies, she saw herself lying on the analytic couch while another woman, her double, paraded seductively in a transparent nightgown. She said to the analyst (who was also her brother), "You think I'm sexually excited about you, but I'm not. She's the one that excites me."

This patient's behavior fulfills the definition of a perversion: an obligate pattern of behavior without which orgasm is impossible. By exciting herself sexually she equally avoided being excited by her husband, exciting her husband, or remaining unaroused. If her husband could arouse her he had power over her: she felt weak, defective, dependent and prey to states of depression and rage. This put her back in the relation she had had with her brother. She despised women who allowed men to excite and satisfy them. If she excited him, she felt contemptuous towards him and disgusted by him. He then reminded

her of scenes in which she had overheard her father begging for sex from her depressed and rejecting mother. But if she did not become aroused and therefore did not have orgasm she experienced herself as defective (like her mother) and therefore became anxious and depressed. Her arousal by her mirror image played out the relation between herself identified as her brother and the mirror image, which represented the seductive woman she had become through identification with the secretary in her adolescent fantasies.

When B. came to analysis, she was completely dependent on others to give her cues as to how to behave. She was so good at this that others thought she was being spontaneous when she was really responding to her perception of their desires. This submission to the object alternated, when she was feeling sure of herself, with isolated episodes in which she behaved in an aggrieved, imperious manner.

She had been engaged for over five years to a self absorbed and infantile artist who had made it clear to her from the beginning of their relationship that she would always have to take second place to his interest in self expression. He treated her neglectfully and exploitatively, demanded intercourse as a "quickie" before going off to other appointments, came home to her irregularly and unpredictably, and boasted that he cared little for her emotionally or sexually and that she was nonetheless his possession, his woman. She was totally dependent on him and when he left town would become phobically housebound until his return.

She worked for a critical, demanding woman who used up her junior executives. No one had lasted more than two years in her job. She had hung on a little longer than most through unremitting, anxious obsequiousness. Every evening, after supper, she would return to the empty office and recheck all of her day's work for errors. This also helped fill in the empty hours till her fiancé came home.

Her relations with her parents were equally unrewarding. Because she had moved to her own apartment upon being graduated from college she was regarded by both of them as a whore. At holiday dinners her mother would make packets of the left-overs and give them to all the relatives while ostentatiously refusing one to the patient since she was not going to make it any easier for her daughter to maintain herself as a disgrace to the family. At the same time, regular and punctual attendance at all family occasions was demanded of the patient who anxiously complied.

She began her analysis by reciting her life story as if impersonally reading from a dossier. This took almost six months and was followed by a phase of embarrassed silences as she vainly looked for some cue as to what was expected of her. Her feelings of inadequacy and her related fear that I was mocking, superior, and destructive began to mount. She said that she needed some way to equalize the situation. She began to go swimming before the sessions and would come to the office wearing a loosely buttoned man's shirt over her bathing suit. On the couch, she later revealed, she would practice surreptitiously

breathing herself out of her bathing suit top. This was a re-enactment of an adolescent pattern that had been one of her few sources of pleasure at that age. She would go up to the roof of her house to sunbathe and slowly breathe her way out of her bathing suit top with the fantasy that tantalized men were staring at her from the windows of the surrounding high-rise buildings. This had made her feel powerful and energetic. Now, if she could do this to me, she did not need to fear me. As this idea became more prominent in her thinking, she purchased an extremely low-cut evening dress and began wearing it to parties and concerts. She was both excited and proud of herself for the incredulous stares she attracted.

Because she was pleased with herself, she felt less dependent on her old patterns of self-esteem maintenance. She took up painting again. She began to make social contacts on her own and eventually broke off her engagement. She went on to a job with a boss who appreciated her more. She learned to drive a car and took a vacation by herself. The analysis became the recitation of her new exploits and capacities. Among these was her growing picture of herself as a psychologically minded person, someone capable of looking at her own motives for doing things. She wanted someone to know about her new achievements and discoveries. As her shame and fear of rejection diminished, she began to reveal some of the perverse aspects of her "new" personality.

She had begun to masturbate during the analysis and had found that the most potent erotic stimulus was herself. Just the casual sight of her mirror image dressed in underwear or bathing suit was enough to excite her and make her want to masturbate. Her fantasies centered on looking at herself. One favorite fantasy was a re-enactment of the scene of sunbathing on the roof. She would look at herself as one of the imagined spectators had been supposed to look in order to have her orgasm. Another fantasy was one in which she postured seductively in front of her father until he lost control of himself and begged for sexual gratification. She would look at him contemptuously, look at her watch and say, "All right, but I'm very busy. You can have five minutes," whereupon her father would drop to his knees before her and begin to lick her genitals. The excitement was in looking at herself, an overpowering, seductive figure. She dreamed of standing before a mirror looking at herself while an invisible man caressed her from behind. In association to this dream she reported that at this time she was in the habit of wearing extremely tight pants that emphasized her buttocks. She enjoyed seeing men get excited about her buttocks since she thought they were fools to do so, the real treasure was in front. Her capacity to excite men in this way excited her about herself. These fantasies were also frankly compensatory. The one about giving her father five minutes undid the humiliation of the repetitive "quickies" her fiancé had forced upon her. The idea of having irresistible buttocks undid the humiliation of her first love affair in which her lover admired her breasts but derided her hips as too skinny.

Her capacity to be excited about herself was important in her sexual life. During intercourse, she experienced herself as two people, one participating and one observing. She was very frightened of having the observer overwhelmed by excitement. She felt that if any man could excite her, she would lose all her newfound independence and lapse

back into object submission. She dreamed of having her vagina removed surgically and replaced with a plastic socket. That way she could have intercourse without feeling it. If she masturbated before intercourse (using herself as her own stimulus) then she would have no sexual desire and could concentrate on causing the man such intense pleasure that he would be putty in her hands. However, intercourse without orgasm left her tense and unfulfilled. She accused herself of being untrusting, controlling, cold, and unable to let go. By allowing the observing part to become sexually excited about the observed self she could attain full orgasmic experience.

These same themes could be seen in the transference. One night, before she went to a party, she described her excitement about herself in the dress she was going to wear, a clinging black dress, which she wore with no underwear. She said, "The first thing I thought when I got invited to the party was 'Hooray, I can wear my dress to the session' - but I decided not to, it's impractical to get all dressed up just to try to put the double whammy on you - I'm going to do the push-pull - it's a dance with pelvic contact - it's very erotic to watch - I look in the mirror at myself in the dress I'm going to wear and I look so sexy I almost look obscene - I want you to see me dancing - I want you to be excited by observing - it's a touch-me thing - knowing that someone desires me and feeling, 'Hah-hah, you can't, all you can do is watch' - I feel like I'm looking in the mirror now - watching my body move to the music - like I did last night - I was in love with myself - I loved the way my body moved and looked - it looked erotic to me - I imagined you would have the same feelings - it's happened before - frequently - as I'm preparing - I please myself - I'm delicious, like food - I look and I feel a yearning - if only someone could see me as I see myself - I'm obsessed with my body - physically I'm proud of myself - I wish someone could see me like I see myself - I'm hungry now - dancing in front of the mirror - even if I don't dance at the party, I'll have that picture of myself - I'm in love with myself and that will sustain me at the party - I feel 'I am good and you can't have me' - it's to make you vulnerable - make you want something - me - by getting you to want - my supermagic powers to do it - by not fulfilling the want there's an emptiness in you - a hole in you - and I lose sight of the hole in me - then I'm strong and invulnerable - if I can frustrate you then I have the power - if I have something you want that gives me the equalizer - then I'm not some sort of lint or fuzz to be pulled off but a force to be contended with - that's how I saw myself in the mirror - that's how I see myself when I masturbate - like a force, like intense energy - not a custard nothing."

The next evening, she reported, "I left the party early with someone who was interested in me - he grabbed me, talked to me, danced with me, hinted he was in love with me - we went home and the love-making was very good - but I felt completely empty and depressed - I was lying on the bed holding my pillow - which for me was a doll - which was my substitute for my mother." Several days later, she said, "I don't really want all these men I'm sleeping with - I want my mother - I can't admit how much she hurt me - it's like a judgement against me - there must be something wrong with me."

11. Homeovestism

Homeovestism [is] perverse behavior involving wearing clothes of the same sex ... The object is worn by the homeovestite during sexual activity and is considered in fantasy as a part of the self ... In the man it is often an athletic article or a military uniform.

The homeovestism appeared in puberty. The patient was 20 years old when he consulted me. Although he sought treatment because he was afraid that he was a homosexual, he started homosexual relations as soon as treatment began. It became clear from the analysis that the homosexual relation reinstated his lost masculinity. The idea of sexual intercourse with a woman was repulsive to him ... In the company of girls he had the tendency to behave like them, adopting their manners and feelings as if he were one of them. He could no longer feel that he was a man. In the company of men, it was different. Men inhibited him because he was afraid of them, but when he had a homosexual relation his feelings of inferiority would disappear. He would feel masculine and strong ... In puberty he remembered seeing two young athletes wearing jock straps and got the impression that the jock straps covered large penises. After that, he tried to masturbate wearing a jock strap and looking at himself in the mirror. The male clothing made it easier for him to have an erection ... The jock-strap hid his penis which he felt was small, and helped him to imagine that he possessed a large one ... When he looked at himself in the mirror, he became stimulated as when he looked at his naked homosexual partner. By wearing the jock strap ... he became, in fantasy, like his father. Then by projecting his image of the father on to the mirror and looking at it, he created a sexual relation with the father, which resulted in an erection. This image of the father was then introjected through vision and led to an identification with the omnipotent father. By the same token, he warded off his identification with his mother. He had previously been a transvestite. His transvestism began when he was three years old, when he would wear his mother's and his sister's clothes ... it was at puberty that he shifted to homeovestism, after he had seen his sister exercising naked.

Zavitzianos G (1977): The object in fetishism, homeovestism and transvestism. IJP 58: 487-496.

The use of feminine clothing to reinforce an identification as female is documented above in the dream of wearing a transparent peignoir. A similar mechanism was noted in the case of a woman who frequently stared at a photograph of herself in "a see-through blouse" which she described as "incredibly sexy." She quasi-hallucinated the picture during an analytic session and then reported nipple erection and vaginal wetness.

12. Report of a Case by Sadger

Three years after the publication of the Schreber case, Sadger, a member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, and a student of *psychopathia sexualis* published a paper in

which he quoted the self-observations of a man who liked to kiss his second self. Compare this with the poetic rendition of the same scene by Benet [*vide infra*].

"Especially in the evening I take a chair and mirror and for almost an hour contemplate my face ... Then I lie in bed, take the mirror, smile at myself, and think: what a pity it is that no one sees you now ... you are a girl, completely so. Then I kiss myself in the mirror; that is, I slowly move the mirror to my lips, gazing at myself therein. In this way, I kiss my second self and admire his good appearance."

- Zentralblatt für Psychoanalyse, IV [1914], 415.

13. Erotized Narcissism in Art

The following excerpt from a longer poem depicts Lucy Weatherby, a Southern belle during the Civil War, trying on gowns before the mirror. Note the similarity of the mental mechanisms that the poet has depicted to those seen in the clinical material above.

Lucy Weatherby spread out gowns on a bed
And wondered which she could wear to the next levee.
The blue was faded, the rose brocade had a tear,
She'd worn the flowered satin a dozen times,
The apricot had never gone with her hair,
And somebody had to look nice at the evening parties.
But it was hard. The blockade runners of course -
But so few of them had space for gowns any more
And, really, they charged such prices!

Of course it is

The war, and of course when one thinks of our dear, brave boys -
But, nevertheless, they like a girl to look fresh
When they come back from their fighting.

When one goes up

To the winter-camps, it doesn't matter so much,
Any old rag will do for that sort of thing.
But here, in Richmond . . .

She pondered, mentally stitching,
Cutting and shaping, lost in a pleasant dream.

Fighting at Chancellorsville and Hooker beaten
And nobody killed that you knew so terribly well
Except Jo Frear's second brother - though it was sad
Our splendid general Jackson's lost his arm,
Such an odd man but so religious.

She hummed a moment

"That's Stonewall Jackson's way" in her clear cool voice.
"I really should have trained for nursing," she thought.
She heard a voice say, "Yes, the General's very ill,

But that lovely new nurse will save him if anyone can.
She came out from Richmond on purpose."

The voice stopped speaking.

She thought of last month and the boys and the Black Horse Troop,
She was just as glad they were fighting now, after all,
Huger had been so jealous and Clay so wild,
It was quite a strain to be engaged to them both
Especially when Jim Merrihew kept on writing
And that nice Alabama major -

She heard the bells

Ring for a wedding - but who was the man beside her?
He had a face made up of too many faces.
And yet, a young girl must marry -

You may dance,

Play in the sun and wear bright gowns to levees,
But soon or late the hands unlike to your hands
But rough and seeking, will catch your lightness at last
And with strange passion force you. What is this passion,
This injury that women must bear for gowns? It does not stir me. I will not bear it.
There are women enough to bear it. If I have sweetness,
It is for another service. It is my own.
I will not share it. I'll play in the heat of the sun.
And yet, young girls must marry - what am I thinking?

She stepped from her hoops to try on the rose brocade,
But let it lie for a moment, while she stood up
To look at the bright ghost-girl in the long dark mirror,
Adoringly.

"Oh, you honey," she thought. "You honey!
You look so pretty - and nobody knows but me.
Nobody knows."

She kissed her little white shoulders,
With fierce and pitying love for their shining whiteness,
So soft, so smooth, so untarnished, so honey-sweet.
Her eyes were veiled. She swayed in front of the mirror.

"Honey, I love you," she whispered, "I love you honey.
Nobody loves you like I do, do they, sugar?
Nobody knows but Lucy how sweet you are.
You mustn't get married, honey. You mustn't leave me.
We'll be pretty and sweet to all of them, won't we, honey?
We'll always have beaux to dance with and tunes to dance to,
But you mustn't leave me honey. I couldn't bear it.
You mustn't ever leave me for any man."

Stephen Vincent Benet: John Brown's Body (1928)