

## Chapter 5

# Pornography and Perversion

If fantasy is what determines whether or not any given sexual act is perverse, then we should look more closely at what an individual is thinking and feeling in order to understand his perversion. Pornography allows us to do this with ease.

← Pornography is a complex daydream in which activities, usually but not necessarily overtly sexual, are projected into written, pictorial, or aural material to induce genital excitement in an observer. No depiction is pornographic until an observer's fantasies are added; nothing is pornographic per se.

Here is the cover picture from a pornographic pamphlet, that is, a booklet produced by someone who thought there was a large enough audience to make the printing profitable. The booklet was purchased by a man who knew it would excite him sexually. Those who look at this picture can be divided into those who get excited and those who do not. The latter group, I assume, is by far the larger. Most readers will be unable to understand why the picture and its story excite; they will not even seriously believe the pamphlet could do so.

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# PANTY RAID



What—if you are not a transvestite—do you see in the picture? Probably not very much: just women who are supposed to depict powerful, dangerous, feminine beauty and who are bullying a defenseless, cowering, humiliated man dressed in women's garments.

Each of the many genres of pornography is created for a specific perverse need by exact attention to detail, and each defines an area of excitement that will have no effect on a different person. Thus, for example, a sadist will choose depictions of sadistic acts, and a fetishistic transvestite will choose depictions of acts of cross-dressing. As with all perversions, pornography is a matter of aesthetics: one man's delight is another's boredom. Also, as with all perversions, at its heart is a fantasied act of revenge, condensing in itself the subject's sexual life history—his memories and

fantasies, traumas, frustrations, and joys. There is always a victim, no matter how disguised: no victim, no pornography. The use of such matter is an act of perversion with several components. The most apparent is voyeurism. The second, hidden (unless the person is an overt sexual sadist), is sadism; sadism is, however, rather easily demonstrated. The third, more hidden (unless the person is an overt sexual masochist), is masochism; masochism is hard to demonstrate, since it is hidden in an unconscious identification with the depicted victim.

These three components are universal for users of pornography. To be dwelled on more in this chapter is a fourth component, which is specific to each user—his own style of perversion.

Pornography is for restitution; its creation and its use are ritualized acts, and deviation from a narrow, prescribed path will produce decreased sexual excitement. The perversion functions as a necessary preserver of potency. The actual sexual life history—the unconscious memory of real historical events—exists in the conscious fantasies expressed in the pornography.

The development of the manifest complex daydream that the pornography exteriorizes is a chronicle, over the years, of fantasies [each elaboration occurring at the moment when a piece of pain (or of incomplete pleasure) is converted into (greater) pleasure, until all these fantasies, like building blocks, have been assembled to create the adult perversion that presents itself overtly]. But there is a grain of historical reality embedded in each fantasy, and the differences between what actually happened in different people's lives account in good part (though not completely) for the minor variations found even in a group of people homogeneous for a particular perversion.

Let us examine pornography of the perversion

transvestism\* (fetishistic cross-dressing) to find these bits of historical reality. There should be an advantage for us in using such an odd condition for our example, for it is pretty rare and its pornography does not stir anyone but a transvestite. (One might suggest, not quite seriously, that a test to establish the diagnosis of transvestism or any perversion in men would be to show its pornography to several subjects: only those with increased penile blood flow would fit the diagnosis. One cannot ask for a more rapid, precise diagnostic procedure. Such a test would also demonstrate most concretely that the psychodynamics of transvestites are different from those of other people.)

In the pornographic literature catering to transvestites, there are repeated stories with the same theme—a frightened, pathetic, defenseless boy-man finds himself, through no doing of his own, trapped by powerful, dangerously beautiful women, who bully and humiliate him. The poor victim—the peak of whose victimization is illustrated by the women physically forcing him to put on women's clothes—hardly seems a subject created for inducing sexual excitement. Yet the men who need such material find their greatest anticipation just at this point in the story, when the humiliated man is illustrated being exposed to his greatest anguish. The typical picture and accompanying text show him seated, cowering, while standing over him with threatening gestures and looks are the very phallic women. (The term "phallic" here is not simply the application of a concept: the drawings show repeated themes of phallic-shaped objects—stiletto heels, table and chair legs, whips, pens.)

Here are excerpts from the pornography. Fraternity pledge Bruce King, as part of his initiation, has to raid the clothesline of a sorority house, when "squeals and

\*I shall use the term "transvestism" only for those in whom clothes of the opposite sex cause erotic excitement. There are other conditions in which cross-dressing occurs (199), but they are different from fetishistic cross-dressing and need not be confused with it.

bubbling laughter" suddenly envelop him. He is caught and bound by sorority girls, all of them "shrieking with joy."

He tried to protest but his gag was too tight; he wiggled but only succeeded in getting the brunt of their sharp fingernails into the muscular flesh of his flanks and thighs. This brought much raucous laughter from the victorious vixens who thrilled at the helpless struggles of their male captive. . . .

The girl named Lori, apparently the group leader, was a silver-blond Amazon. She must have stood a statuesque six feet tall, proudly erect, her heaving bosom thrust forth with a strange form of arrogance which demanded obedience and respect. Lori was garbed in a tight fitting buckled beauty of a pure satin dress; it featured a permanently pleated skirt which shivered like so many leather strings with each movement. The turquoise blouse boasted floral and fruit decorations. Lori's waist was captivated [sic] by a huge patent leather belt of shining black; the contrasting silver buckle resembled a lock, with a tiny keyhole which defied entrance and exit. Her hips were forced into a figure-training position so that she walked with some difficulty, but with greater pride. And Lori's shoes: they were the heavenly dream of any clothes raider. The unbelievably thin match-stick high heels must have been a perfect seven inches long! Made of shiny white patent leather—believe it or not—the shoe featured a slinky sling back which was a silvery chain, a *peau de sole* [sic] trim, an open toe through which peeped a gleaming red nail, the toe almost grateful to be liberated from its confinement. The vamp was charmingly decorated with a pair of gleaming glass eyes! Yes, the eyes even winked wickedly as Lori moved her slender legs. Such white patent leather, polished to milky perfection, deserved respect as they were held in awe and esteem! As Lori stamped her dainty but powerfully shod foot, tiny sparks escaped from the stiletto 7 inch heel!

Bruce flinched, struggling against the bonds of the robe belts. "Lori," his voice tried to be fierce and confident, "will you cut me loose? All right, so I didn't suc-

ceed in my panty raid. I lost! The frat brothers will give me a real paddling," he squirmed at the thought, "and that'll be that. So let's just forget it."

"Oh, we don't want you to be paddled out of your fraternity, no sir!" another girl said. "Lori, what say we give him . . . what's your name . . ."

"Bruce . . . Bruce King."

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" . . . let's give Bruce a complete feminine outfit to bring back to his frat brothers. This will be something he shall long remember!" Lori smiled. As she folded both of her slender swan-like arms across her chest, Bruce caught sight of her blood-red fingernails, extended like the talons of a wicked vulture! "Very well, Sandra. We'll give Bruce a nice frilly outfit . . . bloomers, slip, bra, dress, silk stockings which attach to the garter straps of the garter belt we'll also let him have, and a nice pair of high-heeled shoes . . ."

Before Bruce could protest, he found himself descended upon by the girls, who ripped off his simple white business shirt, cotton khaki trousers (he was grateful he wore protective boxer shorts), off went his moccasins, wool socks. "It's cold . . ." he shivered, feeling more embarrassed and humiliated than the elements of the weather in early spring. To be stripped, bound and in the captivity of four domineering types of females was certainly an experience that shattered his manhood. There was no telling what they could do to make good a threat that Lori now voiced: "We'll teach him that the female of the species are the real aggressive members of the human race!"

"We're going to dress you, Bruce," purred Lori, her green eyes glittering with a strange fascination of the spectacle of a man being held in her captivity. "Now, girls—get those boxer shorts of his and throw them out . . . good boys shouldn't wear such sloppy things. We'll teach our Brucie how to dress."

"No! No!" he protested, but four sets of female hands yanked down his boxer shorts. With a sigh of relief, he remembered he wore his tiny athletic supporter which the girls ridiculed by giggling. "Look—he wears a G-string!"

Lori then said, "Okay, girls, untie him. It'll be easier to get his clothes on. But Brucie-boy," she said in a falsetto tone, "you won't get very far—in your G-string. So behave yourself, or we'll take that away from you, too."

Bruce flushed and no sooner were his arms and legs freed than he tried to cover himself with his hands but his awkward knock-kneed position and round shouldered position of embarrassment only provoked more laughter. "Very funny! Very funny!" he gasped. "Come on, girls," laughed Lori. "I can hardly wait to see what he looks like in some really dainty clothes. Let's start with this panty . . ."

Lori held up a few brassieres and finally made her selection of a charming item. "See, Bruce," she dangled it before him, as if threatening his manhood, "this brassiere has in-up pushup pads and foam rubber shapemakers. This low plunge front gives real cleavage; to a girl, it's breathtakingly sinful. To you," and she made a throaty laugh, "it'll be very wicked . . ."

He would make no protest. It would only infuriate the girls and they might intensify their hatred upon him. And now . . . yes . . . here it was: the gown to be worn by Bruce King.

"Do you like it?" asked Lori, already joining in giggling with the other girls at the anticipation of seeing him wear a dress. "It's a French import. It's an exclusive design." The color was Vampire Red! The gown featured a gossamer silk sheer V-insert lined in nude, exciting "nail-heads" and a braid trim. The back was plunging. The sleeves were made of transparent net-like soft silk of smoke-red. The waist was captured with a very tight suede belt, its buckle a huge replica of Satan, with twin fangs for an insert. A tiny Devil's pitchfork pointed at the buckle which was polished silver. The skirt of this unusual gown was scintillating in its 3 rows of 6" fringes made of leather. Each fringe was as delicate as a shoe lace but as strong as the reins used to compel a team of horses to do the bidding of the driver. With each movement of the hips, the 3 rows of fringes would dance in all directions, as

would a group of frenzied primitive worshippers before a weird fetish-God.

As the dress was lowered upon Bruce, he found his heart was pounding, his emotions were stepped up and he was breathless with eager anticipation. He dared not admit his true feelings to anyone; even to himself! After all, he had been FORCED into this whole thing . . . by his frat brothers and then he was CAPTURED and BOUND BY FEMALES and compelled to follow their orders . . .

How can humiliation produced on being forced to put on women's clothes by hostile women cause sexual excitement? There are several explanations that can (almost) account for this excitement.\*

First, although the man in the illustration is humiliated, the man reading the book is humiliated only in effigy; while he identifies with the illustrated man, he is very clearly also safely not so identified. He knows this experience, taking place via pornography, is only a fantasy.

Second, the excitement is accompanied by a guilt-removing device inherent in the story: since the pathetic boy-man is being forced to dress by the cruel women, he cannot be accused of wanting to do this himself. (In pornography, as in humor, there is always a device for reducing guilt. This could be true for many other sublimated activities with hostile components, such as the theater, visual arts, and "normal" sexual relations . . . Imagine considering heterosexual intercourse a "sublimated activity"!)

\*We do not quite know how sexual excitement is produced in anyone, not just in the perverse. How does a woman ('s body) excite a heterosexual man? What has he learned from infancy on and how do the nongenital responses of infancy and childhood become converted into the adult genital response? Is the explanation simply physiological? (Not likely.) Does anxiety play a role in normal persons as in the perverse? Just as Masters and Johnson did the naturalist's task of revealing the gross physical appearance of sexual excitement, so should the mechanisms of the psychological experience of sexual excitement be discovered—what sets it off, what maintains and protects it, what makes it recur or subside in time into boredom.

Yet the two reasons above are only secondary devices to protect the excitement and are not causes in themselves. We come closer if we study the life history that is present in the pornography in such condensed fashion.

The man who first showed me these dynamics, who also brought in the pamphlet just quoted, had been forced to dress thus by women in childhood. I have told his story before (197, 142).

Fortunately for the research (and disastrously for him), he was posed for snapshots, placed quite openly in the family album, tracing the development of his cross-dressing. In addition, the women who did it to him are alive; though I could not interview them, they gave information to him and his wife, filling in the story indicated by the snapshots.

The patient is a biologically normal man in his mid-thirties, married and with children. The dominating interest in his life is sexual excitement produced by women's clothes; he is masculine in behavior, in choice of clothes when not expressing his perversion, and in profession.

For the first almost three years of his life, he was treated by his mother and father as if he were what he was, a normal male whom they expected to grow up to be a man. They gave him an unequivocally masculine name at birth and sent out no covert messages to contradict their recognition that his assignment to the male sex was correct. As a result, he developed, as do almost all little boys, the conviction that he belonged to the male sex, a necessary first stage in the development of masculinity in all males. Then his mother developed a chronic illness that removed her from the home, ending with her death less than two years later. When she was first hospitalized, his father mobilized the boy's aunt and this aunt's teen-age daughter to take care of the child. These two women unfortunately shared an immense hatred for males and for males' masculinity. Given the free-

dom to act upon him, they were able safely to attack his expanding masculinity. They did so by altering his appearance. It is easy; women can simply put unmasculine or even women's clothes on a boy. What incites them to do this, I underline, is his already present masculinity; that is what they hate, and it is best attacked, they know, by damaging, not destroying it. Such women do not want the boy not to be a male; rather, they want to assuage their envy by saying that maleness is unimportant and inferior. To do so, they make clear to themselves and to the boy that they wish to humiliate him, which requires that he forever retain his wish to be a male and his awareness that he can be humiliated.

On his fourth birthday, a few weeks before she died, his mother came home to visit him. On that occasion, the aunt and cousin introduced his mother to "a new neighbor girl," in fact the dying woman's son, and took photographs to memorialize the joke. The man who had been this boy has no memory of that traumatic event; it was only discovered by his wife in a family album, during the time they were being seen by me. The story was then corroborated by the aunt.

So far as we know, sexual excitement began two or three years later. Only at this point does the patient's memory regarding transvestism begin. At that time, as a punishment, he was forced by another woman to put on her stockings. He was instantly struck by a voluptuous feeling he is sure he had never experienced before. As pleasurable as it was, he also sensed an aura of guilt and so for several years repeated the experience only a few times. At puberty, however, it became linked to orgasm and from then to now it has been his dominating pleasure. Even during intercourse, he is fully potent only when cross-dressed. (Perhaps not coincidentally, the woman who cross-dressed him as punishment had a son who was treated similarly; I have a picture of him, dressed as Shirley Temple.)

Throughout those years of childhood and then on into

adolescence and adulthood to the present, his masculinity was not destroyed, only damaged. That is how the attacking women would have wished it; had he turned completely into a normal-appearing "woman," they would have lost their victim. But instead, he struggled secretly against them so as to protect this essence of his self.

I have discussed elsewhere (137) the evidence that the core of one's gender identity—the sense of being a male or a female—is laid down by the first three years of life and is pretty much unalterable thereafter, as was true with this boy. If one has developed that sense unequivocally, later experiences can threaten it, forcing modifications upon one as one attempts to protect that core, but the core will remain.

Up to now, we have noted the effort the traumatized child makes to save himself. The case above exemplifies this struggle but also, by introducing the issue of threat to one's masculinity or femininity, expands our understanding of the precise nature of that victimhood: the fear that one's already established sense of belonging to one's sex may be destroyed. In analytic circles, this is called "castration anxiety";\* but that term is too narrow, for one fears more than the loss of one's genitals. Rather, it is that if one loses one's genitals, that may signify a more profound loss, one's no longer belonging to the class male, the conviction of which is at the core of one's being. Adult males whose genitals are damaged or destroyed do not lose their sense of maleness, much less their sense of existing; while the experience is traumatic, it does not create perversion or—in the person with intact gender identity—psychosis.

I would disagree with the behavioristic explanation,

\*Fenichel summarizes in classical language: "The pervers is a person whose sexual pleasure is blocked by the idea of castration. Through the perversion he tries to prove that there is no castration. In so far as this proof is believed, sexual pleasure and orgasm become possible again" (18, p. 347).

however, that the perverse act is only fortuitously linked—conditioned—to the daydream or the enactment of the daydream (in the transvestite, for instance, when he puts on women's clothes for the first time). The behavioristic explanation attempts to remove one's childhood and psychodynamics; it seems to say that any object or event occurring at the first time of maximum pleasure would be the beginning of that form of sexual excitement. Analysts, on the contrary, believe that that is an end point and that the agent of the excitement, for example, women's clothes, was not fortuitous but suitable, anticipated, and even chosen. Taking a careful history will confirm this analytic position.

To return to our case, the patient was able to maintain a sense of maleness and masculinity over the years despite the threat produced by his tormentors. Transvestites are long since known—as was this man—to be masculine-appearing men except when sexually excited. They are not, as are effeminate homosexuals, habitually caricaturing women. Almost always, they are overtly heterosexual, usually married and with children, and able to carry themselves in a masculine way without effort.

But where, in our patient, are the hostility, revenge, and triumph anticipated in my earlier remarks? If the thesis is correct, they will appear in the transvestite's sexual fantasy. We assume that, when forced into an unmasculine role by being cross-dressed, the boy felt threatened to his depths, and we expect him to have tried to protect himself as all children do, by creating a comforting daydream. We know of that daydream, because transvestites tell it, react to it when it is told to them in their pornography, and act it out when dressed up. Let us study it again.

Each historical event now to be recounted appears in the pornography.

**History.** From birth to age three, the boy developed in a masculine manner.

**Pornography.** The story starts with a masculine heterosexual man, who has shown no fetishistic interest before in women's clothes or any feminine or effeminate mannerisms.

**History.** When the boy was three, his mother left the family and his "mothering" was turned over to an aunt and older cousin, both of whom despised males.

**Pornography.** The man is trapped by a group of females, who make fun of his maleness and immediately overpower him.

**History.** His father was almost never home day or night, for years, and in effect abandoned the boy to the women.

**Pornography.** There is no other man in the story.

**History.** These two women designed and fashioned new clothes, ruffled and effeminate-looking, for the little boy. Later they dressed him, not just effeminately, but in girls' clothes "as a joke."

**Pornography.** The dangerous women force the man, who is filled with shame and humiliation, to put on women's clothes. Yet they are portrayed as joking and laughing.

**History.** The women, being older and bigger, were psychologically immensely powerful and physically overpowered him without a struggle.

**Pornography.** The man does not have the strength to struggle, much less escape.

**History.** Nevertheless, the little boy needed and wanted, even loved, these women. What choice did he have at three, or four, or five years? They served not only as models for identification but as desired heterosexual objects, for they were now his "mother."

**Pornography.** The women are drawn as phallic and dangerous but also beautiful and feminine.



*History.* Despite dressing him on occasion in girls' clothes, these women always left him the knowledge he was male and had masculinity. Except for the rare occasions when he was cross-dressed, he wore masculine clothes. His games and hobbies have always been masculine. He is now a leader of men in a masculine business. To make their own satisfaction exquisite, they had to prove that masculinity was worthless, far beneath their desire. To accomplish this, they had to be sure not to destroy it, only make it foolish. So he was not feminized to the degree that he wished his body changed to a female one or lost the pleasure of his penis.

*Pornography.* The man is clearly identified as a male; this is never denied. His name is strongly masculine and is not changed by the women during the story. The women express recognition that he is masculine. The attack is specifically aimed, not at damaging his maleness, but at his identity, his masculine attributes, of which the most visible are clothes. In transvestite pornography a male is not turned into a female.

*History.* The disaster became a triumph. By age six, he was sexually excited putting on a woman's garment.

*Pornography.* After the trauma, the man senses in himself an intense, growing sensuality for the women's clothes that had at first been forced on him.

*History.* His fetishistic cross-dressing gradually increased in frequency and completeness to dressing quite like a woman, so that added to it was a nongenitally exciting pleasure in being fully dressed as a woman.

*Pornography.* The man, near the end of the story, is dressed completely as a woman.

*History.* He found an apparently benign, gentle woman, who married him although knowing of (in fact, I learned after a few years, because of) his transvestism. She enjoyed helping him buy women's clothes and wigs and taught him to dress stylishly, apply make-up prop-

erly, and carry himself like a woman. (This type of woman and her relationship to transvestism is discussed elsewhere [137].)

*Pornography.* The harpies are now gentle, friendly, and accepting, fully feminine, and rather girlish.

*History.* He presently goes into the world, passing intermittently as a woman.

*Pornography.* All leave together, the man looking like a normal woman; he is promised that they will all do it again soon, next time as friends.

All that is missing in the pornography, but which occurs in transvestites, is a latency period after the trauma, a matter of months or years during which there is no evidence of overt transvestism, following which the first surface manifestation of the perversion appears (that is, sexual excitement produced by women's clothes). This latency period, being silent, has never been studied. One can therefore only surmise that during it the boy is developing a system of fantasies to preserve his masculinity against the onslaught upon his identity by the hating female who, in reality, jeopardized his sense of maleness and masculinity.

It is not coincidental that he creates his success exactly at the point of disaster. That is, he uses agents of the trauma—women's clothes and the appearance of femininity—to preserve his masculinity and potency. This is not to say that this is all that is needed to create the perversion, for, while the fear of being unmanned is crucial, so also is the (defensive) construction that the powerful women have penises and the power of supermen (18, 32, 35). As noted, this too is indicated in the pornography.

I have tried to detail—here and elsewhere (137, 147)—the nature of this specific trauma (attempted feminization by older, powerful females) by reporting case material showing the contributions made by mothers



(and their substitutes) and fathers in helping create a transvestite. These data suggest that *in fetishistic cross-dressing the denied threat of castration and the phallic woman imagined are based on historical reality*. In these patients, it really did happen that the boy was threatened with loss of masculinity and humiliated by females more powerful than he, not just in some general way, but very precisely by being put into women's clothes. (Although without evidence to prove it, I suspect that the cross-dressing of a little boy is deeply traumatic only if he was already damaged in the years of development before the first overt humiliation. There must also be little boys who, after being cross-dressed by a girl or woman, simply are not susceptible enough to that sort of victimization to take it seriously.)

Just where are we to find the supposed triumph that preserves the transvestite's potency? It cannot come simply from reliving a trauma. How, if the trauma is recapitulated in the perversion, does pleasure replace anguish? I presume, as with other episodes of mastery, that it comes from such sources as finding that one has actually, over and over, survived the trauma, or from the infinite uses to which repression and denial can be put. More specifically, however, the following are suggested: (1) Conversion of a sense of being damaged and inferior into exhibitionistic fantasies ("See what a lovely woman I make"). (2) "Self-realization," the gradual self-conscious creation of a fully evolved "feminine" role: some transvestites learn to act so much like women that they can pass as such undetected publicly.

More important: (3) Fantasies (conscious, preconscious, and unconscious) of revenge against women, which create an exultant sense of redressing the balance. (4) Identifying in the pornography and other fantasy life not only with the humiliated male but with the masterful aggressor, the phallic woman.

The victim becomes victor. The little boy was hum-

bled, but there—now—presides the adult pervert, dressed in the women's clothes. These garments, formerly the agent of trauma, now delight him—strong, full of anticipation, powerfully potent, intact, penis and self gathered up in full strength, competent for orgasm. How better to prove he is triumphant than to be potent in the presence of the original trauma? He has his revenge. The women, so mysteriously powerful in childhood, while not reduced in strength, are not able to overpower him; he proves it every time he puts on their clothes. On each occasion his penis demonstrates that they have failed: he has successfully defended himself and thus frustrated them.

But unfortunately, he has to repeat endlessly, for somehow he knows the perversion is only a construction, a fantasy; it can never truly prove that he has won. It does so only for the moment, and each time in his life that circumstances arise to echo the original traumatic situation, he can placate his anxiety only in repeating the perverse act whose function is to tell him again that he is intact and a victor.

An essential quality in pornography (and perversion) is sadism—revenge for a passively experienced trauma. I am not only referring to well-known revenge fantasies and sexual acts found also in nontransvestite men, such as those of poisoning or humiliating one's partner with ejaculate or of physical damage to someone by one's phallic onslaught. I suppose these are at times present in transvestites, but, additionally and more important, the transvestite revenges himself just by being able to get an erection. That is, he succeeds with a woman when he was supposed to have failed. Even more triumphantly, he succeeds at exactly that moment that should be the moment of greatest failure, when he is dressed as a woman and should be humiliated. Of course, one crucial fact sustains him when he is so dressed: his constant awareness that he has a penis under the woman's clothes,

which makes him, too, a phallic woman. Freud and most analysts since believe the fantasy of a woman with a phallus is always an invention a boy (man) finds necessary to deny that the awfulness that is castration could happen to him. In this theory, females are fundamentally—anatomically—inferior unless given a prosthesis. I think this is not always or only the case. When men in fantasy give women a phallus, they may do so to deny not women's inferiority but female superiority; it replaces for males a fear of the mystery of female generative capacity—inner hidden power, as in procreation or life-and-death omnipotence over their infant—with the familiar, a penis. Later (chaps. 6 and 8) we shall return to this subject.

In the pornography, the moment of greatest anticipation of pleasure—the come-on illustration on the cover of the booklet—is just when the story describes how the victim is told by the powerful women that he must put on or has just been placed in women's clothes. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the fantasy picks out the moment of greatest trauma for what is now its moment of greatest thrill. There is no more perfect triumph than to succeed after running the precise risks that had undone one in childhood. (There are similarities between this and other counterphobic triumphs, such as automobile racing, stage acting, parachute jumping, competition in sports, and so many other acutely anxiety-provoking situations of potential victory.)

Who is the victim in this transvestite fantasy? In the manifest daydream, it is the pictured transvestite-in-the-making with whom the observing transvestite consciously identifies. But additionally and unconsciously the victim is the pictured cruel phallic woman, for the transvestite, in the reality of his masturbation, is having the final victory over such a woman. Despite all she did to him in his childhood to ruin his masculinity, he has escaped her—though barely, and at the price of a

severely compromised potency that can succeed only by means of perversion.

Yet he does win; he has survived. His penis is not only preserved; now, as he celebrates his sacrament, he feels himself no longer split but concentratedly unified in his sexual excitement.

He identifies with the aggressor and then (as may often be the case with the use of this mechanism) he believes (tries to believe) he is better than the aggressor: a better woman than any woman, for he possesses the best of both sexes. He is always aware of his masculinity (an essential part of transvestism), and he is aware of his femininity. He feels that, having been a man and living intermittently as a man, he has a keen eye for what is most to be appreciated in women, and being a "woman" permits him to put this into action. At a deeper level, he believes himself (is constantly working to make himself believe he is) a better woman than any woman because he is the only woman who surely has a penis. And now, identified with the powerful women, he is no longer the humiliated little boy; he no longer consciously experiences that part of him during the act of perversion. It exists overtly only in the script. He has found a way to be the sadist, expressing that satisfaction by saying he is not the depicted frightened boy-man of the story. In splitting his identification into victim and victor, he is able to satisfy, as it were, two different people inside himself.

Yet transvestites are, in the great majority, overtly heterosexual and yearn for heterosexuality, having to work against an unconscious pull toward identification with women. Considering intimacy with a living woman to be desirable but dangerous, they substitute her inert clothes for her living skin. Note these descriptions of women's clothes taken from the booklet: "The straps were milky-way white; the sheer fabric was bewitching"; "pure silk"; "pure satin"; "panties virginal white

in color"; "skin tight"; "transparent green, like sea foam"; "cool, silky-soft, sensuously intimate"; "filmy"; "smoothly formed"; "blushing pink"; "delicately molded"; "transparent net-like soft silk," and so forth for many pages.

The experience is bisexual: not only is the transvestite making contact fetishistically (safely, indirectly) with women's skin (taking the woman as a heterosexual object), but he is also putting it on (identifying with the woman).

This description leaves out much that is important—and speculative—such as a fuller investigation of the transvestite's belief in phallic women, both the powerful sort who originally attacked him and the kind that he represents with his erect penis beneath the women's clothes; or the symbolic meanings the clothes have for him (for example, intact penis); or castration anxiety; or the garments as transitional objects between his mother and separation from her; and a host of additional psychoanalytic formulations. They will not be detailed here, as the present task is simply to define the concept of perversion.\*

\*There are too many explanations. Psychoanalytic theory is the most syncretic system since the Roman pantheon; a new Logos may be added on without displacing any of the older elements: the garments of the other sex allegedly also symbolize father's penis; or getting into mother's skin and thus being sheltered in her womb or (if you belong to a different school) her penis; or being mother herself, either mother with a phallus, mother without, or both simultaneously; or the garments serving to protect mother from destruction; or being father's penis inside mother's vagina; or the need to protect father's introjected penis in mother's womb (of which there is inherited knowledge in the collective unconscious) from oral and anal attack.

To take on and separate out for clear viewing the fortune cookie metapsychology, speculations, fantasies, pomposities, humbug, absurdities, outrageous yet unchallenged pronouncements, marvelous suggestions, brilliant insights, and original and demonstrable findings would take a work of obsessive-compulsive scholarship I do not have the desire and patience to undertake. Few of the key words of our language are definable except by other key words which are themselves undefinable (for example, "narcissism is the cathexis of the self"); little is stated as a proposition that can be tested in the

The reader may ask if this is a study of pornography or of transvestism, for the matter herein shifts from the one perspective to the other. This in itself makes, then, an obvious point: that pornography, as the perverse subject's key daydream, is psychodynamically about the same as his perversion. It is the highly condensed story of his perversion: its historical origins in reality, its elaborations in fantasy, its manifest content that disguises and reveals the latent content. Without pornography, one can obviously still study the dynamics of perversions; but with pornography one has a special tool that at times will give clues one might otherwise miss. Especially helpful is the fact that since pornography, for its creator, is produced for money-making, he will be motivated in the highest to develop a daydream that is not idiosyncratic. If his pornography is to pay, he must intuitively extract out of what he knows about his audience those features all share in common. If he does not, he runs the risk of selling only one copy. He therefore has to create a work precise enough to excite and general enough to excite many. Thus, pornography is for the researcher a sort of statistical study of psychodynamics—a more colorful and more powerful method than the opinion poll that is sometimes foisted on us as rigorous research.

With the relaxation of laws that restricted the production of pornography, the market has increased; it has been financially possible for the producers to cater more precisely to the taste of selected readers. And so, where formerly all transvestites, regardless of multiple interests within the genre, had to settle for one story, each now can find varied forms designed more precisely to his

observable world but rather only by recourse to authority or manipulation of more theory. And even after taking these unnecessary risks, we are often left only with a dramatically complicated rendering of the obvious. The reader who wishes to will find the evidence in *Letters* devastating, unread book (86).

specifics. Thus, not all men who intermittently cross-dress and become sexually excited by women's clothing will take the pornography quoted earlier as their first choice. They say that in the past they settled for it, purchased every book that came out illustrating it, but did not feel it quite fitted *their* case. So, for those transvestites who find the overt sadomasochism in that story too intense, there are now available more charming stories of the happy, shy man and the happy, competent woman happily buying women's clothes and then the happy woman putting the lovely clothes on the happy man.

The following is a story from a transvestite magazine. A masculine man with no previous transvestic interests has been told to dress up by a woman he knows.

It was now time to get ready for the barbecue and Lynn [the man who is to become a transvestite] selected a flowery shirt and a pair of minimal heels for the occasion. More time than usual was given to application of her makeup to her eyes and mouth. How she enjoyed shaping it into the delightful bow that nature had endowed her with. Unusual attention was given to her hair to make certain it was perfect and in selection of beads of just the right length for her colorful outfit. Millie [the woman who is encouraging him to cross-dress] dressed similarly, but added two artificial flowers just above her ears.

"You look simply wonderful," complimented Millie, "and a more beautiful girl just does not exist. However, try not to talk too much this evening, but rather observe what the others do and say. O.K.?"

Soon the two girls were mingling with the other tenants at poolside, and Lynn's first evening out was underway. Millie noticed as she watched Lynn moving about, how graceful and feminine her friend appeared. . . .

Later:

"What a wonderful evening," exclaimed the enthusiastic Millie. "Bill is sure a charmer and knows his way with women! Did you enjoy yourself too?"

"Yes and no," replied Lynn. "To be honest, I felt left out of things and did not want to get myself too involved and possibly give myself away."

"Don't be silly, just be sure and be yourself the next time we are out. Still I can see why you might be uncomfortable," Millie replied, "though no one could possibly suspect that you are not what you appear to be."

"It's easy enough for you to tell me to be myself, but remember that the me that existed till two months ago was all man. Business and sports would not be the conversation expected of me with the men, would it?" retorted Lynn. "I can get along well enough with the women alone. God knows I've probably read as much feminine material these past months as they have in the past ten years . . . and the conversations that you and I have had give me confidence with them, but not with the men."

"Don't worry your pretty little head about it now," Millie said. "We will solve that problem also in time. Get some rest for we do have a busy schedule tomorrow." And planting a kiss on Lynn's forehead she left. . . .

Later:

Millie was fully dressed and soon they were chatting about the many small things that most women enjoy. When they were finished, Millie insisted on doing the dishes, so that Lynn could hurry and get dressed. "Wear the beige suit and that darling coral blouse you like so much," she commanded. "I don't want you to look too overbearing today since we will be out most of the day."

Later:

The ladies were soon seated and Lynn was delighted with the assistance of the waiter in seating them. During their light meal Millie told Lynn of her plans for them for the balance of the day.

"We are both going to enroll in the John Robert Powers Charm School where they will not only instruct you on makeup and clothes which you are coming along very well with now, but also in the art of conversation and development of your feminine personality. Most women

who attend these courses are weak in this area also, and if we are to be in mixed groups again such as the barbecue, I want you to be at ease, and this should do it."

At the opposite end of the spectrum are the stories in which the sadomasochism is intense, placed even more in the foreground than is the cross-dressing. In this form, the story is so slam-bang instantaneous that it is often represented simply by photographs without text. These show a "woman" tied up in ropes and chains in uncomfortable positions, in fact a man in woman's clothes; but what excites in this pornography is not just the male in women's clothes but the fact that "she" is chained. With pornography becoming specific enough for each type of man, there is less need to buy the pornography of the past that was acceptable but not ideal.

I have the impression (there are too few cases for sureness) that those who, in their childhood, were treated less cruelly by a woman (or women) prefer a happier pornography in which frank humiliation or even open physical sadism is not a part of the overt story.

However, these varying pornographies have in common the evocation of danger (humiliation, anxiety, fear, frustration) surmounted. In this sense, all pornography probably contains the psychodynamics of perversions. There is, I allege, no nonperverse pornography, that is, sexually exciting matter in which hostility is not employed as a goal. Most pornography is aimed at heterosexual men, however, and since there are so many customers and since there is so much of this minor-league pornography, such literature is "normal" in the statistical sense of being congenial to many men. Thus, for most men in our society pornography consists of pictures of nude women and of heterosexual intercourse. That these forms are common does not mean that they do not arise as solutions to conflict, distress, frustration, and anger. If they were "normal" in the

sense of being a universal, biological expression of unconflicted pleasure-seeking, then nudity would be sexually fetishistic in all societies (which it is not), not just in those like ours where it is made tantalizing by frustration.

Pornography spares one the anxieties of having to make it with another person; the people on the printed page know their place and do as directed.

Although popular, pornography may nonetheless not be simply (though it may, especially in adolescence, be partly) a substitute because of lack of proper sexual objects. It exists because it fills voyeuristic, sadomasochistic needs that in some people cannot be satisfied no matter how many willing sexual partners are available. Although genital orgasm is the final common pathway for pleasure and for relief from the drivenness of perverse need, perversions often use acts performed on objects or parts of the body that simply cannot be fully relieved by orgasm (cf. 152, p. 316). Nongenital organs—for example, eyes, skin, anus—and affects other than love—for example, rage, anxiety, depression—can, we know, be erotized, but the tension cannot easily be released, as it can in the genitals. This gives, I think, an intensity, a compulsiveness—a hopelessness—to perversion. Analytic theory, which connects perversion to neurosis and psychosomatic disorders, has long since suggested that if erotic tension builds up in an organ that cannot adequately reach discharge, chronic cellular change occurs.

If in pornography sexual activities are somehow portrayed in which there is always a victim, who is the victim in pictures and descriptions of heterosexual intercourse? Who is the victim and what is the sexual activity in a photograph of a nude?

While much of the excitement in the pornography of heterosexuality may come simply from identification with the depicted participants who are displaying their agility (and who do not suffer anxiety or genital failure

as might the viewer), it is also likely that piquancy is added by the primal-scene fantasy of a child getting away with something when he watches what he should not and perhaps a sense of superiority from being an audience and so not exposed to risk. The victims then are the "grownups," whose lack of omnipotence is proved since they do not know they are being observed.

Very popular are descriptions of a woman who starts out cool, superior, sophisticated, and uninterested but is swept by the precisely described activities of the man into a state of lust with monumental loss of control. One easily sees therein a power struggle disguised as sexuality: the dangerous woman who is reduced to a victim and the boy who, by means of the pornography, for a moment, in the illusion of power, becomes a man (106).

I have said that an essential dynamic in pornography is hostility. Perhaps the most important difference between more perverse and less perverse ("normal") pornography, as between perversion and "normality," is the degree of hostility (hatred and revenge fantasies) bound or released in the sexual activity. One can raise the possibly controversial question whether in humans (especially males) powerful sexual excitement can ever exist without brutality also being present (minimal, repressed, distorted by reaction formation, attenuated, or overt in the most pathological cases). This may be comparable to asking whether a piece of humor can exist without hostility (25). In humor the hostility is not simply tacked on but is a *sine qua non* (though not the only one). Is it possible that in nonperverse sexual excitement, unconscious hostility also is essential and not simply anacletic?

Can anyone provide examples of behavior in sexual excitement in which, in human males at least, disguised hostility in fantasy is not a part of potency? We are already familiar with a similar situation in which hostility surmounted is essential for normal functions, for we know that normal development demands that infants be

increasingly frustrated in order to permit the separation that will result in the ego functions and identity necessary for coping with the external world. This process, using frustration as an essential tool, creates a reservoir of unconscious hatred, coping with which helps determine successful or maladaptive personality development. Mastery, that most gratifying experience, often comes about through restitution for passively suffered frustration by creating fantasies, character structures, or modes of activity that in their most primitive form are brutal, but that, filtered through a process of sublimation, may end up far removed from the original hatred.

If hostility could be totally lifted out of sexual excitement there would be no perversions, but how much loving sexuality would be possible? The differences between each of the perversions, and between the different perversions and more common sexual behavior, may lie with the specific differences in frustrations and gratifications (often determined by society but applied by parents, especially mother) experienced in infancy and childhood.

A few words may be in order regarding the puzzling fact that attempting to sell pornography to women would lead one to starvation. Why? In the asking itself, not just in an answer, there is information. The question is like "the age-old mystery"—to put it in its ripest form—What Is Woman? Only men worry over the mystery of women; women do not, because they are not mystified. This does not necessarily mean that they comprehend the dynamics of their own sexuality but simply that because they experience it, it does not strike them as mysterious. If women wished, they could ask about the mystery of men's sexuality, which may not be so clear as some would have us think. We may take it for granted that we understand male sexuality because most of the work on it has been done by males who, experiencing it, need not be so curious and mystified.



In regard to the question why women do not respond to pornography as intensely as men, perhaps the question is wrong. Men tend to equate pornography in general with what is pornography for them in particular, but, for instance, precise depiction of sexual intercourse, although exciting, is less compelling for women. You can sell a steady flow of pictures of nude men to very few women for erotic purposes, but that does not mean women do not have their own pornography—they do. Because their childhood experiences in our society are different, women need some aspects of their pornography to be different from men's. By now it is known that women are full of their own private sexual fantasies and are stirred by pornography (see, for example, 36, 69).<sup>\*</sup> Men, judging the pornography of women, make the same mistake as when judging the pornography of anyone dynamically different; not stirred themselves, they cannot sense that the material might arouse others. Reading the romantic, masochistic stories that in recent years have been the surface that excites women, men might think it trash, since it seems so unsexual. It can appear *ad libitum*, not recognized—much less legislated—as obscene.

In addition, most of us believe (cf. 78) that, although they can be stirred by pornography, women are less voyeuristic, and voyeurism is an essential quality of pornography. Although some admit nowadays to staring at men's pants, women are never Peeping Toms. This may not reflect a biological difference in the sexes but our society's inhibition of a little boy's right to sexual looking and a little girl's training that she is not to permit that looking, which implies to her that it makes no big differ-

<sup>\*</sup>My impression at this point, before studying the question carefully, is that fewer types of perversion are represented in women's pornography, which, besides the gentle masochism-sadism romances, seems to consist most often of endless variations on the favorite-harem-girl-of-the-Sultan oedipal-masochism tale or the supergirl-frustrating-droves-of-roaring-studs reparative-sadism fantasy.

ence to anyone if she looks or not. It may also develop that, as routine heterosexual pornography becomes available to them in a more lenient society, more women will discover a taste for such products. To the extent that penises become a forbidden but prized vision for girls as breasts are for boys, women will be drawn to penis pornography.

I have stressed the obvious, that what is pornography for one person is not so for another with a different life history and psychodynamics. Looking at the repetitive, unvarying stories of transvestites, the nontransvestite finds his mind wandering and quickly becomes unable to read any more. One day I asked a transvestite to bring in pornography suited to his transvestism; he told me that stories he had already shown me that I had been too bored to read were in fact the pornography. Similarly, what women may find exciting in books and movies will make men in the audience restless as they wait for the story to pick up its interest again.

It is also obvious that politicians today, when legislating on pornography, will tend to define as pornographic only those things that excite themselves and as obscene only those productions that make their own gorges rise.

Societies fear pornography as they fear sexuality, but perhaps there is also a less sick reason: they respond intuitively to the hostile fantasies disguised but still active in pornography. And so, pornography will be loathsome to the person responding to it (who, in responding, makes it pornography rather than foolish prose); the word "loathsome," like "disgust," implies not only forbidden sensuality but also fear that the hostility may be released.