

Chapter 2: The Virtue of Maleness

01 - GRIDIRON

So, moviegoers and time travelers (but not snow lovers), imagine a late October Friday evening, around dusk, in 1960 (I don't know whether daylight savings was in effect that late then). I've walked the one mile from my home, after supper, in Arlington, VA, to the Washington-Lee High School, where I'm a senior, and this time I walk along Washington Boulevard, outside the chain-link fence protecting the gridiron in front of the three-story brick high school, built in 1926 (now replaced twice), where in a couple hours I'll be climbing the bleachers to sell Cokes to raise money for the Science Honor Society. (Yeah, me peddling stuff to raise money for causes, although they are my causes.) It's warm, about 75 degrees, threatening a thunderstorm, and I have my first epiphany.

I could "defend my life" (as with the Albert Brooks movie), and come up with a list of things that I "should have done" or ought to do now. That sounds judgmental. But the collection of advice doesn't necessarily correspond to a consistent set of moral principles, at least regarding balancing the needs for "personal autonomy" against the "sustainability of the group" or family.

The next question is how are these questions about "autonomy" connected to homosexuality? In my life, they're so meshed that it's hard to sift them apart into separate issues. But many of the problems, about willingness to enter commitments or dealing with "sacrifice" when a familial or group mentality would mute the sense of loss, can occur within the "heterosexual" world. But, until recently, male homosexuality, at least, was nearly always "practiced" without any intention of procreation or taking responsibility for lineage, so it arguably sounds like it is "fair game" as a complete target subset of "unsustainably selfish behavior."

My own experience would seem to most people (including therapists) mentally "self-circumscribed," but it takes on a great deal of existential meaning – leading to questions about my own intentions and integrity. But the questions ultimately "infringe" upon the political debate over first, gay autonomy and then, gay equality. "Gay rights" as an issue overlaps, and is mostly, but not entirely, contained within the debate over individualism. Imagine the Venn diagrams!

Starting about third grade, when I commenced piano lessons, I noticed that I was "different," but mainly because of negative feedback from the teacher and classmates, especially about falling behind in physical and athletic activities. I don't know why I was behind and why the decline appeared suddenly, but I did have the measles right after first grade. Things probably hit their worst in "junior high school," with some disturbing stuff in grades seven and nine particularly. (Senior high school would go so much better.)

Starting around age 11 or so, I also became aware that I "noticed" men (or "men's bods") as to their level of "masculinity." Perhaps some of this was in reaction to careless, offhand comments that my father made about people, even including television stars (like Aldo Ray). I experienced certain "curiosities" that sometimes resulted in erection, but they were more like mental fantasy play. Yet, I did not sense that these "curiosities" really needed to lead to an outcome until I was a senior in high school.

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At the same time, I had come to view the world of courtship and dating, and the great abyss of marriage and parenthood that was supposed to follow (but still out of sight) as humiliating. I had felt particularly humiliated about my body (particularly during middle school), and about its vulnerability to even being brought lower. So I needed nothing to do with the conventional world, as long as I could create one of my own.

That brings me back to the silent soliloquy that Friday night, walking to a place, to interact with people, with the aspiring second theme from the finale of the Brahms Symphony #1 playing in my head. It struck me that masculinity is an achievement (Joseph Nicolosi starts his 2002 patently anti-gay book *Parents' Guide to Preventing Homosexuality* with a chapter called this), but that femininity is just a given. I associated the notion of “feeling feminine” with depending on others. One had to compete and win to be “masculine.” Also, in my fantasy world, one had to “look” masculine. The real accomplishment was to be smart and masculine, both, at the same time. There was an urban legend that brains came at the expense of testosterone (biologically, the opposite may be true for men – we’ll get to that soon). **So wasn't it more productive to “like” or be drawn to that which is “good”?** Didn't homosexual feeling actually make sense, as a tool to find and support the good? Or was I already setting myself up for the trap of “the knowledge of good and evil?”

At that particular moment, as I turned to walk past the gridiron toward the soda stand, it seemed to me that my “purpose” is all about virtue. A man who “has it all” represents good, or virtue. Anything less isn't worth any emotion (or excitement). It made perfect sense at the time.

I recall tramping through the stands that evening, selling the Cokes, and the camaraderie at half-time. After the game, as we were standing around, somehow the subject of homosexuality came up. One of the boys called me “homosexual Bill Boushka” with some affection. We all knew it was an act.

Washington-Lee won that football game on a last second field goal.

In December, I would be “initiated” into the Science Honor Society in my own basement (two days before a massive blizzard). One of the guys (who it turned out would give the valedictory speech the following June) gave a talk about how some kinds of white blood cells work, a talk that curiously anticipated AIDS to occur 25 years later.

At the dinner before the talk, one of the other guys would say that the thirty-something male teacher who taught AP Physics and sponsored the Society (and who was there in the basement) was a homosexual. In the spring, about a week before our Memorial Day Weekend trip to Mt. Washington, NH, the teacher would announce that he was resigning, although he did come on the trip. Later I would hear that he had become a “traveling lecturer” and about two years later the *Washington Post* would report that he had died of hepatitis.

During the year, I had befriended a particular young man who was not in SHS but in my government class, who was physically strikingly commanding and six months older. I'll call him Michael. I'm not sure

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what kept the friendship going at first, but it may have included chess. In the summer, we saw each other more, particularly after the annual summer family trip to Ohio, in a notehand (aka shorthand) class in summer school starting in late July. I had taken it to give me “something to do” because I felt I had fallen behind other SHS members who had summer jobs (like at the Weather Bureau, inspired by Mt. Washington).

We got together a lot, and particularly played “at” tennis as well as chess, and one particular August evening in his home I realized, quite suddenly, how sexually aroused I felt around him. It was a “passive voice” experience, something that happened “to” me. But, indeed, “nothing” actually “happened.”

At the same time, I noticed something else: in dreams, sexual arousal at the prospect of submission to a male who was more “powerful” and fit certain expectations. I could feel arousal at “losing” an arm-wrestling match or even a chess game. Existentially threatening abasement could actually become exciting.

Before, my interests had been more those of “curiosity.” Now it was real. I again noticed something more. It seemed (as I had long since noticed) that a lot of men locked in marriages and raising kids weren’t particularly “attractive,” and I sensed that my homosexual feelings for attractive men implied a derogatory attitude about those who “have” less.

Michael went away to VPI (Virginia Tech), which at the time was all ROTC, and I wondered about what effect that could have on his attractiveness. I went down to William and Mary.

The “story” of my expulsion is detailed in the first *Do Ask, Do Tell* book. So is the subsequent period of psychiatric treatment and inpatient experience at National Institutes of Health in 1962. I would reiterate the curious parallel that my “roommate” problem would form with the debate on gays in the military three decades later – privacy and, more subtly, social cohesion. I was seen as an alien observer, able to distract others merely by noticing them, as predicted by special relativity.

In the book, I made a lot of the analogy between the “privacy” aspect of life in college dormitories, and “privacy” in military barracks. That is somewhat valid, but the focus on this aspect of the debate on lifting the ban on gays in the military as it was conducted in 1993 misses much bigger points about human intentions. There are good reasons why the military ban (and subsequently legislated “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy) is perhaps the most sharp-edged of all sexual issues and deserves focused attention, but my own history would go beyond the obvious questions about the practical limits of privacy. Cohesion (and its generalization, solidarity) means a lot in concentric social units everywhere and feeds sustainability expectations.

Times have changed enormously since those days. Indeed, the acceleration of progress in marriage equality (to be taken up shortly) is startling to me. For most of my adult years, I felt satisfied with a “separate and unequal” life if I was just left alone, and as long as the “inequality” didn’t matter too directly to me. We have a paradoxical situation today, with stunning legal and political progress in the West, but even more antipathy in authoritarian countries (like Uganda and now Russia), and a street culture even in the West that tolerates bullying. Why was male homosexuality viewed with such

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“illogical” disdain in previous decades? It’s ironic that it was dreaded more in some families than was the reverse outcome, unwanted pregnancies. In my first book, in the Introduction, I suggested that people saw it as a “tempting” character defect that led people to mooch (or “freeload”) on the willingness of others to take risks and unpredictable responsibilities in their place. Such a view fit into both the military and “family values” problems. I now think it is more a mix of things – a need to validate a social power structure, and “make sense” of an intrinsically unfair world by pretending (like the Vatican) that you can make everyone partake in intergenerational responsibility by being open to lifetime marital commitment and procreation whenever even experiencing sexuality (an idea that certainly leads to different strokes for different folks). The “power structure,” though, would seek to satisfy its urges, propagating a view that someone like me should turn myself in and be re-educated or be born again (at least to avoid distracting others). Religion is especially prone to abuse by those in power. Remember the whole idea of selling indulgences!

02 - SCHIZOID

My experience, particularly at NIH (and perhaps, less so, at William and Mary and even in high school) suggests a darker side to the way I experienced homosexuality. That is, my refusal to show affection for someone who “fell short” has an expressive purpose, that eventually, even though not immediately and probably not frequently, made me capable of communicating the contempt and even hatred that I had to fight off to win my own freedom to live my own separate life. I would later see in my medical records that NIH had a rather misleading clinical term for this – “schizoid personality.”

I could think of many images that reinforce this, particularly one at NIH, with a particular patient who went catatonic in group therapy after she asked why we “can’t love everybody.” A male patient, whom I actually liked, picked her up off the floor and revived her. Another is the way I handled a ping pong tournament, luring non-intact patients into anger and slamming the ball wildly. I’ll come back to that in a jiffy.

Indeed, the therapy at NIH indeed seemed to “rescue” me, to see if I could conceivably get interested in having a family the “normal way” at all. The course of therapy tried to uncover my fantasies, and the hundreds of pages of medical records make this clear. They aimed to show that the fantasies substituted for “real life,” even if I may have had good reason (in terms of earlier physical humiliation) to avoid it; furthermore, while I could even then, in 1962, maintain that I should have the freedom to be myself and explore my “fantasies,” their ultimate purpose could be to bring back a certain authoritarian system of morality to which everyone would be held accountable, even if that required allowing others to make “irrational” emotional demands on me.

Already, at NIH, my aloofness or distance from people with “real need” had become apparent, enough to be noted in my medical records. I tended to form friendships only with two or three more intact male patients, and could sometimes express contempt for some of the others, who were “too sick” (or, put euphemistically, “unable”) to function competitively in a demanding world. Another “filmable” episode backed up their theories. One Friday afternoon, after “Unit Government” (a step down from “group therapy”) we had a ping pong tournament right in the day room. I won the

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tournament by keeping the ball on the table, letting a couple of other patients make fools of themselves after losing their tempers over missed slams. In “backyard baseball” years earlier, when I was a tween, I had manipulated the rules so I could compete, and sometimes the “stronger” boys resented it. (A ball hit over the fence was out – sometimes, if it was the “wrong” neighbor’s fence – really our parents’ rules, but the kids “blamed” me for it.) In chess, when I had become an adult, a lot of my upsets came merely from opponents’ blunders. There is a saying in international chess, “only your own mistakes can beat you.” That sounds like it applies to pro football too. I saw people who “failed” in it just like people who messed up, made too many mistakes, or missed too many problems in algebra tests.

Nevertheless, at the time, even during the Kennedy years, we were already shifting away from the “Greatest Generation’s” communitarian or family values to personal “consequentialism.” In 1962, after all, the Supreme Court struck down bans on contraceptives, and at least one state decriminalized sodomy. If behavior itself was objectively non-aggressive and harmless and didn’t violate another’s consent, it shouldn’t be prohibited.

But in the case of sexual values, it seemed as if the context in which they were experienced and then gradually communicated to others really mattered. In my high school years and at college, as stated, “grades” (for a sense of self-worth), and aesthetic expression and experience (music) had become my “currency,” my bitcoin mine. I did not easily grasp a bigger purpose other than my own performance. But after a broken semester in a dorm and some experience in the hospital (albeit as a “goddamn MP”) I sensed how the bigger picture of social and familial relationships drove most “normal” people.

I can certainly imagine that a “larger purpose,” perhaps drummed in by religion, could make a long-term monogamous marriage sexually interesting for some people. But the preservation of interest depends on institutionalized social supports, and a belief that some system of absolute right and wrong will get everyone to comply with the same rules. In time, one senses that the “rules” help rationalize away other inequalities, as between the rich or the poor, or even racism inherited from previous generations through families. Traditional family values, as understood some decades ago, tend to guarantee people that their descendants will survive them and give them a kind of vicarious immortal future, even if they stumble as individuals.

Then, if I were marginally able to perform as a “man” and belonged to a closed society with a shared vision (the Mormon Church makes a good example), I might have an emotional investment in the belief that, to obtain the social status of husband and father, others have to play by the same rules, and be angry at those who “cheat.” It could have happened to me with just slight perturbations.

On the other hand, marriage seemed like a convenient succor for people who couldn’t “make it on their own.” The media was filled with images supporting marriage (like the *Ladies Home Journal* series about saving marriages). At one time I laughed at this as “other people’s problems” but pretty soon I was picking up that I was expected to enter and navigate this world. After all, no one can be in control of everything that could affect him, right? It seemed, based on my one episode of heterosexual dating in 1971, that it gave stay-at-home moms an awful lot of power over whether their men fit in.

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But if marriage defined the structure or “sexual constitution” of society, as well as political and religious structures on top, it still mattered how well people did as individuals. People who didn’t perform too well (as in school) had to stay in their place and do what others said. They were particularly vulnerable in the ‘60s to become cannon fodder for the Vietnam-era draft. That also seemed potentially true for people who weren’t physically competitive, although the Cold War was rapidly making society more hospitable to nerds, who frankly were needed badly now. In fact, people like me, not very competitive physically, could feign “superiority.”

You start to see how this plays out in a closed environment, and why it might matter in, for example, the military. In earlier decades, it created tensions in dorms, fire departments, law enforcement agencies, with teachers, and other areas where people had to share a lot together in a relatively closed environment, but areas outside the military gradually learned to deal with it. **It’s more than just a matter of modesty or “privacy”; to survive in a group, people sometimes have to learn to bond under circumstances not wholly of their own choosing.** (This point came up recently when Lt. Gen. Russell Honore, of Katrina lore, challenged members of Congress, after the budget debt ceiling bickering, to learn the nature of “physical sacrifice.”) So did the military itself, to some extent, but it was in the Armed Forces where these sorts of issues are the most likely to surface.

A private act, or a “desire” for an act, itself is harmless. But the person’s intentions gradually leak out and become more apparent in a confined space. Then the “purpose” of the person’s feelings become apparent (it goes existential) and what starts out as indifference gets translated into contempt or hostility. Today it’s even more apparent with the ease of self-expression on the Internet – a topic for the next chapter. The general catch-all term for this concern in the military debate became “unit cohesion.” And that concept could “extend,” like a method in object-oriented programming (OOP) to the larger culture, where inner motives leak out and are seen as distracting to the larger culture, to the moral incentive for most people to step up and do what has to be done (and feel what has to be felt). The capstone of all this moralizing had to do with the ability to render affection where it is really needed (starting in the family and branching out), and most of all, accept affection as a part of “staying alive.”

I of course wondered why others had made my sexual interests (and disinterests) their business. Maybe my interests went against “nature” and therefore needed to be opposed, but isn’t it intrinsically human to challenge and question “nature” sometimes? My “interests” (however associated with “wild reeds”) would logically matter only if many people were likely to follow and copy me. (I know, that gets into modern immutability arguments.) But maybe something more subtle was going on: others couldn’t make and keep their own commitments if they knew others like me would “get out of it” and then criticize (or even shame) them while remaining undetected “parasites.” Still, an ideology that emphasized privacy and being left alone would gradually take hold by the late ‘60s or early ‘70s, and then sound particularly appealing during the Reagan years (and eventually necessary given the politics of AIDS).

So is immutability the concept that really matters? It wouldn’t if the “lives of others” didn’t bother people.

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However, the question of immutability has grown more compelling in recent years. Researchers cannot find any direct evidence of “gay genes,” but recent studies suggest that other biological influences called “epigenetics” may affect how genes are expressed, and these can be important to sexual interest. All fetuses start as female and in theory the default setting for the hypothalamus would be to have some instinctive reaction to men. It is only as various hormones and reagents reach the hypothalamus that “instincts” change for males. Of course, instincts are sometimes overridden by education and culture. But, as with so many other factors, biology affects where people start in line in many ways. Opponents of equal rights for homosexuals (or even of toleration of homosexuality, as in the past) seem willing to demand sacrifices from “us” for the supposed collective motives of the majority, or to achieve their idea of a sense of “virtue commons” (such as the Vatican idea that sex is only for marital procreation). Or they may point out crude comparisons to other biologically mediated propensities that have more obviously dangerous results for the individuals themselves (such as alcoholism).

Libertarianism has become more attractive in the gay community since the early 1990s, as libertarian perspectives on ethics have made immutability irrelevant. In fact, in the Introduction to my DADT book, I had proposed that “absolute responsibility for the self” become a backbone principle for justifying equal rights for gays, but the reasoning can backfire, leading to questions about what is to be done with people who don’t “make it” by someone’s standards; history is not very reassuring on this point. That’s because an ideology of self-sufficiency makes morality based on communal sustainability irrelevant. Personal responsibility (whether in financial dealings or in safer, HIV-free sex) becomes absolute. To some gay libertarians, the military ban issue becomes a sideshow, because military service is voluntary anyway. Marriage gets reduced to a private contract, with no public privileges that the unmarried must support.

Libertarianism has been predicated particularly on two concepts: privacy, and the idea that aggression against another person (or people) is never acceptable. Libertarianism expects a certain paradox (loosely called “**spontaneous order**”) to generate social structure: since no one can use force, people naturally will seek out ways to live and work together, eventually out of self-interest. Ultimately, one talks on two levels: one is about limiting government and the effects of politics, but at the same time the kinds of behaviors and commitments people, in a real world, will need to learn to handle. For example, marriages, or at least committed partnerships. And all of these relationships develop in a world that has much less expectation of privacy today than in previous generations because, with the Internet, people want to share and broadcast themselves. People will become very reluctant to be pinned down.

Yet, in a community, specialized roles, some of which may depend on gender, take on meaning if people must accept a certain level of interdependence among generations. Ironically, male homosexuality focuses on visually confirmed attributes that we typically connect to “masculinity.” Look on any gay disco floor and notice how the tall, slender but muscular young man is the most “desired.” (At least, there is very little obesity.) Ironically, that confirms the right-wing idea that masculinity is an

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achievement and is necessary socially after all. Gay “body fascism” seems to be a strange bedfellow (pun) of the far right. I admit there is some of that in my own fantasy in people-watching; in discos, people not of my choice will challenge me to dance with them, just to get my attention. It seems to comport with a worldview that people are “intrinsically” good (and worthy of intimate attention) or bad, based on natural endowments beyond their control. That belief was pretty common when I was growing up, when less could be done for the disabled or “untalented” than today.

If people must accept some interdependence, then the idea that people should share the risks of military service in some way (and maybe men have to share more of it, still) becomes meaningful. Therefore, to be a fully equal and autonomous citizen, you need the ability to serve in the military if somehow you become called to do so (in the deepest sense).

Likewise, if equitable sharing of the risks and uncertainties of intergeneration responsibility (child rearing and parenting, and now eldercare) are an essential goal of an ethically run society, then the “equal” right to same-sex marriage and parenting becomes important. At a certain level, the notion of a birthright to a mother and a father for every child becomes a logical impasse.

So then we fall back to the immutability problem. In my case, I don’t think I was “born gay,” but I wasn’t “born straight” either. And if personal responsibility is that important, I’m responsible for both myself and for sharing social challenges in an equitable way, even if I don’t always accept the dictated (and sometimes sheltering) goals of the group. Life doesn’t have to be fair; everyone shares in variable sacrifice.

03 – AN OFFERING

For a time in my early years as a working young adult (in the fall of 1971), I actually tried “heterosexual” dating. I remember picking up one young lady in a cottage house in suburban Maryland when her father offered me a sandwich before we went out. The moment was photogenic. I declined, of course. But in recent years, I’m struck by the moment, where perhaps the father wanted to see if I could really turn her down, or the idea of family life down. What would follow was interesting – singles clubs (one dominated by a “cigar-smoking man” for a bartender) that attracted lonely hearts, dinners (without going Dutch) where popovers were served and steaks were flamed at the table, Beltway car (Ford Maverick) discussions with her about the difference between looks and personality, attending Leonard Bernstein’s *MASS* at the Kennedy Center, and almost seeing the Washington Senators’ last baseball game at RFK for 33 years.

She came to my modest south Arlington garden apartment just once, and I remember playing an inexpensive recording of Beethoven’s *Pastoral Symphony* – her request, not my favorite. She made the comment that for me, music took the place of drugs. It provided enough high to live for. But that probably meant I didn’t need babies.

(03A) – A TEMPTATION

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One Saturday night in March 1972 (three months before Watergate), I drove to a Giant store in Springfield, VA, near the notorious old I-95 Mixing Bowl, where a co-worker whom I particularly admired “moonlighted.” I still remember his tending to the rouge live lobsters when I made my rendezvous (in the style of the *Triplets of Belleville*) with him there. According to plan, I drove over to his townhouse apartment and waited. He showed up five minutes later.

A former high school math teacher himself, he had married an “instant family,” had people depending on him, and had gone to work for the government (where I worked then) to make enough money (teachers couldn’t make enough to raise kids). His second wife and stepchildren were away for the weekend, in the lake and pine country of north Florida. I was there, in his living room, until maybe 3:30 AM Sunday morning, still before a spring dawn. Oh, nothing happened. I looked at photo albums that revealed a lot. He demonstrated his workout routine.

The point is that I took the chance, put myself (and him) in a situation where “it could be allowed to happen.” I didn’t have to be gay to experience this one-time bonding and Maslow-like peak experience, if it could even happen. My “second coming” (below) would not happen for almost another year. There could be two outcomes. One was that nothing happened but I had shown that what I wanted was permissible – therefore I wouldn’t need women. That is “what happened.” Or, had something else “happened,” I would have been quite aroused, but I might have felt that the energy could lead back to women someday. I would have been energized.

Later, I would find that some gay men would indeed say (or “admit”) that they had never had women, even once. I think they were in the minority, maybe about one-third. (I don’t know the statistics, beyond Kinsey). Still, it struck me that I was to be discriminated against, excluded, or driven into second-class citizenship not for what I did or even desired (or even confessed as desire), but for what I didn’t do or show passion for. It sometimes felt like not making the cut. In some societies, I wouldn’t have been allowed to live and consume resources if I weren’t to have progeny. In others, I would have become subservient, while others played on the passions supported by my expected sacrifice. In a few, I might have been honored in a priesthood, but maybe only after emasculation. I desired to see an erotic royalty.

Understand something else. If an evening of “temptation” and maybe sexual roulette were not even permissible, if marital sex were the only possibility, and if I had become competitive enough (like after getting reasonably fit in Army Basic), maybe heterosexuality could be exciting after all. Ask Masters and Johnson. They wrote a book on the subject.

In more modern times, it would really strike me that whenever homosexuality came up as a “moral issue,” it became the lieutenant for everything else. Why were others so concerned about my “private life,” my inclinations, my Berlioz-like passions? There is something about the moment of excitement that swallows all other meaning. Answer your own question. They want you to share the responsibility of having kids. That’s just as important as supporting a kid once you’ve sired one. They want everybody to share the risk. *Then it’s exciting for everyone.*

04 - SECOND COMING

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I'm struck by the observation that at some points in my life, both early and late, I was disrupted and kept from pursuing my own "goals" to satisfy not so much the basic needs but the psychic goals of others.

I detailed in my DADT how I came out a "second time" in 1973, and I recall sitting on the bus, crossing the George Washington Bridge, to go to a "gay talk group" on the Upper West Side as an epiphanous moment, on a frigid February Sunday afternoon. I would celebrate by treating myself to a skiing trip in Killington, VT, not so far from beloved Mt. Washington.

It took a great deal of **exertion** and self-focus to arrange my life so that I could overcome my social (and by age 29, attractiveness [in my case] deficit – already). I focused on my own comfort and own fantasies, not on the "real needs" of others. It seemed necessary. I felt I had already missed "the first boat." I would never experience having others really want my body, something I can see on any visit to a large gay disco. There would come a Saturday night in January 1975 when I would have my "first experience" in the Club Baths. I would celebrate privately, going to see *Macon County Line* the next day around the then seedy Times Square.

In time I would discover the Ninth Street Center, as detailed in my 1997 book. Submissiveness, which could be a source of sexual excitement with the right person, could be seen as a "creative" activity in terms of psychological polarity, where people have feminine or masculine personalities regardless of biological gender.

Creativity was supposed to be experienced in the context of a lifetime monogamous relationship. The Center existed as a kind of separated community in the East Village. Since it was local and isolated, the homosexual no longer had a reason to use his capacities to imply judgment of others in the outside world. The Center, as a closed community, imposed a certain paradox: the polarity theory did seem to demand psychological complementarity, that is, the idea of meeting the real needs of a partner in a relationship and others in a community. But one had to be quite intact and capable of "growth" to be "worthy" of a relationship in the first place. To people outside the Center, the place seemed a bit harsh.

Still, in those days, I lived in a kind of urban exile or separate "dominion." As long as I could lead the life I wanted and make regular excursions into the "real world" (with planes and rental cars) I didn't care very much about an abstract idea of "equality." The fundamental right was "private choice" or to be left alone – and this is what got trashed when the Supreme Court upheld sodomy laws in *Bowers v. Hardwick* in 1986 (but finally overturned in 2003 with *Lawrence v. Texas*).

05 – ERWARTUNG

There was a period, from about 1976 to 1983, where I lived a conventional "gay" life, including taking people home, and also dating and forays into relationships. In fact, the anticipation of someone's arrival, which at my Village apartment would be announced by a street-level intercom, could become one of the most exciting moments possible.

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On a weekday night in May 1978, I had such a date – the details of the whole day stick in my mind. We would go to a play (*The Fifth of July*) and then have French ice cream on a well-known Village spot, where he would tell me some medical things that would foreshadow what was to come in a few years. A few weeks later, I was on vacation, in Washington State, with a rental car, when I happened to pick up a magazine with an article about clusters of cancer. I remember sitting in a restaurant in a Cascade mountain pass (Snoqualmie) on I-90, eating a ham sandwich, and taking in the random article and putting “two and two” together, and wondering what would happen. At least I did not have the more conventional problem of needing to be jealous!

I had to consider how I would feel about any partner or lover if he fell off his pedestal and “broke into a million pieces.”

As I detailed in the first book, I restarted my personal life in Dallas in 1979, when the “storm” would soon hit. Oddly, I didn’t hear about it in detail until the spring of 1982, and my coming to see AIDS as an existential threat would occur suddenly, in early 1983. But in time I indeed saw the AIDS epidemic as a death knell to the privacy rights we seemed to have largely won. Very literally, if HIV could create secondary risks of spread of disease to “innocent bystanders” and if anal intercourse really did propagate the disease up to amplification, then the right wing could certainly construct arguments showing “state interest” in private conduct. It’s a lucky and good thing that HIV is not an arbovirus (spread by insects, as was recklessly speculated by conspiracy theorists on both sides in the 1980s). I explained this in the 1997 book.

I went through my own period of panic, wondering if skin blemishes could be KS (Kaposi’s sarcoma), and actually had a biopsy once. After all, for about seven years, I had probably averaged about seven partners a year (tricks had become old hat), not great in the gay world but excessive by mainstream standards.

I tried to gain control (not really earn karma or do penance) by becoming a buddy, but rather a “baby buddy” on my own terms. Volunteering to support people with very limited life expectancies (as many people with AIDS experienced in the mid 1980s) would not be as emotionally demanding as family eldercare two decades later.

06 – DYNAMIC EQUALITY

By the time Bill Clinton was elected, I was in a position to wake up to the debate over gays in the military, and see it in a very schizophrenic way.

I have to back up here, and retrace a thread covered in the DADT book: I went through three draft physicals in the 1960s, going from 4-F to 1-A, before getting drafted, after finishing graduate school. But once in the Army most of my issues had to do with regimentation and “paying my dues”; they had little to do specifically with sexual orientation. It was very important, as a moral matter, **not to “get out of” exposure to the sacrifices demanded of others because of a supposed moral or character defect**, as things were seen at the time (but starting to change).

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I saw lifting the ban as a way to gain “equality” of sorts. But I also saw it through the “privacy” prism. Originally, I saw non-discrimination simply in terms of an employer’s leaving me alone and not “asking.” That had been pretty much the case with my whole career since the early 1970s. (There had been some tension in my first job because the employer paid married employees greater *per diem* on long-term travel, regardless of whether spouses accompanied them or they traveled on their own.) In fact, that had been my own actual experience in the Army (with rare exceptions, as in my book). I saw “lifting the ban” in terms of being allowed to serve and keep a private life separate. Up to 1993 (and at least since 1981), the military had indeed “asked” during enlistment in a section of disqualifying personality or social adjustment traits. In fact, in the mid 1960s, the Army had temporarily stopped asking during the draft physicals! But, in sum, I initially saw President Clinton’s “don’t ask, don’t tell, don’t pursue” from his 1993 speech at Fort McNair as an “advance.” Unfortunately, the military would often fail to honor “don’t pursue.”

What would eventually change my own perception of this would be my own self-promotion and self-expression, first in book writing and then on the Internet, as I’ll detail in the next chapter. Because it is so unacceptable to be recruited to serve someone else’s purposes publicly or even privately, a personality issue and axis (“unbalanced and balanced personalities” that had come up at the Ninth Street Center, as explained in the DADT book), it became important to me to be open publicly about who I was. It rather reminds me of training as a boy at church in how to “pray publicly.”

I discussed in the book about my own “compromise” and my own “White House Letter.” The Clinton Administration hired the Rand Corporation to perform and publish a formal study on how to lift the ban and develop a code of “military professional conduct” that would allow gay soldiers to serve with some immediate discretion as to matters of behavior appropriate for intimate environments, like submarines, and self-contained “dominion-style” units (Clive Barker has the right idea there). Rand surveyed the experience of foreign militaries that even by 1993 had made progress in accepting gays (especially Israel). Generally, its recommendations are appropriate for today (and Britain, the largest ally in Iraq and Afghanistan, has effectively implemented them in lifting its own ban around 2000).

After about 16 years of “**don’t ask, don’t tell,**” the first Obama administration gradually lumbered toward repeal, getting a bill passed in December 2010 by a lame-duck Congress. I was actually attending the rally at the Capitol at high noon December 10 when I got a call about the sudden further decline of my mother (three more chapters), and had watched most of the equivocal hearings on C-SPAN. The certification was signed by the president this summer while the debt-ceiling “debate” stormed on, almost to be overlooked. I waited an hour in line to get into the celebration on K Street on September 20, 2011.

During the 2012 presidential campaign, some of us breathed heavily as more socially conservative Republican candidates (like “common good” man Rick Santorum) did well in the early primaries. But “social conservatism” (due to some candidates’ arrogance in public) seemed to fade during the year, and Obama won the election in an electoral rout.

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It's important to note that the DADT repeal occurred after the Supreme Court had declared homosexual-only sodomy laws unconstitutional in 2003 (*Lawrence v. Texas*), reversing *Bowers v. Hardwick* (Georgia) (1986). This ruling does not necessarily invalidate the UCMJ Article 125, for a variety of reasons. It's clear that the "moral" climate of the country had changed in 17 years, toward an individual locus of moral compass, although the dissent questioned the focus on individual experience in a world already becoming more public again.

The "battle over the ban" (not quite a war) had done a lot to reduce the importance of "privacy" as a morally compelling argument. Social conservatives talked about "unit cohesion" in the military, translating into "social capital" for the larger civilian life. A lot of that had to do with incentives to accept the aims of "the group" based on expectations of what others may do. Civil libertarians shifted the debate from "being left alone" to both "openness," being oneself, and inequality, with a somewhat limiting or truncated use of the idea of immutability, as already mentioned.

The lifting of the military ban and DADT policy would certainly help improve the climate for same-sex marriage, and for gradually pressuring the Boy Scouts of America to revisit its own policy ("repealed" with respect to youth membership but not scouting leaders, as of this writing mid 2013). The military repeal would help defuse the "old chestnut" of a notion that homosexual tensions undermine the ability of a society or tribe to defend itself against enemies – an idea that had also fed the difficulties that civilian gays had with security clearances (including me, when I worked for the Navy Department in the early 1970s) until at least the '90s. It also defuses the idea of homosexuality as "illness" or "disability," if one only sees procreation as essential. (Some social conservatives still complain about the American Psychiatric Association's removing the designation of illness in 1973.) It's worthy of note here that a two years after my expulsion from William and Mary in the fall of 1961, another student was "hospitalized" there in the infirmary on the theory that the College (in 1963) saw it as "illness" and indeed, I had been told that I might be readmitted if I had permission from a psychiatrist. One "medical" chestnut that remains is the ban on blood and organ donations from MSM's – that is, any male who has had genital contact with another male since 1977. I used to give blood until 1983, and would resume if the ban were lifted, say, pending a negative antigen test and no activity for the past ninety days. I would consider organ donation at death. On the other hand, I don't relate to emotional calls to share (my) other body parts (kidneys, bone marrow) for heroic attempts to save the lives to others. I still feel sensitive about calls to "be brave and shave." (In the Army, a "buddy" once joked with me by shaving his forearm before giving blood and plasma.)

Another point that is critical is that back in the early and mid '90s I saw gay marriage, the way it is argued today, as less critical to "first-class citizenship" than the military ban. That's partly because I saw "equal citizenship" as related to the ability to share "equal risk" in a crunch. But I also saw the gay marriage problem in terms of a different kind of tension between the single and childless (not always synonymous with gay, even if I thought so) and conventionally married adults raising families with children (and probably entering the intergenerational responsibility cycle involving eldercare as a "sandwich generation," although I couldn't see this yet). Related to that were ideas like the "**family wage**" (no longer discussed much except in very conservative circles) and the idea that single people sometimes "worked at a discount" and lowballed people with families in the workplace, to the delight of

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some employers and the chagrin of some unions. Equal pay for equal work across gender – something that had really taken off in the '60s in the computer industry (and had actually appeared in the home front during WWII) – figured into this. Of course, I knew that gay couples faced issues regarding sharing of benefits, but this stayed away from my mind, in a certain intellectual compartment.

I think there are three major things to bear in mind, however, to add to the historical record of the debate (on the now repealed DADT policy) now, indeed “as the world turns” – before fully looking at history of the marriage debate.

One is a refocus on the lessons from my own experience. Why was William and Mary so brutal in the way it treated me and my parents, and why was NIH so probing as to my refusal to honor social expectations of others? In retrospect, it seems to me that there is another big factor besides the “privacy” one (where dorms and barracks are a lot alike): that is, I was an **only child**, and my statement to the Dean of Men (of being a “**latent homosexual**”) was taken as pronouncing a death sentence on my family, perhaps even jeopardizing my parents’ marriage. (That anticipates an aspect of the gay marriage debate, where the apparent avoidance by gays of the complementarity of the heterosexual world is viewed as undermining the long-term stability and even purpose of heterosexual marriage, as explained in Paul Robinson’s *Queer Wars*.) How could I do this? (So Dr. Laura would ask.) Although it was my roommate and other boys who had brought up the subject of homosexuality, the whole process had been somewhat of a two-way street, with my feeling that I was achieving a “creative” purpose by “stepping on their toes” and showing them that they were as inadequate as me, even if in different ways. It seemed to others that I was interested in a fantastical world of elitism, and not willing to carry my share of the risks as part of the “cloud.” (You know, the “too much education” stuff in the Army.) That translates into the military concern about “unit cohesion,” of course; in a closed environment, the “what makes me tick” factor becomes visible to others, and psychological privacy, corresponding to a separation of private and professional life, is not really possible.

A second area is the whole question about security clearances. Clearly, the military ban had created a schizophrenic situation, practically forcing soldiers to lie, itself creating a real problem (what happens if a soldier has civilian boyfriend in intelligence services, where telling is required?) My own experience with the expulsion and psychiatric treatment helped drive me away from defense into a civilian commercial area where clearances wouldn’t be required; when I came back to the DC area in 1989, I had to think about the problem again (and there would develop a really bizarre and critical “plot twist,” which I cover in the next chapter). It wasn’t until the 1990s that the security clearance situation for gays became more or less settled, partly with Clinton’s 1995 executive order but also with Frank Kameny’s efforts. In fact, representatives of the CIA, which had a booth for the first time at DC’s Capital Pride Festival in 2013, told me that LGBT employees (as determined even by polygraph) could be fired from the CIA as late as early 1996. Another twist seems created by the Manning WikiLeaks situation in 2010, but at this point it is far from clear that homosexuality or the ban had much to do with it. (The harm done by the leaks is that it could make civilian informants overseas into targets for the enemy, an important concept, as we will see again in the next chapter in a context having to do with “self-promotion.”)

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The third question, to which I have been pointing, refers to the Internet. Any code of conduct (for military people or for civilians in unusually sensitive jobs) will have to cover the handling of self-disclosures on public media like Facebook or other social networking sites. And the basic conduct rules ought to be subsumed by all other conduct rules regarding social media.

In the past decade, the battle for equality in the minds of most LGBT people has been fought more in the **marriage** area than anything else (including the **military**). The debate has skimmed along the top planetary layer of something miscible and deeper: the debate is really about whether people should be compared individually, or only be considered in terms of their community and generational links. The recent federal court decision on Proposition 8 in California (from a gay Republican), focused on abstract ideas about whether one person's relationships were "better" than another's, an unacceptable notion to the judge. Curiously, though, sometimes attraction seems based on the idea that some people are "better."

For quite some time in my own career, I had noticed that the modern world was making it difficult for breadwinners of families with children to "compete." The extreme cost of child rearing and loss of career opportunity (particularly if it is not postponed for education) and the rewards of an individualistic culture turn many people away from it, and not just LGBT. Some people on the right wing have talked of "**demographic winter**" and that certain populations in developed or rich countries don't reproduce themselves, whereas the left has tended to see this point as racist as being about "more white babies" (or "the right babies"). But you see one point right away: it gets away from marriage itself, and becomes more about how society treats parenthood in an institutional sense. In my 1997 DADT book, I proposed that the benefits from marriage should accrue only when there are other dependents, which would have put same-sex marriage on an equal footing "morally." I also proposed that the opportunity for "benefits" be allowed for only one relationship in a life, unless ended in the death of a partner.

But the problem seems even deeper than that. The debate, the way some on the right wing have put it, calls attention to the supposed intention behind the antipathy of some people to experiencing intimacy based on complementarity and others' needs, rather than personal expression and "turn on." The modern culture – demanding, beyond respect for autonomy, an obsession with consent – arguably could lead to a situation where many people get left out (as individuals) because they are overly interdependent, and could translate to a generalized situation where a society can't sustain itself. Generally, societies expect people to grow to become receptive to needs outside those generated by (procreative) choices, such as the readiness to raise or protect younger siblings or step up and raise siblings' children after family tragedies, and, with increasing frequency, meeting (in person) the needs of the elderly. (That gets covered in the last chapter). **If one can face having responsibilities dumped on them without choice** (that will get even more important in the following chapters as I deal with "the privilege of being listened to"), **then one needs to be in the game early in adulthood with progeny of one's own and a human stake in the future, to maintain self-respect.** If one feels primarily same-sex attraction, whether for inborn, "creative," or reactive (previous competitive humiliation) reasons, then one winds up needing equal treatment for permanent, consensual same-sex relationships, just to carry out "equal responsibilities."

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Since Stonewall in 1969, American culture has gradually migrated to a view that sexual orientation is a morally neutral personal “property,” essentially immutable and not needing explanation, with the corollary that the decision to become a parent is a personal decision involving consent and personal responsibility, but is still morally a strictly private choice. In practice society is again finding, with parameters changed somewhat (lower birthrates, longer lives, sustainability and vulnerability issues) that some situations requiring responsibility for others cannot be avoided. Equality must be understood in the context of that development.

07 – AN ALIEN’S VIEW OF ANTHROPOLOGY

I think it’s clear to me, and any reader, that I view people in terms of their own individual merit, with regard to various parameters like what they’ve earned on their own, on what they deserve, and the like. It fits our idea of a content-oriented workplace and a lot of our culture. You can go for decades living in certain parts of suburban yuppiedom or gentrified urbanescapes, and think there is nothing else in the world but individual merit. Do we compete with each other, or do we complement and complete each other? Oh, yes, there are those polarities. But what about meeting the needs of people “as people” and enjoying doing so? It seems I live a long way from that, and so do a lot of people.

A person’s presence and visual appearance can provide the brain a gratifying, if sometimes misleading, confirmation of his “merit.” Most of the time, our brains function within the normal appearance of space-time: we see a person of a particular age, and believe, even if we know differently intellectually, that the person’s immediate appearance and external trappings are permanent.

We admire the greatest of our athletes (at least if we know they didn’t take steroids), but we also know that human beings as a whole are pitifully weak compare to most other animals. Can you jump ten times your height over a fence? Your house cat can.

Anthropologists tell us human beings had to give up some of the “trappings” of strength to satisfy the energy requirements of their brains. Walking as bipeds required less energy. Then, in order to hunt in hot climates (while other shaggy carnivores took siestas) humans, including males, lost most of their body hair. But today’s male Caucasians, mostly in cooler climates, didn’t lose it completely. It tended to become an extension of the beard, a secondary sexual characteristic that could provide females some sort of index as to “masculinity.” In the animal world, this is well known with birds (where the male in many species has bright plumage) and not so common with mammals, but there are notable exceptions, such as the male lion’s mane. It had struck me as curious and perhaps offensive when I was younger, that females, if “weak” and needing “protection” that I could not give them, were prized for “beauty,” but the appearance of males was not supposed to get spoken of or noticed (although I thought that other boys often did notice it). That didn’t fit what happens in nature. In white males, I had noticed a definite progression: young men typically developed conspicuous leg hair as teens, and then sometimes later on the arms and finally chest; then as men got older, they often “lost it” and went bald in the legs, even if not on the head. All this stayed conveniently just out of sight (except, curiously, in barracks banter when I was stationed at Fort Eustis). On the other hand, the shaving of the beard was so

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commonplace as to have no visual significance at all. (Other matters, such as circumcision, did not matter because one never had the opportunity to see it, even just barely “out of sight.”)

Then came another line of thinking: if I were (somewhere around age 12 or so) supposed to feel ashamed of my body, and perceive the eventual adult scenario for family formation and reproduction (that is, vicarious immortality) humiliating, then so were others. Many other men, in various ways, were just as inadequate, but they kept their issues from gaining attention.

No wonder, then, that in a dorm in 1961, guys would pick up on this. As I noted in my book, my roommate expressed a fear of my “super strength” and being “attacked.” I was the venerable “homosexual on the loose,” the wild reed. On one level, he probably feared my calling attention to his own problems to the point that he could fail physically later. Or he probably feared that I would undermine the larger social context of dating and eventual marriage, because I had already announced it was personally humiliating. Later, heterosexual men would want to reassure themselves that someone like me had actually been able to “have women,” as a kind of floor of opportunity.

What NIH wrote in 1962 in its patient notes, in my records, is indeed telling: “The homosexual fantasies are a prime preoccupation with him because a great part of his satisfaction and feeling for other people is based on the nature of these fantasies. He is constantly preoccupied with the masculine qualities of his contemporaries. This is particularly focused on the amount, color, [and] distribution of hair about the wrists of these young men. This secondary sexual characteristic is in the nature of a part-object, having considerable erotic and symbolic significance to him. He is concerned not only about the quality of the hair on the wrist but also of its durability and the possibility of losing it. He becomes sexually aroused in the presence of young men who have these characteristics or in thinking about these characteristics. This gets to be elaborated to include both the accomplishments of and the moral character of his contemporaries. He questions and wonders and puts under constant scrutiny these contemporaries to see if they come up to his standards for an ideal man.” Again, the “fascination” or fantasy was possible because in those days you didn’t talk about male attractiveness – unlike the case with some birds in nature, beauty was the prerogative of “passive” females – so in “your” mind you could make more of it, and believe that in time others would have to, as well.

The implications of this mode of thinking are perhaps frightening; with different parameters of “virtue,” they’ve led to horrific consequences for people in the past in various historical episodes. It’s as if someone were always watching for the slightest imperfection or slip, which in the predatory natural world, outside of civilization, is pretty much true.

Were the psychiatrists mainly concerned with my own future well-being, or more with the implications that my way of adapting to my gender-developmental difficulties would set a dangerous example for others? They could even see with my interactions with other patients in the unit. I had essentially taken the position that I would “love” someone if he were perfect enough. It seemed logical to me, because that promoted “virtue” (even if inherited – and I probably didn’t grasp the implied embracing of fascist values). But the essence of becoming human, especially when young, is to meet the

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real needs of someone else and derive satisfaction in doing so, from the social and not purely personal meaning.

The sado-masochistic subcultural element in the male gay community has sometimes explored these areas, perhaps to draw the ire of critics. Occasionally (more so in the past than these days, as an adjunct to “body fascism”) one could find literature celebrating physical abasement and shame as a source of immediate sexual gratification, as in one booklet describing crotch-shaving and “the shameful pleasure of being totally desecrated.” One can find “even worse” on the Web (discussions of “losing it all”) if one looks very hard. It isn’t hard to imagine how men, especially from closed-knit cultures that stress lineage, could imagine they were being scoped and judged by “queers” who “notice” men’s bods instead of girls’.

Anthropology, however, suggests that not only do “women tame men,” men necessarily become less “masculine,” in a sense, by raising families. For example, testosterone levels in men when fathering have been found to be lower than those of childless men of the same age (noted again in more detail below). Some men, as do women, gain weight after marriage (the slender male physique seems to live most comfortably in gay discos). Although somewhat variably so, family life is often about teaching kids and associated adults to function together in a family unit, and especially retain some preferential sense of affection for one another out of bloodline, outside of the normal “competitive” value system of the individualistic outside world. Married parents will accept each other’s intimacies during a long period of what appears to the outsider as physical decline over that “time-arrow of physics” that we can’t reverse.

Some demographers even write that some women prefer older men who are already ripened and “past peak color” because they have supposedly proven that they are stable enough for a family to depend on more or less permanently. As a contrast, I note that when I watch the “dirty dancing” in gay discos, I never had the “opportunity” to enter the “game” at my own peak. I was already balding, for example. I was never as perfect as the others. But that could have saved my life.

So when someone presents, in a college, military or (as in my case) institutional environment refusing to show affection to others outside of a world of personal fantasy, this seems to represent an existential challenge that might take hold with others. The cooperative synergy (or even syzygy) of family life – Strauss’s *Sinfonia Domestica* – seems to be deliberately challenged, ultimately because someone “like me” sees it as so humiliating. Psychologists do have a word for what I experience, “upward affiliation.” They also have a word that is, as I noted, more pejorative, “schizoid personality,” a refusal to experience adult relationships except on one’s own terms. But I had, as an adult, come to think of this as a good thing.

I can cast all this in a distinct, almost academic, perspective now, but at the time of my stay at NIH, all of this was painful to get out. I kept waiting for that grand revelation that would make everything all right. And all that would provide relief was to change the rules of engagement, and narrow the granularity of individuality, at least mine. People sometimes do deliberately challenge the narrowness of my scope of affection.

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It's clear that there is a wide schism in our thinking, between the focus on consent, privacy and individual rights on the one hand, and the sustainability of the group on the other. It's also clear that there is a wide schism in our thinking, between the focus on consent, privacy and "consent" law is further complicated by the relatively high "age of consent" in most US states (18 in some, including California), in a world where the physiological and mental maturity at any one age (for both men and women) varies so much. True, some research warns us that the brain is not fully mature as to "seeing around corners" until the mid 20s. But people much younger get fake id's and visit establishments, putting others who get taken in by visual spectacle and smooth talking manipulation in legal peril. I'll come back to this later with the next chapter on Internet speech.

08 – SEARCH FOR MEANING

I recall a sequel to my heterosexual dating period. One sweet late spring day in 1972 in Washington, I attended a "search for meaning" encounter group at the church I had grown up in. It would eventually lead to a sermon on "The Rich Young Ruler," in which the minister mapped the moral duality of individualism to the different kinds of love between a father's (based on potentiality) and mother's (the latter being unconditional).

I remember bringing up the question "what about the body" and being trapped by attachments to people who could reject me. But after my "second coming" that turned out not to be the problem that one would have expected.

The young woman whom I had dated spoke of being "in a box." I don't know literally what that meant, but it must have related somehow to the expectation that everyone "join up" with the rest of the human race, and accept intimacy on terms partly dictated by others. Within the family (nuclear or extended) that gets more important today than ever because people live longer and are likely to be disabled longer. But I, given the "chance," had already backed away.

I can jump back about two years, while in the barracks at Ft. Eustis, VA, safely stowed away from combat by MOS's given to those privileged by "too much education" – and, with my wacky roommate around, I pull up an olive-green fatigues pant leg, finally not too sinful to notice my body – and I grimace at bald spots outside my shins. "You're losing hormones" my roomie jokes, and then says what Chickenman's cure for lost virility is. No matter, he's still young and virile, as are most male soldiers.

In more recent years, some clinical studies have shown that when men both become fathers and actually help wives tend to their children, their testosterone levels drop. They may complicate claims by right-wing writers like Nicolosi (in his book noted above) that male homosexuality represents a (morally relevant) "gender deficit"; it seems that marriage prevents "gender excess." You put all this together with my situation: if my boyhood experiences resulted in a sense of competitive humiliation with respect to future capabilities to function sexually and then in familial fashion with women, then actual marriage would actually be feared as likely increasing an already shame-producing gender deficit. It isn't hard to see that fantasy and "upward affiliation" would become attractive, as would a tendency to kibitz on the "competitive" abilities of others, who would obviously resent my presence and propensity to

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remind them of their own potential future difficulties with reproduction. All of this, in my case, happened with relative unawareness of what others claimed homosexuals actually “do.”

It’s clear that when young men (and to some extent people of either gender) are thrown together in circumstances not totally under their control, their sense of worth and identity is challenged. It’s understandable indeed that “gays in the military” translated in my mind as an existential test of my own self-worth, however shortsighted my own initial impression that fair solutions depended just on respecting “privacy” and stopping government snooping – a post-McCarthyism view understandable given my own experience. **I had a stake and standing here that could shed light on a particular singularity in our social policy.** I then embraced a libertarian outlook (where I found customers) and branched out into many concentric areas with my journalism, to the point that my resistance to fighting anyone else’s battles increased. Nothing else but media really interested me as a closing career. I really moved further away from an interest in “people as people” which is what had bothered the therapists at NIH so much.

As late as 1970 I would have a follow-up interview at NIH (shortly after leaving the Army), and they would still wonder why heterosexual interest in me had never grown. By now, they would have to admit, that they really did have a “problem” with homosexuality, as a proxy for “everything else.” And we know from my dating adventures, that I found nothing in the heterosexual world “to get excited about.” It had come to seem almost unworthy of such a biological response. What happened to the male body “mattered” because there was the possibility of loss and submission; what happened to the female (in my own thinking) didn’t count because it was seen as passive, taken for granted. My own father had always sidestepped such introspections with his own faith in immutability. “One day blue eyes will confuse you.” (Race dependent?) Or he would say that a typical man instinctively seeks intercourse with every woman he spots. I guess animals below man feel that way, or maybe they don’t always. Try the Bonobo chimps. Or maybe it had become unthinkable to him that anyone could disconnect himself from his biological ancestors and future progeny – and vicarious immortality. Yet my father had also been quick to point out visually “deficient” (as compared to desirable) males, as on television and in other circumstances. Obesity and tenderness were out; hairiness and sinew were in. It seemed important to him, and then to me, that men look demonstrably different from women, that they possess “something” visually that women didn’t have, and that they performed functionally as men (and maybe fungibly, putting all their external trappings of manhood at risk to protect women and children). It seemed that everyone wanted me to be capable of developing and maintaining sexual arousal over someone who would become dependent on me, and remain so forever (in those older days of male-dominated careers), when I was a bit deficient in those competitive areas myself. My brain would react with arousal at the prospect of submission to someone who had the “trappings” that I wanted for myself.

Had I performed “guy things” better as a young person (or kid), I probably would have seen more “meaning” in my own reproductive potential, and had less intellectual reason to develop this pattern of “upward affiliation.” That might well have led me to follow through on heterosexual dating, marrying and having children. But some of my interests could be immutable. I might have craved male intimacy later in life, leading to the end of a marriage, after having children. It could possibly have even meant

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exposing a wife and future unborn children to HIV. So the course I took, while maybe evasive of full responsibility in the eyes of some, could have been for the best.

Therapists, authorities, parents and the like were very concerned about the “purposes” served by my homosexual fantasies, as well as a larger envelope of self-expression. They even went so far (in patient records) to note that visual exposure to certain male secondary sexual characteristics were my only way of experiencing sexual pleasure, as if they saw me at a dead end. Or perhaps the therapists saw me as caught in a recursive loop where I believed that male sexual appeal (as female) had “moral” significance, showing virtue, and remained trapped by the pleasure that such a belief system could provide. (It’s relevant that I had grown up in a homogeneous, almost segregated, “white” culture.) They were as adamant about this as a developmental and character problem as they could have been about the more common “opposite” problems (like getting girls pregnant). I could say that’s just evidence of their own insecurity about the “purposes” of their own heterosexual (or “heterosexist”) lives. As society changed in the 1960s on, a certain schism developed, where many people believed that “self-driven” accomplishment was all that matters, and that having a family and children is almost a personal afterthought. Perhaps that confirms their “fears,” leading to modern concerns about demographics and sustainability. I remained steadfast, that I would not serve the purposes of others in social games where I could not compete well. I would not even accept the idea of accepting “love” if some sort of disfiguring catastrophe happened to me (as a result of the draft and Vietnam war, for example), or of giving intimate love to anyone else who had fallen for any reason. That sort of attitude seems to persist in “nerdy” people who remain socially isolated. Perhaps we are becoming so self-absorbed, in our own thoughts, that “life” no longer seems as special and wondrous as it did to many in previous generations.

On *Days of our Lives*, a popular soap opera, an appealing young gay man, Will Horton, has impregnated a town bad girl Gabi to prove to his father that he is a “man.” After a brush with the temptation of abortion, Will is surprised at his attachment to the unborn child, even though he doesn’t love Gabi. The plot is quite complicated and beyond scope here. But in compassion, I don’t think that I could feel the same thing for a baby as mine, unless I did love the mother too. Despite my moral topology – as to what I can “feel” – that’s not so far away from me “in another universe” as I used to think. I can’t see myself using a surrogate and then taking a baby from a mother just to have children.

One other aspect about the narrowness of my response to people, as the psychiatrists saw it (and the source of a lot of teasing went on in the therapy sessions), deserves special emphasis: I could not stand the idea of further physical body image loss (as could happen in war, if I were later drafted – as eventually I would be) and then the presumption that I should still expect someone to “love me.” When it was over, it was over. It seemed that the draft was ruining the fittest of our population. I would ask the therapist about this, and he would just say, “You’re not qualified” (to go to war and be sacrificed). There was no end to the moral contradiction. Ayn Rand could never approve.

Religious moralists, especially of the Vatican or LDS sort, might have a point. The obviously “manly men” are fungible enough to go to war, and the wounded and maimed warrior faces the obvious challenge of getting someone to love him when he returns. The “sissy,” so the moralist thinks, can pay for his safe harbor and “sacrifice” by giving up sex altogether. Or a truly versatile man can “sacrifice” his

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upward-affiliating ideals and learn the complementarity of putting one woman and family ahead of them in his life, for the good of others, not his own feelings. I remember an ABC *20-20* episode where a Mormon woman married to a gay man tried to explain that concept.

It's apparent, then, that "homophobia" – leading the outright prohibitionism and legal scapegoating in the days before Stonewall – seemed to rest on a few distinct foundations (as I hinted earlier, at the end of the first section). One was "competition" – that men would deliberately avoid raising kids if they could, an idea that seems cynical when you consider how many couples try desperately to become fertile, although today many other people who can afford to don't have enough children to help the next generation have a well-prepared workforce. Another was "distraction" (not "detraction"), the idea that men felt they were being watched and judged by other men who looked at them the way they looked at women. Another was righteous continuity: if there is a "right" self-giving way to love, "I" can do it only if I know that everyone else has to. Holding everyone to rigid standards of sexual morality (and making examples of those who demonstrated publicly a propensity to violate it or even ignore it) seemed like a way to rationalize a system where marriage controlled so much property, as well as economic – and sometimes political – power.

The recently passed law in Russia that targets pro-gay speech more than gay sex itself (which is still technically legal) seems crudely motivated by the idea that impressionable young men will easily decide they don't want the responsibility for children (or for the initiative it takes to father them), and is definitely related to Russia's own low birthrate (in stark contrast to China's one-child policy, also backfiring). When I was growing up in America in the post-war '50s, it seemed that similar thinking prevailed. But it's only in recent years that the economic, moral and sustainability questions about low birthrates in many populations had made this kind of thinking disturbingly relevant. In our country, it is much less acceptable than it used to be to expect the individual to "sacrifice" his inner needs for the supposed common good demanded by the political leadership of others. Let's hope we can keep it that way.

09 – LICENSE EXPIRED

So I'm left with the impression I lived a life of observation and fantasy, almost in an extra dimension. It worked. I didn't need equality – until I needed it. Others could close in on me anytime they wanted. And they would in coming years, testing me and daring me, seeing my aloofness as hostility.

This takes me one more time back to the marriage debate. The "right" makes a lot of the decline of marriage as a socializing institution, and of course sees gay marriage as a ruinous distraction and dilution of the unifocal dedication of sexuality to family "commons" and procreation. It strikes me that marriage is more an outcome of good socialization (including learning sacrifice at a personal level) than a cause. It can be as challenging to remain passionate about a same-sex partner in "sickness and health" (as my own experience in the 1970s showed) as in a traditional marriage. In fact, it may well be that the capacity to parent and raise another generation is more an outcome of good social development, but healthful socialization may not guarantee by itself the lifelong passions of "marriage," particularly the conjugal relationship that the "right" wants to see drive everything else in our culture.

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Libertarians have indeed sometimes taken marriage as far away as possible from institutionalism by proposing that it be nothing more than a private contract, with deeper meanings only with the church when chosen by participants. That was the point in a famous essay “License Expired” by Gene Cisewski in a 1996 issue of *The Quill* (from Gays and Lesbians for Individual Liberty). I had covered this point in my first 1997 book. Such a view would have made the whole gay marriage debate and litigation moot.

However, the demands of social solidarity have become ever more pressing in recent years. I had proposed, in my first book, that the benefits of marriage (traditional or gay) apply only when there are long-term economic dependents (starting with pregnancy, often enough). I still personally think that’s fair and reasonable.

Nevertheless, the progress toward acceptance of gay marriage – with even full use of “the Word” – has accelerated much more than I would have expected, going back to about 2004 (and Chris Crain’s “Piddle, Twiddle and Resolve” editorial in *The Washington Blade*, as well as the Massachusetts “opinion”). For the first time, in the 2012 general election, voters in three states approved it, and in one more turned down a constitutional ban (rather putting Virginia’s Marshall-Newman in 2006 to shame). I was present in the state Capitol in Annapolis on March 1, 2012 when the governor of Maryland signed the state’s new marriage law. It was a great day, just like the celebration of the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” It is inevitable that a debate on equality in federal benefits (already going on in the military now) must follow.

I had proposed, in Chapter 6 of my first *Do Ask, Do Tell* book, an “Amendment 29” (p. 433 in the 2000 iUniverse version), which would have implemented as a constitutional measure a vehicle very much like part of the much reviled (and now seriously constitutionally challenged) Defense of Marriage Act of 1996 (DOMA). In the mid 1990s, when I conceived of this as an “amendment,” I thought that it was progressive to encourage states to experiment, without overreaching and being hemmed by FFC (Full Faith and Credit). I also was not that sympathetic to the idea that working spouses depend on each other at the federal level for one another’s “benefits.” For example, I think that the recent and current health care system (with employer implementation when possible, even more so with Obamacare) makes hidden family tax benefits a much bigger matter than it should be (and that’s a common conservative argument). However, given my own experiences in recent years, I am certainly learning that it is important that adults depend on one another; their ability to do so can make the role of government less intrusive in the long run. So I am much more “sympathetic” to the idea that equal spousal benefits matters now than I was 15 years ago.

Both DOMA and California Proposition 8 were argued before the Supreme Court in March 2013. It looked possible for the Court to rule against DOMA at the federal level on equal protection grounds, and still uphold the “rights” of states to have different standards for marriage, even with regard to gender or the possibility of procreation or parenting. DOMA seems to be a stumbling block in giving full benefits to same-sex spouses of members of the military, now a major priority for SLDN (Servicemembers’ Legal Defense Network), but seeming anti-climactic compared to the huge battles of the past. There are other issues, such as reenlistment, and restoration of income and benefits lost to discriminatory discharges. I had discussed a lot of this in detail in Chapter 4 of my first book. Justice Kagan brought up a 1995 House

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report that conveyed the idea that DOMA expresses intentional moral animus among some members of Congress against homosexuality per se. I had not been aware of this shocking piece of writing from a House committee. But others said that, strategically, DOMA might have been a necessary “pre-emptive” step to prevent Congress from proposing a constitutional amendment with an outright ban on recognition of same-sex marriage in any state. On the other hand, Supreme Court questions in 2013 indicate skepticism as to whether DOMA-like laws overstep Congress’s explicit powers under federalism, even if the federal government would have to pay more to support benefits according to a particular state’s implementation of marriage law.

One June 26, 2013 the Supreme Court indeed struck down the third clause of DOMA on equal protection grounds; the majority (5-4) opinion by Justice Kennedy even wrote that DOMA demeans persons in same-sex relationships and the children they raise. It’s important to remember (and often glossed over by the media) that the Court left in place the second clause, which says that states don’t have to recognize (despite FFC) same-sex marriages of other states. However the federal government does now have to recognize state definitions of marriage in doling federal benefits (in matters like Social Security for surviving spouse, employee and military benefits, and even immigration of spouses). There remains some question as to whether one or both partners must still live in the state of “celebration” to get equal federal benefits. The Court also said that the plaintiff in the California Proposition 8 case had no standing to sue, leaving the Ninth Circuit the option to vacate a stay and let same-sex marriages in California renew. Some legal experts even predict that lawsuits, following the *Loving* miscegenation case in Virginia in 1967, will challenge the ability of states to ban same-sex marriage, as Virginia did with the Marshall-Newman state constitutional amendment in 2006, while Maryland voters approved gay marriage in 2012, as did referendums in Washington and Maine. The circumstances in other individual states are likely to evolve quickly.

The role of gay couples and sometimes singles as parents is likely to become more visible. One reason is the apparent need for adoptive children, within the United States and abroad (Russia just complicated the matter), and this need has gotten much more publicity in recent years. (In Minneapolis, there are bus-stop poster ads encouraging singles to adopt children.) The cultural effect could be to expect people to be engaged in raising future generations (including other people’s children) in some way just as they pursue their own personal goals. (On surrogate parenting by male couples, I would be concerned about deliberately creating a baby and taking it from its biological mother.)

The post-DOMA debate seemed as loose as ever, with the sides talking past one another. The moral issues seemed to play out as like (instead of opposite sides of a surface) vertices of a triangle, each representing a necessary virtue. First, committed sexual complementarity, creating new human life and creating moms and dads, not just “parents”; second, emotional commitment, staying power in a relationship and emphasis on psychological polarity instead of physical “performance,” all of this important in a broader sense for social capital and to care for older generations and the disabled, particularly in a world with increasing opportunity to prove it values every human life; third, individual autonomy and freedom, along with concomitant personal responsibility, and individual equality before the law – all of this necessary for self-concept and innovation. There is tension between these three goals; they cannot be achieved perfectly and simultaneously. In 1997, I had written that the benefits of

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marriage should accrue only when there is at least one economic dependent (pregnancy counts)—trying to secure “fairness” and equality. Social conservatives write correctly that the law doesn’t prevent voluntary adult relationships, including gay ones; but it wasn’t too long ago that it tried to disrupt consensual adult gay relationships (as it also tried to prohibit miscegenation), making examples of those whose “difference” distracts from the supposed stability of others. “Social conservatives” felt no shame in allowing personal casualties to sacrifice for the “common goal” of more babies born into traditional nuclear (and extendable) families. Some observers don’t give homophobia that much credit, citing the “ick” factor that used to accompany perception of interracial relations, too. Again, my biggest concern is, you can live “hands separately” for years and do well, but some day the needs of others will demand sacrifice from you. If you don’t have the right to have your relationships recognized, you suddenly learn what it feels like to be part of a moral underclass. Of course, there’s still another good question: if it had been permitted and supported, could I have started a permanent same-sex marriage in my early twenties, and been capable of being at least a good “parent,” picking up for a child that needed a family? Good question. On this planet, we’ll never know. But the direction of my fantasies could make one wonder.

Yet, as the ensuing chapters will show, all of this was still political theory, until people “came after me,” again, in retirement, just as they had in my early years. Once I had taken the limelight, personal indifference would be taken as hostility.

10 – CONCLUSION

On the public policy level, we have seen a remarkable change in the area of “gay rights.” What used to be posed in terms of the right to be left alone in one’s private life has migrated to a perception of sexual orientation as characterizing a separate “people” (or as Chandler Burr noted in his book title, “a separate creation”), who must be treated as equal, somewhat as what has happened with race.

At the same time, at the personal level, many of the same issues remain. I’ll be explaining more in succeeding chapters how this developed for me once I had to assume eldercare responsibility for my mother. But we look around and see unprecedented concern about bullying among our young people. Is this new or getting worse, or are we now just no longer “too sinful to notice” (as a commentator in *Gays and Lesbians for Individual Liberty* once noted)?

I’ll never be remembered or cherished as a “husband and father.” The practical reality is that “you” have to perform a certain way to earn that approbation, except in the most special of circumstances, which need to be supported. I have to give the “right” certain credit for recognizing that true sexual complementarity may help make a relationship able to overcome adversity from the outside world, especially physical challenges that result from the sacrifices demanded by others. Yes, on balance, that might be a little better for children.

I want to note here my own sense of personal loss at the tragic story of violinist Tyler Clementi, who committed suicide in September 2010 after his roommate spied on him in an intimate encounter and Rutgers University apparently didn’t do much about it. He might have been a tremendous musical talent. His roommate situation was in many ways very different from mine a half century before at

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William and Mary. What he had said in private notes has not been disclosed, and I won't get into complicated speculation, other than that he might have seen the world as too evil a place or wondered if he could feel what he wanted in the future. I would add, the idea that **"it gets better"** (so promoted by celebrities like Ellen DeGeneres) seems incomplete, because such a phrase implies that some of the bullying is inevitable. That's not good. Bullying happens because people believe that they have to fend for themselves in "social combat" and that the larger legal (and economic and political) "system" doesn't work for them and therefore doesn't "apply." Bullying or undue social ostracism or pressure may occur also because, particularly in older social mainstreams, people want to see mores preserved so that their own feelings and drives keep their "meanings." Emotional inflexibility has two sides.

I also want to emphasize, in these days, that the political correctness of "equality" blinds everybody to "the lives of real people"; in the past (during my coming of age), efforts to witch-hunt gays, presumably to send an indirect message about the expectations of social conformity to the power structure, really took place. Yes, at one time people were entrapped, and bars were raided, as late as 1980 in Dallas. (And, by the way, despite the old stereotypes about public sex – only one person in my whole life ever approached me in such a setting, and that was way back in 1972 at a hotel hosting a high-level chess tournament.) The political environment during the AIDS epidemic for a while threatened to bring all this back. The two-decade (almost) battle over the military ban brought this to a head. All these concepts (privacy, social and unit cohesion, due process, even equality) came together in the barracks. It's taken the Boy Scouts of America a long time to catch up (even with the lifting of DADT – and remember the Supreme Court's allowance of them as a private organization in 2000). Changing popular opinion and the need for public support is finally turning them around. It's also important to note that the BSA issue shows that a collective sense of religious morality, created when stricter denominations gain influence beyond their membership, can raise questions as to how far religion can go and still be treated "preferentially" by tax policy and even rules for public accommodations.

The whole concept of "equality" seems a bit of an intellectual artifice. In nature, no two organisms can be exactly "equal," but they most "complement" one another for all to survive. That explains how biological communities "evolve." And perhaps physics explains reproduction. Conscious life seems like a way for nature to oppose entropy; and reproduction is the process to recover from the decay with aging that entropy says must happen. "Equality" has always sounded like an idea that matters most in a world perceived as a zero-sum game. If traditional marriage is to be privileged, there must logically exist occasions where the "not legally married" are compelled to make major sacrifices to appease the higher "reproductive" needs of the married; you can't always help "families with children" without hurting everyone else. It starts out in economics and gets personal.

And depending on "immutability" has always seemed unsatisfactory to me – partly because it isn't completely true, and because it leads to bad comparisons on other issues (like a tendency toward chemical dependency or obesity, which is partly inherited, but which requires behavioral control). Most of all, punting on the "nature" question leaves open the question of why "social conservatives" feel they need to intrude on the "private choices" of others.

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Remember, that for most of history, gay rights has indeed been more about respecting the right to these “private choices” than about “equality,” and the appropriate question to ask those who attempt to damage the lives of homosexual people (or people who seem to exhibit homosexual inclinations and probable conduct), is “Why do you interfere with others? What’s in it for you?” Or, “Why does my own personal life affect you so much?”

It’s simple, and yet it’s hard. Yes, parents often want an indefinite lineage, and for those without other economic or expressive opportunities, that’s one thing they may think they have a “right” to count on. The need for lineage may well be strong enough that parents change course, and expect less “competitive” sons to try to have kids anyway. A family can be “killed” just as a person can. (That sort of thinking may help explain the draconian anti-gay laws under consideration now in Uganda and Russia.) But there’s obviously more. People tend to believe they need to prevail in social competition; stomping on those “beneath” them, despite the obvious moral contradictions that this entails, may be almost instinctive social behavior. (That’s how one gay midwestern prosecutor explains it to me.) Once in some sort of political or social control, and particularly when there are external enemies or various demographic or environmental problems threatening long-term sustainability and stability, leadership (religious or not) seeks rationalizations for its situation. One such rationalization is that those who are in some way challenged “adaptively” and dependent on the infrastructure above them should not oppose the “hands that feed them” but should remain subservient or obedient, lest they put everyone in jeopardy (particularly of enemies in a “class warfare” sense). Such individuals can point to the distraction that those like me can pose to those who try to raise families, both by economic competition but also by “kibitzing” and projecting personal value systems (“upward affiliation”) which might prove tempting to others or “contagious,” or which might actually make other people of lesser means feel even less worthy in the grand scheme of things. Such ideas seem to house their own internal moral contradictions, to be sure. Particularly, they seem to project a belief that sexual pleasure from sadomasochistic or “alternating current” psychological mechanisms (where abasement or shame becomes a source of pleasure) is naturally tempting to people as a “path of least resistance” for those who have trouble adjusting. They may have a stronger point when they argue that ordered freedom, as a whole, depends on individuals in local families and communities all doing their part, even at an intimate level, not always chosen. Marriage in this view becomes more a result than a source of “moral values.” This sort of thinking is most vehement in more closed religious communities, which seek to make others comply with their views to maintain a grip now only on power but also on “meaning.”

It’s important to contemplate what “religious morality” (especially Vatican) means by “abstinence” - “no sexuality except in marriage” (heterosexual, that is, and it refers to fantasy as much as acts). It obviously plays out differently for gay people than straight. But the old-fashioned “simple rule” really was intended to get people to save themselves for procreation and raising another generation for the benefit of the family or tribe, not just for preventing unwanted babies.

Likewise, the whole thrust of the “right to life” and anti-abortion movement is much more than just an abstract respect for human life. It has to do with getting people to become actively involved in protecting the vulnerable. It ultimately has to do with loving “people as people” (to quote my dad) and

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as part of family, as a given. But it, in the area of opposition to stem cell research and therapy, have overreached its own purposes.

There's an arcane term, called "aesthetic realism," that perhaps characterizes what a society needs to happen. The dynamics change with technology and with the size and reach of the "society" (from family or tribe to a whole global culture or "caliphate"). It has to do with interdependence, complementarity, and compassion. Yet, none of these can replace "upward affiliation," which for many people has to happen first. For me, it stopped there. Perhaps I missed the train, but I didn't think I needed to "go." Until I was coerced. If I went along with the emotional demands of the group, I would no longer be me, right?

Indeed, it has become striking to me how much my own psychological makeup expressed a love of "abstract" virtue (and beauty) for its own sake – a belief (rather like that from Oscar Wilde) that beauty is its own justification rather than the result of an organic, earthy process involving people meeting their own real needs with complementarity, extending to raising the next generation. I inherited this mindset from the conservative culture that raised me, and curiously fed it into my values of what I could find exciting in other people. I tended to view others through strictly moral terms (as I thought I had been viewed), without regard to circumstance or possible disability. I might just barely get on the train, and then not let any following straggler hang on to me. A corollary is that I (still now) resent having the needs of others forced on me as motives that should pre-empt what I have already come or even "chosen" to feel. I didn't feel "pleasure" in meeting the needs of someone who could never become "perfect" – and at the time, feeling this way seemed like my own prerogative. I don't like to admit it, but I can see even in myself how fundamentalism, and the need to see others comply to a set of beliefs so that I can comply too, could grow even in my own psyche. It's scary. (You don't want a value system where something is right just because "everybody does it.") Like a fundamentalist, I needed the "freedom" to explore my own belief system, claiming that it was harmless fantasy or a private choice—yet the motives could eventually have serious public consequences. I can see how I could have felt had I grown up and somehow "made it" under radical Islam or some other strict, fundamentalist religious system.

People tend to make a great deal of the "narrowness" of others in the ability of others to feel and sustain interest. Indeed, some of the notes at NIH explicitly noted my indifference to "girls," but indifference can become an issue in the same-sex world, too. Sometimes, when I'm at a disco and watching someone who looks "interesting," someone who is "not" interesting according to my own internal value system will try to divert me. Everyone has a right to say "no," right? If you can get rejected, you can certainly reject. (To allow anything else would be to accept sexual harassment, maybe.) That certainly sounds like the normal idea that comports with "personal responsibility." But the idea that people remain so narrow in their "choices" sounds like one that can spread; "body fascism" could encourage real fascism again. So I can understand why some people make openness to love in some way that involves some psychological complementarity (the Rosenfels polarities) as well as "affiliation" (the "he can do better than that" problem) and openness to risk and unpredictable responsibility (even having children), often within a "natural family" setting, into an important religious and perhaps moral precept. Maybe the idea (rather off-putting to me) of a "God's match for you" as

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advertised by sites like “Christian Mingles” summarizes this idea of expected inner openness. Maybe all of us need a stake, at least indirectly, in a biological future beyond us, of real human beings. But in the grand scheme of things, mere biological difference in gender seems to mean less all the time.

