

## ANAL EROTISM AND ANAL CHARACTEROLOGY

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*Psychosexual developmental theory implies that adult anxiety concerning a particular body part may derive from preoedipal fixation during childhood around the corresponding erotogenic area. Since flight is the most common reaction to anxiety, it was hypothesized that persons with high anal fixation would spend less time in the lavatory than others, since the lavatory would be expected to raise anxiety levels in that area. In this study 53 men and 55 women who had been timed for the duration they spent in public lavatories completed Kline's Ai3 Anality Scale. Results showed that lavatory time was an inverse function of anality for men, but did not confirm the hypothesis for women. The possible role of reaction formation in confounding results for women is discussed.*

Freud (1908) claimed that repression of anal erotism produces the anal character. Various studies have demonstrated that the anal triad - obstinacy, parsimony, and orderliness — exists as a distinct personality dimension (see Pollak, 1979, for a review of this research). There is, however, no experimental evidence relating the triad to anal erotism or toilet training experience, and researchers in the field have considered the term “anal” a misnomer and suggested its abandonment (Kline, 1972).

In neurotic conflict between ego and id, the ego seeks to bar the expression of instinctual impulses which are threatening (Freud, 1923). A reasonable test of the role of “anality” in the anal triad is to see if such conflict is manifest for persons with this personality around anal functions. Because flight is the most common reaction to anxiety, it is reasonable to hypothesize that anal characters would spend less time in the lavatory than others, since anal anxiety should be heightened and anal impulses more threatening in the anal chamber.

In this study, the amount of time spent in the lavatory was clocked for persons using public lavatories. When people left the lavatory, they were asked to complete the Ai3 Scale (Kline, 1968), a thirty-item inventory concerning anal characteristics. Results showed that lavatory time was an inverse function of the Kline score for men ( $r = -0.27$ ,  $n = 53$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ), but not for women ( $r = 0.16$ ,  $n = 55$ ,  $p = 0.12$ ).

The sex difference, although not hypothesized, is commonplace in psychoanalytic research (Masling and Schwartz, 1979). It is feasible that the ever-looming confounding effect of reaction formation - *i.e.*, the psychoanalytic option of fixated individuals behaving in a mode directly opposite to the hypothesized one - is responsible for the lack of relationship for women. The data, however, provide a more integral interpretation of the sex difference.

An analysis of the time spent in the lavatory for all 67 men and 69 women who were observed (including those who chose not to complete the scale) showed that the mean time for women (3.8 minutes) exceeded significantly the mean time for men (3.0 minutes),  $t = 2.83$ ,  $df = 134$ ,  $p = 0.005$ . This difference,

although accepted by most people intuitively, is contrary to the scientific data reported to date on the topic; without discussing methodology, Reynolds (1946) refers to "many experiments in timing the two sexes" (p. 171) showing that prolonged sitting on the toilet is a masculine rather than a feminine avocation. It seems that the answer to this contradiction lies in the fact that women often use the lavatory for cosmetic and grooming functions besides the anal ones. Thus we can explain the lack of findings for women as being confounded by grooming activities.

The overdetermination within psychoanalytic theory provides yet another step in this analysis. Grooming is part of the construct of cleanliness - an integral factor of the anal character. Cleanliness is a reaction formation against the instinctual urge to soil. Thus we would expect grooming to be a positive function of anal fixation while, concurrently, elimination is a negative function of anality. Since lavatory time = elimination time + grooming time, and elimination time is a negative function of anality while grooming time is a positive function of anality, we would indeed predict the total lavatory time will *not* be a function of anality since " $X + (1-X)$ " is a constant.

This study shows that there is a contiguity between the anal character and anal erotism. As with all studies in anality, the sample is necessarily confounded by *sampling X anality* interaction, since high anal persons generally are oppositional and would not willingly complete questionnaires for an experiment. Given that limitation, these results are encouraging for the empirical fixing of anal erotism within anal characterology.

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