Sex and Curriculum in Life Narratives: A Poststructuralist Meditation

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Abstract

How are body trajectories governed by their being told/heard, written/read and published/cited? The current work examines problems associated with ethnographic uses of auto/biography from a poststructural stance. Such a perspective offers the dual agenda to rethink the forms of closure and representationalist pretense in ethnography *as well as* those encountered in self-representational texts (autobiography), and therefore offers a third agenda, namely a deconstruction of *tacit consensus* between the two. To test-case my problematisation, I offer a multi-layered reading of *curriculum* in Marjorie Shostak's *Nisa*, by which are examined the work's dealings with sexual trajectories through paradigms of analysis, discourse, negotiation, and performance.

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0. Prologue

This thesis departs from author's ongoing archival effort of surveying cultural aspects of sexual trajectories (Janssen, 2002-5; cf. Janssen, 2004, 2005). In short, this project[1] has entailed an inclusive, 4-volume bibliographic approach to ethnohistorical perspectives on emergent, pre/propaedeutic, and inaugural bodies, erotic and gendered, in terms of their curricula and trajectories. In it I loosely piloted an operationalisation of 'sexual curricula' as

> [confluences] of local, reciprocally implicated disciplinary ethnotheories integrating notions of *chronology* (a logic of sequentiality, timing and chronic segmentation), *substrate* (ontology, teleology, deontology; substance, purpose, trope), and *governance* (age/phase stratification, inauguration, *poesis*).

I proposed that social curricula represent performances rather than representations of, references to, and allusions to natural trajectories— in terms of claimed purpose, cause, and direction. The 'work' of curriculum, then, is an accomplishment by all involved to actualise rather than denote and live out ('embody') a role sequence. This work, I contend, is a pivotal enterprise in which 'culture' is accomplished insofar as enculturation is a function of *curricularisation*, that is to say, to the extent that the latter is discursively necessitated by the former's discursive necessity. Rather than exposing this process from a structural (e.g. Hendrix, 2005) or functional perspective, I previously addressed a need to take hi/stories seriously[2] as social curricula can be seen as political schemes by which are proposed, imposed, contested, navigated and negotiated trajectories that are alternatively envisioned to be associated with 'individuals' (psyche, person, persona), 'citizens' (autonomy, integrity, responsibility, consumption), 'authors' (Geertz: inscription, description, transcription), 'social actors' (roles, issues, networks, platforms) or, in a more dystopian register, 'extras' (extrapolating from Baudrilliard)[3]. Thus, throughout the history of ethnography the product of this association, the *curricular subject*, has been variably addressed as experiential, entitled, as ownership, authorship, performance, and simulation.

The foregoing entails that in anthropological discourse, *curriculum* and *culture*, as analytic inventions, are informed by their being definitionally implicated in a recursive way: culture defines curriculum defining culture. Such an abstract ramification seems unproductive when taking a life narrative or biographical perspective. But then, these matters may prove central to a discursive approach of life trajectories, certainly when considering recent crises in issues of voice, epistemological privilege, ratiocination, authorship, ownership, authority, and authenticity. Indeed, who is the anthropologist thinking s/he is when writing, whom is being written, who may not be able to 'write back', and, in terms of curriculum, *when* is one to 'write' (back) or, for that matter, read (back)? This invites a reflection on the various ways of employing 'auto-texts' (autobiographic, auto-ethnographic).

1 *Introduction*

1.1 Sexual Lives: Curriculum and Culture

The status of sex-life stories has known a remarkable academic and public ascendancy in recent decades[4]. Auto/biographical material is used in a range of narrative genres[5]. A limited number of papers and monographs have presented the sexual histories of non-native Americans at a descriptive level[6], an amount of data not paralleled for the majority of western and non-western cases[7]. Most celebrated non-Western examples in which sexuality looms large include two feminist bestsellers: *Nisa* (Shostak, 1981), which I examine in more detail below, and *Aman* (Boddy et al., 1993).

These works explore what is culturally, methodologically or personally demarcated as "the sexual" factor, or element, as producing "the sexual" space, trajectory and curriculum. Autobiographical narratives clarify how activities/experiences are retrospectively temporalised (curricularised), re/theorised, re/assessed, and re/situated within this "sexual" sphere / trajectory / curriculum. Such narratives (e.g. Martinson, 1973; Ribal, 1973) suggest that in autobiographies people predominantly reconstruct their "sexual" ontogenesis as an active process (contemplation, acquisition and application), whereas in pedagogical accounts there is more representation of passive "sexualisation" ideologies (exposure, reception, containment). This invites a critical assessment of referentiality in biography-based ethnography.

How are sexual curricula 'cultural'? In analysing a native reflection on Diné homosexualities, Waller and McAllen-Walker (2001) offer (but not pursue) the notion that "Stage theories have no place in the Navajo understanding of the world" (while 'coming out' is a tabooed issue). In the small body of quantitative cross-cultural work[8] hegemonic non-native American categories of infancy, childhood ('early' versus 'late'), 'adolescence' are retained in the face of a range of interpretative problems[9], which severely compromises the salience of this line of work for any analysis of social curriculum. This takes us into the idea of development and age being socially constructed (e.g. Laz, 1998), or rather *narratively accomplished*. The

literature on this subject is vast[10], but largely consumed with late 20th century Euro-American conventions of biography, personality, and social discourse. This leaves social trajectories and their narration a matter of discursive routine where artefacts of narrative like lives, life phases, turning points, inaugurations, and so on, are being subjugated to serve distinct canons of rationalisation and social policy.

Throughout this text, I will argue that ethnography (and certainly auto-ethnography) should address these issues of subjugation explicitly, as their eruption and management articulates core issues of cultural performance.

1.2 Auto/Ethno/Biography and the Study of Local Sexualities

The culturalist problem in representing and narrating curricula to me is obvious. Charles Briggs (1986) argues against imposition of the Western /middle class interview speech event and in favour of 'culturally grounded' forms of listening and talk (cf. Padilla, 2003). However, the case for an 'insider' or 'authentic' narrative of sexuality is not an unproblematic one (e.g. Kusow, 2003), at worst a positivist fiction. *Auto-ethnography* has been appreciated as an exemplar in a range of 'experimental' designs (e.g. Driessen, 1993, p. 3) that, amidst the erosion of a range of arthritic dichotomies, satisfactorily blurs the distinction between pretences of social scientific inquiry and that of the humanities. In the *native autobiographical* subgenre[11], the politics and poetics of the lived 'Self' are shown to articulate the politics and poetics of the lived *ethnos*. Otherwise put, insofar as both 'self' and 'culture' ontologically are discursive invocations of 'the familiar' as a layered site of rationalisation, ethnographic uses of auto/biography as well as auto/biographic approaches to ethnography will be enhanced by a focus on both *emic* and *analytic* plots in which these layers historically arise and articulate. Such auto/ethno/biographies depart in significant ways from conventional objectivist, modern, and realist ethnographies, since they are by necessity and crucially subjectivist, 'familiarising', and transformative. As stated, this necessitates forms of inquiry that crosscut conventional disciplinary 'levels' of analysis—anthropology and the humanities. To the extent that 'anthropology' still is a suitable framework to delimit the study of Man, then, it has come to tolerate and even lionise dissenting voices, critique, and historicisation of writing and praxis (of which the canonical texts are well know:

Clifford & Marcus, eds., 1986; Geertz, 1988; James, Hockney & Dawson, eds., 1997), and of a general deconstructionist mindset (cf. Linstead, 1993).

In this sense I find (e.g. Janssen, 2002-5) that auto/ethno/biography has been used to subvert generalizing statements on and ramifications of people's *vita sexualis* in terms of culturally and anthropologically 'legitimate' plots. This has come to be called "rereading" (Marcus, ed., 1992) of ethnography, or "ethnographic reading in reverse" (Kuwayama, 2004, p. 87), which effectively means a "rewriting" and "reclaiming" of culture. For instance, this rereading pertains to reflections on ethnosexology's transhistorical permutations, to critique of the anthropological 'conquest' and appropriation of the sexual Other[12], to culture critique of some sexual status quo or 'local' sexology (cf. Janssen, 2005), to the question of voice in relation to 'unofficial' cultural histories (e.g. Smith, 1993); and finally to cartographing and critiquing the increasingly translocal policing of people's sexualities in terms of 'human rights', 'oppressive traditionalism', and transcultural sex education.

Auto-ethnographic designs problematise the auctorial role/status of 'the' 'ethnographer', the stylistic and editorial imperatives of the ethnographic and biographic commodity, presumed mirroring by 'reflective' texts of 'real' lives, and the micro-politics of the [studied/lived]x[self/ethnos] binaries. As analysable instances of cross-cultural negotiation, collaborative autobiographies help to map and deconstruct performative aspects of 'culture', 'authorship', 'anthropology', 'field' 'work', referentiality, and positionality. For instance, the 'anthropologist' may adopt a role as initiator, organiser, facilitator, secretary, interviewer, (co-)translator, archivist, chief-editor, co-editor, intermediary, counsellor, advisor, advertiser, intellectual benefactor (cf. Boddy, 1997)[13]. With Richardson (2000/2005), we might say that all these roles imply activities that *are* 'methods of inquiry'.

In a poststructural fashion, the ethnographer centralises and leaves unsolved his/her problems of representation by means of collage, separated commentary, recto/verso juxtapositions of native languages "versus" translations or post hoc contextualisations. In the modernist mode, the result had at least have to retain *sufficient* autobiographical 'flow' which is *sufficiently* 'unedited' and which retains *sufficiently* indigenous genre and style (if not *form*). Unlike in the poststructural option, in which any account of lived life is a 'version' of metaphorical assemblage, this modernist sufficiency or 'substance' is lived reality *approximated*. As for another

scenario, the anthropologist may record or collect biographical material, but rework it in a format detached from the interview form and context, resulting in the use of fragments and quotes to support an analytic framework that is not in any way indigenous to the field. This reminds one of a psychoanalytic case study. Lastly, the anthropologist may record or collect biographical material, but utilise it to support an ethnographic format which does not report on, assess, or delineate storied trajectories at all, so that trajectories are rather implicated in a study that focuses on a generalised understanding of life or lives as 'curricula'. This refers to the classical 'tribal life'/'sexual life' ethnography (e.g. Malinowski, 1927).

In my view, then, the asset of auto/ethno/biography is to be able to, *as a process*, shed light on the dialectically textualised interaction of what is construed as 'the personal' and what is construed as 'the cultural'. Note that this does not imply an *a priori* opposition between self and society, nor between the social self and the cultural self, nor between 'lived' and 'reconstructed' self-hood; rather it might tease out how (if present) such binaries work, and how they may be resisted. As one author defines:

> 'Autoethnographic performance is the convergence of the "autobiographic impulse" and the "ethnographic moment" represented through movement and critical self-reflexive discourse in performance, articulating the intersections of peoples and culture through the innersanctions of the always migratory identity' (Spry, 2001).

In the study of sexualities, the assets of auto/ethnographic models are many. The anthropologist constructs the interplay of lived sexuality and the study of/in 'other' (sexual) sub/cultures (Kulick & Willson, eds., 1995; Markowitz & Ashkenazi, eds., 1999). The anthropologist may specifically analyse his/her own sexuality through her/his encounter with 'other' or 'new' or 'local' sexual sub/cultures. Non-western sexual autobiographies may challenge, complement, and help to deconstruct hegemonic (i.e. West-European/American, colonial, academic, ethnographic) sexological versions of the Self. These possibilities may clarify, elaborate, and pluralise lived understandings of sexual interactions, options, and impossibilities *as such*. Again, the cultural-historical entry to the problem to me seems obvious: concepts of maturation (Rousseau), the primacy and authority of text and textualisation (Derrida), the sexualisation and pedagogisation of the self (Foucault),

and the proliferation of the autobiographical self (Plummer) are all distinct attributes of the modern West-European self, and as such these issues have in various ways delimited the perceptivity of the anthropological project.

1.3 Outline

The foregoing issues are immediate and pronounced when addressing sexualities-as-trajectories, and it is this (20th century Euro-American?) *idée-fixe* that I propose to concentrate on. This mini-thesis is comprised of two main parts. In the first part I examine problems associated with ethnographic uses of auto/biography, specifically where addressing issues of sexual intimacy *as a development*. In the second part of my work, I propose a preliminary "rereading" of Marjorie Shostak's *Nisa* along the lines of a poststructural perspective on *curricula*, briefly addressing them from perspectives of analysis, discourse, negotiation, and performativity.

2 Sexual Trajectories and Anthropology

Ethnographic observations pertaining to sexual trajectories have over the course of the 20th century foregrounded epistemological problems of persona (e.g. subject/object) and role (e.g. author/reader). Specifically there has been a growing interest in the ethnohistorical contingency in local ontological dealings with 'lives', sexual behaviours as representational of 'identities' and 'orientations', as well as on issues of 'oppression' (e.g. Herdt, 2004). In the following part, I wish to single out some of these problems as they inform a critical reading of indigenous narratives-of-the-self as trajectories-of-the-self.

2.1 Sex, Text, Closure

In my previous work (2002-5) I have tried to demonstrate that sexualities, specifically emergent sexualities, are cultural products especially insofar as they are made intelligible, transferable, controllable, and *reifiable* through stories, as stories[14].

This entails that the (local) status, workings and meanings of sexuality refer to the (local) status, workings and meanings of the specific texts that report them, a referentiality that is in fact instantiated by the locality of textual legitimacy and authority. That is to say, the ethnographer as an interlocutor (*a performer in the middle of a minstrel line who engages the others in talk*) has the paradoxical duty to *produce as well as to report of* the locution of sexuality. In my view, the modernist pretense of resolving this paradox in terms of a consensus model, 'where interlocutors actively negotiate a shared vision of reality' (Clifford, 1983, p. 134 discussing Crapanzano's *Tuhami*) risks neutralizing the dialectic moment in the closure of agreement and 'final' publication. In ethnographic modernism, then, text equals resolution, rather than illumination of problems, it embodies the cultural encounter mastered[15], rather than staged.

A poststructural stance, as I will propose, offers the dual agenda to rethink the forms of closure and representationalist pretense in ethnography *as well as* those encountered in self-representational texts (autobiography), and therefore offers a third agenda, namely a deconstruction of *tacit consensus* between the two.

2.2 Reduction to the Curriculum

Several caveats have occurred to me doing review work. In studying sexual trajectories/stories it appears that these are usually contained within the rhetoric of large historicizable projects of Euro-American academia and civil society[16], which tend to privilege gender-pivoted developmentalist tales about deprived, endangered and entitled subjects. This produces stories about hegemonic notions of social democracy (rights, welfare, and access/participation) and the welfare state (serving a trichotomous lexis of protection, correction and education). Thus auto/biographic acts are commonly politically instrumentalist (diagnostic, therapeutic, prognostic, confessional, re/claiming) and trans/formationalist (*Bildung*). Thus, also, in narrating sexualities qua trajectories (i) both interviewer and interviewee may find themselves interlocked within these reciprocally implicated discursive realms of representing the sexual/erotic, and (ii) non-hegemonic modes of self-narration may be *reduced to the curriculum*[17], rather than *developed* through it. In my view, this means that interviews may abstain from offering a platform for biographic departure (the normative curriculum, the institutional curriculum), while deconstructing such a

platform (or its multiplicity) may be a central and reported part of the biographic enterprise.

Anthropological problems of sexual auto/biographies schematically entail aspects of (a) the sexual (gender/ed, erotic/ised, pleasure-principled?) self; (b) the self-life (integral / continual / past / pastiche / reminiscent self); and (c) the narrated (oral / textual / represented / transcribed / edited / translated / imagined) self. *Trajectorality*, then, can be hypothesised to emerge from, and articulate, the discursive regimes of all three analytic cultural domains (sex, life, story), two of which are classificatorily temporizing (life: span, course; hi/story). Such an analysis, however, will risk 'othering' non-hegemonic domain structures, if any, thereby deconstructing and reducing —rather than teasing out and inviting— trajectories and trajectoralities as 'alternative', 'outlying', 'different', '*emic*' and 'Other'.

In short, ethnographic reduction and consensus are very much problems of the all-pervasive textual ordering of conventional plots, which is not limited to ethnographic digestion proper. Hence, consensus is a multi-layered problem, inviting a multi-stage deconstruction. In other words, where a modernist ethnographer is a participant, and not an intern (entering from an extramural space), s/he runs into the problem of the *lowest common denominator*: consensus occurs where *and only where* the analytic needs of the fieldworker are textually met by natives' 'agreement', when text is 'satisfying' to the final editor or publisher. It is where the tales-of-the-field align with the tales-from-the-field. As I will try to substantiate, this consensus model has important limitations, at least when dealing with cultural intimacies. But, as I will argue in the ensuing section, postmodernism invokes the same limitations.

2.3 Post/modernist Sexualities and Post/modernist Anthropology

The modernist 'literary turn' in social sciences, meeting the anthropological maxim of qualitative anti-positivist assessment, has been supported by an explosion of sociological observations on often self-consciously marginal and exceptional niches or, conversely, intersections within urban metropolitan sexual landscapes. When 'ethnicity' enters center court, it is usually within a poly-ethnic environment situated in the (megapolitan) West. Research outside these contexts produces an uneasy image of a both modernist and postmodernist neocolonialism, that, through their consecutive registers of plurality, hybridity, and inconsistency imperatives, confronts

receptive communities envisioned to await becoming “aware”, “being given a voice” and thus be “empowered”. To some extent, this *post/modernist imperative* may be more than biased observation, formulation, and feeding back of meaning, it may come to rival and contain *emic* contestations of (or indifferences to) conditions and aesthetics privileged by an elite academe. And if so, how unproblematically would that be ‘examples’ of (remnant? constricted?) monism, or absolutism? Does it work for the anthropologist (the self-conscious intersectionalist) researching in communities with no history or aspiration of, or access into, modernist revisionism *or* postmodernist despair? When Weeks (1995 [2003, p. 125]) asks “us in Western countries” to “consider the realities” about binary divisions and fragile barriers in sexual identities, whose realities are we to “consider” or in fact “believe”? Clearly other binaries are being introduced (Western/non-Western, us/them, realities/fictions of the binary)? From which agonism departs New Guinean gender ‘antagonism’?

In short, can/should an ethnographer be a credible culture critic? I contend this depends on his/her textual strategy, which in turn is based on the deployment of metaphorically legitimated key frameworks. To which I turn next.

2.4 Two Metaphors of Analyzing Textualised Sexuality

The textual paradigm of sexualities as described above necessitates an ethnographer’s critical stance vis-à-vis the various metaphors through which they are conventionally elaborated. I want to stress this problem since in reviewing pre-adult sexualities I have continuously been confronted with the politics of trope and analogy. Generally, anthropological registers of approaching storied sexualities feed into analytic-genealogical modes of containment (Janssen, 2003, II: Appendix I), as well as more subject-oriented, existential approaches[18]. The former, contextualist register privileges the notion of ‘geographies of enculturation’ and ‘locality’, analytic grids and models, and even mathematical intervention (articulated by the exteriorizing metaphor of a *map* or *atlas*), while the latter focuses on cultural embodiment, definitions of the self, and cultural psychology (articulated by the interiorizing metaphor of *anatomy*). Thus, textualised sexualities are analytically retextualised through an engagement or encounter either with their ‘wider’ exterior social setting in which they are allegedly immersed or immerged (zooming out), or with their

'ulterior' self-containment and *Grund* (zooming in). In short, how do sex stories articulate the plot 'culture' and how do they narrate the plot 'Self'? In the following two sections, I hint at the problems emerging in a tacit consensus over the use of these two spatial metaphors for analysis.

2.4.1 *Cartography* and Sexual Bio-Narratives

The epitome of a cartographic approach to sexual lives is a typology of locally available and analysable (recordable) bio-narratives as they relate to the macro-structures and cultural 'spaces' that allow them, require them, and to which they ideally respond. A preliminary socio-cultural typology would include: **(i)** theory stories (researcher's *ex ante* or *ex post* stories formulated within a research context, gained outside research procedures), **(ii)** non-subjugated research stories/interviews (instrumental within research objectives answering to ethnographic pursuits proper), **(iii)** subjugated research stories/interviews (from research instrumentalised within social procedures exterior to ethnographic pursuits proper), **(iv)** non-subjugated non-research stories (not produced through formal research procedures, ethnographic or otherwise).

Narratives of the (ii) type are classical sexological forms of history taking, whereas (iii) or "subjugated" type narratives are produced in interventionalist, diagnostic, investigative, and otherwise instrumentalising contexts (criminology, psychiatry, police work).

In a genealogical sense[19], at least a part of type (iv) narratives may chronicle, rehearse and depart from the institutional and official type (iii) documents. In a *sociological reading* (to which I return below), these stories are bound up with, implicated in, and depart from some bureaucratic status quo. In a *culturalist reading*, one might proceed examining and comparing how people organise, resist, rehearse, or critique local, absent, or ambiguous bureaucracies.

I have offered the above typology because I think its deconstruction hints at some pressing issues related to ethnographic authority. In it, 'theory' is discursively privileged over and divorced from *emic* rationalisations or ramifications. The bureaucratic statist interpretation of "subjugation" is arbitrarily privileging or at least

assuming a (stable, mechanistic, effective, uncontested, just?) welfare state, the proceedings and actions of which are envisioned to be both integrated into an internally consistent apparatus and as such divorceable from some imagined 'collective' of academic proceedings (*the research society*). A concept of subjugation of course could have addressed culturally pervasive (trans-corporate) theoretical and normative (changing, arbitrarily applied, contested) fixtures. This would confront the implied naïve notion of 'non-subjugated' (sterile, 'personal', authentic) stories-of-the-field. Lastly, the facile divorce of research from non-research contexts (the problem of 'the field') can not be reconciled with ethnographic ideals of 'participatory interpretation', less with auto/ethnographic formats. In all, the typology's *dramatis personae* seems to be neo-colonial in nature, occupied with disciplining, governing and 'Othering' contexts rather than, through stories, having contexts emerge, from the stories, evoking them.

2.4.2 *Anatomy* and Sexual Bio-Narratives

If sex stories translate 'outward' to cultural structures, they certainly project 'inward' to the cultured self. Hence we are invited to ask, how do storied sexualities relate to the auctorial Self? A number of problems arise. Are such sexualities/textualities arrived at in the face of anthropological *demand*, and if so, does this eclipse their cultural *emergence*? Are we, as Kamala Visweswaran (1994) does, to centralise silences, refusals, and betrayals in life/sex stories? Is 'story' an undue feminist metaphor for 'life' (or 'sex') (e.g. Haronian, 1996)? Are we assuming a 'contemplative individual' where we should be assuming a more 'tactile' sexual chronologiser (Taussig, 1992, p.13)? Isn't sexuality social and relational? Is sexual chronology a medicolegal fixture encountered in the (Other) field or brought to the (Other) field? In part these ontological questions relate to decision-making in narrative research and a concomitant privileging of *certain kinds* (and metaphors) of connotation, denotation, or performativity.

Let us digress on one example. Psychoanalytic work has suggested that excitement and fantasy meet in a story as "an adventure, an autobiography disguised as fiction, in which the hero/heroine hides crucial intrapsychic conflicts, mysteries, screen memories of actual traumatic events and the resolution of these elements into a happy ending, best celebrated by orgasm" (Stoller, 1976). In this normative

approach stories are diagnostic and/or therapeutic. In anthropology, by contrast, stories are rather examined by their being informed *and* performed, instrumentalised, and negotiated in a culturally specified (diagnostic/therapeutic) social setting. A counter-example in point reads that Afro-American mothers "used stories from their own experiences to accomplish socialisation / enculturation and to discourage their daughters from making the same mistakes that they reportedly made (such as becoming pregnant during the teenage years)" (Nwoga, 2000). These stories reportedly "served as cultural artefacts that describe the cultural pathways" of those involved. If Stoller's definition of sex-fantasy stories can be accepted, then, one needs to reckon how the flux (and order) of ingredients (adventure, life, fiction, heroism, psyche, conflict, mystery, memory, trauma, eventuality, happiness, closure, celebration) are (if at all) articulated in locally specific forms and genres of social interaction. Of interest are culturally contingent issues of 'privacy', disclosure, age stratification, gender boundaries, and so on. This contextualist focus should not be consolidated within textuality, locality, or other fashionable tropes, or within research paradigms such as health, identity, and gender, instead it should facilitate to allow tropes to *ad hoc* emerge, to deconstruct, and to reconstruct. In short, I would say that ethno/auto/biography engages rather than defuses a dialectic between narration, analysis, and critique.

To conclude, whether and how storied sexualities articulate either 'culture' or 'Self' may be examined through a critical listening for, rather than imposition of, metaphor-driven frameworks. Hence, sexuality's cartographies and anatomies may be seen as accomplishments of the ethnographic (retextualisation) process. This means that both plots rather than being *assumed* (in structuralist convention) or *negotiated* (in modernist consensus), may be seen as the products of a collision, interims of an ongoing, inside and outside friction.

I have found the matter of 'assumption' as hinted at above most pressing in reviewing sexual narratives, and it is to this issue that I propose to briefly turn next.

2.5 *Assuming* Narrative: Plummer's *Stories*

In his canonical 1995 work on sexual stories, Plummer, a sociologist positioning himself as "a pragmatic symbolic interactionist ethnographer" (xi) and a "critical humanist" dedicates his preface and a substantial amount of chapter space to point

out that his coverage is restricted to American/British storytelling. In this sense it is also the case that whereas Plummer does sociologise and historicise stories, he still tends to *reify*, psychologise and *assume* their presence as well as their absence (for instance, as 'told' and previously 'untold', "not even told to the self", "dormant, waiting for their historical moment" of being told, stories about matters previously "unrecognised", silences broken; Plummer even assumes "authentic voices": p. 29). In this realist sense, stories emerge as (therapeutic) imperatives and natural, and telling as a best – or only – case celebration (performance, acknowledgement, therapy), a matter of relocation rather than constitution, implication and assemblage. Who is Plummer to define and delimit ontology; and who is he to stage resistance to his own deconstruction of his own ontology (pp. 138, 142)? Plummer contends that,

> "Identities are built around sexuality; an experience becomes an essence; *and the new stories that are told and written about homosexuality hold it all together*" (1995, p. 86, *ital. in orig*.)

Thus, Plummer's (homo)sexualities seem to be real experiential centres "around" and "about" which cultural processes take place. As he points out, his choice of genre exemplars, in their conditional *success* in becoming *paradigmatic mass* marketed genres ("suffering, surviving, surpassing"), is quite typifying of late 20th century U.S. capitalism with its rooting in domestic media, therapeutism, and scholastic industries. Plummer's market metaphor of 'production' and 'consumption' is *thin* as it is not shown to emerge from the referenced stories. Plummer also holds back on various issues that seem to be of obvious importance to anthropological analysis, for instance the dialectic of bourgeois individualism versus 'positionality', collaborative 'good' polyphony versus 'bad' cacophony, and subjects resisting 'laws of genre' (as discussed in Smith, 1993); in short the auto/ethno/biography as a situated historical 'encounter'. Analytically this entails a stream of encounters, at a minimum (but no unproblematic minimum) including a meeting, a telling, a writing, and a reading (Hoppe, 1993).

In my view, ethnographic encounters are never dictated to 'laws of genre', and never as brilliantly polyphonic as, say, Alfonso Lobo's *Versa est in luctum cithara mea* (as Shostak's *Return to Nisa* aptly confirms). This brings us to a final point of

attention, that of ethnographic authority in relation to a changing paradigm of power distribution.

2.6 Paradigm, Authority, and Sexual Life

If anything, a 'culturalist' approach to sexual life chronologies provides a more radical analysis than a 'societal' approach, where it is able to draw upon a more divergent and more intimate experience with the social fabric of the narrated self.

In sociology, there seem to remain at least two competing perspectives on the status of chronometric selfhood in contemporary Western life courses, one that holds that "[...] as societal regulation became more lenient [thus] age-normative conceptions about the life course internalised by individuals may gradually have replaced external regulations based on objectified institutions" (Heckhausen, 1999, p. 35 as cited by Mayer, 2002), and another holding that, conversely, "In the light of the historically growing bureaucratisation of a large number of social services [...] it appears that status passages are increasingly disconnected from the passagees' immediate social environment and its dynamics, and connected to more abstract, 'universalistic' criteria, such as chronological age" (Levy, 1996, as cited in Marshall, 2000, pp. 13-14). This paradox hints at a paradigm shift evident in 20th century Occidental control of sexuality as trajectories (Janssen, 2005; Janssen, *under review*). This entails the coming centrality of infrastructural and logistic issues in what Deleuze identified as a post-disciplinary, post-normative world of 'control'. Naively, his 'new dialectic' (discipline versus control) may be identified in auto/ethnographic observation exactly where and insofar as pivotal issues are ordered as structured by '*emic*' rather than analytic intrusions. This *emic-etic* binary however seems to contradict the thesis of 'generalised ethnography', the condition of wide dispersion of what once was the privileged Art of anthropologists (cf. Ellis & Bochner, 2000 [2005, p. 249]). At least this contradiction pertains to the 'massively diffused' lexicon of the traditional ethnographer (Trouillot, 2002).

Illustratively, none of the mentioned authors examines how bureaucratic infrastructures are navigated to suit local and personal agenda. In any case, the above discussion hints at a problem with the invocation of *any* framework of analysis without a dialectic over its principles. In vogue is not a consensual framework, nor a platform that renders dialogue productive for both frameworks, but an encounter

that productively deconstructs all framework. This encounter is necessarily therapeutic, but not necessarily within the therapeutic framework of any participant.

3 Narrating Nisa

In the section below I propose to briefly analyse one mentioned bestselling example of autobiography in terms of its dealing with sexuality as a curriculum. This is to signal out the problems that have been, and have not been, addressed by the ethnographer as facilitating the work's eventual form and style.

3.1 Writing Curriculum in *Nisa*

Shostak's book length *Return to Nisa* (2000) offers few other comments about *Nisa*'s (1981) genesis than offered in her original *Introduction* (pp. 1-43) and *Epilogue* (pp. 345-371), and her short interim reflection (Shostak, 1989). I shall focus on *Nisa*'s extensive sexological coverage, which may have been due to an anthropological artefact as Shostak's method comprised of the (gendered but acultural and ahistorical) question, "Tell me what it is to be a woman." (2000, p. 26). The book's chapter divisions mimic American anthropology's 'reproductive life cycle' coverage. A number of epistemological contexts for *Nisa* were detailed; among these the cultural-historical author (placed within an emerging 'Women's movement' and a search for 'the traditional woman' and the universal woman[20]), and the personal author ('a girl-woman, recently married, struggling with the issues of love, marriage, sexuality, work, and identity'; p. 7). Shostak's field roles varied between an employer (paying informants), a 'child in need for help in preparing for what life might have to offer', a younger niece (p. 41n4, a rule-governed fictive kinship), and a woman who needed to 'better understand what it meant' to be a *Western* woman (p. 21). Beside bringing 'a main source of ecstatic pleasure' for the illiterate !Kung, then, Shostak tried to manoeuvre toward indigenous forms of intergenerational same-sex sex education, or peer counselling. But a full account of this is not offered (cf. Crapanzano, 1984, p. 957). Indigenous forms of talking sex are at least restricted to gender and perhaps age (Shostak interviewed one premenarchal 14-year-old: p. 35). According to Marshall (as

cited in Janssen, 2002-5) young children may be instructed by sexual joking in their presence. However, this contradicts an observation contemporary with Nisa's girlhood that 'The Bushmen strictly avoid talking about sexual matters in the presence of women and children' (Lebzelter, 1934, p. 38). Shostak's 'child role' (rather than that of *≠dara*, or 'friend'), then, seems to require elucidation[21].

Ultimately, we are to understand that "Our conversations went where I led them as often as where Nisa did." (p. 27). Shostak continues her reflections as staged by her encounter with a friend anthropologist, who is reported to have mused:

> "How would Nisa have sounded if an anthropologist had recorded only what Nisa chose to talk about? And how would the other woman's story have sounded if an anthropologist like Marjorie had asked her what it meant to be a woman?" (*ibid*.)

Elsewhere Shostak seems to be more honest: "Back then, [...] I took charge of her voice. Instead of trying to close my ears to her colorful and constant verbiage, I actually asked for it. But I asked for things I wanted to hear. I asked about [...] sexual play in children. I asked about adult sexuality [...]".

3.2 Rereading *Nisa*

In the following pages I would like to offer a multi-stranded rereading of *curriculum* in *Nisa*, briefly hinting at aspects of its partaking in (1) analytic, (2) discursive, (3) negotiated, and (4) performative plots. This is not to say that the deployment or elaboration of these plots produce a better reading of !Kung (or Nisa's) sexuality; such a reading, I would argue, does offer a number of suggestions for further research. The four plots can be associated through the following logic: analysis connotes authority, which in turn connotes multiple authorities, which implies a struggle for authority, which requires discourse, which is a negotiation over truth-value, which in fact is authority performed.

3.2.1 "Unrestricted Free Time": Analytic Curricula

In qualitative research, chronological age is "always already" culturally operationalised, imbued with enculturated and ideological material; it is always

rhetorical age. Anthropologically, sexual dis/continuities, anticipations and trajectories can be imagined at a variety of levels: as (i) states/events in a realist sense; (ii) personal biographical accomplishments; (iii) cultural abstractions; (iv) analytic representational forms. Given social/cultural forms and organisational modes of sexualities-as-intimacies, and of "young" sexualities specifically, a realist approach (i) is not feasible, or, as sexualities-as-identities, ontologically impossible; however, a small British school of sociologists has focussed on semi-public performative aspects of gender (reviewed in Janssen, 2003). Ethnographers may focus on cultural factors in the mediation and interpenetration of personal (ii) and depersonalised, abstracted (iii) discourses that inform native ethnotheories. The latter may be comprised of *parental ethnotheories* (Harkness & Super, *forthcoming*), ethnopsychologies and ethnopsychiatries, ethnosociologies, and auto-ethnographies; a clean division however is suspect for ethnocentrism. The utility of development as an analytic matrix (iv) is problematic, and contingent on specific research purposes, and —again— potentially normative[22] and ethnocentric.

How (if indeed) is curriculum a Western fixture? Drawing from the original 2004 proposal, current Dutch research by Miranda van Reeuwijk was set out to complement an 'adult-centric', quantitative line of research into primary school (institutional age) sexualities[23]. In her proposal, she specifically *assumed* agency to complete biomedical and victimological, problem-centred ramifications of age-delimited sexual behaviours in terms of 'vulnerability', 'risk', 'power' and 'control'. However the directive positivist requirements of anthropological grant proposals, this then is what the anthropologist might bring to the field. May it be that non-Western sexualities-as-behaviour are reduced to their absence or presence of a host of (post-industrial, academic, 'post-disciplinary', biomedical) preoccupations with a 'risk society' (e.g. Beck, 1992)? This I gather is the (appropriately) *risk* of an instrumental, paradigmatic (medical) 'applied' anthropology of intimacies, to function as an extension of an internationalizing welfare apparatus. But then, would not a non-deployment of such an enabling bulwark immobilise non-Western sexualities in a romantic fiction of authenticity and detachment?

Nisa's narrative form is only partially autobiographic. Autobiographic fragments are multiply *staged* by ethnographic interventions: between front cover and back cover, between introduction and epilogue, between chapter editorial and 'next' chapter. Nisa 'speaks' in sequential chapters not of her own choosing, clutched

in ethnographic observations that are not her own nor indigenous to her culture, and in quotes not of her own selection, not in her own language, and not in her own mode of representation. The comments, for instance, on 'Discovering sex' seem to be a commentary on aspects of the concurrent American middle-class sexual curriculum, to which !Kung life emerges as a 'total' negative: little privacy, failed shielding of adult sexuality, unrestricted free time, no schools, no daily shores, no adult interference, no gendering, no violence, no responsibilities, no value on virginity, no covering of bodies, and so forth (p. 105-106). Moreover, the chapter-wise chronological regimentation may or may not reflect on indigenous periodisations[24], pedagogical ethnotheories, life concepts, continuity politics, and so on. Interestingly, Shostak confidently overrules !Kung accounts where she states that adults 'remember such [sexual] play from their own childhood and, although they usually deny it, they know that their children are playing that way too' (p. 109).

To conclude, Shostak could have produced dialogues, instead she offers the illusion of two separate monologues that interdigitate and supplement each other. Nisa's trajectory is made to (fashionably) exemplify a feminist quest for the arch-woman in antipodal culture. In which the author apparently privileges a "more mature and independent [...] more reliable" Nisa over a "lively and dramatic" Nisa "trying to describe the events of her childhood through the eyes of Nisa, the little girl" (p. 43).

3.2.2 "As Adults Do": Discursive Curricula

According to Brooks (2005), " 'Age' is an important social category used to define individuals and groups within our society and, often, to structure access to power, prestige and status". Chronological ('tween') and nominal ('childhood') periodisation markers 'fix' social actors in a normative framework. Rather than regimenting local texts to analytic and normative concepts of curricula, one may examine local tropes, plots, and story anchors that produce the sexualities which they narrate[25]. A number of authors have analysed Euro-American age discourses in relation to gender and gender/sexuality, including Kaisa Vehkalahti (1994), Sinikka Aapola, and Penelope Eckert. Eckert (1994; cf. 1996) observed that "[s]ocial status among one's peers requires growing up-it requires demonstrating new 'mature' behaviours". Korobov and Bamberg (2004) observed how boys aged 12-15 "accomplish a sense of 'maturity'

by bringing off and managing certain features of 'heterosexuality' in group interaction". Aapola (1997; cf. Gonick, Harris & Aapola, 2000) sees "texts as active in constructing a social reality by offering definitions and categorisations which are linked to wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes". Thus, people may be studied transgressing "normative cultural age orders" (Aapola, 2005), age being a "socially constructed, contextually defined and multi-dimensional" phenomenon. However, as illustrated in Cotton et al. (2004), when posed to adolescents curricular questions generally reduce self-evaluative options to simplex chronological binaries juxtaposing "too-early"- and "too-late"-bodies. A praxis curriculum however needs to reflect on children as potential self-developmentalists, as hinted at by Kelle (2001).

In *Nisa*, children are not heard other than through the voices of an elderly mother and a potential mother. Development is doubly prefaced, first by Shostak's general introduction (a spatial metaphor), and Nisa's "story I heard my grandmother tell my mother about our mythical past" (a temporal-cyclical realm). Nisa's narrative reveals a range of native periodisation markers (such as 'sex play' versus 'sex like an adult', playing "grown-up" village) and normative markers that articulate sexual versus 'ordinary' 'nice' 'good' play. This periodisation is marked by a progression of 'fear' (for adult reprimands) and circumspection (for adult surveillance), 'sense', understanding, knowledge, learning, self-teaching, awareness; as technique (penetration), gender-based orientation, and partner preferences. However, since Nisa's "secondary" part is a dialogue reduced to a monologue, there is no way of knowing what causes or obliges Nisa to invoke and then transgress (as she does) harsh gender stereotypes, and to slip in and out of first persons singular and plural, active and passive mode, specific and anonymous protagonists, mythical preface, "rough" chronology, developmental plot, and indeed the realist, shared discourse of ""discovery". Specifically, what do Shostak's hard returns, paragraphs and chapters mean?

3.2.3 "I'm Still a Child. I Don't Understand About Such Things": Negotiated Curricula

Using four ethnographic examples, I previously (Janssen, 2003, II, pp. 159-182) argued that concepts of sexual inauguration, schedule, and pre/liminal signification

are instantiated by processes of negotiation and contestation[26]. A problem with resistance as a postmodernist aesthetic, however, occurs where the aesthetic evolves into an imperative and a reductionist principle.

Clearly, *Nisa* offers plenty of negotiation over being 'still a child' in the context of trial marriages (1981 [1984, pp. 132, 133, 135, 137, 139, 140]), and of in-group negotiating of sex play. Yet since it is not clear exactly how the chronology of !Kung sexual lives emerges as a negotiation between two (chronologically positioned) authors, it remains largely unclear *what structures*, *delimits*, or *necessitates* the data as they arguably articulate autobiographical realism, gendered lamentation, historical analysis, pedagogical commentary, pedagogical idyll, pedagogical negotiation, grand/parental/maternal authority, nostalgia, complaint, and duty in a gerontocratic society. In short, what might feed (and be fed by) *emic* plots?[27] That is to say, in deploying an image of negotiation, an ethnographer's use of biographical materials should be willing to look for negotiation at more than the denotative level, and investigate where at connotative and self-editorial and meta-communicative *as well as* dialogical levels negotiation is present.

3.2.4 "I Am Going to Tell You a Story": Performative Curricula

In this concluding section I would like to elaborate on what Plummer elsewhere (2001, pp. 191-195; cf. 1991) addresses as 'the narratives of 'life patterns''[28], referring to a milestone work by Gubrium and Buckholdt (1977)[29]. In it, the authors offer a self-consciously post-conventional 'social phenomenological' view of life change, focussing in on its 'work', 'social negotiation and accomplishment' (ix). This performative view is juxtaposed to seven 'conventional' approaches, of which one (psychocultural) had to that time been most associated with ethnographic data (though typically not with auto/biography). In contrast to the symbolic interactionist option, the authors propose to examine the constitutive verbal '*of*' rather than the referential '*about*' of, by implication, sexual lives (i.e., "their" objectivity, coherence, continuity). This means that sexual lives are not recounted, remembered, recited, narrated, or collected, but that interviews are co-performative of the (occasional, stage-acted, implicit, tacit) consensus that they could be[30].

For example, Moore (2001) observed how preadolescents established "variably hierarchical cliques using inclusive and exclusionary dynamics that held each other

accountable to emergent and racialised conceptions of gender and age in ways that actively and creatively used the adult cultures around them".

In *Nisa* we encounter a childhood sexuality that is tellingly imitative and social, but, apart from Nisa's claim that "You teach it [play sex] to yourself" (p. 119), and apart from Shostak's passing echo of "inventive" play (p. 109) the genre proves to be too limited to offer a rich analysis of performance. Nisa's interview performance remains unanalysed on the issue of curriculum, which Shostak receives in positivist concerns for "corroboration" and "accuracy" (p. 43).

4 ***Conclusion***

To conclude, I would suggest future narrative work may pay close attention to culturally specific frameworks that locate the issue of development in the broader discursive routines of biography. Specifically, a rereading of *Nisa* offers an agenda to reflect on (1) analytical, ethnographic and editorial contributions to the biographic process, (2) the 'work' of discursive framework, alignment, and appropriation that 'situates' biographic fragments; (3) various levels of possible negotiations inherent in the biographic process; and (4) the possibility that biographies are co-performative of cross-cultural (viz., co-editorial, co-auctorial) consensus over what biography in fact is/does, that they are partial to what they are agreed to signify. The metaphor of *curriculum* was designed to signify confluences of local, reciprocally implicated disciplinary ethnotheories integrating notions of *chronology*, *substrate*, and *governance*. We can now conclude that curricular notions are brought to the field; that they then circulate among other discourses of curriculum; that in deconstructionist ethnography they break down into their negotiable components; and that an analysis of this componentiality contributes to a performative notion of curriculum that is sensitive enough to allow a *mutually productive* cross-cultural translation.

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Notes

[1] 'Growing Up Sexually'. Homepage: http://growingupsexually.tk

[2] Life narratives of sexuality presented themselves throughout the work (Janssen, 2003, I, II). See especially Vol. II: ch1 (academic master-narratives as "theories" and "agendas"); ch2 (anthropological discourse); ch4 ('Language, Culture and Developmental Sexology'); ch6 ("scripts" of first and play sex); ch7 ("Sex "Education" Discourses"); §9.2.1 ("verbal references" accompanying adult handling of infant genitalia); §10.2.6 ("The Primal Talk"); §14.5 ("paedophilia" as a "Central Cultural Discourse"); ch16 (academic and lay discourses of erotic emergence); further on "prehomosexual homosexual" stories, and menarche stories.

[3] Writing, "Generally, postmodern historians and philosophers question the representation of history and cultural identities: history as "what 'really' happened" (external to representation or mediation) vs. history as a "narrative of what happened" with a point of view and cultural/ideological interests. History requires representation, mediation, in narrative, a story-form encoded as historical. This central tenet is immediately transferable to the archives of human trajectories, the "childhoods". We are looking for local and explicitly contingent hi/stories, well aware of the politics: who can write? for whom? from what standpoint? Plummer (1994, 1995[a,b; 1991, 1997]), examining the making of "sexual stories" from a symbolic interactionist perspective, implied that children are gradually introduced to a culture characterised by a "recent exponential multiplication of [sexual] narratives", including family, emotional, representational, bodily, gender, erotic, and identity genres. In reality, studies of these stories (addressing ownership, authorship, performance) are sparse as yet, in any case as far as childhood is concerned (E.g., Kelley et al., 1999; Beausang, 2000[, 1998 as cited by Beausang and Razor, 2000]. Cf. Lamanna, 1999). As for another peculiarity, while autobiographical material about ´queer´ and gender-disordered childhoods are multiplying in secondary literature, few accounts are available about clinically relevant erotic orientations" (Janssen, 2004).

[4] The Anglo-American spectrum includes use of stories dealing with gay/lesbian/quationing/transsexual growing up and 'coming out' (Savin-Williams, 1997, 2005, *in progress*; Payne, 2005; Reiher, 2001; Hart, 1995, Merla, ed., 1996), menarche (Uskul, 2004; Chrisler and Zittel, 1998), queer childhood, transsexuality, child sexual abuse (Reavey and Warner, Eds., 2003; Crossley, 2000), incest victims and 'survivors' (Kirkland, 2004; Krebs, *in progress*), child molesters (Schultz, 2005), female circumcision (Khaja, 2004), schooled bodies (Davison, 2003), sex education practitioners (Kehily, 2002), masochism (Keys and Money, 1993), autobiographies of sexologists, biographies of sexologists, biographies of paraphiliacs (Renders, 1998), and so on

[5] These genres include clinical case histories (Von Krafft-Ebing), criminal profiles, fiction, memoirs, and diaries. Havelock Ellis (1901) presented some of the very first *normative* sexual histories in clinical literature since Von Krafft-Ebing's work with the sexual anamnesis in the 1870s. The autobiographical approach was also noted in the homosexual discourse (e.g. Magnus Hirschfeld). Sex histories have been published throughout the 20th century. Clinical samples include those offered by Caprio (1955), Lukianowicz (1960), Bell, Weinberg and Hammersmith (1981, pp. 96-113, 164-180), and several works by John Money. A number of clinical tools were designed to standardise 'sexual histories'. In an appendix of the first *Study*, which was published previously in two parts in *The Alienist and Neurologist* (1901), he observed the "scientific" craze for sexual pathology, the self-evident and unstructured nature of argument in the field and the absence of data on normal variability. He stressed his point of biography and discussed the difficulty of ignorance, lack of motivation and insight to the value of reminiscence. He then presented twelve autobiographical cases, of which two are said to be on the verge of abnormality, or of "Psychopathologia sexualis". Autobiographies were included in the 3rd, 4th and 5th volume.

[6] To mention a few: Schaefer (1964, 1974); Ribal (1973) also studied by Straver (1986, esp. pp. 28-70); Martinson (1973, 1974); Halloran (1995); Leroy (1993: pp. 16-38); Morrison et al. (1980, pp. 1-60); Kronhausen and Kronhausen (1960, pp. 26-96, 250-253); Lamb (2001).

[7] E.g., Simmons [Hopi], Sekaquaptewa [Hopi], Enry [Ruanda, Zaire], Bloom [Zambia], Rotkirch [Russia, Finland], Amin [Egypt], Crapanzano [Morocco], Dyk [Navajo], Barton [Philippines], Villanueva [Puerto Rico], Shostak [!Kung], Ellis [Britain], Boddy [Somalia]. Relevant passages are referenced in Janssen (2002-5, I).

[8] Reviewed and referenced in Janssen (2003, Vol. 2, App. I).

[9] *Ibid*., see fn46

[10] As an unpublished literature review (2001) shows.

[11] In contemporary literature one observes a distinction between professional ethnographers' autobiographical exposés offered to a peer forum, and ethnographer-facilitated autobiographical projects in which the subject is not ethnographically trained. In the remainder of this text, I will limit myself to the latter mode. I haste to observe that the future will make such a distinction increasingly problematic.

[12] The Mead—Freedman encounter would be a positivist example here, Malinowski's *Diary* and the Lizot—Tierney quarrel hint at other applications. All referenced in Janssen (2003-5).

[13] Boddy's 1997 claim to tell 'the story of the story' in "Writing Aman" reveals a number of issues that may have been salient to the final form and content of the bestseller, only some of which were apparent in Boddy's 1994 *Foreword* (pp. vii-xiv) and *Afterword* (pp. 289-336). Among these: 'high narrative form' in a 'largely oral culture', illiteracy (Aman), memory (historical, transgeographic), all-female multiple editorship (Boddy, Buss, Barnes, Dennys, Godfrey, Aman, Aman's cousin, an 'external' editor) with post-mortem transference of edited and copy-edited and re-edited data, transcultural co-authorship, (culturally determined?) presumed inadequacy of pseudonymy (Aman) and associated geographic indeterminacy, language (Aman's English as 'translation' and its late rendering into 'standard English'), financial anticipation (Aman), interim transcultural migration and (related?) perspectival changes of Aman's persona, changing macropolitical context (1993 Nigeria), anticipation of (English) reader's perspectives (in terms of contextualisation, episodicity, genre, plot, closure, outcome, style: p. 12), editors' ideological consideration (universality, humanism, role of anthropology), transnational editions (necessitating negotiations over the title, cover images, backcover advertisements: p. 13), and, perhaps, (shared?) anticipation of political usage (circumcision abolitionism, views of 'female passivity') and ('wrong') reasons of purchase. Boddy signals out the process of 'editorial solutions', 'replacements', 'compromises', and 'considerable finetuning'. So we are confronted by the popular anthropological work that as a process is itself intercultural and intertextual 'all the way': from 'lived biography', to text and tapes, to drafts, to publication, to reference, to commodity, to export item, to worldwide asset in feminist libraries. From 'Writing Aman' it appears that writing Aman had been a self-consciously political and meticulously negotiated collaboration

among a range of diverse stakeholders. As an international bestseller, it offered the 'right' kind of plot at the right time in the right form: an adolescent female recounting her lived ('real') sexual dissidence amidst an exotic, oppressive, contemporary sexual 'patriarchy', under the patronage of two compassionate ('Rahima') and complicit female anthropologists (of which one prematurely died).

[14] Reading Victorian classics and cartoons and studying U.S. TV culture, hometown folklore and the like, James R. Kincaid compellingly argued that "child molesting cultures" "eroticise" innocence by repeating various "stories" (1992, p. 375) "allowing us to construct, watch, enjoy the erotic child without taking any responsibility for our actions". An Aerol Arnold Professor of English, Kincaid's interpretation of "the sexualizing of the child" (1992, pp. 172-176), affirmed by public denial, departs from Foucault's observation that through these narratives of denial, child sexuality has progressively been presented as a "fundamental problem", society "sexually exciting the bodies of children" (Foucault, 1977, p. 120). The way out would require our embracing of, again, stories, "new" ones (Kincaid, 1998, pp. 279-295). Commenting that the child has become in our [U.S.] culture "a blank screen on which we can write our sexual dreams", Kincaid singles out a number of culturally salient issues about these stories, for instance, that "[...] they are shrill, they are repetitive, they have mandatory features, they are Gothic" (Kincaid, 1999). This obviously articulates a heretic position, in which a responsibility-exempted author disciplinarily removed from (hence: uninvolved in) the scene of the crime/story argues for a social constructionist case where the story is assumed to precede and embody the trauma that is at the discursive heart of the matter. Kincaid never escapes the story imperative.

[15] I shall not dwell on discussion of 'patriarchal' authorship, 'Oedipality' in textual practices, and feminist lionisation of autobiography.

[16] A rough breakdown of these projects would include (1) grand overarching conceptual pivots and anchors (e.g., gender, "identity"), (2) ontological ramifications ('systems' of behaviour, social negotiation, cognition, discourse/text), (3) disciplinary interventionalist paradigms (educationalist, protectionist, correctionalist), (4) policy research paradigms (biomedical, psycho-medical), (5) "acknowledged" action research / activist traditions (sexual minority youth), (6) political/foundationalist programmes ('Christian right'), and/or (7) transgressive counter-hegemonic agendas (commonly contained clinically as 'cognitive distortions')

[17] First, sexualities and nominal-chronological stratification are *reciprocally implicated* by cultural normative discourse, for instance where Netting (1992) argues that "in our culture [Canada], sexual expression is an important element of becoming an adult"; meanwhile, 'children' are protected from 'adult' forms of representation. That is, nominal-chronological stratification is measured by sexual eventuality, while eventual sexualities are identified as componential of nominal-chronological stratification. Second, sexualities and nominal-chronological stratification are *reciprocally exclusive* by cultural normative discourse: 'child'-identifying paedophiles are 'regressive' or 'fixated' and unable to maintain 'adult' heterosocial skills, while sexually 'abused' children display 'adult', 'sexualized' behaviours. That is, sexual eventualities (as such) are denied, reformulated, extrapolated and contained by reference to 'normal' nominal-chronological stratification. In short, sexualities are rendered probable (possible) as well as improbably (impossible) by normative nominal-chronological fit. Cf. Foucault's example of Charles Jouy, as chronicled by Stone (2004).

[18] In a January 2005 post-hoc critique ('Against Atlases') of the online 'Growing Up Sexually' Atlas (Volume 1), I provide a more elaborate critique of the spatial turn in sexology.

[19] To historicise matters for the (generic) Western case, theories proper (i) did not arise before (arguably) Von Krafft-Ebing, Sigmund Freud, and Albert Moll; personal narratives within *sexology* proper (ii) not before Havelock Ellis, large surveys in the 1920s, and groundbreaking work by Alfred Kinsey c.s.; medical, criminal justice and pedagogical narratives (iii), formerly classified and access-restricted documents, did not seem to go public until the U.S. recovery/survivor industry and criminological awareness decade of 1980s (or late 1970s); whereas narratives nominally unaffiliated with any research project (iv) never really proliferated as a published genre until after –and outside– these various historical subjugations, which became numerous since the 1970s, until later within derivative and hybrid niches of storytelling.

[20] Shostak (1981 [1983, p5-6, 7]). Cf. Hoppe (1993, pp. 624-625)

[21] This pertains to ambiguities typical of qualitative transgenerational research, that is to say, in structural terms of field 'roles'. Illustratively, Debbie Epstein (1998) discussed what she calls a 'least adult' option necessitated by her small-scale ethnographic study of gender and sexuality in a primary school, while Mary Jane Kehily described her research experiences as that of a 'grown-up girl' (2004, p. 368). This might have been what nestor Havelock Ellis hinted at when arguing: "[...] until we have cleared away the elaborate structures of childhood sexuality erected on the adult pattern by adults who seem to have lost all memory of youth, we shall wander among vain shadows in this field. Here certainly is a kingdom of knowledge into which only those can enter who become as little children". (1954, p. 73).

[22] Analytic bias is rampant even in 'cultural' challenges that juxtapose sex education discourses in Western locales. Illustrative of ideological deployment of cross-culturalism is Straver's (1986, pp. 28-70) reanalysis of a prior trans-Atlantic challenge of American and Scandinavian (Swedish and Danish) narratives by Ribal (1973). Arguing that 'American' curricular hierarchies undermine the effectuation of a "working consensus", it appears that Straver normalises Scandinavian sexual trajectories as "positive", pleasurable and effective, and denormalises the U.S. case by the use of negative qualifications, and the pathologising of sexual dissonance, rendering "development" "restricted", "halted", "blocked" due to "conflict" and "tension", and thus "structurally" problematic. Straver also claims to recognise a "distinct" male Scandinavian "B" pattern opposing a "typical" "A", which entails much of the "structurally" negative qualities ascribed to the U.S. male pattern, but which nonetheless would be "clearly separable" from it. There is no statistical testing of the perspectives offered, as Ribal's study was based on a loose juxtaposition based on dialogic colloquia.

[23] Drawing from the original 2004 proposal.

[24] Shostak claims that Nisa first told her life "in a loosely chronological order" (p. 39)., after which "major phases" were discussed.

[25] For instance, Schalet (1994, 1999, 2000) found that US parents describe sexuality as a biologically driven, individually based activity that causes disruption to the teenager and the family. Dutch parents, by contrast, emphasize love relationships and social responsibility of teenagers, making their sexuality a "normal" phenomenon. US parents would exclude "sexuality of teenagers" from conversation and the family, while Dutch parents accommodate culturally prescribed forms of "teenage sexuality" in the home. Schalet demonstrates how two constructions of adolescent sexuality, and the conceptions of personhood and social life that engender them, constitute "fundamentally different cultural logics".

[26] As for another illustration, Leahy (1991 [2002, pp. 25-32]) notes that participants in 'intergenerational' relationships negotiated intergenerational sex by "minimizing transgression in terms of one of its major axes--the age category distinction": by negotiating hegemonic connotations of chronological age, framing experiences into an inauguration ('coming of age') framework, or via claims of greater than average maturity.

[27] It has been argued, for instance, that anthropologists' purposive positioning as a novice not simply *orders* the generation of data, but may in fact be *implicated* by local status quo, *accomplished*, and *contested*. That is to say, a field role is not chosen, but negotiated.

[28] Plummer's (1990) note on childhood sexualities briefly addresses the unsurprising observation that age categories are "neither fixed nor universal".

[29] For a more consolidated perspective on life curricula one might consider later work by these authors, including Gubrium, Holstein and Buckholdt (1994) as well as Holstein and Gubrium (2000).

[30] Examining gay/lesbian youth activists, Talburt (2004a,b) identifies a multiplicity of linear narratives of development that function as what Deleuze and Guattari call "molar" lines fixing subjects within narrative segments. As Talburt argues, "these intersecting molar segments position the youth in panoptic time, in which subjects act within developmental trajectories laid out for them. In constructing social and political purposes through their affiliations with the GLSA [Gay Lesbian Straight Alliance], students repeat dominant terms of identity as they seek to "become meaningful" as individual and collective subjects". Talburt further suggests that "If ethnography is to make a

Deleuzian gesture of "becoming meaningful" by "decoding" rather than "coding" sexual identities and differences, it might begin by denaturalizing narrative segments that produce ethnography's and subjects' desires for trajectories with a beginning and a destination".