

On Sex Play

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On Sex Play (1)

"Viene, gioiuzza mia, e viene scatená
all'acqua frisca della tua funtana!"¹

(Come, my joy, come and play
In the fresh waters of your fountain!)

"Is he allowed to take a few favorite toys to bed with him so that before he goes to sleep and after he wakes up, he has things to keep him happy and busy?"²

Contemporaneous play is likely to be seen as entitled to an intersectionalist digestion, being that crossroads of the Derridean lure, developmentalist imperative, existential aesthetic, and consumer duty. If not elsewhere, in the case of "forbidden" games (*Brincar de osadia*³, *Erotische Kinderspiele*⁴, *Kunyenga*⁵, *troca-troca*⁶, *Undize*⁷, and so on) the pressure is on the gaze that needs to reconcile these necessities informing a

¹ Chairidakis, A. L. (1993) Tears of blood: the Calabrian villanella and immigrant epiphanies, in Del Giudice, L. (Ed.) *Studies in Italian American Folklore*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University, pp. 11-51, at 34

² The Prudential Company of America (1954) *Your Child- Pre-School and School Years*, p. 70

³ Ribeiro, J. S. B. (2003) "Brincar de osadia": sexualidade e socialização infanto-juvenil no universo de classes populares, *Cadernos de Saúde Pública* 19, Suppl.2:345-353

⁴ Adler, A. (1911) *Erotische Kinderspiele*, *Anthropophyteia* 8:256-258

⁵ Lockhart, C. (2002) Kunyenga, "real sex", and survival: Assessing the risk of HIV infection among urban street boys in Tanzania, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 16,3:294-311

⁶ "Among *rapazes* [boys or young men], same-sex play and exploration is almost institutionalized through games such as *troca-troca* (turn-taking), in which two (or more) boys take turns, each inserting his penis in his partner's anus. It is perhaps even more obvious in the expression "Homem, para ser homem, tem que dar primeiro"—A man, to be a man, first has to give (in receptive anal intercourse)—often used by older boys seeking to *comer* their slightly younger playmates. And while such practices are perhaps less explicit among groups of *moças*, early sexual play with same-sex partners is cited nearly as frequently by female informants as by males. Such experiences seem relatively widespread, and as a game such as *troca-troca* would indicate, offer participants at least some room to explore both active and passive roles. Assuming that the cultural system has, in fact, successfully carried out its mandate, however, such early adolescent play is quite explicitly not expected to disrupt fundamentally the process of development that will ultimately transform the *rapaz* into an active home and the *moça* into a passive *mulher*". Parker, R. G. (1995) Changing Brazilian Constructions of Homosexuality, in Murray, S. O. (Ed.) *Latin American Male Homosexualities*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, pp. 241-255, at 245-246

⁷ *U ndize*. Children call out "Ndize?" *Can I come?* The game was mentioned in Nelson Mandela's 1994 autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom*. New York: Little, Brown & Co. "Usually the boys played among themselves, but we sometimes allowed our sisters to join us. Boys and girls would play games like ndize (hide and-seek) and icekwa (touch-and-run). But the game I most enjoyed playing with the girls was what we called khetha, or choose-the-one-you-like. This was not so much an organized game, but a spur-of-the-moment sport that took place when we accosted a group of girls our own age and demanded that each select the boy she loved. Our rules dictated that the girl's choice be respected and once she had chosen her favorite, she was free to continue on her journey escorted by the lucky boy she loved. But the girls were nimble-witted--far cleverer than we doltish lads--and would often confer among themselves and choose one boy, usually the plainest fellow, and then tease him all the way home".

subject that the eye ought not meet when not at play, informing it *in absentia* and by extrapolation.⁸ This subject, to recall Foucault's keen premonition, is

“no longer [...] a kind of behavior hedged in by precise prohibitions, but a kind of roaming danger, a sort of omnipresent phantom, a phantom that will be played out between men and women, children and adults, and possibly between adults themselves, etc.”⁹

No rules, then, but *dangeur*, risk society, not play but risk behaviour, not playability but risk management. In keeping with this now overly familiar pedagogical turn, modern play, as sex, is always diagnostic, it is either an abject presence or an embarrassing Nietzschean vacancy. As such, play is being constituted by the opportune interventionism of the advice industry selling healthy sex that works, delivers and fulfils— “Do it in the car. Do it on an office desk. Do it somewhere dangerous and forbidden. Do it with toys, with whipped cream. Do it fully clothed. Fantasize, role play, pillow talk, and then do it.”¹⁰ If we are to sink back for a second into the econo-repressive Reichean-Marxist stance on the matter, play's multiplying negatives arguably include gonadality, *The Journal of Sex Research*, anthropologists on “normal sex”¹¹, pornography, Disney World, sex therapy à la Thomas Szasz, anticheiromanic devices, Portnoy's wacking off¹², and, saddest of all, Dutch ex-prime Minister and UN High Commissioner for Refugees Lubbers' recent resignation for allegedly having been a “billenknijper”.¹³ However, even outside of Japan, with its pornographic cult of the cute, today sex seems ultrastructurally ludic, in sexual allusion, illusion, delusion, collusion. To “play sex”, then, seems to be a contemporary tautology only meaningful in terms of the (overcited) Foucaultian complaint that “sex

⁸ When Derrida, in the (unimaginatively titled) 2002 film *Derrida* (Kirby Dick & Amy Ziering Kofman) was asked, “If you could listen to the philosophers you've admired talk about anything, what would you like to hear them talk about?” Derrida replies, “Their sexual lives, because it's the thing they don't talk about.” The protagonist does not comment on his own *vita sexualis*, as explained in an interview: “If I'm to discuss such things, I prefer to sharpen my own tools - my writing”. Kristine McKenna, *The Three Ages of Jacques Derrida, An interview with the father of Deconstructionism*. www.laweekly.com, Nov 8 - 14, 2002

⁹ “The Danger of Child Sexuality”, Foucault's dialogue with Guy Hocquenghem and Jean Danet, was produced by Roger Pillaudin and broadcast by France Culture on April 4, 1978. It was published as “La Loi de la pudeur” in *Recherches* 37, April 1979. First published in English in *Semiotext(e) Magazine* [New York] Special Intervention Series 2 (Summer 1980), in a translation by Daniel Moshenberg. See Lotringer, S. (Ed.) (1996) *Foucault live (interviews, 1961-1984)*. New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 264-274

¹⁰ Jeyling Chou, Film dramatizes evolution of sex therapy, *UCLA Daily Bruin*, November 12, 2004

¹¹ Frayser, S. G. (1994) Defining normal childhood sexuality: An anthropological approach, *Annual Review of Sex Research* 5:173-217

¹² Roth, Ph. (1967a) Wacking off, *Partisan Review* 34,7:385-399; Cf. Roth, Ph. (1967b) *Portnoy's Complaint*. New York: Random House, ch. 2

¹³ The 2004-5 incident expectedly inspired months of office humour.

is boring”¹⁴, that is: to be reassessed. Allow me to just sketch this late modern reassessment.

Insofar as gamesmanship is a narratively accomplished localisation of the erotic (a departure from its amorphia, fuzziness, carpopedal spasms, and extra-moral idiosyncrasy) any contemporary analytic intervention in sex games will be informed by the aesthetic appropriation of “games”, “role-play” and allied jargon for late capitalist “adult” pleasure landscapes. Consider adding to this massive lexical license Bly’s parentless *Sibling Society*¹⁵, von Franz’s *Puer Aeternus*,¹⁶ Hymowitz’s teening of childhood,¹⁷ the teening of society as a whole,¹⁸ sexologically ambivalent ‘new’ consumer strata such as the ‘tween’,¹⁹ “crosswords, mazes, and other fun puzzles and exercises”²⁰ ensuring a facile differential diagnosis of good play and bad play, and the re/production of genderism, pornotypes, and age stratification in/as new (digital) markets of play²¹ —briefly, here lies a broad panorama of ethnotheoretical, subcultural, commercial, and auto/biographical negotiations of pre/ludic sex.

In sexualibus, play is part of a pan-curricular rhetorical performance that establishes the accountable, performs the liminal²², and negotiates the inconsequential.²³ Historically, anthropological ludus has been indexed as oriented (in fact ultrastructural) to what may be called the *Curriculum (Totem, imago, career)*, that

¹⁴ Foucault, M. (1984) On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress. In Paul Rabinow (Ed.) *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon, p. 340

¹⁵ Bly, R. (1996) *The Sibling Society*. New York: Vintage/Random House

¹⁶ Von Franz M-L. (1981) *Puer Aeternus: A Psychological Study of the Adult Struggle with the Paradise of Childhood*. Santa Monica: Sigo Press

¹⁷ Hymowitz, K. S. (2001) The teening of childhood, *Arts Education Policy Review* 102,6:13-21

¹⁸ Manning, T. (1995) The teening of culture, *New Statesman & Society*, 10/20/95; 8,375, p. 32

¹⁹ Rohder, K. (2002) Between-ager: Et sporgsmål om seksualitet eller leg? [Between-agers: A question of sexuality or play?], *Psyke & Logos*, 23,2:551-562; Cook, D. Th. & Kaiser, S. B. (2004) Betwixt and be Tween: Age Ambiguity and the Sexualization of the Female Consuming Subject, *Journal of Consumer Culture* 4:203-227

²⁰ Advertisement for *My Very Own Workbook*. “Perfect as a reinforcement for 3rd - 6th graders after their Good-Touch/Bad-Touch® lessons.” \$2.25 at <http://www.goodtouchbadtouch.com>

²¹ Consider Schott, G. (2005) *Sex in Games: Representing and Desiring the Virtual*. Paper for the Digital Games Research Association’s 2nd International Conference “Changing Views: Worlds in Play”, June 16-20, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

²² Rajani, R. & Kudrati, M. (1996) The varieties of sexual experience of the street children of Mwanza, Tanzania, in Zeidenstein, S. & Moore, K. (Eds.) *Learning about Sexuality: A Practical Beginning*. New York: International Women’s Health Coalition, pp. 301-323; Lockhart (2002), *cit.supra*

²³ E.g. Collins, T. & Stadler, J. (2001) *Love, Passion and Play: Sexual Meaning among Youth in the Northern Province of South Africa*. Paper presented at International Conference, AIDS in Context, April 4-7, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa; Stadler, J. (1998) *Sex as Play and as Procreation: Adolescent Constructions of Sexuality in the Northern Province of South Africa*. Paper presented at 4th Reproductive Health Priorities Conference, Aug 18–21, Johannesburg, South Africa. See further Janssen (2003, II), *cit.supra*

cultural order that delimits and prescribes the backbone schedule of official formalities and imperatives of social reproduction and biography. The Phallus is curricular, it is Gonadal, it fixes the player in playtime, it schedules play. (As the Bafia say, “Jetzt ist das “*tepampam*” zu Ende!”²⁴) Speaking with Van Gennepe, one observes a place for ludic eroticism in the preliminal anticipation of the curricularly entitled, in liminal flouting of gonadal institute and interdiction, as well as criminal subversion of postliminal comportment or evasion of bulwark agenda. Sex play is where the Gonadal is formally rehearsed *ante datum* (pre-initiatory naught), where it is institutionally received (the anti-structure of bachelor parties, puberty schools, and fattening huts), and where it is achieved *extra curriculum*, by its parody, denial, defusion, revolution, inversion, commercialisation and opportune trivialisation (the play of the Casanova, Onanist, queer, Uranian, catamite, drag, hippie, porna, hetaera, or any of its cultural variants).

Liminal play, apart from the ever implied indoctrination toward productivity, apart from the duty and work in heterosex, is that divine parallel institute where the exquisitely erotic side-tracks the necessity of the flesh as that of the lineage, a refined aesthetic contemplation of the warrior’s pedagogy, i.e., of his pedagogical Other. To recall, Foucault²⁵ points out that in the εραστής-ερωμένος dyad, pleasures did not reveal an alien nature in the person who experienced them, instead “their use demanded a special stylistics”. For we are dealing with

“[...] a whole game of delays and obstacles designed to put off the moment of closure, and to integrate it into a series of subsidiary activities and relations [...] a game that was ‘open’ [...] a game of refusals, evasions, and escapes [...]”.

In his canonical text, Foucault juxtaposes this game to the case of marriage as a statutory relation pivoted around, as in the cases of the slave and the free-born child, “the moderation that needed to be shown in exercising power”, a πολιτικά which becomes complicated in this other courtship game where “an ethics of pleasures

²⁴ Tessmann (1921 [1998, pp. 151-152]; 1934, [I], pp. 226-227) observed that Baifa boyhood sexual life develops in two stages: one (as among the Pangwe) of general promiscuity (“Bei den Baifa heißen diese geschlechtlichen Vorübungen *tepampam te b[o]bte*”), and one of passive homosexuality with older brothers, at age 5 or 6 onwards. When puberty approaches, the father would warn the daughter: “Jetzt ist das “*tepampam*” zu Ende!” Tessmann, G. (1921) Die Homosexualität bei den Negern Kameruns, *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* 21:121-138. Reprinted and translated by Bradley Rose, in Murray, S. O. & Roscoe, W. (Eds.) *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands. Studies on African Homosexualities*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, pp. 149-161. See also *ibid.*, pp. 141-142; Tessmann, G. (1934) *Die Bafia und die Kultur der Mittelkamerun-Bantu*. Stuttgart: Strecker & Schröder

²⁵ Foucault, Michel, transl. Robert Hurley (1985) *Erotics, October* 33:3-30 (ch. 2 of *Histoire de la Sexualité*, Vol. II: *L’Usage des Plaisirs*, Paris: Gallimard, 1984)

would have to bring into play- across age differences- subtle strategies that would make allowance for the other's [boy's] freedom, his ability to refuse, and his required consent". Other than in economics and dietetics, where the voluntary moderation of the man was mainly based on his relation to himself, "in Erotics, the game was more complicated; it implied self-mastery on the part of the lover; it also implied an ability on the part of the beloved to establish a relation of domination over himself; and lastly, it implied a relationship between their two moderations, expressed in their deliberate choice of one another". What delimited the delicate play was not so much "frenzied, uncontrolled" passion (*παιδομανία*), however the qualification of "wolf" or "raven" would be taken as joking²⁶, as the compromised honour associated with a boy's easiness, and the *φιλία* between moderate men that was to characterise the definitive bond—*ἔρως* being supplanted by the *συνουσία* of friendship. Honourability not enjoyment, then, was paramount - that " "strategic" point around which a complex game was required", in fact one which represented the "antinomy of the boy", the paradox of the play's passive role played agonistically, politically, responsively other than by identifying with it, by surrender.

Where man's erotic playmate, variously named²⁷, has typically been the young male in a proprietary, agogical or temporary pseudo-affinal scheme, play has been updated to quadrennial Gay Games, San Francisco LGBT Pride Parades, and Hollywood World Famous Alter Ego Fetish Parties. Some of these events referencing fixed proud classifiable Id-entities with demonstrable rights, others staging the performances of the ultra-eccentric, play has become stylistic of lives scheduled by what formerly appeared quaint, immoral, or impossible: the autobiographical self, the symmetric, the infantile, the imagination staged, indeed, the ego altered. The premodern boy-

²⁶ Licht, H. (1925-8) *Sittengeschichte Griechenlands*. Dresden: Paul Aretz Verlag. Transl. J. H. Freese, Ed. L. H. Dawson (1932) *Sexual Life in Ancient Greece*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, (Panther ed., 1969, p. 367, 368).

²⁷ A brief inventaris of the homosexual "age stratified" species would read: *ερωμέντοι* and *ἔφηβοι* (Greece), *pathici*, *pueri*, *gemelli*, *amasii* (Rome), *bishoonen*, *chigo* and *wawashu* (Japan), *sio kia tsia* (pretty little boys), *Bini boys* or *Ha! Ha! Boys* (Philippines), *qidi* (younger), *Sian-Kôn* (China), *anak djawi*, *sedatis*, *gandrungs*, *gemblakan*, *basirs* (Indonesia), *Balkay* (Pakistan), *Pashtun ashnas*, medieval Jewish "gazelles", Afghan *Kuch-i safari* ("travelling [boy-] wife"), Persian *pesar*, Central Asian *Bača* ("singing boy"), Vietnamese *Nays* ("basket", basket carriers), Korean *Wharang* or *hua lang* (wha, flower; rang, shining purity), "wives of the mines" (South Africa), *shoga* (Swahili), *okutunduka vanena* or "mounts boys" (Hereros), *oronés* or pages (Mossi), "kitchen boys" (Ovambos), *ndongo-techi-la* or "boy wives" (Azande), *izinkotshane* or "boy wives" (Zulu), *nkhonsthana* or "boy-wives" (Tsonga), *diavoletti* ("little devils" in Italian, Eritrea), *katakuma* (Angola). We might add the playful status of the *Chookadoo* and *Mullawongah* or "boy wife" (Australia), and *wokravid* (Marind Anim) and many other examples.

muse, harlot, devdasi, geisha, child-wife, Maasai *ditos*, Babunda *Mombanda*²⁸, and so on, are now paralleled by the *scenester*, the ‘risk aware consensual kink’, the peer gamer, in short one’s circumstantial equal defined by a staged (if transgressed) ethical locality, an ethos that is emergent only insofar as it is being localised: anonymous, *ad hoc* and anew. Foucault’s arguably “consequential” bio has been celebrated the paradigm case²⁹, the anarchist arch-poststructuralist’s *limit-experience*, his Dionysian abandon, and its abundantly premeditated interruption. Sex play had been that “major achievement of the feminist movement”³⁰ seeking to subvert and survive earnest patriarchy. Postfeminist play culture, in turn, became an *eventualist* peer culture that where formerly it produced and disclosed (rather than relieving, assessing and engaging) the gam/est/er—that happy (Kinseyean) consumer not venturing beyond and past modernist Self-pleasures—now has to accommodate radical, post-sexual play, that is to say, the will to it. Canonically, we go from **causal play** (the body at play with its pedagogue/patron to tease into being the kosmos, πόλις, lineage and an honourable locus in them), to **players** (pedagogised bodies at play with their discursive antecedents and precedents³¹, in an endless neurotic and “paraphilic” rough-and-tumble), to Deleuzean **playgrounds** (hacking, browsing aspirant-cyborgs *en passant* in scenes, on stages, on web cams). While the premodern body *had to* play along with its antinomic παιδεία agenda if only to avoid public disgrace and rumours, and where the normal body would play only insofar as

²⁸ “It is the custom of the country [Angola] that about the period when the millet ripens (May) the young men of each village should club together to obtain a *Mombanda*. The *Mombanda* has to be a girl under the age of puberty, a stranger to the village, and she has to prostitute herself with all the young men in turns, but there are days when orgies take place and all the men have intercourse with her. On these special days the *Mombanda*’s mother provides food and palm wine for the young men; it is she who receives the payment, which consists for the term of its duration (two lunar months), of fifty “salts” per man. Not all young men contribute, as they are some who cannot afford it; only contributors enjoy the privileges, and it is “good form” to belong to this set. Not only does a fact that a girl has been a *Mombanda* not prejudice her chances of marriage, but it is considered a distinction; no girl can be *Mombanda* more than once. Should she die while she is in this position, her village is entitled to heavy damages”. Torday, E. (1919) The Northern Babunda, *Man* 19:49-55, at p53

²⁹ ‘For Foucault, the decadent impulse leads to the “theatre” of gay sadomasochism, which he sees as “a kind of creation, a creative enterprise” in which the body’s biological sexuality can be subverted or “desexualised.” Playing his role against nature to the hilt, Foucault denies that these practices disclose “S/M tendencies deep within the unconscious” but are the “invention” of “new possibilities of pleasure” ’ [...] ‘Through intoxication, reverie, the Dionysian abandon of the artist, the most punishing of ascetic practices, and an uninhibited exploration of sadomasochistic eroticism, it seemed possible to breach, however briefly, the boundaries separating the conscious and unconscious, reason and unreason, pleasure and pain—and, at the ultimate limit, life and death—thus starkly revealing how distinctions central to the play of true and false are pliable, uncertain, contingent’. Miller, J.(1993) *The Passion of Michel Foucault*. New York: Simon & Schuster, p. 263, as cited by Walker, J. V. (1994) Seizing Power: Decadence and Transgression in Foucault and Paglia, *Postmodern Culture* 5,1, and by Kimball, R. (1993) The perversions of Michel Foucault, *New Criterion* 11,7. See also Heiner, B. Th. (2003) The Passions of Michel Foucault, *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 14,1:22-52

³⁰ Oriard, M. (1991) *Sporting With the Gods*. Cambridge University Press, p. 481

³¹ Cf. Schmidt, G. (2004) Kindersexualität, *Zeitschrift für Sexualforschung* 17,4:312-322

it was being constituted by its problematic psychosexual curricularity, the post-normal body can not play except in arbitrarily sexual niches that by virtue of their temporality allow a denial of sexual Curriculum as such. Insofar as this does not already mean that the contemporary subject simply cannot but play, a meta-ludic imperative now occurs, where pedagogy is still Erotic (as a sizeable bibliography shows) yet eclectively and contingently so, hide-and-seek wise: as a tight-rope ethos *and/or* as a *dramatis personae and/or* as an opportune, post-curricular (“accessory”) framework. Elements of this are seen in backstage/centre-court coding of S/M scenes³², where three power dimensions (structure, technology, logistics) concur in a denotative, annotative and connotative blur. The non-closure, the indecision whether the sex scene is either facilitative, as the γυμνάσια and συμπόσια were to the εραστής³³, or “primal”, constitutive and transferential, or a host to a parasitic *dividual* or non-Id-entity, is the game. Surely this would be ultimate sex play: where subject(ed) sex escapes any singular escapist schedule. At least it would seem to entail a perennial dialectic (*dialudus*?) as indeed, and to a profound degree, “The social practices of one generation tend to get codified into the ‘game’ of the next”.³⁴ To such a profound degree in fact, that we might have to say that “The games of one generation tend to get codified into the ‘game’ of the next”.³⁵ But that would not do. Play would have to escape any constituent dialectic moment (sex/sex-play), but also any trace of economic and discursive immanence—one will want to surpass fooling around, then saying “It wasn’t me”—after all: limits are to be experienced, not negotiated or “codified”. In the orthodox scenario, the postmodern player’s mobility

³² E.g. Langdrige, D. & Butt, T. (2004) A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Investigation of the Construction of Sadomasochistic Identities, *Sexualities* 7,1:31-53

³³ In press research suggests that athletic nudism articulated or in fact “triggered” “a persistently erotic incentive that reinforces hegemonic maleness and advertises the individual’s virtuous exercise of restraint”. Scanlon, Th. (2005) The Dispersion of Pederasty and the Athletic Revolution in Sixth-Century BC Greece, *Journal of Homosexuality*, Vol. 49, Nos. 3/4. To be published simultaneously as Beert C. Verstraete (Ed.) *Same-Sex Desire and Love in Greco-Roman Antiquity and in the Classical Tradition of the West*. Haworth Press. See also Haworth, M. (2005) *The Grooming of Athletes: Seeing in the Greek Symposium*. “Building knowledge of the past and present through acts of seeing” Conference, Archaeology Center, Stanford University, February 4–6, 2005; Yates, V. L. (2005) Anterastai: Competition in Eros and Politics in Classical Athens, *Arethusa* 38,1:33-47

³⁴ McLuhan, M. (2001) *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. London: Routledge, p. 260

³⁵ A stereotypical though for some reason anthropologically neglected betwixt-and-between Dionysus in sexual modernity is the paedophile. Clearly this is a player the status of which has altered considerably, from an ethically compromised paidomaniac, to a Von Krafft-Ebingean *contra naturam* persona, the arteria lusoria, a retarded child-identifying regressor, involving into “the” play the one subject that can not be thus involved, to the uploader that simply can not be outside a “network”, playing tricks on cyberpatrol, and tricking into cyberplay the one subject that cannot be thus tricked. Clearly we go from a play that one must not play, to a player that one must not be, to a playground that one must not access. We can deduce this schema by examining the way the subject is controlled: by slander over an allegedly *curriculum ludi*, to hospitalisation and reorientation and management, to neo-political colonization of access points, and continuous traffic regulation.

is that of a body toying with its own spatial docility, *playing the field*, to live out the spatial trope of the post-Self “situation” without the stuff of embodiment, a hyperspatial exercise in discontinuity. “Fetish play, sex play, edge sex” one commentator asserts,

“these disturb the efficiency and utility of bodily orientations, skewing the mapping of body parts as purposeful, unified, and an adequate image of my “self.” A kind of Brownian motion introduced into the performed field of sexuality, such play may involve spatial reorientations and unruly kinetic exchanges at the collective level”.³⁶

Such a collective disturbance of (but not utter departure from) the auctorial (if quoted) Self in a “Journal of Rhetoric and Power” inaugural issue—we are to concur—is more serious as a rereading of auctorial sex than it is of playing ‘it’, which would be, to follow the metaphor, to *add to* it. Per Horowitz³⁷, we’re in the Foucauldian “impasse” of “excessive” dandyist antiessentialism, where erotic play becomes so playful that it stops being erotic, that it can not be erotic. Poststructural sex, being play, is only that in terms of its being inadequately so, being a logical fringe: the performative centre is still the author with body parts and a sexuality (qua field) and if not a childhood paternal to man at least a Marcusean “basic repression”. As most commentators agree, digital sex play merely *operates on the self* (albeit a fashionably ‘incoherent, scattered, shattered’³⁸ one) as it is only spuriously remade from an asset to an agenda, from a singular to a set, from being to having (a phallus/strap-on dildo/joystick, an audience), from ethic to score. Playing the Self brings out the Self more distinctly, it demarcates rather than destructures. To revisit my earlier definition, play is narratively accomplished, yet it isn’t narratively consummated; contemporary radical play, then, answers to the psychodynamic sobering of militant Foucauldianism in that “the sexual” exists, submerged in Eros, root reciprocity—not the agogical *plot* but the agogical *structure* (as exteriorly in pederastic performance). A new story is a story still.³⁹ While one can play around relative centres like the *allos* (another of the same kind), the *heteros* (another of a different kind), the *hōraios* (the

³⁶ King, Th. A. (2005) M/S, or Making the Scene: An Erotics of Space, *Queen: a journal of rhetoric and power* 1,1 [<http://www.ars-rhetorica.net/Queen/Volume11/Articles/King.htm>, as accessed July 4, 2005]

³⁷ Horowitz, G. (1987) The Foucaultian Impasse: No Sex, No Self, No Revolution. *Political Theory* 15,1:61-80. See also Horowitz, G. (1977) *Repression: Basic and Surplus Repression in Psychoanalytic Theory: Freud, Reich and Marcuse*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press

³⁸ McRae, Sh. (1996) Coming Apart at the Seams: Sex, Text, and the Virtual Body, In Lynn Cherny & Elizabeth Reba Weise (Eds.) *Wired Women: Gender and New Realities in Cyberspace*. Seattle: Seal Press, pp. 242-263

³⁹ E.g. Langdrige and Butt (2004), *cit. supra*

seasoned, ripe, mature), the xenos, the phallus, sexus, and so on, and while surely one can rethink “risk”⁴⁰, one cannot *unplay* the necessity of gamesmanship.

How play will remain accomplishable, to summarise, depends on the assessment of the necessity of juxtaposing glorifying biographies and defensive critiques of parental intellectuals in order to preserve the idea of resolvable “impasses”, *and/or* that of accepting philosophically unconsummated ontologies, where plots are realised only (if at all) where they fail to deliver what they propose—bodies and pleasure. For these are always already playable. ♣

⁴⁰ E.g. Westhaver, R. (2005) ‘Coming Out of Your Skin’: Circuit Parties, Pleasure and the Subject, *Sexualities* 8,3:347-374

On Sex Play (2)

“Quod licet puerulo, non licet puero und umgekehrt”⁴¹

“If you notice, it is the puppies that seem to go against Nature, but grown dogs, never”⁴²

“Did you go to ‘t so young? Were you a gamester at five or at seven?”⁴³

“In the Morning in front of the elders, the parrot
Starts mimicking the sounds
Of last night’s love-play.
Embarrassed, she claps her hands,
“Dance! Dance!” she orders the children
The chatter of the parrot is lost in the jingle of her bangles”⁴⁴

Elsewhere⁴⁵ as in my wider reviewing efforts⁴⁶ I have been interested in discursive delimitations of sexuality’s playful excursions versus its ultimate and ultimately tragic moment, its *propaedeusis* (inauguration). A proliferating poststructural decursus on adult (postinaugural?) play troubles a return to the preadolescent case, for it seems to have vanished, re-appearing as, and only as, adult (or, *adulterated*) text. For instance why would early sex have to be latent and self-consolidating rather than complementary⁴⁷, and clearly sex play does not end “when the final act begins, narrowing choice, dictating tempo, and giving reign to “nature” ”?⁴⁸ Why, for that matter, should children’s experimental pleasures “embody the political logic of local sexualities”?⁴⁹ With children “queered”⁵⁰, the strange conundrum of paraphilic

⁴¹ Friedjung, J. (1923) *Die Kindliche Sexualität und ihre Bedeutung für Erziehung und Ärztliche Praxis*. Berlin: Julius Springer

⁴² From a letter written by “an experienced master in one of the most famous English public schools” to Havelock Ellis, quoted in *Auto-Erotism*. See Ellis, H. (1927) *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*. Vol. I. Third Edition, Revised and Enlarged. New York: Random House

⁴³ William Shakespeare, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, 1608/9?, Act IV, Scene VI

⁴⁴ The Parrot, dedicated to Amaru, celebrated erotic poet, date unknown. Cited by Lal, P. (1967) Sanskrit Love Lyrics, *Transition* 32:32-33, at 33

⁴⁵ Janssen, D. F. (2003) *Growing Up Sexually*. Volume II. *The Sexual Curriculum*. 0.1 ed., Victoria Park, W.A.: Books Reborn. See esp. chapter 6 and §§ 2.4, 2.5.1, 4.5, 15.2, app. III.7.

⁴⁶ Project and 4-volume corpus “Growing Up Sexually”, online at http://www2.rz.hu-berlin.de/sexology/GESUND/ARCHIV/GUS/GUS_MAIN_INDEX.HTM

⁴⁷ Money, J. & Ehrhardt, A. A. (1973/1996) *Man & Woman, Boy & Girl*. London: Aronson, p. 201

⁴⁸ Erikson, E. (1963) *Childhood and Society*. Second, rev. & enl. ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., p. 214

⁴⁹ Streicker, J. (1993) Sexuality, Power, and Social Order in Cartagena, Columbia, *Ethnology* 32,4:359-74

⁵⁰ Bruhm, Steven & Hurley, Natasha (Eds.) (2004) *Curiouser: On the Queerness of Children*. University of Minnesota Press

“onsets”⁵¹, the increasingly impossible cult/folklore of sexarche—what remains of child’s play?

By “adult text” I do not want to rehearse spastic age dichotomies but simply to note the inverse of play’s metaphorical production of sex, namely that ‘sex’ is an increasingly arthritic centre of pedagogical play, and therapy. Play is “readerly accomplished”—it is immanent in the hermeneutic moment: the hermeneut cannot be a player, cannot be *at play*. For instance, the Latin comfort of *ludus* has fitted American psychologising of this other utter comfort, “love”, for instance as the Ovidean among six “love styles”, where *ludus* is the empirical evil twin of *eros* and *agape*, at least where “intimacy, passion, commitment, and satisfaction” are stylistic desiderata.⁵² Of course, the curiously popular “style” metaphor invites a reflection on social propaedeusis and meta-metaphoric utility: what would it mean to ‘play’ ‘ludic love’, to foreplay a style? Beyond the childhood years, the notion of sex games has fed a professionalised lamentation of (especially Afro-American) divergence from the white middle class heterosexual non-serial monogamy maxim.⁵³ Illustratively, two quite overtly racist (or at least anticultural) articles by Burgest juxtapose destructive, delusive, perpetrated “games” (situating “the psyche of Black America”) and healthy, genuine, lasting, authentic, “positive and fruitful” relationships.⁵⁴ What is clearly at stake in sex play is what not even irritates celebrated San Francisco anthropologist Gilbert Herdt where he lays claims to “sexuality that is genuine, well rounded and healthy”.⁵⁵ Play is not embraced by all self-conscious deconstructors either. Angelides⁵⁶ recently called for a “queer theory of age stratification”, however he still

⁵¹ Janssen, D. F., *Protoparaphilia, An Archival Approach to Paraphilic “Onset” and its Chronology Discourse*. Unpublished, 2003

⁵² Frey, K., & Hojjat, M. (1998) Are love styles related to sexual styles? *Journal of Sex Research* 35,3:265-271

⁵³ E.g., Burgest, M., & Goosby, M. (1986) Games in Black male/female relationships. *Journal of Black Studies* 15:579-591; Burgest, D. R. (1990) Sexual Games in Black Male/Female Relations, *Journal of Black Studies* 21,1:103-16; Anderson, E. (1989) Sex Codes and Family Life among Poor Inner-City Youths, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 501, Jan.:59-78. Reprinted in R. Lerman & T. Ooms (Eds.) (1993) *Young unwed fathers: Changing roles and emerging policies*, (pp. 74-98). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press; Eyre, S. L., Hoffman, V. & Millstein, S. G. (1998) The gamesmanship of sex: A model based on African American adolescent accounts. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, N.S. 12,4:467-489

⁵⁴ Langford (1997) observes how “adults” incorporate “childish” personae within the private microculture of dyadic intimacy. Langford, W. (1997) “Bunnikins, I Love You Snugly in Your Warren”: Voices from Subterranean Cultures of Love, in Harvey, K. & Shalom, C. (Eds.) *Language and Desire: Encoding Sex, Romance and Intimacy*. London: Routledge, pp. 170-185

⁵⁵ Gilbert Herdt, *What is sexual literacy? And why is it so needed now?* National Sexuality Resource Center website, San Francisco State University, 2004?, as accessed July 9, 2005

⁵⁶ Angelides, S. (2004) Feminism, child sexual abuse, and the erasure of child sexuality, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 10,2:141-177

seems to privilege “serious sexuality” and reject the application of the sex play label for its being a “regulatory construction”.

First, what is so sexy in games? Foucault had argued that “the child has a flow of pleasure for which the ‘sex’ grid is a veritable prison.”⁵⁷ What can be said about this grid? Until the Advent of Orgasm, states Hall⁵⁸ (who as may be recalled is usually heralded as the inventor of the Occident’s *adolescence* fixture), genitalia provide “a sea of knismogenic (knismos=tickling) sensations” which later become “extremely gelogenic (gelos=laughter)”. However, even before puberty, Fox⁵⁹ notes, at least “boyhood bliss” includes “ ‘ripples’ of continuous, smaller climaxes preceding the major ending or quiet cessation of the activity”. The problem obviously is that of hegemonic lexis of the adult aesthetic and its imperialism into what it allows as childhood territory, an aesthetic of “knowing” anticipation, progressive repetition, intelligent delay, consummated climax, and post-climactic contemplation. This *gonadal* lexis, this postpubescent imperative of style and of the flesh, can not but extrapolate and encroach upon what remains as the pre-gonadarchal, in fact the *adrenarchal* experience where orgasm exists as, adorably, “[...] a chopper to chop off your head [...]”.⁶⁰ This is a Platonean dichotomy embodied: frivolity versus Ideal, motivated play.⁶¹ Sex in the playhood years, as a defect, lacks not the visceral but the proper visceral, the visceral appropriated— indeed, in a worn-out epigenetic discourse, it craves the proper visceral moment to organise, direct, and orient the aspecifically carnal. As psychoanalysts seem to have discontinued to speculate, under the pressure of masturbatory inhibitions, direct motor stimulation of the genitalia would be transformed to “an expression of drive activity utilizing movement of the entire body”⁶², such as disorganised jumping, organised athletic activities, and organised total body movement in play.

“The girl in jumping rope acts out the to and fro movement of the man during sex intercourse. Her own body takes the part of the active man, while the swinging rope imitates her own body

⁵⁷ Foucault, M. (1996) The End of the Monarchy of Sex, in Lotringer, S. (Ed.) *Foucault live (interviews, 1961-1984)*. New York: Semiotext(e), p. 219; Foucault, M.; Lawrence D. Kritzman (Ed.) (1988) *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984*. London: Routledge, p. 117

⁵⁸ Hall, S. ([1924]) *Adolescence*. New York: D. Appleton. Vol. II, p. 95

⁵⁹ Fox, R. (1993) Male Masturbation and Female Orgasm, *Society* 30,6(206):21-5

⁶⁰ Winnicot, S. (1947) The child and sex, *The Practitioner* 158:324-34

⁶¹ Livescu, S. (2003) Play: Otherwise, A Recycled Gestalt Or From Plato to Derrida: Being Differantly Playful, *Clouds Magazine*, No. 15

⁶² Sarnoff, Ch. (1976) *Latency*. New York: Jason Aronson, p. 55

adjusting to the movement of the man's. In this game, the girl acts both the role of the man and of the woman".⁶³

Confirming this displacement discourse, Blyler (1966)⁶⁴, concluding on children in grades 2-6, suggests that the subjects prefer songs with melodies possessing "strong melodic movement, strong climaxes, and definite points of repose". Appropriately, Winnicot's pedagogical recommendations include the thesis that "substitute climaxes have to be provided- notably meals- but also parties, outings, special moments [...] a forfeit, a prize, someone is caught or killed, someone has won, and so on". As for an interim conclusion, then, we have a crypto-biological end-pleasure 'principle' that inhabits and frustrates a soma that fails to host and implement it *properly* (without anxiety⁶⁵), that it to say, other than in a form that aligns with a (proper) Kinderculture. This Kinderculture, crucially, is to provide orgasm to the preorgasmic, gonadal bread-and-games for the adrenal masses (masses awaiting endogenously motivated rebellion against what then will be felt as phallic oppression but is now internalised as constitutive—that is, exciting—pastime), while *among the savages*, of course, 'good' sex is routinised *per se* (as a *sui juris* gonadal solution).⁶⁶ In the West, child sex play is only anomalous when it adopts, *when subjected to*, the routines, schedules and mania of the gonad (think penetrative purposive heterosex, 'sexual identity', reputation economy, pleasure metabolism, the sexualised child, "participating victims") rather than that of the rush and the blush of the play scene (surveillance subverted, Toms peeping, flashing, pantsing, piss fights, circle jerks).⁶⁷

⁶³ Sonnenberg, M. (1955) Girls jumping rope, *Psychoanalysis* 3,3:57-62

⁶⁴ Blyler, D. (1960) The song choices of children in the elementary grades, *Journal of Research in Music Education* 8:9-15

⁶⁵ Freud (1896) claimed that since the pre-pubescent individual is incapable of experiencing the full cycle of sexual arousal and satisfaction, it is impossible for a person who finds himself in a sexual situation in childhood to experience anything like the kind of satisfaction that could allow the tension of sexual activity to be adequately dissipated. Therefore the sexual experience led to anxiety, and it was anxiety that laid down the disposition to neurosis. Freud, S. (1896) Zur Ätiologie der Hysterie, *Wiener Klinische Rundschau* 10,22-6. *SE* 3:187-221

⁶⁶ Anthropologists have mused on an adrenarchic role in the culturally gonadal. Herdt, G. H. & McClintock, M. (2000) The magical age of 10, *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 29,6:587-606

⁶⁷ Obviously ethnography offers many juxtaposable examples. For instance, "When a [Ari] boy is getting near puberty families meet and arrange—another family have a girl coming on, and they are approached and arrangement made for a combined feast. The maternal uncles decorate the children and they are given dance ornaments, and a dance is arranged. The boy is told during the dance to take the girl and have connection with her; the dance lasts all night, and whilst the people dance outside the boy "has" the girl in his parents' house. [...] this connection has no effect on future marriage, and has nothing to do with it—it is merely initiation. The dance may last several days, and advantage is taken of it to initiate all children who can be. However long the dance lasts the two children only copulate once. This is called Iarata, and all boys initiated are called Iarata". Frazer, J. G. / Liston-Blyth, A. (compil.) (1953) Notes on Native Customs in the Baniara District (N.E.D.), Papua, *J Royal Anthropol Instit Great Britain & Ireland* 53:467-71, at 470-1

Second, what is so frolicsome about sex? In an attempt to reference “sex play” where it (to use a Von Krafft-Ebingian term⁶⁸) *paradoxically* involves the genitals, we stumble upon the heavy-handed propaganda of a welfare *dispositif* that sheds, contains and controls the playsome and the rapturous (or ravaging or rampant or rational or any other un-play) *as such*. Definitional politics over sex play are embedded in the *chronology wars* (more generally the *politics of eventuality*⁶⁹) waged by both a neoconservative forum that celebrates abstinent-only (playless? play-only? happy-only?) trajectories, and by a paradigmatically anti-traumatic pedagogy, both somehow superimposed on the existing functionalist straightjacketing of play. Even Sutton-Smith and Kelly-Byrne⁷⁰ in their mid-1980s critique of *ideal* play essentialised “it”, play, as the stuff of pre-adulthood⁷¹. In any case the authors briefly stage the existence of sex play as corrosive of play’s general idealisms. During the 1990s one notes an embarrassing “appropriateness” paradigm that served to legitimate diagnostic aggression toward ideal sex play’s multiplying negatives from which it had to be cleansed: harassment, betrayal, sexism, homophobia, and that all-purpose notion, abuse.

As sex play informs the notion of play “where it dares not go”, illegal sex play informs the notion of innocuous sex play “where is ought not go”. In the West, virgin play informs “never identities,” a subcategory of the “various identities based on not engaging in particular acts (simply, “not doings”)”.⁷² As evidenced in nineteenth-century British novels play needs to be studied as it occurs in “qualitatively different states of neverness”, innocent play versus pure play. Sex play, in its domesticated “Your Child is Growing Up” variety, is play of the citizen that can not but play, can not participate in or receive consummated consensuality nor deliver performative totality. Maturity is the ‘all the way’ option not chosen by “courtship”-disintegrators⁷³

⁶⁸ Janssen, D. F. (2001) *Paradoxia Sexualis. Bio-Othering and Psychopathia Sexualis of the Child (1877-1931)*. Unpublished, Nijmegen University, The Netherlands, Dept. of Medical History, Philosophy and Ethics

⁶⁹ Cf. Janssen, D. F. (2005) *Current Western Problems of “Taught” and Propaedeutic Sexualities*. Paper read at the “Cultural Aspects of Sex/Sexuality Education” One-day Conference at the Institute of Education, University of London, May 25, 2005

⁷⁰ Sutton-Smith, B. & Kelly-Byrne, D. (1986) The Idealization of Play. In Smith, P.K. (Ed.) *Play In Animals And Humans*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 305-321

⁷¹ A more radical departure from ideal play is Blyth, J. (2004) *Law of the Playground: A Puerile and Disturbing Dictionary of Playground Insults and Games*. Ebury Press, and what must be the most genial website ever: <http://www.playgroundlaw.com>

⁷² Mullaney, J. (2001) Like A Virgin: Temptation, Resistance, and the Construction of Identities Based on “Not Doings”, *Qualitative Sociology* 24,1:3-24

⁷³ Freund, K., Scher, H. & Hucker, S. (1983) The courtship disorders, *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 12:369-79

who break not only the courtship routine but also the law: exhibitionists, frotteurs, voyeurs and rapists. Play is also the trick, or *unnature*, of the paedophile contemplating the death of Narcissus (as in the classic psychodynamic reading⁷⁴), or some grooming plot, in the necessary apologia of access and entry, as Marvell resolves,

Whole fair Blossoms are too green
Yet for lust, but not for Love⁷⁵.

Play is the staged-recalcitrant nympholeptic claim, as in the Humbertian register:

“Ah, leave me alone in my pubescent park, in my mossy garden. Let them play around me forever. Never grow up”⁷⁶.

...as indeed it is Peter Pan snapshot bewildered and puzzled before the chase:

TIGER LILY: Suppose Tiger Lily runs into wood? Peter Pale face attack her – what then?
PETER: [bewildered] Paleface can never catch Indian girl, they run so fast.
TIGER LILY: If Peter Pale face chase Tiger Lily - she no run very fast - she tumble into heap what then? [Peter puzzled. She addresses Indians.] What then?
ALL INDIANS: She him's squaw. (MS Scene 3 p 2)⁷⁷.

According to the psychodynamic binary, of course, play is the erotic implicated, erotics the passion of activity, the unwritten read; play's carnality must be excavated, dismantled, *unplayed*. How is Neverland (as, *de jure*, certain pop stars' estates⁷⁸) the *verso* of Eros' *recto*, then, that “realm of romance, untroubled by memory, anticipation, or any other causal tie”?⁷⁹ What about the ‘troll-like libido’, Peter's pan pipe virtuosity, are these the Id-play of repressed Barrie, do they illustrate

⁷⁴ Fraser, M. (1976). *The Death of Narcissus*. London: Secker & Warburg

⁷⁵ 'Young Love', in Andrew Marvell, *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*. G. A. Aitken, Ed. London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1892. pp. 54-55. I owe this reference to Matt Harkins (2005) *An 'Antedate' for Young Love*. Paper presented at *Exploring the Renaissance 2005*, An International Conference, Pepperdine University and the Huntington Library, March 3-5

⁷⁶ Nabokov, V. (1955) *Lolita*. New York: Vintage International, 1997. 2nd Edition

⁷⁷ Scene from an original draft of the play not featured in the novel. Jack, R. D. S. (1991) *The Road to The Neverland*. Newcastle: Aberdeen University Press, p. 169. See further Wilson, A. (2000) Hauntings: Anxiety, Technology, and Gender in Peter Pan, *Modern Drama* 43,4:595-610

⁷⁸ “Sexuality hovers on the edge of this movie, as if afraid to enter and spoil the family fun. Was Barrie impotent, asexual or a bit too interested in little boys? No truck is given to the pedophile rumors that might have turned this Neverland into the Michael Jackson version”. Peter Travers reviews Marc Forster's *Finding Neverland* (2004), *rollingstone.com*, Nov. 3, 2004

⁷⁹ Kincaid, J. (1992) *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture*. New York: Routledge, p. 286

Rackham's "cheerfully domestic gynoculture", or in fact semioticians' re-play of it?⁸⁰ As James R. Kincaid has argued, Peter's antagonist Hook enacts the play's main character's "erotic" reading, the voyeurist aggression toward embodied play, as he (Hook) enacts "either the game of resentment and danger or the game of resentment and nostalgia". Turning the table on readers' cultures of 'child-loving' rather than writers' Victorian fixtures, Kincaid concludes that whereas "Barrie turns it all into a romp, makes play not a glitch in the real but the measure of it",

"Peter Pan is, however, about our inability to have make-believe and the true stick together: it dramatizes an artistic failure, the failure to make the vision of play persuasive"⁸¹.

Illustratively, *Hook* (1991), Spielberg's pop psychological triad of workaholism, Peter Pan syndrome, and the inner child is a grotesque therapeutic attempt at this failure⁸². To sum up, Play's *unsexuality* is the erotic Other of its cultural reader who is (and indeed when s/he) is trying to locate his dangerous gaze elsewhere, onto the ludophile, that regressive aggressor.

Who can play what play with whom? is a progressively (and progressively dull) chronometric matter. Not explicitly invited by upcoming special issue of the international journal *Social Semiotics* CfP on *The Michael Jackson Trial*, but covered by September 2004 Yale University's interdisciplinary two-day conference on *Regarding Michael Jackson: Performing Racial, Gender, and Sexual Difference Center Stage* is the increasingly politicised interface between "persuasive" (sexual) performance, "sustainable" (sexual) iconicity, and "sufficiently" proven yet imperatively incomplete (sexual) maturity. Obviously this interface is increasingly one of double negation, against the background of American ('adult') sexuality's managerialism⁸³ and *accessorialism*⁸⁴, therapeutism and capitalism: performance can not be ambivalent or unproductive, mediocrity should be resolved, immaturity should be disproved though not fully so, the measure of it all being that sales don't drop. Therapy *prescribes play* to render its fashionable referent, sex, more

⁸⁰ Ripley, D. (2004) *The Broken Mirror: A Freudian Slip into a Hellenistic Victorian Gynoculture*. Online paper, http://www.dead-onwebsites.com/Under%20Discussion/peter_pan.htm, as accessed July 8, 2005

⁸¹ *Op.cit.*, p. 287

⁸² Gordon, A. (2004) "*Hook: The Peter Pan Syndrome*". 21st International Conference On Literature & Psychology, Arles, France, June 30 - July 4

⁸³ Tyler, M. (2004) Managing between the sheets: lifestyle magazines and the management of sexuality in everyday life, *Sexualities* 7,1:81-106

⁸⁴ Smith, C. (2003) *Designed for Pleasure: Style, Indulgence and Accessorised Sex*. Design History Society Annual Conference "Sex Object: Desire and Design in a Gendered World", Norwich School of Art and Design

productive of claimable worthwhile pleasure. And, again obviously, the advise and welfare Mahlstrom allows an evermore total antipodal *idée fixe*, sex play that is essential, necessary in some ephemeral way, age-appropriate, and “entitled” to increased surveillance irritating the playful developments formerly contained merely as ‘natural’, ‘functional’, indeed ‘important’ assets to (or precursors of) straight unqueer maturity.

Lastly, how is play “readerly accomplished” in the infrastructural era, the web-generation? Folklore still heavily invests in concepts of “having sex”, however an increasingly politicised and ambiguous⁸⁵ site, and its preliminary: abortive, “uninformed” or “mistaken”, and therefore *ridiculous*⁸⁶ sex. In the evermore efficient chronocentric analysis, play is *prepropaedeutic* and masturbatory to that pivot of pivots, coitarche. According to Siegel and Shaughnessy (1995)⁸⁷, American sexual and social “firsts” would still be “imbued with an inordinate amount of emotional investment”⁸⁸ which almost necessitates a “healthy” non-first and “cute” proto-erotic. Apart from the perversion and therapy registers, then, semi-public play ‘around’ and ‘about’ sexuality as an ultimate spatial realism (“*introduction*”, “*seduction*”, “*initiation*”) is just that— spatial: it stages pre-pubescent *ante portam* anxiety and teen angst, as it situates the production of heterosexual hierarchies⁸⁹ and conforms

⁸⁵ Pitts, M. & Rahman, Q. (2001) Which Behaviors Constitute “Having Sex” Among University Students in the UK?, *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 30,2:169-76; Remez, L. (2000) Oral Sex Among Adolescents: Is It Sex or Is It Abstinence? *Family Planning Perspectives* 32,6:298-304; Sanders, S. A & Reinisch, J. M. (1999) Would you say you “had sex” if? *JAMA* 281:275–277; Halpern-Felsher, B. L. et al. (2005) Oral Versus Vaginal Sex Among Adolescents: Perceptions, Attitudes, and Behavior, *Pediatrics* 115:845-851

⁸⁶ Early childhood intercourse is commonly received as “funny”, “amusing”, or at least smile-provoking in the adult or parental generation (Tuareg, Azande, Ijo, Bantu tribes, Baushi, Semai, Australian aborigines, Santal, Lepcha, Baiga, Dusun, New Guinea (Gimi, Eipo [boys], Trobrianders, Bimin-Kuskusmin, Batanabura), Qipi, Copper Inuit, New Britain, Marquesans, Tahitians, Pukapukans). The reaction is both life phase- and culture-specific.

⁸⁷ Siegel, J. & Shaughnessy, M. F. (1995) There’s a First Time for Everything: Understanding Adolescence, *Adolescence* 30(117):217-221

⁸⁸ In a paper titled “Getting Started on Sexual Behavior”, Udry and Campbell (1994) relate: “Although most people have sexual feelings and sexual thoughts, some autoinduced sexual experience [*sic*], and some range of nongenital erotic body contact before experiencing coitus, coitus is a simple identification of starting. Maybe we start here because, as Ira Reiss says, Western sex is coitus centered, as contrasted to some imaginary society that is centered on something else” (p. 187). See Udry, J. R. & Campbell, B. C. (1994) Getting started on sexual behavior, in Rossi, A. S. (Ed.) *Sexuality Across the Life Course*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 187-207; Weiss, I. (1960) *Premarital Sexual Standards in America*. New York: Macmillan

⁸⁹ Thorne, B. (1993) *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*. New Brunswick, NJ.: Rutgers University ; Francis, B. (1997) Power Plays: children’s constructions of gender and power in role plays, *Gender & Education* 9,2:179-91; Boyle, D. Ellen, Marshall, Nancy L., Robeson, Wendy W. (June 2003) Gender at Play, *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 46 Issue 10, p1326; Leppälähti, Merja (2003) *Gender play? Playing man and woman in role-playing games*. Paper presented at 5th European Feminist Research Conference ‘Gender and Power in the New Europe’, August 20-24, 2003 Lund University, Sweden

the player to locally salient chronologies of 'exposure'.⁹⁰ The spatial here is pretextual, a tactic, a move.

Sutton-Smith⁹¹ mused that semi-public games such as Spin-the-Bottle in fact *perform exposure* as, eclectically, reward and punishment; they regiment the frightfully unregimented, allow formal approximation through a motivational alibi, and —hence— grant formal competence in lieu of intentional mastery over the dreaded implications of the play's referents: "total and serious" intimacy, the heterosexual Self scrutinised, impotence confessed, and erratic promiscuity revealed. Semi-public games stage exposure to contain its imminent excess.⁹² The normative body's malleability, through their "orderly conduct and competitive but neighbourly ethos of games"⁹³, resides where bodies confess and *play* what they could have been *doing* (yet resist to do) all evening, at least: to excess. In other words, for the modern subject, sexuality's play idiom performs the excessively important juncture between virginity and its excessively important bankruptcy. [A relative of this inferred function (which we might call *allocation* of sexual performance) is *dislocation*. Karniol (2001)⁹⁴ provides support for the contention that "feminine" male media stars idolised by adolescent Israeli girls provide a "safe" target of romantic love, to practice "feeling norms" on the remote, the icon, the imaginary play-boy/girl.] Sex is too important, it does not want to be played, it must be played. That is to say: the body is too important, it does not want to be read, it must be read. The player fails its modern subjectivity, he decompensates and *does* what he should *be*, does what he should have become but can't. Playmates are constitutive by the castration of the player's persona, by reading too much in it, reading it too much. Sex play, the domestic kid's version, still is the author-body regulating, supervising, directing and prefacing a spatially delimited reading, when reading is demanding

⁹⁰ In most cultures there are institutionalised precoital techniques which by their form or institutional practice confirm the existence of a coitarchal cult: *Hlobonga* or *ukusoma* (Amazulu), *ngwiko* (Kikuyu) or *ombani na ngweko* (N'Jemp), *tsarance* (Hausa), *metsha* (Xhosa, Tebu) along with *unkuncokolisa* and *uku-phathaphatha*, *kujuma* (Swasi), *kuchompa* (Ila), *lukh* (Wa-Sania). Other expressions include "petting of the pubic apron" (Otoro) and "placing of arms" (Lugbara). Formerly, South African boys and girls had to be instructed "not to play inside", and only to have "panty" or "thigh" sex". American adolescents have been known to practice "simulated intercourse", "humping", also known as "outercourse". The Koka Shastra described that "a young girl who is not yet mature must be approached by way of the 'outer' forms of lovemaking"; or embraces. There were two sorts of embrace for those who have not yet declared their love, four embraces by which they can make known their mind, and eight embraces for those who have shared love-pleasure already.

⁹¹ Sutton-Smith, B. (1959) The Kissing games of adolescents in Ohio, *Midwest Folklore* 9:189-211. Reprinted in Avedon, E. M. & Sutton-Smith, B. (Eds.) (1971) *The Study of Games*. New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc., pp. 194-216

⁹² Cf. Martinson (1960, p. 73-7; 1970, p. 253; 1973, p. 83-5; 1974, p. 23-4) and Thorne (1993, pp. 151-4), *op.cit.*

⁹³ Miller, T. (1995) A Short History of the Penis, *Social Text* 43:1-26, at 4

⁹⁴ Karniol, R. (2001) Adolescent Females' Idolization of Male Media Stars as a Transition into Sexuality, *Sex Roles* 44,1-2:61-77

beyond lexically Gonadal emergent subjectivity. Hazardously, the opportunity to “be read” is an issue contained in a safety and child rights apparatus, and thus progressively disengaged with the opportunity to “read”, which is less effectively surveyed. This is an effect of late capitalism’s textualism, where the consumer reads what is to be read, and where he himself is not read but written.

“The general sexualization of commodities has also included people. It provides an outlet for expressing previously suppressed sexual urges. Adolescents, most of all, make use of this possibility, and their demand generates a further supply. With the help of new fashions it is possible to advertise oneself as, above all, a sexual being.”⁹⁵ ♣

⁹⁵ *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, Mark Poster, ed., Stanford University Press, 1988, p. 56