



The Sexual Child?

First seminar of Sexuality Studies, Aarhus University

September 17, 2014, 10-17.30

Bld. 1584, room 124

Is our Visual Culture Paedophile?

Jakob Rosendal, Aarhus University

In recent decades we have seen a growing literature concerned with what is described as a strong and damaging sexualisation of children. This talk will first address how this sexualisation looks from within contemporary everyday visual culture and then focus on, moving to what seems to be located at the opposite end of the spectrum, Australian photographer Anne Geddes' highly popular brand of images of innocent infants. In this sampling of images from everyday life the issue will in each case be what semantic and fantasmatic purposes the child serves. Drawing on psychoanalytical theorizations of paedophilia, this will then lead to a comparison between these images of the child and the child as it appears to the paedophile, in order to discuss the desire for the child that we see in everyday visual culture.

A Raindrop Unfallen: Innocence and Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint Pierre's Paul and Virginia

Carol Mavor, University of Manchester

A drop of pure rain that never hits the ground is a perfect image of uninjured innocence, escaping the ravaging hands of time: as if in a fairy tale, as if in Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint Pierre's 1788 *Paul and Virginia*, the once famous, now rarely read, tragic romance of two children, innocent as birds, havened on the Ile de France (now known as Mauritius). Paul and Virginia are at once erotic and pure; siblings and lovers; different and the same. One can easily imagine Virginia proclaiming to Paul, as Catherine does to Heathcliff, in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*: 'He's more myself than I am Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same.'

In 1865, the Victorian photographer Julia Margaret Cameron used the 'pencil of light', the camera, to photo-graph (light-write) her *Paul and Virginia*. By fixing Bernardin's utopian fairy tale as a photograph, Cameron's touch (sloppy and seductive) troubles the waters of the sanctuary of a presumed innocent, Edenic, pre-adolescent life. My text, *A Raindrop Unfallen*, maintains innocence differently. Not as something to unjustly clothe the child's body, in order to make innocence paradoxically

that much more desirable (taboo), as has been so justly argued by James Kincaid. Rather, through a radical rereading of Bernardin's *Paul and Virginia*, I seek a raindrop unfallen, as a way of thinking innocence freely, laterally, horizontally, sibling-wise, without the fall of Freud's Father-Mother-Child-Oedipal troubles. I grab at the air for an innocence worthy of detention. Is such innocence possible?

Sexuality between Phantasy and Reality **Katrine Zeuthen, University of Copenhagen**

How to understand sexuality as coming from the outside as well as from within are questions Freud kept posing throughout his life, challenging a dualistic understanding of body and psyche as separated. Thus an examination of Freud's concept of infantile sexuality and how it is related to as well as different from a genital sexuality - traditionally understood as a bodily sexuality - seems relevant to present at a conference with the child's sexuality in the midst of it all.

Present societal as well as academic discussions of what infantile sexuality is, how it expresses itself, and how it can be understood and protected, seem to hold on to Freud's original scientific ambition from *Studies on Hysteria* of uncovering a causal relationship showing that child sexual abuse expresses itself through bodily symptoms in a significant way that can be attributed to a specific starting point thus proving what really happened.

In this presentation I shall introduce cases and vignettes with children illustrating the importance of not taking the body's expressions at face value as representing a historical reality. Rather I argue that we should understand how the body expresses that which cannot be symbolized and represented in the psyche exactly because the original experience cannot be situated as coming either from the inside or the outside. It is rooted in a sexuality that only can be understood as sexuality *Nachträglich* when sexuality in time and with the body's maturation also becomes genital.

The presentation is based on the work of Jean Laplanche and his theory of the sexual that holds that sexuality is first and foremost defined by the difference between genital adult sexuality and infantile sexuality.

Sadism in the Kindergarden: Pixar's *Toy Story 3*

Lilian Munk Rösing, University of Copenhagen

The gaze and the voice are to Lacan partial objects. In *Toy Story 3* the partial object as such is depicted as that which animates the human subject. The talk introduces Lacan's conception of the independent partial object, "the lamella", as a metaphor for libido, analyzing the character of Mr. Potatohead whose substance seems to be his detachable partial objects. Supplementing Lacan's theory of the partial object with Melanie Klein's as well as with Winnicott's concept of "the transitional object" the talk further inquires into the film's depiction of children's play and creativity as partly sadistic. Finally, the talk analyzes how the kindergarden in the film becomes an allegory of society as based on the organization of that monstrous surplus energy which may be still another answer to the question of the principle animating the human being.

Child's Play: Meditations on Bronzino's Portraiture

Chris Askholt Hammeken, Aarhus University

Often admired for their glacial, porcelain-like qualities and statue-sque poses carrying the impenetrability of masks, Agnolo Bronzino's austere portraits of the Medici family nevertheless also contain puzzling ornaments that act as attributes to the figures. Mainly focusing on the *Portrait of Giovanni de' Medici as a Child holding a Goldfinch* (1545) this paper seeks analytical correspondences between the facial expression in the figure of the child and the 'burlesque' ornamentation in Bronzino's art. In dialogue with Jean Laplanche and Leo Bersani the concept of 'the enigmatic signifier' will be activated.

Puberty – Girls, Women and Femme Fatales in the Art Works of Erik A. Frandsen

Kamma Overgaard Hansen, Aarhus University

In 1986 a paraphrase of the female figure in Edvard Munch's famous painting *Puberty* occurs in a work by Danish artist Erik A. Frandsen. Through the following years, Frandsen continues to build on Munch's *Puberty*-figure: Starting out with a shy adolescent girl, Frandsen soon elaborates on his motif by staging her as his girlfriend at the time, Ester, and as various female icons such as Theresa d' Avilla, Djuna Barnes and Linda Lovelace. The presentation seeks to link between Frandsen's use (and misuse?) of Munch's *Puberty*-figure as both a fearful child and a soon-to-be woman with a fatal potential.

Little Monsters: Sexual and Sexualised Children by the Chapman Brothers

Camilla Skovbjerg Paldam, Aarhus University

Since the 1990's British artists Jake and Dinos Chapman have made a series of sculptures called *Fuckface*, depicting children with adult penises and open anuses morphed in their faces where nose and mouth would usually have been. The children are staged in different poses in different environments suggesting all from sexual assault to playful innocence. My talk examines cultural processes of sexualisation and desexualisation of the child with Chapman's extreme artworks as point of departure. This will be done by addressing three constitutive questions: What meanings are ascribed to the child; boys and girls respectively? How is the child understood in relation to desire and sexuality? And how are these understandings reflected in Chapman's representations of the child?

Biographical informations

Jakob Rosendal

PhD student, Aarhus University

Jakob Rosendal is a PhD scholar in Art History at Aarhus University, where he is a founding member of the research unit Sexuality Studies. He has been an editor at the Danish art history and visual culture journal *Passepartout* since 2006, and is currently co-editing a forthcoming issue entitled “Visual Childishness”. His PhD thesis – with the working title *Overlooked Signs – A Critique of Everyday Fantasies* – develops an analysis of contemporary everyday visual culture via a conceptualization of “the overlooked sign” and through a psychoanalytically informed ideology critique of the fantasies that such signs entail or play into in today’s consumer culture and more specifically in relation to sexual difference, the image of the child, logos and current advertisement trends, and money as visual objects.

Carol Mavor

Professor, University of Manchester

<http://www.carolmavor.co.uk/>

Professor Carol Mavor is the author of five books. The first four were published by Duke University Press: *Reading Boyishly: Roland Barthes, J. M. Barrie, Jacques Henri Lartigue, Marcel Proust, and D. W. Winnicott* (2007), *Becoming: The Photographs of Clementina, Viscountess, Hawarden* (1999) *Pleasures Taken: Performances of Sexuality and Loss in Victorian Photographs* (1995) and *Black and Blue: The Bruising Passion of Camera Lucida, La Jetée, Sans soleil and Hiroshima mon amour* (2012). Mavor’s *Blue Mythologies: A Study of the Colour* was published by Reaktion Books in 2013 (translated into Turkish 2014, Chinese, 2015). Her newest book project, entitled *Aurelia: Art and Literature Through the Eyes and Mouth of the Fairy* is forthcoming from Reaktion in 2015. Her essays have appeared in *Cabinet Magazine*, *Art History*, *Photography and Culture*, *Photographies*, as well as edited volumes. Mavor’s writing has been widely reviewed in publications in the U.S. and U.K., including *Publishers’s Weekly*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, the *Los Angeles Times*,

Los Angeles Review of Books, Boston Globe, Times Higher Education, Frieze and The Village Voice. She has lectured broadly in the US and the UK, including The Photographers' Gallery (London), University of Cambridge, Duke University, the Royal College of Art and the Guggenheim Museum. For 2010-2011, Mavor was named the Northrop Frye Chair in Literary Theory at University of Toronto. Currently, Mavor is hard at work on fairy tales and a novel entitled *Like a Lake*.

Katrine Zeuthen

Senior Lecturer, University of Copenhagen

Katrine Zeuthen is senior lecturer in clinical child psychology at the Institute of Psychology at the University of Copenhagen, where she is co-founder and member of the Center of Psychoanalysis and the Center of sexuality, language and gender. In her research and clinical practice she concentrates on the relationship between infantile sexuality, sexual abuse and trauma, both in relation to prevention, identification, assessment as well as treatment of children with sexual trauma, based on psychoanalytic theory, primarily Jean Laplanche's theory of the sexual, seduction and translation.

Her PhD, *Love and Survival – Child Sexuality and Sexual Trauma*, is published in Danish in Academic Publishing. She has also edited the Danish anthology *Id Talks - Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, and she has written several articles on the subject, i.e. in the *Forum of Psychoanalysis* and *Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*. She has developed the projective and psychoanalytic training material "Play Room" which is a Danish dialog-creating imagery based on the theory of Laplanche. She teaches many different professionals in the relationship between infantile sexuality and sexual trauma. She is an authorized clinical psychologist and is training to be a psychoanalyst at The Danish Psychoanalytic Society.

Lilian Munk Rösing

Assistant Professor, University of Copenhagen

Lilian Munk Rösing is a PhD and assistant professor at the University of Copenhagen. Author of a large number of articles in the field of aesthetics and psychoanalytic cultural criticism. Three books published (in Da-

nish): *At læse barnet*, 2010 (Reading the Child: Klein, Winnicott, Freud, Proust, Joyce, Walter Benjamin), *Kønnets katekismus*, 2005 (Catechism of Gender: Irigaray, Lacan, Badiou, Anzieu), *Autoritetens genkomst*, 2007 (The Return of Authority: Freud, Lacan, Zizek, Moses, Hamlet, Kierkegaard, Imre Kertész). Forthcoming: *Pixar with Lacan. The Hysteric's Guide to Animation* (Bloomsbury). Literary critic since 2000 at the Danish newspapers Information and Politiken.

Chris Askholt Hammeken

PhD student, Aarhus University

Chris Askholt Hammeken has studied art history and comparative literature at Aarhus University. Since 2013 he is PhD-student on a project concerned with Mannerism and ornaments as artistic license in sixteenth century art.

Kamma Overgaard Hansen

PhD student, Aarhus University

Kamma Overgaard Hansen is an Art Historian, curator at Horsens Art Museum and PhD student since 2013. Her PhD project ads new focus to the Danish so called 'young wild' artists, who had their debut in the early 1980s.

Camilla Skovbjerg Paldam

Associate Professor, Aarhus University

Camilla Skovbjerg Paldam (b. 1973), Associate Professor and PhD in Art History, Aarhus University. MA in Comparative Literature and Sociology. Studied at Aarhus University, University College London, Freie Universität (Berlin) and École des Hautes Études en Science Sociales (Paris). Editor of the Danish literary journal Passage 1999-2008. Research and publications within areas such as avant-garde art and theory, especially surrealism, haptic perception with special focus on disgust, and sexuality studies. Author of *Surrealistiske collager. Underfulde billeder i kunst og litteratur* ('Surrealist Collages – Marvellous Images in Art and Literature'), 2011.