

THE SPACES OF THE REPRESSIVE HYPOTHESIS: SUBJECT AND SEXUALITY IN BDSM

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of original research; it contains no materials accepted for any other degree in any other institution and no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

I further declare that the following word count for this thesis are accurate:

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ABSTRACT

BDSM is usually positioned as a reality alternative to the mundane. In my thesis I explore the nature of this alternativity, and how it is connected the subject – in particular, on affective level. Drawing on theory of performativity, affect theory, and Foucauldian repressive hypothesis as analytical approaches, I analyzed interviews of English-speaking BDSM practitioners I met in Budapest. In addition, I involved insights received in conversations and observations of local parties as well as from secondary literature. I found out that in BDSM, sexuality functions as a spatial phenomenon – it works not as a psychological property, or drive, or a subject’s object-directed desire, but as a virtual space – a fantasy to explore and inhabit with different scenarios. I argue that repressive hypothesis produced the fantasy of sexuality as an underground space in relation to social and the subject. The subject has its own spatiality that is described in performativity studies in terms of transparency, surveillance, and theatricality. I show that these two spaces – of the “subject” and of “sexuality” – are related fantasies produced by the repressive hypothesis, which are structured and affectively attuned in different ways, which, in its turn, governs performance in different ways. Furthermore, I claim that BDSM “came down” and inhabited that virtual dungeon of sexuality, “underground” of the subject and society where, according to the repressive hypothesis, hypocritical Victorians banished sexuality to. Through the analysis of the interviews with BDSM practitioners, I investigate affective economies of these fantasies, and their relation in the shame/theatricality circuit.

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Introduction

Chapter 1 - Review of BDSM, theoretical framework, and methodology

1.1. Views on BDSM

- Definition and short history of BDSM

1.1.1. Review of the discourses around BDSM today and their roots

- Pathology
- Liberation
- BDSM activists works
- Queer and feminist views

1.1.2. Queer theory framework

- (including Foucault and Bersani)

1.1.3. Feminist sex wars

- (including postcolonial approach)

1.2. Situated motivation, motivated doing: performativity, affect, and spatiality

- Performativity: overview
- Performativity: a subject is an effect of doing
- Affect helps to see individual motivation of doing. Performativity as affectively motivated doing
- Affect theory (Tomkins): overview
- Affects shape and structure reality
- Grosz on fundamental spatiality of a subject's psychic, subjectivity as being situated in space and in certain relation to others
- Affective attunement: situatedness is simultaneously spatial and affective. "To be in world is to be in mood" (in Flatley), affective "attunement to being" (Bartky, Heidegger), "sense of standing in the world" (Bartky)
- Tomkins, shame, and the subject in the liberal society
- Sedgwick on H. James's queer performativity, shame, and spatiality
- Why I use this framework to study BDSM case

1.3. Methodology, situation, and the limits of my research

- English speaking practitioners in Budapest, local parties, local munches, fetlife.com, secondary literature on BDSM

Outline of the methods

My methods included interviews and participant observation. In October 2016 and April 2017 I conducted interviews with Budapest based BDSM practitioners who speak English. I understand the general social profile of my respondents as a global mobile community, since many of them came from other countries, while practitioners with Hungarian citizenship also studied and travelled abroad. I got acquainted with some English speaking practitioners at the BDSM conference in November 2016 in Budapest and found other respondents through their contacts. I also got acquainted with practitioners through friends in CEU, and through the social network fetlife.com (the “facebook” for BDSM practitioners). I attended BDSM meetings (munches) and parties in Budapest in October-February 2016/17. I conducted semi-structured interviews and asked my respondents to describe their plays, feelings, fantasies, associations, and places they use to play. My aim was to understand connection of fantasies, affects, and space, as well as their relation to power dynamics. Furthermore, in my research I involve observations from meetings (munches) and parties, and insights from private conversation.

Positionality and ethics

To my respondents and at the meetings, I introduced myself as an “exploring” and as a researcher, which helped to establish friendlier contact, since, as I noticed, expressing an interest just as a researcher invoked certain dynamics when a respondent was in the position of justifying the “exoticness” of her\his BDSM interests to a researcher from the “normal” outside. It also created imbalance in the level of vulnerability: a respondent opened up intimate details of her\his sensuality and other aspects of life, while a researcher was in the safe position of a detached asexual listener. Since I sincerely became interested in BDSM personally, I

suggested it would be more ethical to construct communication with my respondents rather as a conversation of BDSM enthusiasts, and to express my concerns not only as in the name of the research but also as my personal interest. With regard to vulnerability and power dynamics between a researcher and informants, I drew on Nancy A. Naples's framework (2003). Naples pointed out that the research is not a mere representation of an objective social reality, but is the result of interaction of a researcher and researched. Moreover, the very presence of a researcher forms a field (2003, p. 38). Another ethical aspect was in regard with the conflict which emerged between my identity as a researcher and as a feminist when I was "in the field". Many narratives I heard at the BDSM events were informed with heteronormative and sexist discourses - for example, what is natural for men and women. Of course, I did not intrude into or challenged accounts of people while interviewing them, but I had to reflect critically on this afterwards. This set up an ethical problem: how to be honest and critical, and not to lose the trust of my respondents? With regard to consent, I informed my respondents about the publication in the Internet and free access to my thesis, and asked for their oral consent. To protect the privacy of my respondents, I used their BDSM nicknames or random pseudonyms depending on their will.

Chapter 2 - The space of repressive hypothesis: “subject” and “sexuality” as different sites in BDSM

2.1. Repressive hypothesis and BDSM

Self in BDSM and BDSM in self

The writing on the wall of famous s/m club in San-Francisco says: “Abandon yourself, all ye who enter” (Fritcher, p.3, 1978). In this call “self” is something that can be suspended before entering the space of BDSM. Not only that you can leave your “self” as a coat in a wardrobe at an entrance, but, perhaps, the very act of stepping out of your “self” invokes the space to enter. Moreover, abandoning of “self” promises a pleasure. There are contradicting narrative on “self” in BDSM discourses: “self” is something to lose, to veil, to explore, to find the true one. Either one has to mask her/his personality to play BDSM, or it is one’s personality that masks the one’s raw “self” that finds its unrestricted expression in BDSM. In other words, “self” behaves ambiguously in BDSM. Either BDSM is a playground and an erotic role-play, or it is a raw reality debunking hypocritical niceties of mundane.

Similarly, there is a tension in how BDSM is constructed within the “self”: either it is a sign of pathology and perversion, or it is subversion and liberation, or a “spice” and therapeutic recreation. Moreover, BDSM is usually positioned as an alternative to conventional reality space - as a “bracketed space” (Weiss, 2011, p.151). What is the character of this alternativity? And how it is connected to a subject and self?

Repressive hypothesis and its spatial model

Foucauldian “repressive hypothesis” is crucial to answer these questions. Conventional understanding of sexuality as repressed and censored by hypocritical and prudish Victorian era produced imperative to liberate ourselves, reveal the truth (that started to imply sexuality),

violate taboos and claim back our right to express our desires freely. Repressive hypothesis can be understood as a certain structure within which a subject and sexuality were produced in relation to each other. I argue that this structure and relations were produced on psychic and spatial levels in parallel.

According to repressive hypothesis, connection of sexuality and power is negative – sexuality is a drive arising from the depth that was suppressed, limited, silenced by bourgeois morals. It is said that Inappropriate sex was expelled into the social underground - illicit sexualities with their “infernal mischief” (Foucault, 1988, p.4) were displaced into “the brothel and the mental hospital” (ibid). “Only in those places would untrammelled sex have a right to (safely insularized) forms of reality [...]. Everything else, modern puritanism imposed its triple edict of taboo, nonexistence, and silence” (ibid, p.4-5). ““By creating the imaginary element that is "sex," [...] It constituted "sex" itself as something desirable. [...] in fact we are fastened to the deployment of sexuality that has lifted up from deep within us a sort of mirage in which we think we see ourselves reflected-the dark shimmer of sex” (Foucault, 1988, p.156-157). Sexuality suppressed because of its seducing dangers, its underground place in relation to a social superstructure is a construction designed by the repressive hypothesis - a spatial model that outlined relation of sexual and social both on material and psychic levels.

BDSM inhabits imaginary space of sexual underground

According to Foucault, repressive hypothesis imbues a subject with the desire of liberation, to let sexuality into the world, unleashing it from the underground. I argue that BDSM is based on another strategy - instead of freeing illicit sexualities from the social dungeon went down and inhabited that space, at least its imaginary aspect. Underground energy of BDSM, atmosphere of “forbidden fruit”, connection of dungeons design to horror genre and to hidden “dark side” emanates from fruitful fantasmatic space of illicit sexualities, generated by the

repressive hypothesis. That is, I argue that BDSM inhabited that virtual space, that dark chthonic “catacombs” where, according to repressive hypothesis, hypocritical Victorian morals banished sexuality to. Such construction also produced imaginary spaces of sexual underground as fantasies with dark atmosphere. Sexuality was produced around visible secrecy, significant silence, meaningfully closed doors, whisper as a way of talking about “it”, coded language – all this became a fruitful tension stimulating imagination to reveal the secret and decode the whisper.

Laplanche and Pontalis connected fantasy, imagination to secrecy (1968). They wrote that fantasy develops as response to enigma, when an individual faces something she/he cannot explain. Connection of secrecy, whisper and coded languages with imagery of sexuality. Transgressive energies which are crucial aspect of BDSM are also the effect of repressive hypothesis: tension between seducing depth of underground and restricting social superstructure – between “sexuality” and a “subject”. These spaces, being produced in relation to each other, as parts of the repressive hypothesis construction, are structured and affectively attuned in different ways in BDSM, and imply different levels of performativity. Onwards, I offer to analyze these spaces – separately and as parts of the whole construction and its spatial design, affective economies, and performative effects.

I argue that the subject and sexuality are structural fantasies that govern experience and performance, and have certain affective atmosphere, certain affective exchange between a “performer” and an “audience”. Stryker on Laplanche and Pontalis, “a concept of fantasy as inhabited structure (and of structure as inhabited fantasy)” (Stryker, 2008, p.39).

2.2. Spatiality of the subject: transparency and the fantasy of surveillance

In performativity studies a subject is not an autonomous entity with an internal unified “core”, but is relational and spatialized. There is a range of models explaining how modern subjectivity

works through spatial models, but all of them outline similar structure based on visibility, spectacle, and power relationality, which, as is argued, has developed within liberal ideologies.

Foucauldian panopticon

In “Discipline and Punish” (1995) Foucault explains modern subjectivity through the architecture of Panopticon – a prison designed by 18th century philosopher Jeremy Bentham. It was designed as a new type of prison that would be based on permanent inescapable visibility. Its structure is following: donut-like building with cells equipped with windows on both – inward and outward directed sides, so that they are completely transparent. In the center of the inner courtyard there is a tower with a guard inside. From this tower everything what happens inside the cell is visible. Prisoners do not see a guard and do not know when they are observed. This creates a sense of total permanent surveillance that prevents misbehavior without using direct force and brutal methods. Moreover, this model is effective, hygienic and economically rational in comparison with dark crowded jails. Panopticon embodies modern regime of power that does not a king or a sovereign, but that disciplines people through ubiquitous surveillance. Moreover, surveillance – a guard in the tower - is a part of subjectivity. That is a subject is not a prisoner who is observed and controlled by an external guard, but is a prisoner and a guard simultaneously.

Performative acts and their audience (Parker and Kosofsky Sedgwick)

Kosofsky Sedgwick and Parker, developing Austin’s theory of performative acts, and explaining further connection of performativity and performance (1995, p.1), paid special attention to the space of the uptake of a performative act. To remind, for a performative act to be successful it has to comply with the convention. Convention requires a consensus, which, in turn, requires implied “witnesses” of an act so that it can come into force, be legitimate. The authors argue that to analyze performativity it is crucial to see the whole scene of a performative

act: “[...] the role of silent or implied witnesses, for example, or the quality and structuration of the bonds that unite auditors or link them to speakers, bears as much explanatory weight as do the particular speech acts of supposed individual speech agents” (ibid, p.7). A performative act needs interpellation of the eyes of the witnessing audience, their recognition of the act. Similarly to a marriage ceremony, where the performative act of “I do” relies on the social consensus and approval of witnesses. What is more, the very “I” is a performative act here - the “I” is not the natural, universal, private “I”, but is a part of certain “we” - authorized, confirmed by state heterosexual consensus (ibid, p.10). Thus, Kosofsky Sedgwick and Parker show pervasiveness of theatricality, its stage-audience structure as constitutive for subjectivity. In other words, a subject is not only a performer, but is the whole scene of a spectacle. A performer and an audience simultaneously. Importantly, in our heterosexual society there is a non-replaceable element of a stage setting - a “proscenium arch” (ibid, p.11) of marriage.

Rousseauian “public ball” (theatricality and Rousseau’s shame for it)

David Marshall showed that Rousseau’s concern on “how spectacles govern our lives” (Marshall, 1988, p.135) anticipated modern regime of governmentality. Rousseau condemned the theater for corrupting Genevan society. For him, theatrical relations were to blame for inequality in society, since exhibiting oneself in front of others as well as comparison to others induce competitiveness and vanity, which make a social man (in distinction to a savage) to annihilate self, to become an actor who lives “outside of himself [...] in the opinion of others” (ibid, p.138). Theatricality structure social relations as well as a subject (a “social man”). “In large cities, according to Rousseau, this concern for the eyes of the world turns people into actors” (ibid, p.140). Rousseau condemned theatricality for making people into actors with vain “relative self”, for annihilating of self and being non-autonomous, dependent on public opinion, seeking for the recognition of the audience, which was immoral for him. With that, Rousseau accepted that theatrical relations are what constitute society. That is, they are inescapable. He

therefore developed an idea that it can be possible to develop a theater that would be moral, and if theatricality and vanity are inescapable they shall be used by the state to govern the society. He developed an idea of "balls for young marriageable persons" (Rousseau cited in Marshall, 1988, p.160), where unmarried youth makes a proper spectacle of themselves, engaging in a modest and innocent dance observed by the public. The key of this ball is in the constant observation – “relentlessly open eyes of the public” (ibid, p.160) - and censoring each other, and the aim of this ball is to find a couple to marry. “State- controlled theatricality”, policing and “mutual surveillance” (ibid, p.163). "The empire of opinion": the power of public opinion to control people's manners and morals and consequently their actions” (ibid). “[...] a concern with the eyes of the public” (ibid).

For Rousseau, it is impossible to avoid theatricality, since spectacle is a condition of sociality. Therefore, theatricality shall be taken under the control of government to regulate society in accordance with morality and common good. As an ideal model of such “state-controlled governmentality” (ibid, p.163) Rousseau develops an idea of public balls for unmarried young people, where they have to dance modestly and with reserve, under the controlling watch of their parents. A public ball is an epitome of modern governmentality based on control and surveillance. Rousseian public ball as the model of modern governmentality: “Consequently, if people are governed by public opinion, then the best way to govern them is to control public opinion. According to Rousseau, rather than opposing amour-propre and people's subservience before the eyes of the world, government should seize the apparatus of public opinion” (ibid, p. 163). “This fete provides a reflection as well as a manifestation of the state that governs by theater” (ibid, p. 165). “There, monsieur, are the spectacles necessary to republics” (ibid). “Like the young people at the ball who watch themselves with "the eyes of the public incessantly open and upon them” (ibid, p. 166).

Butler on subjectivity as subjection (“passionate attachment” and “foreclosure”)

Butler, considering contradicting stances on what is the subject, draws on Foucault who developed the idea that power is not external and negative to a subject, but produces a subject (1997). That is, a subject is produced in and as subordination. Butler considers psychic aspect of this, psychic topographies of the subject, and argues that a subject emerges in the strong affective attachment to those it completely depends on (considering fundamental vulnerability of a child to her/his caregivers). With that, paradoxically, a subject is formed by putting a barrier to this attachment, by turning against itself, against this attachment. I suggest that this barrier, this foreclosure is a shame. Tomkins explained shame as an affect that emerges from communicative failure, when one wants to establish a positive contact but this request is disrupted. For Sedgwick, shame is a self-constitutive affect and is inseparable from theatricality and spectacle (Kosofsky Sedgwick, 2003).

Social existence implies subjection, compliance to dominating discourses. “[...] it marks a primary vulnerability to the Other in order to be” (Butler, 1997, p.21). Autonomy of the subject as a shame for being dependent or subordinated, as a foreclosure, a barrier (which is spatial model of the affect of shame) of the desire to dissolve in others – annihilation of self and living in the eyes of others – social features that Rousseau was ashamed about. Shame as a barrier to dissolution in others, to attachment to others, to dependency. “Moreover, the desire to survive, “to be,” is a pervasively exploitable desire” (Butler, 1997, p.7) – (desire for social intelligibility)” - connection to that “I” has to be proved by the audience (Parker and Kosofky Sedgwick, 1995). The subject is an effect as well as an agent of power – it is formed in attachment to power and simultaneous foreclosure of this attachment – barrier that shifts power into the agency of a subject. The subject recoils power that constitutes and subjects it, as agency. Interiority of the subject, its psychic space as divided from the social is the effect of such cut, foreclosure of the desire.

2.3. Spatiality of sexuality: dungeons and the fantasy of seduction

“Fantasy as inhabited structure” and “structure as inhabited fantasy” (Stryker, 2008, p.39)

Conventionally fantasies are understood as ephemeral effects of desire that in turn is constructed as an effect of a sexual “orientation”. Psychoanalysts Laplanche and Pontalis provide with an insight that fantasy is actually a “cradle” and a structural principle of an individual’s sexuality (1968). Stryker mentions their important insight on: “a concept of fantasy as inhabited structure (and of structure as inhabited fantasy)” (2008, p.39), which is a fundamental concept to outline how I understand fantasies in my thesis. Laplanche and Pontalis point out the “convergence of theme, of structure, and no doubt also of function” of fantasies (1968, p.11). Similarly to a fantasy of a subject described above, which has its structure, figures, colors, dramas, and affective atmosphere, there is an “antipode” of it – a fantasy of sexuality, or I would rather say of illicit sexuality, since according to repressive hypothesis sexuality by itself has become illegitimate in general. [...]

Connection of BDSM dungeons to horror fiction

[...]

Shame and transgression

Transgression in BDSM can be understood as entering a scene – the fantasy of sexuality, virtual dungeons of society. The act of transgression means spatial movement and certain emotion: “transportation” from one space to another and positive affects connected to the sense of liberation. The question is, what is that to be transgressed in BDSM? As I discussed above, repressive hypothesis generated connected spaces of the subject (social) and sexuality (underground), which perhaps could be epitomized as relation of de Sade’s dungeon (as imagined, hiding all possible perversions) under the brightly illuminated hall of Rousseuian public ball. Furthermore, the subject and its spatiality is produced as turning against oneself:

the desire for attachment to those it depends on (fundamental vulnerability to power) + shame for this desire. That is, shame constitutive for a subject is not a shame in general, but very particular shame for the dependency on others and others opinion. I suggest that this pre-shame state of the Western liberal adult self is that virtual moment connected to the imaginary space of sexuality in the repressive hypothesis. As I claimed above, BDSM dungeon is a virtual space constructed in connection to the clandestine space of illegitimate sexualities of repressive hypothesis.

Shame involves desire for connection with others, it indicates dependency on others, desire for connection and a barrier to this connection at the same time. Shame Rousseau talks about theatricality– annihilation of self through dissolution in (the opinion of) others. Also, in connection to that, perhaps, the dependence on the audience – you have to mask it in reality, to be autonomous (example of Oscar’s shame, from the interview), Rousseau on theater – his model not only describes a modern subjectivity, public opinion, ball as a model of subjectivity – but his attitude, shame for this state of affairs is what also constitutes modern subjectivity. BDSM, in the fantasy of seduction, annihilates this kind of shame of being dependent on others, even intensifying it within the framework of seduction, significance of intimacy in BDSM. For Butler, desire for dissolution in others as a condition for the emergence of a subject, and a barrier to this desire as a condition for a subject to keep existence. Subject as a barrier to attachment and desire to others (1997). Marshall described Rousseauian idea of theatricality as a condition of emergence of a social man (1988) – as a model of modern governmentality – but he did not pay attention to a crucial element of this model – to the shame Rousseau wrote about this with. Shame is the barrier that forecloses a subject from dissolution. Shame (a barrier that constitutes the self) and theatricality as constituents of the autonomous modern democratic self.

The subject is constituted as a spectacle, relation of an actor and an audience, an observed and an observer, in passionate relation to others, and is simultaneously ashamed of this. Shame as covering surface of this spatiality, a personal border, which is, at the same time, is in permanent tension, has to be reestablished and proved constantly, reiteratively. Shame as a barrier, a personal border that outlines the autonomy of a subject, and self (at least one of them, that is central in a subject) is this border. Connection to transgression in BDSM and ambivalence of “self” in BDSM. Double structure of shame in the subject: shame for awkwardness (interruption of a contact), and “meta”-shame: shame for being ashamed, for being dependent on the opinion of others. Butler raises the question of the ambivalence in understanding of the subject with regard to power – either it is an effect of power, or it is an agent of power. Perhaps this paradox informs ambivalence of “self” in BDSM – self is narrated either as repressive mask to remove in BDSM (self as subordination to social power), or as a subject that liberates oneself (self as an agent of power). To consider paradoxes of self and transgression in BDSM within this dichotomy of subordination and agency. I suggest this sheds light on what happens in BDSM, and the relation of a subject and sexuality in the repressible hypothesis structure. Shame produces foreclosure of a subject, a border, a surface of self. In BDSM “passionate attachment” and theatricality as desire for the eyes of others, narcissistic exhibitionism, approval of the audience and craving for its sympathy – this “passionate attachment” as the first constituent of a subject (according to Butler) is not interrupted with a barrier of the shame (the second constituent of a modern subject).

BDSM dungeon as being located in the fantasy of sexuality as something “pre”, in-depth, as passion, as seduction that precedes shame (*seducere* from latin means “draw aside” which echoes Rousseauian concerns with regard to theatricality as transporting self outside oneself which is immoral for him, as well as dangers of dark space of the theater with its seducing vicious). Produced by repressive hypothesis fantasmatic space of illicit sexualities contains fear

of self-loss as well as promises of self-discovery. “The posture of the adult subject consists precisely in the denial and reenactment of this dependency” (Butler, 1997, p.9). – perhaps, BDSM is reenactment without denial.

Example from an interview with Haya, a Dominant, a genderqueer: they described how they dropped off from the “dom-space” (certain state of mind during the play, for a submissive the analogue is a “sub-space”) because suddenly became ashamed of what they was doing.

Experience of shame as “dropping off” the space and returning to the self:

Haya: [...] I have not felt shame in the... maybe there was one or two instances but usually that means I’m dom dropping... I don’t know if you know this. So there is sub-drop. There is dom-drop. So usually it means that something probably went wrong or I did something that I did not want to do. Or [...] there was something off in that scene that caused me to feel this way because it means I wasn’t in the head space or I dropped from the headspace... from the dom-space [...]... basically I was coming back to reality while I was doing something that I wouldn’t do in reality... you know... and it feels like gap in consciousness [...] when I’m like “what the hell...”, like “what am I doing, where’s my morality?”. It’s kind of, like my morality is judging me for what I am doing because I dropped out from the dom-space and now I am doing this in the real [...], which for me is not something that I would do. I would never bit a person just for fun in real world. Ehm... or like outside the scene. And so in that sense I have felt shame or ... ehm... embarrassment or guilt.

Shame and seduction

[...]

Laplanche and Pontalis: the fantasy of seduction

According to Laplanche and Pontalis (1968), the fantasy of seduction is a primal “mold” of the historicity of a subject’s sexuality, similarly as a primal scene is a starting point of the historicity of a subject. They explain the fantasy of seduction as following drama: ““A father seduces a daughter” might perhaps be the summarized version of the seduction fantasy” (ibid, p. 14). Importantly, the feature of an original fantasy is that it is a structure with “multiple entries” (ibid). That is, a subject can be a “daughter” as well as a “father” or even “seduction”

(ibid). I do not take this psychoanalytical framework as a theory to draw on (since psychoanalysis is not my theoretical framework) but I draw on a significant authors' insight to outline how the virtual space of illicit sexuality that BDSM inhabits is structured and attuned. That is, I draw on the fantasy of seduction as a "scene" with power and gendered drama that frame and inform (is a setting for) different scenarios. "Fantasy [...] is not the object of desire, but its setting" (ibid, p. 14). "[...] sexuality is detached from any natural object, and is handed over to fantasy, and, by this very fact, starts existing as sexuality" (ibid, p. 17). [...]

BDSM and the fantasy of seduction

As I argued above, BDSM inhabited the fantasy of illegitimate sexualities with their "infernal mischief" (Foucault, 1988, p.4). Foucault referred to BDSM as desexualization of pleasure, with that, even if not involving stimulation of genitals, BDSM invokes erotic environment, which, I suggest, is structured as the fantasy of seduction. [...]

H. James's "age play" and shame/theatricality circuit

In connection to Butler's subject as a "foreclosure" of the "passionate attachment" to the other, and Rousseau's tone full of shame for theatricality as the precondition of sociality. [...]

H. James: shame for being ashamed develops into re-parenting script. [...]

Two folded structure of James's fantasy where he is seduced by his younger ashamed self and where he seduces the audience. He seduces the audience exhibiting his erotic relationship with the younger self (or little conceptus). At the same time he proves to the audience his Mastery by taking mentorship over ashamed self. His "re-parenting scenario" in the prefaces can be understood as an "age play" in BDSM. Complicated fantasy. Several "levels" of seduction in shame/theatricality circuit. Energy of seduction emanating from homoerotic interior of James's relationship with his younger self (or little conceptus): not only he is seduced by charming vulnerable self, but the scene of his seduction, the very scene of such intimacy implies to be

seducing for the audience. Perhaps, it can add to understanding the structure of how subject/sexuality construction works: the space of sexuality not only contains seduction, but itself seduces a subject. There is a popular image in scary children movies of an opened door to the dark basement of house that seduces a personage. [...]

2.4. Conclusions

Repressive hypothesis has a certain spatial model, structure and imagery – it is a fantasy in a sense how Laplanche and Pontalis understand fantasy (“fantasy as inhabited structure” and “structure as inhabited fantasy” (in Stryker, 2008, p.39)). Within this model there is the fantasy of sexuality as underground space in relation to social and to a subject that is another spatial fantasy. Repressive hypothesis produce the imperative to liberate sexuality from the “imprisonment”, and I argue that BDSM is based on another strategy – of “coming down” to this virtual underground dungeon and to inhabit it. Productive space for imagination. There are different affective economies governing these two connected spaces (of “[illicit] sexuality” and the “subject”), but they are connected in one affective circuit. Shame/theatricality and constitution of a subject. In connection to this, in the next chapters I will consider individual fantasies of BDSM practitioners (interviews), connection of BDSM to fiction and their affective sense (affective strategies).

Chapter 3 - “Fantasy box” and transgression: sexuality as a spatial phenomenon in BDSM

3.1. Sexuality as a virtual space: cinema, fiction, simulation, fantasy

- BDSM feels as alternative space, experience of BDSM is close to the experience of fiction
- different scenarios take place, sexuality works as an environment for them
- Norberg-Schulz “some phenomena form an 'environment' to others” (from ‘’Genius Loci’’, Phenomenon of Place)
- dungeon as a phantasm under the places where BDSM takes place (connection of dungeon design to horror fiction)
- “bracketed space” (from Margot Weiss book)
- metaphors of playground, theater, experimental lab (Foucault)
- “fantasy box”, Stephen’s interview, doing BDSM is close to writing fiction
- horror genre, movies, Tim’s interview, superpower and superheroes
- science fiction fantasies, Adam’s fantasy about racially superior women
- BDSM as “simulation” and “make-believe” (articles of Hopkins, Stear)
- feeling of hyperreality, Haya’s interview
- Grosz on virtual spaces
- Stryker on BDSM dungeon as “a generative space”

3.2. Transgressing borders in/to sexual environment

- “Transgressive energy” (Remethep’s words) of BDSM
- Transgression means transition from one space to another, form one state to another (+ definition of transgression from the dictionary)
- Rituals of transgression: hot buttons, taboos, triggers that invoke another space/state
- Tomkins on sexuality as deinhibiting factor for affects
- Borders and affect of shame

- Excerpts about transgression and borders from interviews
- Sexual excitement sets up a scene - “virtual” environment for playing BDSM scenarios

3.3. Conclusions

Chapter 4 - Fantasy of seduction and affective economies in BDSM

4.1. Intensity in BDSM: sexual environment and affective exchange

- kink as intensification (there is even the term: “to kink” something)
- Foucault on s/m as intensification of pleasures, to avoid boredom. Comparison of s/m to love games, courtship
- affect as main currency in the economy of seduction
- Affects as main currency in power exchange in BDSM as well
- Foucault on power as strategical situation, metaphor of a chess desk, power is about indeterminacy of situation, power tension, power exchange is in every situation
- “Self”, power and powerlessness, and connected discomforts of shame
- Tomkins on shame, shame as a barrier, a stumble
- Tomkins on main affective principles, or Images (to achieve positive affects, avoid negative, etc.)
- Tomkins on sexuality as deinhbiting aspect for affects
- Congelation of power hierarchies in BDSM can serve also as annihilation of power tensions (clashes of interests) which can produce uncomfortable affects in usual power situations
- Rubin on the “sexual environment” of “Catacombs”: “smoothing” interior, surfaces, cans with lubricant everywhere. I understand it as reducing the resistance of environment
- Fantasy of seduction in BDSM, and its status of either virtual, or underground - produces “lubed” environment for affective exchange
- Oscar’s interview, in BDSM he doesn’t feel shame of being ashamed
- Theodor’s interview, “social awkwardness” and BDSM as alternative
- Sensei’s interview, attraction to alternative genres (BDSM, music, drugs) for their intensity

4.2. BDSM fantasies and affective strategies

- Tomkins on affective strategies
- Tomkins on fantasizing as affective strategy
- Fantasizing as a practice of narcissistic pleasure, watching “movie” about oneself and producing positive affects
- Pleasures of watching self through the eyes of sympathetic “audience”
- Public and private fantasies (de Lauretis) and social context (gender, class, race, geography)
- H. James’s erotic narcissism (Sedgwick)
- Fantasy of seduction sets up the scene for different BDSM scenarios
- Submission and the fantasy of objectification: narcissistic pleasures of being a seducing “treasure”
- Identification with a sub woman, Oscar’s interview
- Barbie’s fantasy (from Fetlife.com) about being a geek teenager humiliated by popular mean girls – humiliation looks like erotic teasing, as a hidden erotic interest of powerful girls
- K’s interview, pleasure of submissive exhibitionism
- Woman’s “vanity” and masochism (Bartky) – to look at this within the fantasy of seduction
- Can be useful to understand how experience of submission can be pleasurable, how the fantasy of a seductive “treasure” can seduce into feminine performativity, pleasures of this fantasy
- Fantasies of power and omnipotence:
- Tomkins on the Image of Power (and omnipotent God), strategy to control affects
- Tim’s interview, superheroes
- Stephen’s interview,
- Haya’s interview
- Respect and self-image
- Alex’s comment (from conversation) on respect, on treating a sub like a dog

- Sensei's interview, fatherly figure
- Salome's interview, self-image as a parenting figure

4.3. Mask as an affective strategy in BDSM

- Riviere's "Womanliness as a masquerade": mask as a device to get rid off anxiety. Femininity as a derivative of an affective script. Fantasy of being in danger because of "castrating" the father – performance of submissive seduction as an affective strategy, strategy to feel safe
- Stephen's interview, metaphor of mask
- Salome's interview, about "tricks" when dominating
- K's interview
- Haya about being a "persona"
- Alex's comment (from conversation) about keeping the image
- Adam (from conversation and fetlife profile) about his submissiveness as taming a beast ("a lot of sperm", "predator", he needs a Mistress to control his ferity) – submissiveness as a reference to masculinity, lack of masculinity as a "mask" veiling hypermasculinity

4.4. Conclusions

Conclusion

Annotated Bibliography

Ahmed, S., *Affective Economies*. In: *Social Text*, 79 (Volume 22, Number 2), Summer 2004, pp. 117-139

Ahmed explores how emotions produce things and their borders, or “surfaces” of things. Although her analysis is of wider scale, is rather connected to the affective production of communities or nations, I will involve her conceptualizations to analyze the affective and performative aspects of “borders” (and their transgression) in bdsm.

Bartky, S. L., 1990. *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression*. New York: Routledge

Bartky works on the issue of how psychological oppression becomes a part of our subjectivity and psychic life. Her theoretical work raises from the feminist consciousness raising project. The author explores “the embodied consciousness of a feminine subject” and related aspects of “natural” feminine masochism and narcissism, shame. Mostly, I use her arguments on masochism in the overview of what has been said on bdsm, in the part on feminist “sex wars”. And I will draw on her overview of the theories of feminine masochism from Freud to Klein. Moreover, I will critically involve her consideration on the psychological construction of the feminine subject, sexual fantasies (not only behavior) as socially and historically situated, and psychological effects of sexism. Plus, I will involve some of her arguments about the illusory sense of power that women have in care-giving interactions to the analysis of my interviewees’ narratives, to show that the question of power is more complicated.

Basilire, J., 2009. *Political is Personal: Scholarly Manifestations of the Feminist Sex Wars*. In: *Michigan Feminist Studies*, vol. 22, no. 1, Fall 2008-Spring 2009, Issue title: *Politics and Performativity*

Overview and reflection on the feminist “sex wars” (including debates on s/m)
– events, political, theoretical and practical contexts, arguments, etc.

Bauer, R., 2014. *Queer BDSM Intimacies: Critical Consent and Pushing Boundaries*. Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Bauer examines dyke + queer BDSM practices through the analytical frameworks of queer and trans- studies, and the concept of heteronormativity. The latter is related to the “ideal of harmonic sex” that represents the monogamous egalitarian tender sex positioned against queer, BDSM, promiscuous and commercial sex. Bauer deconstructs this ideal and explores the

possibilities of alternative intimacies, talking to queer, lesbian and transgender BDSM practitioners. I include Bauer's work in the review on the BDSM studies. I will also draw on Bauer's insights and arguments about BDSM as an "intimate theater" with "its own specific kind of reality and social space" (p.13) (Margot Weiss uses for similar reasons the term "bracketed space" – I mention this below, in the annotation to her book). Furthermore, the author explores the issues of boundaries, boundaries transgression and intimacies (Weiss also addresses these concepts). I want to show that these fundamental for BDSM concepts are underexplored – they have been considered primarily in socio symbolical sense, while their obvious spatiality has passed as too obvious to be noticed. I want to show that spatial conceptualization of BDSM - borders transgression, intimacies, theatrical scene and dungeon, playgrounds, bracketed space and hyperreal space, experimental laboratories – have performative sense.

Benjamin, J., 1988. The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination. New York: Pantheon

Bersani, L. Foucault, Freud, Fantasy, and Power. GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies April 1995 2 (1 and 2), pp. 11-33

Bersani refers to Foucault's points on s/m as desexualization of and experimentation with pleasure, as the promise of new forms of pleasure. Moreover, he considers these claims in connection to Foucault's call for the invention of new forms of relationship. Bersani explores the connection between the modes of relationship and the modes of pleasure. I involve Bersani's linkage of forms pleasure and forms of relationship into my analysis.

Bersani, L. Is the Rectum a Grave? In: October, Vol. 43, AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism (Winter, 1987), pp. 197-222

From this text, I draw on Bersani's arguments on s/m and machismo. Answering to some claims that gay macho masculinity is rather a subversive parody, Bersani points out the seriousness of some gay machos, and argues that parody is rather turn off for sexual interaction. The same can be said about bdsm (for example, Pat Califia said elsewhere that s/m is a parody). For some of my interviewees bdsm is indeed understood rather as an alternative fun, and for some of them bdsm is perceived as fundamental and serious part of their selves. I will also draw on Bersani's considerations on the intimate relationship between oppressors and oppressed. I will use it in the analysis of my interviews, how fantasy and affects are involved in such relationship, how bdsm is situated here. As well, I found his way of thinking on sex and its "fantasmatic potential" (p. 216), the "phallicizing of the ego" (p.218), and masochistic loss of self useful for analyzing my interviews.

Butler, J., 2006 [1990]. *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge

Butler, J., 1993. *Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of "sex"*. New York: Routledge

Butler argues that “sex” is not natural but is coerced through discursive practices. I will draw on this work for the theoretical chapter, in the section on performativity. This work also informs my general theoretical framework. Moreover, through my interviewees’ narratives analysis, I will try to show how such “imposed” condition of subjectivity is used strategically (it doesn’t mean consciously) to achieve positive affects and avoid negative affects.

Butler, J., 1997. *The psychic life of power: theories in subjection*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press

Butler explores the connection of subjectivity and subjection, how subjectivity is constituted in and as hierarchical power relation. She challenges the dichotomy of psychic and political, inside/outside, and connects Foucauldian theory with psychoanalysis. This connection of psychic and wider political and social is important for my analysis of fantasies (connection of public and private), of inside and outside in bdsm. And what bdsm can help to understand about subjectivity in general. Moreover, I will try to show that my interviewees are not merely “trapped” into their gendered and sexed subjectivities but rather use them strategically (not consciously, I mean in affective sense) to achieve positive affects or avoid negative affects.

Califia, P., 1996. *Feminism and Sadoomasochism*. In: eds., Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott *Feminism and Sexuality: A Reader*. Columbia University Press

Pro-s/m view in feminist “sex wars”. I will include her arguments in the review of debates on bdsm.

Califia, P., 1994 [2000]. *Public Sex: The Culture of Radical Sex*. Cleiss Press

Califia, O., 2002. *Speaking Sex to Power: The Politics of Queer Sex*. Cleiss Press

Day, Liz. 1994. ‘Transgression’: The ‘Safe Word’ in s/m Discourses. *Mattoid*

De Lauretis, T., 1984. *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*. Indiana University Press

De Lauretis works with the issues of subjectivity (as related to men), representation (as related to women), spectatorship, etc. She explores how cinemas produces certain form of subjectivities, through structuring fantasies and desire. How narratives and “visual pleasures” “seduce women into femininity” (p. 10). For me, the developments on representation and fantasies are important here, how social becomes individual and psychic.

De Lauretis, T. Popular Culture, Public and Private Fantasies: Femininity and Fetishism in David Cronenberg's "M. Butterfly". In: Signs, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Winter, 1999), pp. 303-334

The author explores how pop culture produces “structures of cognition” (p.304), is experienced as individual, subjective, and shapes desires and subjectivities. I draw on her account of the role of fiction and entertainment in producing public fantasies that become private ones and shape subjectivities. Also, de Lauretis texts are important for my analysis, because some of my interviewees referred to their experience of bdsm as the experience of fiction. Fiction, alternative reality, fantasy appeared to be important aspects in the experience of my interviewees.

Duggan, L., Hunter, N. D., 2006. Sex Wars: Sexual Dissent and Political Culture. Routledge

Authors give a review of the processes and debates on sexual politics in US. They consider debates and cases on pornography, legal issues in connection to lgbt people, sadomasochism, reproductive rights, etc. I draw on their overview of feminist “sex wars” into the chapter on what has been said about bdsm; how s/m was situated in “sex wars”.

Féral, J., 2002. Theatricality: the Specificity of Theatrical Language. In: SubStance 98-99, pp. 94 –109

Feral developed the concept of the “theatrical cleft” to understand what constitutes theatricality. It explains the alterity, otherness of the theatrical space as being created by a spectator’s gaze. That is, a subject experiences theatricality as “belonging to a space where he has no place except as external observer” (Feral, 2002, p.105). I use Feral’s concepts to analyze how my interviewees perceive bdsm experience as a different from mundane world space, and to develop the conceptualization of the character of bdsm space.

Flam, H., Kleres, J., 2015. Methods of Exploring Emotions. Routledge

Review of contemporary methods and approaches (including queer and feminist). For my methodological chapter.

Flatley, J., 2008. *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism*. Harvard University Press

The author is concerned with the works of Henry James, Du Bois and Andrey Platonov. He argues that these authors transformed their melancholy (connected to the experience of modernity as loss) into the productive “way to be interested in the world” (p.2). I draw on his glossary where he gives clear definitions of affects and structure of feelings based on Tomkins. Moreover, the authors theorizing on affect as “attunement” to being and world (basing on Heidegger’s *Stimmung*) is useful for my research vocabulary. He claims that “to be in the world is to be in a mood” (p.5), which resonates with my attempt to connect space and affect.

Foucault, M., 1975. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. New York: Random House

In this work Foucault explores discipline as the technology of power produced in such institutions as prisons, schools, hospitals, armies, etc. He introduces the image of panopticon as a spatial model of how subjection and control is “internalized” to become a subjectivity.

I consider the model of panopticon as the phantasm under Foucauldian model of subject’s interiority. I analyze the type of space in BDSM (what phantasmatic model is under it?), how it functions on affective levels, and what it can tell about subjectivity and performativity in general.

Foucault, M., 1978. *The History of Sexuality Vol 1. An Introduction*. New York: Pantheon

In the first volume Foucault traces how the discourse on sexuality has proliferated since 18th century. He discusses the “repressive hypothesis” – the modern ubiquitous idea that sexuality has been repressed, which induces the imperative of liberating oneself. Foucault argues that, contrarily to repressive hypothesis, the discourses on sexuality has exploded, and sexuality has collapsed with the idea of hidden truth about the personality. Foucault connects this with the development of the new type of power that differs from the juridical-discursive model (the “negative” model that expresses itself as a prohibition and direct vertical power of a sovereign over subordinates). The new kind of power is productive, and is rather horizontal, is ubiquitous and infuses society as capillaries, governs population through knowledge, norms, normative practices and institutions. I draw on Foucault’s theory of power and subjectivity as the fundament of my theoretical framework. For the definition of power. I will also involve the concept of repressive hypothesis to trace how it is affectively experienced, what performances it motivates, and what spaces it invokes. I need this text also to articulate the connection of pleasure and power in affective sense.

Foucault, M., 1996. Foucault Live. Collected Interviews, 1961–1984. Ed. Sylvère Lotringer. New York: Semiotext(e)

I draw on a few interviews from this book - where Foucault talks on s/m and where he makes clear his concept of power as strategic struggle. These interviews are: “Sade: Sergeant of Sex” (difference between Nazism and sadism); “Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity” (s/m as a “creative enterprise”, power as “strategic relations”); “Problematics” (difference between power and domination); “Sexual Choice, Sexual Act” (s/m as intensifying pleasure, replaced medieval courtship); “Ethics of the Concern for Self” (a subject as a “form” for setting “a different type of relationship to oneself”). I include his views in s/m into the chapter with overview of what has been said on bdsm, as well as in connection to the analysis of my interviews. His model of power as a strategic game in connection to affects. What affects my interviewees try to achieve or avoid and what power games it involves. How it looks in spatial sense.

France, M., Sadomasochism and Feminism. In: Feminist Review, No. 16 (Summer, 1984), pp. 35-42

For the review of arguments on s/m in feminist “sex wars”.

Gregg, M., Seigworth G. J., (eds.), 2010. The Affect Theory Reader. Duke University Press

The book is the collection of essays that focus on affective aspects with regard to social issues. The representation of different theories of affect in humanities. I include it into the theoretical chapter, into the overview of affective turn in humanities, and to justify my research – to point out that there has been no works on bdsm from the affects perspective.

Hart, L., 1998. Between the Body and the Flesh: Performing sadomasochism. New York: Columbia University Press

Hopkins, P. D. 1994. 'Rethinking Sadomasochism: Feminism, Interpretation, and Simulation. In: Hypatia 9 (1), pp. 116–41

Hopkins reflects on the feminist debates on s/m, and points out that radical feminist arguments against s/m make a mistake claiming that s/m replicates patriarchal oppression. Instead, Hopkin introduces the concept of simulation, not replication, which changes the perspective on s/m.

I include this work into the overview of debates and perspectives on bdsm. Moreover, I will involve such conceptualization in connection to my interviewees' narratives (relation of bdsm experience with fiction, movies, etc).

Irvine, J. M., 2016. *Mapping the Walk of Shame: Incorporating Emotions into Concepts and Methods*. In: *Social Currents*, Vol. 3 (3), pp. 207-216

The article explores the possibility of extending methodological approach of cognitive mapping with the dimensions of affects. The author studies the experience of the “walk of shame” (morning walk home after casual sex) by female students. Irvine uses the method of affective mapping. This method helps to document affective aspects of social experiences that inescapably involve certain experience of space. Although the very naming of the phenomenon – the walk of shame - indicates control over sexuality through shaming, Irvine, with the help of affective mapping, shows that the affective flows emerging during the walk of shame are much more complex. To capture the layers of affective and spatial experiences of my interview partners.

Jackson, S., Scott, S., 1996. *Feminism and Sexuality: A Reader*. Columbia University Press

The book is a collection of essays that embrace feminist debates on sexuality from 70s to 90s. I draw on the following chapters: “Power, Pleasure, and the Sex Wars” for my chapter on the overview of debates on bdsm; Pat Califia’s “Feminism and Sadomasochism” as pro-s/m view; Sheila Jeffreys’s “Sadomasochism” as opposing, against s/m view.

Kosofsky Sedgwick, E., 2003. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Duke University Press.

The book is the collection of essays collected under the project of exploring possibilities of non-dualistic thinking. These essays are inspired by four texts: Austin’s “How to Do Things With Words”, the 1st volume of Foucault’s “The History of Sexuality”, Butler’s “Gender Trouble”, and Tomkins’ “Affect Imagery Consciousness”. All essays in the book engage with the affect theory.

In the chapter Shame, Theatricality, And Queer Performativity: Henry James’s The Art of the Novel, Sedgwick describes the affect of shame. Then she explores how it shaped Henry James’s performativity in the prefaces to his own collection of works. She introduces the shame/theatricality circuit, claiming that theatricality is the part of shame. Sedgwick shows how James’s subjectivity is formed as a relation of grown-up author to his “inner child”, charged with love and protection of more experienced self to ashamed and queer younger self (or his queer anthropomorphized stories). That is, the experience of shame produced certain interior spatiality, with reparenting script and relevant affective charge. Sedgwick looks at James’s prefaces as at the prototype of queer performativity – “a strategy for the production of meaning and being, in relation to the affect shame and to the later and related fact of stigma” (p.61). Sedgwick’s work is fundamental for my thesis in terms of her approach and conceptual framework. As an interlocutor, I situate my research within the thread on performativity described by Sedgwick.

Her approach of non-dualistic thinking and questions guide my perspective and my questions. I use Sedgwick's way of analyzing performativity. What motivates practitioners to do bdsm in affective sense? What affects and what spaces are produced? What is the character of space in bdsm? What are the effects of bdsm in the broader life of my interviewees? What it can tell about modern subjectivities? Furthermore, I draw on the way Sedgwick explains shame in spatial terms, the way she explicates how shame motivates certain performance and produces relevant to such performance relationality/spatiality. That is, affect is assembled with performance and spatiality.

Kosofsky Sedgwick E., Frank, A., 1995. Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader. Duke University Press

The book is a selection of texts from Affect Imagery Consciousness by Tomkins. It consists of the review on "what are affect, explications on each of the nine affects, and the explanation of script theory. It is one of my main theoretical sources. I draw on Tomkin's definitions of affects and script theory to analyze bdsm interaction within the bdsm scene and in wider sense, as the part of lives of my interviewees. To trace how these scripts are situated socially and what function they have in individual lives.

Kosofsky Sedgwick, E., 1990. Epistemology of the Closet. Berkeley: University of California Press

Kosofsky Sedgwick, E., Parker, A., 1995. Performativity and Performance. Routledge

In the introduction, authors trace the connection of the concepts of performativity and theatrical performance from philosophical and theatrical discourses. Authors consider "the stretch between theatrical and deconstructive meaning of performative", referring to the opposition of "the extroversion of the actor" and "the introversion of the signifier" (p.2). Authors also show that any performative act needs witnesses, invisible audience.

For my thesis, the definitions of performativity are important. Moreover, the spatiality of performance (requirement of audience), and the connection of subjectivity and theatricality. How this works in bdsm. The author's focus on the "space of uptake", the importance of the scene as well as the very act, is important for my interrogation. Also, the example of interpellated audience, witnesses with whom the performer shares "a contempt for wussiness" (p.8) is important for analyzing implicit affects structuring the scene. Focus on the space of the performance.

Langdridge, D., Richards, C., Barker, Meg John (Eds.), 2007. *Safe, Sane and Consensual Contemporary Perspectives on Sadomasochism*. Palgrave Macmillan UK

Primarily, for the overview on debates and perspectives on bdsm.

Laplanche, J., Pontalis, J. B. *Fantasy and the origins of sexuality*. In: *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Vol 49(1), 1968, pp. 1-18

The authors introduce the concept of psychic reality and locate “the origins of fantasy in the auto-erotism” (p. 17). Important for my analysis to connect fantasy, pleasure (positive affects), bdsm and subjectivity.

Linden, R. R., Pagano, D. R., Russell, D. E., Leigh Star, S., (eds.), 1982. *Against Sadomasochism: A Radical Feminist Analysis*. East Palo Alto, Calif.: *Frog in the Well*

Collection of essays on s/m from the radical feminist perspective arguing that s/m reproduces patriarchal violence. Mainly, I will draw on it for the chapter on what has been already said about bdsm.

Naples, N.A., 2003. *Feminism and Method: Ethnography, Discourse Analysis, and Activist Research*. New York: Routledge

Plant, B., 2007. ‘Playing Games/Playing Us: Foucault on Sadomasochism.’ In: *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 33 (5), pp. 531–61

Plant observes Foucault’s points on s/m, and the role of s/m in Foucault’s life and theoretical writing (as the project of a “creative self-transformation” (p.531)). He argues that Foucault’s approach to s/m is useful for understanding his theories of power relations as strategical games. It is useful for my work – first, for the review of what has been said on bdsm, and, second, for the analysis of my interviewees narratives, to trace how power relations (“power exchange”) and tension are used strategically and affectively. The strategical role of fantasies, “masks”, subjectivities, and affects in these power games.

Riviere, J. *Womanliness as a Masquerade*. In: *Burgin, Donald, Kaplan (eds.), 1986. Formations of Fantasy*. Methuen

Riviere introduces the case of her patient, whom she analyzes from psychoanalytical perspective. She concludes from the case that womanliness, or femininity is a mask, a device for a woman to avoid “punishment” from “father” and to feel safe. She considers womanliness rather as “a device for avoiding anxiety than as a primary mode of sexual enjoyment” (p.38). I involve her conceptualization and notion of masquerade (in connection to affect and

performativity theories) to analyze my interviewees narratives in terms of their “masks”, devices and scripts to avoid or achieve certain affects. Mask as a script.

Rubin, G., 2012. *The Leather Menace*. In: *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press

Rubin discusses the politics of s/m in the wider context of sexual politics and processes in US (like “moral panics”, etc.). She traces how s/m was constructed as a public threat, and how anti s/m moods were formed in women’s movement. I use this work in the review of what has been said on bdsm, in the context of feminist “sex wars”.

Rubin, G., 1991. *The Catacombs: A temple of the butthole*. In: Mark Thompson, ed., *Leatherfolk — Radical Sex, People, Politics, and Practice*. Boston, Alyson Publications

Catacombs was a famous kinky club in San-Francisco. Rubin traces the development of leather community in US. Parties were important for that process. Catacombs had a great impact on the community and the development of leather and public sex culture. Rubin describes the atmosphere in the club, there was an accent on s/m rather in terms of physical sensations and exploration. She uses the term of “sexual environment”, analyzes how it was created in the Catacombs.

Samois, 1987. *Coming To Power: Writing and Graphics on Lesbian S/M 3rd Edition*. Alyson Books

Samois was a sex-positive group of lesbians practicing s/m. The book is the collection of essays, graphics, fiction, etc. dedicated to s/m. Important to understand the pro-s/m arguments in feminist “sex wars”.

Stear, N-H., 2009. *Sadomasochism as Make-Believe*. In: *Hypatia* 24 (2), pp. 21–38.

Stear claims for the compatibility of s/m and feminism. She answers to the text of Hopkins (where he claimed the fallacy of radical feminist arguments against s/m and introduced the concept of simulation) and, in general agrees with him, but calls for the sophistication of the argument. And instead of the concept of simulation she involves the one of make-believe. Through it she argues that s/m is similar to the experience of fiction (this coincides with some of my interviewees’ accounts). If to connect to performativity theory, this conceptualization is useful for the analysis of my interviews. I will also include it into the bdsm debates overview chapter.

Stryker, S., 2008. *'Dungeon Intimacies: The Poetics of Transsexual Sadomasochism*. In: *Parallax 14 (1)*, pp. 36–47

Stryker explores the space of dungeon as “a generative space” of “the materialization of creatively grasped virtualities” (p. 38). Her focus on space and virtualities is important for my analysis of what is the structure and character of bdsm space, and how it is connected to subjectivities. Also, I will include it into the overview of what has been already said about bdsm.

Sullivan, N., 2003. *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*. Edinburgh University Press

The author traces the historical and social context of the emergence of queer theory. She gives an overview of the definitions, authors, issues and debates that constitute queer theory. I draw on this work in my theoretical chapter for an overview of theoretical framework, and how I situate my research. Moreover, I will draw: on the chapter on s/m and debates around it; the chapter on race – in particular, the issues of how public fantasies are constructed and inscribed into the individual economies of pleasure; chapter on performativity – theoretical overview, the concept of masquerade.

Thompson, M., 1991. *Leatherfolk: Radical Sex, People, Politics, and Practice*. Alyson Publications

Tomkins, Silvan S. *Affect Imagery Consciousness*. 4 vols. New York: Springer, 1962–1992

Tomkins defines affects as the main motivating force (not drives). Affects shape attention, making salient different aspects of reality, and therefore, motivating certain responses. Affects can be co-assembled with any object. Face is the primary organ of affects, not just a surface that expresses internal life, but a fundamental “device” for interaction with world. Individual affective scripts that structure our life experiences. Connection of imagery and affects. Main theoretical framework for my research. Affect theory and performativity – my main approaches to analyze motivation and affective scripts of my interviewees in connection to wider social situation.

Turley, E.L., Butt, T. *BDSM — Bondage and Discipline; Dominance and Submission; Sadism and Masochism*. In: Richards, Barker (eds.), 2015. *The Palgrave Handbook of the Psychology of Sexuality and Gender*. Palgrave

Definition of bdsm, main perspectives. How it is understood and practiced today. I will draw on this text for the explanation of the term, key aspects, and the context.

Weinberg, T. S. (ed.), 1995. *s&m: Studies in Dominance and Submission*. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus.

Weiss, M., 2011. *Techniques of Pleasure: BDSM and the Circuits of Sexuality*. Durham & London: Duke University Press

The author conducted the ethnographic research of the BDSM community in San Francisco. She considered gender, sex, race, and class dimensions of BDSM practices in relation to capitalism, nationalism, and neoliberal economies. She challenged the common discourse about BDSM as subversive culture, and showed how it is inscribed into neoliberal discourses of self-mastery and certain consumerist practices accessible only to privileged groups. That is, BDSM practices rather reproduce than subvert existing norms and power dynamics. In wider sense, the author showed how sexuality is assembled with wider economic and social circuits. I include Weiss work into my review of the studies on BDSM as a nuanced critical analysis of BDSM from feminist and queer theory perspectives. Besides, I draw on her insights regarding the affective and spatial experience of BDSM space. She provides with interview accounts that describe the choice of scenarios for plays as the process of finding the trigger or “hot buttons” (e.g., Nazi play, Master\slave play, etc.), and through this shows connection of affective with political. Furthermore, Weiss derives from the accounts of her interviewees that the space of BDSM play is experienced as a separate, safe, “bracketed” from the quotidian world space. She also cites her respondents describing BDSM exchange as “more real” than life, as “a deep, almost innate, part of themselves” (2011, p. 152) (this coincides with my first interviewee’s account that she perceives the space of play as “hyperreal”). With that, in my thesis I will try, following Sedgwick, to avoid questions within the dichotomy reproduction/subversion (that’s why I need affect theory).

Hungary’s very first Con!, 2016 [online]. Available at: <http://hunbdsm-con.eu/hunbdsm-con-2016/> [Accessed 01.12.2016]

Appendices

Examples and observations (fragments)

At one of the performances at the Budapest BDSM conference in November 2016, a Dominant woman was tickling her submissive with a sharp device. The submissive was chained to the pole on the stage, and at some point, to reach the sensitive part of his legs, the Mistress got down on her knees. Instantly, a sadist woman who were sitting next to me commented this ironically, “This is something new, Mistress on the knees”.

BDSM play involves stimulating of power hierarchies. D/s (dominant/submission) as a concept and a practice is structured along gender, class, sexuality, race, age, human/nonhuman dichotomies. With that, it is also structured with affects – the position in power relations determines and is determined by certain affective patterns. The following example shows how gender as a power differential can be experienced through and constructed by affects (within heteronormative sexist discourse). Alex, a Dominant, at one of the BDSM meetings (“munches”) in Budapest, gave an advice to a Mistress who raised the issue of confidence in D/s relationship. She told she is unconfident about dominating her male submissive, since she felt he was “not submissive enough”. Alex assumed that she feels too much respect to her submissive, since he is smart and has an authority in the community. Such respect blocks her confidence as a Dominant. Alex offered her to order to a submissive to bring for her submissive girls, to drain dominating skills on them first. He assumed that she will not feel so much respect to them and it will be easier for her to relax. That is, respect here was an indicator of class and gender, and it was a blocker for the affects appropriate for a dominant performance. The submissive did not fit to be the object of such affects as, e.g., anger or disgust, and, as was suggested, that was because of his sociosymbolic position. Whereas, more suitable objects for

such affects were automatically assumed by gender (and in intersection with class, I suggest, since the matter of respect was not only his maleness but also his status).

As mentioned above, affects are not only expressed as internal experience, but they also determine the performance, the spectacle of self – facial display, bodily activities, and involve certain verbal strategies. The submissive position often implies constant apologies, thanks and asking for the permission from the Dominant. The posture and face often display Shame-Humiliation affect: “eyes down, head down” (Tomkins, 2008). Gabor, a submissive heteroflexible male, during conversations with women rarely raised his eyes even outside of the scene. A spectacle appropriate for a Dominant involves displaying affects of anger, disappointment, disgust, or enjoy (but it differs from how enjoyment is performed by a submissive partner). Verbal formulas of a cruel Master or Mistress include scolding, humiliating, shaming, ordering, commending (a submissive can praise and panegyryze a Dominant, but commending is a Dominant’s genre, it is a performative formula uttered from “above”), etc. That is, these performative strategies are charged with certain affects and convey the positionality of the one who displays and utters them.

Alex, a Dominant, in the informal conversation at one of the munches, told that it is crucial not to allow to a submissive seeing the moments of weakness of a Dominant, since it will destroy the image, and therefore respect and trust. That is, to Alex, make-believe is a part of a Dominant’s responsibility. Even if she/he is tired or not in mood, a Dominant has to behave according to the position. As I interpreted what Alex meant, to keep power means to keep certain spectacle. Alex said that the best way to understand approach to a submissive is to get a dog. One loves and cares about her/his dog, but it is important to show the dog its place and who is an owner.

Sensei, a Dominant, who identifies himself as a mentoring, daddy figure, shared an anime episode where the D/s positionality of characters was animated through certain affect spectacle. The anime was about a young boy that had hard times trying to suppress his masochistic inclinations. However, time to time he “exploded” in seizures of pleasure, getting into trigger (painful or humiliating) situations. Once, a girl from his school found out about his “perversion”, and started to tease, humiliate, and torture him at every opportunity. The creators of the cartoon animated a boy, the submissive character, with the performance of shame affect. He was shy, with awkward smiles and careful moves, his face (to the extent anime style conveys it) rendered unconfidence (eyebrows high, blush). He constantly reiterated the shame position— face and eyes down, body position averted, as if he is scared to get into awkward situation beforehand. The dominant girl was very assertive, her eyebrows was depicted in the expression of anger, her moves were free and did not have any inhibition of doubts. This example shows that the drama of power exchange in BDSM assigns affects depending on power position. For “higher”, dominant positions in BDSM play – these are the affects of anger, disgust (e.g., humiliating a submissive with facial expression of disgust and dissmell, and talking like “you stink”, “you are a disgusting worm”, etc.), for “lower” positions, submissives – these are shame, self-contempt, fear, guilt.

Images and metaphors played in D/s scenes also reiterate binaries and invoke relevant affects. Dominant practitioners sometimes identify themselves as primal predators. Stephen, a male Dominant, straight, at one of the munches, in the mentioned conversation on the confidence in D/s relationship, shared the opinion that such questions become irrelevant when you have certain mindset - to be a Dominant means certain mindset, a mindset of a predator. When you look at potential submissives as at the sheep, it becomes of no matter whether you are confident or no, how you look, etc., a predator does not worry about this in front of its dinner. Such metaphors invoke mindsets that involve subjective positionality and affective patterns. To put

it simple, such mindset implies that a predator cannot feel shame or fear in relation to a sheep, while a sheep is not supposed to feel anger. Since BDSM usually plays and reflects on the “normal” world, I also suggest that positionality in heteronormative socio-symbolic order determines the experience and spectacle of affects in similar way. Interesting in connection to how imaginary transformation of the “others”, of the “audience” from semblances to pray helps to eliminate shame.

Barbie, a queer, a submissive, described their understanding of BDSM through the metaphor of cuisine, comparing BDSM with gastronomic culture. Instead of tastes, textures, temperatures BDSM involves power dynamics, senses, emotions, etc. Such view approaches BDSM as productive, creative phenomenon, understanding self, sexuality and body not as repressed, restricted with civilizational boundaries, but rather as a volatile and a productive site.

In a private informal conversation, Adam (a male, a submissive) shared his fantasy that sounded a bit sci-fi. In some anti/utopian society there are two races – of women and men. Women are a superior race and therefore rule the society. The society is organized along a strict vertical hierarchy. There is a queen who occupies the highest position, and her maid ladies, who torture, humiliate and control men. Men are slaves and work in favor and for the pleasure of women. Once, one of the ladies falls in love with a slave, becomes his Mistress and they organize a revolution. What is important, such sci-fi fantasies (BDSM on the remote planet or in anti/utopian society) are very popular setting for BDSM-related cartoons and comics. That is, to justify the obedience of a man to a woman, a woman has to be conceptualized as of a different kind, of a superior race.

Notes from the First Hungarian BDSM conference in Budapest

The aim of the event was “to improve the local culture of BDSM and Kink and to show the international community the city of Budapest and the local community” (Hungary’s very first

BDSM Con!, 2016). The event gathered practitioners from Hungary, Netherlands, Romania, Canada, Bulgaria, and Norway, and included workshops of different techniques (such as knife play, rope bondage, etc.), discussions and performances. Moreover, in the evening, after workshops, guests and presenters could have rest at a BDSM party and play with each other.

The swinger club, which was the venue of the conference, was located in a calm residential area with cottage type buildings. I got lost in the area, and when I finally found the right address, saw an ordinary private house that did not differ at all from its neighbors. I was about twenty minutes late. There was no sign or noise that could give a hint that there is a club in the building. Just an A4 handwritten note on the fence informed in Hungarian and English that to get inside you have to press a buzzer. I pressed it, and after the signal, the door opened. I entered the courtyard and could not find the entrance to the building for the minute or two: there were several doors and I could not see which of them the entrance is. The second door I opened was the right one. There was a small hall with a reception desk. Nobody was there. The first thing that caught my eyes was a shelf with pornographic CD-disks on the one side of the reception. I noticed sounds downstairs and went there. People were sitting and standing in front of the small stage, where the organizer was finishing a welcoming speech. It was a young man about thirty years old, in a grey jacket, Jewish kippah, and high knee horse-riding garments on his legs. After applause he invited guests to follow him to see the premises of the club.

There were three floors in the house. The first floor consisted of the mentioned reception hall, a bedroom with a cage, and a bathroom. There were other bedrooms on the second floor. I managed to see only one of them: there was a huge bed, almost the same size as the entire room, a mirror on the ceiling, and special swings for certain sex positions. The underground floor was the main area of the conference. It was divided into several spaces with different functions. The central room contained a stage with a pole, sofas in front of it, corner with an

empty counter for food, chairs and a big table. The walls were painted in dark red. The next room – smoking and bar area – was the largest, with sofas, a bar with beverages, and a shallow pool filled with water. At the back of this room, there were small cabins with little windows, and other bedroom with a huge bed and mirrors. They were intended for those who would like privacy. However, the space provided very relative privacy, since everyone could look inside through apertures. It created a voyeuristic atmosphere, which was an important part of the event, and structured the interaction between people. Besides, there were locker and shower rooms. Some presenters and guests preferred to change into kinkier outfits.

After a short tour of the club, the first workshops started. I chose to attend “How to find a play date?” held by a presenter from Netherlands who identified herself as a sadist top. The workshop was aimed to present the most effective way to look for a partner and to negotiate. We were offered to practice it straight away, at the conference, and to try to find a playmate for the forthcoming play party in the evening. The presenter distributed among the audience work sheets which we had to fill in with brief information about ourselves: nickname, where we are from, gender, sexual profile, BDSM profile (e.g., dominant, submissive, sadist, etc.). After filling forms in she asked us to introduce ourselves out loud. People in the audience were with different backgrounds. There were several experienced practitioners with definite profile and interests. For example, submissive men who are into pain or humiliation; a couple with a dominant male and a submissive female partner, where a man expressed his interest in finding another couple of submissives he could exert his control upon; a young man who identified himself as a hedonist. A few other people (mostly female) introduced themselves as exploring or beginners. Interestingly, almost all male participants presented themselves as straight, while among female ones were those who identified as lesbian and bisexual. Another interesting point, those who were certain about their “side” in BDSM, wore more symbolically explicit clothes. For instance, one submissive man was in the collar that expressed his belonging to his

Mistress. After we introduced ourselves, the presenter asked us to turn over our sheets and fill in the graphs with our preferences and interests. For example, we could write that we are interested in giving or receiving pain, in flogging, in knife play, in fear play, in age play, In bondage, etc. We were also offered to fill in the limits graph: say, no sex, no kissing, no poop & pee play, no pain, etc. While we were filling the graphs, we were discussing different practices and consulted about them with the presenter. Further, we were offered to exchange our work sheets between each other so that to see who could be a match, and sign up for certain interests if one would like to try to play later. This reminded me what I heard about 19th century dancing balls, where women wrote down the names of their partners for dance in special dance cards. What I found important in such way of negotiation, was the level of explicitness and clarity in discussing practices. For me, it felt as if the same register of communication I could meet in a restaurant, when visitors are discussing their menu and ingredients of the dishes.

After a short break, when people were mostly smoking and chatting in the smoking area, the next workshops started. I chose the workshop on rope bondage. The presenter was the man who introduced himself as a hedonist at the previous workshop. He was young-looking, in dark clothes, from Romania. He started the workshop with introducing his presentation as being mostly focused on the psychological dynamic and connection between partners in bondage play. Another presenter, a woman, volunteered to help him and to be his bottom. He started the workshop showing how to inspire bottom's trust to a top, demonstrating how a top has to perform. He approached his partner from behind, walked around her several times, very closely, touching her and looking at her passionately, then grabbed her neck from the back confidently, bent her knees from behind with his knees and stroke her down, so that they both were on the floor, she being firmly grabbed with his hands and legs. He demonstrated this technique several times and offered the audience to try it. Some people tried to do the same under his guidance. I also asked to show on me how the technique works. The presenter said

to relax, grabbed my neck and stroke me on the floor. Although the fall was fast and from the full height, there was nothing hurtful or uncomfortable. Instead, the confidence of the presenter and the suddenness of the fall created certain sense of trust to him. It slightly reminded me the feeling of trust to your doctor: you do not understand what and how they are doing, but their confidence and manipulations with your body make you give up yourself to their control.