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Seducing children?[1]

ON THE 17TH February 1999, the fashion designer Calvin Klein had planned to unveil an advertising campaign, a huge billboard in Times Square in New York, in the middle of the New York Fashion Week. The campaign was designed to promote Calvin Klein's new line of children's underwear that was to be available in stores in spring 1999 (Fig. 1–2). The new campaign for boys' and girls' underwear was developed by the company's in-house agency, CRK Advertising (Business Wire 1999). It was shot by the famous fashion photographer Mario Testino and it was, according to the company, intended to "show children smiling, laughing and just being themselves" and to "capture the same warmth and spontaneity that you find in a family snapshot" (Newman 1999).

Before the unveiling of the campaign in Times Square, however, the audience had already seen the advertisements in the newspaper *New York Post* and *Martha Stewart Living*. This was the cause for the scandal: after having seen the adverts, some members of the audience, especially psychologists, conservative groups such as the conservative American Family Association, and the then-mayor of New York Rudolph Giuliani claimed that the campaign reminded of "kiddie-porn" and "paedophile porn" (Mohr 2004:17–30). Even some advertising experts said that because the

campaign reminded of child porn, it was a "dumb business move": "[Calvin Klein] is treading in a very dangerous place […] kiddie-porn is a very real problem and to even play in the area is not appropriate" (Key 1999.).

The opponents suggested that the advertisements promoted children's sexual abuse and that the advertisements were child pornography. Thus it was claimed that these were images of seduced children. The complainers were especially scandalized by the way Mario Testino had photographed the little boy in white trunks (Fig 1). The critics blasted that this kind of "pedophile-friendly porn", which focuses in particular on the clearly outlined genitals of the little boy, was detrimental and dangerous: "Whether you like it or not, you have pedophiles in this society. Anything that could get them excited is detrimental, irresponsible and reckless" (Branson 1999). Attention was paid at the little boy's penis whereas no one said anything about the little girls even though the other girl is wearing a sports bra. Following the same logic, it could have been siad that the bra accentuated her breasts even though ideals of virginity and innocence in girls are still part of most Western cultures (Driscoll 2002).

The polemic around the advertising campaign is particularly interesting, since debates whether children are abused or not by too revealing clothing has almost entirely concentrated on little girls both in mass media and in research literature. It has been asserted, for example, that the overt presentation of girls' sexuality through "porno-chic" (McNair 2002) clothing joins commercial interests of individualism, capitalism and girl's commercial and sexual abuse seamlessly together. Revealing clothes such as G-strings and belly shirts have been associated with the display of a certain kind of sexual knowledge that has become normative for girls. This has led many feminist critics to claim that sexualized representations of girls work to disguise sexism in teaching them to police themselves with a narcissistic gaze already at adolescence. To summarize: girls are seen to be offered a limited and commodified vision of sexuality, where girls do

not have free speech or free choice. They are subject to scrutiny from a variety of ideological positions that situate them problematic and in need of adults' protective intervention (See, for example, Attwood 2006:77–94; Gill 2003:100–106; Walkerdine et.al. 2001; Brundson 2000.).[2]

Contrary to girls, boys and their clothing is framed within a discourse of free speech and choice. Even little boys are recognized as capable agents, who produce speech acts with their clothing. The anxieties that are projected on girls' bodies are overwhelmingly sexual whereas moral panics on boys have conventionally centred on crime and violence. The turmoil that the Calvin Klein advertising campaign caused is paradigmatic: it suggests a change in the way boys and their bodies are understood. Their bodies are seen as sexually vulnerable. The controversy around the campaign, which was supposed to capture the "warmth and spontaneity" of a family snapshot, caused its cancellation only one day before the campaign's designed launching day (Key 1999; Business Wire 1999; Branson 1999; Newman 1999).[3] The reason for this was the following: "The comments and reaction we have received […] raised issues we had not fully considered" (Branson 1999). Whether this is true or not can be debated–the scandal made headlines in the news and after the pulling of the campaign the sales of Calvin Klein rose considerably. At least something was achieved: maximum publicity and sales.

The whole scandal begs at least one question: what was the fuzz all about? Was it merely an outburst of concerned adults, who had become aware that the bodies of little boys are also vulnerable to sexual abuse and sexism? The answer is not obvious, not at least to someone, who has grown up in a culture where naked or semi-naked girls and boys have been rather a banal sight. And yet, also the outrage is banal, ordinary, expected. More to the point: the controversy that the Calvin Klein advertising campaign caused is by no means unique. These kinds of responses and accusations are more or less the norm when it comes to children's representations and to

advertising particularly (Kalha and Angelides in this issue). The reception of the campaign was generic, and as such, it represents something more general about the meaning production process. The idea of abuse seems to emerge whenever children are represented in the advertising context.

The aim of the article is to trace, in the Foucaultian sense, the genealogy (Foucault 1984:76–100) of the argument which interprets these kinds of representations as a form of child abuse. How has this discourse been constituted? And more importantly, what is its context? If the campaign is situated in the continuum of the company's previous campaigns, it seems doubtful that the company wouldn't have thought about the possibility of causing strong reactions with the campaign. The company's advertising history builds on a movement from scandal to another; and quite often the accusation seems to have been that the company advocates children' abuse. I will open up space for discussing the question of modern representations of innocent and sexualized children, and what kind of part clothing plays in this process. I focus especially on the reactions that the combination of childhood, clothing, sexuality, and advertising produced in the United States. In order to be able to answer this question, I have looked at the cultural and theoretical atmosphere of the America in 1970s and 1980s, which was becoming more interested in children's treatment in the society. I will show that the genealogy of the child abuse -argument goes all the way back to Sigmund Freud's ideas about children's sexuality, and especially to his seduction theory, which is the "quintessential technology of the child" (Castañeda 2002:156).

However, even though the concerned reactions produced by Calvin Klein advertising campaign travel back to Freud, it is not actually the theory that Freud had presented, which was being discussed in the 1970s and 1980s United States. Rather, it was a reading of Freud, which was taken up at a time best defined as a moment of heightened awareness of children's well being. The re-reading of Freud has contributed to the production of a

ready-made interpretation, which can be used when encountering representations of children. The argument of this article is that the child abuse and kiddy porn -arguments build on an implicit theory of childhood, that of childhood innocence. In the 1980s, it was a counter reaction to the discourse of sexual liberation of the 1960s and 1970s. The concerned argumentation situates sexuality outside children. It also posits adults and adult culture as that which introduces sexuality to children in the form of seductive abuse. This is, of course, everything but that for which Freud has become known for.

Calvin Klein as the child abuser

Clothing carries valuable symbolic information about children and in this sense it is a form of nonverbal communication. Colours, materials, and style suggest meanings: a colour such as white conveys purity (Gage 1999). It is thus no wonder that underwear is often white. Further, white has specific meanings for childhood. Historically, it has been seen as children's colour, representing the purity of the child's body and soul (Higonnet & Albinson 1997:119–144). Children's clothes are also influenced greatly by age and clothes or elements of clothes considered to be sexual are not regarded as part of children's wardrobe. On the contrary, children's innocence has been constructed by certain way of posing and by loose and demure clothes since the inventor of childhood innocence, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762/1989). He explains in his classical treatise on modern education, *Émile* that childhood is a natural, innocent and separate state of being, and that children should be treated and clothed as naturally as possible. He (ibid:100) also advises that children should be dressed in simple, light, and loose clothing and that they should be taken outdoors whenever possible:

> The limbs of a growing child should be free to move easily in his

> clothing; nothing should cramp their growth or movement; there should be nothing tight, nothing fitting closely to the body, no belts of any kind. The French style of dress, uncomfortable and unhealthy for a man, is especially bad for children. […] The best plan is to keep children in frocks as long as possible and then to provide them with loose clothing, without trying to define the shape which is only another way of deforming it. Their defects of body and mind may all be traced to the same source, the desire to make men of them before their time.

Indeed, we find the idea of "deforming" and "maturing" children with wrong kind of clothing already in Rousseau. After *Émile*, the ideology of childhood innocence became visible in painting, popular imagery, and clothes. Children received a visual and material morphology of their own as childlike representations and children's clothes started to appear (Higonnet and Albinson 1997:129). During the 19th century, this way of representing and clothing children as opposite to adults became a norm that still lives with us. Innocence as it was represented and materialized in images and clothing became the defining sign of childhood. What became considered as natural or unnatural for children became also related to ideologies of gender and asexuality in dress.

Calvin Klein's advertising campaigns seem to have challenged the acceptable connotations of acceptability throughout the company's history. Looking at Calvin Klein advertising campaigns one soon sees that the corporation has built its fame as a cutting-edge taboo-braking advertiser. This has been often too much to handle for the American audience.

For example, in 1980, the American actress and model Brooke Shields posed in a Calvin Klein jeans advert. In it Shields, who had already appeared as a child prostitute at the age of 12 in Louise Malle's film *Pretty Baby* in 1978 and in Randal Kleiser's depiction of nubile love at the age of

14 in the film *The Blue Lagoon* in 1980, caused trouble by her line "Do you wanna know what comes between me and my Calvins? Nothing." Another scandal happened in 1992, when the young actor Mark Wahlberg aka Marky Mark posed for Calvin Klein men's underwear advertisement photographed by Herb Ritts. In the TV commercial, Wahlberg is represented hugging his groin shamelessly, talking about not being a virgin anymore even though his mother thinks otherwise, and showing off his athletic and muscular body. This advertisement, closely after other Klein advertisements representing handsome men in their underpants, also raised the issue of Marky Mark / Calvin Klein displaying and celebrating Wahlberg's penis too openly and producing too openly homosexual interpretations about the adverts (Bordo 1999).

During the 1990s Klein's advertising campaigns were almost always a spectacle. For example, the campaign for men's perfume *Obsession for Men* in 1994 represented the new face of fashion: Kate Moss. In the print advertisements Moss, aged 19, was depicted lying naked on a sofa, eating her fingernails, and looking vulnerable and adolescent. Moss was depicted as a "waif" and her childish look was the starting point for both "heroin-chic" (Arnold 1999:279–296) and adult's "kinderwhore-look" of the 1990s (Barnard 1996:145–148). This time around, Klein was accused for promoting objectification of children and paedophilia even though Moss was not under-age. Her look was enough, which indicates how fragile the boundary between adolescent look and adult sexuality is.

Finally, in 1995, Calvin Klein's reputation as the audacious and cutting-edge advertiser gained its peak when he publicized a jeans-ad campaign, photographed and filmed by the famous photographer Steven Meisel. The campaign drew its inspiration from the 1970s soft porn movies and featured models in sexually suggesting poses and situations. The campaign featured videos and stills which set up to resemble screen tests for low-budget skin flicks. Young men and women were represented standing in front of

cheap wood panelling, the kind one might find in the recreational room of an 8mm director wannabe. In the TV commercials, an unseen older adult is kind of interviewing the teens, asking them provocative questions, and making suggestive comments about their physiques. According to the critics of the campaign, it represented and promoted child pornography or "kiddie-porn" as it was labelled. Unlike the previous campaigns and like the campaign from 1999, this was banned shortly after it had been aired on TV and printed in magazines such as *The Rolling Stone* and the *New Yorker* (Tucker 1998:141–157.).

Looking at these campaigns, it is safe to say that the reading of the 1999 children's underwear campaign builds up upon or draws from the previous campaigns. They function as a backcloth for any CK campaign: they have educated the audience to react in a certain manner whenever "Calvin Klein" is mentioned.[4] This ready-made interpretation is such that clashes strongly with the hegemonic interpretation of children as innocent, as those who are supposedly outside sexuality. This is where I will turn now: to the underlying theory of childhood as innocence, which the controversy implies. This is the theory which dates back to 1896, to that time, when not only most of the modern adult sexual categories–the lesbian, the homosexual, and the heterosexual–were created (Foucault 1976/1990), but when also the "masturbating child" had become a "problem" that needed to be resolved (Sedgwick 1991:818–837; Laqueur 2003). Thus, this was time, when children's sexuality also became an intensive object of analysis. The major contribution comes from Sigmund Freud, and it was a kind of by-product of his first systematic theory of the aetiology of neuroses. It was the foundational landmark in the development of psychoanalytic theory, where Freud transformed Josef Breuer's "talking cure" of hysteria by marrying it with Jean-Martin Charcot's views on traumatic hysteria and his own elaborate technique for reconstructing repressed memories through interpretation and free-association (Schimek:1986, 937). Freud presented his own theory

in the form of "seduction theory" in three succeeding articles in 1896 (Freud 1896a/1981:143–156, 1896b/1981:157–185, 1896c/1981:189–221).

Seduction theory

Freud introduced the most thorough presentation of the theory of seduction in the last article of the three, in "The Aetiology of Hysteria" (Freud 1896c/1981:189–221). He presented it at the Vienna Society for Psychiatry and Neurology, and was very poorly received (Schimek 1987, 940). In the article, Freud sketches a new view on hysterical symptoms and argues that the symptoms are the symbolic reproduction of past traumatic experiences in the child's early life (Freud 1896c/1981:192–193). What Freud suggested is that the hysterical symptoms could be resolved if, "starting from them, we are able to find the path back to the memory of a traumatic experience" (Freud 1896c/1981:195). Freud describes how he was on a look for a new technique with which to go back to the traumatic experience and resolve it. He first tells that he believed to have found the technique, in which he put pressure with his hands on the patient's forehead in order for the patient to overcome resistance in producing the required memories. Soon the patients start talking and Freud is able to select associative threads and sexual experiences. Freud writes that they all date from the patient's puberty (Schimek 1987:941). He explains that the original trauma was thus revealed, and it always seemed to be situated in the field of the sexual. Freud writes: "Eventually, then, after the chains of memories have converged, we come to the field of sexuality and to a small number of experiences which occur for the most part at the same period of life–namely, at puberty" (Freud 1896c/1981:200).

Soon after the discovery of the new technique Freud starts doubting and expresses his disappointment. He tells that he has realized that the symptoms that his patients had presented to him had only one thing in common: the fact that they were all sexual in nature. Other than that, he

noticed, the experiences that were the cause of the neurotic symptom, were "different from each other both in *kind* and in *importance*", ranging from a scene of attempted rape to stroking of a hand (Freud 1896c/1981:200). This discrepancy led Freud to conclude that he had failed in finding a technique and a uniform category of clear traumas from where the neurosis could be derived (Schimek 1987:941).

The disappointment led Freud to revise his theory. Soon he argued that there must be an even earlier sexual trauma, whose unconscious memory can account for the pathogenic effect of these hysterical symptoms of later years. Freud (1896c/1981:203) writes: "I […] put forward the thesis that at the bottom of every case of hysteria, there are one or more occurrences of premature sexual experiences, occurrences which belong to the earliest years of childhood". Freud's search thus goes towards an even more remote past. This search ends with the patient's reproduction of a particular sexual event: a sexual assault or seduction by an older person always involving bodily or genital contact. This event, Freud argues, had always happened in early childhood, "roughly between the ages of two and five, and never later than the age of eight" (Freud 1896c/1981:212).

Freud bases these findings on 18 cases. He divides them into general groups according to the origin of the sexual stimulation. The first group consists of an isolated assault by stranger with no question of the child's consent. The second, much larger group involves sexual relationships with an adult caretaker, which has lasted over several years. The third group, which is the largest, includes incestuous relations between siblings, generally between a girl and her older brother (Freud 1896c/1981:208.). These events also vary greatly in kind, in importance and in traumatic force. In fact, the only thing that they have in common is sexual behaviour between a child and an older person, the seducer (Schimek 1987:949–950).

Who are then the seducers? Nursery maids, tutors, governesses, and "all too often a close relative"[5] (Freud 1896/197981:164, 208). Even though

Freud had revised the theory, found different categories for the seduced and the seducers, he was still not happy. He wrote about his frustration in a letter to his colleague Wilhelm Fliess explaining his frustration (Freud 1892–1897/1966):

> I no longer believe in my neurotica. [because of t]he continual disappointment in my efforts to bring any analysis to a real conclusion [and because of] the surprise that in all cases, the father, not excluding my own, had to be accused of being perverse […].

Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis (1968:1–18) have clarified where Freud's frustration came from: he could not describe the early seduction scene where the child is subjected to a sexual approach by adult as traumatic, because his conception of the child was based on the post-Enlightenment thinking of childhood innocence. Since Freud was constricted by this presumption he could not describe the early childhood seduction scene as sexual from the point of view of the child, but only from the point of view of the adult. The problem was that the child did not have tools for conceptualizing, understanding, and interpreting the reaction that had occurred. Thus, the child is, according to Freud, 'pre-sexually sexual'" (Laplanche & Pontalis 1968:4.).

Contrary to this, the second seduction scene Freud describes happens in puberty. These seductions, according to Freud, are even less traumatic. The only power of this event lies in its ability to evoke the first event, retroactively, by means of association, which sets off the pathological defence (Laplanche & Pontalis 1968:4). The whole idea of seduction presents a contradiction. On one hand, it suggests that sexuality literally breaks in to the pre-pubescent child from the outside. The adult sexuality intrudes forcibly into the world of childhood, presumed to be innocent, where it is encapsulated as a simple happening without provoking defence reaction.

On the other hand, in the second scene of seduction, the pressure of puberty, when sexuality has awakened, there is a sense of un-pleasure, but the origin of this feeling is not in the present but it is in the recollection of the first event, an external event, which nevertheless has become an inner event, which now breaks out from within the subject.[6] What Freud realized soon after he had published the seduction theory was that the theory about pre-sexually sexual child was wrong. This led him "abandon" the seduction theory in favour of universal infantile sexuality, fantasy, and Oedipus complex (Laplanche & Pontalis 1968:6). In 1933 Freud (120) writes:

> I came to understand that hysterical symptoms are derived from fantasies and not from real occurrences. It was only later that I was able to recognize in this fantasy of being seduced by the father the expression of the typical Oedipus complex […].

Freud travels to America

Freud's psychoanalytical theory became part of the American "therapeutic culture" after 1909, when he had introduced it to the American audience at the Clark University (Cushman, 1995). When the Freudian psychoanalysis reached America, however, it became medicalised and subsequently, with the triumph of medicalization, theoretically banalised (Fisher 2009:98–100). The psychoanalytical practice was harnessed to consumerism and the concern about carrying on a successful practice overtook the commitment to the subversive aspects of psychoanalytic forms of thinking.

Even though Freud's thinking was well known in America, the same was not with his seduction theory. In the cultural ambience of medicalised psychoanalysis, it was only rediscovered and reinterpreted in the 1970s and 1980s, when mainly feminists and child protection advocates became more concerned about the sexual abuse of especially female children. The con-

text of the re-emergence of Freud's theory was sexual revolution, to which the sexual child had been the symbol of political freedom and the source of liberatory becomings (Bray 2008:177). For the sexual revolution, the figure of the sexual child was an imaginary figure loaded with hope for the less sexually oppressive future. One of the cornerstones and main examples of this hope was the radio discussion by Michel Foucault, Jean Danet, and Guy Hocquenghem from 1978, transcribed as "Sexual Morality and the Law" in a reader on Foucault (1988:271–285). In it, Foucault, Danet and Hocquenghem contemplate the possibility of abolishing age of consent laws in France. The discussants denounce the increasing psychiatrisation of society and the introduction of a social control over sexuality.[7] In the discussion Foucault argues that the problem is the decency/indecency paradigm, which has been defined by legal system, medicine and psychiatry since the 19th century. This system has not been able to punish the offences, the offensive acts–rather; it has worked to punish individuals, whose sexuality has been considered to pose a threat to a part of population regarded as particularly vulnerable: children (Foucault 1978/1988:276.). The discussants claim that the discourse of vulnerability has produced the adult as threat to children. In the discussion, Foucault (1978/1988:277) argues against seduction theory, stating the following:

> It could be argued that the child, with his own sexuality, may have desired the adult, he may even have consented, he may even have made the first moves. We may even agree that it was he who seduced the adult; but we specialists with our psychological knowledge know perfectly well that even the seducing child runs a risk, in every case, of being damaged and traumatized by the fact that he or she had sexual dealings with an adult. Consequently, the child must be protected from his own desires, even when his desires orientate him towards an adult.

All the discussants agree that this kind of discourse, which positions adults and children in opposite worlds, is productive of the category of the pervert or the monster, a new type of criminal, whose "aim in life is to practice sex with children" (Hocquenghem in Foucault 1978/1988:277). The solution that the discussants propose is that in order to liberate desire from the tyranny of the oppressive morality, the sexual boundaries between adults and children must be dissolved.

But these men were not alone with their ideas. Some radical pro-sex feminists, for example Gayle Rubin, argued similarly. In her article "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," Rubin (1984:267–293) proposes that sex is used as a means for implementing repression and creating dominance in Western societies. She calls for a "pluralistic sexual ethics" and for a "democratic morality", which should "judge sexual acts by the way partners treat one another, the level of mutual consideration, the presence or absence of coercion, and the quantity and quality of the pleasure they provide" (Rubin 1984:283). Rubin's concern is, like Foucault's, that certain sexual categories are repressed unfairly. Among these categories she finds fetishism, sadism, masochism, transsexuality, transvestism, exhibitionism, voyeurism, promiscuous homosexuality, commercial sex and paedophilia (Rubin 1984:280–281, 293). One of Rubin's arguments is that especially "cross-generational sex" is considered to be the "lowliest category in the hierarchy of sex". In short: for Foucault, Danet, Hocquenghem and Rubin the child functions as a theoretical resource for imagining sexuality freed from oppression (Castañeda 2002:47).

Assault on truth: re-reading Freud

Feminists and authors with feminist sympathies soon criticized these suggestions. One of the most cited and loudest group were radical feminists, who argued that patriarchal culture abused women and children. Their energy concentrated especially on the debate on the abusiveness of por-

nographic representations of women. Radical feminists such as Andrea Dworkin, Susan Brownmiller, Alice Miller and Catharine MacKinnon argued that pornography is harmful to women. They also constituted the view that there is a strong causality between pornographic images and violence against women (Brownmiller 1976; Dworkin 1979; Miller 1984; Dworkin & MacKinnon 1985; MacKinnon 1993). These so-called "anti-porn feminists" argued that pornographic representations not only represented women's abuse. They argued that they are abuse and therefore harmful to women, and therefore to be banned.

Thus, it was in this context of post-sexual-revolution and the so-called feminist sex wars (Duggan & Hunter 1995), when Freud's seduction theory was taken out of naphthalene and re-read and re-interpreted as a defence against the libertarian politics of the 1960s and 1970s. It was interpreted in a purpose-oriented manner and read through the increasing attention to child sexual abuse (Izenberg 1991:25–43). The theory itself, but also Freud's famous "abandonment" of the theory was read as solid evidence of the extent of children's sexual abuse in the patriarchal order. It was approved of as the official narrative, even though other theorists had argued that Freud did not abandon the theory, but rather revised it gradually, changing the position of the father and giving more room for fantasy and the Oedipus complex (Laplanche and Pontalis 1968:1–18; Laplanche 1989.).

One of the most influential re-readers was the former psychoanalyst Jeffrey Masson–who was, by the way, engaged to Katherine MacKinnon for some time–whose ideas about the seduction theory were made known to the wider American public in his best-selling book *The Assault on Truth* (1984). In it Masson directs his attention at the statement of 1933, where Freud (1933/1974:120) had stated that his patients' seductions were not real but rather fantasies stemming from the Oedipus complex:

> In the period in which the main interest was directed to discovering infantile sexual traumas, almost all my women patients told me that they had been seduced by their father. I was driven to recognize in the end that these reports were untrue and so came to understand that hysterical symptoms are derived from phantasies and not from real occurrences. I was only later able to recognize in this phantasy of being seduced by the father the expression of the typical Oedipus complex in women.

Masson took Freud's statement literally, as his way of succumbing to the prevailing medical discourse. Although most commentators expressed reservations about Masson's view that Freud's reinterpreting his patients' reports of childhood sexual molestation as fantasies indicated a failure of nerve on Freud's part (Masson 1984:xxviii, 190), the book and its claims became highly influential in America. Masson's argument builds on a speculation about the reasons why Freud had changed his mind and abandoned the seduction theory. He reads Freud against the ambiance of his own time, and concludes that women, who had been sexually abused in childhood, came to Freud, conquered their feelings of shame and told Freud what had happened to them. Masson sees that Freud published his patients' stories because he was "chocked", but changed his mind because he was badly received by his colleagues in the medical establishment (Masson 1984:135–137; see also Rush 1977, 1980; Herman 1981).

What Masson did was that he disconnected the theory of seduction from Freud, politicized it and harnessed it to advocate purpose-oriented ideas about sexual violence against children. His speculation transformed the seduction theory into a theory about child abuse that had very little to do with Freud's original ideas (Israëlis & Schatzman 1993:23).[8] Masson's ideas had a good breeding ground in the American cultural atmosphere, which had already learned about Foucault's ideas about liberating the

child–adult-sex, and which had also been introduced to history of childhood as abuse by influential psychohistorian Lloyd DeMause through his book *The History of Childhood* (1976). Other voices accompanied: for example paediatricians Henry Kempe and Ray Helfer argued that contemporary practices towards children were abusive even though the social attitudes towards children had become more alert and caring (Kempe et.al. 1962/1985:143–154; Helfer, Kempe & Krugman 1968/1997; Jenks 1996:90–93).

To summarize: discussion about children and their maltreatment flourished–sociologist Chris Jenks (1996:94–95) has rightly remarked that the discourse of child abuse was politicized in the 1980s. The two primary agencies in this politicization were women's movement and the child protection movement. Both groups were highly influential in instigating change in relation to public awareness and professional practice on children. Children's abuse was identified as part of the continuum of male violence and seen as an instance of the patriarchal maintenance of social relations. Psychiatrists Judith Herman and Lisa Hirschman argued, for example, that seduction of daughters is an abuse which is "inherent in a father-dominated family system" (Herman & Hirschman 1977:741; see also Herman & Hirschman 1981). They believed that the greater the degree of male supremacy in a culture, the greater the likelihood of father-daughter incest. Child abuse became seen as rape and the solution was to undo the patriarchal adult (male) order, which was seen as the cause of both women's and children's abuse.

Protecting or controlling children – Or, what would Freud say?

The context of the Calvin Klein advertising campaign and the reception of it is in the heightened debate on children's position in adult culture in general and on children's sexuality in particular. The roots of the debate

around the ad campaign are especially in that discourse, which wants to free children from adult oppression, especially from adult sexuality. The debate has two opposing discourses. The first suggests that children's sexuality should be celebrated, not repressed, and boundaries between children and adults should be dissolved. The latter opposes and argues that to celebrate children's sexuality in this manner is not the civilized future, because it is the uninterrupted past and present. The latter also suggests that celebration of child–adult-sex excludes interventions into a continuing history of children's sexual oppression and that the truly transformative future would be to free children from the economy of adult sexual desire and adult sexual demands (Alcoff 1996:133). The first discourse proposes that controlling images does not free children but merely subjects them to new forms of control, whereas the latter sees a continuum between children's abuse and representations. It was the second discourse that gained visibility in the debate in the Calvin Klein ad campaign resulting in the withdrawal of the advertisements from the public.

If we look closely how Freud's seduction theory was re-interpreted during the 1970s and 1980s and how it became the hegemonic interpretation of images representing children, it is obvious, that the reactions against the Calvin Klein campaign have little to do with that seduction theory which Freud presented in 1896. Rather, it has more to do with the revised versions of it, where Freud stresses the role of the fantasy. It was this theory that was taken up and misread in the American culture. As we know, it ends up in a situation where representations of children are read through realism, which in turn ends up negating the fantasy aspect of images. Thus, the political climate of the 1980s America produced this interpretation in its search for an answer to children's sexual abuse. This is the context, which generated the popular ready-made interpretation of children's representations. It gave rise to the interpretational repertoire where we can draw from, whenever we encounter (disturbing) visual re-

presentations of children. The mis-reading of Freud had many consequences and one of them is representational realism: it reads Freud's text as authentic evidence and in the same manner it reads other representations. The gliding from representation to reality thus constructs the representation–both Freud's representations and visual representations–as injurious, dangerous and harmful. The conclusion is to protect the child from the harmful adult and to censor injurious images, because they are violent, and the represented object, the child, is the victim. The child-protecting and image-censoring argument implies that there is no other way of reading representations. This transforms the representation to that moment, which reproduces the real thing: real sexual abuse of children.

However, I would like to end my article in a discussion that gives a more positive view on Freud's seduction theory and on the images of Calvin Klein–and any images of children, for that matter. I would therefore like to end at a discussion on fantasy, which also Freud developed in changing his view about seduction.

Fantasizing childhood

Freud's first revision of seduction theory was "The Three Essays On the Theory of Sexuality" (1904–1905/1974), where he presented his theory of children's innate sexuality and argued that seduction was not the key element in arousing the children's sexual life. He argues that the child is autoerotic and sexuality occurs spontaneously as part of the biological maturation of infantile sexuality (1904–1905/1974, 190–191). In 1906 Freud (1906/1962:274) further explains that "'the traumatic' element in the sexual experiences of childhood lost its importance [and] infantile sexual activity […] prescribes the direction that will be taken by later sexual life after maturity. Now he sees that seductions in childhood happen both to people who remain normal and to those who become neurotics. In 1914, Freud finally claims that he had been "misled" by the statements by his patients, in

which they had described that they had been seduced in childhood (Freud 1914/1962:17). And in 1925 he places the father as the centre of seduction for the first time (Freud 1925/1962:34). But, he does not do this in a way that the father would be the actual seducer. Rather, he connects seduction to Oedipus complex and states that the patients reproduced fantasy scenes of seduction under the pressure of his technical procedure. He wonders whether he may have in fact forced these scenes upon his patients. And, then in 1933 he finally comes to the conclusion that the seduction scenes were wishful fantasies in the process of the Oedipal complex.

It was exactly this last statement that was thought to crystallize the seduction theory in the interpretation of for example Masson. Many of his critics have shown, that it is a version that has never existed (Cioffi 1984; Schimek 1987; Israëlis & Schatzman 1993). If we look at Freud's theory of seduction as changing gradually, it is possible to find a more positive view on seduction–one that does not position children's representations as effective performatives, which have the power to enact that what they name. This view is presented by Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis in the article "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality" (1968:1–18). They show that it is not really seduction but fantasy that is the origin of psychoanalysis (Laplanche & Pontalis 1968:7).

The authors distinguish three original fantasies, "original" in the sense that they are bound up with the individual's history and origins: "Like myths, they claim to provide a representation of, and a solution to, the major enigmas which confront the child. Whatever appears to the subject as something needing an explanation or theory is dramatized as a moment of emergence, the beginning of history" (Laplanche & Pontalis 1968:11). The original fantasy is first and foremost a fantasy: "It lies beyond the history of the subject but nevertheless in history: a kind of language and symbolic sequence, but loaded with elements of imagination […]" (Laplanche and Pontalis 1968:10.). What are the three fantasies of origins?

The primal scene, which pictures the origin of the individual. Fantasies of seduction, which fantasizes the origin and upsurge of sexuality. Fantasies of castration which imagine sexual difference (Laplanche & Pontalis 1968:11.). These fantasies are original, but not in the sense that they would always cause the given scenario. They are original in the sense that they form the structure of fantasy which is activated in a variety of ways in the individual's life.

These three characteristics of Freudian fantasy as read by Laplanche and Pontalis are crucial for an understanding of images, such as the Calvin Klein advertising campaign, as fantasy. This aspect of popular culture has been analysed by the Italian film theorist Teresa de Lauretis–for the first time already at the time of the sex-wars and mis-readings of Freud in the 1980s (de Lauretis 1984). Drawing from Freud, de Lauretis argues that "fantasy is a fundamental human activity based on the capacity of imagining and imaging; for making images in one's mind (imagining) and making images in material expressions (imaging) by various technical means" (De Lauretis 2007:122). De Lauretis has explained eloquently how psychoanalytic theory understands fantasy as a creative activity, which animates the imagination and also creates imaginary scenes. Freud designates the imaginary scenes and the activity of fantasizing, the psychic mechanism that brings about the imaginary scenes. These, Freud notes in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, are often conscious but often "remain unconscious on account of their content and of their origin of repressed material" (Freud 1900/1974:492).

Film theory, on the other hand, has theorized the ways in which our capacity to fantasize is intensely stimulated in watching films. The same goes with fashion advertising, I argue, since they also engage the spectator's desire and identification in the represented scenarios, they move the spectator, binding fantasy to the image. This particular advertising campaign, the previous advertising campaigns of Calvin Klein, and the surrounding

cultural images of children constructed a narrative space of sexual childhood that confronted the other, it may be argued, hegemonic fantasy of childhood: that of the pure, asexual, and innocent child.

Fantasy of the bulging penis

Child abuse is real, but it is equally a device for constituting reality. A gaze, which pays attention to a fragment such as the "bulging penis" of the little boy, is performing certain kind of looking, one that produces the picture as a representation of a bulging penis. This kind of gazing, which I would like to call an un-reflected presuming, relies heavily upon representational realism which in turn draws from the distorted reading of Freud's seduction theory. It conflates representations of children with real children and thus constructs the representation as a real act–in this case as "kiddie-porn" and as "paedophilia".

The case of Calvin Klein represents the process where certain kinds of interpretations have become axiomatic, unquestioned, and factual. It exemplifies how pictures of children in general become mixed with real children. Thirdly, the case reveals that both in theory and in practice the figure of the sexual child is gender-blind. In the Calvin Klein advertising campaign, for example, the attention was directed at the little boy and his "bulging penis". The reactions reveal the double standard when it comes to boys and girls. It indicates that to be a body with a sex is fine for girls–as I said at the beginning, no one said anything about the little girls in the ads–all attention was targeted at the little boys. In fact, Susan Bordo (1999) and Valerie Walkerdine (1997) have explained that we expect girls, like adult women, to be sexual and embodied. Both argue that the same does not apply to boys: little boys, like men, are not supposed to be guided by the rhythms of bodily cycles nor are they supposed to have a sexed body, which limits and influences them. In her book, *The Male Body* (1999:19) Bordo claims:

> [M]en just keep those pants on […], identifying completely with the products of their intellect and treating the penis […] as an unfortunate by-product of cultural evolution.

In the case of Calvin Klein the turmoil was thus about the penis and how it signifies, when accentuated, wrong kind of boyhood, but also wrong kind of maleness: a sexualized maleness, which always hints to homosexuality. The fact that the briefs were miniature copies of adult male briefs merely accentuates this. The furore is a defence reaction against the blurring of boundaries between boyhood and maleness–especially since the company has always celebrated and visualized the male body and gained a firm, loving, and buying gay clientele for this reason (Sender 2004). To attach male sexuality, with a hint of adult non-heterosexual sexuality to the body of the little boy, supposedly innocent and not-yet-sexual, is a double offence. This advertisement did not only cross the line between childhood innocence and adult sexuality. It suggested male sexuality in general and queer-sexuality in particular.

The non-reactions about the girls, on the other hand, indicate something entirely different. Linda Alcoff (1996:116) argues in her article "Dangerous Pleasures: Foucault and the Politics of Pedophilia" that contrary to what Foucault and Gayle Rubin following Foucault claim, girls have been the sexualized object throughout history. She even goes on to say that the sexual girl is the subject of approving cultural representations and typifies one of the normative fantasy scenarios. Laplanche and Pontalis (1968:14) agree: the seduction scene, where the father seduces the daughter, might "perhaps be the summarized version of the seduction fantasy". In the end, the reactions around the Calvin Klein advertising campaign reveal that the norms are different for boys and girls. The innocent child body is a body of a boy. This is the body that needs to be protected. When the protesters used gender-neutral concepts of "child" and "childhood", they not

only constructed the advertisement as injurious, they also masked the gender specificity of childhood.

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NOTES

1 I would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on a previous draft of this article.

2 There are also contra-arguments: some feminists suggest that for example girls' G-string underwear and belly-button shirts are a sign of girls' independence, sexual power and strength, and that the popular transformation of feminist body politics to a life-style issue of displaying and enjoying one's sexuality is not the girls' but the exploitative men's problem (See, for example Attwood 2006:77–94; McRobbie 2004; Auster 2002; Kehily 1999).

3 It can be asked, of course, what the "family" is. Is it a safe haven for children–or, as many say, a place where children's sexual abuse, incest etc. is likely to happen?

4 This comes close to what Norman Bryson (2000:89–101) writes about visual interpretation: "My ability to recognise an image […] is […] an ability which

presupposes competence within social, that is, socially constructed codes of recognition."

5 Contrary to what is often thought, the father was only alluded to in this form. Later Freud admitted that in some cases he had substituted "father" for "uncle" (Schimek 1987:950). In his letters to Fliess Freud admits that especially the seduction by the father is the original cause for hysteria: "Heredity is seduction by father" (Freud 1892–1999/1966:239). Here the perverse father thus plays the main role in the aetiology of hysteria.

6 Laplanche and Pontalis (1968:4) explain that the theory of seduction presents that the trauma comes both from within and without: "From without, since sexuality reaches the subject from the other; from within, since it springs from this internalized exteriority, this 'reminiscence suffered by hysterics'".

7 Of course, Foucault had already outlined this analysis of what he calls the "device of sexuality" in his *History of Sexuality: Introduction* (1976).

8 Masson's colleagues disapproved of this idea: Freud was not motivated by his colleagues' approval, because his new theory about the innate childhood sexuality was far more disturbing (Israëlis & Schatzman 1993:23).

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ABSTRACT

ANNAMARI VÄNSKÄ

Seducing children?

This article analyses one Calvin Klein children's underwear campaign from 1999, which caused a scandal claiming that it reminded of "kiddie-porn" and "pedophile porn" and promoted children's sexual abuse. It was argued that the photograph focused on one boy's clearly outlined genitals and accentuated his penis. The article asks what was the scandal all about. It analyses reactions the combination of childhood, clothing, sexuality, and advertising produced in

the United States in the cultural and theoretical atmosphere of the America in 1970s and 1980s, which was becoming more interested in children's treatment in the society. The article also shows that the genealogy of the child abuse -argument goes all the way back to Sigmund Freud's ideas about children's sexuality, and especially to his "seduction theory", and how these ideas were re-interpreted in the 1970s and 1980s United States. First, the article shows how the re-reading of Freud has contributed to the production of a ready-made interpretation, which can be used when encountering representations of children. Secondly, it shows that the panicky reactions represent an implicit theory of childhood, that of childhood innocence and that it was a counter reaction to a discourse of sexual liberation of the 1960s and 1970s. Thirdly, the case study exposes that ultimately, the turmoil was about the penis and how it signifies, when accentuated, wrong kind of boyhood, but also wrong kind of maleness: a sexualized maleness, which always hints to homosexuality.

SAMMANFATTNING

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Förföra barn?

Den 17 februari 1999 hade modeskaparen Calvin Klein planerat att presentera en reklamkampanj, en stor affischtavla på Times Square i New York. Kampanjen var avsedd att lansera Calvin Kleins nya linje av pojk- och flickunderkläder. Kampanjen var tänkt att ”visa barn som ler, skrattar och bara är sig själva” och ”och fånga samma värme och spontanitet som man ser ett i vanligt familjefoto”.

Innan kampanjen drog igång hade dock publiken redan fått se annonserna i *New York Times* and *Martha Stewart Living*. Det orsakade en skandal: det påstods att annonserna påminde om ”barnporr” och ”pedofilporr”, och främjade sexuella övergrepp på barn. De som protesterade var särskilt upprörda över det sätt som ett barn, en pojke, var fotograferat på. Det hävdades att fotografiet fokuserade på den tydliga konturen av hans könsdelar och framhävde penisen.

Diskussionen om reklamkampanjen är intressant eftersom diskussioner om barns ställning inom modereklamen har, både i massmedia och i vetenskaplig litteratur, varit koncentrerad på småflickor. Till skillnad från flickor sätts pojkar och deras kläder in i yttrandefrihets- och valfrihetsdiskurser. Till och med småpojkar erkänns som kapabla aktörer, som skapar talakter med sina kläder. Den oro som Calvin Kleins reklamkampanj orsakade är paradigmatisk: den tyder på att det har skett förändringar i hur pojkar förstås. Deras kroppar ses också som sexuellt sårbara. Kontroversen runt kampanjen ledde till att den drogs in bara en dag innan det var tänkt att den skulle dras igång.

Hela skandalen väcker åtminstone en fråga: vad handlade bråket om? För att kunna besvara den analyserar artikeln de reaktioner som kombinationen av barndom, kläder, sexualitet och marknadsföring, gav upphov till i Förenta staterna. Dessutom analyserar den moderna framställningar av oskuldsfulla och sexualiserade barn i den kulturella och teoretiska atmosfären i Amerika på 1970- och 1980-talen som präglades av ett ökat intresserade för hur barn behandlades i samhället. Den visat också att genealogin till argumentet om övergrepp på barn går tillbaka ända till Sigmund Freuds teser om barns sexualitet, och i synnerhet till hans ”förförelseteori”, samt hur dessa idéer omtolkades i 1970- och 1980-talens Förenta stater. För det första visar artikeln hur denna omläsning av Freud har bidragit till skapandet av en färdiggjord tolkning som man kan använda när man möter framställningar av barn. För det andra visar den att panikartade reaktioner representerar en implicit teori om barndomen, den om barndomens oskuldsfullhet, och att denna var en motreaktion mot 1960- och 1970-talens diskurs om sexuell frigörelse. För det tredje avslöjar fallstudien att ytterst sett handlade kalabaliken om penis och hur den, när den framhävs, betecknar fel slags pojkighet, men också fel slags manlighet: en sexualiserad manlighet, vilken alltid antyder homosexualitet.