This meeting marks a memorable and significant anniversary in the history of The Association for the Study of Play. Twenty years ago in Minneapolis, Minnesota on April 14, 1973 Alyce Cheska organized and chaired a meeting of over thirty scholars who were "identified as publishing research within the general rubric of play," and with this "critical mass of interested scholars" the Cultural Anthropology of Play Reprint Society was born (Cheska, 1982). With this humble beginning Michael Slater organized what is considered the first official meeting of The Anthropological Association for the Study of Play in May, 1974 at London, Ontario (see Slater, 1977). Michael became the first president of The Anthropological Association for the Study of Play.

Current TASP members Frank Salamone and Brian Sutton-Smith remember the "Detroit meeting" well. Frank reminisces that it was a time when "Detroit had about a murder every weekend," and those at the meeting clustered together whenever eating, drinking and being merry. At the conclusion of the memorable meeting, it took Salamone 12 hours to go 1200 miles home to New York. A huge snow storm created havoc for the city, and although ducks were earthbound - TASP got off the ground!

Our April meetings in Minnesota will commemorate a twenty year anniversary of a time Alyce and others fulfilled a dream of forming an organization pertaining to the study of play.

- Happy Anniversary TASP -

References:


The 1993 TASP annual conference is coming together nicely. Conference cite coordinator, Rob Lavenda has made wonderful arrangements with The St. Paul Hotel located in downtown St. Paul, Minnesota. The conference location is easily accessible by plane or car and lodging will be relatively inexpensive at $79 for single or double occupancy. To reserve your room contact The St. Paul Hotel at 1-800-292-9292. Accommodations are also possible at the nearby Radisson Hotel St. Paul (1-800-333-3333 or 612-292-1900). The designated conference travel coordinator is Dayton's Travel in Minneapolis. Identify yourself as a TASP conference participant and book your Northwest flights with them as soon as possible (1-800-533-0324).

The meetings will begin Thursday morning, April 22 and continue through Saturday, April 24. Session and presentation topics will range from computer and wellness play to celebratory, cross-cultural and literary Play. For example, Brian Sutton-Smith will moderate two panels - one with an emphasis upon children’s play and another focusing upon adult play. Research and benefits of humor and laughter also will be presented. Of special interest will be a focus upon Performance Play, for the Twin Cities area is noted for its fine art and science museums, major professional sports, special events and excellent theater. There will be planned excursions, and also some surprises.

The conference planning committee is encouraging different presentational forms so TASP members are encouraged to organize sessions around a theme of your choice that may include: book reviews; panels; playshops; poster sessions; and/or paper sessions. Contact Program Chair, Don Lytle with your ideas and plans: E-Mail: DLYTLE@OAVAX.CSUCHICO.EDU; FAX: 916 898-4932; Phone: (916) 898-6617 or 898-6373 {day}/894-5028 {evening}.

Each presenter is allowed 20 minutes, and additional time is planned for discussion. Note that papers accepted must be presented by a listed author who must also be registered for the conference. Preregistration for the conference is $60 for professionals and $20 for students. Send registration fees and abstracts of no more than 100 words to Don Lytle, Department of Physical Education, California State University, Chico 95929-0330. (Use the enclosed submission form or a facsimile.) Do it now! The deadline for paper submission is December 11, 1992.

Please Note: Deadline for submissions extended until January 8, 1993.
1993 TASP CONFERENCE
ABSTRACT SUBMISSION FORM

Please complete this form and send by December 11, 1992 to
Don Lytle • Department of Physical Education • CSU Chico • Chico, CA 95929-0330

TITLE:

AUTHOR(S):

ABSTRACT (100 word maximum):

AUDIO-VISUAL NEEDS: PRESENTATION/SESSION:
Slide projector & screen Book Display
Overhead projector & screen Paper
VCR and monitor Panel
Cassette tape player Playshop
Other (please specify) Poster

NAME, PHONE NUMBERS, E-MAIL AND MAILING ADDRESSES FOR ALL AUTHORS:
(Put lead author first or in alphabetical order)

Please Note: Deadline for submissions extended until January 8, 1993.
Dr. Play's Pre Conference Quiz: Where/What in the World is a Small Soft Drink?

Some readers of the TASP Newsletter have found previous Dr. Play quizzes difficult to decipher. This quiz is for those individuals. There are only one of three possible answers to each of the following questions 1-18, and answers may be repeated.

1. What city prohibits the display, on public or private property, of symbols "including but not limited to a burning cross or Nazi swastika?" In fact it was the central issue in a recent Supreme Court ruling regarding freedom of expression.
2. What state holds the annual "Freeze Your Gizzard in a Blizzard" January fun run?
3. For nearly a year, harpist Emily Halpern has been playing in the neonatal unit of this city's namesake hospital. This calms the babies, allowing them to sleep during conferences.
4. What is the first state in the United States that has authorized high school sports for the disabled?
5. Le Carrousel Restaurant revolves 360 degrees, 21 stories above the Mississippi River adjacent to this city.
6. What state's health officials have produced anti-smoking ads specifically counter-attacking the tobacco industry's targeting of women as "easily influenced" smokers?
7. In Shakopee (next to Burnsville), outside of ___ you can play Las Vegas style blackjack, video slot machines and bingo. (George Eisen take note!)
8. Based on 17 factors, such as infant mortality, access to health care, education and pollution, the 1992 National Life Insurance's annual study reported the state of __________ to be the very best to live in. It was ranked number 2 in 1991.
9. Chanhassen's, the largest professional dinner theatre in the United States has four theatres under one roof, and is within minutes of this major city.
10. In what state did a student at Duluth Central High School file sexual harassment charges and successfully settle for $15,000? In the same state a seven year old girl become the youngest person to have a federal sexual harassment complaint filed on her behalf.
11. One of the 10 best zoos in the country is 20 minutes from downtown __ _____.
12. This wonderful zoo is called the ____________ Zoo.
13. In April this city is host to the Festival of Nations, which is the world's largest ethnic celebration.
14. What state allows people to buy crops directly from farms, orchards and roadside stands - even though some of these farms don't allow children or pets?
15. In 1985 Hubert Humphrey was the mayor of this city.
16. One writer described this publication as "mostly thin and undistinguished." The title of this interesting publication, that "seems to specialize in the terminally fey and cute" is The _____________ Review of Baseball.
17. The highly acclaimed television show, Rhythm & Blues, features a white DJ who was the "Voice of Black Detroit": now, he's the voice of ____________.
18. Conventional wisdom has it that the Sioux migrated from this area in the 1700s. Bonus questions:
19. In a small town south of the twin cities in between Shakopee and Burnsville, the parent-teacher organization wanted the name of their elementary school changed. The school has the same name as the town, which dates to the early 1900s. That's when the town, originally called Hamilton, was renamed after an entrepreneur who built a horse-training farm, racetrack and an electric railway. What is the name of the school and town?
20. What is the mascot of this state?

Hints: (a) various short tailed, burrowing mammal of the family Geomyidae, of North America; (b) the state's largest university has a Computer & Information Services Gopher Consultant service. It's e-mail address is: gopher@boombox.micro.umn.edu
Report From Salzburg

By Ernst Lurker
Playart, Inc., New York

The academic play scene was recently enriched by the creation of the Institute for Research and Education in Play and Games (Institut fur Spielforschung und Spielpadagogik) in Salzburg, Austria. On October 1-3 it conducted its first international symposium with participants from Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary and the U.S. I would translate the subject of the symposium as Playing/Gambling - Luck/Happiness. Interestingly, these two word connections do not have distinct equivalents in the German language. The words Spiel and Glück both have double meanings. But then English is not totally precise either: we say, I play roulette, and not, I gamble roulette.

The Institute, as well as the symposium, intrigued me, and I simply needed to shuffle a few dates of my upcoming European trip in order to attend the symposium. Before it started, I was fortunate that I could meet the entire staff of the institute and that I was shown the new library with its over 1500 volumes, some of which are valuable antiques from the collections of royal courts. The institute is located within the Mozarteum, an academy for music and theater. Some of the buildings are quite new, and their lecture halls contain state-of-the-art audio, video and projection equipment. What impressed me the most was the fact that one of the members of the institute, Dr. Rainer Buland, had a piano in his office; I was even able to inspire him to play a piece for me. When it became known that I play the piano as well, the two of us spontaneously jammed a four-handed boogie-woogie, culminated by the cheerful applause of the bystanders. That's my kind of play institute!

THE SPEAKERS AND THEIR TOPICS

Keynote Address: Prof. Dr. Rudolf zur Lippe (University of Oldenburg) The Seriousness of the Unserious
He admonished that a loss of the ability to play and the disdain of play leads to a loss of life. When we play, we seem to be obsessed with guilt feelings of neglecting our duties. He calls the tendency of cramming our life with planned work the Lutherization of life with the resulting listlessness and joylessness of our age.

Dr. Leo Wallner, Chairman of Casinos Austria AG The Commercial Use of Luck in Gambling
He gave a broad overview of the workings of organizations such as casinos, Lotto, Toto, etc. The most interesting and perhaps most disturbing news was the fact that such games will soon be brought into homes via interactive TV which allows you to gamble all you want and have instant wins or losses straight from your armchair by simply pushing buttons. Very appropriately, next year's symposium will be on the resulting dangers of addiction.
Dr. Phillipe Addor, Director of the Toy Museum in Vevey, Switzerland, gave an instructive slide show on the historical games of chance, a current exhibition at the museum.

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Roscher, Rector of the Mozarteum Play and Happiness
He emphasized the elusive character of happiness and the fragility of play in our culture.

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Einsiedler (University of Nuremberg)
Play of Children and Adolescents, Joyful - Stressful - Endangered
He substantiated many of his findings with impressive research data.

There were also two hands-on workshops by Prof. Hans-Wolfgang Nickel (head of the theater department at the Art Academy, Berlin) and by Prof. Dr. Rudolf zur Lippe (University of Oldenburg).

If you are disappointed because you missed these, or a articulate presentation, you don’t need to worry. Excerpts will be published in next year’s issue of Homo Ludens vol. III. This is the annual publication of the institute, a beautiful book with four-color illustrations. Our Brian Sutton-Smith is already represented in Vol. II with his essay, Notes Toward a Critique of Twentieth Century Psychological Play Theory. (Son of a gun!)

I experienced the symposium as a jovial, playful and productive event. There were receptions, get-togethers and loosely grouped meals. Everybody was eager to get to know each other, and we had fun doing it since we were a gathering of like-minded spirits. Yet there was a very curious phenomenon which was in a way a microcosm of the difficulties the Europeans have in unifying their continent. The Austrians have a very strong tradition in which titles such as Professor, Director etc. play an important role in addressing people. I thought, when in Rome do as the Romans do, and at my arrival, I intended to comply with these rules. However, most of the other participants were Germans who had abandoned these formalities after World War II. They generally avoided titles and used last name only. One of the workshop leaders was from Berlin, a particularly informal fellow, who even addressed his group by first name (or the familiar du). This caught off within the group, so we wound up with three different ways of addressing each other. Of course, it was easy to lose track, and I caught myself switching back and forth between these conventions, even with the same person. The event was actually plagued by a minor Babylonian confusion of tongues. Fascinating!

To contact the Institute, write:
Institut fur Spielforschung und Spieldagogik
Schwarzstrasse 24
A-5020 Salzburg
AUSTRIA
Director, O. HProf. Dr. Gunther Bauer
Tel: 011 43 (662) 88 908/371
Fax: 011 43 (662) 884 997
Introduction to TASP

By Rob Lavenda
St. Cloud State University

Editor's Note: These remarks were delivered by Rob to the joint TASP-ICCP conference in Paris in May. Due to a communication failure, I had already sent the Newsletter issue covering the Paris meetings to the printer before I received Rob's copy. Rob, I apologize for the delay in getting this out. I think it is good for the membership to know how TASP was represented to the European audience, so Rob's remarks follow.

The Association for the Study of Play -- TASP -- was founded in 1974 in London, Ontario. It unites scholars from a wide range of disciplines -- anthropology, sociology, folklore, psychology, recreation, literature, education, leisure studies, art, physical education, toy design, human kinetics, history, ethnology, sports studies, and more -- and a wide range of approaches within these various disciplines. TASP has been careful never to limit either the definition of play or the approaches to the study of play taken by its members. As a result, TASP has remained small, but has provided its members with a remarkably supportive, intellectually exciting organization.

It may perhaps fairly be said of TASP that our annual meetings are our strongest feature. I say this, not to denigrate our journal Play & Culture, which is excellent, but rather to stress the remarkable, playful, cooperative atmosphere of TASP in reunion. Many colleagues at their first TASP meeting have commented to me that they have been amazed to experience the genuine interest in the work of others, the free sharing of ideas, interpretations and data, and the mutual support of the association's members. There is a special delight at TASP meetings, perhaps because while we take our work seriously, we do not take ourselves -- or each other -- too seriously.

But the work... That we take seriously. I think it is safe to say that the professional level of the papers at a TASP annual meeting is high. And, the association has always had a distinguished publications program. Originally, the TASP Newsletter was composed of research notes and news of play scholarship, meetings, and the like. Selected papers from the annual meetings were published annually in a series of proceedings. Five years ago, after much debate and long discussion, we started a journal, Play & Culture under the founding leadership of Dr. Garry Chick, the program chairperson for this year's meeting and our current First Vice President. Play & Culture has become, in my estimation, a first rate interdisciplinary journal, committed to careful scholarship and a broad view of the field. The journal is now edited by another distinguished scholar of play, Dr. Margaret Carlisle Duncan.

With the exception of this year, we have always had a
distinguished lecture as part of the program at our meetings. We have been fortunate to have heard from Gregory Bateson, Victor Turner, Robert Fagen, Edmund Leach, Don Handelman, Richard Schechner, and many others. These have, in fact, been distinguished addresses, and have been published, first in the TASP Newsletter, and most recently, in *Play & Culture*.

I want to return for a moment to TASP’s size and its influence. It was correct for TASP to refuse to narrow its scope, either in regard to subject matter or in regard to disciplinary focus. The associations for the study of sport in one way or another, of children’s play, and of recreation and leisure have become very large indeed. But they lack the intellectual diversity of TASP, and I would argue the vigorous pursuit of the study of play as a form and context, rather than one of its subsidiary forms. The influence of TASP will, I hope, continue to build. I remain convinced that several of the most important issues of our times in the social sciences and the humanities are implicated in the study of play: issues of creativity, of the influence of one culture on another, and of the connection of popular culture to the creation of a social and cultural superstate that overlays the structure of decreasingly autonomous cultural entities. The study of play illuminates all of these issues, providing us with a view of the openness and ambiguity that are at the heart of the human condition.

Play prepares the future: what and how? (Note: The TASP-ICCP conference theme was Play Prepares the Future.) The play world is shaped by the not-play world, but because the play world doesn’t look exactly like the not-play world, how people use material for play is not entirely predictable. At the same time, playthings do provide a context within which play occurs, and that context is one that we can— at least to a certain degree—shape. But we must remain cautious in our conclusions and our attempts to appropriate play: the players -children, adolescents, adults--take it back, make it theirs, and transform it.

**News Briefs**

**Electronic Discussion Group Formed**

Alan Aycock announces the formation of an electronic discussion group for those with access to e-mail either directly or through their departmental offices.

**PLAY-L@HG.ULETH.CA** focuses on the multidisciplinary study of play, games, and sport in diverse sociocultural contexts. Topics may include (but are not limited to) the nature of the ludic, children’s play, animal play, adult games, amateur or professional sport, leisure activities, spectacles, festivals and celebrations, joking and humor, mass-mediated images and representations of play, play in fiction, the global, national, regional, or local organization of sport, and the play of first peoples, peasants, ethnic minorities, elites, women, and those who are challenged.
Perspectives may include (but are not limited to) feminism, psychology, performance studies, sociology, anthropology, postmodernism, leisure studies, gay/lesbian studies, cultural studies, critical theory, hermeneutics, psychoanalysis, communications studies, ethology, discourse analysis, and human kinetics.

To subscribe to this list, send an e-mail message to PLAY-L-REQUEST@HG.ULETH.CA
The text of the message should only be the command, SUBSCRIBE <YOURNETWORKADDRESS>

Comments and questions should be directed to one of the following:

List Owner: Alan Aycock, Aycock@HG.ULETH.CA
List Manager: Marlene Menard, Menard@HG.ULETH.CA

ISPHES Conference for 93

The International Society for the History of Physical Education and Sport will hold its 1993 Congress in Berlin from June 30 to July 4, 1993 on the theme Games of the World - The World of Games. For information contact Roland Renson, ISPHES President or Herve Van der Aerschot, Secretary and Treasurer at Tervuursevest 101, B-3001 Leuven, Belgium.
Tel: (+3216) 20 18 78
Fax: (+3216) 29 19 77

Humor Scholarship

The 1993 International Society for Humor Studies conference will be held in Luxembourg from September 30 to October 3, 1993. Contact program chair Lawrence W. Sherman, Educational Psychology Dept., 201 McGuffey Hall, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056.
Tel: 513-529-6624
Fax: 513-529-7270
E-mail: <LS8CEDPF@MIAMIU.BITNET>

Don Nilsen has compiled a sixteen chapter annotated bibliography on Humor in American Literature, published by Garland, 1000A Sherman Ave., Hamden, CT 06514.
Tel: 203-281-4487
Fax: 203-230-1186

Leisure Industry Publications

Leisure Industry News is offering a series of newsletters dealing with the economic aspects of leisure, recreation, and tourism. They are priced, but may contain information of direct interest to some TASP members. Publications include Recreation Executive Report, Leisure Industry Report, and Travel & Tourism Executive Report. The organization can be contacted at P.O. Box 43563, Washington, DC 20010. Tel: 202-232-7107.

Phrenogarten

Yes, the word caught my eye when it appeared in a press release I received from the Children's Resource Center in Scottsdale, Arizona.
Phrenogarten means mind garden, and the Phrenogarten Experience is designed as a prevention and early intervention program for young boys and girls that encourages respect for self, others and the world. It was developed by Janet Tubbs, founder of the Children's Resource Center for use in public and private schools, preschools, day care centers, churches, clinics, and homes. If you're interested contact Betty Corley, Children's Resource Center, P.O. Box 8697, Scottsdale, AZ 85252-8697. Tel: 602-483-9130.

Rosalind Turner Asks TASP's Help

Rosalind Turner of Brighton, England wrote earlier this Fall seeking contacts for a proposed research project. She is applying for a Harkness Fellowship to do a one year study concerning policy on children's play in the United States. She is interested in social policy towards children, particularly outside school, and including community provision which may have some intended consequence re: diversion from drug and alcohol use.

If you are interested in helping Rosalind with this project in any way, please contact her at 32 Grantham Rd., Brighton, East Sussex BN1 6EE, England. Tel: 0273 481158 (W) 0273 563528 (H)

'Pure Country' George and 'Shameless' Garth, Or Safe Sex for the Nineties

By Dan Hilliard

Country chic is back, and we native Texans don't like it. Neo-western clothing is on display in all the department stores, boutiques, and mail order catalogs this fall, and it's driving up the price of boots and jeans! Impact on my pocketbook aside, popular culture commentators have noted renewed enthusiasm for country music. The CBS Evening News a couple of months back did a piece on the current popularity of country music, claiming that it was the top 40 music of the baby boom generation. This analysis claimed that modern country songs focus on personal relationships and other themes that are relevant to the daily experience of that generation, that country music is popular because it deals with the routine and the down-to-earth. On the other hand, Newsweek magazine recently ran an article on country megastar Garth Brooks and his uncharacteristic willingness to deal with controversial issues in his music, such as family violence in his 'The Thunder Rolls' and racism and homophobia in his latest hit 'We Shall Be Free.' So, we seem to have differing explanations for the current success of the genre; one claims it's relevant because it focuses on the everyday, the other because it deals with controversy.

Whatever the real reason for country's popularity, the two biggest phenomena in the
country field right now are Garth Brooks' concerts and George Strait's new movie *Pure Country.*
I just happened to see both within the space of two weeks recently, and given my interest in cultural studies and some of the work going on today with audiences (such as Margaret Duncan's work on TV audiences and Cindy Patton's fascinating talk on audiences for women's bodybuilding at the recent NASSS conference), the experience gave me reason to think about audience reaction to country music.

Garth Brooks is about the hottest thing going in popular music today. His recent concert at Austin's 17,000 seat 'Super Drum' sold out in a record 49 minutes. (The previous record of 57 minutes was held by U2.) Front row seats were rumored to be selling for $700. My wife Julie and I drove to our local ticket outlet where she picked up a visa band which guaranteed her a place in line when tickets went on sale at 6 am the next Saturday morning. Julie was a celebrity at school merely for having the visa band. She got up at 5 am (absolutely unheard of for her) to drive into town on Saturday, and by 6:30 she had returned with our four tickets (only $17.50 a piece).

The concert created the highest audience energy level I've experienced at UT's Erwin Center, and I've seen UT men's and women's basketball and a number of good concerts (Tom Petty, Jimmy Buffett, John Cougar Mellencamp) there. Those of you who have seen the TV special based on Garth's concert know that it has been affected by MTV; it features much more elaborate staging technology -- lights, electronic effects -- than the typical country concert, and Brooks and his band run all over the multi-level stage in a frenzy of activity. And while in the TV special Garth and one of his sidemen destroy two guitars on stage, his current concert tour features another technique guaranteed to play upon the audience's collective emotions. He gives away his guitar! In an apparently spontaneous act of generosity, he autographs and gives away his guitar to a child who has brought him a gift of some kind. Of course, he does this at every show (he must have a pretty good contract with Takamine, or maybe he figures he can absorb the cost of a guitar per show out of the $40 million he supposedly made last year). The audience absolutely goes wild, and Garth and his band ride the audience enthusiasm through the end of the show and the inevitable encore. Kinda gives new meaning to the words Garth sings in the Billy Joel song, 'I'm shameless.' But I can suspend disbelief with the best of them, and I really enjoyed the show.

About a month before I saw Garth's concert and the George Strait movie *Pure Country,* I had seen George Strait in concert. Much more traditional than the Brooks show, but with a few visual effects. The mood is much different, too. The Garth Brooks crowd is much younger and the audience is more excitable. Both men and women in the audience seem to respond best to Garth Brooks when he approaches the boundary of respectability,
as when he modifies the last verse of 'Friends in Low Places':

...just wait til I finish this glass, then sweet little lady I'll go back to the bar and you can kiss my ass.

Garth's appeal is an interesting mixture of sensitivity and traditional machismo.

At a George Strait concert, however, it is the women in the audience who create the mood. While Strait's band does excellent renditions of country classics like Hank Williams 'Long Gone Lonesome Blues' or Bob Wills' 'Milk Cow Blues,' the audience (read, the women in the audience) respond most strongly to romantic ballads. When George croons the first lines of 'You Look So Good in Love' or 'Marina Del Ray' the audience responds with a collective swoon. Strait presents an image of polite, handsome and confident sexuality, almost as if he's embarrassed about being a sex symbol.

But if he is embarrassed about his sex appeal, his marketing agents are not, because it is the basis for Pure Country. The plot of the movie involves big-time country star 'Dusty' shedding his scruffy beard and long hair and his MTV-style amplified show to return to his country roots. One scene in the movie shows Strait as he walks out of the barber shop after getting his haircut and shave as rite de passage, wearing western hat and jeans and a huge silver rodeo belt buckle. He walks into the street toward the camera, his belt buckle swaying with his bow-legged walk. One of our friends, a real cowgirl herself, said of that scene, 'It takes a real cowboy to move a buckle like that.' It is part of the folklore of the country scene that riders develop loose hips that make them better lovers. As the David Allan Coe songs claims, 'Cowboys stay in the saddle just a little bit longer.' The camera also manages to capture George's other side quite frequently, as he walks away to reveal what Julie considers the 'best Wrangler butt in the world.' In yet another scene, Strait's character gets shitfaced drunk, falls off his chair, and looks up at the woman who will become his romantic interest with a sheepish grin that reveals handsome vulnerability. A murmur carried through the theater crowd; women think he is 'just so cute.'

I could go on, but this isn't the place for a critical review of concerts and films. What I'm trying to get at is: Garth and George, in slightly different ways, exude sex appeal, and it is sex appeal that is the basis of their popularity with audiences. Despite their differences (and one is tempted to think of Brooks as the basis of the Dusty character Strait rejects in his film), both stars are recognized for traditional good looks and for their devotion to family. They represent a kind of ideal which allows women an exciting sexual fantasy without leaving their socio-culturally familiar surroundings. No questions about sexual preference, STDS, or even kinkiness here. Just good ol' handsome, sensitive, sexy
Well, we all know that sex sells -- just ask Hugh Hefner and Madonna. So, what's the point of all this discussion? I think one of the problems with much of the current cultural studies approach to the media, with its emphasis on objectification of women and on heterosexism, is that it tends to obscure the point that, for much of the population which hasn't been exposed to radical feminist theorizing, sex, or at least sexual fantasy, is a core pleasure, and they don't think of it in terms of domination. I'm not saying that feminist theorizing is fundamentally flawed. I'm just suggesting that we need to balance the new insights of this perspective with a continuing awareness that for each of us, regardless of sexual preference, some form of sexual pleasure is pretty damn important. John Fiske talks a great deal about the pleasures of viewing, and I don't think it should surprise us that at least some of these pleasures are sexual.

One final comment on Pure Country: it is another wonderful example of the ability of the commercial media to incorporate oppositional themes into themselves. This movie has been touted as a very important development in opening the cinema market to country artists; there is the potential to create a whole new generation of singing cowboys. I've already indicated that in Pure Country the star both literally and symbolically rejects the fast lane to commercial success in order to return to the roots of small town, friends and family. What is interesting is that commercial sponsors have invested in this theme in a big way. Wrangler western wear, Justin boots, Pepsi, and Bud Light are everywhere, and I assume they paid handsomely for the privilege. This leads to some issues of authenticity in the film; for instance, I've been to a few crossroads honky tonks in my time, and I've never seen a crowd in one of them dressed in carefully starched Wrangler Brushpopper shirts doing a country disco dance. But, heh, no one in the big media markets will know the difference. As Dick Hebdige reminds us, there is always the issue of authenticity versus imitation involved with style.

Well, I gotta go. My horse needs to be fed, and Tex Thomas and the Danglin Wranglers are about to begin their set at the Broken Spoke. See y'all later.

Answers to Dr. Play's Pre Conference Quiz:

15. Minneapolis 16. Minnesota

Answers to bonus questions:
1. Savage
2. Gopher

P.S. A small soft drink - as the Swedes say- is a "Mini-soda" (Minnesota).