Introduction – Outside Looking In, Inside Looking Out

Sexual fetishism as an object of scholarly study emerges in the complex network of late nineteenth century French psychiatry (Charcot and Magnan 1882, Binet 1887), late nineteenth and early twentieth century sexology (Ellis 1906, Hirschfeld 1936, Krafft-Ebing 1887) and the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud (Freud 1905, 1927). While these groups of scholars approach sexual fetishism from different angles, they converge on two major points of agreement: 1) that the difference between sexual fetishism and “normal” sexuality is a difference in degree not kind and 2) that the cause of sexual fetishism can be located in an early childhood moment. Freud formalizes themes present in sexological work on fetishism from Binet to Hirschfeld when he writes that “a degree of fetishism is … habitually present in normal love” and only becomes “pathological” when the fetish “takes the place of the normal aim” (Freud 1905, 154, italics in original). And Freud's psychoanalytic theory of the fetish as a substitute for the lost maternal phallus (Freud 1927, 151-152) is nothing other than a specification of Binet's initial hunch that the fetish “hearkens back to a specific accident in the fetishist's particular psychic history” (Sullivan 2003, 174).

Psychiatry, sexology and psychoanalysis, in short, have approached sexual fetishism from the outside looking in. While fetishism seems to bear some similarity to so-called “normal” sexuality, psychiatry and sexology nonetheless see it as their role to adjudicate the boundary between the “normal” and the perverse. Freudian psychoanalytic theory troubles this boundary to a degree, but nonetheless takes a pathologizing interest in the etiology of the fetish, in locating the precise moment when the fetish first takes form. Across all of these disciplines, fetishism becomes, as Michel Foucault notes, the “model perversion” or “the guiding thread for analyzing

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all the other deviations” (Foucault 1978, 154). For Foucault, fetishism is at the epicenter of the deployment of sexuality as a normative concept, the keystone of the dual “corrective technology” of psychiatry and psychoanalysis (105). If psychiatry, sexology and psychoanalysis have wanted to know what sexual fetishism is, it has been because they want to fix it or, at least, to rest in the security of an illusory category of the “normal” that can only be maintained through a conceptual dependence on sexual perversion (Foucault 1975).

But what does sexual fetishism look like from the inside looking out? Holdings in the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction document a period from the 1970s to the 1990s when sexual fetishists in the United States first gain access to cheap avenues for publication and textual community building. The sorts of materials that sexual fetishists produce—newsletters, manifestos, autobiographies—certainly bear the marks of psychological, psychiatric and psychoanalytic discourse on sexual fetishism but also explore different conceptual territory: How does a fetish feel? How do I live with and experience the strangeness of my sexual interest? How do I find love and community? During this time—which I have referred to elsewhere as “the golden age of fetish publications” (Allen 2013)—the “discursive explosion” (Foucault 1978, 38) surrounding sexual fetishism takes on a different hue. Today, sexual fetishists ask these questions online through web forums, message boards and chat rooms but this virtual community is not an *ex nihilo* creation; contemporary fetish forums have deep roots in the fetish newsletters of the “golden age.” To understand how and why sexual fetishists have found their current home on the Internet, it is necessary to understand the history of sexual fetishism in print over the course of the twentieth century.²

**Before the “Golden Age”**

Mainstream forms of fetishism do enjoy a life on paper prior to 1970. From the invention of the daguerreotype to the invention of the inkjet printer, fetishists collect photos of furs, stockings, shoes, boots, corsets as well as scenes of spanking, bondage and female domination. These photos are then assembled into homemade photo albums or scrapbooks that essentially serve as a prescient substitute for the kinds of fetish pornography that would begin circulating in

² I focus in this essay on the history of fetish publication in the United States, partially as a constraint of the fetish material available at the Kinsey Institute but also because the United States functions as the center for fetish publication in the mid-to-late twentieth century.
earnest in the 1950s (Amateur Albums 1940s-1950s). Many of these photographs are attributed to noted fetish photographer John Coutts who “was active in establishing … a social network of shoe and other fetishists” through his photography in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s” (Kleinhans 1982, Part 3,1, see also Boot Fetish Photos 1924-1938, Corset Fetish Photos 1930s, Shoe and Glove Fetish Photos 1935-1941). The Kinsey Institute also holds a series of remarkable scrapbooks from the 1940s that demonstrate the creativity and ingenuity of fetish collectors (Spanking Scrapbooks 1949). In these small notebooks, an anonymous collector has pasted every single piece of spanking paraphernalia he can find: from letters to the editor to parental advice columns to comics, illustrations, magazine clippings and photos (see fig. 1). In advance of dedicated publications, then, many fetishists essentially tend to their own needs through home collection practices. Even more uncommon sexual interests like urophilia and zoophilia can be found in early twentieth century home albums in the United States, although the photographs seem to have initially been produced in the boom of French 1890s erotic photography (see fig. 2 Urophilia Photos 1920s-1930s, Zoophilia Photos 1883-1963).

Figure 1: An excerpt from an anonymous spanking scrapbook (Spanking Scrapbooks 1949).
Mainstream fetish pornography also circulates prior to the “golden age” of fetish publication. For example, the Kinsey Institute contains one issue of *High Heel Magazine*, a pulpy 1930s shoe fetish magazine that mostly contains softcore pictures of shoes and stockings (*High Heel Magazine* 1937). Explicit pulp magazines in the early twentieth century fly in the face of U.S. obscenity laws prohibiting the mailing of female nudes, laws that are in place until the 1960s (Lindsley 2009). But pulps with a strong fetishistic component such as *High Heel Magazine* can bypass obscenity laws altogether because they focus on women's use of certain objects rather than on female anatomy itself; in this respect, sexual fetishism seems to be uniquely immune to governmental regulation. Material for uncommon sexual fetishes might not even be recognizable to a censor as being sexual in nature. A forced feminization comic book can circulate freely in the 1950s because it contains no hardcore imagery of sexual activity (*Forced Femininity* 1950s). Similarly, *Exotique*, a digest-style magazine that functions as a staple of fetish erotica in the 1950s, is able to publish material on rubber fetishism, leather fetishism,
transvestism and forced feminization without being shut down (*Exotique* 1998).

The 1950s and 1960s mark a curious transitional period for fetish publication in the United States. In this period of McCarthyism and moral panic, the media presents fetishism as a danger to the public even as it relies on its titillating effects. Scott O'Neill and Vincent Howard's book *Profile of a Pervert*, for example, declares that “MONSTERS WALK AMONG US” and promises to “amaze,” “revolt” but also educate an innocent readership (O'Neill and Howard 1963). And Edward Podolsky's article in the digest-style magazine *Sexology* warns that “the murderous fetishist is the most dangerous of all!” (Podolsky 1953, 417). The fetish is presented as a danger, to be sure, but also as an awful, exciting, intriguing form of danger. As the U.S. moral panic begins to fade, a pseudo-academic prurient interest in sexual fetishism takes its place. *Sexology: Sex Science Illustrated*, a digest style magazine beginning in the 1930s and reaching its height in the 1950s, takes precisely this approach, posturing as a popular interest magazine but, in reality, satisfying the public's specific interest in sex; articles on rubber fetishism (Cauldwell 1957) and hair fetishism (Podolsky 1953) begin to appear in *Sexology* around this time. Books from the International Press of Sexology also fall into the genre of 1960s educational-cum-pornographic publications: *Buttock Fetishism* lazily intersperses some quotes from Krafft-Ebing among dozens of close-up photos of women's buttocks (Kind 1965) and *Breast Fetishism* follows in the same vein (Moreck 1965).

**A Psychiatric Detour**

But the public's increasingly prurient interest in fetishism temporally coincides with a more pernicious psychiatric interest in “curing” sexual fetishism through the use of aversion therapy. In the heyday of behaviorism, D.F. Clark's article on the use of aversion therapy to treat a man with a fetish for “his wife's girdle and stockings” (Clark 1963) formally inaugurates two decades of psychiatric attempts to cure patients of fetishism through the use of negative conditioning (Bond and Evans 1977, Cooper 1963, Gershman 1977, Glick 1972, Kushner 1977, Stryzewsky and Zierhoffer 1967). Clark treats his patient with emetic drugs and forces him to listen to a tape he (the patient) had made the night before in which he “soliloquize[s] on the special delights of his fetishism” (Clark 1963, 404). Delighted with his results, Clark reports that “by a particularly happy chance one of his favourite pictures fell into the vomit in the basin so
that the patient had to see it every time he puked” (405).

Clark's successors were similarly violent in their approach. Cooper treats his patient with emetic drugs while verbally attacking his fetishistic behavior with scathing language (Cooper 1964). Stryzewsky and Zierhofer treat their patient with apomorphium, a drug that produces “ringing sounds in the head, nausea, and sometimes vomiting” (Stryzewsky and Zierhofer 1976, 165). Glick opts for hypnosis but still uses hypnotic suggestion to induce nausea (Glick 1972, 432). Other psychiatrists opt for aversive shock therapy: Kushner treats his patient with “41 shock sessions” over just “14 weeks of treatment” and, when the patient's fetishistic behavior subsides, he is nonetheless given “two successive reinforcement sessions” (445). Bond and Evans willingly disclose that they set their shock “10 volts higher than the subject's reported upper threshold” (450). Virtually every patient referenced above reports being cured but the last recorded follow-ups before the authors hastily publish their results typically take place less than half a year after treatment concludes. By the late 1960s and 1970s, psychiatrists move away from aversion therapy techniques and seek out more humane approaches to treatment. William Chambers attempts to treat a shoe fetishist named John with an experimental form of “multiple therapy” (Chambers 1976) and Austin McSweeny reports that he is able to cure a man of his fingernail fetishism through the use of hypnotherapy (McSweeny 1972, for a comprehensive review of treatment techniques see Wise 1985).³

³ The Kinsey Institute also houses a wealth of psychoanalytic literature on sexual fetishism dating from the 1950s to the 1990s. The focus of this portion of the archive appears to be on interpretations of sexual fetishism through the lens of American ego psychology. Bak, who reads fetishism as a “weakness of the ego structure” is prototypical of this trend (Bak 1953, 286). I do not provide a treatment of the Kinsey Institute's psychoanalytic literature here but curious readers are invited to consult the accompanying annotated bibliography for more detail.

**Porn Valley**

While psychiatry tries in vain to cure sexual fetishism, conditions in the publishing world become ripe for sexual fetishists. Over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, the stars align for fetish publication: Obscenity laws and Comstock laws regulating the production and distribution of pornographic material sputter to their demise. The invention of laser and inkjet printers in the 1970s allows consumers to start printing professional publications from within their homes. And the 1970s boom of the porn industry in San Fernando Valley, CA (aka “Porn Valley”) gives rise
to a slew of cheap videos and magazines, typically published in places like North Hollywood and Van Nuys. With this sudden confluence of facilitating factors in place, sexual fetishism bursts into print in the 1970s.

Starting in the 70s, Porn Valley pornographers begin to take stock of particularly salient, mainstream sexual fetishes and attempt to cash in with several short-lived fetish magazines. *Milk Magazine*, for example, caters to lactation fetishists with several full-page spreads of milk leaking or shooting from women's nipples (*Milk Magazine* 1978-1981). The Kinsey Institute only houses three issues of *Milk Magazine* but, judging from publication trends specific to this cultural location, it is doubtful that the magazine circulates much longer. *Poppin Mammas* and *Before & After* are pregnancy fetish magazines that showcase pregnant bellies and humor readers' fantasies of ravenously sexual pregnant lesbians (*Before & After* 1999, *Poppin Mamas* 1982). It is evident that these fetish porn magazines are not produced from within fetish communities themselves. Not only do they feature professional models, the “reader” letters are clearly fabricated. For example, one letter in *Milk Magazine* reads:

“Recently, a female friend came over and saw me using a pump on my tits. Suddenly, she said she had never tasted natural milk since childhood and asked if she could taste mine. I sat in a chair and she stood beside me and started sucking. She said she loved it and before I knew it she had both of my tits pushed together and was sucking both nipples at the same time. It was absolutely fantastic and erotic” (1981, Volume 2, Number 1, 16).

Both the tone and the volume of these letters—in which two women publicly share their participation in a male-dominated fetish with the editors of a male-dominated magazine—betray the presence of editors who want to create a(n) (illusory) sense of authenticity for their readers.

Porn Valley fetish magazines predictably cater to a certain set of more palatable mainstream fetishes: depictions of pregnancy fetishism and lactation fetishism still provide the “normal” heterosexual reader with plenty of eye candy. More uncommon forms of sexual fetishism remain under-explored. No dedicated adult baby or amputee fetish magazines, for example, come out of the San Fernando Valley in the 1970s and 1980s. But this broader ignorance does not preclude the occasional mention of more uncommon sexual interests. A 1983 issue of *Hustler*, for one, contains both an introduction to adult babies (Herd 1983) and an interview with the wife of an adult baby (Gregory 1983). The magazine *Him & Her* opens with material on lactation and amputee fetishism before veering back towards more mainstream
interests (*Him & Her* 1981). And a series of striking amputee fetish illustrations show up in an issue of *Nugget* in a feature called “Amputee Corner” (see fig. 3, Dee 1983).

The publication of *Belly Button Magazine* typifies Porn Valley's casual tourism in the realm of uncommon sexual fetishes (*Belly Button Magazine* 1970). The Kinsey Institute holds just two issues of *Belly Button Magazine*, likely the only two issues ever produced. The first issue stays true to its name: erotic belly button images accompany descriptions of a prostitute named “Big Bertha” who is reportedly so large that men can have penetrative belly button intercourse with her. By its second issue, however, *Belly Button Magazine* is about bellybuttons in name only. Instead, the magazine features a variety of generic group sex photos. *Belly Button Magazine* perfectly encapsulates Porn Valley pornographers' approach to uncommon sexual fetishes: they leverage their rarity to pique reader interest but ultimately cannot rely on them to pay the bills.

![Figure 3: An illustration by R.H. Dee (Dee 1983).](image)
The “Golden Age”

But uncommon sexual fetishes like amputee fetishism and infantilism do find printed expression in a “golden age” of small, often independently-produced fetish newsletters and publications in the 1970s and 1980s. The Kinsey Institute houses several years' worth of issues of *Diaper Pail Fraternity* (later *Diaper Pail Friends*, or *DPF*), an adult baby and diaper fetish newsletter running from 1980 until (at least) 1999 that provides a textual space for adult babies to share experiences, build community and purchase fetish products (*Diaper Pail Fraternity* 1980-1999). Also during this time, the Ampix organization begins to provide amputee fetishists with relevant fetish material through the mail. The Kinsey Institute houses two anonymously-authored papers donated by Ampix, both attempts by amputee fetishists to understand their sexual interests in a broader social and academic context (Ampix 1975a, Ampix 1975b). Gay male underwear fetish newsletters also crop up in the 1980s and 1990s: *Brief Notes* (1982-1983) and *Brief Tales* (1990s). Perhaps most surprising of all: the existence of a late 1970s newsletter for head-shaving fetishists (*Razor’s Edge* 1977-1979) and a baldness, tattoo, piercing fetish newsletter dating from the same period (*The SEBA Newsletter* 1979-1980). Even these small newsletters for incredibly granular sexual interests enjoy a devoted (if short-lived) reader base.

Unsurprisingly, mainstream sexual fetishes also flourish in this “golden age” of fetish publication. The Kinsey Institute houses dozens of issues of *In Step*, the premier foot fetish newsletter of the 1990s, catering predominantly to heterosexual male foot fetishists (*In Step* 1992-2000). Gay male foot fetishists could turn to newsletters like *Foot Fraternity*, a foot fetish newsletter published by “a brotherhood of guys with a common interest factor” (*Foot Fraternity* 1992, Vol. 45). Rubber and latex publications are also a popular fixture in fetish publication from the 1970s to the 1990s, but they are primarily published in the UK with the trademark Shiny branding (see, e.g. *Dressing for Pleasure* 1993, *Leather Obsession* 1993, *Shiny Housewives* 1980s) or in Canada by a latex company called Inn-Skin which publishes its newsletter *Erolastica* for four years in the mid 1970s (*Erolastica* 1974-1978).

But these fetish newsletters advance in a curious lockstep with larger Porn Valley publications. An expansive newspaper called *Fetish Times* published out of Burbank, CA (later Van Nuys, CA) serves as the premier print hub for sexual fetishists in the late twentieth century United States. *Fetish Times* runs from 1972 to 1996 and publishes fetish fiction, reader letters,
advertisements and the occasional piece of editorial content. The newsletter begins in earnest with a core set of fairly common fetishes: bondage, transvestism, rubber, etc. but quickly expands to discover amputee fetishism (Fetish Times 1981, Number 91), adult babies (1989, Number 187) and more. As the editors of Fetish Times discover new and unusual fetishes, they quickly incorporate these new interests into their advertising section. By 1993, Fetish Times is running advertisements for Diaper Pail Fraternity (1993, Number 241), allowing adult baby readers to locate a newsletter specific to their interests. As Angela Herd mentions in her Hustler profile of adult babies, it is clear that they have been finding community through “Fetish Times...[and] the other tabloids that chronicle sexual adventure” (Herd 1983, 59). Fetish Times, then, functions as an important site for reader referral: Fetish Times readers with specific sexual interests can usually find material specific to their needs, if not in the newspaper proper, then in its advertising section. Fetish Times is at the epicenter of the explosion of “golden age” fetish publications.

The “golden age” marks a definitive turning point in the textual history of sexual fetishism, the point at which public writing by sexual fetishists themselves will begin to overcrowd the work of sexologists, scholars and pornographers looking in on fetishism from the outside. For the first time, fetishists gain ownership over a forum through which they can describe their fetishes from the inside looking out. While readers of newsletters for more mainstream sexual fetishes do not seem to feel as much of a need for validation and community building (likely as a result of their increased cultural acceptance, see, e.g., In Step 1992-2000), for many sexual fetishists with more uncommon interests, these newsletters function as important sites for legitimation and self-understanding.

Fetish newsletters focusing on uncommon sexual fetishes generally help their readers with six interrelated tasks: 1) finding validation, 2) describing fetishistic experience, 3) locating relevant media, 4) finding fetish fiction, 5) buying products and 6) building physical community. For many readers, buying a fetish newsletter notifies them, for the first time, that others share their interests (Task 1). As one DPF reader notes:

“I honestly thought I was the only one. A couple of days ago I went into an adult bookstore for the first time and came across a copy of “Fetish Times” with an article about adult babies. I also found your advertisement about an adult baby club. Needless to say I was thrilled to discover that I was not the only one who enjoyed this particular
Reader letters sections allow sexual fetishists to describe fetishistic experience in their own terms (Task 2), explaining the joy of “lying in my bed in a diaper full of warm wet sticky pooh” (Diaper Pail Fraternity 1983, Number 14) or the excitement of the idea of “my wife's head and for that matter all of her [being] completely bald” (Razor's Edge 1977, Volume 1, Number 3, 21). These descriptions simply cannot be found in sexological, psychiatric and psychoanalytic literature on sexual fetishism. In contrast with psychiatric and psychoanalytic scholars who treat cases of rubber fetishism, for example, rubber fetishists themselves produce captivating descriptions of the texture of rubber itself: “the material, especially with a trace of talc on its surface, is extremely agreeable to the touch. It is cool at first touch, it warms rapidly, it is soft to the fingertips” (Traill-Hill 1964, 76).

Fetish newsletters also help fetishists find media sightings of their interests in fairly common “media roundup” features which gather together references to the fetish in books, magazines, television and film (Task 3). Such sections can be found in Diaper Pail Fraternity, Razor's Edge and The SEBA Newsletter. The editors of Razor's Edge, for example, are fascinated by Persis Khambatta's appearance as the bald Lieutenant Ilia in Star Trek – The Motion Picture, a “key role inked in very specifically for a sensuous female with a hairless head” (Razor's Edge 1978, Number 9, 21). Because pornographers at the time are not yet producing material specifically for folks with more uncommon sexual interests, sexual fetishists of the “golden age” are accustomed to scrounging for potentially arousing material in the mainstream media and these “media roundup” features facilitate this search.

Fetish newsletters also help to fill this deficit of pornographic material by selling erotic fiction to their readers (4). Many fetish newsletters of the time feature a catalog of stories sorted by genre, sub-interest, etc. from which readers can mail-order stories for a small fee (see fig. 4 for a typical excerpt from DPF's story catalog). Fetish newsletters also produce revenue by generously peppering their pages with advertisements that allow readers to locate products specific to their sexual interests (Task 5): shoes for readers of In Step, diapers for readers of DPF and so on. The editors of the popular latex newsletter Erolastica make explicit the sort of symbiotic reader-manufacturer relationship implicit in “golden age” fetish newsletters: Inn-Skin
gets to promote its products and, in return, readers receive print space to “air [their] views” and “submit their photos” (*Erolastica* 1974, Volume 1, Issue 1, 3). Throughout the “golden age,” fetish newsletters walk this tightrope between advertisement and reader content, between commerce and community.

Fetish newsletters also serve as reference points for physical community building and erotic exchange (Task 6). Most newsletters contain a personal ad section that codes its ads so as to allow readers to anonymously express their interest in each other: “Goodlooking, 38, White & Love to Wet My Briefs & Jeans” (*Brief Notes* 1982-1983, Volume 2, Number 4, 8). *Diaper Pail Fraternity*, on the other hand, goes so far as to include a comprehensive membership roster with members' names and addresses. *DPF* also actively facilitates physical meet-ups throughout its long history. In 1984, editor-in-chief Tommy organizes the first “Baby Week,” a week-long schedule of adult baby events in San Francisco that readers can attend for a considerable fee (*Diaper Pail Fraternity* 1984, Number 15). By 1995, *DPF* members are independently organizing across the world: Boston, New York City, Alaska, Buffalo, the UK (1995, Number 83, 10-11). These physical meetings prove to be influential in helping members find acceptance within the community. As one Baby Week attendee reports:

“I found people who had the very same fears, thoughts and feelings that I do! I made many new friends. I didn't have to feel ashamed of wearing my diapers because everyone else was in diapers too. For the first time in my life I was with a group of people and I didn't feel like I was different” (1984, Number 17).

Newsletters like *DPF* serve as an important launching ground for the kinds of physical meet-ups that websites like FetLife.com seamlessly facilitate today; they begin the process of dissolving the boundary between textual and material interaction.

**Conclusion – Beyond the “Golden Age”**

The “golden age” of print fetish publication comes to a close at the turn of the twenty-first century as a result of economic and technological shifts. The story of *Fetish Times*’ closure captures the drama of this era's slow wane. In the 1990s, *Fetish Times* is clearly struggling to get by: the editors mainstream the content of the newspaper and begin to fabricate their reader letters in order to paper over a presumably diminishing subscriber base. In a 1996 issue, the
editors announce that the newspaper can no longer subsist in an economy dominated by *Hustler* and a booming video industry (1996, Number 273). *Fetish Times* closes its doors with these famous last-words: “Perhaps we will resurface on the inter-net” (1996, Number 273). Small fetish newsletters do not find immunity from this economic pressure. Indeed, as the 90s wear on, even Tommy at *DPF* begins to phase out reader content in favor of more advertising (see, e.g., *Diaper Pail Friends* 1992, December).

The Internet, of course, is the other primary causative factor in bringing an end to the “golden age” of print fetish publication. This quote from a 1996 issue of *In Step* seems particularly understated in hindsight: “…for those of you who haven't yet gotten on the Internet, you're really missing something” (*In Step* 1996, Volume 6, Number 2, 2). Ironically but understandably, fetish newsletters greet the Internet with breathless excitement. Tommy at *DPF* writes: “We're happy to announce that the INTERNET and cyberspace has come to *DPF*. I'm sure you can picture all these big babies and diaper lovers as they sit in front of their computers while they surf the Net” (*Diaper Pail Fraternity* 1996). The Internet will proceed to make fetish newsletters irrelevant, allowing sexual fetishists to instantaneously connect with each other and locate fetish material for free. But, for a brief moment, Tommy and others are excited by the prospect of new forms of publishing and community building.

The “golden age” does not end so much as it changes locations. The underlying structure of “golden age” fetish newsletters is preserved virtually intact on contemporary fetish websites and message boards (cf. Allen 2013). The popular adult baby and diaper fetish site *DailyDiapers.com*, for example, is almost identical in form to *Diaper Pail Fraternity* newsletters. *DPF* offers mail-order stories; *DailyDiapers.com* has a free story section (see fig. 4). Member profiles on *DailyDiapers.com* fulfill the same function as *DPF*’s membership roster and the message boards on *DailyDiapers.com* allow members to compare experiences more quickly than they could through the letters sections of *DPF*. Both *DPF* and *DailyDiapers.com* partner with advertisers to sell pertinent adult baby accoutrement: diapers, baby clothes, pacifiers. *DailyDiapers.com* sub-forums like “Diapers in the News” are the direct descendant of “golden age” media roundup sections in fetish newsletters. With the history of the “golden age” in mind, the through-lines from print to Internet become strikingly clear.

What does sexual fetishism look like from the inside looking out? How does a fetish feel?
Where can someone with a sexual fetish find love and community? These questions—first asked publicly during the “golden age” of fetish publication—continue to be posed today on dozens of forums like DailyDiapers.com. These forums are not the wholly new and ephemeral creations of a younger generation of sexual fetishists; rather they are the virtual transformation of three decades of print fetish publication and the unique product of three centuries of discourse on sexual fetishism. After hundreds of years of pathologizing and exoticizing discourse on sexual fetishism in sexology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis, the “golden age” of fetish newsletters has quickly ushered in a strange new era of online discourse on sexual fetishism in which fetishists themselves are asking the questions.

Figure 4: A typical story catalog from DPF (above) and a current snapshot of the "Stories" page on DailyDiapers.com (below).

Amateur Albums. 1940s-1950s?


Boot Fetish Photos. 1924-1938.


Brief Tales. 1990s. Streamwood, IL: New Hope Products.


--- For more detail and further reading, see the accompanying annotated bibliography.

Corset Fetish Photos. 1930s.


*Dressing for Pleasure*. 1993. Essex, UK: G&M.


*High Heel Magazine*. 1937.


Scatalogia photos. 1880-1963.


Shoe and Glove Fetish Photos. 1935-1941.

Spanking scrapbooks. 1949?


Urophilia photos. 1920s-1930s.


Zoophilia photos. 1883-1963.