

## **BDSM fantasies become practice**

This study is part of my dissertation and is intended to contribute to the understanding of Bondage and Dominance/Sadism and Masochism (BDSM) fantasies. It is based on 28 interviews with people who define themselves as BDSM practitioners.

The practitioners highlight the impact of fantasies in their encounters. They talk about fantasies that eroticise dominance and submission as a reason for why they became involved in BDSM. The BDSM practice has given them an opportunity to live out their fantasies.

The BDSM scene is built on fantasies, daydreams, thoughts and feelings; the practice stresses taboos, boundaries, prohibitions and social norms. The scene can function as an alibi, allowing practitioners to play with power, gender and race in a way that would be impossible outside the scene.

I discuss the following questions: Does BDSM provide a subversive freedom to go beyond race, gender and trauma? Can playing with taboos be understood as the “allure of the forbidden” and as a tangible and concrete approach to the exchange of power in BDSM play, or should the phenomenon rather be seen as expressions of pure racism, sexism and oppression?

I argue that living out fantasies and playing with taboos implies a complicated and complex chain of symbolism that affects overall perspective on gender, ethnicity, oppression and power.