

Passion Fruit: A History of (Con)Sensuous Games

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2006

The sign read: “Men can wear one article of clothing, and women can wear two articles of clothing.” This was the second annual naked smoothie party that boasted not just fruity blender drinks and creative nudity, but also a steamy hot tub, a banana shaped pool, dancing, body painting, massage, and more.

How did we get here? Did it evolve from a kissing game of twenty people that involved discussions of sexuality, direct action, and anarchy? Did we gain some revolutionary insights while exploring sensual intimacy in between laughter, opinions, and chocolate sauce? Were we breaking down barriers to intimacy while drafting erotic letters and colorful collage-filled cards? What were we risking? Would anyone be disrespected?

Our thinking has evolved through experience in creating emotionally safe consensuous games and expressions of love. A consensuous game is a voluntary experience set up to create a playful new situation intended to encourage intimate expressions and explorations. Games break down ideological, physical, and emotional barriers to love. In referring to surrealism as a game, Philippe Audouin writes, “The prizes in the eyes of those who played and lived it can be calculated in promises of freedom, love, revolution and in anything else that intransigent desire can aspire to.” Indeed, freedom, love, revolution, and desire are the prizes of consensuous games for us!

For me, these games are also a way to begin to dialogue about polyamory and other desires without jumping headlong into the world of open relationships. I also wanted to expand friendships to include more intimacy and romance.

For some, they left the games feeling warmer toward fellow game-players. Touch for many can bring a sense of ease to the body and a sense of love for the people involved. Liberating touch can be a foundation to creating intimate connections. More than once, our Passion Fruit collective meetings ended with loving warmth in the hot tub and even resulted in a polyamorous relationship among some collective members. Consensuous games catalyzed many experimental relationships and evolving conceptions of love and desire.

In romantic friendship relationships, two people may be physically intimate in similar intensity as in a partner relationship, so finding ways to proceed with caution and communication are vital, and it's easy to make mistakes. Predators and patriarchal interpretations of freeing love can creep into these game experiences as well. You may find that there are people in a game that you don't want to be intimate with, so finding a way to honestly express that is important.

Here are some of the questions we have tried to answer, and we encourage you to answer before “you start: How do friends touch each other and show affection in a safe and respectful way? What do I risk in sharing love with partners, friends, and acquaintances? How do we integrate honesty, gentleness, acceptance, and inclusion into the continuum of intimacy? Why do we want to explore intimacy and radical touch? How do we create games and experiences that have activities that are optional and also allow people to slowly sink into playing?

Thanks to the participation of my friend Applecore, slut liberation became prominent in the history of our games with the addition of the Erotic Liberation Letters, where participants were encouraged to free their spontaneous erotic energies by expressing their feelings in creative collages and intimate letters with “slut buddies.” She comments on these games, “Erotic games and play not only keep us alive and remembering what we know but re-

mind us of what freedom tastes like as they give us safe venues for exploring our desires. These games are where we feed our ravenous imaginations, discover new inspiration and surprise, undermine despair, subvert reality, romp unbounded and uninhibited, and experience solidarity and joy.” Applecore wants to explore intimacy and radical touch, the whole range of touch between people, of which kissing and sex are only one small part. Radical touch includes massage, body painting, holding hands, hugging, and even attentive conversation and verbal sharing. In her games, Applecore writes love letters to everything from the praying mantis to laughter.

All these experiences developed simultaneously with many activists’ interests in polyamory and designing their own relationships. Games, radical touch and intimacy, and polyamory all exist within the same continuum.

These explorations brought us closer together while fighting and building. We battled Monsanto’s biotech, the World Agriculture Forum, police brutality, the wars in Iraq/Afghanistan, lead mines, the clearcutting of Missouri forests, globalization. We renovated our community center/infoshop and coop houses, baking bread and cookies at the bakery, doing Food Not Bombs, growing food, repairing bikes for kids, working for animal rights, attending the Great Plains Anarchist Network conferences, publishing zines and Confluence, organizing Biodevastation, planning for diverse neighborhoods and affordable housing, and maintaining the St. Louis IMC.

During the difficulties and joys of games, we’ve discovered that sometimes game obsolescence sets in. Games can become less exciting after played several times. Sometimes, game players feel inspired to spontaneously recombine the sensuous game experiences to make them new and challenging yet safe and respectful.

With years of “games praxis,” I found my true calling in Anarchist Spin the Bottle—a hyper-developed spin the bottle for a multicultural and anti-authoritarian audience. There are questions for all genders and sexualities to challenge and celebrate all genders and sexualities. There are questions that break down barriers and ideological pre-conceptions of love, intimacy, and friendship. Players explore consensual touch or chocolate sauce.

During one game session, we discovered a secret fetish for licking (homegrown) raspberry and blueberry compote off each other’s legs and arms. From anarchist history questions, we role play with the favorite radicals we want to fuck. Or, it can involve massaging a friend’s neck or slutty group kiss-alls.

It ranges from tactical questions on multicultural organizing and the black bloc to the latest on people of color anarchists and green anarchy. I hope it makes a contribution to anarchist critiques and educating new anarchists and radicals while spreading more smooches all around.

This could be my consensual games magnum opus! Keep yer lip balm ready! We declare the new era of polysmoochery, a specialization of polyamory! Let’s not stop there: Calling all booti-grabbing, smooching, touching, licking, loving, communicating sluts: to the insurrectional barricades with your love of radical intimacy! Cobblestones in one hand and passion fruit in the other!

This is an excerpted & edited version of a longer piece, the lead article in the amazing ‘zine *Passion Fruit Anti-Authoritarian (Con)Sensuous Games*. \$4 Available from the Barn or Contact mberry \ A T \ riseup \ DOT \ net or c/o Confluence, PO Box 63232, St. Louis. MO 63163



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Fifth Estate #371, Winter 2006

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