

# **Space, Freedom, and Indeterminacy: Gender, Desire and Commodification in the Use of Electronic Gaming Machines**

Charles Livingstone (Monash University)

## Abstract

Electronic gaming machines (EGMs) may be viewed as devices which connect those who use them to a stream of indeterminacy, in which chance, operationalised via the effects of a computer connected to random number generators, provides a temporary connection to what Castoriadis refers to as the Abyss. In Australia, and in some other jurisdictions, this technology, which is available at local hotels and clubs in very high impact forms, has proven very appealing (in many cases harmfully so), and generates profits of thousands of millions of Australian dollars annually. One of the most intriguing aspects of this commodified indeterminacy is attraction for women, in contrast to other gambling forms. This paper outlines the gender profile of gambling forms in Australasia. It utilises a Castoriadian approach to firstly identify the stream of indeterminacy and the human desire for re-connection to this stream, and secondly to discuss the process of commodification of this desire. It then discusses the conjunction of opportunity, space and ideas of freedom and the imperative of consumption have constructed this intensely commodified activity, with particular reference to its relative 'success' with women.

## Author Bio

Dr Charles Livingstone is Senior Lecturer at the Monash University, Australia. He works at the Department of Health Social Science.