

Ipce

NEWSLETTER

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CONTENT

- 02 **Introduction**
- 02 **Love in a Slave Society**, By Jay Baskins

- 04 **Part I: What to do? Theme of the Meeting 2000**

- 04 Truth and Integrity: The Crisis, By Dave Riegel, 30 April 00
- 04 Group maintenance and goals to achieve, by WR.
- 06 Editorial, Winter 1999: The "NetWar" issue, *By Ianthe*. March 1999.
- 13 Target Areas of the Ex Prisoner Support Group, By WR
- 14 The Bologna project

- 14 **Part II: Internal Ipce Issues**

- 14 Secretarial Report, The voting system
- 15 Financial report
- 16 Report of the Webmaster

- 16 **Part III: Scientists speak out**

- 16 The History of Sexuality – about Foucault, author unknown
- 19 Intimate relationships between young people and adults; Are there criteria for a positive experience? Frank van Ree
- 23 Abuse by Definition? The Taboo as Excuse. Frank van Ree
- 26 Four Questions and Four Answers, by James Kincaid
- 30 Is this child pornography? By James Kincaid
- 31 The Culture of Child-Molesting, by James Kincaid

- 31 **Documentation Service List June 2000**

Ipce is a forum for people who are engaged in academic discussion about the understanding and emancipation of mutual relationships between children or adolescents and adults.

In this context, these relationships are intended to be viewed from an unbiased, non-judgmental perspective and in relation to the human rights of both the young and adult partners.

Ipce meets once every one or two years in a different country, publishes a newsletter and a web site, co-ordinates the (electronic) exchange of texts and keeps an archive of specific written publications.

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Introduction

Here is Ipce Newsletter number E8, the 8th made in electronic format as well as in paper format. As usual, the Newsletter starts with a new statement, and then three parts follow.

Part 1 concerns the theme of the coming July 12th Ipce Meeting: **What to do?**

In an era in which a sexual counter-revolution is going on in most countries, we could complain only, but we preferably should speak about the question **What can we do? What can I do?**

By sending this Newsletter before the Meeting, every member can read the meeting's papers in this section before the Meeting starts and every member can give comments. Visiting members will be asked to tell what they have done and if it had any success so we can inspire each other to find strategies and **do** something that might have success. At the Meeting, people and groups from the hosting country will tell about what they have done and what success they have had.

Part 2 is also meant for the Meeting. It concerns internal Ipce issues. The members will be asked to accept the reports and the proposal.

In the third part, scientists speak out.

The first article in this section concerns the famous sociologist Foucault. The article, from an unknown author, gives a summary of Foucault's ideas about the history of sexuality. IMHO, it is good to know Foucault's vision on how ideas about sexuality are *constructed* by society.

Then, you will see two articles written by Frank van Ree in KOINOS Magazine. Van Ree is a well-known psychiatrist in The Netherlands. In his first article, he searches for *criteria* for an acceptable relationship, including sexuality, between an adult and a minor. Note that the *four criteria* in this article were 'born' at the Ipce Meetings from 1993 to 1996. The Dutch national workgroup NVSH Lwg JORis has discussed and translated these criteria. Another psychiatrist has used the same criteria in an article in a Dutch Newspaper earlier. It seems that these criteria are acceptable to the general public.

The third scientist is James Kincaid, a professor in literary theory at the University of California, Los Angeles. In a very clear style, he answers important questions. His article "Is this child pornography?" was found at the web site "Mothers who think".

So, three scientists from different professions give their opinion.

As usual, a list of available documents completes this Newsletter. In the electronic version, colored links refer directly to the documents. New articles, added to the Library of the Ipce web site, are mentioned in this list. Members who want to **do** something, can use these documents.

*The Ipce Secretary,
Frans*

Statement or short essay:

Love in a Slave Society

By Jay Baskins

Visualize a society dominated by the institution of slavery. Imagine that this is back in the old days, before TV, before cars, before electric pencil sharpeners. Imagine that it is even before all the wilderness areas were perfectly mapped. These were the days when trolls still ruled the earth. Pretend that was a long time ago.

Suppose that a few slaves escape, and that they are able to survive in roving bands and in small communities hidden in the wilderness. A few even manage to disguise themselves as ordinary citizens and live double lives within the dominant community. Now suppose a slave living in disguise dedicates himself to the escape of other slaves. Call him Mr. Byrd.

One day Mr. Byrd is able to have a conversation with a slave boy named Jason. He explains to Jason that the system he lives under is immoral and unnecessary, and that there is some chance of his escaping. The boy is thrilled, and though he realizes the danger, decides to take the chance. Mr. Byrd makes arrangements for the boy to meet up with Mr. Malcolm, a member of one of the roving groups. They make contact at the appointed time and place and slip away into the woods. However, while they are camping out in the forest, Jason has second thoughts. He is afraid and he misses his mother. He wants to return. Mr. Malcolm tries to talk him out of it, but to no avail.

Slave hunters catch Jason as he tries to return, and beat him severely. Jason has known nothing but slavery since birth, so the slave owners have little difficulty persuading him that it was a mistake to have listened to Mr. Byrd or Mr. Malcolm. Full of remorse Jason confesses all. Mr. Byrd is caught and condemned to life in prison. A posse is sent in hot pursuit of Mr. Malcolm. He escapes, but the woods are patrolled from then on with dogs to make sure other bad types never again get close enough to the plantations to enable others to escape. Jason suffers permanent injuries from the beatings he received, and his whole family is punished. Jason himself is watched more closely than any other slave on his plantation in case he should he ever entertain more thoughts about escaping.

Is it ever advisable or even ethical, to allow sexual expression to the love feelings a man might have for a boy? The story above illustrates the context in which this question must be understood. We live in a slave society. We want to liberate ourselves and the boys we love from its bondage. Yet when we risk doing so we place both the boys and ourselves at great risk.

Perhaps I am unfair. Do we indeed live in a slave society? And if so, who are the masters?

An old folk tale from Norway describes three troll brothers who have to share a single eye. They pass this eye back and forth as they stumble along together, taking turns using it. Western culture is ruled by three ideologies that stumble along, like the troll brothers in the story, with very limited vision. As any lover of fairy tales is well aware, knowing the names of one's adversaries gives us power over them. The three troll brothers who rule our lives are named:

Global capitalism, as seen in the practices of the international banks, monetary funds, and multinational corporations that now rule the world economically.

Behavioral technology, the belief in the use of biological, sociological and psychological knowledge to force human conformity to goals and aims that are not internal to the individuals being "treated."

Puritanism, the driving force behind sexual repression.

What then is this one eye that these troll brothers share? What is the one thing that they see when they look out at the world? It is the need to control other people against their will. Around this goal they join hands, and with their limited vision they create a slave society. As a result, we work to make the rich richer, we behave like Pavlovian dogs to provide our behavioral technicians the illusion that life is predictable and controllable, and we repress our sexuality to preserve the Puritans from feeling defiled by our presence.

Sexual activities that are mutually desired between men and boys are not intrinsically hurtful. We know this through the study of anthropological reports, historical analysis, social research, and personal accounts. However our society seeks to repress such behavior through a variety of ruthless and Draconian measures including ridicule, demonization of "pedophiles," public disgrace, imprisonment, and "therapy." Because of these punitive arrangements and attitudes, both men and boys who participate together in sexual activities are exposed to a variety of possible injuries.

Mr. Byrd sits in prison and asks himself whether he has committed a crime against an objective moral order as well as against the state. After all only bad consequences have flowed from his action.

Question: Was he guilty?

Part I: WHAT TO DO? Theme of the Meeting 2000

1. Truth and Integrity: The Crisis. By Dave Riegel, 30 April 00

I periodically find myself reexamining the status of the boylove community, and, more specifically, my place and purpose within that community. I ask myself whether we, as a family and world wide community, really want to face up to the issues and challenges that make our lives less than they ought to be, or if, perhaps, the vast majority of boylovers prefer to live in what seems to be a state of cyberdrug induced euphoria, subsisting on pretense, nifty archives, and the various news groups. Not that erotic stories or pictures are bad or wrong in and of themselves, but is that all there is to boylove? Are these things all that we can aspire to and hope for? Does a significant percentage of our family really want to settle for sham relationships and on line pretenses? Have many of us given up completely on any hope for reality?

I have referred to this before, and I beg the indulgence of those outside of the United States, but this is the only history that I am familiar with. During the American war for independence, an expatriate Englishman, Thomas Paine, penned an essay usually known as **The Crisis**. I excerpt: "*THESE are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service.... Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered....*".

That we, as boylovers, live under tyranny is an obvious fact, the cold and dark tyranny of cruel and unjust laws and of misinformed and misguided societal "norms". Plus there are the ever present psychotic hate mongers and witch hunters who think it is their God appointed task to harass and attempt to intimidate anyone who even wants to discuss the positive side of boylove. These are all givens, and it is up to us as to how we react to these problems. Although, in my humble opinion, it is much better to be proactive rather than reactive, and this is the option I choose.

I do not mean to infer that the present moment is any more critical than others in the past. The stress of being a boylover in today's hysterical society is a pervasive and ongoing thing, and we are constantly faced with choices and decisions. Some of these have to do with real life situations, maximizing our mutually beneficial relationships with boys and other people, while others concern our on line relationships. And sometimes either of these can go sour, or even become dangerous, and we have to decide which way we are going to go. With the on line decisions, especially, we often really can't gather up enough data to make a well informed decision, and even the data that could help us is sometimes deliberately withheld. Therefore we have to do the best we can with what we have, and then live with the results of our choices.

The danger, perhaps, is these crises from time to time, is that we tend to lose sight of the "big picture" and the long term and ultimate goal, as we deal with the immediate problem. Or that we allow the unpleasantness of a current situation to put us into a state of depression, and impair our resolution to press forward. It is not easy to become upbeat and proactive when our hearts are wounded and aching, but this is what we must eventually do. A time for recovery from a trauma is to be expected, but when that time is past, then we must reach out to those who are our real and trustworthy companions, get back up on our feet, and once more take our place in that swelling throng of realistic, responsible, and forward looking boylovers as we continue our march toward light and sanity. To do anything less is to abjectly surrender to the darkness and hysteria that surrounds us.

**Group maintenance and goals to achieve
By WR**

Ted and I spent the better part of a day and a half, very recently, discussing where the B/L movement is and where it needs to go. He asked me to write a brief summary of some of our discussion. This is as brief as I was able to be.

Perhaps the best way to provide a summary of some of the conclusions that emerged out of our discussion about the B/L community would be to divide it into two kinds of issues:

- community maintenance, and
- achieving the task of the community.

Maintenance has to do with tending to the internal needs of the community. Task has to do with strategies for accomplishing it's purposes in the larger environment. Every social system must deal with both kinds of issues.

In general, it is my feeling that much more attention to maintenance issues is called for, if our community is to become successful in the pursuit of it's task. Three maintenance issues would seem to be of central importance to boy lovers at this time:

1. *Identity* -- providing support, and teaching skills, for maintaining a positive sense of self through refusing to internalize the dominant culture's view of the phenomena of boylove.
2. *Networking* -- both between various groups who already have achieved some ownership of their feelings and a positive attitude toward them, and with the very large number of men who have very strong feelings about boys but who are largely isolated with their feelings.
3. *Articulating a common vision* of who we are and where we would like to move society on this issue.

The job of defining and implementing appropriate goals with regard to society -- the task dimension of the B/L community -- is impeded by the sense that the forces against the B/L community are so overwhelmingly powerful and so extremely hostile to our sexual feelings that there is nothing that can be done. Indeed, we do seem to face a huge, monolithic empire of repression.

In order to develop an effective strategy in the face of such overwhelming odds, it is necessary to ask whether there is any way for us to get through or around these massive stone defenses.

We think there are ways. Here's one we came up with. Whenever a person attempts to entertain in one's mind two contradictory assessments of a situation at the same time -- whenever some unavoidable fact challenges a basic tenant in one's world view -- it creates a painful subjective experience called cognitive dissonance.

Example:

Perception 1: Boy lovers are unempathic, vile, dangerous, subhuman creatures who deserve to be imprisoned for long periods of time to "protect the children".

Perception 2: Jay Whatever-his-name was discovered [by the police & the media] to be a boy lover. Jay is a good friend who we know to be sensitive, decent, and gentle in his dealings with others that we know of.

A tension is created here that forces reconsideration of previously held assumptions -- either about boy lovers, or about Jay Whatever-his-name.

I think there are a number of existing and potential areas of cognitive dissonance that can be exploited, expanded, and/or created.

Here are a few examples:

1. As we have already informed ourselves on this list from solid contemporary research at least 25% of all males have sexual feelings for children that are as strong or stronger that what they

experience for adults. Most of these men must, therefore, experience themselves as secret pedophiles, that is to say, scum. Yet most of them persist in thinking that they try to be decent human beings.

2. Every boy lover who is outed has a number of relatives and friends who are reluctant to write him off as a subhuman creature deserving to be locked away for years, and subjected to brainwashing.
3. Some adults have had positive consensual experiences with boy lovers when they were boys, and have not yet had a therapist retroactively redefine the experience as degrading, traumatic and exploitative.
4. Educated people are aware that history includes gifted boy lovers who have made enormous contributions to society, and know that many other cultures treat the bl phenomenon very differently.

Conversely, there are some facts that have created genuine cognitive dissonance with regard to the implied high moral agenda of the sex abuse industry.

1. These people claim to care about children, yet they seem impervious to the manner in which the Satanic Panic, which they drummed up "to protect the children", ruined the lives of many of the children they were "protecting" by destroying their families, filling their heads with bizarre and harmful fantasies, and sending many of their loved ones to prison. Some people personally know children and parents who have been so harmed.
2. Those who head up the sex-abuse industry talk a great deal about "protecting children" -- yet insofar as they are from the religious right, they are not generally preoccupied with the obvious main causes of unnecessary suffering, mental illness, and untimely death in the child population, which are poverty and the lack of effective and universal health care. What does preoccupy them is controlling -- that is to say, repressing -- the sex lives of children and adolescents (often all the way up to eighteen years of age.)

Action should focus on exploiting cognitive dissonance where it already exists and on creating it where it doesn't. Where cognitive dissonance exists, there is already a Trojan horse within the citadel of our opponents. Where there is no cognitive dissonance, there is little motivation for reconsidering the perceptions of reality one has received from the dominant culture.

My suggestions for future activism, which includes targeting people who are in trouble with the law and their families, is based on the notion that this is an area where one will find a great deal of cognitive dissonance. It is a place to begin again. The other group we should somehow target are those men who are acutely aware of erotic feelings about children in their own psychological makeup.

Another way of creating cognitive dissonance is by highlighting our real and shared concerns for the well-being of children and other ethical commitments in formulating a common vision for society.

Editorial

Winter 1999: The "NetWar" issue.

By Ianthe. March 1999.

Welcome to issue #6 of Fresh Petals.

Even under extreme provocation from the state and its agencies, we must continue to work for change in a peaceful manner. For any of us to do anything else would be hugely counter-productive. Even such non-violent "netwar" actions as hacking the House of Lords web-site, humourous though the results may be, can only give the state the excuse to enact ever more repressive measures against us.

So, this issue's theme (such as it is) is being used only in order to try to pique your interest in what you can *peacefully* do to try to change the way things are. It is in everyone's interest to build a conversation between responsible paedophiles and responsible people who fear paedophiles, to start and keep an honest exchange and conversation going - without threats and intimidation on either side.

This issue's theme is in reaction to both the combination of the British state's ever-increasing attacks on us and the everyday 'street-level' hatred, which force us to live our lives on an increasingly narrow margin. The attacks are themselves a sign of the breakdown of some parts of civil society. Nevertheless we should not abandon civil society - just look at the tireless organising of the American Civil Liberties Union, or the global support networks that prevent the Mexican government from attacking the Zapatistas. These show that civil society is not dead - we can turn the concept of "NetWar" into a term for vigorous but *peaceable* use of the net to state a case and to question authority. We should use our "natural" predisposition towards non-violence and pacifism to continue to campaign, argue, and build global support networks. This does not mean we stick our heads in the sand, our arses generating a lot of hot air, while we hope the terror goes away. Knowledge must become capability.

If we really *are* as "hyper-intelligent" and "cunning" as they claim -- which I suspect is as much of a construction as the previous one of us as "inadequate" and "feeble-minded" - the new one suits the needs of 'intelligence-led policing' just as the old one suited the needs of the old psychiatric institutions -- then we need to use that in productive and peaceful ways.

We are striving to build, maintain and shore up an identity in the face of waves of hostility from the media and elsewhere. We wish, ultimately, to redefine our position in society. But why stop there ? Our interests, and the interests of children, will not ultimately be served by gaining a grudging tolerance of the kind that is sometimes given to gays and lesbians. Our goal must be to change society. And we can only have even the remotest chance of doing that if we can touch the power of sexual identity with the "magic wand" of love. If we allow ourselves to be defined (as gay men were/are) purely by sexual activity then our project is restricted from the start. A platform of crude 1960s style "sexual liberation" would therefore seem to be the wrong platform.

A focus on *love* rather than *sex* may also help to prevent us from being a typical "shut off" identity, one that sits in its little defensive bunker and never tries to talk with people of influence, never tries to build bridges with or learn from other minorities, and even becomes intolerant of individual thinking within its own ranks.

Activism to lower the age of consent - a wild goose chase ?

There are still many who grasp at lowering "the age of consent" as a possible tactic. In the current situation, this seems tactically and philosophically flawed. The AOC seems to me to be totally simplistic and even dangerous, no matter what age it is set at. It is hard to avoid seeing the fetishistic focus on this arcane legal dinosaur as a device by which the state can channel and defuse some of the tensions within its own sexual contradictions. It is impossible to devise a fixed categorisation by age that will be applicable across sexual identity, gender, culture, ethnicity, or historical period (especially in light of the way that criminal charges from 30 or even 40 years ago are now being dredged up). The arbitrary AOC laws achieve, at best, an abstract and superficial justice - and, at worst, appalling injustice and suffering to all parties. Lowering or raising the AOC by a couple of years will not change that. As columnist Anna Blundy recently wrote in *The Times*, the AOC should be *abolished*, not lowered. Even NAMBLA [the main US boy-love organisation], despite popular misconceptions, has never favoured lowering the AOC.

So if the AOC's concept of *age* is not usually useful, what of *consent* ? It has been suggested that activists might seek to establish that consent can be used as a defence in legal cases involving older children. Even within the narrow legal notion of "consent", children certainly have the ability to consent to any number of things, and do so frequently (often making better and more pragmatic judgements than some adults) - Priscilla Anderson's book *Children's Consent to Surgery* (Oxford University Press, 1994) concludes that "...beyond any doubt, many children, even young ones, can digest information and make decisions about themselves and their bodies as well as most adults."

The whole issue of consent seems to be wilfully ignored by the child abuse industry. One cannot help but wonder if this is because they feel that this is an area where their thinking is vulnerable. The industry goes on acting on the assumption children's language is something quasi-alien, needing the pseudo-scientific interpretation of specialists and "deep therapy" in order to "know" the "true nature" of child sexuality (about which rigorous scientific knowledge is pitiful). But in doing so, they hark back to the discredited feminist notion of "false consciousness" as a

justification for silencing the many children who do **not** feel they were "victims" or "harmed" by their love with an older person.

A new genuinely democratic morality around 'consent' would mean that the child abuse industry would have to give up disingenuously lumping everything from violent rape to a pat-on-the-backside together under the catch-all label of "sexual abuse". Instead it would seek to understand sexual acts within the context of such things as: the degree of love, length of relationship, the level of mutual consideration, the presence or seriousness of coercion (packet of sweeties or physical threats?), the extent to which a child is encouraged to develop their horizons and intellect, and the quantity and quality of pleasures provided.

A new genuinely democratic morality around 'consent' would mean that the child abuse industry would have to give up its dubious claim to be able to "know" the nature of child sexuality, and would have to listen to children without assuming they (we) can (or should) know children's "true" desires.

Such democratic morality approaches would allow an understanding that children's ideas about consent *may differ from our own*, albeit not usually in major ways. This understanding would be useful on all sides.

So -- if some of us are to choose "consent" as a possible arena in which to try to change things, then:

1) possible differences between adults and children's ideas of consent are important to take account of, both in our arguments and our actions,

2) we should also be aware that the concept of "consent" *is* sometimes useful and can help clarify quickly what happened in exploitative cases and to determine if coercion was used or not. But beyond that, it has a very limited ability to capture the nature of a sexual/love experience, so that...

3) we could usefully explore the ways in which the legal notion of "consent" seems to imply that sexual love is a contractual relationship, while the nature of loving sexual expression is not a capitalist-like trade, but rather *a mutual engagement*.

What the variation in the AOC and sex laws around the world **do** illustrate is that since most sex acts are variably penalised in some countries and not in others, they are unlikely to represent a deep-rooted human pathology. This truism has consequences in the light of recent UK proposals that incurable paedophiles be imprisoned without trial (see news).

Civil rights activism - back from the gulags

We need civil rights activists who can question and challenge the medical/criminal gulag system which is currently being constructed. This might best be done covertly from within existing civil rights organisations, rather than as "lone voices" - here we might usefully study the tactics of "entryism" employed in the past in the UK by far-left and animal-rights groups. ["entryism": A leftist tactic whereby members of a small far-left party would sign up, individually and over time, to membership of a union or campaigning group, in a bid to ultimately manipulate it into being a covert platform for their own ideas and proposals. Cynical and underhand, but effective when practiced by tightly structured and focussed groups.]

More generally, the state's muddled mixing of therapeutic and criminal sanctions seems open to various challenges from activists, especially on the grounds that:

1) that there may be lax commitment or evidential standards ignoring accepted standards of guilt and responsibility,

2) judicial apparatus increasingly take as their subject not *the crime*, but rather *the criminal* (wether he has been found guilty yet or not)

3) when a suspect is questioned, denial of guilt may be seen as evidence of guilt,

4) that psychiatrists retained by child protection agencies may well be ones known to be hostile to paedophiles, may only have had a few days of specific training, or may provide only rough-and-ready assessments which can be misinterpreted by badly-trained or prejudiced social workers,

5) that in a conversation with a psychiatrist, the subject might not have a warning about his rights, as would be the case elsewhere,

6) that commitment procedures may not give a proper chance for the wrongly accused to clear their name,

7) that the lengthy history of the USA's 'sexual psychopath laws' shows that authorities are likely to incarcerate those who are inconvenient or troublesome rather than dangerous,

8) although supposedly voluntary, therapy is linked to release and so compulsory in practice,

9) in some institutions, therapy programmes are not available, but it is a requirement of release that the prisoner attend them - thus trapping the prisoner in a "Catch 22" situation,

10) some (mainly USA) "therapies", such as aversion therapy, electroshocks and chemical castration have been shown to be of little therapeutic value and would also class as barbaric abuses of human rights, and have been discredited by past use against homosexuals,

11) combining therapy and imprisonment-without-trial can be seen as a "double-punishment", and

12) people are claimed to be responsible enough to be punished for an action they might commit, and yet civil commitment is based on the premise that a paedophile is not responsible, that he cannot refrain from molesting children. There is a fundamental contradiction here.

If the situation continues to deteriorate then perhaps there will also be a need for careful non-violent direct-action tactics borrowed from suffragette / peace movement / animal rights / AIDS / Earth First-style activist movements.

Certainly there will be (is) a need to have people prepared to be prison visitors, legal advisors, etc - although this is no light task, some prisoners are "no angels", and some authorities are seeking to monitor paedophile prisoners' outside contacts. Perhaps becoming an official "prison visitor" to *all* prisoners, but at a particular prison where paedophiles are known to be concentrated, might lift a visitor a little above suspicion.

Activism against the child abuse industry - highlighting the ridiculous

Perhaps the child abuse industry's humourless ideological Stalinism will ultimately undermine their own project, without us even having to raise a finger. Or perhaps it needs a push from a few more activists moving in a concerted way with other interested pressure groups - certainly there are a variety of groups which are critical of the industry, for a variety of reasons.

The child abuse industry is open to criticism on several fronts:

Firstly: the claim that they deal only in "sober objective truth" rests on the quicksands of 'satanic abuse' panics, emotive (sometimes fictitious) "survivor" testimony, dubious research methodology, false allegations, overly-wide definitions of "abuse", medieval investigative techniques, and a whole fetid delta of financially self-interested therapists, charities, con-artists (chasing the lucrative compensation and insurance claims) and divorce lawyers.

Secondly: they have made major compromises in order to win the support of the evangelical Right and other moral authoritarians around the world - shifting to emphasise "strangers/predators" (which supports patriarchal authority) rather than "incest/patriarchy" (which undermines patriarchal authority) - and this has caused huge self-destructive ideological rifts

which we might usefully exploit. The desire of feminists to shift the focus back into the patriarchal family leads them to grasp at the criminalisation of normal child sex-play among children, citing the spurious theory that all sex offences represent steps in an inexorable process of depravity - 'kisses-on-the-cheek & mild petting behind the bike sheds at age 8 leads to sex murder at age 18'. The ludicrous and cruel situations (and especially the demonization of boys) which arise from this belief should be another easy target for our activism, as should their child-blaming "vampire" theory - that the abused grow up to become abusers.

Thirdly: we can also show how evangelical child protection movements have historically been fuelled by anti-gay (and more widely, anti-men) sentiments, and point to places like Australia where this continues in virulent form today.

Fourthly: the way in which their witchhunts tend to "spread", allowing more and more general 'moral' issues to become medicalised and institutionalised, producing spin-off industries in which people's jobs are reliant on keeping "the issue" at the heart of public concern, even if that means twisting the facts and even planting media scare stories.

Those interested in history can also draw attention to the absurdity of previous so-called "scientifically based" historical panics on sex, such as those around anti child-masturbation crusades, the herpes scare, "reefer madness", even homosexuality, which have since disappeared down the plughole of history. It can also be useful to point out the many enduring aspects of our culture that have been created by paedophiles - from Alice in Wonderland through Peter Pan, to the Boy Scouts and even the foundations of British welfare state.

Sympathetic journalists can usefully try to dig behind the headlines and present the truth about "paedophiles on the net!" scare stories. This issue's Fresh Petals [news page](#) has several examples which debunk previous scares. Even those who are not journalists can copy and pass on such corrective stories to journalists when they find them blithely repeating the usual "urban myths" about "paedophiles on the net!" in their newspapers.

We can also seek out and amplify squeaks (and sometimes roars) of dissent or outrage. Hopefully this may embolden and back-up those who otherwise might be reticent about expressing or hinting at their real opinions.

Activism in art and culture - creating dissent

There is also a huge role here for artists and writers - we have always used culture as a means of poking the ribs of our oppressors.

There is a need for the occasional "exemplary protest action" which - through its powerful non-violent (even humourous) appeal - is intended to stimulate debate, "wake people up" and put pressure on governments and institutions. Again, here artists may have a role to play alongside and in combination with activists.

Our swords and daggers and pistols have always been the pen, the brush, then the camera and the typewriter. In the 1950s one of our Russian comrades even lobbed a metaphorical home-made atom-bomb into the heart of North America - Nabokov's *Lolita* - and we are still seeing the fallout today.

Our oppressors are often already buckling under the weight of the mass of contradictions they have created in their tortuous attempts to suppress "the paedophiles" - sometimes they need only to be provoked into raiding an art gallery for the whole ideological edifice to shake and totter. Attacks on art also has the advantage of making our oppressors look like philistine prudes and bigots (which of course, they often are), and incidentally provides us with acres of free publicity.

Media/net activism - making knowledge into capability

All activism, in whatever arena, will need to be "got out there", wether by the traditional media or the internet, and do so in the best manner. (These two are not mutually exclusive - increasingly the press and the net are becoming more and more intertwined in complex and reciprocal ways). Our media/communication skills should be fundamental fighting tools, while our communiques and our (as yet undeveloped, but always non-violent, always humorous) prankster

skills might also be means to create "events worth reporting". There are opportunities here for activists to be teach others their skills in these areas.

In the area of net privacy and encryption policy, there is much mileage to be had from suggesting that "the paedophile panic" has been blown out of proportion in order to serve as a smokescreen for government security agencies to pass repressive anti-privacy laws. Because, frankly, this is true.

So - plenty to do. But no-one has to do everything and no one has to do something all the time - choose what you are good at and think how it could be used to our advantage, even if it's only done once. If each person does *something*, that will be enough to "start the ball rolling".

But from what *material basis* might we start to build a wider activist project ?

Firstly: we need to eat and pay the bills. Here, the new kinds of jobs and new labour markets (especially in the unregulated wide-open internet) mean that we no longer have to work within a big organisation eager to regulate our behaviour and expression of identity. We may even wish to create small "families" of child-lovers who live and work together, using the net. Obviously these would need to be "clean" - the single biggest threat to such situations seems to be our own naive willingness to keep diaries, photos, letters, unencrypted computers, etc, which could later be used in court against us over some trumped-up charge. **Secondly:** many of us are single and have no mortgages, so we often have more free time and maybe a little more spare cash than many do. **Thirdly:** our natural inclination towards networking and de centred semi-secrecy is also useful.

Dispersed networking is not a method of organising that we might otherwise choose, but at least we "know the terrain", have the advantage of the internet, and perhaps we should even cherish and develop this method of organising - proof that it works for other radical causes will be seen on [June 18th](#) of this year. The networking structure of the internet reproduces almost exactly the autonomous clandestine cells that we have been forced to work within for the past 150 years (* with a brief hiatus from about 1969-1979, where boy-lovers disastrously tried out the "gay-lib mass-movement" model, and found out quickly that formal centralised organisations are counterproductive and their neurotic internal politics a huge drain on people's energy. But, to be more generous, that boy-love milieu *did* fade away with exemplary historical productivity - leaving a legacy of ideas, dreams, art and culture with which ideologues and would-be censors will have to deal for generations to come)

Dispersed networking has its advantages - while the FBI looks in vain through NAMBLA's letterbox for proof of an organised conspiracy to overthrow decency, the actual conspiracy (with no names, or multiple pseudonyms criss-crossed in a libel-trap lethal to journalists), and with no organisation (or thousands of them), flows and ebbs through the glowing silicon wires of the net.

Certainly the environmental and feminist movements have never had a cohesive centrally-planned strategy determined by a central committee - and yet they have significantly changed the world. An interesting factor in their achievements was that they did not explicitly set out to influence "the masses" but rather to first influence *those who have influence*.

The decentered and subtle nature of such a movement will make it hard to identify as it continues to come into being. Power is quite adept at spotting orderly cadres, banners flying, amplified speeches shouted out from bull-horns at mass rallies, followed by conspiratorial meetings in smoky back-rooms, etc., etc. They miss the slow piecemeal social changes that happen almost in secrecy (as Hakim Bey has said, 'anything that evades the idiot gaze of publicity might as well be secret') among shifting and dispersed networks.

Besides, that old style hard-Leftist marches/placards/pickets/boycotts stuff is not really suited for the new terrains we find ourselves in. It's exciting the first time, but quickly becomes boring and *dangerous*, predictably likely to attract both screaming 'survivors' and fascist bully-boys.

Towards a new family

We might even try to think of a more ambitious project than the usual forms of activism outlined above.

As the welfare systems of nations are relentlessly battered by the winds of the global economy, welfare bureaucracies try to raise the spectre of "the paedophiles" to ever more gruesome heights in order to scare open the wallets of politicians. But why not suggest they turn away from constructing their vastly expensive witchhunt-style systems of mental-health eugenics - and instead recognise that loving and well-balanced ethically informed paedophiles could actually have a central part to play in new egalitarian social structures, in ways that would help and support "new families".

We might actually *support* the family - but in a new more free, more liberated family form, one which better fits free and active women, informed children, and loving respectful men. Changes are already happening - an increasing number of children are being raised in family forms which would have been rare, perhaps unimaginable, thirty years ago.

Families of whatever kind are facing huge strain under global capitalism, so why shouldn't paedophiles play a part in building and support "new families" (or even egalitarian neo-tribal/commutarian) structures ? Being with and loving children is what we do best, after all. We might not want to be "daddies", but we make fantastic "uncles".

We could use the unique historical opportunity of the shifts in family forms to emphasise that we do not wish to see a libertine society, constituted as a supermarket of personal sexual desire in which people are consumed - "I want it, therefore I can have it". Instead we could suggest being supportive of new expanded living structures. Young people would also benefit from "the new family", being more able to express their sexuality with far less risk of falling "prey" to uncaring macho attitudes in a sexual "free-for-all".

And if the panic over "the paedophile sex demon" *is*, in large part, a veiled defence of outdated concepts of male identity, then such a "new families" project might also help to defuse some of these defensive tensions.

Of course, the burnt-out shell of the compound at Waco should alert us to the dangers of such a project becoming little more than a few paranoid communes, insular and cut off from society. But mistakes are to be learned from.

Something has to change. Anything would be better than the current witch-hunt, which damages not only us and children, but also the legal process, freedom of speech, wider social structures and even the inquisitors themselves. Children are being badly damaged by current medical and legal over-responses, and the parental paranoias these provoke. The reactions far exceed the significance of an event - and usually exceed an event in dangerous ways. Some intelligent people in the child abuse industry are aware of this, but dare not voice their doubts. They tentatively suggest tinkering with the system - but in the current climate this is likely to be largely symbolic and will solve little - it may even be counterproductive.

Rather than pervert the criminal justice process even further in order to scrape a few more unsafe convictions from the bottom of the barrel, the authorities might serve children in exploitative relationships better by some kind of non-judicial mediation and reconciliation service, which could be tiered according to level of intellect and capability, and seriousness. The tiny minority of violent attacks would of course be left to the courts, as they are now and always have been. Older children and their partners in non-coercive consenting relationships would be left alone provided there were no complaint, as has happened for decades in The Netherlands, in Spain, and to an extent in Japan.

"If winter comes, can spring be far behind?" wrote Shelley. Let's prepare the ground for a new spring.

Target Areas of the Ex Prisoner Support Group

By WR

I. Developing a Positive Self-image --

Areas of focus:

- Refusing to internalize societies image of the "pedophile."
- Learning to see oneself a political dissident, not as a mental health deviant.

II. Overcoming Social Isolation

Areas of focus:

- Maintaining or reestablishing whatever previous relationships with friends and family one is able to.
- Networking with others with similar orientations for purposes of friendship, support, education, and political action.
- Developing local support groups.

III. Establishing a Satisfying Life Style

Areas of focus:

- Establishing meaningful personal and transpersonal goals.
- Becoming knowledgeable about resources for education and support.
- Staying out of prison by finding legal means of channeling impulses.

IV. Becoming Political

Areas of focus:

- Making creative use of having been "outed."
- Finding a political task or niche that is right for oneself.
- Becoming informed.
- Learning to make the issues discussible.
- Demanding a voice.

Possible Strategies for Ex-Prisoner Support Group

1. Collect names from registered offenders list (as per Jeff's suggestion), from newspaper accounts, and from word of mouth information.
2. Send initial communication to each "offender" describing group and it's aims.
3. Develop booklet describing the importance of each of the goals.
4. Develop list of resources that might be of use to ex-prisoners. (Boy chat, etc.)
5. Collect prisoner stories (in anonymous form). Guidelines and other support for writing would be offered. These stories would be made available to others through two sources: 1. On line archives. 2. Booklet ("Prisons Speak Out") and/or newsletter.
6. Develop and distribute an ongoing newsletter.
7. Develop anonymous, on line, support groups.
8. Encourage development of local consciousness raising support and political action groups. Such groups would always have a triple focus:
 - a. Self education or consciousness raising.
 - b. Emotional and interpersonal support.
 - c. Political action.
9. Develop on-line archive of helpful written materials.

To refuse to define oneself in the terms and concepts provided by the dominant culture is the first political act in the life of any member of an oppressed group. We must provide people ongoing support for this refusal.

Emphasis would be on LEGAL and NONVIOLENT action. (Nonviolence I would support as an ethically binding principle. I am not in principle against civil disobedience. However, any overstepping of legal procedures would make and already vulnerable group a sitting target.

There are things to be done if we proceed like foxes.

The Bologna Project

A university in Italy, in conjunction with a gay group and an association for defense of families developed a research program about human problems due to sexuality in the present societies.

The university asked the gay association information about homosexuality in history, within different civilizations and cultures, prosecution or no-prosecution, different kind of sexual behaviors among homosexual and lesbian people. The research will naturally include repression or no-repression of sexuality for young people, including repression or no-repression of homosexual relationships between young males and adult males.

Prohibited sexuality in art, literature, in the movies, etc. have as well to be considered.

Such an explanation could be used in Internet for a free speaking about the usefulness of a CD-R.

At first, as there is no doubt that comments on Internet web sites are under survey of the authorities, the authorities will for sure have work before finding the university, the gay group, etc.

Secondly, maybe some p* will at least think that the separation between gay and p* is an artificial one and a recent one. And the other comments are to be give some ideas about the possible content of the projected CD-R.

This CD-R has to be made for everybody and especially for people not informed about young people and sexuality, about scientific research, about the methods and lies of the sexual abuse lobby, etc. etc.

This is really a lot of work to do, and masses of information to gather.

Just an example: before the sexual counter-revolution at the end of the seventies, boy-love, sex with minors, free sex for children, were quite often committed in gay magazines. Such comments have to be found and published again.

This is just an idea.

Another one: minor-aged prostitution in history, sex in young workers communities before 1900, etc.

PART II: INTERNAL Ipce ISSUES

Secretarial Report June, 2000

Ipce now has, as of June 10, 2000, 61 members in 17 countries.

49 of these members have an E-mail connection. 1 member receives the Newsletter on a diskette and 11 members have only a post mail address.

The IMO List, Ipce Meets Online, has 35 members at the moment.

I am able and willing to continue functioning as the Ipce Secretary at least for the coming year.

Frans.

The Voting System

On November 17, 1999, the following proposal was sent to all members, by E-mail as well as by post mail for who have no E-mail connection:

"Decisions in and about Ipce can be made by a vote among all members. A voting form shall be sent to all members by E-mail and, for those who have no E-mail connection, by posted mail. If the normal majority of the received votes (one month after sending the voting form) accepts a proposal, Ipce has decided to accept the proposal."

Note (which not everybody did) that the proposal is *not* a voting system by E-mail connected members only, but a voting system amongst *all* members.

27 Members have reacted, by E-mail as well by post mail, before February 1, 2000.

23 Members have voted to agree with the proposal, 2 members voted neutral, 2 members voted against the proposal.

Thus, a majority of the voting members agree with the proposal.

Strictly speaking, only the Meeting can make decisions according to the old rule. Now, a majority of the voting members are asking the Meeting to change the old rule (only the Meeting can decide) into a new one like in the proposal above.

Frans, Ipce Secretary.

Financial Report 1998 - 2000

Posts	July 20, 1997 > Oct 4, 1998	Oct 4, '98 > Jan 1, 2000	Jan 1, 2000 > June 10, 2000	Next	***
	Hfl	Hfl	Hfl		
STARTING BALANCE	1120,91	896,61	720,98	960,58	
INCOME					
Contributions	596,55	694,77	197,40	?	
Gifts	128,25	23,00	95,00	?	
Total Income	724,80	717,77	292,40	?	
STARTING BALANCE + INCOME	1845,71	1614,38	1013,38	960,58	
COSTS					
Newsletter E2, October 1997	-199,30				
Newsletter E3, September '98	-322,50				
Newsletters E 4,5,6 & 7, 1999		-611,20		-125,00	* 1
Costs for the Meeting 1997	-351,80			-750,00	* 2
Invitations, account & question	-75,50		-2,80		
Costs for the web sites		-200,00	-50,00		* 3 *4
Other Secretarial costs (porti)		-82,20			
Total Costs	-949,10	-893,40	-52,80	-875,00	
FINAL BALANCE	896,61	720,98	960,58	85,58	

*1 Newsletter(s) 2000

*2 Meeting 2000

*3 PFT has been paid for hosting the IMO site; this is now hosted by a free ISP.

*4 One of the members has been so kind to pay the costs of registering the domain name.

I ask the Meeting to accept this Financial Report.

The costs for the web sites will be less in the coming year.

So, depending on the costs of the next meeting, it will be sufficient **if EVERY** member pays ten Dutch guilders for the year 2000 and also for 2001.

I am able and willing to continue functioning as the Ipce Treasurer at least the coming year.

Frans.

Report of the Webmaster, June 2000

The public site

At the last Meeting in Athens on October 1998, the Meeting decided to start a public Ipce Web site and asked me to make this. I asked for six months to gather the know-how and the software etceteras. Well, on 24 April 1999 the Ipce web was ready in its first version and later on in its updates.

The web is hosted *by my private domain*, but to there is a link to it from the public address, which is < <http://www.ipce.org/> >

From 24 April 1999 until 10 January 2000, the provider reported 44,727 page views, noting that only the views above a total of 1 MB a day have been registered – so, factually, it was more.

On 10 January 2000 a counter was placed on the homepage of the site. This counter mentions, until 10 June 2000, 11,785 home page views from at least 88 countries all over the world. *That's nearly (home)page views 80 each day.* So, there have been at least 56,500 (home)page views since the start.

The more the site has been seen, the more new members Ipce got to have. Membership has grown from about 31 to 61 members.

Next year, there will be sections in other languages on the Ipce web.

I am able and willing to continue functioning as the Ipce Webmaster at least for the coming year.
Frans.

The internal list and site

Since December 1998, there has been an internal E-mail list. Membership grew from about 21 to 35.

The archive of this list has been stored at two internal web sites: one with the messages up to 2000, the other for the messages after 1 January 2000.

At first, we paid for these sites to be hosted by FPC but there appeared to be a lack of room there for all of the bytes. FPC gave only 2 MB. So, I've found a free provider with 21 MB of room.

I am able and willing to continue functioning as the Ipce List moderator and internal webmaster at least the coming year.

Frans.

PART III: SCIENTISTS SPEAK OUT

The History of Sexuality – About Foucault

Author unknown

Michel Foucault's "The History of Sexuality" pioneered queer theory. In it he builds an argument grounded in a historical analysis of the word "sexuality" against the common thesis that sexuality always has been repressed in Western society. Quite the contrary: since the 17th century, there has been a fixation with sexuality creating a discourse around sexuality. It is this discourse that has created sexual minorities.

This page only covers the views he presents in "The History of Sexuality".

In "The History of Sexuality", Foucault attempts to disprove the thesis that Western society has seen a

repression of sexuality since the 17th century and that sexuality has been unmentionable, something impossible to speak about. In the 70s, when the book was written, the sexual revolution was a fact. The ideas of the psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich, saying that to conserve your mental health

you needed to liberate your sexual energy, were popular. The past was seen as a dark age where sexuality had been something forbidden.

Foucault, on the other hand, states that Western culture has long been fixated on sexuality. We call it a repression. Rather, the social convention, not to mention sexuality, has created a discourse around it, thereby making sexuality ubiquitous. This would not have been the case, had it been thought of as something quite natural. The concept "sexuality" itself is a result of this discourse. And the interdictions also have constructive power: they have created sexual identities and a multiplicity of sexualities that would not have existed otherwise.

Confession is the basis of sexuality

Historically, there have been two ways of viewing sexuality, according to Foucault. In China, Japan, India and the Roman Empire have seen it as an "Ars erotica", "erotic art", where sex is seen as an art and a special experience and not something dirty and shameful. It is something to be kept secret, but only because of the view that it would lose its power and its pleasure if spoken about.

In Western society, on the other hand, something completely different has been created, what Foucault calls "scientia sexualis", the science of sexuality. It is originally (17th century) based on a phenomenon diametrically opposed to Ars erotica: the confession. It is not just a question of the Christian confession, but more generally the urge to talk about it. A fixation with finding out the "truth" about sexuality arises, a truth that is to be confessed. It is as if sexuality did not exist unless it is confessed. Foucault writes:

"We have since become an extraordinarily confessing society. Confession has spread its effects far and wide: in the judicial system, in medicine, in pedagogy, in familial relations, in amorous relationships, in everyday life and in the most solemn rituals; crimes are confessed, sins are confessed, thoughts and desires are confessed, one's past and one's dreams are confessed, one's childhood is confessed; one's diseases and problems are confessed;..."

This forms a strong criticism of psychoanalysis, representing the modern, scientific form of confession. Foucault sees psychoanalysis as a legitimization of sexual confession. In it, everything is explained in terms of repressed sexuality and the psychologist becomes the sole interpreter of it. Sexuality is no longer just something people hide, but it is also hidden from themselves, which gives the theological, minute confession a new life.

"Coming out" as a concept did not exist when Foucault wrote "The History of Sexuality", but this process of confessing homosexuality can surely be interpreted as an expression of this urge to confess. There seems to be a compulsion to reveal one's sexuality to confirm its existence in our society. In Ars erotica, a very different view is held, and people are content to let it remain a secret in the positive sense of the word.

The reason sexuality should be confessed is to be found in the Christian view of it. It was not, as it is today, seen as a strong, obvious force, but as something treacherous, something only to be found by careful introspection.

Therefore every detail had to be laid forth in confession; every trace of pleasure experienced had to be examined to find the traces of sin.

In this attention to details the reason sexuality is given such importance in our society is to be found. Making sexuality something sinful did not make it disappear. Quite the contrary: it was reinforced and became something to be noticed everywhere.

Power relations

There was also an element of social control in this. A power relation was created between the preacher and the confessant, between the psychoanalyst and his patient. Power relations are to Foucault central to any analysis of society, and this is especially true for sexuality. Power relations are formed in all relations where differences exist.

What Foucault means by power is not necessarily what is ordinarily meant by the word. It is something ubiquitous and cannot be thought of as dual, as creating a division between those dominating and those being dominated. Power in Foucault's meaning of the word is not an exclusively negative force. He claims that we have had a juridical view of power in our society; we tend to see it as something negative, oppressing, defining what is not to be done. Instead, power is the basis of Foucault's analysis of society. Common power relations related to sexuality are, in addition to the ones mentioned between the one who confesses and the one that receives the confession, those between teacher and pupil, between parent and child, and between doctor and patient.

Sexuality in the 19th century

Thomas Kuhn is a philosopher of the history of science, who claims we should understand how what is now seen as prejudice could be accepted as science.

With enlightenment, the view of sexuality as something sinful to be confessed mutated. It was adapted to modern demands of rationality by turning itself into a science. Foucault makes a strong distinction between what we would still today call science and a prejudicial doctrine on human procreation.

"Comparing these discourses on human sexuality to those from the same epoch on animal and vegetal reproduction, the difference is surprising. Their weak tenability - I won't even say in scientificity, but in elementary logic, places them apart in the history of knowledge."

The doctrines on sexuality postulated several "unnatural" sexual behaviors. In the 16th century, the focus was on regulating the sexuality of the married couple, ignoring other forms of sexual relations, but now other groups were identified: the sexuality of children, criminals, mentally ill and gays.

"The perverse" became a group, instead of an attribute. Sexuality became seen as the core of some peoples' identity. Homosexual relations had been seen as a sin that could be committed from time to time, but now a group of "homosexuals" emerged. Foucault writes: "The sodomite was a recidivist, but the homosexual is now a species."

"The homosexual of the 19th century became a person: a past, a history and an adolescence, a personality, a life style; also a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mystical physiology. Nothing of his full personality escapes his sexuality."

Seeing gays as a group is now taken for granted, but before the 18th century the idea would never have occurred to ask the question whether homosexuality is a function of heredity or of upbringing. It was simply not seen as being a fundamental part of the person, but instead as an action, something s/he did.

But homosexuality was not the only object of study for the medical "science". Foucault identifies four reoccurring themes:

- + The body of women became sexualized because of its role as a child bearer. The concept "hysteria" was invented and seen as a result of sexual problems.

- + The pedagogization of the sexuality of children. Children should at all costs be protected from the dangers inherent in masturbation and other sexuality.

- + The socialization of reproduction. The importance of sexuality for reproduction is recognized and put into context in the study of population growth.

- + The sexuality of adults becomes an object of study and all forms of "perverse" aberrations are seen as dangers.

Foucault emphasizes that the aim of these new moral codes was not to abolish all forms of sexuality, but instead to preserve health and procreation. Many forms of sexuality were seen as harmful and they wanted to protect health and the purity of the race. A mixture of ideas on population

growth, venereal diseases and heredity ("degeneration" was to be avoided) created the idea that many forms of sexual conduct were dangerous.

Constructivism

Now that sexual actions were being identified and their naturalness and healthiness was analyzed, the concept of "sexuality" was created. Foucault comments on the four phenomena mentioned above:

"What are these strategies about? A struggle against sexuality? Or an attempt to control it? ... Actually, it is rather the production of sexuality. It should not be conceived of as a distinction founded in nature that power attempts to subdue, or as a dark domain that knowledge attempts to gradually uncover. It is the name that can be given to a historical measure...

This view makes Foucault one of the first constructivists" in this area, claiming that sexuality and sexual conduct is not a natural category, having a foundation in reality. Instead it is a question of social constructions, categories only having an existence in a society, and that probably are not applicable to other societies than our own.

This is why we should not speak of "homosexuality" in, for example, antique Greece. What we now call homosexuality cannot exist outside our specific cultural context. The same goes for all sexuality. Sexual intercourse is necessary for procreation, but that does not mean that sexuality, comprising and theorizing about all erotic behavior, is a natural or necessary category. Sexuality is more than sexual behavior. The largest part of its meaning lies in its cultural connotations.

It is this view that has given "The History of Sexuality" its significance. For the first time, sexuality is analyzed as a social construction, a perspective making it possible to study the origins and the development of our view of sexuality in a totally new way.

KOINOS MAGAZINE #24 (1999/4)

Intimate relationships between young people and adults

Are there criteria for a positive experience?

Frank van Ree

Both sexual abuse of children and consensual love relationships between young people and adults are found in all cultures and in all periods of history. Although research statistics show otherwise, at present the notion has taken hold in many countries that a difference in age inevitably results in damaging consequences. Some time ago, an extensive exchange of ideas took place in the newsletter published by the National Workgroup JORis (Younger-Older Relationships, intimacy, sexuality) of the Dutch Association for Sexual Reform (NVSH), about the criteria which an intimate relationship with a young person must meet in order to preclude harm at a later age, based on positions which had been formulated earlier by the Danish Pedophile Association. Remedial educationalist Dr. Frans Gieles took the position in this discussion that in the present situation adults should act with restraint in pedophile and ephebophile relationships, because they bear the responsibility also for the damage which social rejection (whether or not after the fact) can bring about.

We asked the retired Dutch psychiatrist Dr. Frank van Ree about his view of this. Dr. Van Ree has written many publications and doesn't shy away from taking an independent position. As this article shows, he has passed on this way of thinking to his children as well.

Child or adolescent

The concepts child and adolescent are commonly used without further characterization. Still one can recognize clear differences between ephebophilia and pedophilia. Ephebophilia can be described as an erotic and sexual preference by adult men for the budding young male person, that is, the young person shortly after puberty (ephebe = youth, half-adult). Before puberty we are still concerned with children. Ephebophilia is in the transitional area between homophile pedophilia and adult homosexuality. Although the one and the other may seem to be clearly defined, appearances are deceptive. Of course we are familiar with signs of bodily maturation, such as beard growth, change of voice, ejaculation, etc. But the development of each of these characteristics takes place at a different

pace for each individual. The age at which these developments is apparent is definitely much earlier for some boys than for others. It is impossible or very difficult to put limits on the concepts of emotional development and maturation. Moreover, not all psychic functions develop at the same rate. Still, we make use of these distinctions in spite of their fuzziness. Of central significance is the fact that the child is erotically attractive for the pedophile and because of this is sexually approachable; by maturation to a youth, the child loses this attractiveness.

Harmful actions and psychological maturation

In the current, often very intense discussions concerning sex between adults and young people, the question of possible harmfulness comes up again and again. It is obvious that physical abuse, threats, coercion, and similar transgressions are harmful and deserve to be punished. These matters, which in fact would fall under criminal law even if there were no specific morals laws, need no further discussion.

The question of harmfulness is complex. Cuddling, kissing, caressing, and masturbation belong to the normal erotic world of experience of babies and small children, and these behaviors retain their significance for young people and adults. In many publications, non-violent sexual behavior, considered to be inappropriate to the phase of psychic maturation, is also considered in principle to be harmful, even when the young person (or the child) consents to such behavior or invites it. To comment on this it is first necessary to answer three specifically related questions.

- 1) To what extent is the young person able to give or withhold consent? One tends to dismiss the idea that small children have any possibility of consenting or dissenting, because they have little or no verbal abilities. Even though this argument may seem to be very convincing, it is - even when it has to do with children - a misleading position. From the first moment, the newborn give clear signs of contentment and dissatisfaction. Crying, kicking, screaming - there's a whole repertoire of behaviors to express hunger, pain, or other frustrations. It goes without saying that the possibility of expressing consent or dissent is available to verbal children and adolescents. Provided there are no serious psychological deficiencies, consent is always possible in ephebophile contacts.
- 2) To what extent can the young person be overwhelmed by desires of the older partner which he or she is not yet ready for or for which he or she has not yet reached an appropriate degree of maturity? Is it for example imaginable that the inability to satisfy the desires of the adult may lead to feelings of having failed, and through these to feelings of inferiority or anxiety? That could be the case when pressure to display the desired behavior is reinforced by the older partner by increased insistence or even coercion. But when the adult lets himself be guided by signs of consent or dissent from the younger partner, it is hard to imagine that harm will result from the situation itself. There are also no signs of harm resulting from sexual behavior as a result of frequent occurrences at present of sexual interaction between young people in the secondary schools.
- 3) Could there perhaps be an issue of premature sexual enlightenment? It is often claimed that harm could result from the child or adolescent becoming aware of affairs which are not yet appropriate for such a young person. He or she is not yet ready for it, one often hears. There is also the fear that one might be 'putting ideas into their heads'. I remember something which happened back in the 1960s with our oldest son, then five or six years old. I no longer remember exactly what led up to it, but in any case he had asked me a question having to do with where children come from. This was in the time that the so-called sexual revolution was taking place. As psychiatrist and 'modern' father I was of the opinion that a good and detailed answer to his question was needed. I therefore reacted with a very elaborate exposition, not only concerning the anatomical aspects of coitus, fertilization, and so forth, but also about the feelings which might accompany sexual acts, etc. For some time he followed my explanation with full attention, which spurred me on to further elaborations. I didn't notice that my 'neurotic' need to explain everything went far beyond his question and intention. This only became clear to me when he interrupted my verbal barrage with the question, 'Papa, are you going to make pancakes this evening?' He was apparently not yet ready for a large part of my tutorial, or in any case had no trace of interest in it. But my stories didn't cause him any suffering and he showed no signs of harm when I went beyond the boundaries of his need. To the contrary, he only showed a healthy appetite.

I still remember the day the same son turned twelve. At that time a photographic book had come out from the NVSH, in which a Swedish couple was depicted in a variety of positions. These were photographs which were no more pornographic than the Venus de Milo. I had bought this book for him. At his birthday celebration for which my in-laws were present, I presented him this little work. Grandpa and grandma fell silent, but gave no criticism. At that very moment our youngest son, eight years old at the time, came into the room. The older brother had the booklet open on his lap and was leafing through the pages. I thought, 'What now? How will the younger boy react to this?' The answer came soon enough. Watching along over his brother's shoulder, he took notice of a rather complicated position, and said, 'Jeez, now *that* looks hard to do.' And with that comment his interest in these circus acrobatics had passed.

The adult who is looking for signs of interest and desire on the part of the young person in intimate contacts will not pressure the partner psychologically. With the proper concern for the young partner, the older person will adapt himself to the desires of the child, just as adult partners in fact (are supposed to) do with each other. It is entirely unclear to me which physically harmless bodily acts, provided they are not experienced as unpleasant, would be able to cause psychic harm. There seems to be a kind of superstition, much as there once was about masturbation, from which one could contract every imaginable serious and minor sickness. Of course that was never proven, but it was nevertheless a myth propagated even by doctors for years. 'Sex with young people', provided it is directed to their desires and capabilities, is in my opinion not only harmless, but can play an important role in the learning process which would lead to a good quality sex life later.

Discussion within the NVSH

Van der Vorst said in *Nieuwsbrief* (Newsletter) 44 of the National Workgroup JORis of the NVSH: 'Child sex with grownups is allowed; grownup sex with children is not allowed.' That is definitely a good position. One can apply the same statement to 'sex with young people'.

In our present-day society, legislation and public opinion assume another, predominantly disapproving point of view concerning sex between adults and young people or children. According to the law, one attains majority at the age of eighteen, or, if one marries sooner, at an earlier age. However, sexual majority is set legally in our land at sixteen years of age. Recently the Justice Committee of the Dutch Parliament approved a proposal for regulations in which the age of sexual majority would be changed from sixteen years to fourteen years. A boy or girl between fourteen and sixteen years of age would then be able to have sexual relations, on the condition however that the other person not be more than five years older. Even if the age of sexual majority were in fact to be set at fourteen years, a man of nineteen or older would still be subject to punishment for sex with a young adolescent. The 'older adult' seems in this respect to be seen unremittingly as a potential danger. Such an older person can, by abuse of power, become a sexual abuser. As E. Van Ree stated in 1997 in a contribution to the Dutch daily newspaper *NRC-Handelsblad*: 'There seems to be something remarkable taking place with the phenomenon of 'sexual abuse', or at least with society's feeling about it. In recent years (and since the Dutroux affair the pace has quickened) there seems to have formed almost a consensus which, although it is never explicitly mentioned, nevertheless can be formulated quite simply: every sexual relationship between two people who enjoy structurally unequal positions of power is equivalent to abuse. This proposition applies to physicians and patients, sports coaches and athletes, pastors and parishioners, and last but not least, of course: adults and minors. And the proposition has another consequence, namely that sexual abuse is also automatically the worst kind of abuse.' In a situation where the media and public opinion equate 'sex with young people and children' with 'sexual abuse', his comments also apply to the first concept.

It is alarming to realize what a stalemate this neo-Victorianism leads to. After all, in this situation, the older person who has erotic feelings for a child and desires to express them sexually, has to suppress such feelings with possible consequences such as depression and anxiety, or to covertly act on these feelings and in doing so be in violation of the law. The frequent consequences of the latter choice are widely known. Horrible emotional conflict for the younger partner when legal investigations and procedures follow, possibly becoming an outcast in the eyes of one's agemates who avoid such a 'dirty sinner', feelings of guilt and self-condemnation because one was an accomplice in something that apparently was very wrong, etc. I don't bring into consideration the consequences for the adult of the assignment of punishment. It is equally well known that the adult, under threat of many negative reactions and giving in to panic, coerces the younger partner to remain silent or even compels silence in the most horrible manner. At this time even acts of violence by ordinary citizens are not unthinkable. Whatever the man or woman may do who is erotically and sexually attracted to a young person, the

consequences are negative. As long as condemnation of all 'sex with young people and children' continues to be the guiding principle of the society, there will be a stalemate. If adults approach young people sexually in an appropriate manner, that could be beneficial from an educational point of view and could help to break down the unwholesome taboos. But at the same time, existence of these taboos means that such an approach within the present social context is potentially harmful. A decision not to act means depriving the child of part of his development, whereas deciding to act may later cause the child much suffering. Which leads to the question: where do we go now?

In 1996/97 an extensive interchange of ideas took place in the National Workgroup JORis of the NVSH. An important theme was the possibility of harm as a result of pedophile and/or ephrophile contacts. In *Nieuwsbrief* 45 Gieles wrote an important contribution on this subject. He was motivated by having received letters in which men commented on sexual contacts which they had experienced years earlier as adolescents. Among other things they wrote that, in spite of the voluntary nature of the contact and the proper manner of action on the part of the adult who was involved, negative feeling later developed about the contact. Noteworthy is that this was also the case when the experiences at the time that they happened were at least for a part positive. The writer analyzed a series of letters which he had received concerning the negative retrospective evaluations of these experiences, looking for common themes. He found nine of them. Of these nine there were three which indicated that feelings of shame and guilt had developed later, which could have to do with the prevailing taboo (and in fact probably did): 'I have the feeling that something happened which wasn't right', 'I was ashamed and felt guilty', 'I couldn't talk with anyone about it, the secret came between me and my parents and friends'. Another theme actually had nothing specifically to do with issues of pedophilia or ephrophilia: 'It went too quickly, I would rather have discovered these things slowly on my own'. I have also heard this complaint many times in my psychiatric practice concerning contacts between heterosexual adults. Young women as well can experience their (first) male partner as being too impatient and pushy or dominant. The rest of the complaints were chiefly reactions such as those which occur following all possible situations (traumatic as well as others) of a strictly non-sexual nature: loss of spontaneity, loss of self-confidence, disturbing nocturnal fantasies, school problems and concentration disturbances, drug use, anger, etc. Some of these symptoms fit depressive conditions as well.

To put it another way: the development of most of these symptoms seems to be not at all specific to the preceding sexual experiences and doesn't necessarily have to have any direct connection with them. The link seems more likely to be found in the 'sense of sin' and feeling of guilt, both from the environment beforehand and brought on after the fact. As Gieles put it: 'The sources of these experiences of course don't lie only in the thing which happened itself. That thing becomes interpreted after the fact. The frame of reference for this interpretation is encountered in the environment or is presented by it.' Incidentally, Gieles is somewhat unclear here when he states that the source is also 'the own inner self - or the young person's own upbringing'. He goes on to add: 'How modern the family may be, the association 'sex=dirty' is deeply embedded in our entire culture.' This means that Gieles couples the 'own' inner self directly to that which is brought in by upbringing and culture, through which it is partly not one's own.

Of special importance here are the four criteria which pedophile relationships should satisfy, listed in *Nieuwsbrief* 45, as Gieles summarizes them, and given here in abbreviated form:

- 1) Who is in charge?: the child should always be in charge of his or her own sexuality.
- 2) Initiative: the initiative for sexuality should always come from the child him- or herself.
- 3) Freedom: the child should be able at any given moment to remove himself or herself from the situation.
- 4) Openness: the child may not be burdened with a secret.

This is not the place to discuss all four criteria, but in closing I will give some attention to the fourth, concerning openness. The necessity for this is clear enough. But, as Gieles himself indicates: 'there is no place where these matters can be discussed. (...) I find,' continues the writer, 'that this fourth criterion now, in this time and this society cannot be met (any longer).' And he closes, 'This implies that I do not allow myself to have sexual contacts with young people.' An extremely conscientious conclusion and one worthy of respect, based on a realistic analysis of the present reality. But... this conclusion means in fact respecting and maintaining an unwanted taboo!

If the (sub)cultural context, through the absurd taboo, stands in the way of the sexual upbringing and development of the child, then it must be done away with. That means that one can not make do

with simple abstinence, but than one also must put up a fight against that taboo, if possible through providing information, publications and lectures, as Gieles does through his contribution to the newsletter. For those pedophiles and ephebophiles who want to actualize their desires, the only possibility seems to be moving to another culture where such a taboo doesn't exist, or at least not to the same degree. And by this I do not mean becoming a periodic client of child prostitution in poor third world countries. That is not loving involvement with children, but sexual exploitation.

To close, I would like to support Gieles' criticism of many of the helping professions, which in their views and procedures in fact show that they stand behind the taboo. He puts this into words as follows: 'At present, members of the helping professions routinely ask about sexual experiences. If these existed in the youthful years, and were shared with an adult, then the standard conclusion follows that this must be the cause of all miseries. This 'solution' is accepted willingly, for now one doesn't have to look at oneself any more, nor to take a critical look at the parents and the schools, nor even to look critically at the society as a whole, which offers both violence and sex on a mass scale. The problem is now considerably simplified: the scapegoat has been found. The routine solution is now to file a complaint with the police, 'to get done with it'. And then, now almost routine, on to Victim Assistance for damage claims...'

It is thus more necessary than ever that the helping professionals join in guarding against further intensification of the witchhunt and reconsider the origin of their theoretical insights.

Abuse by Definition?

The Taboo as Excuse

Frank van Ree
In: KOINOS # 25

In Koinos 24, psychiatrist Dr. Frank van Ree unfolded his point of view concerning intimate relationships between young people and adults and concerning criteria which distinguish good and damaging contacts. We have received a variety of positive reactions to that article. Van Ree became involved with this subject through his psychiatric practice as well as through his close personal contacts with Dr. Edward Brongersma, who passed away in 1998. It is a source of concern to him that society's view of pedophile and ephebophile relationships has become so simplistic. We asked him to make a new contribution taking a closer look at the ultimate taboo of our time.

The words eroticism and sexuality are used frequently. Their definitions differ in various dictionaries, as does the manner in which they are used in the professional literature. There is particularly a great lack of clarity because these terms are often used interchangeably or defined in a way that their meanings overlap. Sometimes an attempt is made to connect the sexual specifically with certain bodily areas or organs. But here as well all manner of discussions arise concerning where the boundaries lie. In the interest of clarity and to avoid misunderstandings, I have formulated two definitions which indicate in which manner I employ these two concepts.

Eroticism means to me the admiration of and the desire for the bodily manifestation (corporality) of the partner. Sexuality is the name I give to the (bodily) behavior which gives form to that admiration and desire.

Eroticism is associated by many people with something sublime, a quality which also brings to mind platonic relationships. However, as soon as the bodily/sexual aspect plays a role, for many people, certainly in our western culture, feelings of shame and awareness of guilt and sinfulness play along. Sexuality is commonly subject to taboos.

Many sex taboos exist, albeit that every period of history and every culture has its own variations. By taboos I mean prohibitions for which rational arguments are lacking or in any case offer insufficient explanation. Sometimes they have to do with certain orientations - for example, homosexuality - or with specific behaviors, such as fellatio, anal intercourse, etc. Some are seldom absent, such as the incest taboo. Violation of taboos is accompanied by guilt feelings, awareness of sinfulness, and more or less anxiety, particularly if clear sanctions are prescribed. One who thinks back on his or her own childhood years remembers the forbidden games by which the realization of

their forbidden character was in fact present, but by which there was also pleasure and positive excitement. Insight into the reasons for most of the prohibitions was lacking. Much of this was labeled as 'doing something dirty', 'being naughty', or filthiness and sinfulness by parents and other caretakers.

There have been various theories developed to explain those taboos. Important examples are the depth psychology theories of Freud and his followers, and the sociological theories of Parsons and later thinkers. The psychoanalysts based their empathic explanations principally on the struggle between passionate impulses ('the pleasure principle') and the limitations which are put on them by the outside world ('the reality principle'), particularly in connection with the triangular relationships between parents and children (Oedipus complex, Electra complex, etc.). The sociological explanations direct themselves to the development of social rules in service of the preservation of the group of origin and the establishment of larger group ties in service of the preservation of the species. These theories were considered especially important for the origin of the incest taboo. As for special technical taboos the connection between the eliminatory and sexual function of the urogenital system, through which hygienic factors play a role, is often alluded to. Whatever the case may be, history shows that taboos sometimes kept gaining ground (for example the incest taboo) and were sanctioned with increasing intensity and atrocities, but in other periods in fact diminished in strength. Thus for us the taboo on homosexuality subsided and the provisions concerning it specifically have disappeared from our criminal laws.

It's always other people

Whoever looks closely at the present-day rules and regulations concerning sexuality runs immediately into the difficulty that, in spite of the recent increase in openness, even talking about sex is still to some extent taboo. To phrase it differently: we still run up against what effectively amounts to secrecy. It is striking how on the one hand everything is shown and discussed in the media, while on the other hand most people act as though they themselves are not involved in such matters and have no interest in it. Sex films have a huge turnover, porno movies have high viewer ratings, but nowhere are videotapes to be seen lying around, and the viewers who enjoy these performances seldom discuss them openly with each other. The Dutch cabaret performer Youp van 't Hek had an observation about this: 'The telephone sex business turns over huge sums of money. But if I ask my acquaintances and friends whether they ever make use of it, they all say 'no'. And then I think, 'Am I making all of those calls by myself?' This discussion taboo goes further than just the 'amusement applications'. Psychotherapists who (rightly or not) in the course of their work keep their own lives out of the discussion, by doing so promote the continued existence of many taboos and stigmatize their clients as sexual deviants or perverts. After all, these clients do or long for that which therapists do not (appear to) desire or carry out. It is only very recently that homosexuality has been crossed off the list of disturbances as described in the psychiatric classification system (DSM). Before then the helping professions busied themselves with combating and treating this 'sickness'. For that matter, there are at present, notably in the United States, powerful forces which are attempting to reverse this development.

More than a taboo

While the breaking of taboos has to do with acting counter to social norms and values, and ethics are at issue, a very different discussion is going on currently about 'sex with children and/or young people'. At present the very mention of it provokes many people to indignation, anxiety, and anger. The fact of the matter is, one associates this concept not purely with the taboo, but much more with criminality. Pedophilia and ephebophilia are not merely inappropriate, unrespectable, deviant, or even morbid minority orientations, but criminal pursuits. 'Pedophiles and ephebophiles are child molesters, child abusers, child threateners, and above all child rapists and murderers.' That is what the media seem to report to us. Of course the indignation over rapes and murders which have actually happened is appropriate, as is the call for measures to protect children and young people. That is all the more so because punishment and treatment of these and other sexual delinquents in the past seem to have failed or at least to have been inadequate, so that recidivism often is the result. But one makes a serious mistake when one makes a specific connection between criminal behavior and 'sex with children or young people'. There are no grounds whatsoever to assume that pedophiles and ephebophiles should specifically tend toward (aggressive) criminal behavior. Tender and aggressive expressions are found in every orientation. There are men who rape and murder adult women or men. There are violent homo- and heterosexuals. There are very aggressive lesbians, who sometimes direct their violent acts against children. Aggressivity and violent action are not orientation specific. It is in fact predominantly men, regardless of orientation, who abuse their physical power and commit

violent crimes. Women who are involved in violent sexual contacts with children are commonly dragged into it by their male partners! Just where the masculine tendency to aggression comes from is still open to discussion. Of course the socialization of macho behavior is often assumed to be one of the causative factors. But it is certainly not impossible that genetic factors play a role. (Physical) aggressivity is a behavior which is connected both with person and situation, but is not an orientation characteristic. It is more characteristic of men than of women.

News value

Why has the emphasis in the discussion of ephebophilia and pedophilia come to lie so one-sidedly on the subject of criminality?

Undoubtedly the reporting in the media plays an important role here. The media have the task of informing the consumer, in which certainly as much openness as possible should be attempted. That means that even unpleasant news cannot be excluded from mention. Exactly this kind of information has great news value. Particularly calamitous matters such as wars, disasters, and murder make a great impression. That which is not problematical has generally less effect. It is not the media who are guilty of tainted reporting as much as those readers and viewers who have an enhanced sensitivity for the sensational, and who base their opinion principally on the information which goes with it.

But it is more than just the media. It is striking to what extent strongly biased publications have appeared for some time now in the legal and medical professional literature. Even in research, negative descriptions of concepts form the starting point. Erotic feeling for children and young people and sexual contacts with them - pedophile and ephebophile behavior - are labeled as abuse and sexual abuse from the beginning of the research, thus before one has researched their effects. In the United States, words such as pedophilia and ephebophilia are hardly used, but rather one speaks of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). From the very start it is a matter of abuse, perpetrators, and victims. In much of the work reported as sexological research, scientists forget the need for impartiality. Pedophilia and ephebophilia are even nearly exclusively judged by examination of material originating from legal cases and psychiatric files, that is, data originating from negative selections.

Power differences

Even if we could explain some of the current distortion by news gathering and biased scientific research, the very character of ephebophilia and pedophilia plays a role. After all, these involve contacts and relationships between parties who are fundamentally unequal where power is concerned. That difference in power takes many forms. First of all, the adult is generally physically stronger, certainly when young children are involved. For that matter, men in adult heterosexual relationships are generally physically stronger than women. In addition, for very young children, verbal ability will be less or even entirely lacking. Still this doesn't mean that the child or young person is unable to make disapproval known! But what is very important is that the young child lacks knowledge of social norms and values and their significance. Nor can the adult partner explain such matters, at least not to a small child. It is possible to recognize (emotional) rejection of consent in small children, but there can never be any question of informed consent. However unfairly, for many people these differences mean that pedophile and ephebophile contacts and relationships always involve abuse of power. The structural power difference is translated into a sort of necessary abuse of power.

The child or young person can more easily be misled and abused through these factors than the more mature person. But the *possibility* of deception and abuse may not be identified with actual deceit and abuse.

Lack of differentiation

The current animosity toward pedophiles and ephebophiles is very difficult to counter. This is due first of all to the fact that people with these sexual preferences have been forced into silence. In the current atmosphere of condemnation and contempt, who can say anything about experiences which are not negative? Just as was once the case with homosexuals, pedophiles and ephebophiles are now objects of repression. Their situation makes it nearly impossible for them to make known anything positive about their experiences. One finds only infrequently descriptions in the belles lettres of what are often very tender and moving love relationships. But those researchers who work with statistical methods pay no attention to these or consider such descriptions to be false romanticism and deception.

As for the power advantage of adults, one encounters generalizations almost unremittingly, regardless of whether the contacts involve babies, small children, pubescent youngsters, or older adolescents. Consider for example how great the difference in maturity is between a five- and a

fifteen-year-old. This lack of differentiation is characteristic of much of the reporting in the media and also of a considerable portion of the articles in psychological, psychiatric, and legal professional publications.

One can't help but notice that people with a preference for children and young people, in spite of the intense criticism and threat to which they are subjected, deliberate within their own groups about what they should do. They have formulated in various publications the minimum requirements which relationships with children and young people should meet. A number of them have committed themselves to abstinence because they assume - correctly - that public condemnation would cause (secondary) harm to the young person or the child. It is odd, to say the least, that professional publications and the media have little or nothing to say about this. One hopes that an end will be put to the current one-sided negative presentation of these matters. Above all, we should not let ourselves be dragged along any further by the witch-hunt which has developed in America and which has now infected European countries as well.

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Four questions and answers

http://nerve.com/voicebox/puberty/Homes_Answer1.html

Question 1:

Are children inherently sexual beings?

I have a cousin who greets me at family reunions by remarking, year after year, on how flat my stomach is -- it isn't -- and hitting me there, hard. That's irritating. It's also irritating to question the question, but I think we're in trouble if we begin by asking whether or not children are inherently sexual beings.

The question embodies a proposition that is both self-evident and false. On the one hand, are little people the focus of the way we energize ourselves about sex in this culture? Sure. They mobilize erotically our talk, our fears, our activities, our dreamy idealism, our darkest violence -- our movie-makers, our police, and our talk-shows. Duh! On the other hand, putting the question this way is like asking whether pretty people are attractive. The "inherently" in our question gives a slam-bang, blaring and fake solidity to two very dubious terms -- "child" and "sexual," both of which are artificial, relatively recent inventions.

So far, so tedious. But what if, in our culture, "the child" and "the sexual" are not independent terms to begin with? What if we can hardly think of one without the other, if they grew up together and are, in our discourse and in our minds, inseparable? I think the modern child and modern ideas of what constitute sexual allure and even sexual activity were developed only yesterday -- in the last two centuries. I think, further, that these two new manufactures are overlapping: ponder, for instance, what our culture does with ideas of "innocence," how "innocence" gives us something to sanitize and pant after, something we can pretend to protect while exploiting it to the hilt.

"The child" helps define what we think of as "sexual," and vice versa. That's our inheritance, lousy as it may be; and we won't get rid of it by passing more three-strikes laws, stinging a few pedophiles and constructing monsters who actually see a connection between kids and sex, a connection we say (loudly-loudly) does not and cannot exist. But it is a connection forged by our culture and basic to it.

Our obsession with sexual and sexualized children is so intense we need to displace, disguise and deny it. To help us out, we have instituted a form of story-telling, a sanctimonious porn-babble designed to eroticize kids, blame it on somebody else and keep the talk going.

There's nothing "inherent" about any of this: it's not nature doing it but us. It's us keeping the cultural machinery oiled and humming. We have -- bad news for the kids -- come to depend on it.

Question 2:

Most of you seem to agree that child sexuality is natural and normal on its own, but becomes problematic in the context of our culture. Do late-twentieth-century images (e.g. Calvin Klein ads, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Barbie, etc.), books (most famously, Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret, Forever and other books by Judy Blume), and films (Kids, the new Lolita, PG-rated movies with sex and nudity) involving child/adolescent sexuality promote or encourage kids to become sexually active before their time? Do they influence the rates of teen pregnancy and STDs, and the age at which kids lose their virginity today? Or, could it be argued that they promote positive sexual identities, comfort with one's own changing body, better gender/sexual relations and a freedom to ask questions?

Certainly we surround ourselves with images and stories of tantalizing and erotic kids. What would we do without them? To blame "the media," though, is one of the lamest and least imaginative bits of pass-the-buck scapegoating one can indulge in. The media, books, movies are not an unmoved "cause," rather a part of an ecology of desire, a complex symbiotic system that circulates in and through us.

We'd love to blame somebody else (Hollywood anyone?), but these pictures and tales amount to cultural scripts that have no single point of origin: they both answer to *and* direct our erotic energies. Of course these scripts are instructing kids on how to be seductive to adults, just as they are instructing adults on how to find kids sexy; but the images and pictures do not have a stable source -- not Hollywood, not TV, not the White House, not authors, not ads, not perverts. If we were to go after a source, we'd be better off looking at me and you -- especially you.

For all our self-righteous fuming, we need both these images and the indignation. After all, they give us a chance to blame somebody else and thus let ourselves off the hook; we exercise a satisfying and gratuitous righteous indignation while assuring ourselves that these images and stories will keep coming to us in a steady supply. We wouldn't have this "problem" of sexy kids if it didn't do a lot for us.

We even invent problems to exercise ourselves over: stranger abductions and "international child pornography rings" are notorious and never-fail sources for stories we batten on. In our own Question #2 is embedded another of these noxious energizers: this suggestion of increased teen pregnancy. Nonsense. Teens are getting pregnant at about the same rate they have all century long; we simply can't keep ourselves from shifting attention from real systemic problems (the way teens are treated) to, at best, symptoms (pregnancy). We rage about sexual abuse of children, a comparatively minor issue, and ignore the fact that children are, in horrifying numbers, beaten, ignored, abandoned and denied food and hope. This way we can babble on in our sneaky self-titillating way, keep our voyeuristic distance, and make sure nothing is done about the real problems coming down on kids.

Question 3:

Do you think work like that of photographers Sally Mann, Jock Sturges and/or David Hamilton is positive, innocuous or pernicious in its effect on the viewer? Do you think the photos were intended to be sexual or is this perception something our oversexed culture brings to them? (Please feel free to incorporate your reaction to Noelle Oxenhandler's essay, "Nole Me Tangere," in your answer.)

Works of art -- even works of non-art -- do not and cannot dictate the way they are read or viewed. They are subject to interpretive codes and practices current in the culture, codes and practices works of art neither control nor contain. These photographs are, in themselves, neither pernicious nor positive, innocuous nor poisonous, beautiful nor repellent. The way we respond to them, what we say they mean and do, says everything about us and the way we have been taught to look; it says nothing about the works. This is true always, but it is most obviously true when we are most anxious to take our response and put it "into" (i.e. blame it on) the work: if we feel queasy, the work is sick; if we feel exalted, the work is fine; if we feel aroused, the work is pornographic (or purchased, depending on our politics); if we can't make heads or tails of it, the work is muddled.

This is true even of our discourse. Naomi Wolf finds herself feeling -- well, however it is she feels, she takes that feeling and socks it onto what *others* have said, mounts her stilts, then exits.

It's all in how one sees or reads, and one sees or reads largely according to the complex and subtle instructions absorbed from one's culture. But, there are, even within these instructions, a wide range of possibilities; and we are not compelled to read anything mimetically, pornographically, hysterically.

Take, for instance, Sally Mann's *Popsicle Drips* (1985), a photograph of her son Emmett, seen from the neck down only, body in a sinuous arch, penis prominent, speckled with what the title tells us are harmless stains but which some have figured look like blood. There are, following Wallace Stevens, at least thirteen ways of looking at that photo:

1. As a formalist study in lines and geometric patterning;
2. As a technical approach to lighting aesthetics;
3. As an in-joke and technically reflexive play with cutting and highlighting;
4. As a commentary on Edward Weston's famous '20s photograph of his son (also a nude without a head);
5. As a commentary on traditional nudes-in-art, both paying homage to and mocking this tradition;
6. As a pornographic work;
7. As a comment on and critique of pornography;
8. As a tribute to her son's ease, freedom, larky-spiritedness;
9. As a beheading/castration of the hated male;
10. As a joke on penis-envy (lo, it's nothing but a melting popsicle!);
11. As revenge on male objectification of women's bodies (take that! no head!);
12. As a joke on male fears and fantasies of castrating women;
13. As a tone poem, bringing forth idyllic music and poetry . . .

And, if I knew anything about photography, I could go on. But you see the point. The furor over these artists points to a condition in our culture: our addiction to working ourselves up, exciting ourselves in every sense, and then saying, "The photos made me do it!" It's we that are the problem, not the pictures.

And, back to Naomi Wolf, ditto: she's her own problem, I believe. She first proclaims herself a free-speech feminist and then draws all sorts of limits to the allowable, limits to which she appends self-flattering terms, abusing some of the rest of us (me, I hope, among them) in the process with thin-lipped talk about decency and exploitation. I guess she figures that naming herself a free-speech feminist makes her one. Having done so, she can proceed to the claptrap rhetoric of all censors: "I believe in the First Amendment, but really now . . ." The logic is familiar and odiferous. I can proclaim myself a champion of particle physics and start slinging judgments around, hash-like. But that doesn't mean I understand or can speak for particle physics. If what we are saying is upsetting, or if the photographs are upsetting, one should look for the cause of the disturbance on the inside. Why are you making of it what you are making? Why do you want to see the photographs *that way*? What's the pay-off? What's driving you? Those are the interesting questions. I am not interested in why Naomi Wolf responds as she does; I *am* very interested in why our culture shrieks in unison at these photographs and then blames *the images* not just for eliciting but for somehow containing that shriek

Question 4:

In the course of this discussion many of you have pointed out the rhetorical inadequacy of vague notions like artistic intention, media influence and child sexuality. At the same time some of you have identified general problems that presumably can be solved -- Naomi, in her valediction, noted the need to protect children's privacy; Judith Levine decried the predominance of sexist, ageist, violent images in the media; Michael Medved suggested that our popular culture seems perversely determined to rob its young of all shreds of innocence. Let's put semantics aside for this final question and enumerate the more specific modifications you would make to the way sex is presented in the public and private sectors, if you could change things as you wished, to make this country a better child-rearing environment (. . . realizing, of course, that child-rearing is not the only purpose of our culture).

Okay. "Stop drawing fine distinctions," our questioners say: "Stop the yammer, the ac-yak, the evasive action, the dodge into abstractions -- and get to the point!" I am willing to get to the point. Always am -- just ask anybody. I thought, though, that the point was the child and its body, the way we formulate them, the way we look at and are stirred by them.

Apparently not.

Apparently we are to talk about "the way sex is presented" with an eye toward changing things so as to produce better citizens for the future, scouring out "a better child-rearing environment."

Oh my.

Sex isn't "presented"; it circulates. It isn't crafted by somebody else, and it's not an object that's displayed. It's not Keats's Urn. It's more like everyone's perfume or communal smog. We produce it, all of us; it isn't foisted on us.

So, babble about how we would change things encourages us to imagine that all this is done by *somebody else*, that our culture is split into the healthy and the ghastly and thank God I am one of the former and haven't the slightest idea what motivates those freaks who find kids alluring and things weren't like this when I was a boy and let's just pass some more get-tough laws.

I don't think it's a question, you see, of "presenting sex," an after-the-fact social gesture that will take care of itself. Hell with that. Let's deal with what is closer to home, the eroticizing of children. It's our favorite unacknowledged pastime.

What can we do? That's a fair question. And, bearing in mind that we're told to be pithy, I'll be so pithy I'll just list things, like an accountant of the arousing.

1. Acknowledge that the cultural "problems" we have are those we want, that we construct "problems" in the form they are in because they do something for us -- you and me.
2. Acknowledge that it's not somebody else "presenting" sex; directions on what to regard as sexual and what to do about it come as a river we are all swimming in and generating.
3. Stop treating our culture as if it were a Gothic novel, packed with only the Virtuous and the Demonic.
4. Stop pretending we can solve "the problem" by rounding up enough pedophile monsters and caging or killing them.
5. Stop titillating ourselves with endless talk of kids and sex, displacing all of it onto Others at the same time. At least be honest.
6. Focus on real problems kids have: emotional and physical mistreatment, neglect, inadequate nutrition, housing, education, love, hope.
7. Stop countenancing/encouraging hitting any kid for any reason.
8. Leave them alone. If we stop thinking of kids as extensions of ourselves, or as "victims," we might allow them some substance and independence.
9. Tell ourselves the truth: in our culture kids and the erotic are overlapping categories and we cannot help but find kids erotic, which is not so bad, considering that we find lots of things erotic without attacking them. Most of us do not, for example, hump the legs of guests at parties.
10. Change our paradigm: power is only a word; safety is not a worthy Utopia; we can find finer things to do than "protecting."

I'm really sorry this is ending. I have had great fun, will miss you all, and really cannot understand why Nerve does not let us just maunder on in perpetuity. I know I have ever so many opinions, on all sorts of subjects. You too, I'll bet. Goodbye -- for now.

Is this child pornography?

American photo labs are arresting parents as child pornographers for taking pictures of their kids in the bath

By James R. Kincaid, Jan. 31, 2000

<http://www.salonmagazine.com/mwt/feature/2000/01/31/kincaid/index.html>

Picture this: A photo of a boy and girl -- unmistakably naked, posed and giggling -- holding two very large sausages (Italian?). The boy is maybe 8, the girl maybe 6. They are not touching each other, nor does the camera seem especially interested in their genitals. What catches the eye are those sausages, but not that they are involved in anything you or I would call, right off, sexual: They are not being licked, stroked or inserted. They are more atmospheric, I guess you could say.

Is this child pornography? Well, if you are a photo lab manager in Burbank, Calif., you follow the in-store policy and ask the store manager. The store manager, noticing the nudity and the meat, follows what he takes to be the law and calls the Burbank police. The police send two undercover cops out with instructions to nab the photographer. The cops then order the photo lab manager to phone the customer, tell him his prints are ready and instruct him to come pick them up right away.

The customer agrees to drop everything and run over, but then doesn't show, forcing the undercover police to cool their heels for six hours before giving up. Later the cops do nab the suspect, who says the photos were taken by the kids' uncle who thought the children's play with the sausages was "funny." The Burbank police decide to let it go with a warning laced with disgust: There's nothing "funny" about photos like these, photos that are indecent, degenerate and, *next time*, criminal.

As a script written for the Keystone Kops, this much ado about sausages scenario would be funny. But it is a true story. It is a sorry saga about our confused desires when it comes to kids and sex, and the way these collective desires are reflected in our failure to clearly define and execute the laws governing child pornography. This black comedy set in Burbank proves a scary point: At this time there is no way to differentiate -- legally -- between a family snapshot of a naked child and child pornography.

Not that photo labs don't try. They do, and every now and then they light upon (or concoct) what they take to be a case of child pornography. There are about 10 cases in the last dozen years that have emerged in the press. Some are worthy of mention here, mostly because they weren't worthy of attention when they occurred:

William Kelly was arrested in Maryland in 1987 after dropping off a roll of film that included shots his 10-year-old daughter and younger children had taken of each other nude.

David Urban in 1989 took photos of his wife and 15-month-old grandson, both nude, as she was giving him a bath. Kmart turned him in and he was convicted by a Missouri court (later overturned).

A gay adult couple in Florida decided to shave their bodies and snap their lovemaking, convincing a Walgreens clerk that one of them was a child. They are suing the Fort Lauderdale police.

More recently, Cynthia Stewart turned in bath-time pictures of her 8-year-old daughter to a Fuji film processing lab in Oberlin, Ohio. The lab contacted the local police, who found the pictures "over the line" and arrested the mother for, among other things, snapping in the same frame with her daughter a showerhead, which the prosecution apparently planned to relate somehow to hints of masturbation.

Even though the number of arrests is not large and the circumstances seem ridiculous, this photo lab idiocy is a serious matter: It puts all of us at risk, and it significantly erodes free speech protection by insisting that a photograph of a child is tantamount to molestation. Since it is what is outside the frame (the intention of the photographer, the reaction of the viewer) that counts legally, we are actually encouraged to fantasize an action in order to determine whether or not this is child pornography.

Every photo must pass this test: Can we create a sexual fantasy that includes it? Such directives seem an efficient means for manufacturing a whole nation of pedophiles.

The laws, whether state or federal, are inevitably firm-jawed when it comes to meting out punishment to child pornographers. But they seem uncertain both in what it is they want to put an end to and how far they want to reach into our home photo albums to do it.

In the great sausage caper, the photo lab operator and the Burbank police acted as our representatives to decide whether pictures of children and sausages constitute child pornography. This suggests that they have a clear idea of what a child is and that they know porn when they see it. What this also means is that we have a system that allows criminal conduct to be determined by just about anybody.

So, how do I know which kid pictures I can take to Wal-Mart, and how does the Wal-Mart photo guy know when to call the police about my pictures? The short answer is that there is no way I can know because there is no way he can know

**From *Erotic Innocence:*
The Culture of Child-Molesting**

by James Kincaid
(Duke University Press, 1998)

For a long decade or so, we have been uncovering stories of sexual child abuse in the United States, discovering the alarming reach of these stories, their range and variety, only to have the pendulum swing. Suddenly, we hear that memory is suspect, that accounts of molestation coming from children are dubious, that therapists may be crooks, that Freud himself is wobbling. As we up the voltage and try to deal with the dilemma by more carefully tagging the offenders, the counter-reaction grows as well. How can we locate in this bog a solid place to stand? That the stories proliferate and double back on themselves does not indicate indifference, certainly; but it may suggest that our stories are providing us with something other than solutions.

We are forever assuring ourselves that we are in denial, avoiding the issue; it takes, we say, great courage to speak out on a problem most people ignore or repress. That's an odd diagnosis, considering that these stories come at us (and from us) like killer bees. Take a look at these tales as they circulate and you notice right away two things: their redundancy and their strength. When we locate a good story, which we do every week or so, we chew on it ferociously: Michael Jackson, pedophile priests, recovered memory, six-year-old molesters.

I begin with two preliminary assumptions. The first is that these are stories that are doing something for us: we wouldn't be telling this tale of the exploitation of the child's body if we didn't wish to have it told. The second is that what these stories do for us is to keep the subject hot so that we can disown it while welcoming it in the back door. These are not stories told simply to solve a problem but also to focus and re-state the problem, keep it alive and before us. If the stories we tell about child-molesting were working, we might say, they would extinguish themselves. But maybe one of the reasons we tell these stories is to get the stories told . . .

DOCUMENTATION SERVICE LIST June 2000

List of documents from Ipce Newsletter E8

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Items marked with an @ can be had by E-mail or on a formatted diskette in some formats.
The documents are numbered by year and then sequentially. Documents that are available only in the Dutch language are not included in this version of the list.
Documents are E-mailed upon request without charge; include your email address and a format with your request for documents. For documents as files on diskette, the cost is Hfl 2,50 [Dutch Guilders] or 1 Euro or USA\$ 1.50 per disk. For photocopies, the cost is Hfl 0,25 or or 0,10 Euro or USA\$0.15 per page, and you are asked to pay the cost of postage to your snail mail address.

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00-003 28pp	Étude des conséquences de l'abus sexual sur enfants, à partir de cas non cliniques, Exposé présenté au symposium patronné par Paulus Kerk à Rotterdam, le 18 Décembre 1998; Bruce Rind, Robert Bauserman & Philip Tromovitch.
00-007 @ 82 kB, 15 pp	Boys and Sexual Abuse: an English Opinion, Guest essay by D.J.West & D. Litt, in: Archives of Sexual Behavior 27 # 6, 1998
00-008 @ 33 kB, 3 pp	Two letters to the APA from concerned members in the scientific community (about the research of Rind et al.)
00-010a @ 17 kB, 4 pp	Ree, Frank van, Abuse by Definition? The Taboo as Excuse, In: KOINOS # 25
00-010b @ 17 kB, 4 pp	Ree, Frank van, Grundsätzlich Missbrauch? Das Tabu als Entschuldigung, In: KOINOS # 25
00-010c @ 16 kB, 4 pp	Ree, Frank van, Per definitie misbruik? Het taboe als excuus, in: KOINOS # 25
00-011 @ 5.2 mB	The Sam Manzie Dossier in an Adobe4 (.PDF) file of 18 kB and one of 5 mB.
00-012a @ 21 kB, 7 pp	Youthful Sexual Experience and Well-being, Important Conference in Rotterdam, Bob Ferguson, in: KOINOS MAGAZINE #21 (1999/1)
00-012b @ 23 kB, 7 pp	Sexuelle Erfahrungen in der Jugend und Wohlbefinden, Interessantes Symposium in Rotterdam, Bob Ferguson, in: KOINOS MAGAZINE #21 (1999/1)
00-012c @ 21 kB, 7 pp	Seksuele jeugdervaringen en welbevinden, Belangwekkende studiedag te Rotterdam; door Bob Ferguson in: Koinos Magaziene nr 21 (1999/1)
00-013a @ 21 kB, 8 pp	Radical Reconsideration of the Concept of Child Sexual Abuse, New Findings by Bauserman, Rind and Tromovitch, Gorrit Goslinga, KOINOS MAGAZINE #20 (1998/4)
00-013b @ 25 kB, 8 pp	Grundlegende Änderung des Begriffs 'Sexueller Kindesmißbrauch', Neue Erkenntnisse von Bauserman, Rind und Tromovitch, Gorrit Goslinga, KOINOS MAGAZINE #20 (1998/4)
00-013c @ 30 kB, 6 pp	Ingrijpende herziening van het begrip 'seksuele kindermishandeling', Nieuwe ontdekkingen van Bauserman, Rind en Tromovitch, Gorrit Goslinga, Kijnos Magazine # 20 (1998/4)
00-014 @ 145 kB, 16 pp Adobe .pfd file or 44kB .txt	The Clash of media, Politics and Sexual Science; An examination of the controversy surrounding the <i>Psychological Bulletin</i> meta-analyse on the assumed properties of child sexual abuse, by B. Rind, Ph. Tromovitch & R. Bauserman; presented at the SSSS & AASET, November 6, 1999.
00-015a @ 29 kB, 4pp	Schrille Fanfare, durch Paul Rainer in Der Spiegel, 2 Aug 1999 (über Rind u.a. Untersuchungen) (Deutsch)
00-015b @ 37 kB, 4 pp	Strident Attack, translation of 00-015a in English
00-016 @ 29 kB, 3 pp	The Congressional censure of a research paper: Return of the inquisition?, by Kenneth K Berry; Jason Berry, 1st January 2000

00-017 @ 7 pp, 27 kB .html, or 24 kB .txt	Politics of CSA research; by Janice Haaken; Sharon Lamb, in: <i>Society</i> Vol. 37 No. 4; p. 7-14
00-018 @ 3 pp, 19 kB .html, 13 kB .txt	The uproar over sexual abuse research and its findings, by Carol Tavris, in: <i>Society</i> , Vol. 37 No. 4; p. 15-17
00-019 @ 3 pp, 20 kB .html or 14 kB .txt	Suffer the children: Long-term effects of sexual abuse, by David Spiegel, in: <i>Society</i> , Vol. 37 No. 4; p. 18-20
00-020 @ 5 pp 30 kB .html or 24 kB .txt	Sexual liberation's last frontier, by Julia A Ericksen, in: <i>Society</i> , Vol. 37 No. 4; p. 21-25
00-021 @ 36 kB, 3 pp	The real evil among us, Author unknown; source: http://www.phix.com/~ciphrrer/realevil.htm
00-022 @ 42 kB, 4 pp	About: <i>Sexual Science and the Law</i> . Richard Green, Harvard UP, 1992, pp. 141-175, 262-264.
00-023 @ 56 kB, 6 pp	Would America be a better place without teenagers? Review of: * <i>The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager</i> , Thomas Hine. Bard Avon, \$24, & * <i>Framing Youth: Ten Myths About the Next Generation</i> Mike Males. Common Courage Press, \$19. Author & source unknown.
00-024 @ 22 kB, 2 pp	Review of: <i>Scandels by the Seine</i> , Matthew Stadler
00-025 @ 21 kB, 1 p	Extracts from article on the "porn made me do it" argument – author & source unknown.
00-026 @ 12 kb, 3 pp	A picture of innocence? (attitudes about nude pictures of children). by Townsend, Chris, Vol. 46, <i>History Today</i> , 05-01-1996, pp. 8(4).
00-027 @ 63 kB, 15 pp	Decision of the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council, Ontario Regional Council, about the Dr. Laura Schlessinger Show
00-028 @ 38 kB .html, 10 pp	Sexuality, Violence and Psychological After-Effects, A Longitudinal Study of Cases of Sexual Assault which were Reported to the Police, by Michael C. Baurmann – The entire English Summary.
00-029 @ 42 kB, 4 pp	Four Questions & Answers, James Kincaid, in: Ipce Newsletter E8.
00-030 @ 24 kB, 2 pp	Is this child pornography, by James R. Kincaid, at <i>Mothers Who Think</i> , Salon.com & in: Ipce Newsletter E8
00-031 @ 23 kB, 1 p	The Culture of Child-Molesting, From <i>Erotic Innocence</i> , by James Kincaid, (Duke University Press, 1998)