

I p c e

NEWSLETTER

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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.

Introduction

The character of the Ipce Newsletter has gradually changed. One upon a time, we had our paper Newsletters, sent by post mail. Then came the electronic Newsletter, number 10 now. Initially, the electronic Newsletters were put in Html and sent to the web. It appeared that it were long files, long downloads and difficult searches for an article. In the course of time, the articles are put in the Library of the Ipce web site; the Newsletters only had links to the articles. Only the internal Ipce issues kept being in the Newsletters. Now, number E(lectronic) 10, has only the table of content with links to the articles and this introduction in the web version of this Newsletter.

Another change is that new articles now directly go to the Ipce web site. Recently, an update with about 80 files took place and with the sending of this Newsletters other files will be added. So, factually, the page "What is new"? is the 'new newsletter'. This Newsletter gives only a sharp selection of the articles in one language, whilst the web site has four languages now.

Most members are on line now; only ten Newsletters are sent on paper by post mail. I would ask these ten members to go on line or to the local library, university or Internet café and visit the Ipce web site. Doing so, the Newsletter can disappear unless there is internal Ipce news and the paper version can disappear. Note, that it is a lot of work to make *two*

versions of each Newsletter; especially the paper version of is asks a lot of work and time... for ten members only.

In this Newsletter, you will find new Statements and articles about the Brongersma's archive case in The Netherlands. The second section gives articles on *rethinking boyhood*. The third section gives articles written by Ipce members. The usual end is the documentation service. Note that these lists no longer mention the articles in the Newsletter and the library; one can find these easily in the "What is new?" page and in the indexes and the register that is added to the library.

The Ipce web site, by the way, has about 125 visitors each day. If you have a look at a new web site at < <http://pedo.top100.org/> >, you will see that the Ipce web is number one in the top 100 of sites that will be made at that web site. Many other web sites mention the Ipce web. I even have seen a French web site that said the Ipce web was 'well-thought and good-balanced' or French words like these.

Well, let's go on, if we do our work 'well-thought and good-balanced' and let's hope that the 125 visitors of each day will appreciate the information they get and that they will work with these information.

Your secretary and webmaster,

Frans

Part 1: Two Statements

From:

Sexual Privacy for Paedophiles and Children

Paper delivered by Tom O'Carroll to the Symposium on Sexual Privacy at the annual meeting of the International Academy of Sex Research, Paris, June 2000

1. Protection of innocence?

[...] Nowadays, children are in a remarkably analogous position to that of the white women who used to be "protected" by lynch mobs of Ku Klux Klansmen in the American South. The dominant white male culture of the old South in the slavery era held that women, like today's children, were not sexual beings; they were pure. Thus if there was any sexual contact between them and a black man it could only mean one thing: rape. White ladies were not allowed to have sexual feelings for black men; it was literally unthinkable. Women who dared to break this iron taboo were ladies no longer, just whores.

Nowadays, the locus of sexual anxiety has shifted towards children. As this anxiety has been cranked up and up in recent decades, we have been seeing increasingly repressive measures designed not to protect children themselves but to protect the myth of childhood innocence in which society has invested so heavily. Punishing children for sexual involvement

with adults, however, would be too nakedly a contradiction of their victim status. It would imply they had known what they were doing, and were not innocent. In order to preserve this notional innocence of the child, it is far easier to blame the adult, the despised paedophile, whatever the facts of the case may have been.

But when children have sex with each other there is no adult available to blame. Scapegoating the paedophile as-it-were "ethnic minority" is not an option. Instead, the repression of children's sexuality needs a secondary scapegoat. Clinging ever more desperately to the dogma that children in general are non-sexual, a minority of kids are being stigmatised as deviants and delinquents when they are caught in sexual activity with their peers. There have even been attempts to criminalise sexual activities in which no single child played a dominant role, so that it was not possible to blame an allegedly abusive power relationship of a bigger or older child over a smaller or younger one.

Children's privacy

Creating the concept of child sexual deviants, analogous to "fallen" Southern women, has been one aspect of modern Western society's efforts to preserve the innocence myth. Ideally, from a conservative point of view, the embarrassment of seeing kids on sex registers and exposed as sex ring participants, would be avoided if at all possible. So what we are seeing alongside these highly public but fairly rare cases is a much more pervasive phenomenon: the invasion of *all* children's privacy for the purpose of sexual repression.

Children, it is true, have always been spied on by their parents. Rightly or wrongly, mom - usually mom not dad - has gone rooting through pockets, and bedroom drawers. If a youngster has kept a diary, chances have always been it would be read by a parent from time to time, especially if the child insisted its contents were secret. Nothing new in that.

[...]

COPPA

What we are seeing now is an increased level of parental anxiety to such an extent that it is finding political expression, with the force of legislation deployed to systematically invade children's private lives. COPPA, The *Children's Online Privacy Protection Act* in the US is a prime example. This measure, which is not yet operational and which is rightly being resisted by the broadly anti-censorship online community, would require that any website or online service directed to children should obtain parental consent before collecting information from children under the age of 13. [...] What it looks like to me is not protection of their privacy but invasion of it - the language of the law is an Orwellian inversion of the truth.

The threat of COPPA is that it would extend parental control over their children in the one area where they have enjoyed a small measure of personal freedom and privacy in recent years, thanks to the relative lack of net-headedness and technical savvy of many parents. Kids have to some extent been left alone in their bedrooms, able to explore the cyber world with a freedom no longer available to them in the physical world of their immediate environment. [...]

Concerned, loving parents have been sold the myth that it's a big bad world out there, with weird strangers out to get their kids and do unspeakable things. But real horrors are exceedingly rare and the most truly abusive acts against children, including murder, take place in the home, perpetrated by parents - "family values" are only as good as the family that holds them. So what we are getting, in the name of protecting children first from "stranger danger" and now from the Wild Wild Web, is constant surveillance and control over all children, such that they have no space to be themselves. They have no private life, no way of standing a little apart from their adult controllers in ways that enable them to develop as autonomous individuals. [...]

2. The demonisation process

[...] I have briefly mentioned the over-broad impact of child pornography laws on people who would not generally be considered paedophiles, such as the ordinary parents who sometimes naively suppose pictures of their naked kids playing in the bath will be regarded as innocent at the photo lab. What the British Columbia judges understood, however, goes far beyond the problem of over-broadness. It is something deeper and more subtly important. They understood that even when law enforcement is apparently successful in targeting paedophiles rather than so-called normal people (a false dichotomy, by the way [...]) the intention behind such targeting is a dangerous one for society. The wording of the various laws against child porn, in Canada and elsewhere, generally has nothing to say about paedophiles. The laws speak only of the protection of children, not the thoughts and desires of potential offenders.

But law enforcement officers speak a different language, a language shared with politicians and the media in the last quarter century, during which the child porn laws have been developed. It is the language of demonisation, in which the word "paedophilia" has popularly come to symbolise pure, undiluted evil, with the implication that nothing must be allowed to stand in the way of a ruthless war to bring about its extirpation. It is a language in which police, politicians and journalists have colluded to link unreasonably a particular sexual orientation with moral degeneracy and high levels of harm.

The issue of harm

Like the child porn laws, the recent landmark paper by **Rind, Bauserman and Tromovitch** makes no mention of paedophilia. But its findings could hardly be more significant to the view society takes of paedophiles, as I imagine many of you already know. This meta-analysis based on 59 studies of college students showing the effects on those who had been involved as children in sexual encounters with adults provides an important corrective to the view that such encounters are always gravely traumatic. A careful statistical analysis showed that many problems which the original researchers had uncritically assumed to be caused by sexual abuse could more plausibly be attributed to generally inadequate family environments, with which they were much more strongly correlated.

Similarly, the harm supposedly caused to children from being photographed naked or taking part in sexual activity with their peers or with grown-ups has been greatly exaggerated. There is no more intrinsic reason why any harm at all should result from such activities than from children going with their parents on a naturist holiday. Not that there is no need to for genuine concern. We are right to worry over the possibility that children will be exploited against their will, that rape or sadistic attacks will be perpetrated on camera. The production of such pictures is vanishingly rare, however, and there is no shortage of criminal law to deal with any perpetrators who are caught. Even in such cases, though, we would be hard put to blame the private viewer of such material for creating a market in it. There is no means, no even on the Internet, to buy and sell such material. Illegal images may be posted, but this will invariably be done anonymously or with a phoney "from" address - for obvious reasons. This means that it is impossible to make money on these activities. From time to time someone may naively hope do so, lured by claims in the media that it is a profitable business. These commercial attempts have always been stopped very quickly: If the potential customers can find the producer then so can the police. The notion that there is a vast child porn industry, organised by some ruthless mafia, is simply a myth.

Throughout the Western world, and increasingly beyond, we find barriers being set up between adults and children. In the name of protecting innocence we are enforcing emotional and physical separation of age classes in a sort of generational apartheid that sees fathers afraid to hug their children too affectionately and teachers' unions advising that teachers should keep a minimum gap of one metre between themselves and their pupils. The barriers are invisible but strong, enforced by a climate of fear - people are becoming terrified of being identified as a paedophile.

And what is a paedophile?

As sex researchers you might think he or she is a person who is exclusively or to a significant degree sexually attracted to pre-pubertal

children. But as observers of the social and political scene you would have to conclude that a paedophile is a monster who attacks and defiles innocence. On this definition there can be no such thing as an innocent or non-practising paedophile, though there are in fact saintly individuals who manage heroic life-long feats of restraint – people who, especially if they are elderly bachelors, find themselves rewarded with nothing but constant suspicion. A paedophile thus by definition cannot be an affectionate person, nor can a child be fond of him once he is unmasked like some alien in a horror movie. He may for years have seemed to be a pleasant, caring, kind, decent, honourable man, but of course that is all part of his cunning disguise. And there can be no legitimate *private* thoughts and *private* fantasies where such a monster is concerned.

The sting operations and mass police raids we have seen in recent years against child porn actually have a significance that does not readily meet the eye. The deep purpose of both kinds of operation is not the investigation of lesser crimes such as the private possession of pornography. The underlying purpose is to invade the privacy of the mind – not in order to find out what offences someone has committed but what kind of person he is. Possession of child porn is being used to generate evidence of paedophile identity, of paedophile ethnicity, one might almost say, such that often entirely harmless people can be registered and henceforth viewed with lifelong suspicion, surveillance and coercion. [...]

This invasion of private fantasy makes for a cast-iron guarantee that grave injustices will be perpetrated, not least because it flies in the face of evidence that pornography may be used cathartically: its possession may well indicate an intent *not* to get sexually involved with a child but to find sexual gratification with pornography as a substitute.

Part 2: Two articles about the Brongersma Archives

1. Never Again? Dutch police seize gay archive The Guide, October 1999

Walk past the slightly dilapidated, century-old mansion in Haarlem's poshest neighborhood and things seem as they have for the past 20 years, since the building became home to the Brongersma Foundation, one of Europe's largest homosexual archives. But the image of only slow-motion demise misleads, for on the morning of August 20th, Amsterdam morals police, on orders from the Dutch Justice Ministry, raided the archive and sealed off the collection in preparation to seize it. Whether they can or

not is now the subject of a court battle that pits factions on the archive's board against each other and, in turn, against the Justice Ministry. Meanwhile, Dutch media have launched a smear against the archive's founder, Dr. Edward Brongersma, a jurist knighted by the Dutch queen for his political activism and scholarship. A likely outcome of this very public three-way tug of war? The largest destruction of a gay archive since 1933, when Nazis in Berlin looted and burned the library of homosexual campaigner Magnus Hirschfeld's Scientific and Humanitarian Committee.

Sure enough, Dutch authorities cited the same reasons for seizing the Brongersma archive as the Nazi's did for burning Hirschfeld's: protection of youth and public morals. Specifically, Dutch police invoked two new laws in the raid-- one bans possession of any images of minors intended to arouse; the other requires doctors, teachers, clergy, and other professionals who know of sex involving youngsters to report it to the police.

The new laws threaten two aspects of the Brongersma Foundation's collection. In addition to some 20,000 books, the archive holds hundreds of thousands of homoerotic images-- ranging from private photographs and commercial pornography to the collected work of artists such as German photographer Hajo Ortil. Many of the images depict youths. The archive also contains some 500 personal sexual histories, often detailing relationships with boys.

For 20 years the Dutch government had recognized the Brongersma Foundation as an educational institution documenting sexual history for posterity. It was open to researchers by appointment only, not a library people might stumble into off the street. But with police crashing down its doors, authorities now claim the archive was just a cover for criminality. Police say they want the collection's erotica and diaries as evidence to prosecute those who have broken sex laws, whether in the Netherlands or elsewhere. In addition, they want its photographs as bait in pornography stings.

From disgrace to grace & back

The archive's seizure comes less than a year and a half after a death of its eponymous founder. Born to a prominent family, Edward Brongersma entered the upper house of Dutch parliament in 1946, where he served for 18 years, and was chair of its Justice Committee. He had worked also at the University of Utrecht's Criminological Institute, and in 1975 was knighted by the Dutch queen. His academic and political success was remarkable, for in 1950 Brongersma was imprisoned nine months for a homosexual offense with a 16-year-old boy. His rebound was a symbol of the growing acceptance of same-sex relationships in post-war Holland.

But as the Netherlands turned to the right in the 1990s, Brongersma came under fire once more, his calls for tolerance of intergenerational sexuality meeting increasing hostility. In 1996, in the midst of the Belgium's Dutroux scandal, involving the kidnap, rape, and murder of four teenage girls, Brongersma spoke out on TV that there was a

distinction between such sexual violence and consensual relationships. Some of his neighbors answered by stoning the Brongersma mansion, breaking windows. In April 1998, 89 years old and in failing health, Edward Brongersma took his own life.

Saving by destroying

Years earlier, Brongersma had appointed two conservators for his Foundation's archive-- Dr. F. Wafelbakker, a pediatrician and retired director of Children's Medical Services for the Ministry of Health, and Dr. Cees Straver, a physician, lawyer, and former head of the Netherlands Institute for Sexological Research. It was they who decided earlier this year that compliance with the new ban on kiddie-porn possession together with the new reporting law-- which Wafelbakker helped author-- required them to destroy the archive's photos and personal histories. Failure to do so would not only be illegal, they believed, but would put them and the archive in legal jeopardy, together with those who had donated the material. When the executor of Brongersma's estate, University of Utrecht psychologist Lex van Naerssen, opposed the destruction, the two conservators stripped him of his authority. In August, Van Naerssen went to court to gain back his executorship and block any destruction, and he won a temporary stay. But media coverage of the legal wrangling occurred together with a fresh wave of hysteria following the murder of a Dutch girl. That was when the Justice Ministry pounced.

In the balance

The fate of the Brongersma Foundation archive lies with three judges, who will decide soon whether the police can seize the collection for good, whether the "conservators" can proceed with their plans to destroy it themselves, or whether somehow the collection should be preserved in its current form. Any decision is subject to appeal to the Netherlands's highest court.

But meanwhile, Brongersma has become the Dutch demon du jour, portrayed as a sexual monster and apologist for same. A newspaper urged that those with his erotic predilections should follow his example and kill themselves, while a prominent newscaster, whose politician father helped rehabilitate Brongersma after his imprisonment in the 1950s apologized in the Dutch TV Guide for his family's misjudgment. The Haarlem raid and the looming threat of the Brongersma library's destruction has cast a chill on people working to preserve erotic art and history.

"We first wait for what the court rules," says Jack van der Wiel, director of Homodok, the largest gay and lesbian archives in the Netherlands, which in the past has also been targeted by state censors. "If matters go wrong and they want to destroy something, of course we will fight against it."

But legal prospects seem dim. The Dutch kiddie porn law, already sweeping, was given unlimited breadth this summer when a court ruled against Rotterdam photographer Donald Mader, whose work has been shown in museums and galleries around Europe. Any image of a minor, whatever its content, the court said, is "kiddie porn" and may be destroyed if it is part of a "pedophile collection."

The Dutch police have readily used their new powers. Earlier this summer, Amsterdam vice cops raided an art show, seizing prints by such internationally known photographers as Duane Michals, Walter Chappell, Will McBride, and Willem Pluschow.

"I don't think the police should be in charge of book burning, especially when it's historically important material," says Max Allen, a radio producer with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. "The purpose of archives after all is to preserve historical material from temporary insanity."

In 1971, Allen was prosecuted in Toronto for obscenity for showing Russ Meyer's film *Vixen*, which today wouldn't raise eyebrows on cable TV. "How things change decade by decade is quite striking, and what is thought to be actionable and what not," Allen contends. "That's the reason that somewhere someplace, material like this ought to be safe. Historians will be very angry at the police in Amsterdam."

Magnus Hirschfeld's gay and lesbian archive wasn't the only one to fall victim to the Nazis. In 1940, the Dutch Nazi regime seized another collection, compiled over 28 years by Jacob Schorer, a pioneering activist in Amsterdam. The library never surfaced after the war. Schorer reassembled an archive, which became the nucleus of Homodok. As preservationists wait for a court in Haarlem to decide the fate of the Brongersma Foundation, it feels like 1940 all over again.

Tell us what you think! letters@guidemag.com

2. Burning the Library

Dutch government destroys gay archive, vows mass arrests

The Guide, February 2001

In Berlin in 1933, a Nazi mob dealt the archive of homosexual rights pioneer Magnus Hirschfeld a speedy death by bonfire. The Nazis said they wanted to protect children and public morals. Last year, Dutch police seized the core of the Brongersma Foundation archive for the same reasons-- but instead of burning the documents, Dutch authorities are poring over them, compiling a list of people around the world to shame, arrest, and prosecute.

In late October, police made their second raid on the Brongersma Foundation-- headquartered in a mansion in a fashionable part of Harlem, near Amsterdam. The raid came shortly after a Dutch court sanctioned a police seizure made at the archive a few months earlier, in which authorities carted away dozens of boxes of personal histories and photographs. An advisory board appointed by the prosecutor found that the material had [*no -webm Ipce*] scientific value. But on October 5, a

court allowed its seizure in a ruling that split hairs: at the time Brongersma collected the material, the court said, the foundation was not a serious scientific enterprise, even if it is so now.

After examining the writings and photographs, prosecutors announced they had identified hundreds of men who had been involved-- mostly years ago-- in homosexual relationships with boys, and that they had evidence to launch some 40 prosecutions. Raids and arrests in the Netherlands and-- with the likely help of Interpol-- around Europe and beyond are expected to follow.

Patrician in prison

For decades, Dr. Edward Brongersma had solicited documentation of pederastic relationships so that they might be better understood by posterity. Brongersma had established his foundation some 20 years ago with a library that grew to some 20,000 volumes, and an endowment to fund research.

Scion of a prominent family, Brongersma had been elected to the Dutch Senate in 1946. In 1950 he was jailed for nine months for sex with a 16-year-old youth. His public rehabilitation and return to the Senate marked the growing Dutch tolerance for gays. He went on to serve in the Senate for 18 years, and became chair of its Justice Committee. Later he worked at the University of Utrecht's Criminological Institute, and in 1975 was knighted by the queen.

Brongersma was 86 when he died in 1998-- as it turned out, in a medically-assisted suicide. He was despondent over the death of a longtime friend and the drubbing he received on Dutch television when he argued the distinction between sexual violence and consenting relationships in the wake of public outrage over Belgium's Dutroux scandal-- a case involving the kidnap, rape, and murder of four teenage girls. After his TV appearance, neighbors stoned his home, breaking windows.

At Brongersma's death, control of his foundation passed to a three-man board, which soon set to squabbling. There were disputes over recordkeeping and finances. But the rub was the desire of two board members to destroy the archive's most sensitive-- and unique-- material: personal histories and documentation that Brongersma collected over decades from contacts around the world. Boardmembers Fritz Wafelbakker, a pediatrician formerly with the Ministry of Health, and Cees Straver, former head of the Netherlands Institute for Sexological Research, worried that the histories-- many replete with photographs-- might violate a new Dutch law banning possession of sexual images of minors, and another law, which Wafelbakker helped author, requiring doctors and other professionals to report illegal sex with minors to the police.

As a chartered educational foundation, there was reason to think Brongersma's archive might enjoy immunity. In any case, the third board

member, Lex van Naerssen, chair of psychology at the University of Utrecht, opposed the destruction, seeing it as a betrayal of Brongersma's wishes and an affront to historical preservation. He reportedly blocked his fellow board members access to the archive. Straver and Wafelbakker voted Van Naerssen off the board, and in 1999, he went to court to contest his ouster. The court battle alerted Dutch media and authorities to the archive's erotic trove.

Police entered and sealed off the archive in August 1999, and prosecutors laid the groundwork for the raids last year.

Victimless crimes

For now, the Harlem prosecutor says he will not lay charges against board members, on the shaky grounds that they did not know what was in the archive. But the seized sexual histories, which police are now computer-cataloging, have put them on the trail of many "predators and victims."

It remains to be seen how successful will be any prosecutions stemming from the seizure. In most cases, the relationships described are many years old, so that if anyone had felt victimized, they'd have had plenty of time to complain already. But depending on local laws, non-cooperation of long-ago non-victims may pose no obstacle to sex police.

Meanwhile police are poring through the diary Brongersma maintained since he was a teenager, releasing salacious details of his own private erotic jottings to the media. Brongersma's daily contacts over decades are recorded in his diaries, sometimes in code, and police have vowed to decipher it. They believe they can track hundreds of people in the Netherlands and thousands worldwide who claim were part of the Brongersma "conspiracy."

In a curious twist, the doctor who prescribed Brongersma's fatal overdose in 1998 was brought up on charges in October that psychological suffering was not sufficient grounds to aid a suicide. The doctor was found not guilty, a ruling seen as further expanding the already liberal standards for euthanasia in the Netherlands. Would the decision have come down that way in the case of a person who hadn't just been publicly vilified?

The Brongersma Foundation still exists, though without its collection of personal histories. Sources say that it will divest itself of the mansion and its remaining library, and devote its funds to research on youth sexuality. The money available depends on whether Dutch tax authorities certify the foundation as scientific, but could range upwards of \$4 million, though the foundation's scope for action in the wake of the scandal is unclear. Van Naerssen has been removed from the foundation's board, and he has since suffered a stroke.

Lining up at the guillotine

A letter to the editor in *Trouw*, a Dutch daily, noted that when sodomites were burned at the stake in the middle ages, their court docket was burned with them-- depriving future generations of an understanding of the deed. The Brongersma raids raise the question whether sexuality that is judged criminal can be documented for posterity. But the letter-writer was among the few voices raised against the archive's destruction, which has been met by a general silence among Dutch historians and preservationists.

With the Dutroux scandal still reverberating, "there's a sense there that if you stick your neck out on this issue you'll get your head cut off," says one activist.

"I don't think that the state should be the sole judge of this," contends Dan Healey, a historian at the University of Swansea who has written about the destruction of psychiatric records in the Soviet Union. "In principle, if some academics have recognized the scientific value of the material, then it should be retained. Because sexual practices are socially constructed and change over time, it's important to adopt assessment criteria for material that don't excessively reflect the sexual prejudices of our own era."

"Documenting of minority sexuality is very important because it tells you something about the larger organization of sexual society," agrees Brian Pronger, a professor at the University of Toronto's Sexual Diversity Studies Program. "Sexuality of is not just of prurient interest. To erase the record of that part of life is to erase a major part of reality."

As the Dutch brace for what could be a season of serious witch-hunting, vindication in the fullness of history may be the best they can hope for.

Tell us what you think! letters@guidemag.com

Part 3: Three articles about Boyhood

1. It's time for us to rethink boyhood

by CRISPIN SARTWELL
[Source unknown]

Gender: It's back with a vengeance, but also with a twist. Fox television has launched The Boyz Channel and The Girlz Channel, sex-differentiated cable networks. Toys R Us is creating separate girls' and boys' zones in

their stores. And in elementary classrooms and schoolyards across the country, the boys and girls seem, as much as ever; to be from different species: the girls talk, draw, read; the boys yell, punch, can't sit still. My daughter Emma knows what all girls know. Boys are stupid and annoying.

We children of the '60s thought that gender was a social construction. We thought that if you raised boys and girls the same, they'd turn out the same. And maybe more importantly, we thought that the difference between boys and girls was wrong and oppressive, especially for girls. We thought that gender difference was a patriarchal plot.

And so when it came time to have babies of our own we took our shot. We went for green rather than pink and blue. We stocked our little girls' rooms with trucks and bought dolls for our boys. We changed the word "fireman" to "firefighter." We sat the kids down in front of ungendered television shows, in fact shows that were almost desperate in their political correctness: "Sesame Street," "Barney."

And we failed. We found out that if gender was a patriarchal plot, it was a damn good one, hard as hell to resist. And maybe we started to suspect that it wasn't a plot after all, that there was something (gasp) in the hormones. Our boys wanted to go bow hunting with Nerf products or fight with Star Wars Light Sabers. Men kept getting nominated for president of the United States and going to movies that consisted mostly of explosions. Finally we gave up and started reinstating painful truisms like "boys will be boys."

So difference has returned. But this time around difference is different. Mass androgyny has turned out to be something that we couldn't quite get behind. So much rests on differences between genders: desire rests on it, for one thing. And cross-dressing. And whole sectors of our economy. Androgyny would be asking us to give up too much fun and profit. But though the feminist movement didn't succeed in eliminating gender; perhaps didn't end up wanting to, it did succeed in remaking femininity in an interesting way. You'll still find Barbie in the girls' zone of Toys R' Us (though Mattel has lately reported disappointing sales), but you'll also find girls checking out with roller blades, video games, and WNBA official basketballs. Much of what they're buying has "Girl Power" or "Grrrlz Rule" emblazoned across it. Bad sass attitude is a superficial sign of deep change in our popular culture and in the lives of our children.

A perfect symbol of today's girlery is the Cartoon Network show "The Powerpuff Girls." Bubbles, Blossom, and Buttercup are cute little preschoolers with big eyes & a tendency to play house. But when bad guys threaten Townville, they prosecute with extreme prejudice. They're made of sugar, spice, everything nice, and... Chemical X. ~Girls today have a wider selection of off-the-rack personae. They can be sporty. They can be fern. They can be computer freaks. They can kick butt. There is now a major subset of popular culture that caters to them and offers fuel

for their identities, options, and even pride. For the first time, the idea of being a girl is radically open.

One has the sense that femininity is in flux, and that the people who are girls today will be an unprecedented generation of women.

I wish I could be as optimistic about future men. One might think that as the meaning of femininity changes, the meaning of masculinity would also be at stake, but it doesn't seem to be. Boys seem to be stuck in the same old categories of jocks and geeks, with the jocks at the top of the masculine hierarchy.

Indeed, though attitudes toward masculinity have become more hostile because of the same feminism that opened the concept of femininity, boys don't seem to be offered anymore options. Masculinity still means aggressiveness, but now that aggressiveness is frowned on and pathologized, to the undoubted delight of the makers of Ritalin.

Masculinity in boys seems to be something to be treated rather than something to be celebrated. And the popular culture that is aimed at boys seems to have changed very little. If girls are into basketball now, there is no corresponding opening of possibilities for boys. A boy who plays with Barbies is still a gender anomaly who is going to be teased within an inch of his life.

The quality of pop culture aimed at boys is poor and the messages very limited.

"Dragonball Z" on the Cartoon Network is my son Sam's latest obsession. It's all about cool heroes with cool powers fighting the bad guys and trying to collect the dragonballs so they can make a wish. Things for boys don't seem to have changed all that much since He-man was mastering the universe. Don't get me wrong; I have nothing against fighting or against heroes or against dragonballs and wishes.

But if I could make my own wish, it would be that our understanding of masculinity could keep pace with our understanding of femininity, and not only because it might produce more interesting television.

If we don't rethink boy- and manhood, we risk creating a seriously asymmetrical generation of young people in which the females have changed but the males haven't, in which femininity is cool and masculinity is medicated. We're creating a generation of boys who are going to be puzzled and conflicted about how to be men. In fact, most men are already puzzled about how to be men.

The Boyz Channel is trying. It has a show called "Boyzopolis," "an original production that explores issues important to real boys' lives.

Here's a sample:

"Being an ideal man doesn't necessarily mean the one with the biggest muscles." That's at once an expression of hope that masculinity can be opened up and an admission that it hasn't been. So are boys about to throw out their dumbbells in an ecstatic bra-burning moment? I doubt it.

Hardly anyone still dreams of eliminating the difference between boys and girls. But we can dream of opening up possibilities for new ways to inhabit gender. If our popular culture is any indication, girls are finding that opening.

And boys? Well, maybe. My 12-year-old recently started asking his mother to highlight his hair, and now all his friends are coming over, frost caps and bleach packs in hand.

The dudes on Nickelodeon's Rugrats-grow-up show, "RocketPower," are cool, yet interested in relationships. Maybe in a few years being a boy will be.

-Crispin Sartwell teaches media criticism at Pennsylvania State University, Harrisburg.

2. Helping boys become men

Author says an older male must coach, mentor and lend a hand

BY BETH BAKER

from AARP Newsletter, March 2000

Michael Gurian remembers well his stormy adolescence.

"I was hyperactive and got in a lot of trouble," he says. "I shoplifted, got lots of speeding tickets. I recall my family and my society not really knowing what to do with me."

Today, Gurian, a longtime family therapist and author who lives in Spokane, Washington is working to change the way we raise our sons and to keep them out of the kind of trouble he himself went through.

In a number of books, most recently "The Good Son: Shaping the Moral Development of Our Boys and Young Men" (Putnam, 1999), Gurian, 41, draws on biology, anthropology, literature and his own experience to explain why young males in modern society are often impulsive at best and violent at worst. He offers a blueprint for how parents, grandparents, educators and mentors can help boys get through adolescence and become responsible, caring men.

Since the start of the women's movement in the 1960s, inequities faced by girls have received considerable attention. But by many measures, boys are in far worse shape, according to Gurian.

The vast majority of children who commit crimes, [who] are murdered, wind up in prison, suffer physical abuse, kill themselves, go homeless, need foster-care, or are drug- or alcohol-addicted are males. They are

also far more likely to be put in special-education classes or diagnosed with attention-deficit disorder and prescribed the drug Ritalin - as Gurian himself was as a teenager.

"My work is about helping boys belong," he tells a Bulletin reporter in the living room of his home. "I'm really into a boy having an extended family. Boys need more personnel in their lives. There's kind of an emergency when boys don't get enough mentoring and enough direction."

This is especially important for boys, Gurian argues, because they tend to be more impulsive than girls and less able to form close personal relationships.

The wildness of Gurian's youth is nowhere to be seen in the relaxed man he has become. Although he's now something of a celebrity, having appeared on dozens of TV and radio talk shows, he retains an easygoing manner.

He dresses on this day in sneakers, khakis and pullover. Later his wife Gail, also a family therapist, appears with tea and muffins.

That the couple have two daughters and no sons was fate, jokes Gurian. "If I'd had boys I would have experimented on them!" he says.

Gurian's conversation ranges easily from a defense of women's rights to Eastern religions to the role the military can play in teaching young men honor and self-sacrifice. Perhaps his most "radical" theory is that boys and girls are indeed different from each other -- not only because of how they are raised, but because of biological differences in their brains and hormones. When Gurian explained this idea to his grandmother, she replied, 'You think they'll actually pay you to write that? We've all known that.' To others, particularly feminist scholars, some of whom have criticized Gurian's work, anything resembling "biological determinism" -- the idea that biological makeup governs what we are and do is greeted with suspicion.

Gurian argues, however, that by acknowledging the inherent differences between boys and girls, we can arrive at the best strategies for raising both.

Ninety percent of my parenting plan could be applied to girls," he says. "But... things have to be applied differently." The goal for girls and boys, though, is the same: to become "self disciplined, loving, compassionate adults," as Gurian puts it. His message has found a wide following among parents and teachers, especially in the aftermath of the Columbine rampage and other school violence committed by young males.

In his search to avert such crises, Gurian studied 3 [digit missing?] cultures around the globe. He concluded that, in the United States, we

have abandoned many of the time-honored ways that humans have raised their young, especially their sons.

Traditionally, he says, women have been responsible for young children of both sexes, but as boys hit adolescence, their care was taken over increasingly by fathers and other adult males.

"Cultures have always known that elders are the ones who train the young males in how to live their lives," he says. But the days of raising sons to hunt for food, run the farm, or apprentice in the father's trade are long past for most Americans. Even in intact families, fathers are away at work during most of the children's waking hours. At the same time, grandparents often live away. Fewer young people have close ties to religion than was the case decades ago, thus removing for many yet another source of adult guidance.

At a time when such guidance is most critical, teen-ager are left to their own devices and "morally neglected," says Gurian, bombarded with violent and overtly sexual messages in movies, television, video games and music.

"If we had to look at the top three problems right now in our culture, the lack of fathers and other older males in the lives of young males would have to be at the top," he says. Fix that, he believes, and a host of problems would diminish.

While acknowledging the importance of a strong and supportive mother, Gurian believes the role of a father is especially important in a boy's life. He says this is particularly true during adolescence, which he considers the most fragile time in a boy's moral development. "[Boys] need people of their own biology to help them control and cope with their inherent urges and drives. They need men to help them understand by example how a man is different from a boy." [See box at right detailing Gurian's views on the role of fathers.]

With so many single mother families prevalent today, the role of grandparents, uncles, neighbors and other men in the community is critical.

Contrary to what some might think, single moms are common in many societies, he points out. In Turkey, for example, where Gurian and his wife spent two years, fathers frequently emigrate to another country to find work. But in their absence, grandparents and extended family members step up to help the mothers and fill the gap.

"Has humanity ever abandoned a single mom to raise her sons alone?"

He says single mothers must enlist the help of adults, whether it's seeking a male in her church or temple to act as a mentor, requesting a Big Brother or asking a male teacher or coach to become more involved

with her son. "Not only does the mother need to reach out, but the culture needs to reach back to help her," Gurian says. Grandparents who live far away can still form deep bonds that will serve their grandchildren well, he says, through weekend phone calls to their grandkids, regular visits back and forth and mail. Godparents can also be chosen to act as children's "mentors, friends and moral and emotional allies," he believes.

Gurian's own childhood was spent moving from town to town, as his father - "a professor with wanderlust," according to Gurian - took on new assignments. Time spent with extended family was rare. Occasionally, though, his grandfather would visit and take Gurian and his brother fishing at the beaver ponds near their home in Laramie, Wyo. "Those are incredible memories for me," he says. "There is an osmosis that takes place that can't really be studied between young males and elder males. The boy's self fills up with the energy of this elder male, even though you're sitting in a fishing boat silently for three hours."

The Gurians are determined that there will be close ties between their daughters and the children's grandparents. When Gurian's parents retired, he urged them to settle in Spokane.

"I helped my parents move here specifically for my children," he says. "We opened up our community to them. I think people need to make sacrifices to get our extended families back together."

Gurian's strategies for raising boys are now being tested through the Michael Gurian Institute, created last year by the Missouri Center for Safe Schools at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. The idea for the institute came from a federal judge who serves on the center's board.

"He was carrying around 'The Wonder of Boys' [Gurian's first book] and using it as a manual for rearing his own children," says Patricia Henley, executive director of the center, which, as its name implies, fosters safe, disruption-free schools. "He thought it had some of the answers we needed."

Seven school districts are participating in the institute's two year pilot project, which includes intensive teacher training as well as periodic onsite visits by Gurian.

"We thought it would take a couple of years before we'd know if his approach would make a difference," says Henley. "We're only halfway through the first year, and already it's successful." She says the journals of teachers involved in the project are full of success stories.

For example, a young male teacher in a middle school now makes time to develop relationships with some of his troubled students. "He even visits them in other classrooms to show them that what they are doing is important to him," says Henley. When the teacher saw one of his young

charges misbehaving in another class, he pulled him aside and told him he expected better behavior from him. The boy's conduct improved.

One participating school is Edison Elementary in St. Joseph, Mo., where 80 percent of the children live below poverty level and most are being raised by single mothers. "Boys clearly behave differently in school than girls," says Dan Colgan, superintendent of St. Joseph public schools. "There's a higher number who are in our special education classrooms, particularly those being assigned to behavior-management classes."

Through the institute, teachers at Edison are learning methods for helping boys deal with frustration and anger. In addition, volunteers, many of them older people, have been actively recruited and trained to mentor students. Colgan says, "We find that children really respond to someone that they might see as Grandma or Grandpa."

Coming regularly to Kansas City to train teachers accounts for only some of the 60 or so trips Gurian makes in a year. He's active on the lecture circuit, delivering speeches to education, religious and criminal justice conferences, as well as making many book tours.

To keep up with his speaking and writing, Gurian gave up his therapy practice. A prolific writer with a dozen books to his credit, he recently completed a guide to character-building books and movies for boys and is at work on a book for educators. His next project: a book on girls that will examine the biological and cultural particularities of females. Ultimately, Gurian maintains, females would benefit as much as males if his theories were put into practice.

"Every time you raise a loving, wise and responsible man, you have created a better world for women," he says. "Women are having to bond with half-men, with boys who were not fully raised to manhood, don't know how to bond, don't know what their responsibilities are to humanity and don't have a strong sense of service. All of those are what manhood is."

Fathers and sons

ADAPTED FROM his book, "The Good Son," is Michael Gurian's view of the role of fathers during a-boy's adolescence:

If the father has been distant -- either physically or emotionally -- during a boy's younger years, now is the time for him to become an active parent. If the father is unavailable, finding father substitutes is essential

The boy needs more time alone with his dad, such as going on one-on-one outings.

The father should help guide his son toward other adult male mentors.

The father should begin challenging his son to achieve personal success and teaching him the rules of life from a male point of view.

Father and son should have discussions about values, ethics and decision-making, and about masculine stereotypes that the father feels are not helpful to a developing man.

3. These friends bridge the gap between young and old

(Photo shows Bill and Michael walking together.

The caption reads:

"Neighbors Bill Brockelman, 71, and Micahel Atwell, 12 are the best of friends. They go fishing together and Atwell accompanies Brockelman to the grocery store and to doctor's appointments.")

By OVETTA SAMPSON The (Colorado Springs) Gazette

Michael Atwell and Bill Brockelman are best buds. The next-door neighbors do everything together. They fish. They fix up old rods and reels. They tell stories. They cruise the flea markets. And after Michael gets out of school, he usually makes a beeline to his Fountain home just to hang out with Brockelman. The two have been friends for four years.

They view their friendship as ordinary. But many people might see it as unusual, because Michael is 12 and Bill is 71.

"It's pretty different, for as old as Bill is and as young as Michael is," Michael's mom, Debbie Atwell, says of the friendship. "But I think it's pretty neat."

Academics and analysts say such intergenerational friendships are not only "neat," they're needed for the good of society.

By fostering more relationships like Michael and Bill's, kids can find mentors and get the one-on-one attention they often lack at home, experts say. Elderly people can find more meaning in their lives and become more connected to their communities. And society itself could benefit from a more unified consciousness.

"It's not that (intergenerational) programs are just nice; they really are important," says Nancy Henkin, executive director of the Center for

Intergenerational Learning at Temple University in Philadelphia. "They can really foster a sense of interdependence in communities, and we need people to feel some sort of responsibility for each other."

Although there has long been a generation gap, it has been exacerbated by changes in demographics and pop culture that have nearly obliterated the opportunities for generations to mingle.

Tom McBride, an English professor at Beloit College in Wisconsin, points the finger at pop culture. It's not that adults and younger adults can't get along, he says. It's more that society doesn't encourage them to interact.

Advertisers split the buying market by age, drawing an imaginary line between 18-24-year-olds and those 50 and older. Television shows also segment the generations: Teens watch the WB's "Buffy the Vampire Slayer;" while their parents catch CBS' "Touched by an Angel."

Such practices have segmented our society in ways never seen before, says McBride. "Instead of one gap, there are lots of little gaps," says McBride, who has appeared on the "Today" show to talk about the differences in generational knowledge. "People who communicate culture today are so much more skilled at targeting different segments of the society."

Even in his own home, he says, the segmentation takes its toll among the adults and children. Targeted programming creates households where everyone watches something different on his or her own television, with little interaction.

Job demands and increased mobility also have segmented families and the generations. Brockelman lives in Fountain, but most of his sons, grandchildren and great-grandchildren live in Maryland. "They don't come down much," he says.

The generational schism has many consequences, experts say. For one, it tends to isolate many seniors from society.

"There are many older people who spend most of their life doing housework and watching TV," Henkin says. "They are mainly people who just aren't connected to the mainstream of society. They are people who struggle to say 'How do I bring meaning to my life?'"

Less contact between old and young also can hurt children, says Sally Newman, director of Generations Together, an international intergenerational studies program at the University of Pittsburgh. Newman points to the increase in social problems, such as violence and drugs, that surround today's youth. She says seniors are an untapped resource that can give children sustained mentoring.

"There's a lot of evidence to say that communities that are in disarray may, in fact, be suffering from lack of communication within the communities among the generations," says Newman, who has been studying intergenerational programs for 25 years. "The more we let that happen, the more fractured we're going to find ourselves."

McBride also says that when generations don't interact, they can't communicate well or share ideas that could benefit society.

"It's probably harder to get this country to have a national conversation about anything anymore," says McBride. "I'm a little bit concerned that we can't have a national conversation that might prevent a crisis from occurring because of the segmentation."

But all hope is not lost. In the last decade, nearly 300 intergenerational programs around the country have popped up to strengthen ties between young and old. The benefits of such programs are huge, say those who've studied them.

At Temple, Henkin takes a group of teens and seniors on a five-day retreat every year. The first thing that happens is that stereotypes melt away.

That was the case for 150 eighth-graders at East Middle School who worked with local seniors on a living history project. Before the project, the students described seniors as 'boring, grumpy, mean and bossy'

"Most of the time when I said hi to somebody they would be real mean," says Eric Dean, 13.

But after interviewing the seniors, the youths saw things differently.

"I used to think they were real grumpy but I actually learned they were sweet," says Monica Flores, 13. "They deserve respect. They've learned a lot more than anyone of us."

During the project, the students were studying Anne Frank and World War II. They said talks with seniors, many of whom lived through the war; helped them better understand history.

Ashley Pomales, 14, may have learned the most important lesson of all from the woman she interviewed.

"She was like me," Ashley says.

Newman says that to really bridge the generation gap, society must give up the notion that older people and younger people can't get along.

It's a lesson that Sally Meadows has embraced. The 57-year-old Colorado Springs businesswoman used to have friends just in her peer group,

because, she says that's what society told her do. Now her friends range in age from 27 to 85. 'What changed was her attitude about friendship and people.

"It's all attitude," she says. "The benefit of any relationship is the same. Age doesn't matter. It's that unconditional acceptance of who we are.

Michael and Brockelman say their friendship is mutually beneficial. Brockelman teaches Michael how to fix rods and reels, and Brockelman doesn't spend his days in isolation, like many of his peers.

As for Michael, a friend is a friend, period. He hangs out with his schoolmates and he hangs out with Brockelman. "It's not much different," Michael says.

Part 4: Two articles, written by Ipce members

1. How things work

By Peter B., Ipce member.

The perception of many gays is that the social changes that happened for them, where their social status improved, was a logical outcome of their efforts as a group to force society to change. However, this point of view is simplistic.

It is certainly flattering to believe that, along with others in a sexual minority, you have been able to bring about social change. In a sense, this is valid. However, on other levels explanations of the mechanisms of social change are complex.

The theme of liberation or emancipation is still a meaningful discourse for Western cultures. Asian cultures are endeavouring to develop discourses on democracy that fit their situation. What is noticeable is that the discourse is specific to their cultures and the politics of their region. A lot of the tension between the West and the East rests in an ignorance of how the discourses for each are both similar and yet different.

I am saying that there are rules for how any discourse functions at any given time and in any given place. Inside Western culture there was a time when the rules locked out the homosexual from a discourse on emancipation. Currently a different set of rules lock paedophiles out. They are not permitted to talk of themselves as an emergent sexual minority. If they do, such talk is marginalized and related discourses on

child safety, compulsive behaviour and social dangers kick in and dominate all talk of sex and social action.

The question I am interested in is understanding the current set of rules for the discourse of emancipation as it functions now. It especially interest me how other discourses maintain any given configuration (e.g. the discourse on children currently locks out talk of emancipation for paedophiles). I see various discourses as forming a kind of matrix and that this matrix is in a constant state of change.

Theories of social change, how that changes happens and can be explained, is extensive - they include communism, capitalism, liberalism, various feminisms, as well as religious worldviews such as Christianity (God's plan for humanity) Islamic worldviews and so on. My view is that who is right is not the right question to ask. I think there is, however, a need to be aware these different sets of worldviews exist. A pluralistic approach will hopefully keep at a distance dogmatism and social rigidity.

My point is this: Simple explanations are useful to encourage people and perhaps support them in maintaining a struggle for increased liberty, but this simplicity can be misleading. We can, validly, see our efforts as leading to social change. At the same time, I think we can take ourselves too seriously. I believe our situation will change. I don't think what we have is permanent. If we over estimate our role in the change process and under estimate *the role of other factors* then we run the risk of being dogmatic and rigid. Gay pride, I believe, is moving into a kind of rigidity and dogmatism. It's hostility to our talk of emancipation and a re-assertion of its history purified of any talk of boylove I think is a warning to gay culture it could implode on itself, losing much of what it has won.

What other factors?

A central idea in what I wrote regarding my preference for complex explanations over simple ones regarding social change was the idea that by focusing on one factor, even one that is flattering to us, we generate a perception which is more than mere interpretation - it is distorted.

The next point I make in this text relies on a philosophical point - when talking about what we know I am using the metaphor of vision. I acknowledge the use of the metaphor of *vision*, "seeing things", has been attacked by some. Authors have argued this is one of the wrong turns of Western thought. So why am I using it here? Our perception involves more than mere choosing, it actually shapes what one sees.

The argument I refer to involves what can be called the subject-object relationship. Is what I see really out there or do I make what I see? What is the mix of object and subject - if you like. When we see things, when we think we perceive something, understand something, how much is us (the subject), how much is other (the object). What is more important, sensation or the concepts we use to talk about the world.

Do any of us have to be involved in such philosophical discussions? No, but I think there is a real value in at least knowing the discussion is taking place. How this talk comes to us may be quite unconventional. For example, a movie I saw this year was a good example of the kinds of ideas I am talking about here. The movie was called the Matrix. It might make good sense to see the movie to get a feel for what I'm talking about. I think that art is a great way of accessing difficult ideas and I suspect art may be a kind of vanguard for future discussion of intergenerational issues.

Back to my main point. Understanding and perception can be said to be shaped by the model of the world you use to interpret things by. The Christian talks of God's plan, the Marxist talks of the means of production and labours' relationship to what it produces, capitalism talks of a market and the control of goods for sale. If you look at each of these "ways of seeing things" the workings of change is not chaotic, but guided by some hidden structure, which when understood, will allow you to interpret the world accurately, truthfully if you like.

I don't wish to promote any of these world views as better, superior, certainly not necessary ways of seeing social change. However, all of them guide a person to look for factors of change.

My point is that as pedo activist we are in a sense developing our own set of notions regarding how things work. Often this involves the importance of the sexual in Western culture. In our current setting we may come to believe that a key factor in understanding why things have unfolded the way they are now in society is linked to attitudes to children and sex. We might state it negatively as a the effects of Puritanism or a fear of sex. Is that how things work now? I'm saying, maybe, but lets be careful how much weight we give this factor.

A second point is I think we often incorporate one or more of the models listed above, and then give primacy to sexuality or adult/child relations. We can be a kind of mental and emotional "soup", if you like. Perhaps we are Christian, perhaps liberals, perhaps capitalists, perhaps Marxists. When we talk with each other, in one sense we might agree and yet in another we find ourselves disagreeing. The tensions can, in part, be governed by underlying differences we have in how we interpret the world.

In talk of what factors govern change I wanted to argue against allowing the focus to be "too narrow" or over stating one factor. We can over state the sexual or over state the role of the child in Western culture. If we do this, I believe it will lead to negative effects - rigidity and dogmatism. I believe, for our own future as a group and as individuals, there are strong reasons to encourage us to be pluralist in approach.

To the question "What are the other factors," the answer is linked to what you see as the hidden structure that guides things, or for that matter if

such a structure can be talked about at all. You could decide all talk of a hidden structure is false - what you see is what you get. This point of view is gaining a lot of support now.

If you go for the flat world idea - not hidden structures, then there is no struggle for emancipation, no hidden structures of oppression or exclusion, no Marxist framework, no divine plan (Christianity goes out the window), no capitalist theory of markets determining social conditions, humanism dies as well. What you have is what you see, it's that simple.

I've ended what I write with what are loose descriptions of what maybe, for our generation, a modern way of seeing things. Conspiracy theories don't go far in this world view and we might have a hard time getting people to see there is much of a problem to be solved, unless you argue there are thousands of peds out there wanting to jump your children, which is what the abuse industry is pushing for all it's worth.

2. Remarks on 'Rethinking Puberty' by McClintock and Herdt

Peter Schulte-Stracke

Abstract. The view that puberty is triggered by the maturation of the gonads is found conflicting with recent results on sexual development, and a better explanation is given in terms of the maturation of the adrenal glands, several years earlier.

About

GILBERT HERDT; MARTHA MCCLINTOCK: *Rethinking Puberty : The Development of Sexual Attraction.*-- Current Developments in Psychological Science **5**(6): 178-183 (Dec. 1996)

Early sexual attraction.

During their research into the development of (homo-)sexual orientation in gay youth **[*1]**, Andrew BOXER and Gilbert HERDT repeatedly learned of an onset of sexual attraction well before the customarily assumed threshold of puberty:

A youth remembers a time when he was sitting in the family room with his parents watching the original ``Star Trek'' television series. He reports that he was 10 years old and had not developed any of the obvious signs of puberty. When ``Captain Kirk'' suddenly peeled off his shirt, the boy was titillated. At 10 years of age, this was his first experience of sexual attraction, and he knew instinctively that, according to

the norms of his parents and society, he should not be feeling this same-gender attraction. [...]

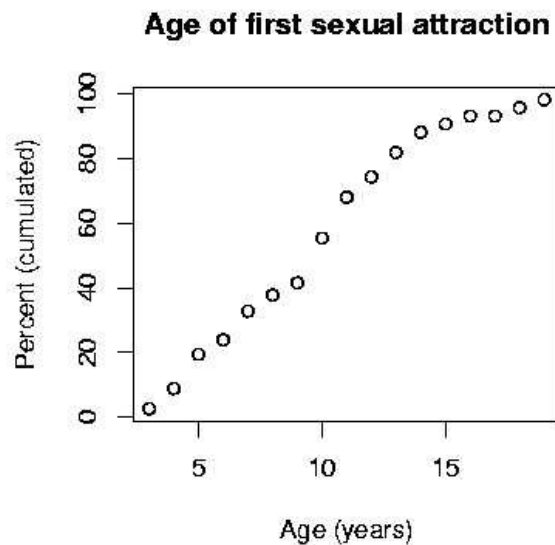
By age 10 [...] a profound transformation had begun, and it was already completed when he entered puberty; sexual attraction to the same gender was so familiar to him, that it defined his selfhood. (178)

In fact, in all of three recent studies, of gay youth [*1] or gay [*2] and lesbian [*3] adults, the *onset of sexual attraction* was consistently found to be much earlier than expected, namely around 10 years (cf. **Table 1**). An impression of the early age at which many individuals reported their first sexual attraction is given by **Figure 1**, which derives from a similar study.

Table 1: Ages (years) at which males and females recall having their first same-sex attraction, fantasy, and activity (179, from [*1])

| Development event | Males | | | Females | | |
|---------------------------|-------|-----|-----|---------|-----|----|
| | Mean | SD | n | Mean | SD | n |
| First same-sex attraction | 9.6 | 3.6 | 146 | 10.1 | 3.7 | 55 |
| First same-sex fantasy | 11.2 | 3.5 | 144 | 11.9 | 2.9 | 54 |
| First same-sex activity | 13.1 | 4.3 | 136 | 15.2 | 3.1 | 49 |

Figure 1: Cumulated age of first sexual attraction (as reported in [*3] for homosexual oriented males). Data approximately taken from drawing on page 322.



Traditional view of Puberty.

The foregoing is difficult to reconcile with a customary view of puberty that is thus summarised by the authors:

[G]onadarche (final maturation of the testes and ovaries) is the biological basis for the child's budding interest in sexual matters. Earlier studies postulated that the profound maturational changes during puberty instigate the transition from preadolescent to adult forms of sexuality that involve sexual attraction, fantasy, and behaviour. **[*4]** Thus adult forms of sexuality were thought to develop only after gonadarche, typically around ages 12 for girls and 14 for boys, with early and late bloomers being regarded as "off time" in development. **[*5]** (178)

In this view, the development of sexuality is understood as a "precipitous, singular, psychological event, fueled by intrinsic changes in hormonal levels. Gonadarche is seen as a 'switch', turning on desire and attraction, and hence triggering the developmental sequelae of adult sexuality." (179) The long stretch of time prior to the onset of puberty, when the levels of said hormones reach a threshold, is considered to be without development of sexuality, the famous *latency period* of FREUD.

Because puberty (qua gonadarche) happens too late, and also because it happens at a differing age for both sexes, it is difficult to explain the data on the onset of sexual attraction by it. But it is also difficult to see a purely external, social learning explanation, as at ten years there is no change in society's way with the children, nor can social learning account

for the case of homosexually oriented individuals. (181f.) So the authors look for another possible explanation: *Adrenarche*.

Adrenarche in Middle Childhood.

From the clinical, pediatric literature it is well known that children from the age of about six to eight years are experiencing a rise in androgens, primarily *dehydroepiandrosterone* (DHEA), secreted from the then maturing adrenal cortex. The metabolism of DHEA yields both testosterone and estradiol. This rise occurs parallelly in both boys and girls, in marked contrast to later sexual development. At about ten years of age, the level of DHEA is about ten times that observed in younger children [6], where it remains until raising further to adult levels when the gonads start to produce them.

Adrenarche is clinically recognized primarily by the onset of pubic hair, but it also includes a growth spurt, increased oil on the skin, changes in the external genitalia, and the development of body odour. Nonetheless, both the psychological literature and the institutions of our culture regard this period of middle childhood as hormonally quiescent.² (180)

In adults, these androgens are known to have "psychological effects in a variety of developmental areas relating to aggression, cognition, perception, attention, emotions, and sexuality[.]" (180) "and it is plausible that the same hormones would have similar effects at an earlier age." (182)

Therefore, the authors conclude, that a "change in the nervous system that results from hormones released at adrenarche does look like the most likely developmental mechanism for several reasons" (182), but add that this question cannot yet be answered definitively.

Conclusion

"This observation, in turn leads to a redefinition of pubertal and prepubertal development." (178) and this even if the hormonal changes should prove not to be the true cause, because those models "assume that adult desires and behaviours develop from gonadarche." (182) "Freud's idea of a latency period is seriously flawed." (l.c.)

The new picture then of puberty, that is not confounded with gonadarche, "is composed of at least two separate maturational processes: adrenarche and gonadarche." (l.c.) And there is another twist:

The idea of sexuality developing in stages is nothing new to social scientists. But the idea that sexuality is a continuous process that begins from the inside, well before gonadarche, and extends into adulthood is a conceptual advance. These

new data from sexual orientation research force a reevaluation of the social and health models of sexual development. No longer can the brain at puberty be treated as a black box, which is suddenly able to process sexual stimuli *de novo* at the time of gonadal change. (183)

Meaning

Given that casual (self-)observation has always pointed to a more extended period of sexual development, one might wonder how much of the popular idea of a youth overwhelmed at puberty by a sudden flood of sex hormones owes more to dramaturgy, from Vienna or Hollywood, than to psychology.

The place of puberty (qua sexual maturation) in society as an important moment in life was handed down, from Roman and later canon law, it appears, with an exclusive view to marriage and procreation. It is well known, that as late as in 18th century France, the sexual activity of children before their maturation was simply ignored.

Now, the new meaning of puberty could obviously not be based upon observation, but may be yet another example of changing *historical semantics*: with the delay of marriage and the appearance of *youth* on the historical stage, puberty lost its old importance, only to be re-commissioned into a different rôle. (A story not here to be told.)

Was it only associated with the masturbation hysteria from the late 18th century onwards? Note also the parallel with the purely legal concept of 'consent' today, which has also taken on ontological dimensions.

Evolution

One question arises immediately: for what purpose a child's entry into sexuality is staged in this way? Why do we develop sexual interest that early, without in most cases outwardly realizing them? Only, it seems, to direct our regards and educate our desires.

Evidently, not procreation per se is the purpose of the delay, but perhaps growing phantasies which might foster the ability to love, perhaps wrapping the still unborn desire into more altruistic clothes, perhaps enriching/generalising the *libido*. If culture pays off, it should make sense, evolutionary. I mention the idea, perhaps forgotten, that a child profits from a time to grow inwardly, to cherish its ideas etc.

It makes perhaps the individual more able to associate specific meanings with procreation, the evolutionary *raison d'être* of all and everything. So let's speculate that it would allow a more *cultural bias* in mate selection etc.

Development

Little is said about the most important of all questions, how the individual child organises its budding sexuality. If the child is more actively involved with its sexual development: what does it with these experiences and their meaning? Both social skills and interpretations are to be developed. And the hormonal development does not make actual experiences redundant, but only prepares the way for them. There are meanings to be associated, experiences interpreted, thus the endogenous moment of sexual awakening remains dependent on the child's environment to flourish.

Here may also be the place for the fact that there are many heterosexual boys who long for an older male partner for this period of their life (the authors assume a fixed sexual orientation by age ten).

Variability

The standard deviations given in table 1, more than three years for children of ten years of age, (But beware! These are surely very imprecise data from a small sample) should remind us again that the development of children goes at an individual pace, and that the age in itself does not tell very much about the maturity or ability of a child.

Redefining Puberty

Now "[r]esearchers need to take into account the hormonal fact that the start of puberty in normal individuals is around ages 6 to 8 and the end of puberty is not until ages 15 to 17." (182f) Amusing, and a bit reassuring, because many can now be assured, that their feelings were not pathologically early, result of bad influences, or whatever, just normal.

'Normality regained' could be our headline, as the sexual development not only takes longer and starts earlier than hitherto assumed; it must be seen but interwoven with and a part of general development. Sexuality must no longer be considered the great exception that it used to be, where anything developed but sexuality was spared for the great onslaught of the sex hormones. Also the idea of an *adult sexuality* that pre-exists *per se*, only to be fetched at puberty, is de-valuated.

Ambiguity

There is an ambiguity with respect to the notion of puberty. Most lay people understand, I believe, puberty more loosely, as starting with what the article calls adrenarche, say pubic hair or breast buds. Educated people nowadays very often play with this, using the medical strict definition as gonadarche (spermarche, menarche) to eschew a discussion of the legal situation. Saying 'not before puberty' is a means for them to sound very critical and compassionate while meaning nothing.

This ambiguity finds itself also in the article, this shows that there is a real problem. The decisive point is not that certain psychological changes are not the consequence of the hormones secreted by the gonadal glands, but of those secreted by the adrenal glands, *but* the fact that these changes are *not* immediately directed towards procreation, but towards the child's inner development.

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| 00-074 @ 1 p | Curley family files wrongful death suit, by Matt Fogelman, in: Cambridge Chronicle, April 8, 1999 (? 2000?) [Against NAMBLA) |
| 00-075 @ 3 pp | Curley family sues pedophile group for \$200 million, by Ryan Thompson, in Cambridge Chronicle, May 17, 2000 |
| 00-076 @ 3 pp | Curleys file suit, by Martin Finucane, in Cambridge Chronicle, May 17, 2000 |
| 00-077 @ 1 p | NAMBLA denies connection with murder, By Arnold Schoen, in Cambridge Chronicle, May 24, 2000 - with a <i>correction</i> by The Chronicle. |
| 00-078 @ 3 pp | Child murders may get attorney in civil case, by Leigh Hornbeck, in The Cambridge Chronicle, July 12, 2000. |
| 00-079 @ 3pp | Curley murders face jury again in civil trail, by Ryan Thopmson, in The Cambridge Chronicle, Aug 23 2000 |
| 00-080 @ 3 pp | Curley family awarded \$328 million, by Ryan Thopmson, in The Cambridge Chronicle, Aug 25 2000 |
| 00-081 @ 3 pp | ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union] will defend man/boy love group in Curley lawsuit, in Boston Globe, by Ralph Ranalli, 8/31/2000 |
| 00-082 @ 2 pp | A.C.L.U. Will Defend Group Backing Sex Between Men and Boys, by Don Terry, in New York Times, Sept. 1, 2000 |
| 00-083 @ 2 pp | ACLU To Represent NAMBLA, By The Associated Press, Aug. 31, 2000 |

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| 00-084 @ 2 pp | ACLU To Represent NAMBLA, by Martin Finucane, Associated Press, Aug. 31, 2000 |
| 00-085 @ 1 p | Family Awarded in Wrongful Death, by Theo Emery, Ass. Press, Aug 23, 2000 |
| 00-086 @ 2 pp | Curley family awarded \$328 million, by Ryan Thopmson, in The Cambridge Chronicle, Aug 30 2000 |
| 00-087 @ 165 kB, 20 pp | The Mike Echols Files |
| 00-088 @ PDF file, 39 kB, 17 pp | The Child Love Manifesto, by Peter Roy (found at the Web) |
| 00-089 @ 18 kB, 6 pp | Frequency, Durability, and Effectiveness of Boylover/Loved Boy Relationships, Results [of an inquiry], April/May, 1999, Safet.net |
| 00-090 @ 12 kB 4 pp | Childhood and background, results [of an inquiry], March 1999, Safet.net |
| 00-091 @ 12 kB 4 pp | The Effects of Viewing Boy Erotica, May, 1999, results [of an inquiry], Safet.net |
| 00-092 @ 2 pp | About Zembla (Dutch TV program) Documentary on Dr. Brongersma, by Chris Canter |
| 00-093b @ 11 pp | Educationalist Ireen Van Engelen, Psychiatrist Frank van Ree and MARTIJN Member Chris Canter: <i>Consider Pedophilia</i> , "Debat op 5" on Dutch national radio, 30 minutes, translation of the Dutch transcription Radio 5, NCRV, 18 August 2000; Moderator: Mrs. Heidi Iepema |
| 00-094 @ 12 pp | Court of Appeals says child nudism magazines not obscene; Appeals court reverses a ruling on the seizure of two European publications; USA, souce and date unknown (2000) - Article and full ruling. |
| 00-095 @ 2 pp | La nouvelle loi sur la protection pénale des mineurs doit entrer en vigueur le 1r avril 2001 ; Protéger tous les jeunes, jusqu'à 18 ans, par Michelle Lamensch, Le Soir en ligne, Bruxelles, du samedi 18 novembre 2000 |
| 00-096 @ PDF, 150 kB, 35 pp | Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, 21.12.2000, COM(2000) 854 final; to the European Parliament: Combating trafficking in human beings and combating |

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| | <p>the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography;</p> <p>Proposal for a Council framework decision on combating trafficking in human beings;</p> <p>Proposal for a Council framework decision on combating the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography</p> |
| 00-097 @ 3 pp | <p>Review of : Pedophilia: Biosocial Dimensions, by Jay R. Feierman, MD, Springer-Verlag New York Inc., 1990, 594 pages, Editor, Reviewed by Kathryn J. Dolan</p> |
| 00-098 @ 3 pp | <p>Study conference "Unfinished Business" in The Netherlands; A summary of the workshop on professional assistance to pedophiles, By Chris Canter</p> |
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| 00-104 @ 1p | <p>ACLU asks judge to throw out Curley suit against NAMBLA, By Ralph Ranalli, Boston Globe Correspondent, 12/12/2000</p> |
| 00-105 @ 4pp | <p>An International Day to Celebrate Boy Love & The AA for pedophiles, but they keep drinking heavily, Gustaw Bessems, translated from Dutch Newspaper Trouw, 21 December 2000</p> |

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| 01-005 @ 1 p | Book review: December 2000, Dirty old man, The Annotated Alice: the definitive edition. Lewis Carroll, with an introduction by Martin Gardner. |
| 01-006 @ 1 p | Report of a broadcast on CNN today about the case of the attempt of 'court-room lynching' NAMBLA, Jan .. 2001 |
| 01-007 @ 1 p | Canada court eases restrictions on child porn, By Randall Palmer, 26 Jan. 2001 |
| 01-008 @ | <p>Canadian reports about Sharpe case Two reports from Canadian Press. The first is legal, in greater detail than the Reuters report sent in another posting. The second is an interview with Sharpe himself. He seems in a bad way after all his troubles. I'm a bit pushed for time personally, but I wonder if anyone else on this list could track him down, maybe via his solicitor or whatever, just to offer a little social support.</p> <p>❏ Supreme Court of Canada upholds child porn law, with two exceptions By SUE BAILEY</p> <p>❏ Ailing John Robin Sharpe says he's paid a price fighting child porn law, By STEVE MERTL</p> |

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| 01-009 @ 2 pp | <p>Clear article about Sharpe case (Fwd) Canada: 27th January 2001, Supreme Court Allows Some Possession of Child Pornography The Supreme Court of Canada upheld the aims of the child pornography laws Friday, but took steps to ensure that private works of imagination and creativity do not run afoul of it. The long-awaited decision by Canada's Supreme Court on Friday clarified what is and isn't child pornography. [...] Full ruling online</p> <p>: http://www.lexum.umontreal.ca/csc-scc/en/rec/texte/sharpe.en.txt [...] <i>On the exceptions: [...] Summary [...] Conclusions [...]</i></p> |
| 01-010 @ 1 p | <p>The joy of not having sex - yet, 26th January 2001 Just as every generation of teenagers acts as if it is the first to discover sex, every generation of middle-aged adults acts as if it is the first to discover that teenagers are having sex. Certainly the current generation of middle-aged American adults is acting that way, since teen sex has become something of a cultural preoccupation here. The Washington Post ran a front-page story a year or two ago that chronicled the sexual activities of a bunch of upper-middle-class 13-year-olds and reported that a bacchanal of blow jobs was taking place behind the bike sheds.</p> |
| 01-011 @ 1 p | <p>Sexual horseplay lands girl in custody, January 31st 2001, Canadian news item An incident of apparent sexual experimentation among young girls has landed a 12-year-old in secure custody for a year while she awaits the outcome of her trial for sexual assault. The bizarre case has been quietly unfolding in a Toronto suburb since the young defendant was arrested last spring, three months after her 12th birthday. The two complainants, both aged 11 at the time, claimed that she pulled their pants down during an after-school play date at her foster home, briefly licking their genitals.</p> |
| 01-012 @ 1 p | <p>Ex - Teacher Marries Former Student, AP, February 5, 2001 SEATTLE (AP) -- An ex-schoolteacher who spent nearly four years in prison for having sex with a 15-year-old student has married his former pupil. Mark Blilie, 46, met Toni Pala, 20, when she was 13, and began a sexual relationship with her when she was 15. He married her earlier this month, six months after his release from prison...</p> |
| 01-013 @ 1 | <p>Child porn Bill change defeated, 16 February 2001, New</p> |

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| p | <p>Zealand National Party list MP Anne Tolley has had her Bill aimed at closing a legal loophole concerning child pornography dumped by a select committee. Tolley's Bill would have given the Censor the power to disregard the right to freedom of expression when classifying material deemed to depict, support or promote child pornography.</p> |
| 01-014 @ 1 p | <p>Nine-Year-Old Charged With Sex Abuse, USA News item, 10th March 2001 A 9-year-old Cedar City girl was charged Friday in 5th District Juvenile Court with sexual abuse of a child, for allegedly holding down a 5-year-old girl, giving her "kisses" on her chest and "touching inappropriate areas." Police are continuing their investigation, including questions about where the 9-year-old would learn such behavior, said Sgt. Dave Holm.</p> |
| 01-015 @ 1 p | <p>Family of 2-year-old 'streaker' taken to court, Court claims 4th Amendment "doesn't apply" to social workers, 12th March 2001 Because a 2-year-old, acting in typical toddler fashion, ran out of the house naked chasing a kitten, a social worker demanded entry into the North Carolina child's home to interview all children in the household, ultimately landing the parents in court.</p> |