

# PAIDIKA

The Journal of Paedophilia



Summer 1987 Number 1

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**The Journal of Paedophilia**

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## **Paidika**

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## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The starting point of **Paidika** is necessarily our consciousness of ourselves as paedophiles. It is our intention to publish an intellectual journal which will examine paedophilia within its cultural context, with emphasis on the humanities, history and social sciences. We shall be speaking, therefore, not only to paedophiles seeking a greater understanding of their identity, but also to members of the academic community open to objective investigations of the phenomenon.

The ground on which we stand is the emergence and evolution of paedophile consciousness and identity in history. We point back to the writings of J. A. Symonds and members of the early German sexual emancipation movement such as Benedict Friedländer and John Henry Mackay, where views of paedophilia as an identity and subculture were proposed. The contemporary development of this consciousness is found in the work of Frits Bernard, Edward Brongersma, Tom O'Carroll, René Schérer and others. We intend to be a forum for the shaping of this consciousness.

But to speak today of paedophilia, which we understand to be consensual intergenerational sexual relationships, is to speak of the politics of oppression. This is the milieu in which we are enmeshed, the fabric of our daily life and struggle. There is no country where there are not proscriptions against even the most innocent consensual paedophile relationships. In the English-speaking countries, in particular, the facts of this politics are worsening, and these countries appear determined to impose their reactionary moral values on other nations. In the United States, for example, prison sentences of a century or more are not uncommon for consensual man/boy relationships, and in the state of Florida the paedophile can receive the death penalty for such relationships. Visual images that are part of a paedophile sensibility are also being assailed: in many places all nude images of minors are legally defined as pornography. Not only are our lives and culture under attack, but proposals are afoot in the United States and Canada to criminalize even discussions of lowering of the age of consent or the reporting of research that does not characterize paedophilia as child abuse.

It is our contention that the oppression of paedophilia is part of the larger repression of sexuality, and that this repression in general represents an irrational expression of authority in government. The oppression of paedophilia is therefore dangerous in a wider sense than simply to paedophiles. We must address the reality of this oppression, and while we do not advocate behaviour that violates these laws, we shall attempt to counter the hysteria with calmness and reason.

We wish then to welcome and invite our readers' participation. Through publication of scholarly studies, thoroughly documented and carefully reasoned, we intend to demonstrate that paedophilia has been, and remains, a legitimate and productive part of the totality of human experience.

The Editors.

## INTERVIEW: MONICA PIETERSE



Monica Pieterse is the author of two works on paedophilia: "Pedofilie", Leiden, 1978, her Ph.D. thesis; and "Pedofielen over Pedofilie", Zeist, 1982. She is a jurist, that is, she has completed all the course work for a law degree. She has worked for the National Ombudsman Service and is at present working with the Auditing Division of the Dutch government in The Hague. After her university studies she was awarded a year and a half government grant for research on paedophilia. She said she did this research because she thought "the law was wrong, that society had a misunderstanding of these contacts, and that perhaps society and the paedophile could come closer together." This interview was conducted in English.

**PAIDIKA:** *You published a work in Dutch, "Pedofielen over pedofilie", in 1982. As most of our readers would not be familiar with that research, could you briefly summarize the research and your conclusions?*

**MONICA PIETERSE:** I sent out about 300 questionnaires, and I got back 148. They answered the questions very openly. Some were very long, stories of their lives. I put all these answers in a computer. Then I did interviews with eighteen: eleven men, two women, four parents and one man who had a pedophile relationship as a child.

*How did you find your sample of three hundred?*

I put an advertisement in *Sekstant*, and two ads in the newspaper, and one ad in the NVSH bulletin.

*Were the respondents self-chosen? Did they contact you?*

Yes. I also went to a lot of congresses on paedophilia. People got to know me and told each other. It was like that.

*The eleven men and two women you chose to interview in depth, how were they selected?*

I knew them by name and got to know them at congresses. They were the more open and active ones. I tried to make the selection a cross section of adults. This was very difficult.

*Why did you do this particular project on paedophilia?*

I thought it was important for society to listen to paedophiles; to hear and understand why they had sexual contacts with children, what they feel about children. I hoped society and paedophiles would come closer to each other and so the happiness of children, paedophiles and parents would increase. Parents often react panicky when they know their children have had sexual contacts with an adult. And their reaction is very bad for the child. I hoped they would react in a better way, when they knew more about paedophilia. So, I wanted to make visible a large group of paedophiles and see what things they had in common. I made a questionnaire and had the interviews. The

interviews were useful because they gave a background to the answers in the questionnaire. They put the answers in the right perspective. Also, I wanted to give a juridical solution to the problem of paedophilia, with a focus on the child. I thought that paedophilia being a criminal offense was a bad solution for all the parties involved. The most important one in the relationship, the most vulnerable member of the relationship is the child. But I thought that if the paedophile didn't do anything bad, why forbid it? I thought that making a criminal act of it was, and still is, a very bad solution.

*The conclusions you reached, can you briefly outline them for our readers?*

The last thing I mentioned, about the juridical, is the most important. You have to get rid of references to paedophilia in the penal code because it doesn't do any good and there are more than enough laws in Holland to protect the child. For example, the law forbids someone to threaten another to have sex, to do things someone doesn't want to do, and parents can have the judge forbid someone to get in touch with their child. So there are more than enough laws and solutions already if you don't want your child to have a contact with a paedophile.

*Have you continued to update the research, stay in touch with these individuals or enlarge your sample?*

No. I thought I knew enough about paedophilia. The thing was clear for me. I wanted to do some other things.

*Have you encountered any new factors since your research to cause you to change your conclusions?*

No.

*In the last four years there have been major changes in attitudes, particularly in English speaking countries, but also perhaps in the Netherlands, regarding paedophilia. Do you think the attitude is worse now than when you published your work?*

It's about the same in Holland, although there is more ado about incest.

*Accusations have appeared in the foreign press that Amsterdam is an awful place with child slave auctions in Dam Square. Do these kind of foreign press reports affect Dutch attitudes?*

No. This has been in the papers, but it's also been in the paper that Holland isn't the source of child pornography. The average person in the Netherlands hasn't changed their attitudes in spite of what has been in the newspapers.

*What is the Dutch attitude towards paedophilia?*

Paedophilia is something that is there. It's not regarded as a good thing. Parents feel that paedophiles ought to leave their child alone. If it happens in a family people will start screaming and panic. I think that's bad. Maybe there's a small difference in the last ten or fifteen years. There are more publications, and articles in women's magazines, so perhaps people will be just a small bit better about this, and will think first. Then they'll start screaming. But, sexual things are easier now so perhaps there's a difference. An improvement. If slight. Now at least people say, if it's other parents and other children, "Oh, paedophilia isn't so bad", but if it's their child they'll react very badly.

*Is there more awareness in the Netherlands of paedophilia now?*

There is more awareness. And there is one big difference with ten years ago, though this difference is with the prosecutors. They won't prosecute so quickly now. Unless there is harm and no consent, a nasty smell about it: pornography or money. But for a relationship or maybe one contact, there won't likely be prosecution, and that's an improvement. I think the police have improved their behavior towards paedophiles. And twenty years ago when there was a sexual contact the police would ask the child what was done and how was it done. The child would get very nervous and upset. But nowadays the police do it in another

way. They ask for a social worker or teacher. They won't react so exaggeratedly. I think that's a real improvement.

*What has caused the improvement, though the society in general hasn't changed?*

I think it's because sexuality in general is more in the open. And more education, more explanations of things, studies about it, research. The police are better informed about it and they know it's not alright to upset the child. It will do more harm to the child than the sexual contact.

*Your study of paedophilia seems to be unique in the variations it covers: men with boys; men with girls; women with girls. This last group have been almost unstudied. It has been the official line of the American feminist movement that women cannot be paedophiles, that such people don't exist. Yet in your sample you have two women who are willing to talk about their paedophile feelings. As you looked at these different kinds of relationships, what differences did you see between, for example, men who were interested in boys, men interested in girls, and women paedophiles?*

To start with the group of men. I don't think there's much difference between men with boys and men with girls. The biggest group in my study, 80%, was men with boys; 12% men with boys and girls; and about 10% men with girls. The men with girls, or with boys and girls, tended to look for somewhat younger girls than boys, so that's a small difference. As for the relationship on its own, I don't see much difference. There is a difference between men and women. But my sample contained only a very small group of women, so it's hard to judge. The questionnaire was actually answered by four women. Two of the women hadn't had a relationship. One woman I think had had a relationship, but it was all very theoretical. For the men the sex was very, very important. But for the women it wasn't. They talked more about warmth, affection, love. But for the men it was focused on sex.

*The focus on sex—was this true for both the men with boys and the men with girls?*



Yes.

*Did you study the results of sex on the children?*

No. It was nearly impossible to get in touch with the children. Also, Theo Sandfort had done such interviews with the children. So I thought his work was enough. (*Sandfort's research has been published in Dutch under the title Het seksuele aspekt van pedofiele relaties: Ervaringen van jongens by the Sociological Institute, State University, Utrecht, 1981, and in English as The Sexual Aspect of Paedophile Relations: The experience of twenty-five boys by Pan/Spartacus, Amsterdam, 1982: ed.*)

*Did you notice any differences in the way these groups established relationships? For example, men interested in boys can often meet the boys at sports events and such but it's harder for a man to initiate a relationship with a girl. Is there a difference in that area?*

I think there's a difference, because the girls tend to be a bit younger and it's harder to get in touch with a girl of nine or ten than boys of twelve or thirteen, because they are more with adults and the boys are going out more on their own. But that was all.

*Does society react differently to these groups, because men with boys share something of homosexuality? Are man-boy relationships condemned more, do you think, because there is a double prejudice against same sex relationships, as well as intergenerational relationships?*

People think homosexual relationships are bad. But also, the thought of such a small girl with a grown man with a big penis—that's very bad to people too.

*Isn't it very unusual to find women who are willing to talk about their paedophile relationships? Outside of the four in yours sample, have you found any others?*

I didn't find any others. These four were in the NVSH. Their groups talk a lot about sex and women don't like that, so most of the women stay away. How can you trace them? I'm sure there are other women.

*Could you tell us more about how the women's attitudes differed from the men's?*

These four women could have sex with other women, or with men, so there wasn't a need to have a sexual contact with the child. They could do it with an adult. But the men couldn't do it with an adult, so they had to have sex with the child. For these women there was always an escape. They were more omni-sexual. Because sex wasn't so important to the women these contacts with children were more "normal". Society wouldn't even call them paedophile. It was just "lovely feelings". So, perhaps there are lots of women who have these kinds of feelings towards children but if it's not sexually expressed, it's hard to trace or see. When you see a woman kissing a child it's "normal", but a man kissing a boy on the street—well!

*We've spoken of the negative attitudes even in the Netherlands on the part of society about paedophilia. From the interviews or the questionnaire, how did these negative attitudes affect the paedophiles' understanding of themselves? How did they react to it? Were they, as a group, more self-condemning? Were they more militant?*

The younger were more militant, proud of it. On the whole, ten years ago they were more afraid and felt bad about it. It was on their conscience. Nowadays, they are more militant. It's like the line homosexuality is taking.

*One of the frequent attacks made on paedophilia is that there are unequal power balances in the relationships. From your interviews or the questionnaire, how did you find power was experienced and felt by each of the parties?*

As for the child's attitude, I only spoke with one adult who had had a relationship when he was a child. He was very ambivalent about the sexual part. He loved and trusted the paedophile. He could speak about anything with him. But he was very uneasy about the sex. He was afraid of it, to give himself. But he had a religious upbringing, and that was twenty years ago. Sex was something to exchange. He got love and affection, and so on. He gave sex. But, otherwise, he liked it but he

didn't dare to like it. So it was a problem. Well, that was twenty years ago and today people are more relaxed about sex. So, perhaps the situation has changed, though I think it still might be like that in quite a few relationships. The child wants to have love and affection in the first place. He will give in to the sexual part because he knows that the paedophile loves it and it gives the child some grip on the paedophile. Also, there are lots of boys in puberty who love to do sexual things with men, and they feel the adult loves to do that. So, I think that the power is divided, both parties have some cards. Of course, the adult knows clearly what he wants, and the child frequently just feels it or dimly knows it.

*You had also interviewed the parents in four families where the children were involved with paedophiles. Did you hear from them of any feelings of powerlessness on the part of the children?*

No, I didn't hear about that. The children were very closed about the sexual part. It was a very private thing. Also, there wasn't sexual activity in every relationship. What I think though is that the power is divided. The adult knows what he is doing and is gradually working towards sex. But the children don't know exactly what the paedophile wants. They know he wants something so they try it out. The child knows he has something to give with sex. In that situation there are always children who blackmail the paedophile who is in need of sex. And there are paedophiles who blackmail the child who is in need of love and affection. These, of course, are very bad situations. But on the whole the power is divided. Just as it is in most relationships.

*How conscious of their power were the paedophiles themselves? Did they talk about the realization of power they held in a child's life and their responsibility for it?*

Yes. They felt very responsible for that part of the relationship. They spoke a lot about it. But I don't know in practice, in the relationship or in making the contacts, if they always are so responsible. But they speak a lot about it.

*Many attacks on paedophiles claim they aren't even aware of this, that they simply wield power unthinkingly. It's good to hear from your research that the community is aware of this.*

Yes, it's like that in the Netherlands.

*We're curious about the child saying 'no'—about the child's ability to say no to sex. Were the paedophiles creating an atmosphere in the relationship where the child could say 'no'? Were there situations where the child couldn't say 'no'?*

That's more a question for Theo Sandfort. But I found, yes, the child could say 'no' in these situations. I don't think the paedophiles I talked to would do harm to the child. They sincerely loved the child. Especially having sex with the child—but they wouldn't do any harm. So, the child could say 'no'. Or just stay away and not come back. The child has a lot of power in that way. And because he can speak to his parents, or to his friends.

*Could you clarify one thing: in your sample do you think the parents always knew about the sexual relationship with the child?*

No. Some knew and some didn't. I asked the question but it was hard to get clear answers because some paedophiles had many many relationships.

*In Dutch the word "relatie" can be translated as "contacts", implying just sexual encounters, or "relationships", which implies in English an ongoing commitment. How many paedophiles were carrying on relationships as opposed simply to contacts, and in the course of your research did you notice any differences in the kinds of persons who carry on relationships as opposed to those who just seek contacts? Any qualitative differences?*

That I don't know. Some had hundreds of contacts; some were very occupied with sex and not relationships. But that was only a small group. And other paedophiles search for real relationships.

*You had earlier stated that children would be better off if the laws stigmatizing sexual contacts between paedophiles and children were eliminated. How did this conclusion grow from your research?*

I didn't arrive at that conclusion from my research. But my doctoral thesis was a bibliographical study on paedophilia. I had read all the research too, and that tended in the direction that making paedophilia a criminal offense was not good.

*How many paedophiles in your sample, both the interview sample and the general sample, had had legal problems because of their paedophilia?*

Let's see, my research says 43% were in touch with the police and a judge. Perhaps those paedophiles who have been in touch with the law are more open about it, they don't have anything to lose.

*We notice that you don't deal with incest cases, and there seems to be a lot of confusion in society between paedophilia and incest. How do you see incest as related to and different from paedophilia? Both of them involve sexual contacts with children, but how do they differ?*

I don't think there's a relationship between the two. They are totally different things. Paedophiles focus on the child. They love the child. But in incest relationships the men and women who have the incestuous contacts aren't attracted especially to children. They normally have sexual contacts with adults, but the situation in their families makes them have sex with someone in the family: the child, because that is the easiest. They aren't focused on children, as the paedophile is. Also, the child can't say no in incest situations. It's the family setting, the adult not focused on children, it's a totally sexual act. There is no relationship. It's an easy thing to do. These are a few important differences.

*How should these differences be reflected by the laws dealing with each? If the laws stigmatizing paedophilia were removed, would it still be necessary to have incest laws?*

There are such laws in the Netherlands already. If the children are in your care, in your power, if you are a teacher let's say, you can't have sex with the children, if you're already in a power situation with them. That's the way it works in Dutch law. I think it has to stay like that.

*One of the differences then that you see is this area of consent: that the child cannot say 'no' in an incest situation. We did speak of consent earlier. But now: what do you see consent to be for a child in a paedophile relationship?*

It's a difficult question. If there is a real possibility that the child can say 'no'—if the child has the ability to say no and still keeps the contact with the man—then he is consenting.

*So, to clarify your criterion, it is that if the possibility to say 'no' is there, and not even necessarily the ability to say an informed 'yes', then there is consent.*

Yes, I would agree with that.

*Is there a difference between informed consent and just consent?*

Yes. There was a commission here in the Netherlands, the Melai Commission, that tried to make that distinction. You know, that for true consent in a paedophile relationship the child has to sign on the dotted line, something like that. But why should the sexual relationship harm, do harm to the child twenty years later? That was the kind of harm they were trying to say must be guarded against. If your parents eat your pet rabbit, that will do a lot of harm too. I think it is very difficult to trace harm. There are so many children who have lousy parents and don't get any affection. That's very bad when you are a child. The society only seems concerned about the sexual part. Why is that the most important thing? I don't know.

*A number of the attacks on changing the age of consent laws come from English-speaking feminists who talk about the fact that the male is so sexually aggressive—which is one of the things, by the way, that is shown in your research—and the need to protect female children from male*

*sexual aggression. Do you have any response to that concern? If we remove all the laws against paedophile behavior will it give free rein to all those men with girls?*

No, it's nonsense. Those women don't know anything about it. As for real aggression there are enough laws to protect the child. Parents haven't studied paedophile behavior either, otherwise they would be more careful in their behavior toward their children.

*In terms of changing the law, removing the stigma against paedophilia—do you have any suggestions how this can be done?*

By information. Articles in women's magazines. Changing the public perceptions. The same direction taken by homosexuals in changing the laws.

*Will the AIDS crisis affect the public perception of paedophilia?*

I don't know, but I don't think so. Paedophilia is such a small group. Perhaps it will change the attitude towards sexuality in general, but not specifically to paedophilia.

*Regarding parents' reactions: you described earlier how there would be a big ado. Do you think there would be an option after that—for it to calm down and the parents to have an acceptance of paedophilia?*

It's more possible now than ten years ago for there to be something after the hysteria. But it depends on the people involved.

*There is a proposal for the change of the law here in the Netherlands, proposed by COC for the Minister of Justice, to decriminalize consenting sexual acts with boys 12 and over. Do you think this has a chance of passing?*

I think, with all this talk about incest, that this is not such a good time for changes, or that the changes have such a good chance. I think there's a small chance, but a very small chance. But, even if it's twenty years for changes to come, it's the prosecutors that matter. And that is better already. So, the law will be a dead letter. And for

real bad cases there is the law, and if the law keeps being applied as it is now applied, well, it won't be so bad then.

*Some final questions. From your interviews could you distinguish qualities that would make for good or healthy paedophile relationships? First, what do you define as a good or healthy relationship, and then, how can paedophiles arrive at that?*

It's like a normal relationship. The paedophile has to accept his sexuality, that sex is not the most important thing in the relationship, but that the person is the most important thing. It's the same in all relationships. The paedophile has to focus on the child and not on the genital part. He has to focus on the personhood of the child. Also, this kind of sexuality is better in the open. The paedophile needs to have friends and to discuss this. Also, it's better if the parents know. If a paedophile behaves like that, it's an improvement. There is a group of young paedophiles who are like that now. I spoke with a few of them. They are the more militant ones.

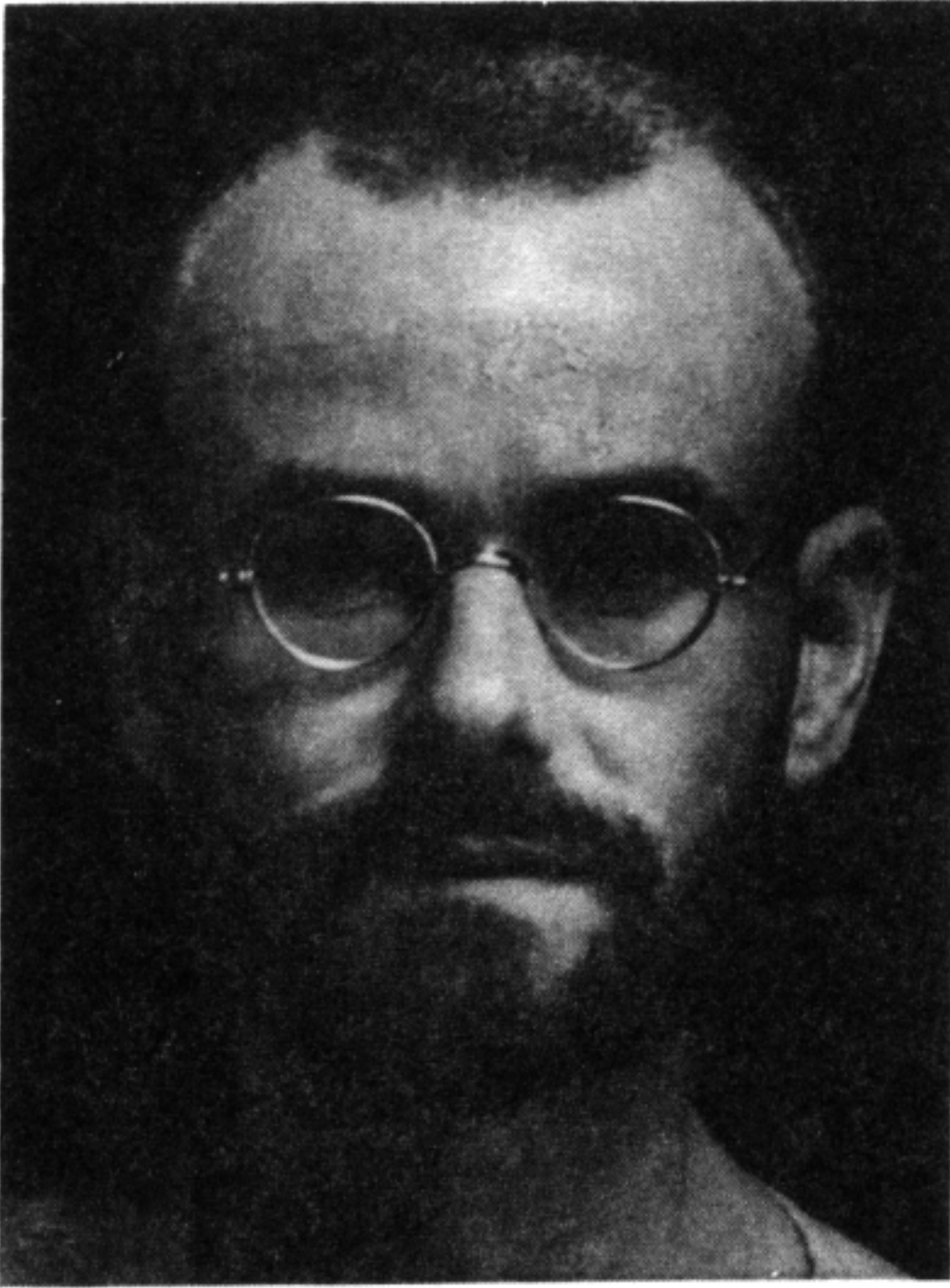
*Again, from your studies, was there any specific advice you would give paedophiles as to how they should create these healthy relationships, and healthy attitudes for themselves.*

Yes. Don't hide your sexuality. Try to let it happen in the open. Speak to the parents. Not the first week; maybe three months later, I don't know exactly. Try to be friendly with the parents. You don't have to tell them the sex part on the first time. Go to the parents and talk with them and when they have accepted you as a person then it's easier for them to accept you as a paedophile. Don't focus so much on the sexual side. It's not so necessary now. Twenty years ago this part was a very big problem and so a lot of paedophiles focused on sex. If you start with a focus on the relationship, and think about the person of the child, it will be alright.

*What should the paedophile keep in mind about society?*

I think that in the U. S. if a small girl is loved it is the same thing as a small girl being raped. There's no difference there. But here in Holland, if someone is paedophile the prosecutor says to go join the NVSH paedophile work-group. And that is healthier, a healthier environment. But you know, I don't always think paedophiles are acting so wisely. They are acting too militantly and they don't want to understand society. It's not so good, this. You have to try to understand, to have a little understanding of society's attitudes about this, to be wise.

## THE JOURNALS OF LEWIS THOMPSON



*Lewis Thompson circa 1940*

Lewis Levien Thompson was born on January 13, 1909, in Fulham, England; he had two younger sisters. He spent his childhood in north London and received a good conventional education in private schools, but did not distinguish himself academically. He was obviously a sensitive child and photographs show a handsome and imaginative boy with a relaxed smile and hands of quite exceptional sensitivity. He had a good singing voice and became such a keen pianist that at one time he intended to become a professional musician. He continued to play throughout his life and was especially fond of Bach, Chopin and Debussy. His mother had some Irish blood; his father, partly Jewish, came from Gosport, ran away at eighteen to join the fifth Dragoon Guards, served in India and was later at the siege of Ladysmith. Lewis and his sisters were brought up as Protestants.

In early adolescence he became friends with a Woodford draper who was a Buddhist, and began to read the great scriptures of the East. His interests were now distancing him from his family and in

his teens he lived independently in London on a small legacy from a relative.

During adolescence Thompson underwent the first severe crisis of his life. This was the turning point upon which his whole future life revolved. He writes of it only indirectly in frequent references to the poet Rimbaud whom he discovered in 1927. This, he says, was the first important event of his life, not only because he admired Rimbaud, but because, at the age of twenty-one Rimbaud had rejected literature. "Somewhere," writes Thompson, "between eighteen and twenty I believe I too experienced all that is implied in Rimbaud's rejection of literature."

The crux of the matter was a celebrated remark of Rimbaud, his wish to "Possess the truth in one soul and body", and his bitter recognition that this is an impossibility; hence the only solution for the poet of consistently passionate integrity is that he abandon all attempts at such embodiment as *poet*. The true state of Poetry can only be attained in a Christ-like state—what Thompson calls Perfect Action. "Rimbaud represented very directly the fact that since the medieval belief in 'sainthood', embodiment of Poetry in Itself is hardly possible in Europe. The symbol remains without the reality; hence the partial and this paradoxical nature of all Western art and its increasing self-consciousness and self-exercising. In Rimbaud the problem became completely conscious." Like Rimbaud, Thompson experienced to the full the profound anguish of a youthful artist certain that *the truth cannot be told* and that by telling only half he has told an untruth. In recognition of this he now destroyed the manuscript of a book on which he had worked for five years.

Something irreparable had occurred. Never again could he bring himself to indulge in conventional "literary creation" for its own sake; he would write solely as a form of spiritual exercise the most sparse and urgent communication conceivable.

In 1930 he began to travel. He attended the gypsy festival in Les Saintes Maries de la Mer, wandered through the Provence of Van Gogh's visionary canvases and went on a pilgrimage to Goethe's house in Weimar.

A small but significant event was a performance at Marseilles Opera House in April 1932 by Uday Shankar, the great classical Indian dancer and elder brother of sitar virtuoso Ravi. It was Uday Shankar who tipped the balance in favour of Thompson's desire to visit India. "My reading in Hinduism, Buddhism and the Chinese tradition from about my thirteenth year made it easy for me to feel from the beginning that in the West one could find very distorted and fragmentary pictures of what in the East was clear, classical and complete. Thus as soon as in my inner life things came to full crisis the natural movement was at once to India." On July 26, 1932, he left Europe from Cardiff with no means to support himself once he had disembarked; he did not return.

For twelve years he travelled almost constantly, in South India,

making short trips to Ceylon and northwestern India, without ever undertaking work for remuneration or ever having any means of support other than through the munificence of friends. He came and went as he pleased and was moved only by the absolute subjectivity of his inmost needs. "My life is entirely a transition, I don't exist at all. I have no place to sit down."

It is hard to imagine now how unconventional Thompson's way of life would have appeared in the days of the British Raj. An Englishman in Indian dress was a very rare bird indeed in the remote country places which Thompson favoured. But an Englishman who did not so much appear a diligent scholar of Indian religion and philosophy as one who lived and breathed their essence—this was a source of astonishment, dismay or hostility.

Very neat in appearance, his few possessions carted from place to place in a single tin trunk, he would live in simple rooms of friends' bungalows surrounded by gardens. His diet was extremely frugal and for long periods tended to be quite inadequate. His room was always impeccably tidy, a few well-chosen objects and fabrics creating an atmosphere of seeming luxury, sensuousness, repose. For long periods he lived with fishermen on the beach at Madras, but his taste and elegance would not allow him any sloppiness about his person or the way he conducted his life. He never became addicted to temple India; he rarely practised yoga or any kind of devotional exercises; his friends were legion.

For the latter part of his life, however, Thompson held a single position. Through the help of his friend Sanjiva Rao, a distinguished educator from a well-known Saraswat Brahmin family, it was arranged that he live as writer-in-residence and librarian at the Rajghat School, Benares. Sanjiva Rao, a personal assistant to Annie Besant and a close friend of Krishnamurti, had founded the school on behalf of the latter and as a personal favour to the former. His appointment led to Thompson's final departure from South India towards the end of 1943 and residence for the remainder of his life in the ancient city where the Buddha had preached his first sermon.

Thompson was given room and board at Rajghat School, acquiring a reputation as the most daring, articulate and outspoken member of staff the school had ever had. He tried to introduce the Ranganathan classification system to the library, but since it is the most complicated ever devised he had little success.

Thompson's journal describes how, in his last years, he wrestled with declining health and the increasing effort it took him to tackle his creative task with sufficient energy. In May 1949, having been in Bombay at a friend's house to recuperate from heat sickness, he returned to his responsibilities in Benares. Nearly everybody he knew had left the city for the hills to escape the heat. He tried to find lodgings now, but all he could discover was an attic roofed with corrugated iron. The temperature was 115 degrees Fahrenheit (47 degrees Centigrade). He was found wandering, dazed, beside the



river—it was noon and the onset of sunstroke was already affecting him. He went to bed with a high fever. He was quite alone, save for the brief visits of a servant with food and drink. He wrote a little. He died alone on June 23, 1949. He was cremated by the Ganges and his ashes were scattered over the river he loved.

Soon after his death his friend, Deben Bhattacharya, mailed Thompson's most immediate and accessible work, his poems, to Edith Sitwell, then at the height of her fame. "You have sent me a poet of genius whose loss is immeasurable," she cabled. "All we who care for poetry have indeed suffered a heart-breaking loss. I could not, at first, believe my eyes when I read Thompson's poems. My brother Osbert said to me, 'At last'. He meant that at last a poet of genius had been discovered."

*Editor's Note:*

*We are pleased to publish for the first time these excerpts from the journals of the English poet, Lewis Thompson. They represent, however, only a small part of his reflections on boys, and an even smaller part of the several hundred pages of journals he wrote. For a more complete introduction to his life and further reading of his thoughts, see the book *Mirror to the Light: Reflections on consciousness and experience*, by Lewis Thompson, edited by Richard Lannoy, (London: Coventure, 1984). We are grateful to Mr. Lannoy for permission to publish these extracts.*

## The Journals

(1919, aet. 10): When, at about 10 or 11, with a companion of my own age, by the fence of a garden in a quiet residential street, we were practising what we had never heard of as *fellatio* and an adult unexpectedly emerging from his house muttered disapproval at us, we could only understand his attitude as something exotic. It did not seem at all relevant to what we were so innocently doing in our own world. Certainly his disapproval had nothing to do with the excitement of our own curiosity, enjoyment and *pudeur*.

(1924, aet. 15): Headmaster referring before whole school to Turner and I going about with arms about each other's waist. I was quite unconscious of our having done this or that I especially went about with Turner. I only felt, simple as a perfume, his distinguished air, the clear and lonely gentleness of dark-lashed grey eyes. So far from feeling embarrassed or ashamed at this reproof, I felt as if it were being made about somebody else, or quite abstractedly, in a world of mere ideas peculiar to grown-ups, irrelevant, unquestionable, unaccountable like Euclid.

How often our childhood memories show that we were utterly innocent of any conception of grown-up fears and prejudice and logic: we lived in another world.

Ceylon, 1933.

Subtle, inconsequent, charming, with a faun's grace and laughing eyes, a lad told me in the market that at the next village, while he was sleeping one night near the bodhi-tree, he saw a *deva* (a god; ed.), white, majestic, beautiful. We arranged to sleep there to see if he would come again.

As I returned in the tender light of the next morning, reviving from a handkerchief that incomparably rich, fresh, sweet, subtle, penetrating, deeply stirring scent, I looked so happy that everyone I met spontaneously smiled at me.

30.III.40

In this richly and tenderly beautiful boy, sweet, shy, indifferent, malicious, experimental, coquet-

tish, is it not that I kiss my youth sacrificed by some deep perversity of will or of despair?

And does not every form of freshness, sweetness, vigour present to me again the same poignant, unfathomable mystery?

12.XI.43

*How it really is.*

A week ago I saw passing in the street just opposite Dr. Ranganathan's house, where I often talk affectionately with the local school children, a lad, delicately made, with an open forehead and pure flower-like face. Perhaps I half perceived some recognition in his glance, a slackening of his pace, for when I stopped and spoke to him he turned out to be a relation of K.T.K. and has heard of me from him. I asked only distractedly where he was studying and forgot about him.

Some days ago, returning from a walk on the beach, walking fast, I only just caught out of the corner of my eye a smiling recognition from an attractive, aristocratic boy whom I felt I had seen before.

This evening, after having watched some children at play, and there was nothing to do, after sunset, but to leave the beach, I felt someone overtaking me: it was the same delicately smiling lad. We sat down on the sand (he had a College companion with him) and I listened more carefully to the answers to my questions. Raju, Vaishnava brahmin, from Tanjore but fifteen years in Madras, seventeen, specializing in physics.

One is naturally pleasant and affectionate with someone simple, sensitive, intelligent and charming. I walked back with him to the room where he studies.

My delight and marvel are as conscious as an actor's—entirely sincere yet not applied to the present case—applicable to no present case. All that I might have done years ago out of affection, delight, excitement, desire (but was always too humble and inexperienced even to think of with full consciousness), but which now I have in itself elaborately analysed, experimented, exhausted in body and in the mind, is of no real interest to me. Even to gaze into those beautiful eyes—soft, mysterious, subtle as perhaps only Hindu eyes can be—is possible only as a concentrated ritual in

which one learnedly watches, moves, exploits oneself. Though perhaps my own gaze is deeper or far more simple than I know.

Gazing with wonder, delight and tenderness, I was overtaken by something at the first moment quite incomprehensible: those marvellous eyes melted, suffused, the delicate, subtly outlined lips trembled, were changed—tears flooded, blurred, overflowed. “When Krishna was about to touch her she pushed his hands away with her own: when Krishna looked at her face tears welled up in her eyes.” (*Govindasa Kaviraja*, an epic poem about Govinda; ed.) And this happened several times. His deep glance, beyond individuality, could contain the most childlike and intimate caresses.

Where nothing is necessary or adequate, all is possible. Of course the ancient Hindu soul has long grown quiet over all that can possibly be known of love; of course there is no raw ethicism left; of course that is true enough for me as well. “Go into *nirvikalpa-samadhi* (loss of self-consciousness through meditation; ed.) or use your will to overcome it.” The Jnani. (Thompson’s guru; ed.)

How can one not be afraid, almost, at the simple response of so pure and subtle a soul? What profound mirroring... What appallingly sophisticated ritual. On neither side intoxication or desire. All the effects of vital charm—of inter-penetrating psychic atmosphere; of emotion, pleasure, delight are themselves perhaps yet no longer themselves because entirely subsumed.

15.XI.43

Letter to a friend.

I want to say something on a subject I have till now made a hopeless mess of with you.

If I ever attain any spiritual perfection it will be due, no doubt, in far greater measure than I can understand to the boys I have loved.

23.XI.43

Raju: The meaning is the peaceful and dazzling sea of Love, self-ordered and self-made; the obstruction is the mind, a non-existent, an abstraction, one of the spangles seeking to contain all, therefore become for itself only a spangle of darkness.

**If ever I attain any spiritual perfection it will be due, no doubt, in far greater measure than I can understand to the boys I have loved.**

10.II.44

These boys of ten or twelve, in their talk and play, radiate an intense electricity of emotion, imagination, fantasy—something nascent, timeless, frontierless. Light and delicate as foam, it could float armadas, argosies, undermine continents. What would have happened to history if the children’s crusade in 1212 had not come to grief?

14.XII.44

With the children at Rajghat School. It would require the greatest genius to express perfectly even a few moments of the beauty, fantasy, passion these little girls and boys bring to their play. I feel as, in the delicate wildness of it, I had been immersed in a sparkling element a thousand times more limpid and intense than light.

26.I.45

It is evident that imagination is the key to energy: the psychic factor is decisive. I am tired and stale partly through having lived all my life on my own substance—sterilised by exigent critical standards and self-demands in all domains, exhausted by violent or melancholic failures from them! But the psychic nature is something relative that cannot live without influx and interchange.

This evening Prabhakar came, delicate, radiant, like a rich flower, so charmingly alert and dignified and with such beautiful manners—the cultured brahmin though only thirteen years old. With his fine tapering fingers, eyes softly glistening like a ‘knot of bees’. And Harikrishna, his Kashmiri friend, with perfumed hair, very elegant in white cotton trousers tightly fitting knee and calf, gathered in ‘bangles’ at the ankle. With his finely taut profile, slender grace and supple hands. This, with his *sauve* golden limbs, is his essential ‘note’ for me. A quality impossible to name which is also expressed in the combination of firmness

and softness in his hands, but which in its direct expression is purely lyrical—in his peculiar sweet and abandoned yet hard and radiant playfulness.

They would not drink tea without me and the cup I drank did only good. After a tiresome dragging day (I could do nothing continuous, take interest in nothing), I was at once revived. Their grace and charm, their subtle simplicity, refreshes me.

I seize on this slight effect; yet none of this is really spontaneous, but, like descriptions, etc., forced, sustained, *invented* by mind, will, imagination... Which desperately, at the last edge of the precipice, refuse to accept that they have and can have but one Object. —Endless, subtle, frantically honeycombed, hollow, mad delay...

In my attention to children or any other aspect of nature (but don't make this a mental excuse for failure of *integral* chastity, the singleness of the whole man), I am of course continually seeking those subtle moments, gleams, reflections, inhabitings of a quality lovely and pure, or else intense, like light—a Beauty that no thing or person can embody or possess, something rare, delicate, fugitive. But imagining, perceiving it, like any artist one brings endless resource and patience to its eliciting, continuance, stabilisation. For me this is the whole activity of the Eros, its relation with sexuality purely incidental, its physical mode.

One builds the whole person, scene, event about the possibility of such a pure felicity, about a rare and invisible centre. Hence the disproportion, in the outer world (or rather, for pragmatic people) between such attention (whose aim they cannot see) and its ostensible object (which, if a person is most likely itself also quite unconscious of the quality that fugitively gleams upon it). In this outer world I do not care how great a fool I appear in such continual attention, search, contrivance. When E.M. thinks that my attention to Prabhakar makes him self-conscious ("all children are actors"), this is an irrelevant psychological, humanistic, social consideration. Where the child is purely and disinterestedly an actor we understand each other; where he is already doomed to be and even is an individual already there is only 'a body of death', irrelevance. This 'body of death' is the sphere of morality for ever inconclusive.

19.II.45

How pure and purifying the kiss that by his symbolic movements I thought Harikrishna at least subconsciously expected as, in his room with two other boys, he lay with his head on my knee and in which so delicately and simply his lips responded with little tentative pressures. Afterwards he lay, playing and not playing, as if dead.

The least disinterested understanding of desire brings one back to the transparency of childhood in which all is still undifferentiated, in which desire and its self-consciousness are still unborn. If I had not responded to this pure wordless language there would have been in him, no doubt, an obscure suppression, self-pacifying. But here all remained limpid, water meeting water, unobscured and unrestrained.

May this lucid, wordless purity possess my whole life. And may I, especially with this sensitive boy who trusted to me that sweet virginity, maintain the most perfect sensibility, the most flawless, resilient delicacy, utter freedom from any darkening of thought, preconception, unilluminated sensuousness, doubt or desire. —How lovely this perfect transparency of the senses and the mind, how utterly free of all other, limited, standards. Even tenderness is subsumed: the child is my own self. Here I touch my own responsibility for my own existence, beyond all purpose and all care, as if it were the caress of my guardian angel. How close and simple such a sweetness—inexhaustibly fresh and sweet like dew, my own childhood's accentless greeting of itself. It is here (indeed!) that childhood, without the least superiority, makes absurd all grown-up words.

He asked me when I am going to start my special classes. I must start as soon as possible and extend to all spheres the special and delicate relation I now have especially with these three or four boys.

Ah, what a subtle field of the most delicate spiritual knowledge and perfection.

In all his play with the Gopis Sri Krishna remained a Child. (Krishna's play with the Gopis, in the *Gita Govinda*, is the Hindu metaphysical symbol for innocent, playful sexuality; ed.) Desire is perfect if it remains purity itself. This is too subtle a state. The modes of desire are the modes of



*Chandar sleeping; Madras 8.V.41*  
by Lewis Thompson

purity.

The intrinsic truth of desire is that as such it never was or can be. This is the truth of love. Desire is the wave and love the sea. When desire knows that it is love, love knows there never was desire. It is only by the ego that desire is isolated and becomes paradox. The secrecy of Love is the open secrecy of Childhood.

By every means I must foster this exquisite, flower-like poetry. All my teaching (!) at the College must be through this limpid and desireless love, unbound by any reference outside its own purity. Its delicacy has always reduced all that is mental to pure air and light. This could be for me a wonderful purification of the mind.

The closeness of children to Poetry is expressed in the fact that this incident is isolated, pure, refers to no individual (a child is not yet a limited individual), is not prolonged or falsified by memory.

It is by Purity itself that *samskaras* (consequences of karma; ed.) of desire at once work themselves out. And Perversity is the fruitless struggle against Purity—a struggle whose motive is Purity Itself.

That kiss could be the key to the irreversible linking of Head and Heart here and now, in this present daily life permeation of every action, mood and thought, at last of one's very substance, by the deepest and most delicate love and understanding. Here alone 'will' and 'seriousness' are

fulfilled, their irrelevance, their impossibility, overcome. All can have at last (by the most unfaltering art, mad in its utter concentration) the sole true 'seriousness' of Perfect Play.

20.II.45

Blinded, illumined by the Sun, understand all without use of understanding.

When I returned from the bazaar at about 20.00 hours I found a few flowers on the little table outside my door. The thought that it may have been P. or M. or even Harikrishna who brought them, restored all the calm, transparent happiness, *prasada* (gift of a deity, often a flower or sweetmeat from the altar of a deity given to the visiting Hindu worshipper; ed.), of last night.

2.III.45

Indescribable impression, stimulus to the imagination, when the young American soldier mentions his compatriot who, in Calcutta, seeks out negro boys ("dark meat") and the marijuana that frenzies the jazz-drummers of New York.

I see that this self-infatuated strangeness, the non-mental organised with more than mental precision, the white-hot coldness, petrified risk, learned madness of murder, incest, spiritual endeavour, so well expressed by Cocteau, is an important note in Tantra—Tantra even the perfect

elaboration of it, the *bhang*-drunken Shiva, Absolute Consciousness, its Source and Essence. I see, perhaps for the first time, how deep and clear this possibility is in me; yet, I believe, perfectly integrated into a 'classic' simplicity and saneness! — Innocence. Any touch of enjoyment of 'vice' or of the 'peculiar' in it, though so easy for me to feel and understand, seems impure, romantic, even sentimental. (A fundamental sign that the young man in question is passive, romantic, is that, according to his friend, he is a hopeless liar.)

#### 14.VII.45

This evening I was sitting on a bed at the Sangam Hostel in the school talking with M. and H., who were lying down. A boy new this term, who came only a few days ago (he is thirteen, a Marwari) came uninvited and sat beside me. While I was turned towards H., leaning upon his lifted knees and sometimes running my hands along firm thighs and delicate hips and waist, this boy, who had not yet said a word to me, began to make slow, delicate fingerings at my groin, pressing nearer and nearer the crotch. I let him continue, to make sure it was deliberate. When I moved a little, he began again as unmistakably from below till I moved away more widely. Veiled furtive eyes, very articulate—too articulate—hands. Obsession? or what other teachers has he had that he should begin at once like this? (No unprepared boy, surely, could have at once misread my gestures with H.)

But H. got up suddenly, and a few minutes afterwards I found him lying beside S., a bright-eyed, flowery-looking boy, behind a towel pulled down to the lowest possible from the cord it was hanging on to screen the view from the door. When I came they got up at once and went to assembly, H. only pausing at his shelf to run a comb through his hair.

How interesting it would be if one could get to know these half-conscious plant-like loves from within, and if one could find a language delicate enough to express them. How gross and arbitrary, beside the poetry of their real lives, the stuff they have to learn.

#### 29.VIII.45

Evening. Pradyuman (his pet name is Captain—'Kaptan') Singh, seven or eight years old, a Rajput from Dholpur State, has become a great friend of mine and shows me the most charming mercurial affection. Very fair, the silky curls of his long head dark brown with a light of copper. Very quick, capricious, intelligent. Keen nostrils; long, mobile, complexly modelled, tragically sensitive mouth. How describe our games, his subtle vividness? When with clawing hands, set face and staring eyes he pretends to be a monster and I act fear, horror, terror his very quick and free imagination frightened by my 'fear'. He loves to play with this dangerous sensation.

Fierce dialogue. Quarrel with the lush, rich-eyed Birendra. Fool! - Rascal! - Bluddy! - Donkey! - Monkey! - Russian Monkey! - Japanese Monkey! This last was serious... and nearly led to a fight, interspersed with equally staccato Hindi slang that I could not understand. Birendra during the meal: Are you married? — No. — Are you a hermit?

Children can absorb the most extravagant love. Seeing this new attention, Birendra told me that Pradyuman is his special friend, his brother. For the first time laid his head in my lap, said I must sleep tonight in the hostel. With a quick, lovely, eager gesture, reaching up his lively, sensitive hand upon my arm. Pradyuman also snuggled his head into my lap. Two other boys who entered at once responded to the strong and delicate atmosphere this created. At such moments there is a beautiful extravagance and one sees how avid for love are these tender growing souls. And my delight in them is inexhaustible. They make possible the purest and most luminous tenderness.

#### 31.VIII.45

The other evening Kaptan, showing an envelope, said that he was going to write to his father for pocket money: all the other boys have money but he has none. It was the eve of Janmashtami (birth of Krishna at midnight on Thursday; ed.), a two day holiday. I tucked five rupees into his pocket (we were alone) but he would not accept

it. Thinking that he might perhaps accept a smaller amount, this evening I tried again with one rupee, but as soon as he saw what it was he threw it behind him.

At about sunset he led me outside the hostel and asked to be lifted. From the sleeping Gold Mohur he plucked a few folded fronds—they close at night—and when I had put him down counted them into my hand: one, two, three, four, five rupees. Then, seated on my shoulder, he wanted to be carried about under the branches and began to strip handfuls of the fronds—all money. We ate together and when the bell rang for assembly I got up to go. He took my hands and came outside. As soon as we were out of the light from the verandah, in a soft, tentative, conniving voice he asked: “Your five rupees?”

“Namaste!” — “Namaste!” (Hindi: “Thank you”; ed.)

#### 8.IX.45

(Excerpt from a letter to the American painter Earl Brewster, close personal friend of D. H. Lawrence; ed.)

Suddenly a fresh young voice downstairs and that charming mischievous child D., elegant in a semi-military white jacket with many pockets, was turning everything over and delightedly striking matches in my room, pulling out my drawers, pocketing money, almonds. His father told me the other day: he likes you very much. I see him rarely, and always more or less in a crowd, but have always found delicious the piquant, mischievous intelligence in his tobacco-coloured eyes. In shadow, anyway, they are actually dark brown, but full of an intense light which, in one’s memory, seems to raise their tone. Very lightly tilted, wittily outlined like a faun’s—Bengali brahman, says he is thirteen. I think he may be twelve.

I had never had him alone for more than a few minutes, thought another boy had come with him and might appear at any moment (he had run up the stairs) so at once, though he hid from my kiss (few Hindu boys, it seems, enjoy being kissed, though I know two marked exceptions), I caressed him daringly, found his immediate response, he sought it at once in me. I ran to bar the door from

the stairs. On my couch, with the most calm and scintillating smile, he let me undo that complicated jacket and draw off his shorts. I had very soon thrown my own clothes on to a chair.

The sweetly gracile body of that age! I kissed face, shoulders, nipples, navel, tender groin and thigh. But more than all awaiting an ingenious mouth—dusky, darkly glossy, tender, hard and eager like the head of a snake, the black pistil of this lily of singed gold.

When I reversed myself beside him he was rather shy of reciprocating—natural (I thought) at first. So I lifted him, alertly docile, brought down the pillow to raise that dark divide, and rather for fun’s sake than any very serious purpose (how much longer should we be undisturbed? and it would be difficult, perhaps impossible), I made to enter. Then to my amusement he wanted to try this too... but couldn’t really manage it. Altogether he seemed on rather familiar ground.

All this with the most charming, simple lightness, and most lovely natural innocence. Here you uncover the genial ancient wisdom of the Hindus—free of moralism but quite different from paganism. In any case I can’t see how a ‘morality’ that seems to cover at the same time questions of property, truthfulness and physical or imaginative delight (all of different modes and levels) can be anything but stupidly abstract—a matter of stone tables!

But then the door at the head of the stairs is banged and shaken—his companion. We pull on our clothes (he doesn’t hurry), I smoothe out the sheet, let in with a smile J., about the same age—not innocent he: with sombre, anxious, hypocritical eyes.

*Perhaps* D. said to him in Hindi: you don’t know what he did and J. in reply under his breath used the word fuck. Anyhow, when I asked him lightly what he said, he made out (what I felt an improvised lie) that he had used the word “perform”. He really is not innocent but anxious, harassed, double. Though D. like any child may imitate and play with ideas around him, and is never doomed to become purely worldly, his innocence, on its own, *natural* level seems at present perfect and has the most charming, playful radiation. Though, indeed, I may really be more of a child than

either...

Afterwards it occurred to me that J., by arriving after ten minutes, though they must have both come on the same bike or the difference would have been greater (else *both* would have come in a rickshaw) may even have been planned between them! and this is perhaps why D. did not seem to be in any great hurry to get his clothes on; when J. came in he was in fact still pulling on his socks.

*Sannyas* (Hindu ascetic vows; ed.). Why can people not simply *include* what is sweet and innocent? —Such painful, abstract literalism! As soon as you *refuse* anything real you are in the wrong: this is limitation, not freedom. All morality and more than half of human thought seems warped by fear, indirectness, doubleness—lack of all the *child-like* qualities, lack of geniality. So few people seem strong enough (or intelligent enough) to be innocent.

It is half past nine.

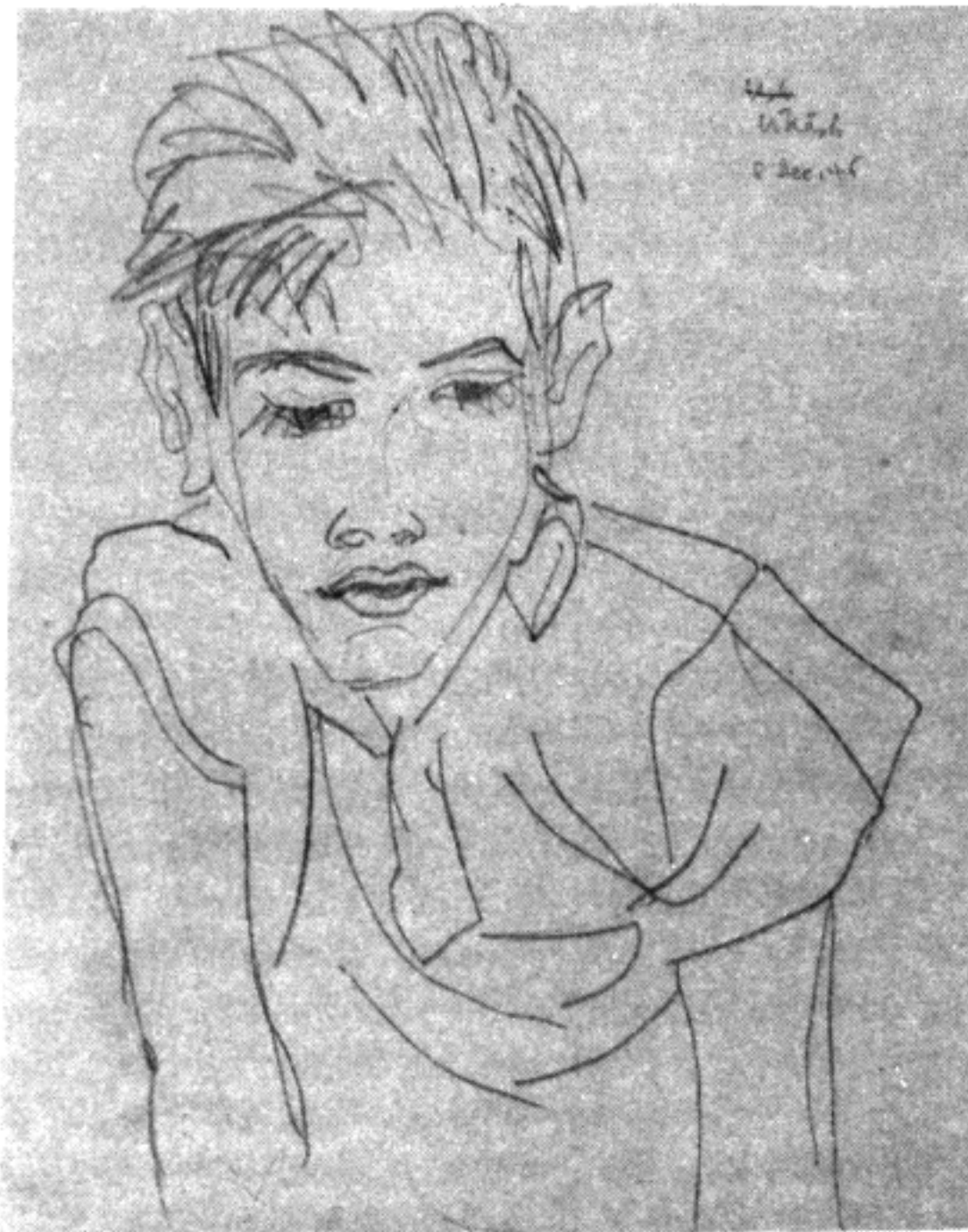
Moonless night, sky and water one, perfectly still. I shrink from my lonely bed. Shall I go and

wander in the lanes? alas with no objective. Or shall I go to Anandamayi's Ashram?

14.X.46

The mind must not be allowed to decide things beforehand theoretically. That is none of its business: it is a faculty of perception and expression, not an organ of action. The true 'will' is the being itself, the central integrity—which cannot remain conscious or manifest without surface flexibility.

I saw again this evening, for example, that one cannot absolutely exclude slight amorousness with certain of the boys: there are times when it is not only expected, wanted, called for, but exactly and immediately expresses a purely non-mental relation. Then its perfect lightness and transparency is sweet and charming for both parties. The only thing is, never to force either refusal or response—to be truly perceptive, neither theoretical nor perverse. —The lightest possible touch, no *mental* pursuit, or it becomes falsified. —Direct response to charm, direct expression of delight in



V. K.; 8 Dec. '45  
by Lewis Thompson



it, or the tenderness it brings. Quicksilver must not be turned to lead.

Much of my fatigue no doubt comes precisely from mental tautness. I felt refreshed after playing with Raju and his friends in the Hostel—forgetting all intentions! But I lift myself into it partly by *using* my imagination, so it does not last. There must be much greater psychic *reserve* to experience a spontaneous charm, a lingering subtle fragrance.

It is no good questioning the material ("coercing nature"): but it must be entirely *used*—towards true perceptiveness, true imaginative experience and subtlety.

You *must* learn Hindi. What charming little conversations one might have with these boys. I could not follow Raju's account today of how he lost six rupees gambling—no doubt at the fairy-tale game I saw children playing on Sunday in the lanes—with elaborate coloured shapes, green, yellow, red, pasted on a ground of paper, and dice an inch square with the same forms on their faces.

Alain and Reymond came this evening. I seem to have no use for the society of grown-ups. But to enjoy that of children again I must lose all obstinate mental *tensibility*, recover floweriness, *imaginatio*, weight and logic, heavy like a rose, that I want, now, in poetry—*fusion* of creative intellect and perceptive imagination. The continuity of these children is a *flight*, or a perpetual transformation.

Don't confuse this with the maturer conscious love that has never existed for me, though I can so well imagine it.

One must entirely *give way*, for example, to Raju, concentrate on the *child* in him.

#### 29.XI.46

Raju: sweet, golden, smiling, in the sun. He is simply a delightful, uncomplicated sturdy animal, robust flower. Re-action to this is simple and direct, and the more I let it be, at its own natural level, the simpler will be his response. All mental rules, discipline, entanglements simply irrelevant—stupid, darkening here. Yet any kind of seeking or fostering would be equally wrong: the detachment of my imagination must be freer and more resourceful than his animal detachment. If I don't infringe it (as simple sensuality does not) he

is fond of me, a charming, kindly friend, with the simple, robust, childlike Nepali loyalty. Yet this detachment, of course, is one with his charm, an unfringability: it is the very lustre of his body, at once the strength I feel when he playfully wrestles with me and its flowery fusion of richness and simplicity. This is why pure sensuality is necessarily violent: it must spark across this bottomless gulf and make of it a current—then irresistible. The current, the interchange, in love is, as D. H. Lawrence might say, the very flow of otherness, but directed, unilinear—something elemental that is tangled, dispersed, doused under ash, by all attempts at unity in the mind, or mentalisations of the possibility of unity. Raju's wrestling is a direct and pure instinct, directly expresses the sweet and pungent freshness of virginity. M., at fifteen, is already mentally surrendered to the need of enjoyment.

It is by this purity, its inaccessibility, that loveliness, even the simplest charm, is a symbol of the Infinite Divine Beauty—pure Transcendence.

Until moments of simple, genuine, unmediated sensuality arise with him, all relation with Raju must be the pure, unsought flicker, interplay, of keen electric forces (sensuality, imagination)—not reaching out, but ever true to themselves, nascent, virginal, running and seizing when they do, suddenly, incalculably, like fire, purely out of their own immediacy, without qualification. — Re-integration of simple sensuality riddled, desiccated by the mind.

#### 27.I.47

As for pederasty, of course it has nothing to do with morality, is purely a matter of taste, of sensibility. Indeed sexuality altogether does not in itself belong to the moral domain: all that concerns morality here, as elsewhere, is selfishness or cruelty.

#### 11.II.47

Drame de Boccaccio. M. venu, nous étions nus sur ma couche au plancher. Je l'avais guirlandé, les fleurs rouges et blanches très belles contre sa peau sombre. (A cela, quand je faisais gravement, il semblait un peu *dismayed*—et à voir que je ne montrais, jusqu'alors, aucune signe d'excitation.)

Il attendait, d'abord, que je manifeste mon intention. J'avais tous imaginé subtile et lent—mais ce n'est pas ça, à son âge (fourteen). Enfin je lui faisais coucher—ce grand corps si bellement svelte, mais je n'avais pensé—qu'au *fellate* à double. Et mon excitation était tellement cérébrale qu'il séchait un peu les nerfs. Me voyant douteux on ne comprenant pas, il s'assit les cuisses sur mes cuisses, se levant afin que j'entre en dessous. Je le tâchait, puis voulais qu'il m'excite un peu plus d'abord. Enfin il supposait que je n'aimais pas cette posture et se couchait sur la face. —Il intamarre à la porte. Aux moins deux. Il se levait en hâte, commençait rapidement à se rehabiller. Je disais: Qui est-ce? J'ai du travail. Je me vêtait un peu aussi, cherchait à mettre un peu en ordre. M. s'échappait sur le verandah dehors. Une des voix disait "C'est Raju" —un très joli, fort gracile garçon qui j'avais souvent (et de plus souvent en vain), demandé à aller me visiter—frère d'un plus grand aux yeux duquel je suis suspect, mais qui, pendant les derniers trois ou quatre jours, a été plus aimable.

Alors j'ouvris, un cahier à la main. L'autre était aussi du South Hostel: je ne le connais qu'à peine et ne le trouve pas agréable. Ils expliquaient qu'il y a ce soit un *sammelan* de poètes auquel quelques-uns des garçons assistent. Ils ne restaient que quelques minutes. En partant, il levait sa main afin que je ne baise pas sa joue.

Je cherchais M., lui parlant doucement. Il n'apparut qu'après quelques minutes, je commençais à penser que peut-être il se serait dérobé le long du *cornice* du mur en haut... pas tout de même probable. A peine entré dans la chambre, il s'élançait vers la porte, l'ouvrit, découvrit Raju aux écoutes, le saisit, lui tordit la main. Doucement, je le faisais désister, disant que j'aime le petit. J'expliquais que nous lisions (j'avais seulement imaginé, un peu plus avant, que nous pourrions au jour tacher de lire certains des Sonnets de Shakespeare que j'avais ouverts ce soir). M. me demandait de lui donner "ce livre". Entrait encore, saisit n'importe quel livre. Je voulais qu'il reste, il refusait. Je lui avais demandé pardon: I did not know they would come. Il insistait pour partir vite et disait de Raju: "You do not know what he is". —C'est vrai qu'il est querelleux, peut-être malicieux; et il a dans

l'oeil droit un petit "cast" blanc. Son compagnon aussi has a squint in the left eye. Je demandais à M. de venir vers minuit. En descende l'escalier il disait "Surely" — mais naturellement j'en doute.

Ayant écrit ceci, je vais discrètement le chercher. — Quoique j'avais invité le petit V. (qui était venu vers les six heures) pour huit heures (il a été aujourd'hui bien 'Cupidon').

Je le trouvais seul dans sa chambre à ses études. Il était fort gentil: il lui serait bien difficile de venir à minuit, mais il viendra un autre soir. Je lui expliquais que je marchais lentement parce que j'avais cru qu'il pourrait rester une ou deux heures.

Je lui faisais un peu apprendre l'anglais. Il ne voulait pas que je montasse quand il allait se coucher.

#### 16.II.47

Raju, last evening and again this morning. Our best relation restored. I told him again how dear he is to me. When he got up to go he paused a little, his eyes shining, with the indescribably sweet and simple look he has at such moments, and I understood that I could kiss him truly and sweetly. — "How many rupees have you got?" (I had asked: "What can I give you, what can I do for you?")

As I passed in the rickshaw, Piyare on his balcony with another, smaller boy, half laughing, half ruefully, I made the gesture "Alas, what is to be done?" and half mocking he imitated it.

S. seemed in a very subtle way, today, more mature—a new suggestion, especially in the line of his mouth. He says that yesterday he felt "very amorous".

And how could one ever, in any language not of a Hindu or Sufi legend, describe the walk back all the way to Rajghat through the lanes? —the Sikh boy at Gudaulia; Hari Prasad, Devi Prasad at the fine-brass shop; one or two more in that lane; the strange Gujarati (fifteen) at his shop a little further, with turquoise jewels hanging from the border of his ear (I really must draw and paint such perfect, almost legendary, types). Yet indeed it is a little consciously extravagant, not quite true. I overheard someone refer to me as "Prem Sahib" (Man of Love; ed.). But indeed with the

strange Tamil sadhu at Dasaswamedh and everyone who spoke to me I felt such free and rich affection and in no way modified the frankness of my worship and delight, nor did any boy, even in the open lane, resist my kisses.

28.II.47

Fever. Raju stayed on after the others had gone (Moti had been singing evening *ragas*) and when he got up to leave came and very sweetly kissed me as I lay on the *chauki*, telling me that I should put up the mosquito-net. The quality of simple, cool, lucid, masculine independence in this child is quite lovely.

# THE CHILD

Lewis Thompson

Entered, one lucid morning of Spring winds,  
Eros, the Child, dark, in an Indian guise. —  
Wanton, beneath my doubtful, daring hands  
What simple, maddening fragrances arise!

From your calm smile the eagle and the tiger  
Have learned their elegance, their pride, their rage;  
From your two eyes the Night, the Sphinx, the Augur  
Their depthless, hallucinating gaze.

Single like water is your innocence,  
White honey, sameness ravishing the tongue—  
At its most secret, shadowed, sinuous  
Glinting the sharpest gleam, the keenest fang.

Drunk with the nectar of your mouth, your breath, your name,  
By your harsh magic mad, mad and at peace,  
Borne by the venomed wave of golden flame,  
We shipwreck on your timeless Paradise.

Borne by the venomed wave of golden flame,  
We shipwreck on your timeless Paradise.

# THE *ENTIMOS PAIS* OF MATTHEW 8:5-13 AND LUKE 7:1-10

Donald Mader

That the gospels are silent about homosexuality has almost become a truism. At least one writer on homosexuality and scripture has even sought to construct arguments for tolerance upon this supposed silence.<sup>1</sup> Certainly there are no direct references to the practices we today term homosexuality anywhere in the teachings of Jesus, as there are in the Pauline letters.<sup>2</sup>

It has been suggested that there may be an indirect reference to homosexuality in Matthew 19:10-12, one of the "hard sayings" of Jesus, regarding eunuchs, on the ground of the popular belief that classed eunuchs with those who practised sodomy.<sup>3</sup> The argument runs that, because of this popular identification, for Jesus to speak highly of eunuchs would at least imply toleration for homosexuals. Two problems severely limit this possibility. The first arises when we note that it was on the ground of physical imperfection that eunuchs were excluded from the covenant community, not their actions; whatever the popular mind may have thought, we are dealing with two different categories, and to reason from the one to the other is not sound. Second, the meaning of Matthew 19:10-12 is sufficiently obscure on its face that it seems unwise to build much upon it. It is probably best taken merely as an admonition to chastity.<sup>4</sup>

Beyond Jesus' silence on the subject, it is also widely accepted that the very subject of homosexuality is unmentioned in the gospels. Since at least the time of Christopher Marlowe, one of whose "damnable opinions" held that Jesus and John were bedfellows, there have been more or less poetical flights based upon the "beloved disciple", and even the young man who "ran away naked", but these cannot withstand serious exegetical examination.<sup>5</sup> However, while none of the standard gospel commentaries which I have been

able to examine nor any of the major texts on homosexuality in the Bible have noted the possibility (aside from a brief mention in Horner's *Jonathan Loved David*), the suggestion has been made in foreign sources and in non-exegetical literature in English that the account of the healing of the centurion's servant, in Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10 (with a parallel in John 4:46-53), may contain a reference to homosexuality in its classical form of paederasty.<sup>6</sup> It is the intent of this paper to examine whether or not this suggestion can be exegetically supported. The issue will center primarily around the understanding of several words, *pais* (boy/servant) and *entimos* (dear, precious, valued), as found in these passages, against the background of other Biblical and secular usage, and the question of whether a person could reasonably be involved in a paederastic relationship and yet have been a "God-fearer" as the centurion is portrayed by Luke.

## The Passages

In both Matthew and Luke the account of Jesus' healing of the centurion's servant at Capernaum is part of a collection of healing stories which directly follow a major section of Jesus' teaching—the Sermon on the Mount in the case of Matthew; the Sermon on the Plain in the case of Luke. Matthew sets it as the second of three healings, Luke as the first of two. Luke has previously used, in his fifth chapter, the healing of the leper with which Matthew preceeds the Capernaum story, and in his fourth chapter the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, with which Matthew follows it; in their place, Luke follows the centurion's story with an account of a resurrection which is peculiar to his gospel.<sup>7</sup>

The setting of the account of the healing of the centurion's boy makes it clear that the gospel writers intended it to be a miracle story, which is to say that they intended its primary focus to be a revelation of the nature and power of Jesus. This equally means that, just as the parable of Lazarus and the rich man is not to be looked to for authoritative teaching about the afterlife, as its primary purpose lies elsewhere, we must here recognize that, even if it is established that it contains a reference to paederasty, we cannot look to this healing story for authoritative moral teaching on homosexuality, carrying the same force as, for instance, Jesus' teachings on marriage in Matthew 5:31-2. At the same time, just as other healing stories, although they are not intended to be authoritative teaching about disease, give us information about Jesus' attitudes toward disease and its causation (or at least the attitudes imputed to Jesus by the early Christian community which framed the stories—an issue which we will examine later), so too, if paederasty is present, this account will necessarily reveal attitudes about it.

Because of the prominence in its structure of the saying of Jesus regarding faith (Matthew 8:10; Luke 7:9), the account certainly does have a secondary focus in teaching about the nature and importance of faith. Indeed, it is a common observation among commentators that structurally the real point of the story comes in these words and not the miracle of healing itself, which comes almost as an afterthought. Perhaps the strong demonstration of faith and trust on the part of the centurion played a role in the placement of the account directly following sections of teaching dealing with faith and life (Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 6:46-49), to serve, in effect, as a "bridge" between sections.

It is in relation to the strength of the saying of Jesus in the structure of the story that we may briefly examine the source from which this account enters the gospels. The story is almost universally agreed to have been an element in "Q", the hypothetical source of materials used in common by Matthew and Luke but not found in Mark.<sup>8</sup> As such, it would be the only (or perhaps, if Matthew 9:32-3 is admitted to be from "Q", the only major) miracle story to have stood in that

source.<sup>9</sup> As "Q" is commonly regarded to have been a collection of the sayings and discourses of Jesus, and not of stories about him, the fact that this account should have been included supports the supposition that Jesus' words to the centurion regarding faith are an important—and were perhaps originally its primary—focus.

Having briefly surveyed the context and source, let us look at the texts themselves, in the Revised Standard translation:

Matthew 8:5-13:

<sup>5</sup>As he entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, beseeching him and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, in terrible distress." <sup>7</sup>And he said to him, "I will come and heal him." <sup>8</sup>But the centurion answered him, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup>For I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me, and I say to one, 'Go', and he goes, and to another, 'Come', and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this', and he does it." <sup>10</sup>—When Jesus heard him, he marveled, and said to those who followed him, "Truly I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. <sup>11</sup>I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, <sup>12</sup>while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth." <sup>13</sup>And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; be it done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

Luke 7:1-10:

<sup>1</sup>After he had ended all his sayings in the hearing of the people he entered Capernaum. <sup>2</sup>Now a centurion had a slave who was dear to him, who was sick and at the point of death. <sup>3</sup>When he heard of Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his slave. <sup>4</sup>And when they came to Jesus they besought him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him. <sup>5</sup>For he loves our nation, and he built us our synagogue." <sup>6</sup>And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; <sup>7</sup>therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word and my servant will be healed. <sup>8</sup>For I am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go', and he goes; and to another, 'Come', and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this', and he does it." <sup>9</sup>When Jesus heard this, he marveled at him, and turned and said to the multitude that followed him, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." <sup>10</sup>And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave well.

A comparison of the two versions shows key points in common as well as key differences. Matthew and Luke agree in placing the incident at Capernaum, in Galilee, a large and prosperous commercial and fishing center with a Roman military presence. While Capernaum, unlike Galilee in general, was primarily Jewish, the city was strongly influenced by the Hellenism of the surrounding Gentile majority. It is famed in Biblical archaeology for its well preserved third-century synagogue, noted for the figural decorations not in accord with Jewish law regarding images—perhaps a replacement to the one claimed by Luke to be the centurion's gift. While it would be dangerous to reason from a third century building to first century social conditions, this is at least suggestive of a certain heterodoxy that might have prevailed there.<sup>10</sup> The two versions are also in agreement about the wording of the centurion's message (Matthew 8:8-9 and Luke 7:6b-8) and Jesus' response (Matthew 8:10, Luke 7:9).

On the other hand there are significant differences. The most obvious is the structure of the story, for while both versions agree that the healing took place at a distance because the centurion felt unworthy to have Jesus under his roof, Matthew has the centurion himself approach Jesus, while Luke has a complicated account of two embassies sent by the centurion, the first of Jewish elders and the second of friends. Contained within this is the further identification of the centurion as a "God-fearer", who had donated a synagogue for the local congregation. Matthew includes an Old Testament quotation from Psalm 107:3 in verse 11 as part of a section which Luke reworks as an independent teaching (Luke 13:28-30).

The other significant difference is somewhat muted by the translation, though still traceable in the Revised Standard Version's use of "servant" and "slave". In identifying the relation of the sick individual to the centurion, Matthew (in verses 6, 8 and 13) consistently uses the Greek term *pais*, a word of multiple meanings which include "son", "boy", "child" (of either sex), and "servant" (either an adult or minor), and here rendered by the RSV as "servant". In verses 2, 3 and 10, parallel to Matthew's verses 6 and 13, Luke instead uses the Greek *doulos*, "born slave", rendered by the

RSV as "slave". Significantly, each writer uses the opposite term once in his account: Matthew uses *doulos* in verse 9b, seemingly to emphasize the distinction between the *pais* on whose behalf the centurion makes his request and the hypothetical, less important slave being ordered about; Luke, while consistent with verse 9 of Matthew by using *doulos* in the centurion's speech (vs. 8), also breaks his pattern of using *doulos* and agrees with verse 8 of Matthew by using *pais* in verse 7b, perhaps to stress the more personal relationship this servant enjoyed. On his part, in identifying the relationship between the centurion and the sick individual, Luke does introduce the Greek adjective *entimos*, meaning "honored" or "valued" in verse 2 to describe the slave. It is a word which appears in the Gospels only in the writings of Luke.

With these differences between the passages firmly in mind, we may move to the question of precedence. The question is not which of these passages is primary in the sense of one being a reworking of the other, for it is accepted that Matthew and Luke had no contact with one another's work. Rather the question is which of the passages is probably closer to the hypothetical original source, the "Q" document, from which both authors drew. Obviously, no final answer can be given, without an original with which to make comparisons. However, the preponderance of scholarly opinion favors Matthew as better representing the hypothetical source. Most of the arguments involve the structure of the story, noting the artificiality of Luke's narrative, with its complications of having the centurion invite Jesus by the first embassy, then withdraw the invitation by the second. The unsuitability of the first-person message delivered by Luke's second embassy, which fits perfectly in the mouth of the centurion himself in Matthew's version, is also noted. This unsuitability seems to suggest that the message has been preserved by Luke from another source but used in an incongruous setting. Other scholars, however, also extend their claims for precedence to the text of Matthew's version with particular comment on Matthew's use of *pais*.

Among those who have argued, on one ground or another, for Matthew being closer to a hypothetical original are Loisy, Klostermann, Wend-

land, Dibelius and Bultmann.<sup>11</sup> Plummer clearly states his opinion that in the use of *pais* Matthew preserved the text of his source while Luke has substituted *doulos*.<sup>12</sup> John Chapman refers to Luke as a “borrower”, and also suggests Luke changed *pais* to *doulos*; at the same time he judges Luke “longer and more complete” and more “beautiful” for the addition of the intervention of friends.<sup>13</sup> Vincent Taylor plainly states his opinion that “in its Lucan form the story has received later additions”, and appears to consider the first embassy one of them.<sup>14</sup> A. R. C. Leaney says that it is “likely that Luke himself invented the detail of the sending of the elders”.<sup>15</sup> In the Anchor Bible Jos. Fitzmyer opts for Matthew being truer to the source in both structure and text, except for the addition of the free-standing saying of Jesus now in verse 11. He states that any argument for Matthean “omission is more difficult to explain than Lucan additions”, and offers his opinion that Luke has shifted from *pais* in the original source to *doulos*, though he says it is “not clear why”.<sup>16</sup> Among current commentators only those of evangelical slant seem to disagree. Geldenhuis, after citing authorities in favor of Matthean primacy, baldly asks “Why?” and actually suggests that both Matthew and Luke are correct and must be combined to make a full story with two embassies and a personal visit!<sup>17</sup> I. H. Marshall, after making such comments as “Luke’s version is more complicated, if not actually improbable” still finds, in the balance, that Luke better represents the source, though “the possibility of Lucan expansion cannot be excluded.”<sup>18</sup> But perhaps the strongest statement of all—in favor of Matthew—comes from Montefiore, who declares “Luke makes diverse changes in the story of the centurion”, that Luke’s version is “weaker and less natural than in Matthew” and that it is “clearly secondary as compared with Matthew”.<sup>19</sup>

Before leaving our examination of the texts themselves, we should also take notice of the parallel to these two passages in John 4:46-54. It is one of the few incidents recorded in the synoptic gospels which appears recognizably in John, where it stands as the second of the “signs” performed by the Christ. While it is recognizable, it is by no means identical: the points of similarity

include the location, Capernaum; the personal request by the man for the healing of a child (parallel at least to Matthew), answered by a healing at a distance effected by Jesus’ word alone; and the faith of the petitioner as a key element of the account. The differences, however, are also considerable: the man is not a centurion, but rather is identified as *basilikos*, or “king’s official”, though it is the considered opinion of W. F. Howard that this title would suit the position of a Roman centurion in the service of Herod the tetrarch.<sup>20</sup> It is not clear in John whether the man is Jew or Gentile, though the assumption would seem to be that he is Jewish, where it is implicit in Matthew and explicit in Luke that he is non-Jewish; and the relationship of the man and the sick individual is specifically that of father and son, as John uses *huios*, or “son” in verses 46, 47, 50 and 53. However, curiously, in verse 51, John does use *pais* (here obviously by the context, in the sense of “son”), the only appearance of that word in the Johannine writings.<sup>21</sup>

Given these similarities and differences, the relationship of John’s version to that of the synoptics has been hotly debated. Among the Fathers, Irenaeus, in his *Against Heresies*, ii 22:3, treats all three accounts as variants of one incident. Though again evangelical commentators argue otherwise, and Plummer denies any parallel, remarking that in view of the differences, to suggest such a relationship would imply a “startling carelessness” with his sources on the part of John, the majority of modern voices can be represented by Howard, Bernard, and Marsh who remarks that “the present story is unmistakably like that of the synoptics” and that the “assumption seems justified” that this is a parallel account.<sup>22</sup> Streeter more cautiously suggests that this is an account of the same incident, though taken from a source that had early diverged from that used by the synoptic writers.<sup>23</sup> R. E. Brown, in the Anchor Bible series, affirms that all three accounts are versions of the same incident, but then stands alone in proposing that it is John who best represents the original source, which he believes used *huios*, which Matthew for some reason altered to *pais*, and which Luke further changed to *doulos*.<sup>24</sup> If, on the other hand, we accept the opinion of the majority of



commentators that *pais* stood in the source used by Matthew and Luke, the unusual appearance of *pais* in John would seem to suggest a fairly direct connection.<sup>25</sup>

### The Meaning of *pais*

If it is accepted that *pais* stood in the original source from which Matthew, who retained the word, and Luke, who substituted another, both drew—and it does appear that this is a justified assumption—we may now move to inquire how the word would have been understood by contemporaries first encountering the narrative. As we have already noted, the word has multiple meanings, which often must be understood from the context: it can mean “boy”, “child” (of either sex), “son”, or “servant” (of any age). The word occurs 23 times in the New Testament, and is used with almost all of these senses. Five additional occurrences are in Matthew: 2:16, of the “male children” of Bethlehem; 12:18, in a quote from the LXX, “servant”; 14:2, of the “servants” of Herod; 17:18, of the “boy” cured of epilepsy; 21:15, of the “children” on Palm Sunday. Seven additional occurrences are in Luke: 1:54 and 1:69, in the Magnificat and Benedictus, respectively, of Israel and David as “servant”; 2:43, of the “boy” Jesus at the Temple; 8:51 and 8:54, of Jarius’ daughter, a female “child”; 9:42, of the “boy” cured of epilepsy; 15:26, of a “servant” in the parable of the prodigal son. Five more uses occur in Luke’s second volume, Acts: 3:13 and 26, in Peter’s sermon, of Jesus, as God’s “servant” or “son”; 4:24, of David as God’s “servant”; 4:27 and 30, of Jesus as God’s “servant” or “son”; and 20:12, of Eutychus, the “boy” who fell from the window. The final one is of course in John. Secular usage reflects the same spread of meanings. The lexicographer Hesychius, writing in late antiquity, defines *pais* as a descendant, particularly a son (*huios*), more mature than a *neos*, and in contrast to a daughter (*parthenos*), and notes it can also be applied to a slave (*doulos*).<sup>26</sup> Liddell and Scott provide instances of use as “son” or “daughter”, “boy” or “girl”, and “servant” or “slave” of any age or sex.<sup>27</sup>

There is, however, an additional specific usage

which one might not necessarily expect to find in the New Testament, but which should have fallen within Liddell and Scott’s field of view. Before launching into this discussion, it will be necessary to make a brief digression.

Perhaps the most difficult mental adjustment to make for anyone from a twentieth century western society who seeks an understanding of classical times involves the recognition of the pervasiveness of paederasty within ancient society. (A recognition of the total acceptance of slavery is perhaps a close second.) Intergenerational sexual relationships between males are today regarded by our society as so perverse and uncommon that we are totally unable to comprehend the centrality, and the widespread practise and acceptance, that paederasty enjoyed in the ancient world. Because this condemnation often arises from religious strictures, we are even less willing to consider the possibility that there might be non-judgemental references to such practises in scripture.

The ubiquity of paederasty, and its centrality to facets of ancient culture and society ranging from literature and the arts through philosophy, education and even into military training, was first treated in such pioneering works as J. A. Symonds’ *Problem in Greek Ethics* (the “problem” being precisely the importance of a practise so reviled as paederasty in a culture so revered as that of ancient Greece) and George Ives’ *Graeco-Roman View of Youth*.<sup>28</sup> Within the last decade the centrality and pervasiveness of paederasty has been formidably documented for Greek culture and society by K. J. Dover, and for Rome by John Boswell and Royston Lambert.<sup>29</sup> Lambert conveniently sums up the issue:

Pederasty was not a mere fashion or aberration in ancient Greece. Wherever and for whatever reasons it originated, by classical times it had clearly come to serve certain profound needs existing in society, at least of the leisured or citizen classes. It had matured into an esteemed social institution, fulfilling precise and vital functions, regulated by law and tradition, elaborated into a culture and

dignified with a philosophy. So important was its function that it flourished, weakened and adulterated perhaps, all over the Hellenic world under Roman rule... tenaciously surviving even the ineffective edicts of the Christian Emperors of the fourth century A.D., which had to be renewed by Justinian two hundred years later.<sup>30</sup>

A further concise summary of the role of pederasty in ancient society, from the perspective of Biblical scholarship, will be found in Robin Scroggs' work on New Testament texts and homosexuality.<sup>31</sup> While we may question his contention that it was pederasty, and not homosexuality as we know it today with more or less equal relationships between similarly aged persons, that is opposed in New Testament texts that explicitly condemn homosexuality, his review of the background material is most valuable, and his conclusions worth noting:

The practices of pederasty emerged out of the dominant social matrix of the day. In some quarters pederastic relations were extolled, in almost all quarters condoned... it is important to keep in mind that Greco-Roman pederasty was practised by a large number of people in part because it was socially acceptable, while by many other people actually idealized as a normal course in the process of maturation.<sup>32</sup>

Any reader desiring further documentation regarding the importance and pervasiveness of pederasty in classical times may consult these sources in their entirety.

Bearing these facts in mind, we should now note that within the institution of pederasty, *pais* had a rather specific reference to the younger, passive partner in a pederastic relationship, or the desired object of pederastic affections, whether freeborn or slave. In the general overview at the beginning of his study, Dover observes, "In many contexts, and almost invariably in poetry, the passive partner is called *pais*", and Bernard Sergent, in a discussion of terminology in his study of pederastic myths in Greek religion,

comments on Strabo's use of the word *pais* in a description of Cretan pederastic customs, "the term was commonly used to refer to an adolescent, the *eromenos*, and that is the case here."<sup>33</sup> The usage remains remarkably consistent for close to a thousand years from the poems of Theagenis, through the epigrams collected in Book XII of the Greek Anthology, on through work dating to well after the time of the gospels' composition. The epigrams of Strato of Sardis (fl. 30 A.D.) and Meleager of Gadara (fl. 90 B.C.) are of particular interest, as the former was an almost exact contemporary of the date of the gospel events, and the latter, though slightly earlier than the date of the gospels, was a native of Gadara, about twenty miles from Capernaum across the sea of Galilee in the Decapolis, and site of the healing of a demoniac (Matthew 8:28), and thus they provide evidence on usage at the time and place of the gospels. Strabo of Amaseia, the Geographer, the subject of Sergent's comment, whose dates are roughly 63 B.C. to 24 A.D., provides from prose still another example of this contemporary, pederastic understanding of the word.

This is not to suggest that the word *pais* necessarily carried pederastic implications. In most common usage, it carried only the usual meanings. There were words, such as *eromenos*, or *paidika* when used as a masculine singular noun, which did carry such specific implications, and would have left the nature of any relationship for which they were used entirely beyond doubt.<sup>34</sup> It can, however, be said that *pais* is a word that contemporaries could well have expected in descriptions of pederastic relationships, and, moreover, a word which appearing in the proper context would have clearly conveyed that meaning.

The difficulty in determining the precise meaning of *pais* in any particular situation is clearly seen in the gospel passages here being examined. If we had only Matthew's version, it would be impossible to say whether the *pais* was the centurion's son or servant. If we had Luke alone, we would clearly understand from his use of *doulos* that the *pais* was a servant. Indeed, it is the strength of Luke's use of *doulos* that makes us also read Matthew as a reference to a servant. Yet if we had Matthew's and John's accounts only, and Luke's

version did not exist, we surely would read Matthew, with the indefinite *pais*, in light of John's more specific *huios*, and refer to Matthew's account of the healing of the centurion's son! But in the light of what has been said about the paederastic usage of *pais*, another uncertainty must be introduced: if we were to read through first-century eyes, accustomed to the institution of paederasty, and knowing its vocabulary, encountering a story like Matthew's, might we not also read it in terms of a man's concern for his younger lover?

### Luke's *entimos doulos*

Before answering that question, we should briefly examine Luke's use of *entimos*. The word occurs five times in the New Testament altogether, two of those appearances being in Luke, who is the only Gospel writer to use the term. It also is used once by Paul, in Philippians 2:29, and twice in 1 Peter 2:4 and 6. When applied to things, as in the two references in 1 Peter, the word means "valuable" or "precious"; when to persons, the sense is generally "honorable", as in Paul's injunction to the Philippian church to count Epaphroditus "honorable", and Luke's other use of the word, 14:8, where Jesus instructs his followers not to take seats of importance at a feast lest they have to make way for someone more "honorable" than they. For secular usage, Liddell and Scott confirm these meanings; T. W. Manson notes also that the word was used as an honorific for soldiers with long or distinguished service.<sup>35</sup> Luke's use of the term in 7:2 then must be seen either as somewhat cold-blooded—a "valuable slave"—or as somewhat anomalous—though as a slave not "honorable" in the sense of reputation, at least valued for personal reasons. As the centurion's motives are portrayed as much warmer than merely protecting a valuable piece of property, the latter is undoubtedly the sense in which the word should be understood.<sup>36</sup> Thus, while the term does not usually imply an emotional attachment, at the least we can say that Luke, in introducing it, was recognizing that the centurion's actions displayed a depth of feeling which was over and above that of an ordinary master-slave relationship.<sup>37</sup>

We can now summarize our findings and offer

an answer to the question of how a first-century reader would have viewed this account. We have seen that the majority of commentators believe that Matthew's version of the story is closer to the hypothetical source from which both Matthew and Luke drew, and that many extend this to the assumption that *pais* stood in that source. We have also seen that *pais*—though it assuredly had other, and more primary, meanings—was a word that first-century readers would have expected in references to paederastic relationships and one which, given the context of such a close, though non-parental, relationship between an adult male and a boy such as this account presents, might have implied a paederastic relationship. Though there is nothing which requires such a reading, given the nature of the story, with the concern shown for the boy, and the ubiquity of paederasty in the experience of first-century readers, I believe that we must answer that this account, as reflected in Matthew's version, certainly could have conveyed to its original audience the suggestion of paederasty. But did it?

I would propose not only that it could, but that it did suggest paederasty to an important early reader—Luke. If we need an answer to the question of why Luke changed terms from *pais* to *doulos*, this would appear to be the obvious reason. The author of Matthew, out of respect for his source, or from having a lesser experience with the Gentile world and its institutions, or for theological reasons, let the account stand, while the author of Luke, with a greater experience of the Gentile world and its institutions, and thus a greater sensitivity to the implications of the story, sought to mute them.<sup>38</sup> That Luke understood the relationship to be non-parental is indicated by his choice of another word expressing servitude, but while a *doulos* also could have been used for sexual purposes (and a reading of ancient literature indicates that many were), the term would not have been as provocative as *pais*.<sup>39</sup> Having made the change, Luke felt the need to acknowledge, by the use of *entimos*, that the centurion's actions on behalf of his servant indicated a remarkable emotional connection, the depth of which was comparable to (and for John, explicable in terms of) what a father would do for his child.

## Paederasty and God-fearers

We are affirming, then, that the account of the healing of the centurion's boy not only might be read as a reference to paederasty, but that it was read that way by Luke, and further, that the changes made to the story by Luke support this interpretation not only in muting what Luke found in the original, but also by still affirming, in a less provocative way, that the relationship was unusual. At this point a new question arises: could a "God-fearer", as Luke portrays his centurion to be, also have engaged in paederasty?

It would be easy to dismiss this issue by arguing that the identification of the centurion as a "God-fearer" is a Lukan creation. Whatever the answer to the question of whether a "God-fearer" could practise paederasty, the primary argument that in the original and Matthean versions this account would be seen to have reference to a pederastic relationship will not be affected, and there is certainly evidence that could be adduced that this detail did originate with Luke. That the detail occurs in the course of the rather artificial structure of the embassy of elders, with all the evidence we have cited that this is secondary, and the fact that the 'pious centurion' is almost a 'type' in Luke-Acts—Cornelius (Acts 10) being another example, and perhaps the source upon which Luke drew to fill out his portrait of this anonymous centurion—all suggest this is from Luke's hand. However, if we wish to argue that Luke's account, though muted in comparison to Matthew's, still allows a pederastic reading, we must deal with the issue. Nor can we ignore the question of whether the centurion of the original story, by his openness to approach Jesus and his concern—perhaps more than just a sensitivity to Jewish culture—about having a rabbi enter his home, might not have shown himself a God-fearer, though the fact was not stated.

The term "God-fearer" (*phoboumenoi ton Theon*) was applied to a large group of Gentiles who responded positively to the theological and ethical teachings of Judaism, but who stopped short of full conversion. They are encountered fairly frequently in Acts; among the more notable are the Ethiopian eunuch, Cornelius, and Titus Justus

(Acts 8, 10 and 18, respectively), and many of those that Paul and other apostles found receptive in the course of their preaching journeys probably fell into the group as well. It is obviously hard to categorize so broad a group, which ranged from individuals philosophically inclined toward monotheism through those who embraced some, but not all, Jewish ethical and cultic practices, through those who would strictly follow all these matters but held back from the rite of circumcision.<sup>40</sup>

Quite apart from debates about the original meaning of Old Testament references to homosexuality, it is clear that first century Judaism found homosexuality, and its expression as paederasty, abhorrent. The wealth of rabbinic literature examined by Scroggs documents this for Palestinian Judaism; for Hellenistic Judaism our source material is narrower, as we see it almost entirely through the eyes of Philo Judeus, but his condemnation is no less thoroughgoing.<sup>41</sup> While reliance on a unique source is always risky, and it is by no means clear how well Philo represents the thinking of other Hellenized Jews,<sup>42</sup> we must assume that paederasty would not be an approved practise for a God-fearer. We must also assume that any God-fearer who was so close to the Jewish community as to endow a synagogue would be among those more observant of Jewish customs. Together, these assumptions would argue against the possibility of the centurion, as portrayed by Luke, being involved in paederasty. However, the case cannot be closed entirely. It is also possible that Hellenistic Jewish communities in general, or the one at Capernaum in particular (which, as we noted above, was later rather heterodox in its attitude toward graven images), may have been more accepting of Hellenistic moral practises than was Philo, and that paederasty, particularly if it conformed to the higher Hellenistic ideals for the practise, as the caring evidenced by the centurion's request suggests this did, might have been tolerated in a God-fearer for whom this remained one area of non-conformity.

## Summary and Conclusions

In summary, the points of the argument are:

1. Respecting the consensus of critical opinion, it is probable that Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10 are both drawn from the same original account; that Matthew's version better represents that original; and that the word *pais* was used in that account, with Matthew preserving the word while Luke substituted *doulos*.

2. The word *pais*, when used in the context of a close non-parental relationship such as that portrayed here—a relationship that John, when using the account, found fitting and explicable as a parent-child relationship—could have conveyed to a first-century audience the implication of paederasty.

3. Not only could this account have been read as referring to a paederastic relationship, but the author of Luke, by substituting *doulos* for *pais* (thus affirming his understanding that the relationship was non-parental while using a less provocative word), and by adding the qualification that the boy was *entimos*, indicates that he understood it that way.

4. While it is presumed be that a deeply observant God-fearer would not practise paederasty, the possibility that this account does refer to paederasty cannot be eliminated for that reason. There were many levels of observance among God-fearers, and the details that imply that the centurion was an observant God-fearer are probably Luke's composition.

I would therefore conclude that we must seriously consider the possibility that this passage in the New Testament does refer to homosexuality, in its classical form of paederasty, though there is no one fact that requires that it be seen in that way.

What are the implications of this? To begin, this passage will not allow us to reach any sweeping conclusions about Jesus' attitudes toward paederasty or homosexuality. As we noted early in this paper, the story does not contain any authoritative moral teaching on the subject. This is merely a detail in a story which had, for its authors, quite a different purpose than the presentation of ethical teaching. For that matter, it is widely recognized today that the Gospels are neither biographical in their intent nor do they portray for us an "historical Jesus"; while they contain historical materials, they are rather the

record of what the Church, at the time of their composition, believed about Jesus. Therefore, the most that can be claimed is that a segment of the early church out of which the "Q" document and Matthew arose, was not concerned, and believed that Jesus was not concerned, when confronted by a responsible, loving paederastic relationship, but rather held it subordinate to questions of faith. This is entirely consistent with the rest of the image created by the Gospels. From accounts such as those of Jesus and the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-11, where the hostile and self-righteous attitudes of the accusers are shown as more troubling to Jesus than the woman's sin) or, from the same chapter in Luke which holds our centurion's story, that of Jesus at the house of Simon the Pharisee (7:36-50, where it is the woman's act of faith that Jesus notes rather than her violation of moral laws), as well as the repeated statements that Jesus extended table-fellowship to sinners (Mark 2:13-17 and its parallels Matthew 9:9-13 and Luke 5:27-32, Luke 15:1-2) and his own observation that he expected prostitutes to enter the kingdom before the conventionally righteous (Matthew 21:31-2), Jesus is shown as more concerned with the state of a person's faith than with their observation of conventional, and particularly sexual, morality. There is nothing unusual, then, in the response Jesus is shown to have toward the centurion, whose request is evidently based on his real love for the boy as well as his strong trust in the saving power of Jesus. Indeed, Jesus is depicted as affirming the relationship here, and fulfilling the centurion's faith, by restoring his boy to him.

The passage has bearing, nonetheless, on the debate in the church over homosexuality. On the one hand, it surely strengthens the general thesis proposed by Boswell that the early church possessed a greater tolerance for homosexuality than was previously suspected—and than it seems to possess today. On the other hand, there has been a tendency, particularly notable in Boswell and Scroggs, to argue that while the early church was tolerant of adult male homosexuality, condemnation was directed to the vicious and unsavoury side of paederasty. Evidently there was little other side. Boswell relates deteriorating attitudes to-

ward homosexuality in the early church to revulsion against the sale and prostitution of unwanted children, incest and child slavery as associated with pederasty, but also reveals his own view when in his index 'Pederasty' refers one to 'Children, sexual abuse of'.<sup>43</sup> Scroggs takes a much longer route, first arguing that because of the partners' difference in age the nature of pederasty is inequality, and because inequality always leads to domination, and domination to dehumanization and abuse, and second, because the relation is inherently impermanent and intended to last for only a few years, "it is clear that most forms of pederasty had at least the *potential* to create concrete relations that would be destructive and dehumanizing to the participants, particularly the youths... Given this potential and its frequent actualization, that early Christians should repudiate all forms of pederasty is not unduly surprising."<sup>44</sup> He concludes, "what the New Testament was against was the image of homosexuality as pederasty and primarily here its more sordid and dehumanizing aspects".<sup>45</sup> One would never suspect, from all this, that the same society also contained nurturing, self-sacrificing relationships such as those cited by Lambert.<sup>46</sup>

The issue is not, however, whether historically there were positive, nurturing relationships—which there surely were—or destructive, dehumanizing ones—which there also surely were—nor even in what proportion they existed. With the discovery of a New Testament passage which suggests an attitude of toleration toward a non-exploitive, caring pederastic relationship, the focus must move back to where it always should have been: that it is not homosexuality, or pederasty, or any other specific sexual relationship that Christian ethics condemns, but dehumanization and exploitation of another person in any relationship, heterosexual or homosexual, intragenerational or intergenerational.

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*Editors Note:*

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**NOTES**

1. T. Horner, *Jonathan Loved David* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), p. 110-111.

2. Romans 1:26-7, 1 Corinthians 6:9, Timothy 1:10. A considerable literature exists dealing with exactly what these passages mean, the most important being J. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1980), Appendix I, also pages 106-113; Horner, *op. cit.*, chapters 7 and 8; J. J. McNeill, *The Church and the Homosexual* (2nd ed., New York: Next Year Publications, 1985), pages 50-56; R.

Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), chapter 7. It is not within the scope of this article to enter into the debate over Pauline intentions.

3. Horner, *op. cit.*, p. 123; McNeill, *op. cit.*, p. 65, makes a similar argument including Acts 8:26ff. The Old Testament background is Lev. 21:20 and Deut. 23:1, excluding eunuchs from the covenant community; a similar law regarding castrated animals is found in Lev. 22:24. The context of Lev. 21:16-23, however, makes it clear that the objection is to castration as a physical imperfec-

tion.

4. F. F. Bruce, *Hard Sayings of Jesus* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1983), pages 63-5.

5. Horner, *op. cit.*, pages 120-21. One of the more remarkable poetical flights is W. Wattles, "John", *Lanterns in Gethsemane* (New York: Dutton, 1918), and no less than the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham was responsible for seeing a homosexual allusion in Mark 14:15; L. Crompton, *Byron and Greek Love* (Berkeley: U. of California, 1985), p. 281.

6. The mention by Horner, *op. cit.*, p. 122, cites previous

sources but devotes less notice to this than to his theories involving Matthew 19:10-12. The foreign sources include J. Martignac, "Le Centurion de Capernaum", *Arcadie*, March, 1975, p. 117ff, which I have not been able to examine; a thoroughly unscholarly notice in E. Gillibert, *Le Colosse aux pieds d'argil* (Paris: Metanone, 1975), and a poetic enthusiasm by D. Christianopoulos, "The Centurion Cornelius" (trans. K. Friar), *Gay Sunshine Journal*, No. 47, 1982, p. 170; the earliest mention in English is\* J. P. Rossman, *Sexual Experience Between Men and Boys* (Boston: Association Press, 1976), p. 99. It is also mentioned in J. J. McNeill, "God and Gays: A New Team", *Christopher Street*, 1:4, October, 1976, p. 27; it was with the encouragement of Dr. McNeill that this paper was begun.

7. The parallels between this story and another healing story, that of the Syrio-Phonecian woman's daughter (Matthew 15:21-28 and Mark 7:24-30), must be noted. Both accounts involve an appeal to Jesus by an adult Gentile on behalf of a child, followed by a commendation from Jesus about faith, and a healing effected at a distance by Jesus' word alone. There is even, in Matthew's version, a negative embassy (verse 23b)! On this basis, some of the more thorough form-critics have suggested that there is a common origin for these two stories. Two things appear to militate against this, however: the severe difference in

Jesus' initial response to the request; and the different sources from which the accounts came (Mark for the Syrio-Phonecian woman, "Q" for the Centurion). While it is not impossible that, at an extremely primitive level in the development of tradition, both reflect a common event, and there are certainly similarities of motif, we will not here assume any connection.

8. For non-professional readers unfamiliar with this designation and how it came to be proposed, the easiest introduction is still probably that of A. M. Perry, "The Growth of the Gospels", *Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 7, p. 60ff, or D. T. Rowlingson's article "The Synoptic Problem", *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 4, p. 491ff.

9. S. MacLean Gilmour, "Introduction to St. Luke", *Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 8, p. 13; B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels* (London: MacMillan\*, 1928), p. 233; S. E. Johnson, in his Exegesis to Matthew includes Matthew 9:32-33 as from "Q" as well: *Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 7, p. 337 and p. 359.

10. D. C. Pellett, "Capernaum", *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 1, pages 532-4; K. W. Clark, "Galilee", *ibid.*, Vol. 2, pages 346-7.

11. Loisy, Wendland and Klostermann are cited as favoring Matthew by N. Geldenhuis, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1950), p. 221; Dibelius' suggestion that the motif of messengers is a Lucan creation and Bultmann's argument that

pais stood in the original "Q" source are cited in I. H. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p. 277 and 279.

12. A. Plummer, *International Critical Commentaries\* Gospel According to St. Luke* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901), p. 196.

13. J. Chapman, *Matthew, Mark & Luke* (London: Longmans Green, 1937), p. 103.

14. V. Taylor, *Formation of the Gospel Tradition* (London: MacMillan, 1945), p. 76.

15. A. R. C. Leancy, *Commentary on the Gospel According to Luke* (London: A. & C. Black, 1966), p. 141.

16. J. Fitzmyer, *Anchor Bible: Gospel According to Luke (I-IX)* (N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981), pages 451, 468-9.

17. N. Geldenhuis, *loc. cit.*

18. I. H. Marshall, *loc. cit.* Marshall does construct a response to the problem in Luke of a first-person statement in the mouth of a messenger, by citing the oriental practise of ambassadors memorizing statements, and Biblical examples thereof, which is credible but not wholly convincing. T. H. Robinson, *Moffett New Testament Commentary—The Gospel of Matthew* (London:\*\*Hoder and Stoughton, 1978) must also be numbered among those favouring Lukan primacy. \*\*Hodder

19. C. G. Montefiore, *Synoptic Gospels* (N.Y.: KTVA Publishers, 1968), Vol. 2, pages 423-4.

20. W. F. Howard, Exegesis of John, *Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 8, p. 538.

21. J. H. Bernard, *International Critical Commentary: Gospel Ac-*

- ording to John (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1928), Vol. 1, p. 166.
22. Plummer, op. cit., p. 197; Howard, op. cit., p. 536; Bernard, loc. cit.; J. Marsh, *The Gospel of St. John* (London: Penguin, 1968), p. 236.
23. Streeter, op. cit., p. 409.
24. R. E. Brown, *Anchor Bible Gospel According to St. John (I-XII)* (New York, Doubleday, 1966), p. 193.
25. C. K. Barrett, *Gospel According to St. John* (London: SPCK, 1978), p. 248, however, presents arguments that *pais* here is an assimilation from the synoptics.
26. Hesychius Alexandrinus, *Lexicon*, ed. M. Schmidt (Jena, 1858-68), Vol. 2, p. 256.
27. H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 1289.
28. J. A. Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (London: Privately Printed by Leonard Smithers, 1901, and subsequent reprints); G. Ives, *The Graeco-Roman View of Youth* (London: Cayme Press, 1926). That both works have the polemic purpose of defending homosexuality by appealing to the classical tradition, and therefore are somewhat unwilling to confront the darker side of paederasty in ancient culture, where it intersected with prostitution and slavery, does not negate their value.
29. K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978); Boswell, op. cit., chapter 3; R. Lambert, *Beloved and God: The Story of Hadrian and Antinous* (New York: Viking, 1984), chapter 6.
30. Lambert, op. cit., p. 78.
31. Scroggs, op. cit., chapters 2, 3 and 4.
32. Ibid., p. 27.
33. Dover, op. cit., p. 16; Bernard Sergent, *Homosexuality in Greek Myth* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), p. 10. It is not clear whether Sergent's statement is on his own authority, or is based on Dover, whom he cites.
34. Dover, loc. cit. While we lack any commonly used terms that are the equivalent of *eromenos* or *paidika*, the situation with *pais* might be compared with the contemporary use of the word "boy": while in common usage it would refer to a minor male child, when used of or in a gay setting it carries a distinct sexual connotation.
35. Liddell and Scott, op. cit., p. 576; T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1949), p. 64.
36. I. H. Marshall, op. cit., p. 279, goes to some pains to point out that *entimos* here should be read more with Luke's other usage and Paul, rather than that in I Peter.
37. Manson, loc. cit., concurs, suggesting that Luke used *entimos* to explain concern that would not normally have been shown to a slave.
38. The issue of the authorship of these Gospels, upon which we touch now, is much too complex to be explored here. For non-professional readers unfamiliar with the controversies surrounding it, the most accessible background is probably that in E. P. Blair's article "Luke", section 1 of V. Taylor's "Gospel of Luke", and section 9 of F. C. Grant's "Gospel of Matthew", *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 3, pages 179, 180 and 312, respectively; and S. E. Johnson's "Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew", section VII, S. M. Gilmour's "Introduction to the Gospel of Luke", section F, and G. C. H. MacGregor's "Introduction to the Acts of the Apostles", section IX, in the *Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 7, p. 242, Vol. 8, p. 9, and Vol. 9, p. 19, respectively. In brief, there is broad consensus, but by no means unanimity, that the Gospel of Luke was likely written by the individual of that name who, according to the Acts, accompanied Paul, and that the Gospel of Matthew was probably written by an unknown Syrian Christian and attributed to the disciple whose name it bears.
39. Horner, loc. cit.
40. M. H. Pope, "Proselyte", section 5b, *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 3, p. 929.
41. Scroggs, op. cit., chapters 5 and 6.
42. E. R. Goodenough, "Philo Judeus", *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 3, p. 796.
43. Boswell, op. cit., p. 143-4.
44. Scroggs, op. cit., chapter 3, particularly pages 36-8 and 43. It is clear that, by these criteria, most human relationships have similar potential for dehumanization, and could therefore be condemned. Almost every human relationship—most marriages, all parental and pedagogical relations, and labour/management relations, among others—involves inequality, and all accordingly contain po-



tential for abuse, physical, emotional, financial and otherwise. So too does paederasty, no more and no less. Similarly, many human relationships are of limited duration, among them parenting and, increasingly, marriage itself—not to mention heterosexual relations not involving marriage. It is questionable if any of these would be criticised for their limited duration alone. Indeed, classical paederasty might have been less damaging than some of these open-ended relationships, as it was clearly understood by both partners that it was of limited duration.

45. Scroggs, *op. cit.*, p. 126. This allows him to conclude that what the New Testament has to say against homosexuality is irrelevant to today's situation, in which homosexuals seek to attain permanent, fully equal and mutually fulfilling relationships.

46. Lambert, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

## ON SEEING A BEAUTIFUL BOY AT PLAY.

Nathaniel Parker Willis

Down the green slope he bounded. Raven curls  
From his white shoulders by the winds were swept,  
And the clear color of his sunny cheek  
Was bright with motion. Through his open lips  
Shone visibly a delicate line of pearl,  
Like a white vein within a rosy shell,  
And his dark eye's clear brilliance, as it lay  
Beneath his lashes, like a drop of dew  
Hid in the moss, stole out as covertly  
As starlight from the edging of a cloud.  
I never saw a boy so beautiful.  
His step was like the stooping of a bird,  
And his limbs melted into grace like things  
Shaped by the wind of summer. He was like  
A painter's fine conception—such an one  
As he would have of Ganymede, and weep  
Upon his pallet that he could not win  
The vision to his easel. Who could paint  
The young and shadowless spirit? Who could chain  
The sparkling gladness of a heart that lives,  
Like a glad fountain, in the eye of light,  
With an unbreathing pencil? Nature's gift  
Has nothing that is like it. Sun and stream,  
And the new leaves of June, and the young lark  
That flees away into the depths of heaven,  
Lost in his own wild music, and the breath  
Of springtime, and the summer eve, and noon  
In the cool autumn, are like fingers swept  
Over sweet-toned affections—but the joy  
That enters to the spirit of a child  
Is deep as his young heart: his very breath,  
The simple sense of being, is enough  
To ravish him, and like a thrilling touch  
He feels each moment of his life go by.

Beautiful, beautiful childhood! with a joy  
 That like a robe is palpable, and flung  
 Out by your every motion! delicate bud  
 Of the immortal flower that will unfold  
 And come to its maturity in heaven!  
 I weep your earthly glory. 'Tis a light  
 Lent to the new-born spirit, that goes out  
 With the first idle wind. It is the leaf  
 Fresh flung upon the river, that will dance  
 Upon the wave that stealeth out its life,  
 Then sink of its own heaviness. The face  
 Of the delightful earth will to your eye  
 Grow dim; the fragrance of the many flowers  
 Be noticed not, and the beguiling voice  
 Of nature in her gentleness will be  
 To manhood's senseless ear inaudible.  
 I sigh to look upon thy face, young boy!

*The American author Nathaniel Parker Willis was born in Portland, Maine, on January 20, 1806, and was graduated from Yale University in 1827. He first published poetry two years before his graduation, and two years after it founded his own literary journal, the American Monthly, in Boston. Two years after that he joined the staff of the New York Mirror, and for that journal traveled extensively in Europe and the Near East, filing travel reports and essays as he went. He eventually became editor of the Mirror, and in that capacity befriended Edgar <sup>\*</sup>Allen Poe, retaining him as the Mirror's literary editor. Poe was perhaps returning the favour when he called Willis "the third most important poet in New York." Another contemporary, James Russell Lowell, observed that "Willis' shallowness makes half his beauty." Though Willis wrote with facility, producing a stream of poems, essays, drama, short stories and a novel, his reputation faltered soon after his death at his estate, Idlewild, at Tarrytown, New York, in 1860. In its brief notice on him, the Encyclopedia Americana comments tellingly "his affections might suggest the later Oscar Wilde." This selection is from Willis' Poems: Sacred, Passionate, and Humorous (New York: Clark, Austin and Smith, 1860).*

**\*Allan**

# THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN BOY-LOVER: THE POET WILLEM DE MÉRODE

Hans Hafkamp

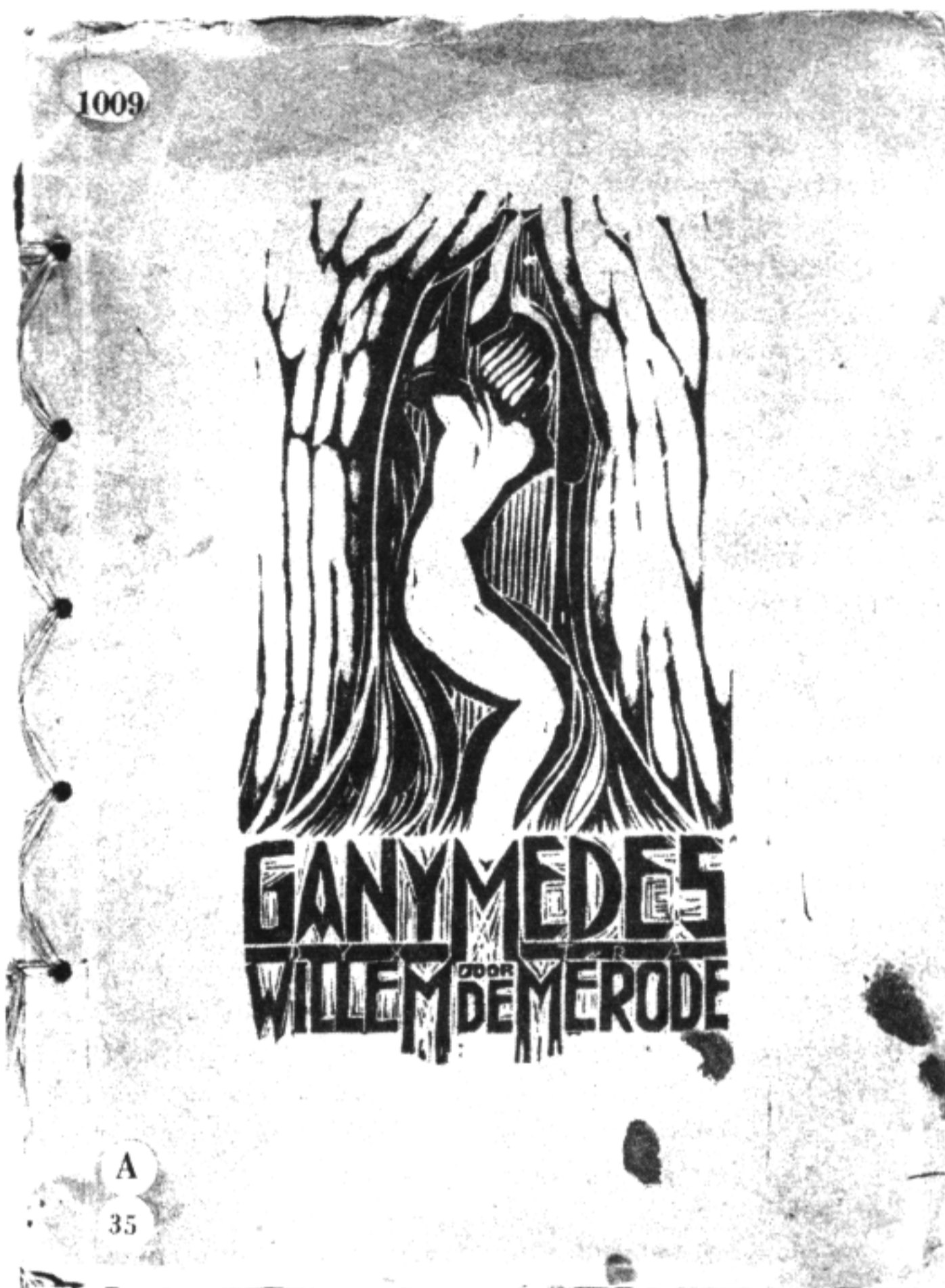
Since the beginning of the gay emancipation movement in the second part of the nineteenth century a whole library has been written in defence of homosexuality. A defence has been made, for example, by pointing out the important contribution to art and literature by 'homosexuals', a considerable section of the library consisting of studies of gay writers and artists, and anthologies of 'gay' literature. Although many of these studies pretend to be international, they are mostly devoted to persons from the country of origin of their authors with token representation of writers from other countries. This means that you hardly ever find Dutch persons mentioned. The only Dutchmen included in Edward Carpenter's 1902 collection *Ioläus: An Anthology of Friendship* are William of Orange (who was also king of England) and his servant Bentinck.<sup>1</sup> Seventy-five years later A. L. Rowse included in his *Homosexuals in History* only one Dutchman: Erasmus of Rotterdam (who wrote in Latin).<sup>2</sup> Stephen Coote didn't include any Dutch author in his *Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse* (1983).<sup>3</sup> It seems, however, that there are changes in the air. David Galloway and Christian Sabisch included two Dutch authors in their *Calamus: Male Homosexuality in Twentieth-century Literature: an International Anthology* (1982): Maarten 't Hart and Willem de Mérode.<sup>4</sup> Anthony Reid will present for the first time in translation an overview of the last 100 years of Dutch gay poetry in his forthcoming anthology *The Eternal Flame*.<sup>5</sup>

In anticipation of an article on paedophile aspects of Dutch gay literature which I shall publish in a future issue of this journal, I would like to

sketch here a portrait of Willem de Mérode, author of many boy-love poems. There are some problems when you narrow your subject to paedophile instead of gay literature. The most important is of course how to define "paedophile". I have decided to use this criterion: one partner must be an adult, and one of the partners must be a minor according to legal definitions.

From 1811 the Netherlands didn't have special legislation about same-sex relations. This changed, however, in 1911. A last minute intervention by the Roman Catholic Minister of Justice resulted in the inclusion of Paragraph 248 section 2 in the Penal Code, which made sexual contacts between an adult and a minor of the same sex between 16 and 21 punishable by up to four years imprisonment. (Sexual contacts with children under the age of 16 were illegal for homosexuals as well as heterosexuals under Paragraph 247 of the Penal Code.) From 1911 to 1939 1354 males were prosecuted under this article.<sup>6</sup> One of the 59 defendants of 1924 was W. E. Keuning, better known under his pseudonym Willem de Mérode.<sup>7</sup>

Willem Eduard Keuning was born 2 September 1887, the sixth child of the teacher Jan Keuning (1850-1926)<sup>8</sup> and his wife Elisabeth Wormser (1850-1929). At the moment of Willem's birth his parents lived in Spijk, a rural village in the north of the province of Groningen. Young Willem wasn't very healthy and he had to stay home for long periods. This made him a rather lonely child, who read much. In 1902, at age fifteen, he became acquainted with the poetry of Willem Kloos (1859-1938), one of the leaders of the new literary movement grouped around the magazine *De*



Cover of De Mérode's *Ganymedes*; woodcut by Johan Dijkstra

*Nieuwe Gids*, which was founded in 1885. This literature was at that time only accepted by a small number of connoisseurs; for most people many of their poems were incomprehensible and their prose indecent.<sup>9</sup>

In a letter to Kloos of 20 May 1933, De Mérode described his influence: "At the age of 15 I read for the first time a sonnet of yours... quoted in *De Groene Amsterdammer*, and that started me writing poems. I'll never forget it. At that moment I began to cut out and copy everything I saw of yours."

When he became acquainted with Kloos's poetry De Mérode couldn't have been aware of the

agonies Kloos had gone through in the 1880's and 1890's because of his homosexual feelings and which he had expressed in some of the finest lyric poems of Dutch nineteenth-century literature. In 1879 Kloos had written in German a cycle of nine poems titled *Knabenklagen*.<sup>10</sup> One of these poems was dedicated to August Graf von Platen-Hallermünde, the homosexual German poet. Kloos had discovered in Platen's work many of his own feelings and longings. Around 1909 De Mérode would also recognize in von Platen his own feelings. From Platen's *Tagebücher* he copied: "More and more I longed for a friend; I mean a profound

friend, whom I could love with my whole heart, and who loved me also. O lovely Friendship, how great you must be, when you're true and completely based on the sympathy of two souls." That this passage on Friendship appealed so much to De Mérode was probably based on the fact that he had just met a boy named Reind Kuitert, four years his junior, who attracted him very much and who would become a lifelong friend.

Kuitert wasn't homosexual himself. In later years he confessed that he hadn't realized either the nature of De Mérode's feelings, or that he probably had been the poet's first great love. To him their friendship was mostly literary. De Mérode wrote many poems these years and he showed most of them to Kuitert. Although he wrote in his poems about his feelings towards Kuitert, he did this guardedly and it is not surprising that Kuitert did not realise that most of these poems were addressed to him, or even to a male. De Mérode used the second person very often so he could hide the fact that most of his poems were about people of his own sex.

After the completion of his training in 1910 Kuitert moved to Amsterdam to start work as a teacher. This was the beginning of an extensive correspondence. De Mérode, lonely and isolated, wrote at least once a week, and he was very annoyed when Kuitert did not do the same. In 1906 he had been appointed teacher in Oude Pekela, a small town in the north of the Netherlands. He didn't like this job very much and on 1 May 1907, he moved to Uithuizermeeden, a small village very near his place of birth. Most of the 2000 inhabitants of this village were farmers and workmen and he did not find the intellectual friendships he needed. In a letter of 2 October 1910, he wrote to Kuitert: "You know that I don't really mix with anyone here and I don't have many acquaintances here either. But I prefer *one good friend* above a dozen acquaintances. And you have always been a good reliable friend to me." Kuitert was receiving and keeping all the poems De Mérode wrote and we can now trace how many there were. For example, he sent Kuitert 167 poems in 1911, the year his first poem was published.

The March issue of the magazine *Ons Tijdschrift*

contained two of his poems, pseudonymously signed 'K'. He was very secretive about his writing; he did not discuss it with his parents or his brothers (with the exception of Pieter, who had also written some poetry<sup>11</sup>). On one of his walks with Kuitert (who visited him frequently) he saw in a shop-window a picture-postcard of the famous French dancer Cléo de Mérode. He liked the name very much and, aware of the important role the De Mérode family played in Belgian history, he decided to use this name. There was some discussion about using the French form, Guillaume, for his first name, but in the end he kept this Dutch. He might have also had in mind another meaning of 'mérode', that is, 'misery' or 'poverty', also used to describe a monk. He did not mention this meaning to Kuitert, but much later—after his trials—he told a colleague about it. "When I'd asked him once why exactly he had chosen the somewhat odd pen-name De Mérode, he started to laugh. 'Did you ever hear about the poor mérode-monks?' he said. 'I'm a king (=Keuning) who abdicated and became a poor monk (=mérode).'"

It is quite probable that he let his homosexual feelings (and the 'misery' they brought him) take part in his choice of a pseudonym. In 1917 when he published a collection of mystical prosepoems, *Aanroepingen* (Invocations), he used the name Joost van Keppel. Certainly he chose this name because of a certain Arnold Joost van Keppel who was supposed to have been more than just a friend to William III of Orange.<sup>12</sup> In fact De Mérode used pseudonyms for every literary genre he practised. Besides the two already mentioned he wrote stories in the Groningen dialect under the name Jan Bos and children's books as Henri Hooglandt.

As a teacher De Mérode was rather popular with his pupils. In the morning they would accompany him on his way to school and on his birthday they sent him 'a rain of picture-postcards'. Much later one of his pupils remembered that "at Uithuizermeeden the children were very fond of him. For his way of teaching, but especially for his story-telling. When the hour of stories came, we were still as mice."

Although he treated all his pupils well, he favoured the boys. He came early to school to pre-

pare his lessons, and it was always boys who accompanied him inside. In his manuscripts he dedicated many poems to these boys.

In his poetry he also started to portray boys. His second collection of poetry, *De overgave* (The Surrender, 1919), for example, included a fragment from a long portrait of Narcissus, two poems about angels (portrayed as young boys), one about Gainsborough's *The Blue Boy*<sup>13</sup>, three so called 'portraits of boys' and two poems about page boys, the second of which, as translated by Reid for *The Eternal Flame*, ends:

This is the hour! Let courage shine!  
 Giving and doing be your drives!  
 Feel in your blood the great design,  
 And do your utmost while he strives.  
 How pure boy's loyalty, how fine!  
 But men play havoc with their lives.

Although *De overgave* even contains a poem called "August von Platen", for many readers the true inspiration for these poems was not clear. The ambivalence sometimes caused trouble. In a letter of 12 April 1919, De Mérode wrote: "A girl, for whom I don't feel anything, imagines that she's the one I've written about and now asks me in a letter to marry. We know each other only very superficially. I find all of this far from pleasant. I did not provoke any of it." Maybe this would not have happened if De Mérode had included some of his more explicit poems. In another poem about von Platen one finds for example lines such as:

You remained, infatuated, for love inflamed,  
 A love most pure, though people cast blame.

But he withheld this poem and the poem published about von Platen is much more covert. In his love-poems he still hid the gender by using the second person. Apart from this it is difficult to judge from our contemporary point of view how clear some of the allusions were to readers of the first decades of the century, when homosexuality was a rather unknown phenomenon, especially in the little-educated, rural area where De Mérode was living. From what we know happened to him in 1924 it is clear what he means when he writes

about "the unblessed trinket of my lust" and "my violated virtue" in his first book *Gestalten en stemmingen* (Portraits and Impressions, 1915). His original readers, mainly rather rigid Christians, could have interpreted these lines as referring to the sinfulness inherent in everyone.

In the course of time De Mérode felt especially attracted to two boys, Jaap Woltjer and Ekko Ubbens. Ekko became his favourite and he wrote many poems about him. In a letter of 25 February 1920, there is this: "Yes, Jaap is a nice, sweet boy. Ever busy and lively. I often call him 'wild crow' because he comes rushing in at me and disappears just as fast. His friend, who also comes here often (his name is Ekko, but Jaap and I say Okke, reversing his name), is much calmer. He is large, and what one calls a beautiful boy. Jaap is very plain. But both are lively and good of heart. We are a real three-some." And on 8 July 1921, he wrote: "The best thing in my life is Okke's friendship. So far it has been very enriching for me."

Curiously enough his biographer Werkman does not report when De Mérode made the acquaintance of these boys and he also does not mention their years of birth. It would seem he became friendly with them around 1915 when they were nine years of age. Already in 1916 he had dedicated a poem to Okke which was set to music by Okke's father, and in De Mérode's children's book *Jaap's portret* (1917) the boys were the originals for the leading characters. In 1922, at the age of 16, both boys went to study at the agricultural school, much to De Mérode's regret. In a letter of 3 November that year he wrote: "And now there is a lonely winter for me in prospect. I was so accustomed to have them come rushing in every moment that it will be very empty now."

In the schoolyard De Mérode sneaked them chocolate bars so often that sometimes the boys would not eat the bars immediately. Once Okke's mother found some of them hidden in a box. Of course she thought there was something suspect about it, and Okke had to confess that they were presents from his teacher. When the boys visited him at his home he gave them books. But it does not seem likely that he made any overt sexual moves toward them, but had to content himself with pampering them. As he wrote in one of his

poems in *Kwatrijnen* (Quatrains, 1923): "Award to me the fullest taste, / To drink love's draught, not sip in haste." Sometimes they were curious about his attentions, as a letter of 1 December 1927 shows: "Okke is the ideal boy to me; sensitive, sharp intelligence, and a beautiful fellow in appearance. But—'normal'. Of course he knew how much I loved him and often asked me why, though I never told him." De Mérode wrote this letter after he had been to jail, so he did not have to hide the true nature of his feelings anymore.

By now De Mérode had become aware of the homosexual emancipation movement in Germany as well as in the Netherlands.<sup>14</sup> He read the German magazine *Der Eigene*, which was published by Adolf Brand (1874-1945), the founder of the homosexual organisation *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*. It is not surprising that De Mérode felt attracted to this part of the German movement, because the *Gemeinschaft* favoured man-boy love-relations. Or, as one of their leading theorists, Benedict Friedländer (1866-1908), stated in his

*Renaissance des Eros Uranios* (1904): "The positive goal... is the revival of Hellenic chivalry (with the greatest possible avoidance of sexual excess) and its recognition by society. By chivalric love we mean in particular close friendships between youths and even more the bonds between men of unequal ages." They were strongly opposed to the idea of the 'third sex' ('a female mind in a male body', or vice-versa) which was advocated by the other important German emancipation organisation, the *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee* of Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld. De Mérode was, however, familiar with the *Komitee's* *Jahrbücher für sexuelle Zwischenstufen*, which was edited by Hirschfeld. In a letter of 17 January 1927, he wrote about the interrogation of his young friends in 1924: "They have asked the lads they interrogated things which the 'Jahrbücher' would consider innocent." De Mérode also read works by John Henry Mackay; he possessed at least his pamphlet *Gehoer. Nur einen Augenblick!*, about which Hubert Kennedy remarked: "In it Mackay tried to bring



Woodcut by Johan Dijkstra, from *Ganymedes*



together all the objections to man/boy love and to give them an answer."<sup>15</sup> De Mérode also kept abreast of Dutch homosexual literature. On 14 February 1924 he wrote a letter to the Dutch poet Jacob Israël de Haan, then living in Palestine, in which he confessed: "I love your boy poems so much. And I am so glad that there are so many in your books."<sup>16</sup>

Apart from mentioning De Mérode's homosexual reading-matter Werkman does not tell us anything about it. He does not name titles and he does not quote any remarks De Mérode made about these books. For example, it would be interesting to know if De Mérode was familiar with the works of Gustav Wyneken, a German pedagogue who stood trial in 1921 because of accusations that he had had sexual relations with his male pupils. He wrote a pamphlet in his own defence called *Eros* (1921) in which he glorified the 'pedagogic eros', but in which he also advocated 'heroic asceticism' in sexual matters. This was exactly the attitude to his own boy-love that De Mérode tried to adopt.<sup>17</sup>

De Mérode also got in touch with the driving force behind the Dutch branch of the Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee, J. A. Schorer.<sup>18</sup> It is sad to say, but Schorer destroyed his complete archives with the German invasion of the Netherlands in 1940, including the letters of De Mérode. Thus, we know very little about their relation, not even if they actually met. It is known that Schorer took great pleasure in bringing together people who in his view would fit together and he brought De Mérode in contact with Jo Pater (1896-1978). Pater was also a teacher and he lived not far from where De Mérode lived and they met frequently. It was not a sexual relation and Pater later stated that in his opinion De Mérode did not approve of sexually acting out his homosexual feelings.

De Mérode became acquainted with more homosexuals. The binding of his book *De overgave* (1919) had been designed by Jan van der Leeuw, a homosexual artist he kept in touch with for the rest of his life. Van der Leeuw made a series of drawings inspired by the boy-love poems in *Het kostbaar bloed* (The Precious Blood, 1922). These drawings were never published because they made clear what was kept hidden in the poems.

The drawing inspired by the poem 'Venezia', for example, shows a man and a boy in a gondola,<sup>19</sup> while the poem disguises this by using "we".

De Mérode and Van der Leeuw exchanged letters almost every week, but these were destroyed after they were answered. As Van der Leeuw confessed to a mutual friend after De Mérode's death: "I wasn't allowed to preserve any letters—he wanted with all his heart to talk about everything without restriction, from chairs to Henriëtte Roland Holst."

There was another friendship in homosexual circles which would eventually lead to disastrous results. In 1916, when De Mérode was asked by the poet Ernst Groenevelt (1887-1955) to be the editor of *Het Getij*, a new literary journal, he accepted the position. The first issue, in January 1916, opened with a fragment from De Mérode's *Ganymedes*, a lengthy poem of 256 lines. Because of the distance involved De Mérode could only sporadically attend the editorial meetings, which were held in Amsterdam. One year later he was no longer involved with editing the journal but remained a contributor. However, this did not imply that he lost contact with Groenevelt. He visited him several times in Amsterdam, which not only led to new contacts with homosexual poets such as Karel Wasch (1886-1967), but also to an introduction to the homosexual subculture of Amsterdam. Groenevelt was in fact much less inhibited than De Mérode when it came to leading a homosexual life-style.

In 1922 Jaap and Okke left for agricultural school, an event which, as we have mentioned, brought about a great change in De Mérode's life. He did however rather quickly become friends with other boys of about sixteen years of age. One of these boys, Joop (a familiar form of Jacob), seduced him sexually. As De Mérode confessed in a letter of 1 December 1927: "I just couldn't stand it anymore. I was already nervous all the time, it got worse after my illness. And—it went wrong. And perhaps you can imagine it. The worst part of the whole thing for me is that it was so unfair to Okke." He expressed himself even more clearly in a letter of 17 January 1927, to the authoress Wilma: "I never do anything with them. I don't really want it. If only I can pamper a boy a little



Woodcut by Johan Dijkstra, from *Ganymedes*

bit. Jopie (a familiar form of Joop; HH) did want it, and because he had been kind enough to comfort me when Okke left, I said to myself: 'O.K., what's the difference, let it happen.' It was of course incredibly stupid. That I readily admit."

Wilma Vermaat, who published under her first name only, was a very popular writer in Christian circles. In 1923, however, she endangered her popularity by publishing the novel *God's Gevangene* (God's Prisoner), in which a homosexual eventually succeeds in uniting his inclination with his faith, but only with the observance of complete chastity. "Great was the mission and stern the demands. To enter God's sanctuary with his love means to raise his love to its purest heights, to cleanse it of any unholy aspect."<sup>20</sup> This book was hardly received with enthusiasm in Wilma's own literary circles, which were the same as those of De Mérode. In *De Heraut* ("the religious journal of the reformed protestants... Very influential", was De Mérode's comment) the reviewer strongly objected to *God's Gevangene* because "it makes public

that which in my opinion should be discussed as little as possible. There is an evil which ideally one should not hear about, so as not to contaminate the imagination or be allowed a look at the depths of Satan."

Wilma's literary involvement with homosexuality had sensitized her to certain signals in De Mérode's poetry. When *Het Heilig Licht* (The Holy Light) was published in 1922 she contacted the poet. He responded promptly but guardedly. Later, however, she would become one of De Mérode's closest confidantes.

Because of De Mérode's association with Ernst Groenevelt, who led a rather openly homosexual life, his poems about boys were also seen by others in a certain light. The critic Roel Houwink noted about *Het Heilig Licht* "an unbalanced eroticism, the origins of which seem to lie in a completely derailed sense of sexuality."

The police were also not unaware of the fact that Groenevelt might have violated Paragraph 248 section 2. In order to gather evidence they not

only intercepted his letters, but they also took a number of boys who were regularly in Groenevelt's company to the police station for interrogation. One of them was B., a young man interested in literature, who in 1923 at the age of fifteen had made his literary debut in *Het Getij* with a selection of poetry. Groenevelt had also told him a lot about the literary world. This had fatal consequences for De Mérode, who in a letter of 1 December 1927, reported the following: "Ernst Groenevelt knew a boy from Zeist, B. And even though he knew nothing of me he said to the boy: 'De Mérode also seems to like boys.' This B. then became involved with the police and in answer to the question whether he knew any others such as Groenevelt he rashly mentioned me. I myself have never seen this boy. You understand, now there will be the devil to pay."

The Amsterdam police informed the mayor of the town where De Mérode lived of B.'s confession, whereupon the mayor ordered the town policeman to investigate the matter further. Seemingly incriminating details quickly came to light and De Mérode was arrested on the evening of Tuesday, 26 February 1924. The next day he was incarcerated in the House of Detention in Groningen under the accusation of "Vice". All of this naturally resulted in great consternation in his home village of Uithuizermeeden.

Even before De Mérode appeared in court on 17 April judgement had been passed on him on two occasions. Already on the evening after his arrest the school board held an emergency meeting, since "the Mayor had sent for the Chairman and told him that W. E. Keuning, by order of the Public Prosecutor, had been arrested last night on a charge of indecency with boys. The Board considered this a dreadful case..." according to the minutes. Measures were not immediately taken, but when the Board assembled again on 4 March the decision was made to discharge him on 5 March.

On 3 March the church council discussed the problems which had arisen. The minister announced that he would visit De Mérode in prison "where he has been confined because of terrible sins, and tell him to confess his sins openly and with repentance before the Heavenly and the

earthly judge." Two weeks later he gave a report of this visit: "(He) has spoken with (De Mérode) about his sinful life; Keuning had confessed to having struggled for a long time with this sin, but he cannot break away from it. The chairman is of the opinion that the fallen brother is conscious of his guilt and feels contrition for his sin." The church council decided to apply ecclesiastical disciplinary measures in the first degree, which amounted to excluding him from partaking of Communion: "Not because there is doubt regarding his profession (of guilt and contrition), but because of the scandal of sinning against the seventh commandment and seducing young people into committing this sin." The council heard this judgement from the pulpit and De Mérode himself was informed in a letter dated 31 March 1924.

In the meantime preparations for the trial were in full progress. De Mérode's room was searched, probably by his brothers as well as the police, with the result that important material disappeared. On 25 October 1936, De Mérode wrote to Reind Kuitert: "A great deal has disappeared from my archives because of a lack of understanding or a deliberate unwillingness to understand. Thousands of letters, all my diaries and manuscripts." The loss of his diaries is particularly unfortunate because this is probably the only place where De Mérode expressed himself openly.

Investigations were also held and not only of De Mérode. In a letter of 1 December 1927, he expressed his agitation about the investigation: "The police in Groningen are so small-minded that they are letting all sorts of things go on in town while concentrating their efforts on the case of a Christian teacher. But it's not only that—they are questioning all the boys who have been with me over the last 17 years, even those who are married. It became a dreadful scandal. Okke was visited by a local police inspector. Nothing more was discovered there than that one boy."

This last remark is correct only when seen retrospectively. When De Mérode appeared before the District Court in Groningen on 17 April 1924, he was accused of indecent acts "at various times in the years 1922, 1923 and 1924 with the boys Jakob, of legal age... and Jacob... of the same sex, whose status as being under age he knew." Ac-

ording to the summons the illegal activities consisted of "in each case grasping the exposed member of said boys in a lascivious fashion and pulling on it or taking the member in his mouth and sucking on it."

Not all the charges, however, were considered proven. According to the <sup>\*</sup>sentence De Mérode had admitted during the hearings "that he had committed said crimes several times in 1923 and 1924 about once a week; and that in his flat he had taken the exposed member of the boy Jacob, whose status as a minor he was aware of, out of his trousers and pulled on it, and that he did this to satisfy his desires; and that said person was a former student of his."

Jakob's testimony (according to the verdict he was born on 21 October 1907) closely agrees with De Mérode's statement. He testified "that several times in the years 1923 and 1924, usually once a week, the accused, in his flat in Uithuizermeeden, took the witness' exposed member out of his trousers and pulled on it."

This was sufficient for the judge to conclude that "by means of the evidence heard it has been legally proven" that De Mérode had violated Paragraph 248 section 2.<sup>21</sup> On closer examination of the evidence it is striking that the judge convicted only for the indecent acts of 1924, even though the accused as well as the witness had also mentioned 1923. Did the judge not want to make the case more difficult than it already was? If indecent acts had been proven before 21 October 1923, then Paragraph 247 would also have been violated, since Jakob would have been under sixteen. De Mérode was sentenced to a prison term of eight months and suspended for three years from his post as a teacher.

It was not only De Mérode's actions that attracted interest during the trial. At a later date he indicated that the public prosecutor had also introduced his poetry into the case. During the trial he read aloud several poems about boys and said: 'that's the way he writes and that's the way he acts.' This is strongly reminiscent of Oscar Wilde's trial where a hostile atmosphere was also created by accusing Wilde of having appeared in the first issue of *The Chameleon*, where John Francis Bloxam's anonymously published story "The

Priest and the Acolyte" had also appeared. Fortunately the prosecutor did not have at hand De Mérode's most explicitly homoerotic work, the long poem *Ganymedes*, in which Zeus is struck by the beauty of the growing boy:

His beauty had reached its fullest bloom.  
 One more day and the timidity of youth  
 Would grow into the dark daring of the man,  
 His taut limbs on fire with yearning.  
 But not yet: a quivering glow  
 Now silver, then a tint of gold,  
 Then clear and pure, then deep and purple-red,  
 When he turned and walked, or danced or lay,  
 Matched the rhythmic quiver of his breathing,  
 Flowing softly or drawn in quickened gasps,  
 When hot desire with painful throb made audible  
 His trembling heart's vibration and with its pulse  
 His seething blood was swelled to soothing sleep.  
 And all the tenderness of awaking youth,  
 Shy and fleeting as the morning dew  
 Destroyed by the sun in adoration,  
 Shone dazzlingly in Zeus's brilliant light.  
 The gods hold dear that class of mortal boys;  
 Their splendor loves to pair with such dark  
 nakedness.

So Zeus—He saw the sweet secrecy  
 With which the boy each day, body and soul,  
 Offered sacrifice, as he swept from his clear brow  
 The dark overflow of hair, as his eye  
 Lingered dreamily on the sky's blue brightness,  
 Or (the evening mist veiling his light limbs)  
 He, become flesh, desirous, quite alone,  
 Walked through the sadness of a shimmering  
 field.

(translated by Ross McGregor)

During the first few months of 1924 De Mérode was very involved with this book. On 1 February he signed the contract with De Gulden Ster publishers which contained the clause: "No copies may be sent to the press and the book may not be sold." On 21 January he had already written to an acquaintance: "*Ganymedes* came into being piece by piece from 1914 to 1923. It will be a luxurious edition with woodcuts. It will not be commercially available." The book would appear in an edition of 125 copies; the woodcuts were executed



Woodcut by Johan Dijkstra, from *Ganymedes*

by Johan Dijkstra (1896-1978), a painter whom De Mérode had met around 1922.

On 16 April 1924, the day before the trial, De Mérode wrote to a friend: "Wilma wrote you about *Ganymedes*, didn't she? It can't be done the way we thought." This opinion was also shared by De Mérode's brother Carel, who wrote to the publisher on 8 May: "May I respectfully urge you to let the matter of the book rest and not to give the book out without consulting me. I know that at this point my brother does not want the production of *Ganymedes* to be sped up. He will also refuse to sign any copies." Dijkstra also did not think it was opportune to publish the book at that time. He mentioned this in May to Ernst Groenevelt, who was closely associated with the publisher. Dijkstra had "serious reservations... about publishing anything by De Mérode, especially *Ganymedes*, as long as he is in prison. You know just as well as I how at this time such a book would only serve to satisfy the public's appetite for sensation (especially here!) which I would really dislike. In

any case I don't want to be involved with it... As soon as he is free again we can tackle the job and it will be ready in no time."

The publisher, however, wanted to proceed with the book and when he told Dijkstra that it would not be commercially available, he agreed to cooperate. And De Mérode himself agreed to publication, even though his family was against it at that time. The strict prison regulations to which De Mérode was bound were, however, a problem. Although he could not check the proofs, it did prove possible to provide him with the sheets which he had to sign. On 28 June 1924, he signed all of the 125 copies. He had seen neither the final text nor all of the woodcuts. He wrote to a friend that he had only seen two woodcuts and that they were harmless and would probably not cause any further difficulties. From this remark we can conclude that he did not know that the other three woodcuts represented nude figures.

In the end Johan Dijkstra was not terribly pleased with the book. When he made the wood-

cuts he was only concerned with illustrating the text and knew nothing of De Mérode's love for boys. For this reason he did not feel that De Mérode had treated him with complete fairness. When De Mérode visited him after his release from prison he was received rather coolly. Later they hardly had any contact at all with one another.

Since the contract stipulated that no review copies could be distributed, the book received very little attention. Shortly after its publication Ernst Groenevelt (who on 1 August 1924, went to prison himself for violating Paragraph 248 section 2) printed one of the woodcuts, a frontal view of the nude Ganymede.

There was only one *\*review* and it was not very positive. According to the reviewer "its beauty... was concealed by an overgrowth of worthless detail." He had much more praise for the woodcuts.

De Mérode had been sentenced to a prison term of eight months. He was, however, not imprisoned immediately because a petition for mercy had been submitted on the grounds of poor health. In any case on 4 June the Minister of Justice requested a medical examination. He received the report nine days later and rejected the petition. A petition to free the poet signed by members of the public was also rejected.

On 24 October 1924, De Mérode was released from prison. Many of his acquaintances as well as some of the boys he had befriended remained faithful to him.

The church council, however, thought that there were still problems which had to be dealt with. Shortly after his release De Mérode was visited by the rector and an elder "to discuss his sins with him." The profession of guilt which De Mérode had signed shortly after his arrest was not considered sufficient. In a letter of 17 January 1927, to Wilma Vermaat, De Mérode wrote what the purpose of the church delegation's visit was: "I had to acknowledge to them that a man could not love a boy. And I could not do it. Should I not have been free to love Okke? And because I could not deny it I have become the hardened sinner who wallows in evil."

But this was not the end of the matter. The

*\*review*

church council wanted De Mérode to go to Uithuizermeeden in person to confess his guilt publicly. De Mérode's reaction can be found in the minutes of the church council meeting of 1 December: "in short he did not wish to receive visits from the church council to speak about his sins. He wished to close the matter in writing, he did not wish to profess his guilt personally before the church council since many church members, including his best friends, were willing to forgive him in theory but in practice acted quite differently. For this reason he did not wish to come and even preferred to give up his church membership rather than come."

De Mérode took a rather remarkable position for his time: on the one hand he was willing to confess his guilt as far as the sexual acts were concerned, but on the other hand he refused to deny his love for boys. For the church council, however, this was an incomprehensible distinction. On 16 April 1925, it was announced from the pulpit in Uithuizermeeden—where De Mérode no longer lived after his prison term—that he was no longer a member of the church. This did not mean that De Mérode gave up his faith; religious sentiments also play an important role in the poetry he wrote after his stay in prison.

But the church was not yet through with the poet. On 16 November 1925, he settled in the town of Eerbeek in the province of Gelderland, and it was not long before the rector came to visit. He tried to extract a kind of confession out of the poet which De Mérode refused. After having been sent away he warned people in the vicinity not to allow their boys to visit him. Later the relationship became friendlier and the rector was even given complimentary copies of several of De Mérode's books.

After he moved to Eerbeek De Mérode's life became more settled. He was now a private citizen supported by his brother. He read and wrote a great deal and despite his poor health he travelled and made new young friends. However, he apparently stopped having sexual relations with boys. In any case he warned a few boys he had befriended about the "bad intentions" of his friend Jo Pater, who later fell out with him because of this. At a much later date one of the boys de-

scribed the situation: "Mr. Wieger (=Pater) often received young men in my presence, members of his youth club. Even during these visits I could not imagine that there was anything unusual going on between him and me. It was different when his famous friend came to stay. This friend, an older, semi-invalid man, was a very renowned poet in Christian circles. I immediately realized that he was of the same sort as Mr. Wieger and I also realized that he exercised a certain authority over him. Based on a short argument between them, of which I only caught a few words, and the fact that one of the young men stopped visiting, I concluded that the poet had his way whenever he thought that Mr. Wieger should be put on the right track."

Every year De Mérode published at least one collection of poems, often two or three. He was especially honored in Christian circles as one of their most important poets.<sup>22</sup> In 1936, when he celebrated his 25th anniversary as a poet, he was nominated for royal honors. On 30 August 1936, he received the Oranje-Nassau order of knighthood. It was of course unusual for someone who

only twelve years earlier had been imprisoned for indecency with a young boy to receive a royal decoration, and De Mérode was very pleased. It meant that the blot on his past had been removed.

He was not able to enjoy these honors for long, however. Less than three years later, on 22 May 1939, Willem Eduard Keuning, better known by his pseudonym Willem De Mérode, died at the age of fifty-one.<sup>23</sup>

#### Editor's Note:

Hans\*Hafkamp is the editor of the following books: *Naar vriendschap zulk een mateloos verlangen*, an anthology of Dutch homosexual poetry from 1880-1980 (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1979-80); *Hoeveel vrienden heb ik gevonden*, a collection of new Dutch gay fiction (Amsterdam: De Woelrat, 1987); and together with Maurice van Lieshout, *De Leeslijst*, a bibliography of homosexuality (Amsterdam: De Woelrat, 1986), and *Pijlen van naamloze leifde*, a collection of biographical essays about pioneers of gay emancipation (Amsterdam: Tabula, 1987). We would like to thank Eric Wulfert for his assistance with the English translation of this article.

## NOTES

1. Edward Carpenter (ed.), *Iolaus: An Anthology of Friendship* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1929), p. 145-146.
2. A. L. Rowse, *Homosexuals in History: A Study of Ambivalence in Society, Literature and the Arts* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977), p. 6-10.
3. Stephen Coote (ed.), *The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse* (London: Allen Lane, 1983).
4. David Galloway and Christian Sabisch (ed.), *Calamus: Male Homosexuality in Twentieth-century Literature: An International Anthology* (New York: Morrow, 1982). De Mérode is represented with the first part of his

long poem *Ganymedes* on p. 119-120 and Maarten 't Hart with a part from his novel *Ik had een wapenbroeder* (I had a Brother-in-arms) on p. 420-431. Biographical notes about each are respectively on p. 498-9 and 492.

5. Anthony Reid (ed.), *The Eternal Flame: A World Anthology of Homosexual Verse (2000 B.C.-2000 A.D.)* is scheduled for publication in 1988; Reid also translated the poems. His selection of Dutch poetry is mainly based on *Naar vriendschap zulk een mateloos verlangen. Bloemlezing uit de Nederlandse homo-erotische poëzie 1880-nu*, ed. H. Hafkamp, (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1979). See also Hans Hafkamp, "Homoseksualiteit in de Neder-

landse literatuur", *Spiegel Historiae*, vol. 17, nr. 11, november 1982, p. 584-593, and Ron Mooser (ed.), *Het huis dat vriendschap heet. Mannelijke homoseksualiteit in de twintigste-eeuwse Nederlandse literatuur* (Amsterdam: Manteau, 1985).

6. This number is based on Pieter Koenders, *Homoseksualiteit in bezet Nederland. Verzwegen hoofdstuk* (Amsterdam: SUA/-De Woelrat, 1983), p. 24. The occupation of the Netherlands by the Germans in 1940 was followed by a tightening of the morals laws.

7. Most of the present article is based on the biography *De wereld van Willem de Mérode* (The World of Willem de Mérode)

by Hans Werkman (Amsterdam: De Arbeiderspers, 1983), a revised edition of the earlier *Het leven van Willem de Mérode* (The Life of Willem de Mérode) (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1971). All quotes are from the revised edition, unless otherwise noted. A problem with this biography is that its author is a member of a rather rigid branch of the Protestant Church which condemns all homosexual acts. He attributes a very negative attitude to De Mérode about his homosexuality. Because De Mérode was rather rigid in his Christianity it is possible that this portrait is correct, but some critics of Werkman believe that he shaped it too much to his beliefs. Poet and critic Boudevijn Büch, for example, wrote in *Vrij Nederland* (21 June 1979): "Thanks to the friendliness of Prof. Mr. Barend de Goede... who as a boy was a friend of De Mérode—I was allowed to read the letters of the poet which he had sent to little Barend... Werkman hardly used these. From this correspondence arises a completely different De Mérode than the pious bungler who is presented to us by the biographer." And later: "The prude, Werkman, keeps hiding and twisting De Mérode." In 1986 Werkman was awarded the Dutch Henriëtte de Beauford Prize for biography. This was protested against in an open letter by a society for the study of gay literature. According to this letter Werkman makes clear in his biography his belief "that ho-

mosexuality is a disease, formed by motherly pamperings, and at any rate a punishment by God... a perverted and effeminate personality structure is the result." Werkman indeed pays a lot of attention to the relation between De Mérode and his mother, but he denies of course the more serious accusations of his critics. To find the truth it would be necessary to do the research all over again (which is impossible, of course) or to have access to a complete edition of De Mérode's letters (which isn't even considered). A very curious fact concerning Werkman's attitude towards homosexuality can be found (or more precisely, not be found) in the bibliography of his book: he lists his own publications about De Mérode, but he doesn't include an article on 'The Trials against Willem de Mérode in 1924/1925', which he published in the historical magazine *Groniek*, nr. 66, January 1980, an issue entirely devoted to homosexuality.

8. The biography of De Mérode's father (and brothers) has also been written by Werkman: *Kroniek van Meester Keuning: Het leven van de vader van Willem de Mérode* (Groningen: De Vuurbaak, 1982).

9. The most important critic of *De Nieuwe Gids*, Lodewijk van Deyssel (1864-1952) published in 1888 his second novel: *De Kleine Republiek* (The Little Republic). This was a fictionalised account of his own stay at the boarding-school of Rolduc, and included a description of a 'special friendship' he had had

there. This theme in the novel became of course a prime target for his critics. They didn't like passages such as the following: "I love him very much, but you'll understand, I wouldn't do any indecency with him...I mean, I would not touch him below, not put my hand in his trousers... you have to stay decent of course...I only want a special friendship with him." Willem [the leading character] spoke quickly, and again he felt angry that he did not know what they meant by indecency. Even if he wanted to commit indecency, he did not know what it meant! But it didn't matter, he would have Scholten, although it would be for kissing only." Kissing is the only thing that happens between the two boys, but for most critics that was more indecency than they could accept. 10. This cycle has recently been reprinted in a separate volume: Willem Kloos, *Knabenklagen* (Boy Laments) (Amsterdam: Sub Signo Libelli, 1981). The reprint was edited by Harry G. M. Prick and published in an edition of 75 copies.

11. Pieter Keuning (1882-1962) became a publisher and in the 1930's he issued some of his brother's books, although their personal relation was bad after De Mérode's trial of 1924. The nature of their business relationship became clear after the discovery in 1986 of thirteen letters of De Mérode to Pieter and his company, dating from 20 November 1936, to 11 April 1938. More details about these letters are to be found in 'Keun-



ing en Keuning' by Hans Werkman, published in *Juffrouw Ida*, vol. 12, nr. 3, December 1986, p. 15-19.

12. In connection with the dissertation of H. E. Heimans, *Het karakter van Willem III Koning-Stadhouder* the pioneer of Dutch gay emancipation Jhr. Mr. J. A. Schorer wrote in a letter of 5 June 1933, to Jaap van Leeuwen: "[Heimans] cites a lot of material which certainly pleads for Willem's homosexuality, especially his fixation on the young Keppel, for whom he would do literally anything."

13. The German sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld wrote in his *Die Homosexualität des Mannes und des Weibes* (Berlin: Louis Marcus Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1914): "there are the same works of art that we come across time and again in the houses of homosexuals... as far as paintings are concerned: ...the 'Blue Boy' of Gainsborough..." (p. 66).

14. A good introduction to the situation in Germany can be found in *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany* by James D. Steakley (New York: Arno Press, 1975). A history of the Dutch gay movement has been written by Rob Tielman, *Homoseksualiteit in Nederland. Geschiedenis van een emancipatiebeweging* (Meppel/Amsterdam: Boom, 1982).

15. Hubert Kennedy, *Anarchist of Love: The Secret Life of John Henry Mackay* (New York: Mackay Society, 1983), p. 8. Werkman mentions only *Gehoer*. Mackay wrote it *Gehör*, not *Gehör*, and because 'hoer'

means 'hooker' in Dutch, it led to a remark by De Mérode's landlady about his strange reading-matter.

16. Jacob Israël de Haan (1881-1924) published two homosexual novels: *Pijpelijntjes* (1904) and *Pathologieën. De ondergangen van Johan van Vere de With* (1908). The first one brought him much trouble, among other things the loss of his job as a teacher. After these two novels De Haan mainly wrote poetry. In 1919 he immigrated to Palestine, from which he contributed articles to a Dutch newspaper. He also wrote a considerable amount of autobiographical poetry in which he sang the beauty of Arab boys. A selection of these quatrains will be included in Anthony Reid's *The Eternal Flame*. De Haan was murdered in Jerusalem on 30 June 1924. In 1932 the German author Arnold Zweig published a novel based on De Haan's life and death, *De Vriendt kehrt heim*, which was translated into English the following year as *De Vriendt Goes Home* (New York: Viking, 1933).

17. De Mérode is the only important twentieth century Dutch Protestant poet. Immediately after his death he was claimed by the Protestant literary establishment as their own poet. In 1980, when the (Protestant) Free University of Amsterdam devoted an exhibition to De Mérode's library it did not include one example of his homosexual reading matter. See the catalogue in C. Rijnsdorp and others, *Op reis met Willem de Mérode* (Delft: W. D.

Meinema, 1980), p. 51-60.

18. Regarding Schorer see Hans van Weel and Paul Snijders, 'Levenslang strijden voor rechtsgelijkheid. Jhr. mr. dr. J. A. Schorer (1866-1957)' in *Pijlen van naamloze liefde. Pioniers van de homo-emancipatie*, edited by Hans Hafkamp and Maurice van Lieshout (Amsterdam: Tabula, 1987).

19. This drawing has been reproduced in *Willem de Mérode* ('s-Gravenhage: Nederlands Letterkundig Museum en Documentatiecentrum, 1973) *Schrijversprentenboek* 18, p. 60.

20. Wilma, *God's gevangene* (Amsterdam: Uitg. mij. Holland, 1923), p. 133.

21. Hans Werkman did not use the verdict in his biography. He only wrote: "Not everything Keuning had been accused of was considered proven. The accusations concerned lascivious actions with two boys in the years 1922-1924. The court judged them proven with regard to one boy in the first two months of 1924. From the rest he was acquitted for lack of evidence." The verdict, including the descriptions of the 'lascivious actions', was only very recently made public by Boudevijn Büch in his article 'Bibliopolis 1' in *Maatstaf*, vol. 35, nr. 2, February 1987, p. 66-76. Büch also writes that "the things not considered proven were admitted by De Mérode in later years in (informal) writings". He does not elaborate on this, but he promises "more about De Mérode" in a following issue, so it seems he can make his earlier accusations of Werkman

"hiding and twisting De Mérode" (see note 7) true.

22. A bibliography of De Mérode's work is included in Werkman's biography. Most of his books contain poems about boys, but the most important in this respect is of course *Ganymedes*. De Mérode's collected poems were published in three volumes in 1952. A new edition of his collected poems, edited by Hans Werkman, will be published on the occasion of the poet's hundredth anniversary, 2 September 1987, in two volumes. Besides the 1130 poems published in his books, this edi-

tion will also contain 410 poems which were so far unpublished or only published in magazines.

23. That De Mérode's royal decoration was indeed a very special honor is shown by the fact that only six years earlier, in 1930, the Dutch poet P. C. Boutens on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday had been nominated for a knighthood. However, he did not receive it, mainly because of rumours concerning his homosexuality. An official of the Department of Arts and Science wrote in this respect to the Minister: "The mayor [of Boutens' home city,

The Hague] informed me that Boutens is indeed known as a homosexual. He will inform the chief commissioner if this is only a strong suspicion or if he has got into trouble with the police." And although the police did not have anything against Boutens, he was not knighted, and later correspondence shows that his homosexuality had influenced this decision very much. Further information about this affair is given in Evert Paul Veltkamp, 'Een decoratie voor Boutens', *Optima*, vol. 4, nr. 4, winter 1986, p. 457-465.

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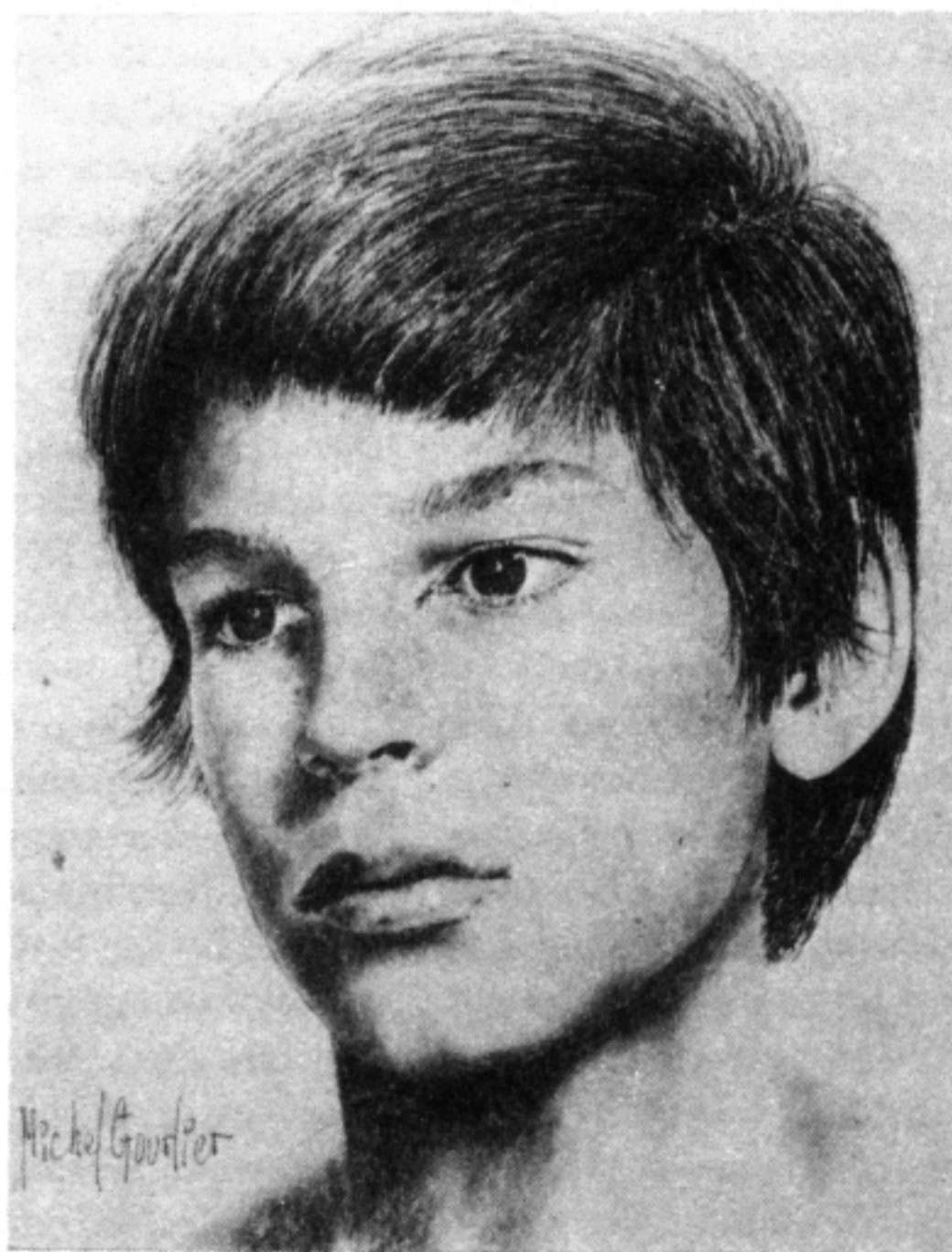
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## BOOK REVIEW

*Attorney General's Commission on Pornography: Final Report, July 1986*

U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., 1986. (In two volumes, containing 6 Parts and an Appendix. Vol 1, 1035 pages; Vol 2, 929 pages).<sup>1</sup>

Since the appearance last summer of this massive 2-volume Final Report, much has been written about the "Meese Commission" publication, and almost all of it has been extremely critical. Dismissed by most thinking people as a report prepared by self-righteous bigots for the "let's ban everything" ultra-conservative brigade, the fact remains that the opinions offered in these two discredited (and, often, distinctly pornographic) volumes are currently being used to enact new laws restricting the sexual health and freedom of a large proportion of the men, women and children in one of the most influential countries in the world. These laws, if passed, will bring misery to many in the coming decades, and most especially to those whose minority sexual lifestyles may be considered to clash with, or lie outside of, socially approved pro-family norms.

The Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, as it is formally known, was established in February 1985 by U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese, at President Reagan's suggestion, to examine the

"problem" of pornography, and to find "more effective ways in which the spread of pornography could be contained." Given this mandate, it is somewhat surprising to find that nowhere in their report do the Commissioners deem it necessary to define clearly such terms as pornography, obscenity, and erotica, although there are some pages of verbiage about what the terms might mean to various people.<sup>2</sup>

It is quite obvious however that, in the view of the Commission's members, almost *all* sexually explicit materials should be classified as pornographic, or obscene, or both, and prosecuted vigorously. This is especially so in the case of any and all materials featuring persons less than 21 years of age.<sup>3</sup>

Having started their allotted task by examining and discussing "sexually violent material", all of which they found "harmful to society"<sup>4</sup>, the members come out of their various closets with a vengeance, opining that "an enormous amount of the most sexually explicit material available, as well as much of the material that is somewhat less sexually explicit, is material that we would characterize as 'degrading'". This included: "material that, although not violent depicts people, usually women, as existing solely for the satisfaction of others, usually men, or that depicts people, usually women, in decidedly subordinate roles in their sexual rela-

tions with others, or that depicts people engaged in sexual practices that would to most people be considered humiliating". And, they warned, "with respect to material of this variety, our conclusions are substantially similar to those with respect to violent material..."<sup>5</sup>

It takes only a moment of thought to realise that there is really very little in the human sexual repertoire that could not be "considered humiliating" by a large number of people. This is especially so if they have a predisposition to consider sexual activities negatively, except for the zealot-approved missionary position, engaged in purely out of duty, and for the purpose of creating another little church-goer.

And what would the Committee Members do about such materials? They urge "that prosecution of obscene materials that portray sexual violence be treated as a matter of special urgency" (p. 376), and they also "recommend prosecution of those materials that are both degrading and legally obscene" (p. 377). As for innocent items—or, in other words: "materials that are neither violent nor degrading" (p. 378)—the committee shows its true colours and pre-conceptions by threatening that "some of us would strongly urge that all legally obscene materials be prosecuted with equal vigor and would not only urge the communities of which we are part to take this course, but



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would condemn those that did not" (p. 380).

Forget the First Amendment! In fact, one can only presume that ignorance of this constitutional bar to totalitarianism was necessary if one was to be invited to become a member of this censorious little band. Having recommended the banning of most pictorial material, they then turned their attention to non-illustrated titles and we read that they "strongly urge prosecution" of purely textual material "...when its content involves child molestation or any form of sexual activity with children". They plaintively complain, "there is little prosecution of this material now, and we hope that that situation will change".<sup>6</sup> The results, if the situation were to change, would be a ban on any publications, scholarly or otherwise, that supported the lowering of age of consent laws or even scientific materials that discussed paedophilia. The reporting of research such as that of Theo Sandfort or Larry Constantine would fall under this ban.

Need one add that nowhere in this Report is proof offered that there is, in fact, any "problem" of pornography in America today. Nevertheless, seizing on the artificial premise that pornography has been "pervading the culture", the Commission's band of meddlers and voyeurs eagerly contacted pressure groups, and some of the country's more vocal self-appointed experts on pornography, and set up a series of hearings across the USA.

Members studied sexually explicit publications, sifted through porno pictures, and listened to horror stories from representatives supplied by local law enforcement agencies. It was thus a fairly simple task for the Commissioners to establish, to their own satisfaction, the link between every kind of pornography, and organized crime. And then between pornography and the decline and fall of the American way of life.

It was the hearing in Miami, Florida, that was in many ways the most significant, for it was here that the subject of child pornography was showcased. A carefully orchestrated effort was made to blur distinctions between child pornography, child molestation (in which they included the depiction of nude children) and child murder, and to link the whole confused mess to adult sexually explicit materials and erotica.

The implicit message to the Commission's members, which they accepted almost without a murmur, was that the open availability of adult-oriented sexually explicit materials eventually led to the murder of children. The corollary was

that the production, distribution, or even the mere possession of child pornography was a peculiarly special horror. Thus the Commission's hearings served to once more re-fuel the continuing American hysteria over "kiddie-porn".

There are two major sections in the Final Report which deal with this particular topic.<sup>7</sup> The section describing the hearings is liberally sprinkled, as might be expected, with exaggerations, fantasies and downright lies. When the "kiddie-porn" hysteria first broke in America, the press concentrated on stories about the sexual abuse of young teen and just-pubescent youngsters. As "child abuse" stories became commonplace, and readers started to become bored, the media and local law enforcement agencies—who were basking in the glow of regular headlines—quickly invented "tot-abuse". Thus a whole new genre of mass-market porno was born, kicked off by the block-buster McMartin pre-school case in California, and quickly followed by other exposés of tiny tots supposedly engaged in everything from sex orgies and bestiality to

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satanism and blood sacrifices. Not to be outdone, the Meese Commission eagerly enlarged upon these fantasies, and lowered the supposed ages of the abused participants once more, pontificating (page 405) that: "the necessary focus of an enquiry into child pornography must be on the process by which children, from as young as one week... are induced to engage in sexual activity of one sort or another..."

Needless to say, child pornography was defined as child abuse, and the "kiddie-porn industry" was credited with producing an annual income of between half a billion and three billion dollars. This, in spite of the fact that the authorities well know that any commercial child pornography industry that may have existed in the USA in the 1970s has been completely stamped out in the past decade,<sup>8</sup> and that almost all of the child pornography presently circulat-

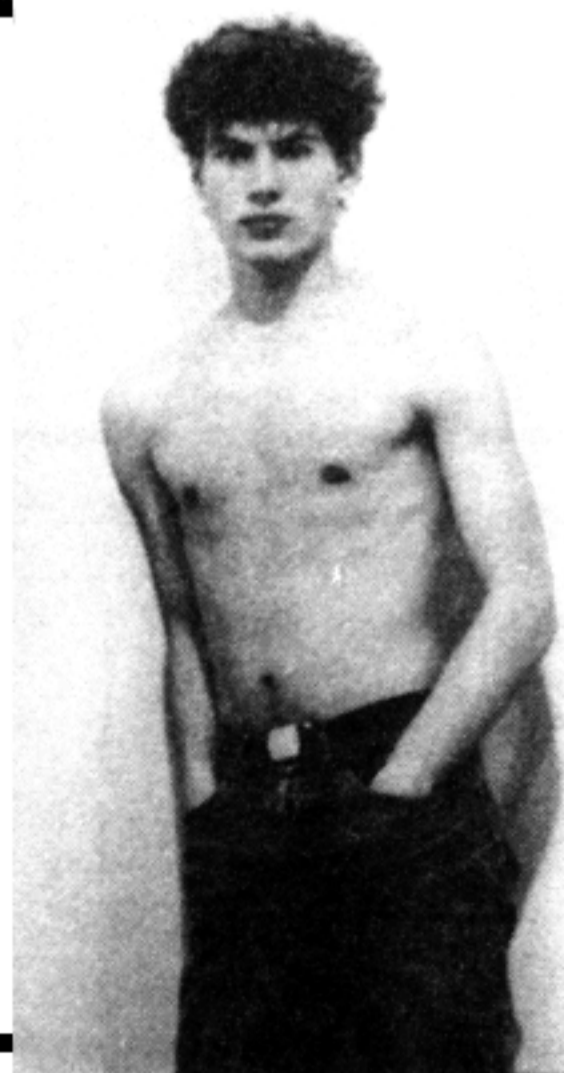
ing in America does so at the behest of police, postal, customs and FBI agents, scrambling to set up their "sting" operations to entrap potential paedophiles (and not infrequently entrapping each other).<sup>9</sup>

Although they heard from experienced police officers—who testified to having no knowledge of child pornography being commercially available—the Commission was unwilling to let this interesting topic die, and finally proclaimed that the "extremely clandestine nature of the distribution networks makes it difficult to assess the size of this trade". Having failed to uncover a commercial network, they invented the next best thing, which they termed a "cottage industry" of child pornography, said to be largely produced by child abusers themselves.<sup>10</sup>

It was only then that there was any attempt to define the

term child pornography and to refer to such binding legal precedents as *Miller v. California*<sup>11</sup>, and *New York v. Ferber*<sup>12</sup>. The general opinion was that these were far from ideal for stamping out this vast "cottage industry" that the Commission had decreed existed. In a subsequent part of their report the Commission makes recommendations for new laws against child pornography that could be used to abolish many of the freedoms remaining to Americans.

These recommendations are in the form of detailed proposals which will affect nearly every branch of American law enforcement at federal, state and local level. A fundamental change would raise the federal age of consent of those allowed to appear in sexually explicit material to 21 years of age. This proposal can be seen as part of the expanding sexual enslavement of American youth by the



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ultra-conservative forces presently in power, when medical and all other scientific evidence indicates that young people are becoming sexually mature at an earlier age, and by the mid-teens are well able to decide for themselves what their sexual outlets should be.

Even more alarming is the suggestion to abolish the assumption of innocence until proven guilty, where an individual is accused of violating pornography laws, and particularly if persons under 21 are depicted. The mere possession of child pornography would become a felony, and possession by an adult who appeared in the material would be accepted as firm evidence that molestation took place, whether or not the children in the pictures could be located, and regardless of whether there were persons claiming to have been molested.<sup>13</sup>

And no matter that the pictures may have been taken in another country, 20 years ago! That simply compounds the offence. The Commission suggests redefining interstate commerce so that if material produced outside of the state in which an accused person lives is found in the accused's possession, this possession will be held as proof that the material has been transported across state boundaries and this will lead to an automatic felony conviction for the possessor.<sup>14</sup>

Given the fact that American law enforcement agencies are undoubtedly the major shippers of interstate child pornography at present (see note 9), as part of their attempts to entrap paedophiles (and nudists and parents, and anyone else who falls into their net), one can imagine the sorts of abuse that would result from accepting this particular Meese Commission proposal!

Of course many proposals suggest the need for increasing official interference with an individual's life, and for additional personal records to be kept. Undercover surveillance of accused (not proven) sex offenders would be automatic; monitoring of private mail would be introduced (in case it is of a sexually explicit nature) and messages posted with electronic bulletin boards would be intercepted. The eventual aim would be the abolition of sexually explicit materials, private or public, all of it justified by the need for keeping records of sex crimes, which the Commission is sure will prove that such crimes have been caused by pornography.

If only a few of the recommendations are followed, and plea bargaining is abolished where accusations involve such materials, many more personnel will need to be appointed to

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prosecute pornography cases. The individuals so accused could have their homes, money and personal effects seized, be declared bankrupt, and end up in jail for very long periods.

This report, then, could open the door for greater repression of a vast part of the American population. All laws are enforced selectively, and this is especially true where sexual matters are concerned. The Commission particularly targets all sexual minority groups (their hearings dwelt obsessively with child molesters, gays, lesbians, sadomasochists, pornographers, prostitutes, and "swingers") and many of their recommendations would be used to bring untold misery and terror to those whom the authorities deem to be unorthodox, or wish to punish. One can only hope that a backlash will eventually raise up vigilant fighters against this oppression.

### Notes

1. Since US government documents are free of copyright protection, but often rather difficult to obtain, this publication was quickly reproduced and offered nation-wide by two commercial publishers. At the end of November 1986 the U.S. Government Printing Office had sold over 5,000 2-volume sets of their "official" version, but Rutledge Hill Press (of 513 Third Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37210) had sold almost all of its 571-page edition of 35,000 copies in the bookstores, and

Word Books Inc (of Waco, TX) had distributed across America 20,000 copies of their edition.

2. *Final Report* Vol.1, pp. 227-232.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 74 ("our Commission was unanimously opposed to child pornography in any form...").

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 323-329.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 331-332.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 383.

7. *Ibid.*, Part 2, Chapter 7: pp. 405-418; and Part 3, Chapter 3: pp. 595-735.

8. After an intensive three-year investigation, the Illinois Legislative Investigating Committee (ILIC) issued a report in August 1980, entitled *Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Report to the Illinois General Assembly by the Illinois Le-*

*gislative Investigating Committee*, which concluded that following passage of the Child Protection Act of 1977 the commercial distribution of child pornography in the United States had totally ceased, and that there was no evidence of any kind of underground distribution.

9. These "sting" operations, which currently employ hundreds of law enforcement personnel, postal inspectors and customs agents across the USA are aimed at seducing anyone possible into exchanging child-nudity or "kiddie-porn" materials, or into admitting sexual activities with minors. The "stings" use such names as: American Hedonist Society (in Madison, WI); Candy's Love Club (in Norfolk, VA); Cru-

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saders for Sexual Freedom (in Glen Ellyn, IL); Far Eastern Trading Company (in St. Croix, Virgin Islands); Heartland Institute for a New Tomorrow (in Omaha, NE); Midlands Data Research (also in Nebraska); Ohio Valley Action League (in Akron, OH); Project Seahawk (in Falls Church, VA); Research Facts (in Cleveland, OH); International Enterprises S.A. (Mexico, D.F.). See the second issue of *Paidika* for further documentation.

10. *Final Report*, Vol. 1, pp. 406ff.

11. 413 U.S. 15 (1973).

12. 458 U.S. 747 (1982).

13. *Final Report*, Vol. 1, pp. 665-667: "State legislatures should amend laws, where necessary, to make child pornography in the possession of an alleged child sexual abuser, which depicts that person engaged in sexual acts with a minor sufficient evidence of child molestation for use in prosecuting that individual, whether or not the child involved is found or is able to testify". Note the use of the word *alleged*; remember that the words *minor* and *child* mean, in American law, anyone under 21 years of age; and note that there is no requirement to confirm

that the "minor" is resident in America, or that any unlawful sexual activity ever took place. For instance, the age of consent in most of Europe is 16 to 18 years of age, but depictions of sexual activity that is legal in Europe would be unlawful if found in America. It is also not unreasonable to question how rigorous standards of proof would be concerning the identification of the depicted adult (or parts of any adult body visible in a picture) as being the accused.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 472ff.

Eric Reynolds

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