

Paedophilia essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Over the years the term ' paedophile' has taken on various meanings. The word literally means ' child love'. It has been used to describe men (and some women) who exhibit sexual arousal and attraction towards pre-pubertal children (Blanchard 511). When there is sexual arousal towards post-pubertal children who are below the age of consent, the term that has been used is ' hebephilia'. Sometimes, where men abuse boys, the term ' homosexual paedophile' is used. This is unhelpful, as it equates ' paedophilia' with homosexuality. In fact, child sexual abusers generally are more likely to be heterosexual than homosexual.

However, there are some abusers whose preference is what they call ' man-boy love' who identify themselves as ' paedophiles' (Blanchard 511-512). Seng (1986), in considering ' some issues of definition' with respect to ' sexual behaviour between adults and children', found the distinctions between sexual exploitation (including child pornography), incest and child molestation can become blurred by the fact that the offenders may very well be the same: ' that is, an incestuous father may involve his daughter as a participant in child pornography and child molesters are indeed very apt to involve their victims in pornography' (Seng 56).

Even the diagnostic definition of ' paedophilia' as ' the act or fantasy of engaging in sexual activity with prepubertal children as a repeatedly preferred or exclusive method of achieving sexual excitement' is not supported by research (Blanchard 511). Langevin and Lang found that " 66 per cent of ' heterosexual paedophiles' were married at some time, 91 per cent had vaginal intercourse with an adult female and even 50 per cent of ' homosexual paedophiles' had done so.

They found that 'empirical controlled studies' did not support the view that ' paedophiles' were ' shy, unassertive, sexually ignorant' and have ' an aversion to adult females'" (Langevin and Lang 405). Wyre's view, notwithstanding his use of ' paedophile' classifications for treatment and policing purposes, is that incest and ' paedophilia' should not be regarded as separate and different phenomena, that they are ' inextricably linked' (Howitt 137).

I share Kelly's (1996) concerns about the use of the term and the category of ' paedophilia' (Kelly 44). Kelly, Wingfield, Regan and Burton describe it as ' dangerous to create classifications of sexual abuse which are constructed as mutually exclusive categories' because this pathologises some men and shifts attention from the ' recognition of abusers as "'ordinary men" - fathers, brothers, uncles, colleagues', and from the ' centrality of power and control to notions of sexual deviance' (Kelly et al. 7). Also because it constructs ' paedophilia' as a ' specific, and minority " sexual orientation"', distracting attention from ' the widespread sexualisation of children', and focusing ' attention on a kind of person rather than kinds of behaviour' (Kelly et al. 27).

The other cause Kelly and his colleagues mention is that it distracts attention from the similarities between ' paedophiles' and other men who sexually abuse children with respect to ' how they entrap and control children' and their ' production and consumption of child pornography'; and because, as ' paedophiles' themselves want it to do, it puts an 'emphasis on boys rather than girls as victims' (Kelly et al. 27). It leads to the presumption that all or most ' sex tourists' are ' paedophiles' which is not the case (Kelly 45).

Kelly, Wingfield, Regan and Burton found that the sexual exploitation of children for commercial purposes is 'not easily separable from other forms of sexual abuse in childhood' (Kelly et al. 28). The fact that a person has 'paedophile' tendencies does not necessarily mean that he has sexually abused a child or is going to abuse a child. Conversely, not everybody who sexually abuses a child can be described as being a 'paedophile' (Kelly 47). A person who has 'paedophile' desires might be able to control his behaviour if he recognises that the abuse of a child is wrong.

A person may have high levels of desire and fantasy about a child sexually, but if he is going to abuse, he will necessarily exhibit high levels of distorted thinking, and have to overcome his internal inhibitors. "Disinhibitors can give permission to the offender to carry out the abuse. These include: certain emotional states like loneliness, depression and anger; drugs and alcohol; adult and child pornography; fantasy and masturbation to thoughts of children (here the orgasm acts as a reinforcer); and peer pressure" (Kelly 47-49). Constructing typologies of sex offenders who abuse children is controversial.

However, being aware that child sexual abusers sometimes exhibit different characteristics can assist both in understanding their patterns of behavior and in recognizing that certain behaviors can indicate particular motivations for abusing. Identifying the needs that are met through particular patterns of sex offender behavior can help the police prioritize suspects in an investigation of child sexual abuse. At the same time, it must be remembered that although it is possible to identify sex offenders by type,

individuals who sexually abuse children come from all walks of life and all social class and ethnic backgrounds (Gebhard et al. 17).

The one characteristic they have in common is that they are predominantly male. " In treatment, the main purpose in trying to identify different types of offenders has been to enable the people working with an offender to look at his offence and his previous history, and talk to the man in a way that lets him know that they are aware of his actions and motives" (Langevin and Lang 408). This gives the offender the feeling of being understood and enables him to give information that he has previously hidden away (409).

For many, it is a relief to be able to share this information, and is often seen by them as the beginning of progress. It will also offer hope in that the offender will sense he is talking to someone who not only knows about the subject, but because of this knowledge, is able to offer the help needed (410-412). Identifying types of offenders is also useful in assessing the risk they present. There is little doubt that certain types of sex offender are more dangerous than others. Whereas some remain static in their target selection and in the level of assault, others progress to more serious levels of offending (Langevin and Lang 417).

No individual has all the characteristics of a type. However, there are a number of characteristics that can be identified with each particular type (Gebhard et al. 101). The stereo-typical image of the man in the dirty raincoat with funny eyes, or alternatively the 6ft 6in man who looks like a werewolf are all part of a problem that needs to be broken down. The

community will always be vulnerable if they do not understand that it is not monsters who sexually abuse children, but ' nice' men.

By listing the different types of offenders it is hoped that rather than simply putting offenders into boxes, the typology will function to expand the knowledge and understanding of the range and behavior of the men who sexually abuse children. What characterizes the man who is sexually attracted to prepubertal children? " Most of our evidence is based on studies of convicted offenders. Probably the majority of paedophiles are never convicted; they are either extremely cautious or they confine their attentions to those children who are clearly seeking such encounters.

In one American study of practising paedophiles who were interviewed, only 1% had ever been arrested" (Rossman 107). One should therefore be cautious in generalizing from those who are convicted. Paedophiles cover a broad age range. Those convicted tend to be older than other sex offenders. The median age at first conviction in the Kinsey Institute study was 34. 5 years for heterosexual and 30. 2 years for homosexual offenders (Gebhard 144). The majority prefers either female or male children; a small proportion is interested in both boys and girls.

The Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE), an organization of British paedophiles, surveyed its members and found that they were most attracted to girls aged 8-11 and boys aged 11-15 (O'Carroll 81). It has been pointed out that this coincides with the age when childhood sexuality is most noticeable. Girls in particular enter a sexually quiescent period after this late childhood phase of activity. The majority of paedophiles marry at some

stage. Gebhard et al (1965) found in their group that marital breakdown and re-marriage were common but more happy marriages were reported than in most other groups of offenders.

Other studies, however, have emphasised the problems paedophiles have in establishing satisfactory adult relationships, possibly encouraging their resort to relationships with children (Mohr et al 1964; Pacht and Cowden 1974). A number of studies of the personalities of paedophiles have been reported but they are inconsistent in their findings, partly due to methodological weaknesses (Levin and Stava 57-80). Ingram (1979) interviewed 11 men who had been sexually involved with boys. They reported strikingly similar backgrounds, with poor relations with their mothers and detached or fearful relationships with their fathers.

They had had unhappy childhoods, deprived of love and with unrewarding contacts with their peer groups (Ingram 511). Ingram concluded that this facilitated their tendencies to love emotionally deprived children (511). In this particular study, nearly all sexual incidents involved men who were well known to the boys, more than 80% in the role of teacher or youth leader (511-513). Ingram emphasized the extent to which many of these men were generally fond of boys, devoting much of their time to the welfare of children (517). There is no doubt that some paedophiles are of this kind.

O'Carroll (1980) gives further examples. But it is also possible that in some cases time is spent helping children in order to gain sexual access to them; paedophiles presumably vary in their moral scruples as do other groups. The one thing that paedophiles clearly have in common is their sexual attraction

to children. In other respects, they are a heterogeneous group and once again we should allow for a variety of causative factors. Preference for children may not be exclusive, though most commonly paedophiles are either sexually disinterested in adults or unable to succeed in sexual relationships with them.

In some cases, called by Gebhard and his colleagues the sociosexually underdeveloped, the man enters adulthood inexperienced, inept or threatened as far as sex with his own age group is concerned, and one can see that a child partner would be less threatening and hence a more attractive proposition (Gebhard et al. 403). In some instances, the paedophilia is a continuation of a childhood pattern that originally was successful; the paedophile sticks with the type of partner he had success with in the past, rather than developing more mature relationships.

In some instances, the paedophile may have sustained unduly close relationships with his mother, which then make a sexual relationship with another woman too threatening (as in the case of Wilfred Johnson, described by Parker (1969)), or has married a woman with whom his relationship is more like that between child and parent than between two adults. But in general we must remain uncertain why paedophilic preferences develop and become apparently fixed. So far, no adequate aetiological explanation has been put forward.

Child sexual abusers called ' fixated paedophiles' tend to have the following characteristics: First of all, their main arousal and orientation is towards children. Many men are sexually aroused by children but control their

behavior or get adult women to play the roles of children. They do not have to be sexually aroused towards children to abuse them. They may be aroused by a specific sexual practice and can manipulate the child to satisfy this desire. Flagellation, oral abuse, and abuse involving urinating are examples of this" (Seng 47-48).

Secondly, they may engage in highly addictive behavior. ' Paedophiles' can be very highly addicted to their behavior. This is similar to a gambling or a drug addiction. An understanding of the devices of deceit as used by these other types of addict can help to explain why there are some ' paedophile' offenders who really do want to stop but find it impossible. Despite appearance, they may feel inadequate. ' Fixated paedophiles' in positions of power or in prominent positions within our society may not initially appear to have inadequate personalities.

However, if you scratch the surface, these men will usually feel inadequate compared to their peers (Seng 49-51). Also, they may molest large numbers of children. Of all sex offenders, ' fixated paedophiles' are most likely to abuse again, and they can abuse hundreds of children during their criminal career. Some will stay with one child for many years and then move on to another child. Others move quickly from one child to another, and some abuse more than one child at the same time (Seng 51). However, we must always be careful in accepting the numbers of children a ' paedophile' claims he has abused.

I have little doubt that some ' paedophiles' in treatment begin to exaggerate the scale of their abuse. There are a number of reasons for this. The most

common is their desire to please the therapist; the second is that, if you wish to be seen as getting better, it can be an advantage to make it seem as though you were very bad to start with. We may never know the full extent of abuse because children who are victims of 'paedophiles' seldom reveal it. " They may adopt pseudo-parental roles or may deliberately set out to gain the trust of (' seduce') the parents or other care-givers.

In the relationships they create prior to the abuse, ' fixated paedophiles' often relate to the children as a father might do to his child "(Seng 52). For this reason, I would argue that men should retain a role in childcare, even though there have been recent debates about whether men should work with children because certain men have used their positions within care situations to abuse children. " Children who have no fathers or other adult male figures in their lives are susceptible to men who give them attention, whether for good or bad motives" (Seng 52). "'Paedophiles' need children's caregivers to trust them.

They can be excellent at persuading parents to accept that their relationship with the child is in the child's interest" (Seng 53). Some such men actually become part of a family. They are invited round at weekends and are allowed to babysit. This is very common within certain types of religious groups. The single man attending a service on his own will often find himself invited back for dinner by a family. The relationship may deepen, and the time he spends with the family will probably increase, especially if he demonstrates a willingness to help out with the family, either practically or financially.

Besides, they may be seductive in their approach. " The normal approach to a child by a ' paedophile' is one of seduction. The process is very similar to the seduction process within adult relationships, but this should not be compared to the ' chat-up' line within an adult/adult relationship. This seduction can go to the very being of the child, and their identity, beliefs and fantasies will be affected by it. Because of the secrecy and control involved in abuse, children often have only the offenders to give them information.

The hands-on abuse by the ' paedophile' is often felt to be congruent by the child, because the offender has prepared the child in a psychological way to accept the abuse and has created the emotional dependency to keep the child trapped" (Seng 54-55). The seduction process can often be as arousing for the ' paedophile' as the abuse itself. It often outwardly resembles the actions of someone who cares for and loves children appropriately (Seng 55). Investigating ' paedophilia' is extremely difficult because of this. What is it that makes one expression of affection towards a child acceptable, and when is it abusive?

If the behavior moved into genital touching, for example, the earlier affection should also be considered part of the abuse. The one should be aware that ' paedophiles' take time to form relationships with children. "'Paedophiles' can devote many days, weeks, months and sometimes years to targeting and seducing children" (Seng 55). One ' paedophile' said that the reason it was so easy to abuse children was because most fathers know more about their cars than they do about their children. During this period, the offender may be targeting and testing certain children and will be careful before he moves into hands-on abusing.

If a child discloses the abuse during this testing period, it is unlikely that anything will happen to remedy the situation, because the 'paedophile' may claim that the activity was play-fighting, accidental touching or that the child has misconstrued something that was said. However, if the child does not disclose during the testing period, the offender will see this as a green light to proceed with hands-on abuse (O'Carroll 97). Parents should ask: 'Why does this person want to spend all this time with my child?' Parents might be happy for their child to be taken off their hands for a while.

The more parents are aware, the more questions they may ask. This does not mean that the children should not be with other adults or that adults should not take children away from their families for short periods. '

Paedophiles' will be able to relate to children and will often be seen as 'nice men'. Monsters do not get close to children, but 'nice men' do. They can stop being a stranger two seconds after meeting a child. Children's definitions of 'a stranger' are often very different to what adults call 'a stranger'. Strangers, to children, are often 'dirty, horrible men', or 'men who make you feel uncomfortable'.

Outsiders will often say of an offender that 'he really liked children', that 'he really enjoyed their company, and children enjoyed his. Moreover, 'paedophiles' may use child erotic material and child or adult pornography to lower the inhibitions of children. The use of pornography has a number of purposes. It may arouse children, depending on their age. It can lead to sexual discussion. It helps target certain children, depending on their response. It can be used to create a collusive secret behind adults' backs, but with the offender offering reassurance about the secret.

It sexualizes the environment for children and they may become sexual with each other. Pornography can be used in the corruption of children. It contains within it myths and fantasies concerning women and children, and portrays people as sexual objects. Also, it was noted that most seek to portray their behavior as normal (Howitt 314). ' Paedophiles' usually wish their behavior to be seen as normal and encourage debate as to how normal sex with children is. Some ' paedophiles' emphasize how common it is in order to try to make the public believe that it is normal (Howitt 315).

They will encourage, in some countries, a political debate as to how it is normal to have sex with children. Cases in the media where young girls are described as being ' seductive', being ' promiscuous; and ' wanting to be involved with men' may be used to legitimize the behavior, as well as some high-profile cases, like Mandy Smith's relationship, at thirteen, with Rolling Stone Bill Wyman. Various organisations, like NAMBLA (North American Man Boy Love Association), Paidika, the former England-based Paedophile Information Exchange and Magpie, could all be described as promoting ' inter-generational sex'.