

# 5

## Studies on Adult Sexual Contact with Children

### Introduction

The previous chapter concentrated on the work of one author, Alfred Kinsey, and his view of 'children's sexuality', a view based not on children's experiences of their sexuality but on adults' experiences of their sexual interactions with children, using the one criterion which Kinsey found important and to which everything else became subservient: the orgasm. Kinsey wished to argue that children have a sexuality which is not harmed by being used for adult gratification, and thus he saw adults 'manipulating' children to orgasm as synonymous with children's own authentic and autonomous sexuality. His views on childhood sexuality have continued to shape understandings of paedophilia and child sexual abuse up to the present day. In particular, Kinsey articulated a view of sex in which the only 'abnormal' sex is no sex and therefore, by extension, paedophilia does not exist as a pathology or even as a separate concept. Children – like animals, adults or wet dreams – are simply another 'sexual outlet' which may be used for orgasm. Kinsey also argued persuasively that 'sex offenders' do not exist and so should not be criminalized. Neither of his two encyclopaedic books on human sexuality deals with the reality of rape and nowhere is the concept of non-consensual sex addressed. According to Kinsey, therefore, it would be absurd to prosecute anyone for such an offence as 'paedophilia' or 'child sexual abuse', and indeed, his work has been used to argue for leniency and, more fundamentally, to revise legislation to make it less vigorous in prosecuting sexual offences. The only reference Kinsey makes to 'child sexual abuse' is to the situation of elderly men wrongly accused by hysterical females (*Male*, pp. 237–8). Relying on Kinsey as a scientific resource on which to base legal and public opinion bolsters the 'sexual liberation' discourse

discussed in this volume (Chapter 3) while cutting away any support for a 'child protection' discourse, since from Kinsey's perspective there is nothing harmful from which children, however young or vulnerable, would need to be protected.

When I first began researching the issue of child protection and child sexual abuse, I naively assumed that 'everyone' agreed that adult sexual contact with children harms those children. I was astonished to discover how wrong I was. As with the rhetoric of heated condemnation of paedophilia compared to the reality of how those who sexually offend against children may be treated (see earlier chapters), there seems to be a similar dissonance in the rhetoric of 'child protection' compared to the reality of how people actually behave when a child is at risk of potential or actual sexual abuse. Indeed, the question of harm to children in relation to adult sexual contact remains a topic of lively debate and one of the most vexed areas of this entire subject and it is therefore to this topic that this chapter turns.

This chapter contains four sections. Section 1 presents a brief overview of the question of 'age of consent' as a basis for understanding harm to children from adult sexual activity and follows this with an introduction to a study (well-known and often-referenced in the literature) by a Dutch psychologist, Theo Sandfort, who reported on interviews with a sample of boys on their sexual contacts with men. Section 2 goes into some detail to examine the Sandfort study and Section 3 then widens the discussion to include a selection of other prominent academic texts on paedophilia and adult sexual contact with children.

## **1. The Sandfort study and 'age of consent'**

Although, as suggested above, lip-service is paid to the idea that child sexual abuse is wrong, it is surprising how quickly consensus collapses when the question of age of consent comes up, and this issue will therefore be addressed in this section. For many people, the question of the harm of adult sexual contact with children is related directly to the age of the child, or the disparity between ages, and there is little consensus, for example, on the harm caused by mutual sexual experimentation between 14-year-olds, or the risks from a 15-year-old having sex with an adult a few years older, or the pathology of an adult being sexually attracted to young people under the age of 16 (or 18 in the United States). Indeed, some adult men seem to see it as unproblematically normal and acceptable to be sexually attracted to 'nubile' teenage 'schoolgirls' of 'sweet sixteen' or under. Well-known examples include

Edgar Allen Poe who, in 1836, married his cousin Virginia Clemm when he was 27 and she was 13 (although a sworn affidavit given at the wedding stated that she was 21); John Ruskin, who fell in love with the 10-year-old Rose la Touche when he was in his 40s; Charlie Chaplin who, at 29, married 17-year-old Mildred Harris, at 35 married 16-year-old Lita Grey, and at 54 married 17-year-old Oona O'Neill; Jerry Lee Lewis who, at 22, married his 13-year-old cousin Myra Gale Brown, in 1957; and Elvis Presley who, in 1959, aged 24, started a romance with his future wife, Priscilla Beaulieu, when she was 14.

The legal age of consent varies across the world but an overview of the global age of consent laws shows that most countries cluster around 16 years old as the average age at which people may legally consent to begin heterosexual sex (homosexual sex tends to have separate legislation and remains illegal in some countries). In order to understand a little more about the confused and shifting definitions of 'age of consent', it is helpful to look at the legal history of this concept in one particular country, for example in England. In England, the legal age of consent was first introduced in 1275 and set at 12 years. By 1576 it was assumed that a girl could consent to sex from the age of 11. In 1875, in the *Offences Against the Person Act*, the age of consent was raised to 13 years. In 1885, the age of consent was raised again, to 16, but sex with a girl aged 13 to 16 was legal provided the man was aged under 24. The *Sexual Offences Act 1956* made sex with a girl aged under 16 punishable by up to two years' imprisonment and sex with a girl aged under 13 punishable by a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, with the age of the adult perpetrator largely irrelevant. Following the Wolfenden Report, the *Sexual Offences Act 1967* set an age of consent of 21 for male homosexual acts, with legislation in Scotland following suit in 1980, and in Northern Ireland in 1982. In 1994 new legislation in England reduced the age of consent for homosexual acts to 18 and in 2000 this was lowered again, to 17 in Northern Ireland and to 16 in England, Scotland and Wales, bringing it largely into line with the age of consent for heterosexual acts. The changes in legislation, from 1275 to the present day, have come about on each occasion because of changes in how sex is conceptualized (as property-right, as fornication, as sodomy and so forth) and how children are conceptualized (as property, as corruptible, as vulnerable and so forth).

Today, in contemporary England, there is no concept of legal consensual sex below the age of 16 years and, since the *Sexual Offences Act 2003*, all sexual acts – not just penetrative sex – are now a criminal offence if at least one of the people involved, male or female, is under the age

of 16. The *Sexual Offences Act 1956* still applies, although the Home Office has stated that 'the law is not intended to prosecute mutually agreed teenage sexual activity between two young people of a similar age, unless it involves abuse or exploitation'. A more recent amendment to the Act involves the 'abuse of trust provision', designed to protect those aged 16 and 17 who, even though they are over the age of consent, are potentially vulnerable to abuse from people in authority or positions of trust, such as teachers, carers, prison officers, youth counsellors or sports coaches. Non-consensual sex remains technically illegal (but frequently unreported and unprosecuted) at any age.

The legal age of consent, while dependent on social attitudes to young people's sexual activity, also relates to the biological factor of the physical onset of puberty and to the sociological factor of the age at which a significant proportion of young people first engage in sexual acts with others. Over the last 150 years, the age of onset of puberty in the UK has dropped by approximately four years, from an average 16.5 years for girls and 17.5 for boys in 1840, to 11.9 and 13.1 years respectively in the 1990s. At the same time, the average age of first sexual experience in the UK is now 14 years for girls and 13 for boys, with almost 35 per cent of girls and more than 55 per cent of boys having had some form of 'sexual experience' short of intercourse before they reach the age of 16 (Wellings *et al.*, 1994). At the same time, a 1999 NOP [National Opinion Poll] opinion survey on the age of consent suggested that the majority of young people do not want the age of consent to be lowered or removed (Brook, undated, online). This legal marker still provides some form of protection from unwanted sexual attention. It indicates the distinction recognized by society between those who are physically and psychologically ready to experience sexual intimacy with another person, and those who do not yet have the required maturity.

However, as can be seen from this brief overview, the age at which one person can legally give their consent to sexual acts with another person is both historically and geographically varied. While the legal age of consent bears a relationship to the onset of physical sexual maturity (puberty) and thus, arguably, to emotional and mental maturity, the relationship is by no means straightforward or necessarily logical. The variance over time, country, regions or states within countries, and context (whether the sexual act is with a peer or someone older, younger or in a position of authority; heterosexual or homosexual; within marriage or not) all adds to the confusion. This confusion certainly works to the advantage of those who view adult-child sexual contact generally as non-harmful, since it is easy to point to, and disparage, the seemingly

arbitrary and illogical bases of legal ages of consent, thus throwing doubt on the whole question of legal 'consent' itself and hence, in turn, any division between people who are 'old enough' and 'not old enough' to have sex. This has led to calls, for example by the well-known British gay rights activist Peter Tatchell, for a reduction in the age of consent to 14 (Tatchell, 2002). A more thoughtful response, and one which acknowledges the agency of young people while also recognizing the existence of exploitation and coercion, particularly by adults against both girls and boys, is that of Matthew Waites (2005) who discusses the current UK legislation and alternative proposals on the age of consent and comments that they:

... [focus] excessively on what is legally defined as consensual, rather than recognising that the law has a limited but legitimate role in constituting social norms of behaviour, and a legitimate role in protecting children collectively as a vulnerable group by facilitating state intervention in their lives where necessary. [The proposal to abolish 'child sexual offences committed by children or young persons'] tends not to recognise the existence of consensual but abusive or excessively risky behaviour among young people ... [we should] draw a distinction between what is recognised as consent in law and what we believe is a desirable standard of consent. (Waites, 2005: 238)

Waites' suggestion is for an amendment to the UK law which would introduce a two-year age-span provision applying until the age of 16, as is already current in some other jurisdictions.

This would mean that 14-year olds could legally have sex with those aged 14–16; 15-year olds with those aged 14–17; and 16-year olds with anyone aged 14 or above, including all adults. The age of consent would thus remain 16 in relation to adults over 18... [This provision] should be accompanied by redoubled efforts to extend and improve the provision of sex and relationship education, sexual health promotion, and skills, resources, and support of many kinds to young people, to enable them to make decisions about whether and how to have sex more confidently and effectively.

My solution implies a conception of young people's citizenship which repudiates the prevailing stark dichotomy whereby children's sexual citizenship is equated entirely with 'protection', understood as legal prohibition, and defined in stark contrast to adult sexual citizenship, defined by sexual 'autonomy' (understood as the absence of legal prohibitions). (Waites, 2005: 238–9)

Waites and other authors (for example, see Levine, 2002) are concerned that age of consent legislation may patronize children and deny them agency and decision-making skills. However, they remain aware, as Waites emphasizes, that many young people do look back and regret early sexual experiments. This confusion over our need, as a society, to protect young people from harm (whilst simultaneously not criminalizing or morally condemning them for sexual experience or denying them agency in exercising their right to bodily autonomy and integrity) leads to uncertainty over how best to revise or reform current age of consent legislation. This confusion has been used by some individuals and organizations to argue for liberalization of age of consent laws which would at the same time relax legislation against adult sexual contact with children.

One example of the use of this confusion to argue for greater liberalization and indeed the complete removal of the legal concept of an age of consent, to be replaced by a system of individual negotiated agreement, is provided by the book, *Boys on their Contacts with Men* (Sandfort, 1987), published within the context, and as part of, a Dutch campaign for greater sexual freedom. *Boys on their Contacts with Men* is written as an accessible text for the general reader and an explicit and major part of its *raison d'être* was to inform the debate in the Netherlands in the late 1970s and early 1980s on lowering or abolishing the age of consent, much as Kinsey's work in the 1940s was written to inform and influence the debate on relaxing sex offender laws. The book is based on an investigation carried out by Sandfort as a research assistant in 1980–81 at the Sociological Institute of the State University, Utrecht, in the Netherlands. Sandfort wrote two books, in Dutch, from his investigation, published in 1981 and 1982. In 1986, when the Dutch legislature was actively considering revising the age of consent laws, Sandfort summarized his work in a paperback book aimed at the general reader, first in Dutch and then, in 1987, in English. Section 2 now looks in some detail at this book and the arguments it puts forward for the benefits of adult-child sexual contact.

## 2. '*Boys on their Contacts with Men*'

Theo Sandfort is something of a hero to many paedophiles. He is, for example, on the NAMBLA list of recommended reading – always a good indication! (see <http://www.NAMBLA.org/readings.htm>, accessed 1 April 2008). His writings are widely referred to (although, like most academic texts, perhaps not actually so widely read). Dr Sandfort, now a research scientist at Columbia University, is regarded as a notable academic in the

area of sexuality: he has been President of the Dutch Society of Sexology, President of the International Academy of Sex Research, and serves on the board of various academic journals on sexuality. In 2000, Haworth Press published his *Childhood Sexuality*, billed as 'one of the first books to present facts about the normal sexual behavior of children under thirteen'. Coyly, Sandfort does not mention his work on paedophile relationships in the list of publications on his web-page (<http://www.hivcenternyc.org/people/theosandfort.html>, accessed 1 April 2008).

The investigation on which *Boys on their Contacts with Men* was based was part-funded by the NVSH, the Netherlands Society for Sexual Reform, a campaigning organization which still thrives, calling itself 'the most comprehensive site about sexuality'. Its web-page on paedophilia portrays views negative to paedophilia as being hysterical, illogical and 'primitive'; it shows pro-paedophile images including the cover of a pro-paedophile magazine; and it also contains a brief interview with Martin de Jong, chair of the Dutch Paedophile Association. It does not contain any views which are not supportive of paedophilia (<http://www.nvsh.nl/variants/paedophilia.htm>, accessed 2 April 2008).

Why is *Boys on their Contacts with Men* a significant book? It is one of the few books (indeed, perhaps the only book) to which paedophiles can point and say, 'Look, a scientific study has been done which proves that adult-child sexual relationships can be positive for the child.' The English-language edition contains a glowing Foreword penned by Dr John Money, the doyen of sexology, who acclaims the book as 'One of the most valuable works of research scholarship on the topic of pedophilia that has ever appeared in print.'

Sandfort has two points to prove in this study. Firstly, he wants to provide evidence that children do enjoy sex and are sexually active and therefore that age of consent laws which limit the extent of their sexual expression below a certain age do not reflect reality and should be altered or removed, thus de-criminalizing consensual sexual contact at any age. His second point is that people generally regard all adult-child sexual contact as harmful. Therefore, if he can prove any counterexamples, the harm argument will be shown to be logically flawed. He has therefore gone out to find a sample of boys who will tell the researcher, convincingly, that they enjoy their sexual relationships – or 'sexually expressed friendships' – with men and that they find it 'pleasant' and therefore not harmful.

He was able to recruit this sample because, as well as part-funding Sandfort's research, the NVSH also provided the entire sample on which the study was based. Sandfort explains on p. 37, that the men were

found through the NVSH and especially through the 'pedophile and youth emancipation groups'. He then says, 'It was the men, the older partners, who asked the boys to participate.' He does not, in this book, say what his own role in the NVSH may have been, or whether any of the 'older partners' were in fact Sandfort himself, or his friends. In any case, he does not discuss the fact that, to the boys, he himself, as a well-educated professional adult man and possibly one already known to them as a member of the NVSH (we are not told), he must have seemed not dissimilar in status to the 'older partners'. In the interviews, Sandfort presents, entirely appropriately, as non-judgmental, but again – from the perspective of the young boys (23 of whom were aged 14 or younger) – this positive and supportive attitude towards adult-child sex might in fact have made it more difficult for them to deviate in their answers from any NVSH 'party line'. For example, it is interesting to read how, when asked explicitly about negative factors around their sexual relationship, the boys provide examples of men over-riding their wishes and 'pestering' them for sex but then repeatedly deny that this is significant or insist that it only happens very infrequently. It would be interesting to read the full transcripts and certainly this is a point which could be sensitively explored in any follow-up study.

Sandfort also remains silent on how exactly the boys were chosen to participate in the sample, and how many boys may have been selected out as 'unsuitable', although he does tell us that:

[the] possibility cannot be excluded that only the 'better' relationships were here investigated. Although we made absolutely no effort to 'select' a favorable sample, it is undoubtedly true that men and boys will be more willing to participate in a project like this if what is being studied does not cause problems in their relationship and so create a bad impression of it. (Sandfort, 1987: 35)

This rather convoluted sentence seems to mean that, although 'we' (that is, Sandfort) may not have deliberately selected only a 'favorable' sample, it is more than likely that the men (who actually recruited the sample) did.

In the book, Sandfort tells us that he interviewed 25 boys aged between 10 and 16 years old, all of whom were having a sexual relationship with men aged between 26 and 66. In all, then, he tells us 25 boys were involved, and 20 men (because five of the men were each having relationships with two of the boys in the sample). However, it



is rather odd that, when the names used in the book are counted up, he actually refers to 27 boys and to 25 men (whose ages also seem to vary). This seems extremely careless for such a ground-breaking study. There are also two Simons aged 12 given in the book, one having a relationship with Ed (aged 32), and one with Maarten (aged 32). Thus, as well as being sloppy with detailing numbers of respondents and ages, Sandfort seems to have been quite surprisingly careless in allocating pseudonyms to distinguish between the respondents in this very small sample. In addition to the 27 names, he also seems to confuse one child as being either Bert or Bart and another child as John or Johan, so there are in fact 29 names in total for the children. If Sandfort is so offhand with basic details of names and ages one wonders what other information from the research is being treated equally casually. (All quotations in this section are from Sandfort, 1987 unless specified otherwise. The ages given are the ages of the children *at the time of interview*, which is usually older than the age at which sexual activity had commenced.)

The overall impression from this book is rather sad. The boys, particularly the younger ones, come across as affectionate, caring and eager to please, working hard to conform to the ideal of the 'nice', 'pleasant', 'considerate' young boyfriend. They remind me oddly and unexpectedly of the stereotype of the 'mail-order bride', aware that her tenuous position can only be maintained as long as she adheres to the idealized model of meek and obliging, submissive femininity (Robinson, 1996). In this regard, it was intriguing to catch hints of how the boys seemed on some level to identify with their mothers. It would be helpful to see the full interview-transcripts to explore this in more depth (three transcripts are provided in an appendix to Sandfort's book). It is not surprising that if the main model of sexual companionship which the boys had was that of their parents, and they identified their 'older partners' as similar in some ways to their fathers, then they might in some sense identify themselves with their mothers' experiences. Thijs (aged 10) describes his sexual experience as, 'I think it's exactly like a woman going to bed with a man – it's nice. And I feel the same things they feel.' (p. 111). Rob (aged 12) explained:

Through sex with Chris, I learned how my parents relate to one another. ... Chris explained what was really going on at home, because sometimes I just don't understand what they are talking about. [TS: But what does that have to do with your sexual relations with Chris?] Well, my father sometimes sort of teases my mother,

flatters her and stuff. I didn't used to have the faintest idea why he did that, and now I know. (pp. 79–80)

For much of the time, however, the experiences seem to be, as one would expect, less about identifying with their mothers and more about sharing some complicated masculine social network where various individuals have sex with various others, both adults and children, in a kaleidoscope of complex interactions. For the boys caught up in this network, this is regarded – by some of them at least – as 'normal'. As one child, Lex, aged 13, states about his parents' knowledge of his own sexual relations, 'Oh, they think it's okay, as far as I know. . . . [TS: They're not opposed to it?] No, they do that kind of thing themselves, so . . . [ellipses in original]' (p. 102).

All 20 of the men involved in this investigation, Sandfort tells us, had had previous paedophile relationships, and 12 of the 20 were known to the authorities, with three of the men actually still on probation for sexual offences at the time of the study. Sandfort notes (p. 37) that 'In the 25 friendships which are the subject of this book, 20 men were involved: five of them had two younger friends, each of whom participated in this investigation.' As we have seen, this claim is problematic, because in fact 27 boys' names are used and 25 men's names, with only one name (Maarten) used twice. We therefore cannot know which of the men had 'two younger friends'. Neither is this aspect given much attention in the book. Teasing it out, however, it seems that, far from this being a study of 'normal children' living in an everyday community, a number of the boys were living in a context in which the adults around them either actively endorsed adult–child sexual contact or held a neutral opinion on it, and in which a tangled web of current and past sexual relationships intertwined.

To give a flavour of this strange environment and its links with the NVSH, there is the example of Erik (aged 10) who has a mother in the NVSH, where he had first met his 'older partner'. Erik explains, 'I was there. And so, of course, were a whole lot of pedophiles, and so was Edward [aged 57]. He was very nice, and he had brought a car race game with him' (p. 47). Sandfort describes how, 'Lex [aged 13] was brought by some of his age-mates to Richard who immediately started telling him about pedophilia . . . Within an hour they had sex' (p. 66). In Lex's words, 'he showed me some films. Sex films. . . . There were four of us looking at the film and then they started pulling my pants down . . . and so Richard said, "Now, will you let me . . .?" . . . I got used to it.' (p. 66). The 'older

partner' Richard may also have had a previous sexual relationship with Theo (aged 13) who is shown as now having a relationship with Bert (aged 35). Rob (aged 12) had a similar experience:

a week or so after I met him... We'd been making ['half-naked'] photos... And then he started to explain things to me... how you really *got* to jerk off and other things like that... I didn't have the faintest idea about any of that... Okay, every so often I saw I had a hard-on, but I didn't know anything more than that. (p. 65)

Gerrit (aged 16) had an older brother who had a sexual relationship with Gerrit's 'older partner' for two years, overlapping with Gerrit's relationship (Gerrit's brother appears not to have been included in the sample). Gerrit described how his 'older partner' Barend (aged 39) started the sexual activity:

the three of us [Barend, older brother, and Gerrit] were lying here on the bed and Barend had a sex book on the table. So my brother and I began to read it and I began to sort of jerk off and so on. From then on we had sex with one another... Barend started to jerk off a little, and my brother too... Barend did it a little bit to my brother, but not to me. Because I was a bit embarrassed – my brother not. He went around with Barend for two years. (p. 162)

Gerrit himself was then active in involving his friend Harrie (aged 16) in a paedophile relationship. Similarly, Rob (aged 12) was now having sex with the 'older partner' who had previously had sex with his brother (who appears not to be included in the sample). Both John (aged 13) and his brother Jantje had a sexual relationship with the same man (again, Jantje appears not to be included in the sample). The brother of Jos (aged 13), and possibly his sister as well, may also have been involved with a paedophile – it is not clear from the text. Both Maurits (aged 10) and Simon (aged 12) were having a sexual relationship with Maarten. Willem (aged 13) is described as 'already experienced' when he starts a relationship with his 'older partner'. Rene (aged 12) met his 'older partner' when 'I went to his home to meet a man I'd known for six years, also a pedophile, who'd just got out of prison.' Hans (aged 13) met his current 'older partner' through another paedophile, and Simon (aged 12) had previously had a relationship with another paedophile, Ton. This is more complicated than a soap-opera!

Within this sample, therefore, a picture emerges, not of an average neighbourhood as Sandfort seems to want to imply, but of a group of men – all connected to ‘pedophile and youth emancipation groups’ of the NVSH – having sex with clusters of siblings and their friends; of paedophiles introducing children to other paedophiles and of children subsequently introducing their brothers and schoolfriends to paedophiles. It has reached the point where Bert / Bart (aged 14) claims:

that’s the way it always is; one quarter of all boys do it, thus in my class of 16 there are four, including me, who have relations with a pedophile. [TS: That seems to me a bit too many.] Well, it just goes on an awful lot, but you’ll have to ask Albert about that – he knows the figures a lot better. (p. 107)

In addition, Paul (aged 14) had previously ‘had a sexual relationship with’ (or been sexually abused by) his step-father – we are not told at what age this occurred. Is this then an example of a free-and-easy sexual paradise in which children are at last ‘emancipated’ to express their full sexual natures without unnecessary social inhibitions? Or is it an environment in which the sexual decisions made by the children are shaped by the dynamics of the secretive clique in which they are being brought up? (The study is of course silent on the experiences of those children who may have been offered sexual ‘emancipation’ by eager adults but yet declined their kind offers.)

This may well be an environment in which the children can feel ‘special’ – admired, pampered, cuddled, indulged and attended to (at least until they reach adolescence). But this is also a clique which is protective of the men far more than of the boys: the major concern seems to be with keeping the men out of prison, not with ensuring the children have genuine autonomy. Rob (aged 12) has clearly been taught to feel very protective of (and responsible for) his ‘older partner’. ‘What really frightens me is what Chris has already gone through, and that, thanks to me, he might have to go through it all over again. That he would have problems with the police and such. And also my mother.’ (p. 88) Walter (aged 15) also innocently repeats the justifications he has heard from his ‘older partner’, ‘We’re not hurting each other, are we? If you murder somebody you only sit in jail a few months; but if you go to bed with somebody you get punished more severely – that’s what Steven says.’ (p. 88). More unpleasantly, John / Johan (aged 13) discloses that his ‘older partner’ has threatened John’s parents into silence, ‘One good thing, though, is they’d never turn Marcel in. My mother is on disability

but she works black [illegally]. Marcel said, "If she turns me in, the next day I'll turn her in." (p. 99).

The boys also seem to feel responsible for their 'older partners' sexual pleasure. 'Pedophiles ought to be able to enjoy themselves', says Marco (aged 12, p. 79). Little Ben (aged 10) has been told that sex is 'doing nice things for children', apparently: 'Sex with Herman is, uh, love for children and, uh, doing nice things for children, that sex is not bad.' (p.78). Ben also commented that Herman says, "'I want to do something nice but you don't want to do it.'" So then I think he's mad at me.' (p. 78). Poignantly, he also tells us, 'I think it's wonderful to sleep together. Then I don't have to lie in bed alone. Sometimes I'm a little bit scared to go to sleep if I've seen a movie.' (p. 54). Jos (aged 13) felt pressurized, 'When I don't want to do it and Bas [aged 35] keeps pestering me.' (p. 84). Martin (aged 12) also expressed that pressure – but then quickly backtracks: 'I ask him not to do something, I say I don't like it, and then he doesn't stop. But that doesn't happen so much.' (p. 82). Johan / John (aged 13) had hidden his pain: Sandfort reports that 'Marcel (45) said that he had anal contact one time with Johan (13), who found it painful. Johan, however, had not admitted it had hurt and said that he wanted to do something nice for Marcel.' (p. 71). On p. 80, Johan bravely denies there is anything wrong, 'There's nothing unpleasant about it [sex]... I haven't any trouble with it. I like it and he likes it, so I think why should we make problems about it?' Lex (aged 13) also felt he owed his 'older partner': 'Well, you ought to have sex, because he does so much for me. He takes me out a lot. So I should pay him back somehow; that's what he thinks, but I think so, too, so I'm not against it.' (p. 94). Hans (aged 13) also felt responsible and anxious not to 'let the other guy down':

if I'm doing something and, uh, something he likes but I, well, don't like it so much. Sometimes every so often you can say no, but other times you really shouldn't... you tell him no and he gets mad.... If you say no you're letting the other guy down.... you got to find a solution, and that's not easy. (pp. 83–4)

Sandfort's apparent incapacity to understand the power-dynamics of what he is studying is at times ludicrous. Theo (aged 13) attempts to negotiate with his 'older partner' while feeling guilty that he is 'telling a fib': 'he wants to suck me off and I tell him it hurts, and so I'm telling a fib [because it doesn't really]... I'll say "If the TV stays off I'm going to sleep alone", and then I get to watch the TV a little longer.' (p. 95).

Sandfort ponderously asserts, 'From this answer it can be seen that the boy realized he could withhold sex from his partner and so use it as a power tool.' (p. 95) A 'power tool'?? No doubt this is affected by the translation from the Dutch, but what is truly amusing is that over the page Sandfort then feels compelled to conclude his discussion on 'power' with a lengthy quotation (p. 96) – on a man's ability to ejaculate 'to the ceiling'! Yes, Professor Sandfort, very exciting no doubt, but that is not actually the kind of power we were expecting you to analyse! (It is also notable that this anecdote about a man in his fifties ejaculating 'to the ceiling' emphasizes an image of paedophiles as highly potent, virile and masculine, counter perhaps to more popular but less flattering notions of them.)

This quotation is also revealing for another reason. Sandfort introduces this quotation as 'an example from the interview with Ben (10) of how he often cheered on his partner Herman (55) when they had sex'. Sandfort wants the child to be talking about 'cheering on' his 'partner' when he ejaculates, but what the little boy is actually talking about is how absurd it all is and therefore how it makes him laugh. Sandfort is quite unable to hear this, and keeps steering the little boy until he says something positive about ejaculation:

Ben (aged 10): Oh, when he wants to come I say, "Come! Come!"  
(*Bursting out laughing*)

TS: Does it make you laugh, or is it also serious?

Ben: Yes, I always start laughing (*Again laughs*)

TS: But you mean it seriously, you're encouraging him?

Ben: Yeah, I laugh my head off.

TS: You laugh your head off? Why do you find it so funny?

Ben: (*Still laughing*) All of a sudden, pssst! Up to the ceiling!

TS: Do you also think that's sort of strange?

Ben: Uh, no.

TS: You don't think it's strange?

Ben: Later I'll be able to do it, too.

TS: Do you think it's too bad that you can't yet?

Ben: Yes, but when I'm eleven or twelve I will.

The younger boys of 10 and 11 years old especially seem somewhat baffled by what is going on. Ben, for example, does not seem to derive any enjoyment from the sexual contact which he describes as an 'unpleasant tickling' (p. 78). Why a 10-year-old child would want, on a daily basis,

to 'cheer on' a 55-year-old man ejaculating is something that doesn't seem to occur to Sandfort.

At no point does Sandfort distinguish between the experiences of the younger or older boys in his sample. This omission is almost certainly driven by Sandfort's belief that age is irrelevant to consent – in fact, consent as a concept is not addressed. It is enough for Sandfort that some of the boys describe themselves as 'initiating' sexual contact and that they find pleasure in their experiences. For example, regarding Jan (aged 11), Sandfort reports that 'Sander said [to Sandfort] that it was really he who had taken the initiative, and that he had been very careful how he began: "You get a response to something you do, and that determines whether you go any further or not. The whole process lasted three months."' (p. 67) We are not told how old Jan was at that time, but we are told that it was 'a long time ago', presumably therefore Jan was aged no more than 9 or even younger. In Britain today, there would be no hesitation in naming this behaviour as 'grooming'.

So, does this book tell us about 'sexually expressed friendship' between boys and men? Is it reassuring in its message that such friendships can be positive and not harmful? To what extent are they 'friendships'? To what extent are they 'sexually expressed'? And to what extent is the sexual expression integral to the friendship, in the views of the boys? It seems clear from what the boys say that some of these relationships are indeed regarded as friendships. Here it is difficult to be precise, because Sandfort has not been precise and has given us 27 names of boys while telling us that he studied 25 boys so there is a certain amount of confusion to be taken into account. At least one boy (Andre, aged 14) is clear that it is not a friendship, he does not love his 'older partner', he was in it for the sex and now he has a girlfriend he is finishing his contact with the man. With some of the other boys, for example Marco (aged 12), from whom we hear only once (p. 79), there is no clear evidence either way and, for others, what seems to matter are the incidental benefits of time with an adult. Lex (aged 13) talks about the activities he is able to do, to which Sandfort responds, 'You're pretty lucky, eh?' and Lex replies poignantly, 'Yeah, that only happens if you go around with a pedophile, or you're the only child at home, of course,' (p. 52). Harrie (aged 16) explains that he gets treats like French fries whereas otherwise, 'There are seven of us in the family, so you just can't do that sort of thing' (p.53), and for Willem (aged 13), it is the lack of parental discipline, 'At home you can't do as much as you can here at Roel's. Like smoking – they don't let me smoke at home. Here I can do just about everything.' (p. 53); while, for Wouter (aged 12), he could

escape from an unpleasant home situation, 'I feel at home... I can hide from my dad.' (p. 54).

For some of the other boys, for example Gerrit (aged 16), it is fairly clear that his friendship with his 'older partner' may be providing him with space to think, away from his family, and encouragement of his dreams of living in the countryside, and his hobbies such as sketching. Gerrit did not initiate the sexual aspect of this friendship and it is likely that, had it not been initiated, he would still have enjoyed the company of his friend.

For a number of the other boys, too, what they seem to value most in their friendships with the adult men is the attention, the treats, and the physical warmth of hugging, cuddling and back-rubbing. Peter (aged 14) is clear that what he likes is being cuddled (p. 56). Sandfort makes the comment, which everyone in this culture should take to heart, that boys in this age-bracket, once they are no longer little children, are unlikely to receive much physical affection. If the only person who is going to provide cuddles is a paedophile, then for some lonely and affection-starved children that alone may be sufficient reason to spend time with him. The answer is not that 'sexually expressed friendships' are positive: the answer is that those of us who care about children and adolescents must feel comfortable to offer them that bodily touch and warm, comforting physical affection that we all crave throughout our lives – the hugs, back-rubs and cuddles – while never crossing the boundary into inappropriate sexual contact. The boys also felt more relaxed and freer in their behaviour in the homes of their 'older partners'. They felt they could talk to these adults and perhaps escape from a stressful situation at home. Again, this is not something on which paedophiles have a monopoly: any adult could potentially befriend a young person and play a valuable role, offering support without any sexual element. It is a sad comment on our culture that so few children and adolescents have adult friends outside the family to whom they can turn when their own family situation is difficult.

It seems therefore that some of these relationships were indeed perceived as friendships by the boys but – far more often than Sandfort would like to admit – even in this carefully selected, and arguably brain-washed, little group the sex is likely to be something the boys feel obliged to take part in rather than experiencing it as an integral and necessary aspect of their friendship.

Sandfort's work has been reviewed and criticized (as described in Bauserman, 1990) on the grounds of method (for example, biased sampling), speculation (for example, assuming that the boys were lying



throughout their interviews), and moral or ethical concerns (for example, the fact that the relationships studied were illegal). Bauserman refutes these critiques, essentially by decrying them as 'ideological' and 'dogmatic', in other words, as based on a moral position which differs from Bauserman's own. In turn, his analysis of the critiques has been addressed by two of the original reviewers, David Finkelhor and David Mrazek (both published in Sandfort, Brongersma & Naerssen, 1991). Finkelhor's response is particularly interesting. He is a key author and researcher in the field of child sexual abuse and his model on paedophilia is widely used. Finkelhor comments, 'Sandfort's findings are probably valid and could be (and need to be) replicated by other investigators' but he also states, 'it is probably an extremely unrepresentative sample. It is impossible to make policy on the basis of such a sample' (1991: 313); and he goes on to say that:

[W]e are talking about an experience that has a very high risk. . . . The public policy priority to protect children from unwanted and coercive sexual approaches by adults seems justified given the evidence of its wide prevalence and the high risk for serious effects. The (now grown) children who have had such experiences are very active in lobbying for such protection. I have encountered very few individuals with self-defined positive experiences who are lobbying for legal protections for their kinds of experiences. Mostly it is pedophilicly oriented adults who argue for such rights. . . . Some types of social relationships violate deeply held values and principles in our culture about equality and self-determination. Sex between adults and children is one of them. Evidence that certain children have positive experiences does not challenge these values, which have deep roots in our worldview. (Finkelhor, 1991: 314)

In order to understand Sandfort's book, it is important to bear in mind its wider context (the drive by the NVSH to reduce or abolish age of consent laws and to de-criminalize adult-child sexual contact) and also to read carefully the quotations from the boys which, even in the limited form in which they are presented, still cannot manage to paint the picture of positive sexual enjoyment that Sandfort and the NVSH wanted to portray. According to Bauserman (1990), Sandfort had intended to follow up this study, and had obtained permission from all the boys to conduct such a follow-up. This never happened. The boys in the sample must now be aged in their 30s and 40s – it would be of great value if they can be traced or would be willing to get in touch, so that a researcher

could re-contact them and allow them to speak, in their own words as adults looking back, about how they found the sexual relationships, the research, and their views now.

### **3. Other studies on adult sexual contact with children**

The value of Sandfort's work is that it offers us a uniquely candid insight into how paedophiles may behave in society. In distinction to the many clinical or prison-based studies of paedophiles, Sandfort's is almost the only one which actually positions paedophiles in society, within a social context where they are permitted extreme leniency in their sexual behaviour (as will be remembered, at least three of the paedophiles were on probation at the time of the research and the book makes clear that, even when arrested, most of the paedophiles were effectively only 'cautioned' and allowed to continue). Although his expressed purpose was to interview the boys, at the same time he cannot help but show us the paedophiles themselves, in his descriptions, in their own comments and through the words of the boys.

This is a highly atypical setting. For example, Sandfort tells us that, when Robert (aged 42) invited Rene (aged 12) to start a relationship with him, Rene replied 'I'll see. If they think it's okay at home, then it would be fine.' (p. 44). In many ways, this is the great paedophile fantasy come true: the paedophile able to have a sexual relationship which is ignored or even approved of by the child's family. And, unlike Hollywood movies such as *Long Island Expressway*, *Leon* or *Man on Fire* (see Chapter 3), no-one gets to die either: the worst that seems to happen is that the paedophile goes to prison but comes out again and carries on as before. This, then, is the paedophile fantasy which is counterposed to the popular cultural fantasy of the 'evil pervert'. In Sandfort's book, the paedophile is well-integrated into society and able to offer boys valuable resources such as knowledge, affection, outings and treats – a 'value-added paedophile', one might say. In Sandfort's book, as with Kinsey, no-one is harmed, there is only good sex, and sexually active paedophiles have a place and a positive role to play in society.

As noted in Chapter 3, Sandfort's is by no means the only text which treats the subject of adult sexual contact with children in this positive light. Crawford *et al.* inform us that there are a 'plethora of publications that are positive' on this topic and that 'Intergenerational Studies has just begun, and... there are shades of grey and white in the discussion that do not appear in the literature of abuse' (1997: 255–6). This section now turns to look at a small sample of those texts which treat

adult sexual contact with children in 'shades of grey and white'. These texts tend to derive from the fields of sexology, pathopsychology, evolutionary psychology, criminology, sociology, sociobiology, anthropology, ethnology and human ethology. It is important that there is an awareness of these books and the arguments within them. The reader may be surprised at the influence of these books, the authorities involved in creating them, and the bodies of data on which they draw. Unless such literature, and the arguments within them, are clearly understood and addressed, and thus challenged, their subtle but powerful influence remains.

A noticeable fact about these texts is that they emphasize male-with-male paedophilia and scarcely touch on male-with-female paedophilia or paedophilia by women. Regrettably, as a mono-lingual, I am not able to comment on work available only in languages other than English, although it is clear that there is, for example, a body of Dutch- and German-language work which is relevant to this discussion but not available in translation (for example, the work by Sandfort available only in Dutch; the studies in the 1980s by the social worker Monica Pieterse on paedophiles, again published only in Dutch). It would be all but impossible to provide a thoroughly comprehensive bibliography of all the relevant works, as work on paedophilia and paedophiles *per se* will shade off into the wider areas of sexual 'variation', 'deviation' or fetish; children's rights, children's sexuality, children's development and sex education; social work and healthcare; moral and legal discussions and other cognate discipline-areas. I do not pretend that the titles given below provide a scientifically rigorous sample of available English-language material; the intention is that they should simply provide the reader with a flavour of some of the relevant texts. Book-length works include Gagnon & Simon (1970), Rossman (1976), O'Carroll (1981), Cook & Howells (1981), Taylor (1981), Sandfort (1982), Wilson & Cox (1983), Brongersma's two volumes (1986), Feierman (1990), Li Chin-Keoung, West & Woodhouse (1990), Sandfort, Brongersma & van Naerssen (1991), and Geraci (1997).

In addition to work which seems mainly concerned with the adult experience, there are also a number of books on children's sexuality written by authors who have published statements which endorse adult sexual contact with children (Pomeroy, Yates, Constantine, Martinson, Sandfort) or who are closely related to and have defended the work of Kinsey in this area (Pomeroy, Bancroft). Examples of these include Yates (1978), Constantine & Martinson (1981), Martinson (1994), Sandfort & Rademakers (2001) and Bancroft (2003).

The following four reviews are again not intended to be comprehensive but to illustrate to the reader that such texts exist and are easily obtainable through libraries and booksellers. The views contained in them (drawn from academic and popular discourse and using the kinds of historical, anthropological and biological arguments discussed in Chapter 3) are able to influence the 'sexual radicalism' discourse by providing a resource arguing for the legitimacy and normality of adult sexual contact with children. When we attempt to understand the place of paedophiles within contemporary society, and how society responds to paedophiles, books such as these help us to understand the arguments for tolerance which exist and how they are developed and transmitted.

*Adult Sexual Interest in Children* (1981), edited by Mark Cook and Kevin Howells. This book is part of a series entitled *Personality and Psychopathology*. It is compiled by two British lecturers (one at University College Swansea and one at the University of Leicester) and arose as a result of a major conference on sexual behaviour organized by Mark Cook, the *International Conference on Love and Attraction*, held at Swansea in 1977 and subsequently written up as a series of conference papers published by Pergamon Press in 1979 as *Love and Attraction: An International Conference*, edited by Mark Cook and Glenn Wilson. At the conference, Kevin Howells had convened a symposium on paedophilia, at which Tom O'Carroll, a well-known paedophile activist, had been invited to speak but which was disrupted when Judith Reisman (see the previous chapter) brought this to the attention of ancillary staff at the University who then threatened strike action if O'Carroll was given a platform. At the same conference, Floyd Martinson convened a symposium on Child and Infant Sexuality.

This book therefore arose from the authors' experiences of controversy surrounding the conference, and they write: 'We began planning this book with the intention of assembling a body of information about the various aspects of adult sexual interest in children, which might provide a factual basis for a cooler and more reasoned approach to the issue' (p. viii). The collection includes chapters by the sociologist Ken Plummer and the forensic criminologist and Director of the Institute of Criminology at Cambridge, Donald West (see below). The tenor of the book is liberal in the sense that sex with children is generally seen as something not to get too excited about, although there are various provisos about the possibility of harm.

A sample chapter is that by Thore Langfeldt on 'Sexual development in children'. Langfeldt, a psychologist from Norway who has a

clinical practice with children with 'deviant sexual behaviour' (Cook & Howells, 1981:112), appears to share an interest similar to Kinsey's in masturbation and early childhood sexual experience. Like Kinsey, he discusses how, 'at the neonatal level' 'an orgasm is easily produced' (p. 102), and he makes use of reports 'from paedophiles' on 'erections in small boys' (*ibid.*). He also states that 'observations are confirmed by reports from sexual interactions between young boys and adults' (p. 104) and by '[i]nterviews with men and boys having sexual relations' (pp. 104–5). Looking at childhood sexuality, he discusses how 'sexual activation may occur as a result of active manipulation by the child itself or by its caretaker' (p. 105) and expands this by stating how an 'uncle or some adult friend of the family might in some cases tell the child how to masturbate' (p. 106). These interventions are implicitly approved. There is a confusing but rather disturbing discussion of 'muscular oriented therapy' on 'young children' (pp. 116–17) which seems to be aimed at causing 'an increase in the pelvic bloodflow which gives rise to erection and lubrication' (p. 117). The overall tenor of the chapter is to suggest that touching children sexually is positive and helpful and connotes with 'liberation', 'pleasure' and being 'liberal', whilst not touching children sexually connotes with being old-fashioned and ashamed and having an 'anti-hedonistic attitude'.

*Pedophilia: Biosocial Dimensions*, edited by Jay Feierman and published in 1990 by Springer-Verlag. My attention was drawn to this book because it is frequently cited and recommended by those within the paedophile community. As with the Cook & Howells book, this collection arises from conference papers, this time a symposium in 1987, organized by the International Society for Human Ethology, on understanding paedophilia from cross-cultural, cross-historical and cross-species perspectives. An emphasis of the collection is on the contribution of evolutionary biology to contemporary human behaviour and, since the collection was published in 1990, some aspects of the more specialized work on neuro-endocrinology, for example, are likely to be somewhat out-of-date. This is an odd collection in some ways, with contributors going into great detail on the sexual behaviour of Japanese quail, laboratory mice and so forth without always clearly linking it to any implications for understanding why some men find children or adolescents sexually attractive. Nevertheless, it remains a fascinating work, even for the non-specialist. There are contributions by social scientists Vern Bullough and Paul Okami, but the majority of contributions are from the physical sciences. In some ways the most interesting part perhaps is the final concluding chapter by Feierman himself, which is

essentially a heartfelt plea for tolerance, although it is noticeable that while there is clear empathy for the men caught up in the dilemma of paedophile sexual attraction (and who may find themselves sentenced and publicly disgraced for offending behaviour), there is no such clear empathy expressed for the children involved if the men do act on their attraction. Feierman refers sensitively to the cost of being a paedophile as 'an indeterminable sentence of never to be discussed inner turmoil and pain' (1990: 553).

*Children's Sexual Encounters with Adults*, written by Li Chin-Keung, Donald West and T. P. Woodhouse, was published by Duckworth in 1990 and then reprinted in 1993 by Prometheus as *Children's Sexual Encounters with Adults: A Scientific Study*. (The edition reviewed here is the earlier, Duckworth, edition.) This book contains two reports of research conducted by the authors. The first study, by West and Woodhouse, is a survey of male students which asked about their sexual experiences with people older than themselves before the age of 11 and when aged 11 up to 16 years. They received 182 completed questionnaires and undertook 23 interviews with respondents who had a history of relevant sexual experience and 13 interviews with respondents who hadn't. Forty-five students reported experiences between the ages of 11 and 16 years and 22 reported experiences aged under 11 years. The majority of the experiences were with male non-family members, often a one-off encounter with strangers, and the respondents reported these as embarrassing but otherwise 'indifferent'. For example, one respondent told how a friend's father had touched him in bed at night:

I was almost wholly indifferent, it was bloody embarrassing, but I was almost completely indifferent to the whole thing. I don't seem to recall having – I mean it was a nuisance that I was being kept awake. Other than that it was slightly embarrassing I seem to remember. (1990: 53)

The authors then attempted to expand the data-collection using electoral registers in London and Cambridge, contacting respondents through telephone and postal questionnaires and visits to randomly selected addresses to ask men about their childhood sexual experiences. Not surprisingly, they encountered some difficulties! Nevertheless, they collected 298 questionnaires using this method, of which 60 (20 per cent) reported some sexual experience with adults or with someone older than themselves at the time, before the age of 16. Allowing for bias

in non-response, the authors suggest a prevalence rate of around 10 per cent. They found that whilst some respondents had found their experiences very distressing or disturbing, some had not. Some experiences, mainly those when the respondents were aged around 15 years, and particularly those involving women rather than men, were regarded positively. There were no instances of parental sexual abuse reported in this study. The authors conclude that 'whereas the early sexual experiences of girls tend to be regarded as violation, those of boys are considered initiation' (1990: 127). This relatively relaxed attitude is echoed in the second part of the book, which comprises Li's doctoral thesis, supervised by West. During the early to mid 1980s, Li found and interviewed 20 self-defined paedophiles, contacting them through psychiatric clinics, an un-named paedophile organization (presumably the Paedophile Information Exchange, PIE), and *Forum*, a 'soft porn' magazine. The backdrop to Li's analysis of his research findings was the Cleveland investigation in 1987, in which, within a five-month period, 121 children were diagnosed as having been sexually abused and were taken into care by social services, thus provoking a sustained national debate about the nature and prevalence of child sexual abuse. Against this backdrop, Li sets out a careful analysis of the issues and cautiously posits a 'middle ground' on the 'continuum of adult-child sexuality, bearing in mind that there is considerable grey area in this continuum.' (1990: 314, emphasis omitted).

*Male Intergenerational Intimacy: Historical, Socio-Psychological and Legal Perspectives*, edited by Theo Sandfort, Edward Brongersma and Alex van Naerssen, was published in 1991 by Harrington Park Press (a subsidiary of The Haworth Press). This book was published simultaneously under the same title as a special issue of the *Journal of Homosexuality*, volume 20, numbers 1/2, in 1990. Sandfort is of course well-known for his *Boys on their Contacts with Men* (see previous section), and Brongersma has been referred to affectionately in an online discussion as one of the 'grandfathers' of the paedophile movement and by Plummer, in this volume, as a 'committed paedophile' (p. 320). This compilation brings together contributions from Ken Plummer, the British sociologist and a leading theorist on sexualities, David Thorstadt, the outspoken boy-love campaigner and the public face of the North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), and Li Chin-Keung, writing on his study on adult male sexual experiences with boys (as discussed in *Children's Sexual Encounters with Adults*). Also contributing are a number of others, including Edward Brongersma himself, on 'Boy-lovers and

their influence on boys'. The book is written mainly from a Dutch perspective and therefore displays a social attitude strikingly at odds with the North American or British model. This is shown, for example, in the two chapters dealing with the treatment of paedophiles, in which the aim of treatment is to increase self-esteem and 'social autonomy' and explicitly not to reduce sexual contact with children, contact which is assumed, on the word of the paedophile, to be consensual.

I hesitated for months to open this book, once I had taken it out of the library, because I expected I would find it too disturbing to read. In fact there is much of interest here and the historical chapters on 'pedagogical Eros', the 'Uranian movement' and the history of tolerance in the Netherlands are informative. The polemics in favour of 'loving boys' are silly rather than disturbing (or perhaps by now I'm getting inured to them). The near-total absence of any reference to family or parents is remarkable and Brongersma's quotation on how a relationship with a paedophile will help a boy to 'burst the gates of the family cage' (p.169) sums up pretty succinctly what seems to be the view on the contribution of the family and the relative importance of 'the boy-lover' to everyone else in the boy's life. Similarly, Jones' remark on 'the man-over-boy power imbalance typical of so many father/son' relationships (p. 287), as distinct from good old boy-lover relationships, of course, seems to betray a real hostility to the family, perhaps a jealousy? Overall, one is left with a sense that the vision of male intergenerational intimacy being portrayed in this book is a self-serving fantasy of educated middle-class men finding themselves pursued by sexually rampant working-class young adolescents eager for their attentions, whom they can then altruistically liberate from their repressive and stultifying parents in order to educate and prepare them for manhood. Strange that they don't find their services more in demand.

As well as these books, which together build a vision of paedophiles in society acting sexually but harmlessly with children, there are also those texts which relate even more precisely to Kinsey's work on 'children's sexuality'. As we saw, Wardell Pomeroy, Kinsey's close colleague, went on to write popular lay books on children's sexuality, and to insist in print that incest can be pleasurable for children and that girls (Pomeroy was less interested in boys) should have orgasms from an early age (Arnow, 1977). John Bancroft, one-time Director of the Kinsey Institute (who can be seen in interview in Tate's film, *Kinsey's Paedophiles*, defending Kinsey's position on using paedophiles to research 'children's



sexuality') also went on to edit a collection of papers, *Sexual Development in Childhood* (2003). Bancroft's book, with contributions from Philip Jenkins, David Finkelhor and others, does contain some useful discussions, but there appears to be little or no discussion of the ethical implications of researching children's sexual development and overall it does not reduce my concern at the manner in which Kinsey's legacy is still treated.

Some of Kinsey's previously unpublished data, obtained from adults having sexual contact with children and babies, may also have been used directly in other publications. Floyd Mansfield Martinson's book, *Infant and Child Sexuality: A Sociological Perspective* (1973), is still available online and in this Martinson states that, alongside his own observations and interviews:

I have also read and incorporated data from Alfred Kinsey's interview notes on a sample of children two to five years of age, data which have not been previously published. Permission to utilize these data was granted by the Institute for Sex Research (the Kinsey Institute), Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. (Martinson, 1973, Preface: online)

It is possible that these may be the interviews Kinsey conducted with children in a nursery-school in California in 1949 (Gathorne-Hardy, 1998: 327) but it is unlikely that this will ever be verified.

Martinson also explains:

Recall of sexual encounters is possible from about age three. For earlier ages one cannot rely at all on subjective data as such. One must utilize the observations of mothers, researchers, and others who have been particularly close to the infant and young child. Among others, Larry and Joan Constantine have graciously offered me the use of data on a small number of child sexual experiences that they gathered incidental to their study of multilateral marriages. (*ibid.*)

Apparently a 'multilateral marriage' involves three or more people, but what relevance that has to 'child sexual experiences' in the under-3s is opaque. Constantine and Martinson later edited a book together (1981) called *Children and Sex*. Like Sandfort and others, Martinson is something of a hero in this field. He was the fourth recipient of the Kinsey Award (which has also been awarded to Gebhard, Pomeroy and Bancroft, among others) and received an obituary in the *Journal of Sex*

*Research* when he died in 2000. The obituary enthused that, 'More than anyone else in sociology has done, Floyd made us knowledgeable about sexuality in children. . . . He was recognized as one of the world's authorities on child sexuality and he received many awards.' (Reiss, 2000: 391). Martinson's 1994 book on *The Sexual Life of Children* is described by its publishers as tracing:

the development of sexuality in the child from the prenatal, through birth and up to puberty and adolescence. . . . Western society has been slow to recognize sexual experiences and conceptualizations as an important part of a child's development. This is the only work that has been written in a frank and open manner about the many sexual encounters that children have on a daily basis as part of their normal psychological development. (Greenwood Publishing Group, undated: online)

In fact, as we have seen, it is not the only work written on children's 'many sexual encounters'. Another significant text in this field is titled *Sex Without Shame*, by Dr Alayne Yates, a psychiatrist. Her book, first published in 1978, is, like Martinson's book, now available online. Like Martinson also, Yates refers repeatedly to the Kinsey data on childhood sexuality. She also quotes with apparent agreement, in Chapter 6, the slogan, 'Sex before eight or else it's too late', attributed to the René Guyon Society. Her book includes a great deal of rhetoric on both incest and on developing an 'erotic' relationship with your child from birth, which appears to be related to her own professional practice as a child and adolescent psychiatrist at the University of Hawaii. Yates had a relatively prestigious career, for example being a guest editor of *Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders, for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Clinics of North America*, published by W. B. Saunders in 1993.

Yates goes on at great length and with a high level of detail. A flavour of the text can be conveyed by the following excerpts on incest:

There is one event that occurs in all strata of society and that provides youngsters with intense erotic stimulation – incest. While incest can lead to serious problems, it is not always harmful. . . . Mutual sex play among siblings does not prove harmful, and could foster a robust, healthy, nonincestuous stance later in life. . . . Incest does not necessarily produce damage. . . . The girls I have evaluated who were young, uncoerced, and initially pleased with the relationship remain emotionally unscathed, even after protracted incest. However, they may

be devastated by the social consequences after discovery. They are fully orgasmic... When these girls move out into school and the community, they swiftly form gratifying liaisons with more appropriate males. They retain a taste for older partners, such as foster fathers, male teachers, doctors, and policemen... There is an important lesson to be learned from noncoercive father-and-daughter incest. Early erotic pleasure by itself does not damage the child. It can produce sexually competent and notably erotic young women. Childhood is the best time to learn, although parents may not always be the best teachers. (Yates, 1978: online)

Notice Yates' emphasis that girls who experience incest are 'fully orgasmic' – this is the point repeatedly made by Kinsey and later by Pomeroy. In other words, following Kinsey, orgasm is reified as the highest good: it trumps any other good, such as the security and psychological well-being a child receives in a non-incestuous environment. Incest or other early sexual experience is presented as benefitting the girl by readying her to be 'sexually competent and notably erotic' in her 'gratifying liaisons with more appropriate males'. The list of these 'more appropriate males' which Yates produces – 'foster fathers, male teachers, doctors, and policemen' – sounds more like a recipe for serial abuse from precisely those adults who are given the greatest responsibility by society to protect vulnerable children.

Yates goes into quite extraordinary detail when she is looking at the 'erotic' involvement between parents and very young children, particularly babies. She notes her experience of 'the hundreds of births in which I either officiated or observed', although it is not in any way clear why a psychiatrist would 'officiate' during labour or delivery. Again, the following excerpts can only give a flavour of her approach, which includes 'exercises' which she, as a psychiatrist, recommends from birth and for babies up to one year of age:

Mothers who are erotically involved with their infants raise sexy children... The application of delicately scented and delightfully creamy lotions to the genitals isn't just for hygiene or, as the label indicates, to protect against harmful bacteria. Lotions and oils are highly sensuous and the genital contact distinctly erotic. What difference does it make anyway to call a spade a spade? After all, good mothers have always patted and powdered the penis and swabbed the clitoris.

... There are certain exercises that enrich the experience of body intimacy – for both mother and child. These are designed for use in

the first six months of life. The first exercise may be begun on the delivery table... Mothers on the delivery table who have the chance but avoid looking at the penis or clitoris are dealing with significant sexual inhibitions.... Mothers who retreat from the sight of infant genitals need to pay close attention to the next exercise. There's time to concentrate at the first feeding.... Look at the arms, the legs, the belly, and the genitals. All deserve careful attention. The clitoris may be hidden or covered with a mucous jelly. Two fingers spread the labia to reveal the contours. The newborn girl is still affected by your hormones so that the labia are flushed and the clitoris enlarged and glistening. Can you touch it?... If the penis is uncircumcised slide back the foreskin to reveal the glans.... Are you reluctant to touch it? Some mothers are so frightened that they never retract the foreskin. Eventually it adheres to the glans and often becomes infected.

... More advanced exercises involve your reactions to your infant's secretions.... The glistening modicum of saliva or the dab of mucus which slips from the baby girl's vagina are bits of a cherished being, until recently a part of you. Full acceptance of these secretions is the same as the ability to savor your mate's sexual perspiration, semen, and saliva.... If infancy passes without an abundance of these intimate sensations, then the sexual response will be limited. Thus all forms of licking, washing, tickling, and sniffing contribute to the growth of the eroticism....

Breast-feeding is a potent gratification, for both mother and child. Rhythmic sucking, scent, warmth, and closeness combine to produce the optimal erotic congress. Genital pleasure is enmeshed in the total experience. Direct genital stimulation occurs as the mother presses the child's hips against her body....

... The genitals are ordinarily stimulated, if only under the guise of hygiene.... Diapering is prime time for the enhancement of genital eroticism.... Genital manipulation is often an accepted method to calm an irritable infant. Although statistics aren't available, sexual dysfunction seems far more likely in countries where diapers are employed. Certainly the parent who conceals the baby's genitals beneath a tightly pinned diaper assumes a huge responsibility. This parent becomes the infant's main source of genital pleasuring.

... During the second six months the infant develops a separate self and recognizes the parents as distinct individuals.... The infant with a background of pleasure knows what he likes and now begins to seek that which feels good.... Some little girls rub against a pillow or squeeze thighs together to create erotic feelings. The father becomes

a playmate with a bouncy knee.... More advanced exercises include the provision of large soft or fuzzy dolls and pillows of various shapes. The session can be extended to include play with mud or finger paint in the backyard or tub....

The infant in the second half year needs to develop reciprocity.... Teaching the infant to swim has been in vogue for a number of years. Initially these programs were sold to the public as the stylish acquisition of an essential skill.... The real payoff from infant swimming has nothing to do with skill. A wet, wriggly, naked body, ecstatic in the sensuous delights of water and the defiance of gravity, is hard to resist. Make the most of it.... The child can scarcely contain her joy; she's done something great. As she clasps her thighs about her mother's waist, clitoral impressions add to her gusto.

Can the infant receive too much stimulation through these activities? Will eroticism take over the child? Data from many cultures yields an emphatic 'no.'... By nature children have catholic tastes.... If they've observed or participated in oral sex they may devise a game with this as the central focus.... Sex play is certainly healthy.

... In cultures where children are sexually active, sex play continues uninterrupted. Unfortunately, in our culture, there's a sharp decline in all sexual activity by the end of the oedipal phase.... Parents who have followed the suggestions in these chapters, or who have in other ways communicated acceptance and enjoyment of sex, have promoted a solid erotic foundation. (Yates, 1978: online)

Any parent who has raised small children understands the importance of accepting and loving every aspect of their dear baby – smelly faeces, urine escaping everywhere, vomit, dribble, snotty noses and all. Many parents also recognize the importance of close and sustained skin-to-skin contact, breastfeeding, snuggling and sleeping together to build the child's sense of security and subsequent self-assured independence (Liedloff, 1986; Kitzinger, 2008). None of those considerations, however, need ever involve the kind of genital fixation and violation advocated here. One wonders what the publisher, and Yates' employers at the University of Hawaii, thought of these recommendations and 'exercises'.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Overall, as can be seen, this review of a small selection of books, chosen more or less at random from those available, present a vision of

paedophiles in society as acting sexually but harmlessly with children; a vision which is entirely consonant with the work of Kinsey in the 1940s. Kinsey was not the originator of this view by any means. He himself drew on earlier and contemporary theorists and researchers such as the anthropologist Clellan Ford (1909–1972) and the psychologist Frank Beach (1911–1988), whose main work on cross-cultural sexual customs, *Patterns of Sexual Behavior*, published in 1951, is still referred to in current studies (for example, see Green, 2002). The key contribution of Kinsey was not to instigate but to popularize the idea of adult sexual contact with children and, within that, the notion that children, from birth, are sexual agents who have the capacity to be willing participants in sexual encounters with adults. This approach can be easily identified in the work of Langfeldt, Sandfort, Brongersma, Martinson, Yates and others. Together, these authors have produced a powerful strand within the ‘sexual liberation’ discourse which has been taken up by other ‘sexual radicals’ or ‘sexual dissidents’ who would arguably not otherwise have sympathy with paedophilia but who are convinced by its association with, for example, gay rights or queer politics.

It is noticeable that a number of these books are from reputable academic and Establishment sources (for example, Donald West was the Director of the Institute of Criminology at Cambridge University, and Edward Brongersma a senator in the Dutch parliament). These are not self-published rantings by neurotic loners on the margins of society (although there are of course also examples of those within this genre). Often, the books and articles are peer-reviewed and produced within contexts which have national or international standing; they cannot be dismissed as irrelevant or merely subcultural. The impact of such texts has been, and continues to be, profound on the development of the discourse of ‘sexual liberation’.

Those of us who naively had no idea that academic and popular texts genuinely do exist which promote adult sexual contact with children, including newborn babies, need to realize the significance of these works. Kinsey’s *Reports* were published in the late 1940s and early 1950s. A generation later, Pomeroy, Yates, Constantine, Martinson and Sandfort were publishing their texts from the early 1970s to the early 1980s. A generation on and we now appear to be experiencing what even sceptics such as Philip Jenkins (2003) have identified as an epidemic of child pornography. Child sexual abuse remains at epidemic levels in every country in the world in which statistics are gathered. For example, a United Nations report in 2006 found that 150 million girls

and 73 million boys aged under 18 experienced forced sexual intercourse and other forms of sexual violence involving physical contact in 2002 and that in 21 countries, most of them industrialized, as many as 36 per cent of women and 29 per cent of men said they had been the victims of sexual abuse during childhood, with most of the abuse occurring within the family (Usborne, 2006).

Books are also now being made available online, or coming back into publication, which have been unavailable since the 1970s. For example, Tony Duvert (1976) was an author who, like Kinsey again, was fascinated by masturbation and by the notion of a child's right to sexual exploration with adults. As with Sandfort's work, Duvert also used his book to argue for a lowering of the age of consent. He combined his interest in the sexual life of young boys with a passionate loathing for parents and families, describing the paedophile (especially the well-off, middle-class, homosexual paedophile) as 'the father's rival'. The publisher's synopsis of the book includes the following:

This title offers a scathing view of sex manuals for children and society's hypocrisy of over [sic] sex that argues for the rights of children to their own bodies and their own sexuality. Written in the wake of May 1968 and Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, Tony Duvert's *Good Sex Illustrated* (*Le Bon Sexe Illustré*) was part of the miraculous moment when sexuality could turn the world upside down and reveal social hypocrisy for what it was. Bitterly funny and unabashedly anarchistic, *Good Sex Illustrated* openly declares war on mothers, family, psychoanalysis, morality, and the entire social construct, through a close reading of sex manuals for children. Published in 1973, one year after Duvert won the prestigious Prix Médicis, it proved that accolades had not tempered his scathing wit or his approach to such taboo topics as pedophilia. (Posted as product description on Amazon, 2007, <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Good-Sex-Illustrated-Foreign-Agents/dp/1584350431>, last accessed 10 December 2009)

As a society, we seemed to have learned little between that 'miraculous moment' in the 1960s and the present day in our capacity to distinguish between the self-indulgent pleasure of privileged adults to publish scathingly witty, taboo-busting diatribes against 'hypocrisy' and the rather more sober requirement to protect actual flesh-and-blood children from sexual abuse. Rather than averting one's gaze and hoping that these sorts of books will go away or will have no effect (or that publishers will take more responsibility in what they choose to publish), it is better

to understand what the arguments are, how they are used, who is citing and quoting these authors, and overall, something of what the contemporary impact may be. Sandfort's research, for example, continues to be used by a number of writers as evidence that man-boy sexual contact can be positive rather than harmful. Work published over the last few generations continues to reverberate in that cultural space within which individual and legislative decisions are made. When we seek to understand the issue of paedophiles and their place in society, we need to take cognisance of, but not be blinded by, texts – from however lofty a source – which are based on a model of 'childhood sexuality' derived from the rape of small children by paedophiles with stopwatches.