

## The Paedophile Impulse: Toward the Development of an Etiology of Child-Adult Sexual Contacts from an Ethological and Ethnological Viewpoint<sup>1</sup>

by Gisela Bleibtreu-Ehrenberg<sup>2</sup>

### I. Introduction

The term "paedophile" in the following presentation will be understood as the sexual contact of adults with children *before* puberty, regardless of the sex of the partners. As is well known, every culture determines what is understood by "adult" according to its own needs; here it means an age that lies in every case *after* puberty. Thus contacts between "adults" and "children"-so defined by their culture-will *not* be subsumed under the concept of paedophilia here if *both partners have already reached puberty*, for then it is merely a question of contact between adults of different ages. In this connection, the degree of age difference is unimportant.

The present essay is an attempt to describe the sexual impulse of those persons who prefer close bodily-emotional contacts with prepuberal children to those with adults, and where the impulse in question is an integrating moment of the whole personality. Let it be emphasised from the beginning that contacts of this kind are fundamentally free of force. If they are not, it is not paedophilia that is present, but rather an offence to be considered legally punishable.

### II. Causes of the Negative Evaluation of Child Sexuality and of Child-Adult Sexual Contacts in our Cultural Domain

#### 1.) Traditional Hatred of the Body

The traditional hatred of the body in our civilization goes back to the pre-Christian philosophers and thinkers of ancient Greece,<sup>3</sup> by whom the Apostle Paul, as an educated man, was strongly influenced. No indications of hatred of the body are found in the Gospels. Through Paul's missionary work, however, genuine Christian demands were so inseparably mixed with pagan ascetic ideals that Christian dogma, both in patristic and scholastic teaching, was inconceivable without them; in contrast to their cultivation, the primary demands of the Gospels were often neglected. Sexuality was rated as negative, as long as it did not serve reproduction; and even then it was good only as a means to reproduction, not as an expression of life *suigeneris*. Idealized, on the other hand, was asexuality. "chastity". Therefore it is obvious that sex with children, since they are not mature enough for reproduction, would be regarded as altogether evil and could not even be considered value-neutral. To the extent that some later works on this theme express other theories,<sup>4</sup> they generalize relationships that doubtless existed, but which have never/ had ecclesiastical and general sanction, as is shown by all the penitentials, confessionals and textbooks of moral theology that have ever been found.<sup>5</sup>

In the late middle ages and early modern times the fear of syphilitic infection presents a further and often overlooked motive for demanding chastity, especially for very young persons. Chastity at the time constituted the only possible protective measure against the still incurable disease. Similar considerations are evoked today, as we know, by the appearance of AIDS: moralistic and hygienic measures against the epidemic are entering into a symbiosis not objectively justified. Thus "innocence" in the sense of being sexually untouched, becomes equated with "health" in the sense of being disease-free. These ideas in turn find apparent support from a false literal interpretation of the Biblical injunction "...the wages of sin is death."

#### 2.) The Pretended Asexuality of the Child

When Rousseau writes at the beginning of his *Emile*, "Everything is good as it comes from the hands of the Creator, everything degenerates under the hands of man the effects of the above-mentioned dogmas, believed for centuries, show themselves. For Rousseau, child sexuality meant degeneration<sup>6</sup>, so that, in following his concept of education, people were to try as long as possible (even until after the 18th year!) to do all they could to keep from children everything that would remind them, even distantly, of sexuality. We now know, at least since Freud, that children are not asexual beings, yet the influence of Rousseau continues to have an effect today. In the meantime children are "allowed" to masturbate and "play doctor", but if they seek to learn something about sexuality or direct sexual practices from those from whom they are otherwise accustomed to learn most things, namely from adults, then the majority of the population feels this to be a violation of the child's "purity". They assume (even in the face of proof to the contrary) that an ineradicable emotional harm has been caused and demand punishment of the "culprit" as if he were the worst kind of criminal.<sup>7</sup>

What actually offends society about paedophilia, however, is not something inherent in it. Rather the offence is in its violation of the above-mentioned ideologies, which are partly Christian and partly of a pseudo-enlightenment tendency. The ideologies, further, assume the absence of child sexuality, so that its presence is seen as "against nature", when in reality nature has in fact already bestowed sexuality upon the child. In addition, the "seducer" might undermine the child's acceptance on faith of these ideologies, which for the child they are simply prohibitions. His actions are therefore subversive to repressive educational goals.

A third prohibiting ideology is the recent apodictic assumption, raised from an extreme feminist standpoint, that sexual contacts of adults with non-adults (even as far as concerns sexually mature adolescents already beyond puberty) is in principle never free of force and therefore always criminal. This last conviction is just as unprovable as the two previously mentioned traditional views, but is based on its protagonists' belief in their own deductions.

### III. Child Sexuality as a Component of the Physiological Make-up of Primates

Fortunately nature pays no attention to what people from one epoch to another have understood, and understand, as being "natural". Let us then take Rousseau at face value: "Everything degenerates under the hands of man." In fact! If we had indeed drawn the desired consequences from the ideologies that stretched over two centuries, then in the meantime the West would probably have become really empty of people. Children must learn sexuality before their own sexual maturity in order to be able to practise it without conflict in their adult years. Reared in isolation according to Rousseau's concept, they would certainly become neurotics unfit for marriage. And in reality children do learn sexuality, only they learn it from other children, i.e., in a subculture carefully kept hidden from the adult world. If this has begun to change recently in the case of a few progressive parents, one may still assert that, for the majority of all children in our civilization, sexuality remains even today a book with seven seals until they begin to concern themselves about their own "sex education". In doing so, however, a "knowledge" of reproduction and birth is often

spread and believed that is simply fantastic, that in turn calls forth new fears and insecurity. Here young primates and children in certain primitive cultures have it easier.

I.) Child Sexuality in Anthropoid Apes if, in the following considerations, animal sexual behaviour is the starting point that leads by further thinking to conclusions about human behaviour, then it must be expressly emphasized ahead of time that such comparisons must always be entered into with great care.<sup>9</sup> Human beings are not the same as beasts, and the greater the nearness of the anthropoid apes to homo sapiens in the rank of evolution is presented, the more care is required in comparisons of this kind.<sup>10</sup> As a rule of thumb it may certainly be held that the importance of *learning* increases, and that of instinct decreases, the higher a creature is ranked in the order of the primates.<sup>11</sup> In the human being pure instinctive behaviour is strongly reduced. Possibly, however, the degree of the remainder of instinct still present in each individual of our kind varies and is related besides to the domain of the instinct, so that much that in reality is perhaps a remainder of instinct appears, falsely, as something individual, through factors of social behaviour appropriate to personal socialization,<sup>12</sup> and vice versa.

The importance of learning for primates depends on their form of life; unlike martens, bears or moles, for example, primates are not loners, but social beings, and practically everything they learn is learned through and from adult members of their group or older siblings or somewhat older members of their "peer group". Learning and the forming of a tradition tend always and necessarily to be bound up with one another; at first, no doubt, predominately those "customs" were continued that made survival easier.<sup>13</sup> Among the early forms of our own kind that have died out the handing down of newly found, meaningful and existence maintaining forms of relations must have been continued and substantially enlarged.

The enormous differences in the traditions that are found among human beings makes clear how manifold (and sometimes, from our modern standpoint, meaningless) are the traditions that have been handed down (such as the belief in local spirits, the power of ancestors, the danger of some special kind of sex, food tabus, etc.). In spite of their absurdity, however, such traditions are neither conscious deceptions of priests nor savage superstitions. Rather, every tradition acts in spite of its objective truth as social cement. The same mechanism holds for social prejudices.<sup>14</sup> Ethologists, ethnologists and anthropologists all agree that the importance of learning in nonhuman primates and in humans cannot be overestimated. To the content of what must be learned by being taken in and internalized during childhood belongs without doubt, among many other things, the sexual behaviour usual in the respective culture. That is, learned sexuality (or the learned ideal of asexuality) is dependent on the respective cultural traditions. This even holds *mutatis mutandis* for the non-human primates, since they must learn the sexual behaviour typical for their own place in the ranking order.

Primates become sexually mature at very different ages, according to how long-lived the respective species is on the average. Many young monkeys and anthropoid apes only a few days old already show forms of behaviour that appear to be derived from sexual ones, but which in that early stage of life obviously are not yet "meant" as sexual. Thus, for example, the exhibition of the penis (with an erection) is a display of power and in certain monkeys (Totenkopffaffen), when they are babies, is to be classified as a playful imitation of the threatening gestures of adult males.<sup>15</sup> For their part, these "threats" are taken no more seriously than they are meant. Even these animals, which in intellect stand far below the anthropoid apes, are thus already able to distinguish between the pure gesture and the age or maturity of the one making it. In chimpanzees and gorillas the adult animals, even the alpha-male, tolerate the fact that playing young animals, from the age of the baby to the small 'child', tug at the fur, constantly cross over the distance that is maintained among adults according to their rank, take food away from adult animals, and do not react to their defensive and threatening behaviour; obviously the adults comprehend that the 'youngsters' just do not yet know better.

Behaviour derived from mating behaviour, such as "mounting" (actually a precondition for coitus), is found in young anthropoid apes partly as play, partly as so-called "demonstrations of rank";<sup>16</sup> they always learn by watching the actions of adult members of the troop. Masturbation has been observed in many adult males although at the same time sexually mature females stood available; this was observed in prepuberty, to be sure, only in the intellectually especially high-ranking chimpanzees.<sup>17</sup> In order to learn the coitus behaviour of mature animals, young chimpanzees must be able to observe older ones doing it. Examples reared alone A la Rousseau's *Emile* and then at the onset of their sexual maturity set loose in a pen with females ready to mate did not know how they were to behave. To be sure, most showed a definite interest in the females and noticeable restlessness, but many did without any kind of sexual activity of their own at all. Females reared in isolation often regarded male attempts to approach as attempts on "life and limb" and reacted with panic. Animals that have had only slight contact with others of the same species, but which nonetheless have not entirely had to do without it, often attempt sexual behaviour according to the system of "trial and error", and even animals that exercise extensive opportunity to observe older members of their species in coitus behaviour, must practice the coitus behaviour typical to chimpanzees until they finally master it. Chimpanzees, however, on the basis of their higher intelligence, can still learn functional sexual behaviour even after an abnormal childhood, so long as they are confronted with it as "adolescents"-although such animals have distinct problems with it.<sup>18</sup>

The aforementioned "mounting" (originally the mature copulation behaviour of male monkeys) has become in an extraordinary number of species what ethologists call a "status gesture" or "demonstration of rank". I personally believe that ethologists make it somewhat too easy for themselves when they bring into play here terms that are unsuitable for animals, and would prefer the designation "pacifying gesture" (Befriedungsgeste). Otherwise, it appears to me, one concludes too directly that there is a constant readiness for conflict, which that gesture does not convincingly express. The investigation of the whole field in question suffers besides from the similarity of such behaviour to that of humans, which plainly evokes errors.

The only thing certain is that "mounting" on the one hand and "presenting" (i.e., offering to allow oneself to be mounted) on the other are gestures that on the breaking out of conflicts almost instantly restore the peace, since they set in motion an almost immediate restraint to aggression in the stronger (mounting) animal. The connection between the former sexual and the later social meaning of this gesture is likewise clear: in primates<sup>19</sup> freedom from aggression is a component of the act of copulation. The fact that female animals of higher rank also occasionally mount lower ranking ones show how strongly ritualized the gesture is. The situational context shows that here it is not a question of homosexuality. Presenting is obviously learned by all the babies (male as well as female) from their own mothers, who daily use it as a pacifying gesture toward stronger animals. This social learning is carried out on the model

"identification through imitation".<sup>20</sup> Animals reared in isolation could not learn even the peace-making content of these reactions that are derived from types of sexual behaviour. Those "unskilled" in such remained social outsiders. Not directly sexual, but probably sexually flavoured types of behaviour such as caressing, romping, fondling, licking body openings, and "grooming" definitely serve the group peace in primates; they signal sympathy and a feeling of belonging together,<sup>21</sup> but can also and at the same time be foreplay to sexual acts. Similar nonaggressive caring behaviour was at first of value only to their own young and in the course of primate evolution was much later-and indeed at first within the framework of courting-transferred to the sexual partner, wherein the bringing of food and nonaggressive gestures in an often highly ritualized form resurface. Also, in primates that live in groups without forming permanent couples, individual variations that are obviously connected with the "rank order" of the two animals clearly appear in the contacts with their various sexual partners.<sup>22</sup>

## 2.) Child Sexuality in Primitive Peoples

The usual division between civilized and primitive peoples easily leads the uninitiated astray: it is self-evident that there are no human beings without culture.<sup>23</sup> By the term "primitive peoples" one understands today-after overcoming the linear evolutionism of the preceding century-peoples without writing or such as belonged to a high civilization that has in the meantime perished, or whose material culture has since sunk very low.

Different cultures are remarkably at variance on the question of child sexuality and its evaluation. Some judge that this area of learning is just as important as all the others or even one of the most important altogether, and so teach it intensively and unaffectedly.<sup>24</sup> Others hold only limited sectors of sexuality (such as those relating to pregnancy and birth) as worth teaching, thus making an evaluative selection.<sup>25</sup> We ourselves, and other peoples as well,<sup>26</sup> hold a rigid sexual rearing to be desirable and are inclined to declare morally inferior any of the goals of education that do not practically exclude sexuality. All three views mentioned, including their intermediate forms, are *determined purely traditionally* and are in no way "natural" in the sense of a pre-formation exclusively determined by instinct. The nearly supreme power of the compulsion to learn in our species, in union with the still enormous impressibility of the infant brain, leads indeed to the fact that, for example, the sexual customs of the West that are acquired by rearing have been viewed until the most recent past as evidently given by nature.

Since the pedagogical treatment and social evaluation of child sexuality in primitive peoples is extremely diverse, it would be absurd, within the framework of a short essay such as this, to bring examples of this or that customary behaviour, which, moreover, are discussed in the literature mentioned in the notes. Sexology dearly loves the most exotic examples possible (thick books on the subject thrive on them!), but in the end they only tell us very little, if we do not take into consideration the whole of the respective culture from which the examples in question came.

Moreover they often lead thoroughly into error: namely, viewed only by themselves they produce in the naively ethnocentric European grotesquely false representations of the life of the people in question, since he, unconsciously selective, only observes what appears to him strange and therefore interesting-for example, the sexual liberty of young and very young people in certain cultures. He thereby overlooks the numerous food tabus that exceedingly complicate life in the same society, for food tabus do not appear to him as a European to be important. If he then reports either enthusiastically or in horror on the "liberty" of the society in question, he perceives only one side of the coin-since the "liberty" that he notices is perhaps the only one there is altogether in the people in question, for all expressions of their life except sexuality are constrained by rites, tabus, traditions, etc., to the limit of the endurable. Therefore if I give here only a few examples and limit myself to more general statements, this is because to give a detailed cultural comparison would require not an essay or a book, but rather an encyclopedia in which, in every case, along with child sexuality the whole of the respective culture of a people would be treated. Brought to a simple sounding but pertinent common denominator, one may in good conscience declare about the child sexuality of primitive peoples: There is simply nothing that does not occur. And the farther one goes back historically to include in the analysis the circumstances of antiquity or those of the ancient Orient and the civilizations of Asia in the past, then the more colorful are the results presented.<sup>27</sup> As cause of any particular evaluation of child sexuality found among primitive peoples, the following may be agreed upon in general: The respective racial traditions with their myths, their genesis and fertility legends, and further the cultural characteristics of the groups in question, now treated as geographically spread out and viewed in connection with race, language (language families), lineal descent (patriarchal or matriarchal), as well as their economic and ecological particularities, religion, economic relations, natural resources along with the ecological environment all together (also their changes in the course of time!) prove themselves to be directly related to one another everywhere.

An institutionalization of child sexuality occurs within the framework of initiations (mainly in Melanesia, parts of Australia and New Guinea); it resembles the paederastic educational practices of ancient Sparta.<sup>28</sup> Sexual contacts between the girl just beginning to menstruate and an adult are to be judged less according to the old European custom of the "jus prima noctis" than as a component of the "rites of passage" from one stage of life to the next.<sup>29</sup> In the setting of the category of shamanistic religions there occasionally appear very young individuals as mediums, who feel themselves erotically bound to spirits, and sometimes believe that they are forced by the spirits to become transvestites and therefore, in a state of imagined "sex change", select same-sex marriage partners. Such bondings, however, do not attract social attention, since the shaman's society firmly believes in the supposed sex change. In large parts of India, but also in Indonesia, ancient China and Indochina as well as in the Philippines, there were and are to the present day elements of the cult prostitution of the old civilizations. Admittedly these are nothing but a secularized reminder, and socially marked as prostitution of the poor, in which children are also to be found.<sup>30</sup>

The sexual behaviour of children and youth in many peoples, such as in the Pacific region, where individuals were especially long-lived by reason of above average environmental circumstances, presents the transition between institutional child sexuality and child sexuality in or as play. Here a regular youth culture tended to develop, in which no adult was allowed to enter or interfere. Usually boys and girls met in their own house, where they were undisturbed among themselves; they tried out friendships and love relationships, and celebrated their own festivals. Such arrangements, actually called "clubs" by European researchers, existed in Polynesia, Central India and Micronesia. Here the "peer group" took over on its own the sexual education of its members.<sup>31</sup>

The preponderant opinion among primitive peoples is that child sexuality manifests itself differently from that of adults: it is more playful and less goal-directed. Heterosexual and homosexual play among children, but also of adults with children, occurs and is hardly noticed, is smiled at, or is so common that it is a theme of ordinary conversations.<sup>32</sup> Sexual contacts between parents and children (especially between mothers and small children), which we would

designate as "paedophile" were not rare and are probably still not today in places where the culture of the white man has not become the model or where its influence is in the process of disappearing again.

3.) Connections Between Sexual Drive, Sexual Maturity and Social Maturity in Anthropoid Apes and Human Beings  
Chimpanzees become capable of reproduction at about age eight, yet at this point their bodily growth is still not complete and they are inferior to the stronger, older males in their group. This can be a source of frustration for them.<sup>33</sup> Before attaining the ability to procreate and conceive, chimpanzee children nonetheless have for years already been sexually mature to the extent that they, through observation and their own experimentation, have learned a lot about sexuality within the group. It is a question here of a cognitive learning that builds on the sexuality available from birth (earlier called "sexual drive") and directs it into the course that is appropriate for their species; in this their bodily experiences are not to be separated from the social ones.

In those primitive peoples that take a neutral, indifferent-tolerant or positive attitude toward sexuality in general and that of children in particular, the circumstances are very similar; we human beings, too, are indeed capable of sexual pleasure and frustration much earlier than the onset of puberty. But puberty (particularly in boys) is not in all societies the end of childhood nor can it be equated with social maturity, i.e., ability to marry. What is decisive is whether the culture in question is simply-structured or complicated, where much must be learned for its complete internalization (i.e., more than a person is able to learn up to puberty) and where social maturity, the sexual maturity as well as the actual ability to procreate, can only follow at a distance that is, at times, very great. In such cases all three abilities (for simple sexuality, for procreation, and for the assumption of the adult role besides) are often falsely put into one, and thus the individual is kept an unseemly long period totally in the stage of childhood. In primitive peoples the response has sometimes been the development of the youth culture mentioned (a type of reaction to which our own youth have come relatively late). Without this possibility of sexual contacts, which are allowed to them although they are not yet in a position to take on the official role of adults, there comes between the adults and the next generation strong interpersonal conflicts that for their entire later life often overshadow the parent-child relationship.

#### **IV. Child Sexuality and Curiosity**

So-called "curiosity"<sup>34</sup> is presumably to be viewed less as a measure of intelligence than as a disposition that some species of primates have, in the sense of a selective advantage, more than others. Thus the gorilla, which stands physically almost as close to us as the chimpanzee, shows little or no curiosity,<sup>35</sup> whereas the curiosity of the chimpanzee appears inexhaustible and our own, the root of all inventions, proceeds continuously from them in a straight line. Strictly speaking, curiosity is an especially intensive and active reaction to an outside stimulant and to that extent also a source of imitation and learning; without the imitation of newly invented types of behaviour there would be no progress. Chimpanzees and (early) humans, in contrast to the much stronger gorilla, had a host of enemies and the more methods they adopted to cope with them, the better they succeeded. Their heightened curiosity offered a real selective advantage for survival, especially because it was unspecific. For the human being today, too, curiosity as an inborn disposition is important for survival.

When a child directs curiosity to its own sexuality, trying it out within its peer group, it thus puts into practice two inborn dispositions: curiosity and the inborn ability for sexual feelings (within the limit of the degree of bodily maturity at the time, of course). In such situations the following reactions of the child are distinguishable: it reacts passively when it either simply observes what is happening around it or when it accepts the sexual actions of others toward itself without resistance or going away, but also without an active cooperation. Active sexual reaction (masturbation) can be directed to its own gratification or this gratification can be sought by and with others who are younger, older or the same age. In both situations curiosity (i.e., imitative learning behaviour) and behaviour directed to obtaining purely sexual gratification are superimposed by that cognitive learning within whose context the respective culture-specific preceptive and forbidden forms of sexual gratification are internalized. Generally children imitate only what interests them: curiosity selectively appears, corresponding to the respective (and certainly highly diverse) motivations of the individual child, and the cognitive result is stored and later differentiated as the age of the children increases. Children actively cooperate in their own socialization; they also do so with regard to the development of their sexuality, even when their behaviour does not go beyond an accepting passivity. How important a child's self-fulfillment is regarding its sexual interests is strikingly shown by at least one fact: both in non-human free-living primates and in those primitive peoples that cultivate a type of rearing that fully accepts child sexuality there are no sexual crimes! On the other hand, in anthropoid apes that grew up in isolation, i.e., without the possibility of learning experiences, wild aggression is found in the attempt to copulate, and in primitive peoples that, like us, have assumed a forbidding, fearful-mistrustful attitude toward sexuality, sexual crimes are thoroughly known.

#### **V. Child Sexuality and the Paedophile Impulse**

##### **I.) The Meaning of the "Infant" Model**

Already in non-human primates the raising of the young is no longer ensured exclusively on the basis of instinctive rearing behaviour:<sup>36</sup> Thus, for example, chimpanzee mothers must have the opportunity to observe how to handle babies in order to know how. Without the possibility of imitating rearing behaviour, they sometimes regard their first child as a foreign object and a puzzling nuisance; they pay no attention to it or even kill it.<sup>37</sup> This occurs despite the fact that evolution, in the so-called "infant" model ("Kindchen"-Schema),<sup>38</sup> has installed a safety mechanism that makes possible the recognition of a young animal of the same species in need of care and protection, as a reflex, illuminating perception. Corresponding to their high rank on the scale of evolution, however, in anthropoid apes the importance of learning as a factor in the handling of the newcomer is added to instinctive-reflex nurturing. This is demonstrated by the fact that female chimpanzees that grew up alone in cages still sometimes treated their baby correctly at the first attempt, i.e., with loving care. The intensity of the reaction to the infant model must accordingly have been stamped in these primates, only in varying strengths. In general people react to the infant model, in the sense of an encoded stimulus (Schlüsselreiz), by heightened acceptance and, where it is a question of living, not pictured beings, by "euphoria, caressing or nurturing actions."<sup>39</sup> "Nurturing actions" are primarily to be understood as feeding, warming and protecting. The enormous popularity of certain breeds of dogs (e.g., pug and Pekinese), which were bred on the infant model centuries before it was scientifically discovered as an encoded stimulus for nurturing behaviour, strikingly exhibits the associations under discussion: such dogs have been known and loved for a long time as "baby" substitutes and "lap dogs". Yet not all persons find Disney figures "sweet" or babies or Pekinese "cute"; rather, many find them boring, even decidedly ugly and grotesque. They thus show an ideal of beauty that is exclusively oriented toward adult living beings. They are not child-hating monsters; what is missing is evidently just the

ability to still relate to the infant model. But that this, as was mentioned above, can already be found in chimpanzees forces us to the conclusion that the stored instinctual ability of the individual to react in a meaningful way to the encoded stimulus is in humans also no longer generally present. Many lack it entirely, while others still react to it very intensively with euphoria and acts of devotion, which, especially when the reacting individuals are not women, are noted by the society with a certain astonishment. The functioning of the infant model in male primates is very much as important as in mothers; it makes certain that a young animal running around without motherly protection is not attacked by a grown male of the same species, but rather, on the contrary, is protected. The infant model also presents a means to hinder aggression within the species, especially toward young animals.

The "fondling" connected with the reaction to the infant model in non-human primates, and in those primitive peoples that have no tabus relating to this, includes caresses, smelling, licking, "romping", and the well-known "grooming". Touching and manipulation of the genitals of children belong in this context among the acts of devotion,<sup>40</sup> because in humans, as a result of the heightened mobility of the hand, "actions" can supplement many of the forms of devotion mentioned above. Their own reaction to the encoded stimulus of the infant model brings to those reacting an intensive experience of satisfaction (the "reward" of nature. so to speak, for the response to the encoded stimulus).

The child, who has already learned after a short time how such forms of behaviour-classified by it, of course, as desirable-are provoked in adults, develops for this purpose an appropriate repertoire of expressions and gestures, and, if new devotion is experienced with their help, there arises in it the feeling of security and primal trust. That exchange of positive actions and feelings, in which genetically fixed reflexive behaviour and social learning are mixed, form the beginning of every bond that promotes social unity. Both young non-human primates and human children still seem to have a vague, instinctive knowledge of the effect of the infant model on adults; therefore they put on a "little child" act so as not to be punished for pranks or to gain attention (i.e., devotion). Here belongs not only the childish calculated "regressive" behaviour of young anthropoid apes and young children, which is meant to release appeasement, attention and heightened devotion, but also the well-known "fooling around" of grown-ups (deliberate stumbling and falling, stuttering, throwing things down, rolling around, talking nonsense): this is nothing but unconscious imitation of childish behaviour and says in a nonverbal but unmistakable way, 'I am small and dumb and helpless as a baby; why don't you concern yourself about me?!' This extends to the clowning-around of school children, whose bad behaviour, not corresponding to their age, often causes them to appear intellectually deficient, although what they need is not more sense but more devotion from adults.

## 2.) On the Etiology of the Paedophile impulse

In contrast to the anthropoid apes (and presumably also to many of our prehuman ancestors that stand closer to us in evolution), we humans are "wanderers between two worlds": one side of our nature is firmly anchored in our genetic inheritance, which we have in common at least with the anthropoid apes and perhaps even with animals standing much lower in the scale of evolution. We are unable to give up this inheritance, since it is unchangeably imprinted in our brain stem and midbrain. The other part of our nature is determined by learning and by freedom from bondage to the "early" parts of the brain, i.e., by the cerebrum and especially by the frontal lobes. Where the impulses of the older and younger parts of the brain prove to be incompatible, there appear social anomalies<sup>41</sup> - collective neuroses as well as conflicts within the species, i.e., wars, as well as institutions such as the inquisition, concentration camps, etc. In the West paedophiles have become the victims of such a collective neurosis, whose culturally determined cause lies in our traditional hatred, fed from multiple sources, of the body and thereby of sex.

Paedophiles who seek to define and describe the object of their longing often reproduce the infant model with striking sureness.<sup>42</sup> And as conclusion to what has been presented so far, let us assert the theory-at least as a topic for discussion-that the paedophile impulse is the result of a still unbroken spontaneous and intensive reaction-which has become rare, certainly-to the infant model, an encoded stimulus originating in the midbrain, such as may have been intrinsic to many more people in earlier epochs. Paedophiles emphasize again and again that sexuality is not the constituent factor in their relationships with children, but rather only one-important, to be sure-among numerous other and not less important ones. They further declare that in their opinion 'many people have an interest in paedophilia, but repress it'. This observation may be true within limits, but the conclusion is false: my opinion is rather that many people do indeed still react impulsively and intensely to the infant model (otherwise it would doubtless not be so popular in advertising!), but just no longer quite as strongly as the paedophile. Thus it is easy for these people to do without the sexual component of their contact with children, which in truth does not represent something as unique and noteworthy as it appears to us, but rather has acquired this character only through the sexual fear that the basic body-hating pattern of our culture produces. People can do without this component in their contact with children, but one could also place special value upon it, indeed see it as an altogether important value. The moralistic judgement against paedophilia is always "learned", is a cerebral matter.<sup>43</sup>

Healthy children react with curiosity to everything that happens in their environment. Since they are interested in their own socialization, which includes becoming acquainted with their own sexuality and the sexual feelings of others, then in child-adult contacts, sexual content also is inevitably included, wherever it is not made tabu. Sexuality must be learned: that is one reason why children are interested in it, and children prefer to learn from someone who loves them. To this extent one would think that the natural teachers for this would be the child's own parents, and in anthropoid apes and some primitive peoples this is indeed the case. Parental introductions to sexuality, however, are *never* the beginning of a lifelong sexual relationship; on the contrary they have an absolutely temporary character. The fact is worth noting that paedophile child-adult contacts correspond to parental introductions to sexuality in that they tend to end with the puberty of the child and, in addition, that the paedophile can have equally strong emotional relationships with several children during the same period of time. Moreover, rounding out the picture is the circumstance, denied by most people who pass judgement, that for the paedophile, the sexuality of the child with whom he wishes to have contact is only of secondary interest.

## 3) The Fundamental Nonaggressiveness of Paedophile Relationships

Since the infant model arouses nurturing devotion and forms an unalterable basis for nonaggressiveness, paedophile contacts must by their nature be free of force. If they are not, then they are not paedophile. Those who force a child to sexual contact belong to a category of pseudo-paedophiles who are just as truly criminal as a man who rapes a grown woman. But sexual contact by force is not attractive for paedophiles. The widespread opinion, where such a relationship is discovered, that the paedophile must have "forced" the child into sexuality, reproduces once again the Western ideology of a fundamental child "innocence" or "purity" that has long since been disproved by psychology. In

truth, the child may often even be the sexual initiator with an adult in whom, by way of exception, the child does not notice the usual tabu toward all questions about sex. Declarations by paedophiles in this connection are thus by no means to be evaluated as defensive statements. Likewise, the often expressed conviction that children are "seduced" to sexuality is to be seen as pure nonsense. When one takes cognizance of the basic physiological endowment of sexual feelings already in the small child. One can "seduce" someone to sexuality just as little as to eating or drinking. Paedophile relationships also constitute no inevitable power relationship of the adult over the child: they establish on the contrary a seldom seen camaraderie between the personality of the child and that of the adult, within whose system of reference each takes the other seriously. Where sexuality with children is forbidden, as it is with us, there can be no talk of any kind of power of the adult, since the child can denounce him at any time to anyone, something which brings with it truly existence-threatening consequences for the adult.

Contrary to the customary opinion, sexual murders of children are extremely rare, but even in such shocking cases a distinction must be made between sadism and actions motivated by a fear of discovery. In the cultural domain paedophiles are considered criminal no matter whether their contacts with children are friendly and loving or are extremely harmful. It is this criminalization that brings with it most of the consequences that finally must be judged negative for the paedophile as well as for the child in question. Paedophiles who do not constantly maintain a self-awareness and an examination of the child's reactions are naive. Nevertheless their environment has at some time or another unmistakably inculcated into both partners that sex is something nasty and bad. Thus they often have feelings of guilt—all the more serious when in fact nothing happened in the contact that the partners did not experience as positive.

If force comes into play, then the intimate contact of an adult with a child acts exclusively to frighten the child and can lead to lifelong harm. Ironically, it is often overlooked that in the cases of sexual contact with children often presented as being particularly horrible, the force used is in the first place the force of authority: the perpetrators are fathers, stepfathers, older brothers, uncles, neighbors—precisely those people whom children customarily find themselves forced to obey. The forced sexual contact is therefore interpreted by the child as a form of rearing, to which the child must obediently submit. The paedophile impulse, like every other human impulse, runs the danger of being perverted, but the perversion does not lie in the impulse itself, certainly, but rather in its interpretation. Where sex between older and younger, even between parents and children, is not made tabu, it is not grounds for shame, mutual accusations of seduction, lies or force of various kinds. Examples of this are found in the pre-Aryan races of India, the Kighiz, in Micronesia and the Malay-Indonesian region. Are the aborigines of India or the members of the Malay family of peoples therefore not human? The question is rhetorical; I only want to emphasize one last time that our Western fear of paedophile contacts is determined above all by the sexual tabu as such.

#### **VI. Problems of Research on Paedophilia**

The start given in this essay to a discussion illuminating the etiology of the paedophile impulse may need enlarging, may be one-sided or false. One is left, however, with nothing more than theories about it, for what would be needed here to clarify the remaining questions are international empirical researches, ranging over many fields, of a social-psychological nature.<sup>44</sup> For us (in the Federal Republic of Germany) these are impossible at the moment, for whoever investigates nonaggressive paedophile contacts must necessarily be actively occupied with people who are living out the paedophile impulse, and with their child partners. But the information that is thereby obtained must, by law, be reported to the responsible state's attorney, since under German law paedophilia belongs to those crimes that everyone must denounce if they hear of it. The exception of professional confidentiality, as with doctors and pastors, does not exist for social researchers. An attorney of my acquaintance commented on the situation thus: "You had better not begin such a project. The state would not be able to avoid demanding that you turn over the names and addresses of your informants so as to begin prosecution. And you can not refuse, otherwise you would be imprisoned to force you."

In view of this absurd situation, I argue that sociologists and psychologists, too, who wish to undertake empirical work on the behaviour, development, personality profile, etc., of the "typical paedophile", also be juridically released from the duty of denouncing our informants. As Edward Brongersma has written, the literature (and not least the expert opinions given in the courts) is stamped with conceptions of paedophilia and paedophiles that are false and have their ideological origin in the previous century.<sup>45</sup> Until more valid analyses exist, this will not and cannot change; but how is it to be changed, if for the researcher the effort to make a better analysis is bound up with the danger of being robbed of one's freedom? Here closes a vicious circle, whose victims are not only paedophiles, but also the behavioral sciences.

Paedophilia is the least investigated scientifically of all sexual "deviations". This is so because in it the general sexual tabu still has the most intensive effect. With the notorious imputation that every paedophile contact is forced, completely prejudiced public opinion prevents a more realistic view of things: the prejudice itself hinders its dissolution and is able to evoke in those involved and in outsiders further insecurity, fears, and even actually punishable, reprehensible acts. One is reminded of the old German legal adage: "False laws ripen into genuine crimes."

#### *Editor's Note:*

*Dr. Gisela Bleibtreu-Ehrenberg originally worked as a telex and telephone operator. She returned to complete high-school studies as an adult, then received her M. A. and Ph. D. degrees from Bonn, studying ethnology, sociology, comparative religion and psychology. She has long been active in political organizations, journalism and special education. Her publications in the areas of ethnology and sexuality include Tabu Homosexualität (1978), Mannbarkeitsriten: Zur institutionellen Paderastie bei Papuas und Melanesiern (1980), and Der Weibmann: kultische Geschlechtswandel im Schamanismus (1984).*

#### **Notes**

1. An abridged version of this article was published as *Der paedophile Impuls. Wie lernt ein junger Mensch Sexualität?* in *Liebe, Sexualität und soziale Mythen (Der Monat neue Folge)* 295, 1984, pp. 175-192.
2. Translated from the German by Dr. Hubert Kennedy.
3. A more extensive presentation of this connection is in Gisela Bleibtreu-Ehrenberg, *Homosexualität. Die Geschichte eines Vorurteils (Frankfurt/M., 1978), pp. 196ff.* The traditional hatred of the body in our civilization goes back to the

pre-Christian philosophers and thinkers of ancient Greece,<sup>3</sup>

4. In places in Jan van Ussel, *Sexualunterdackung* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1970).

5. Examples in Bleibtreu-Ehrenberg, op. cit., pp. 196-228, 265ff.

6. J.J. Rousseau, *Emile oder Über die Erziehung* (Paderborn, 1978) pp. 9, 216ff.

7. See Frits Bernard, *Padophilie. Von der Liebe mit Kindern* (Lollar, 1978), esp. pp. 53-4.

8. Statements on this in Hans Gliese, "Das andere Geschlecht", in Hans Gliese and V.E. v. Gebattel, eds., *Psychopathologie der Sexualität* (Stuttgart, 1962), are probably still valid today, as numerous articles on the subject in the journal *Sexualpädagogik* show. Wo?

9. The much loved equation of human behaviour with that of rats ("rat-ology") of American psychologists in the animal-human comparisons of the 1950's is completely unsuited to a clarification of the present question, since these animals are much too distant from us in the scale of evolution.

10. Easily obtainable works on research into animal and human behaviour include the following, a number of which are not directly connected with the theme of this essay but which provide general background to the topic: (Ed. Note: Titles of English translations or originals, where known to us, are given after the German title; however, page references are for the German edition.) Geoffrey H. Bourne and Maury Cohen, *Die sanften Riesen. Gorillas-Legende und Wirklichkeit. Ergebnisse der Verhaltensforschung* (München, 1977), in English, *The Gentle Giants: The Gorilla Story* (New York, 1975); Stella Brewer, *Die Affenschule. Neue Wege der Wildtierforschung* (Wien/Hamburg, 1978); Vitus B. Drascher, *Diefreundliche Bestie. Neueste Forschungen über das Tier-Verhalten* (Oldenburg/Hamburg, 1968), in English, *The Friendly Beasts* (New York, 1971); Irendus Eibl-Eibesfeldt, *Liebe und Hass. Zu Naturgeschichte elementarer Verhaltensweisen* (München, 1971), in English, *Love and Hate: the Natural History of Basic Behaviour Patterns* (London, 1971); Alison Jolly, *Die Entwicklung des Primatenverhaltens* (Stuttgart, 1975), in English, *The Evolution of Primate Behaviour* (New York, 1972); G. Kurth and Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt (eds.), *Hominisation und Verhalten* (Stuttgart, 1975); Jane van Lawick-Goodall, *Wilde Schimpansen. 10 Jahre Verhaltensforschung am Gombe-Strom* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1975), in English, *In the Shadow of Man* (New York, 1971); Eugene Marais, *Die Seele des Affen. Beobachtungen über das Verhalten unserer engsten Seelenverwandten* (Esslingen, 1973), in English, *The Soul of the Ape* (New York, 1969); Paul Overhage, *Der Affe in dir. Vom tierischen und menschlichen Verhalten* (Frankfurt, 1972); George B. Schaller, *Unsere nächsten Verwandten* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1968), in English, *The Year of the Gorilla* (London, 1965); Walter Baumgartel, *Unter Gorillas. Erlebnisse auf freier Wildbahn* (Frankfurt, 1979); Grzimek's *Tierleben, Säugetiere 1* (München, 1979), esp. chapters 2022; Edouard L. Boné and Louvain-La-Neuve, "Hominisation in der Paläontologie", in Edouard L. Boné et al. (eds.), *Aspekte der Hominisation* (Freiburg/München, 1978).

11. Jolly, op. cit., summarizes the concept of "learning" on pp. 313 and 288E. Human beings are not the same as beasts, and the greater the nearness of the anthropoid apes to homo sapiens in the rank of evolution is presented, the more care is required in comparisons of this kind.

12. Clellan S. Ford and Frank A. Beach, *Das Sexualverhalten von Mensch und Tier* (Berlin, 1960), p. 294ff., in English, *Patterns of Sexual Behaviour* (New York, 1951). In the human being pure instinctive behaviour is strongly reduced. Possibly, however, the degree of the remainder of instinct still present in each individual of our kind varies and is related besides to the domain of the instinct, so that much that in reality is perhaps a remainder of instinct appears, falsely, as something individual, through factors of social behaviour appropriate to personal socialization,<sup>12</sup>

13. Jolly, op. cit., pp. 217, 288-95. The importance of learning for primates depends on their form of life; unlike martens, bears or moles, for example, primates are not loners, but social beings, and practically everything they learn is learned through and from adult members of their group or older siblings or somewhat older members of their "peer group". Learning and the forming of a tradition tend always and necessarily to be bound up with one another; at first, no doubt, predominately those "customs" were continued that made survival easier.

14. Kurth and Eibl-Eibesfeldt, op. cit., p. 383; Peter Heintz, *Soziale Vorurteile* (Köln, 1957), p. 100; Theodore Newcomb, *Sozialpsychologie* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1957), p. 561: "Even nonexistent things, such as ghosts, for example, are in a social sense truly present for the members of every group that assumes their presence and are agreed on it." In English, *Social Psychology*, (New York, 1950). The enormous differences in the traditions that are found among human beings makes clear how manifold (and sometimes, from our modern standpoint, meaningless) are the traditions that have been handed down (such as the belief in local spirits, the power of ancestors, the danger of some special kind of sex, food tabus, etc.). In spite of their absurdity, however, such traditions are neither conscious deceptions of priests nor savage superstitions. Rather, every tradition acts in spite of its objective truth as social cement. The same mechanism holds for social prejudices.<sup>14</sup>

15. Jolly, op. cit., pp. 150, 168. 16. Ibid., pp. 115, 118, 122, 143, 148, 151, 168ff. Primates become sexually mature at very different ages, according to how long-lived the respective species is on the average. Many young monkeys and anthropoid apes only a few days old already show forms of behaviour that appear to be derived from sexual ones, but which in that early stage of life obviously are not yet "meant" as sexual. Thus, for example, the exhibition of the penis (with an erection) is a display of power and in certain monkeys (Totenkopffaffen), when they are babies, is to be classified as a playful imitation of the threatening gestures of adult males.

17. Ford and Beach, op. cit., pp. 294ff.

18. Ford and Beach, op. cit. pp. 293ff., Jolly, op. cit. pp. 173ff, 112-134.

19. On the definition of the concept see Jolly, op. cit., pp. 1-5; monkeys and human beings belong to the primates.

20. H. Heckhausen, "Einflüsse auf die Motivationsgenese in Theo. Herman (ed.), *Psychologie der Erziehungssituation* (Göttingen, 1966).



21. jolly, op. cit., pp. 112-134; Ford and Beach, op. cit., pp. 293E.
22. jolly, op. cit., pp. 213, 172 and passim.
23. The error is stubbornly maintained; it is unscientific and ethnocentric. Different views prevail in the various research disciplines on just where the dividing line between beasts and human beings is to be drawn; at the latest, the beginning of culture is equated with the human domestication of fire, which Peking man already knew. For an in-depth study of the whole complex of the acquisition of culture see Ute Holzkamp-Osterkamp, *Grundlagen der psychologischen Motivationsforschung*, vols. 1-2 (Frankfurt/M., 1977, 1978); see also Volker Schurig, *Naturgeschichte des Psychischen. Lernen und Abstraktionsleistungen bei Tieren* (Frankfurt/M., 1975) and by the same author, *Die Entstehung des Bewusstseins* (Frankfurt/M., 1976). „The usual division between civilized and primitive peoples easily leads the uninitiated astray: it is self-evident that there are no human beings without culture”
24. Ford and Beach, op. cit., pp. 213ff.
25. Ibid., pp. 211ff. 26. Ibid., pp. 203ff. 27. Examples in N.M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story*, vol. III, Appendix II (London, 1925).
28. See my ethno-historical study *Mannbarkeitsriten* (Berlin, 1980) and the important work of Harald Patzer, "Die griechische Knaberiliebe", in *Sitzungsberichte d. wissenschaftl. Ges. an d. Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität*, Frankfurt/M., vol. 18, tir. 1 (Wiesbaden, 1982).
29. See A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago, 1960).
30. Examples in my essay "Homosexualität und Transvestition im Schamanismus" *Anthropos* 65 (1970), pp. 189ff; shocking descriptions from a more recent time are in Lawrence Durrell, *Das Alexandria Quartett* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1977).
31. Examples in Robert Brain, *Freunde und Liebende. Zwischenmenschliche Beziehungen im Kulturvergleich* (Frankfurt/M., 1976), p. 292ff., in English, *Friends and Lovers*, (New York, 1976).
32. Ford and Beach, op. cit., pp. 178ff, 213ff.
33. See the analysis of the behaviour of half-grown male chimpanzees in Jane van Lawick-Goodall *The Behaviour of the Chimpanzee*, in Kurth and Eibl-Eibesfeldt, op. cit., P. 110ff.
34. The connections between curiosity and sexual exploration of the self and others are probably as a result of the old sexual tabus largely unexplored. The important publication of Harry Fowler, *Curiosity and Exploratory Behaviour* (New York, 1985), treats the theme on pp. 74ff, with a few references to further reading in the literature; see also jolly, op. cit., pp. 282E.
35. See Kurth and Eibl-Eibesfeldt, op. cit., pp. 14ff, jolly, op. cit., pp. 123ff, 146; for gorillas there was probably, after a period in which both tree and savannah living was usual and the importance of visual observations increased, a forced withdrawal into the forest that was caused by the more intelligent prehomonids that have died out in the meantime. Although gorillas in captivity readily eat the same things as chimpanzees, in freedom they only eat twenty different kinds of plants, whereas the feeding repertoire of the chimpanzee includes more than two hundred sources: curiosity promotes discoveries that make life easier.
36. One can no longer speak today with a good scientific conscience of purely instinctual nurturing behaviour in mammals; this is admissible, however, in birds and reptiles, as well as species that are below them on the evolutionary scale.
37. Examples in *Grzimeks Tierleben*, vol. 1, Säugetiere, p. 533. 38. jolly, op. cit., pp. 185-88, 194.
39. For a definition of the concept see Peter Meyer, *Lexikon der Verhaltenskunde* (Paderborn, 1976), p. 104: "Childish contours and proportions of the skull arouse euphoria, caressing or nurturing behaviour in human beings (SchRisselreiz) 51 ; "Childish contours and proportions (especially of the face) and in a wider sense also childish sounds and movements of individuals of the same or a different species, which arouse the nurturing drive of adults."
40. jolly, op. cit., pp. 121, 157; Ford and Beach, op. cit. pp. 293ff.
41. On this concept, see Werner Fuchs (ed.), *Lexikon zur Soziologie* (Opladen, 1973), p. 38: "The breakdown of cultural order in the form of a split in the culturally given goals and values on the one hand and the socially allowed possibility of reaching these goals on the other. The situation of anomaly exerts in the individual a pressure toward deviant behaviour and is overcome through the various forms of adjustment according to the recognition or rejection of the cultural goals and values or the means allowed." (Defined following R. Merton, who has been especially concerned with the anomalous situation of marginal social groups.)
42. See Uwe Kroll, "Objekt meiner Schnsucht", *Zitty*, tir. 26 (Berlin, 1979), reprinted in Joachim S. Holimatin (ed.) *Paedophilie heute* (Frankfurt/Berlin, 1980), pp. 155E. It is also significant in this connection that paedophiles only experience sexually stimulating pictures of young persons as attractive if the faces of those pictured appear "happy" or "beaming".
43. On the connection between the development of the brain in human beings and the at least partial- "liberation- of the higher (i.e., later developed) parts of the brain from the tyranny of the brain stem and midbrain see the excellent newer research interpretations of Gordon Rattray Taylor, *Die Geburt des Geistes* (Frankfurt/M., 1982), in English, *The Natural History of the Mind* (New York, 1981), and Karl R. Popper and John C. Eccles, *Das Ich und sein Gehirn* (München/Zürich, 1982), in English, *The Self and Its Brain* (New York, 1977).
44. Here may be mentioned the works of Dr. Frits Bernard and Dr. Edward Brongersma as well as the research by Michael Baurmann. Newer works from abroad may also be named: Theo Sandfort, *Sexual Aspect of Paedophile Relations* (Amsterdam, 1982) and *Boys on their Contacts with Men* (New York and Amsterdam, 1987); L.L. Constantine and Floyd Martinson, *Children and Sex: New Findings, New Perspectives* (Boston, 1981).
45. Edward Brongersma, "Die Rechtsposition des Paedophilen", *Monatsschrift für Kriminologie und Strafrechtsreform* 63,



nr. 2 (1980). See, for example, the presentation in the psychiatric textbook, Jorg Weitbrecht, *Psychiatrie im Grundriss* (Berlin/Göttingen/Heidelberg, 1983) where, on pp. 143, paedophilia, homosexuality, bisexuality, exhibitionism, voyeurism and other "perversions" are still traced back to "defective maturation from so-called constitutional reasons or through exogenous, environmental impressions and hindrances to maturity, or both together. " And an entirely new vocabulary has recently been created in the U.S.A. for that behaviour which is designated by us in the Federal Republic of Germany as -sexually deviant-, namely "paraphilia", defined by Dr. John Money as "anerotic" sexual syndrome in which a person is reiteratively responsive to and dependent on atypical or forbidden stimulus imagery, in fantasy or in practice, for initiation and maintenance of erotic-sexual arousal and achievement or facilitation of orgasm" (quoted in *Pan, m-* 12 (Amsterdam, 1982), p. 44-5). Having such "atypical" and/or -forbidden- thoughts is suggested to be identical with sickness C'syndrome"): here the---moral insanity" of the 18th and 19th centuries celebrates a shocking resurrection.