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Propaganda about science

T. Rivas

It usually is quite a thrill to find one's name mentioned on the internet, especially if it does not concern your looks or other trivia. However, I have personally been mentioned in the context of one or more articles that aim against a study by Rind, Tromovitch and Bauserman. These investigators have, as I interpret it, empirically shown that not all sexual contacts between adults and minors are involuntary and that *if* the contact is voluntary the minor will typically not suffer any psychological harm from the contact as such. Opponents of these conclusions, mostly with a conservative background, have tried to brand their study as an example of shameless propaganda for pedophiles rather than a serious, reliable scientific study.

Thus, I am personally mentioned on the internet as one of several Dutch authors who want to promote "pseudoscience" in the cause of 'pedophilia'. More concretely, I am quoted as follows:

"It is necessary to find adults who as a child or adolescent experienced a positive relationship with an adult, and who after having grown up, still maintain that they have not suffered because of that relationship on a long term basis, but rather keep cherishing the memory of it."

The author adds:

"He [meaning Rivas] solicits positive stories and cautions that it would be best if the referred adults were not now pedophiles. Rivas says that upon its publication, the report can be used it as 'a tool of emancipation.'"

[* In: Dallam, S. J. (2002). Science or Propaganda? An examination of Rind, Tromovitch and Bauserman (1998). *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 9(3/4), 109-134.]

From this correct, but incomplete quotation the reader can get several wrong impressions:

- ◆ 1. First of all, that I am advocating the collection of delusional experiences or even the creation of unrealistic and misleading stories.
- ◆ 2. That I want to promote the emancipation of *any* kind of sexual contact between adults and children, in other words that I wish to show opponents of such contacts are wrong in all cases.
- ◆ 3. That I am probably a 'predator' myself who wishes to rape or abuse young children or has already done so.
(By the way, I am not saying the person quoting me wishes to create this impression.)

- ◆ 4. That the emancipation of any kind of 'pedophilia' is my main or even sole intellectual project. (Idem.)

Let me use this opportunity to respond to all of these possible impressions:

1.

I am not advocating the use of any non-substantiated or unreliable stories for any purpose. As a psychologist, I am only interested in reliable case histories. I am convinced of the existence of real voluntary and harmless contacts or relationships between adults and children because of previous studies by Theo Sandfort, etc.

2.

I do not promote the emancipation of all kinds of sexual contact between adults and children. I strongly believe in the nasty reality of sexual abuse, rape, child pornography, child prostitution, etc. It is my only aim to emancipate *voluntary* and of course *harmless* relationships, not to deny that many sexual contacts are involuntary, abusive and very harmful. I simply want there to be more attention for one particular category which does not get enough attention in this context. My agenda was about real affectionate, mutual *relationships*, not about covering up rape or abuse.

3.

I naturally cannot 'prove' that I am not a predator. However, there certainly are no records or files of my having raped or abused any children (or adults) nor of my having been involved in child pornography or trafficking or other related crimes. I have never had a sexual relationship with a youngster. However, as an adult I have had close personal (platonic) friendships with children that were not tolerated by important persons in my direct social environment. This is what made me decide to get involved in the main general movement for the emancipation of voluntary relationships (i.e. Ipce), after I generally found them to be civilized, well-informed and reasonable.

I have written articles about platonic friendships (such as my own) and also about erotic relationships (of others). My own experiences with societal taboos has made me very sensitive to caricatures, bigotry, prejudice, and witch hunts. At first I specifically wanted to contribute to the emancipation of platonic relationships and after some reading I decided I simply wished to contribute to the emancipation of *any **voluntary** relationships*.

As a liberal thinker, I cannot accept irrational taboos. For me, abuse is about involuntary, harmful sex, not about sex, eroticism and tenderness in general. As said before, I am a real 'freethinker', including in moral, sexual and political matters (though not on a materialist basis).

4.

Although the emancipation of voluntary relationships remains on my own intellectual agenda, it was never my *only* project. It is just one of my many scholarly endeavors as an unconventional psychologist and philosopher.

Here is a full overview on the Ipce-website of the issues concerning the important work by Rind, Tromovitch and Bauserman.

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