

# PAIDIKA

The Journal of Paedophilia



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# **PAIDIKA**

## **The Journal of Paedophilia**

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**[p.i, inside front cover]**



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## CONTENTS

- Interview: Gilbert Herdt 2
- Graham Ovenden 18
- Introduction *Laurence A. Stanley* 18
- Guest Editorial: The Fall from Grace *Graham Ovenden* 20
- Poems and Drawings *Graham Ovenden* 22
- A Shrine to Love and Sorrow: Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fensen **Fersen**  
(1880-1923) *Will H.L. Ogrinc* 30
- The Sexual Experience of Children, Part II *Theo Sandfort* 59
- Book Notes 79
- Book Review: *Childhood and Sexuality: A radical Christian Approach* 85

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## INTERVIEW: GILBERT HERDT

Dr. Gilbert Herdt is currently Professor of The Committee on Human Development, and the Departments of Psychology and The College, The University of Chicago. He is also Director, Center for Research on Culture and Mental Health, the University of Chicago. For the past year he has been Visiting Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Amsterdam.

As a leading anthropologist, his ground-breaking field research into man-boy insemination rites among the Sambia in New Guinea has stirred much comment and controversy. All together he has spent more than two-and-a-half years living in a remote Sambia village, beginning in 1974 and continuing even today with periodic visits. He is just completing an ethnographic documentary film project for the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) entitled, "Sambia Gender and Ritual" which will contain rare footage of rituals which have since been lost.

Dr. Herdt's broader interest focuses on maturation in youth, not confined to Melanesian examples. He has also been Principal Investigator, Project on Sexual Orientation and Cultural Competence in Chicago Teenagers in the Metropolitan Chicago Area, which has received funding from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). As early as 1978 he received funding for research into gender identity and maternal bonding. In 1980 he was awarded a summer research grant for studies at the Boys Town Center for the Study of Youth Development, Stanford University.

In 1988 he was the winner of one of the most prestigious awards in anthropology, the Ruth Benedict Prize. He has been asked to deliver the Henry Morgan Lectures, University of Rochester (1991) and has been the Chairperson and Co-chairperson for innumerable international conferences on sexuality and sexual development. He is a Fellow, Royal Anthropological Institute (UK) and Fellow, American Anthropological Association. His first book, *Guardians of the Flute*, was a non-fiction nominee for the 1981 National Book Award.

This interview was conducted by Paidika Editor Joseph Geraci in Amsterdam in July 1993.



*Paidika*: You have cautioned about the dangers of imposing upon non-Western cultures a variety of Western meanings and values about homosexuality and "age-structured" relationships. You have also recently rejected your own view that sexual acts between men and boys be discussed as "homosexual rituals," and now describe them as "boy-inseminating rites," or, "age-structured same-sex relations." Can you explain to us why there has been this shift in your language and what your new descriptions imply?

**Gilbert Herdt**: In scholarly work, the social sciences and anthropology in particular, we inherited a lot of conceptual baggage, particularly from the 19th century. Our legacy has been the assumption of very powerful categories concerning acts and identities, perhaps the most powerful being the dualism of heterosexual/homosexual. This dualism is a conflation of gender and sexuality, and the more I've thought about it over the past couple of years the more I've thought that gender and sexuality have been incorrectly fused. I've increasingly shied away from using the term sexuality, and see it as a gloss for erotics. Erotics has recently become of great concern to me.

When I was being trained in anthropology in the late '60s and early '70s, sexuality was simply not being studied. Whatever one learned about the subject one learned from reading Freud and Kinsey, or from novels. There was virtually no anthropology of sexuality. There was a study of gender, primarily by feminist anthropologists, and they left sex totally out of the picture, for reasons that I think have to do with the history of sexuality in Western culture.

When previous anthropologists talked about the study of women and men, they were primarily talking about gender; they believed that by talking about gender, they were also talking about sexuality. The gender roles determined or dictated sexual conduct, which is what Margaret Mead, for instance, was arguing in the early '60s, and the feminists at the end of the '60s.

In constructing my own account of the Sambia I used the assumptive categories and ideas, definitions, and terms which were in popular usage at the time in psychoanalysis, in

feminist anthropology, in social science discourse, and these contained much of this left-over baggage from the 19th century.

There were other influences at work also, not just the heterosexual/homosexual dichotomy. Many powerful aspects of the person's body, mind, personality, soul, desires, and behaviors were summarized by this 19th century dualism. In addition there was a centuries-long, Western social history which first viewed same-sex desire as a product of a set of ideas about sin, a transgression against God. In the 18th and 19th centuries the idea of sin was modified by the category, disease. The philosophy of the body was also changing; increasingly there was evolving a differentiated set of roles about what man and woman were like in Western society. In the 20th century, ideas about sexual orientation, sexual preference, and sexual lifestyle, as well as modern medicine and sexology, were of course extremely influential in the transformation of these ideas.

I would have to say that these had an influence on my early writing, so that when I came to complete my first book, *Guardians of the Flutes*, I was using the term "ritualized homosexuality" throughout. It seemed perfectly appropriate to me, even though I was distinguishing between identity and behavior. That turned out to be a critical step to take; it was perhaps one of the first books in anthropology and perhaps one of the first studies in general in which a distinction was made between having the desire and doing the behaviors. Previously, behavior and desire had been conflated. In spite of the distinction though, which was in keeping with social science study of sexuality at that time, I still used the term "ritualized homosexuality."

*In other words, you were applying the identity category of "homosexuality" to behavior among the Sambia that perhaps should be otherwise described?*

Yes. I was not really thinking about what homosexuality as a Western category implied. But that was common in the social sciences at that time. In the last few years, however, there has been a lot of writing and thinking about this



conflation of categories and I have been giving a lot of thought to desire and to the importance of how one represents desire. For example, can a certain kind of desire be represented as distinct from the act which expresses the desire? I've been partly influenced by new studies on the ancient Greeks, such as Winkler and Halperin, which have shown again and again since the time of Boswell's book in 1980 that the Greeks were primarily concerned with thinking about what people are *doing*, rather than how they are *being*. The Greeks didn't confuse the two categories.

I think these writers convincingly show that for the ancient Greeks to do something did not necessarily mean that you formed an identity as a result of doing it. If you have a sexual interaction with a younger male, that did not mean that you were placed in some permanent identity category. Which is of course the step that we took in Western history and in epistemology, particularly since the 18th-19th century. To invoke the category "homosexuality" in this rather grand way, it struck me, was really a misrepresentation.

In 1990 and 1991, I was also reviewing and rethinking both the literature on gender transforming practices, particularly the *berdache* among native American Indians, and also the literature on Melanesia since the late '70s and early '80s, in preparation for my book *Ritualized Homosexuality in Melanesia*. In both cases, it struck me how terribly reliant we were upon old-fashioned ideas, especially 19th-century ideas about sexual inversion. Freud had built upon these theories to form his concept of homosexuality, and anthropologists in the '40s, '50s, and '60s simply took over Freud and the 19th-century view in a relatively unselfconscious way.

Looking at the material from the Melanesian studies, two cases began to bother me. The anthropologist William Davenport did a study beginning in 1965 in the area of the Solomon Islands which he refers to as East Bay Island. He reported that there was what we might call an "egalitarian emphasis," an emphasis upon equality, between two males of approximately the same age who are having a sexual interaction.

He reports this as a more or less traditional Melanesian practice, completely different from the age-structured kind of practice that we now think about. This began to bother me a lot.

In 1988 the artist Tobias Schneebaum published a book about the Asmat of New Guinea called *Where the Spirits Dwell*. And Tobias reported that among the Asmats there was also an egalitarian emphasis, between age-equals.

I began to give a lot of thought to this "egalitarianism," and in writing to Davenport it began to be quite clear from his correspondence that what he was talking about was a result of social change; it was not a traditional institution. I re-read Schneebaum and became likewise convinced that his egalitarian emphasis was also probably the result of change. In other words, both of these authors, in referring to what was seemingly an equal-age structured relationship, or what we can term a "sexual democracy formation," were invoking Western concepts of homosexuality. And it seemed to me to be quite wrong to represent New Guineans by Western conceptual meanings.

Of course, this also meant that my use of homosexuality, even with the modifier "ritualized," was equally conceptually misleading. I came to the conclusion that the Melanesian practices that had concerned me were primarily a ritual form, namely boy-inseminating rites, in which boys are inseminated by men.

*You seem to be saying that words should be used descriptively, without imposing identities. The language should focus on behavior. Are you being consistent with the move away from the dualistic structures you mentioned above?*

The language which we use in anthropology and perhaps which we should use in a broader sense for history and culture is a language that certainly must pertain to a social practice. What do the man and boy, who are creating a transaction, do together as partners? Are they possibly forming an important social relationship over time, perhaps for the rest of their lives, which is not confined to the sexual aspect? Surely invoking only homosexuality is misleading.



In the Western tradition, homosexuality has become a category that reduces the full person to a single aspect – the sexual. That is entirely out of keeping with the holistic emphasis in the Melanesian system and, by the way, also in Attic Greece. In Greece many other dimensions of the person were at play: the body, the body fluids, the cultivation of a certain kind of spirit, a certain kind of being, a certain kind of honor, manhood, a certain kind of philosophical outlook, a certain kind of world view, a certain kind of comportment in relationship to males and to females. These distinctions are almost entirely wiped away when you invoke the category “homosexual.”

“Homosexual,” applied to Melanesia, is only a rather vague and tenuous allusion to what is a much more precise and at the same time a much fuller area of human activity, namely the social practice of inseminating boys. This begins in ritual ceremonies but fans out to include many other areas of life, including every-day activities of the boy and the male who are involved with one another.

So, it seemed to me that the terms that I had used were misleading. They misrepresented the behavior. By shifting the representation I also found that new questions immediately arose. What are the desires of the boy? And, what are the desires of the man? If it's not a desire to be a homosexual, which is what the Western framework would label it as, what is it a desire for? What social and individual interests are brought to the social practice?

Many anthropologists, objecting to the categorical intrusion of homosexuality into the Melanesian situation, or into the ancient Greek situation, have argued strongly, “Well, what is going on in Melanesia has nothing to do with homosexuality.” In a literal sense, they're correct. If I were to agree with my own distinction now, I would say that what these boys and men are doing is not homosexuality. However, I think this is not nuanced enough. What these anthropologists would like to do, I think, is to suggest that the social practice does not involve the erotic either, and that seems to me an entirely erroneous point of view. To deconstruct

homosexuality without retaining erotics is to lose the spirit of the practice, and I do not agree with that.

In order to understand the social practice, one must understand the meaning of the erotic in the Melanesian world. That then leads us to the question, why would the boy desire the man? What does he desire in having the sexual relationship with the man? We might think, well, it's the personality, it's the face, maybe it's something about the genitals that the boy likes. Or is it a Freudian construction: the boy wants to have a big penis, he wants a substitute for the father, he wants a substitute for the mother? The flaw, of course, would be that each one of these views takes the perspective of a Western category, namely heterosexual and homosexual, and the kinds of gender needs which go along with homosexual and heterosexual. If you engage in same-sex activities with an older male, you must be feminine. You must be effeminate. You must be inverted. All of these kinds of notions are quite ridiculous in the Melanesian situation.

As we have known for a long time, there's absolutely no observational evidence to show that boys in the Melanesian situation who desire a same-sex relationship are effeminate, are inverted, manifest feminine behavior. It's a completely different set of dynamics and principles, which has to do, I think, with the different meaning of erotic, and forms of the erotic.

*How do you define both “erotic,” and “desire”?*

When we think of the sexual, we think of genital. And I think that's far too narrow to express the erotic. Perhaps that statement is consistent with a long-standing critique the feminists have made, not to think of the erotic as purely genital, or orgasmic, or vaginal, or whatever the case may be, but rather something that pertains to an overall, larger state of feeling or excitement in the body, but not necessarily restricted to the genitals. Sexuality is genitally centered; the erotic is more bodily diffused.

As for desire, the theory of desire that I've been developing in the last couple of years comes primarily out of the work that I did in



Chicago with gay youth. In the Western tradition, we too much reduce the whole category of desire to sexual desire. It seems to me that this is a grave error historically, and for cultural study. In trying to rectify the error, we have to begin to think in broader terms about what desire is and how it develops. Where does it come from; what does it change into?

In my new study, *Children of Horizons*, in the chapter on individual sexual identity development, we made a very rudimentary formulation of a theory of desire with three aspects: aesthetic, erotic, and social. They seem to occur in some kind of a developmental sequence, with the aesthetic coming early in life, probably pre-linguistic, at a symbolic level, in the very early experiences of the child. This would have to do with tastes and appetites and things that are not subject to conscious and willful change in the same way as other kinds of things are.

The second aspect, erotic desire, overlaps it, and has to do with the kinds of objects that the person is interested in, the kinds of things that arouse, the kinds of meanings that they put on their body, and the way in which their aesthetic desires become represented in their erotic desires. This would include certain ways of feeling, sensing, tasting, and I would describe these as the undersurface of erotics. Many scholars since Freud have argued this line of thinking about the erotic, but it has been very difficult to substantiate.

And then the third, social area is usually post-pubertal, though I would think that for some individuals it can come before. This stage has to do with the social expression and attainment of these desires, which we can call "the social context of desire fulfillment," though in a sense, social roles and social practices are themselves desired objects. Let me give you an example of what I mean. Think of a woman who, as she grows up, gradually comes to realize that she's attracted sexually to other women. She experiences it very early in life, when she's only about six or seven years old. One of the reasons she's attracted to women is there are certain kinds of aesthetic aspects of the female body that she loves, for instance the breasts, that are eroti-

cally exciting to her in a way that male breasts are not. But at some point after puberty, she begins to realize that she also has another desire, to have children, and according to the dictates of her culture, she can only satisfy this desire within the social practice of heterosexual marriage. She then might have two social desires—to be lesbian, and to have children, but not within the context of a heterosexual marriage. The desire for children, then, might cause conflict in a social situation with her erotic lesbian desires. We can see that within the same person, there can be conflicting desires, not always fully conscious. The person is then challenged to resolve them.

In any case, I would try to begin to make an analysis of desire along these lines, starting from individuals, to avoid over generalizing.

*In describing age-structured insemination rites, you said that they begin in the context of rites and rituals, but then can "fan out," to use your phrase. Does that mean that these sexual acts at some point stop being rites and take on other, more personal meanings?*

What we're talking about here is the problem of the relationship between everyday conduct and the institutional practice. In societies such as New Guinea, virtually all areas of life of any importance begin with ritual forms. Hunting, warfare, marriage, domestic life, gardening—all of these begin with ceremonial or ritual forms. These include magical practices, certain kinds of initiation rites, and certain kinds of spells. The reason for this is found within the nature of their animistic world view. To put it very simply, it suggests that the world is composed of energies, and that one can tap into these energies and, can even, to some extent, control them through certain kinds of human practices. In Melanesian society, the sexual is one of these forms of energy. It is introduced by a ritual practice, which has a vast context, a sacred context, really—their religion. In the context of their religion they invoke the power of the sacred in order to bestow blessings and meaning. They instill a sense of importance, namely, that this is an area of culture which takes precedence and should not be tampered with by the individual.



In this context, the boy is introduced into sexual life sometime between the ages of seven and ten, where hitherto no sexual life has been. His life until then was perceived or interpreted as asexual, but when he is around seven or as a median age, nine, he is introduced into sexual life through an insemination rite.

By casting these sexual practices in a ritual form, no individual takes responsibility for the form. That is the beauty of ritual; it's also one of the most difficult things to accept about it, that no individual father or grandfather or brother is responsible for what is done. It's a collective action, the result of the intents and practices of the past, of the ancestors.

*But what is the relationship between that ritual model and what the boy does every day?*

The boy has in mind a model, the practice that is introduced through ritual. We can say that the ritual model is always in mind. It provides a kind of *charter* for what happens every day. This charter, however, is not responsible for the boy's individual decisions and the boy's individual tastes or desires, on a day-to-day basis. The boy can decide on his own what he wants to do, as can the older, unmarried bachelor of 18 or 19 who has sexual relations with a younger boy. Both of those are individual actors expressing their own needs, likes, dislikes, tastes, though in the context of this ritual practice. What we can safely say is: both actors begin and operate under the influence of an ideal model, a cultural charter, a ritual manifesto, so to speak, and this carries them a long way in everyday practice, even in their dreams. But it doesn't account for everything. There's still a certain area, a residue, that is left over, that is not guaranteed by or blessed or defended by ritual. For example, there might be a man who has a greater dislike for boys than another man and would sleep with them every three nights instead of every night. Another man (although this would be quite rare) might have no interest or taste for boys. By not engaging in sexual practices with boys in a sense he violates the norms or rules. The Sambia attitudes about this area are somewhat fuzzy, but

generally benign. They suggest that as long as one is not drawing attention to oneself, as long as you're conforming to most social roles and rules, and you're not doing anything ostentatious, you can do pretty much what you want to do. If you don't have sexual practices with boys, you might pretend that you are, or at least no one would draw attention to it. No one is going to negatively sanction you. Likewise, if you continue to have sexual practices with a boy after you've been married and had children, when according to custom you should stop, as long as it's done discretely, no one is going to draw undue attention to it.

*Does the initial ritual give the charter for all future acts? Are all future sexual acts between men and boys, de facto, ritualized?*

The Sambia, in spite of this extraordinarily intense ritual system, give quite a bit of license to the individual to do what he or she wants, so long as they don't violate roles and rules. Perhaps the question with respect to the boy is: what are his desires? It seems to me that in anthropology consistently for many decades, the most important description that has been left out is: what do the actors want? What do they desire? Do they have what we might call an erotic desire?

What is an erotic desire anyway? Well, in the case of the older man, some sexual investigators would say, "Well, that's perfectly obvious. Does the man get aroused or not? My old mentor, the psychoanalyst Robert Stoller, would have asked, "Well, do they get turned on? If they're turned on, that means they're erotically excited." It's as simple as that.

Sometimes with pre-pubertal Sambia boys it did not prove that easy, because there was not always a necessary indicator of their arousal. Let me use a concrete example, a boy named Kambo. I say to Kambo, "Well I notice that you really spend a lot of time with so-and-so. You like him a lot." He says, "Yes, I go into the forest and when I'm walking along, sometimes I realize I'm singing his name song." This would be to sing about him, his name, his personality. So I



ask, "Well, why is that?", and Kambo says, "He makes me happy. You know, I like him, I like to spend time with him. He gives me small gifts, small favors." They've been together a few times for a few weeks. The metaphor the Sambia use is "to sleep together," which is to inseminate, although in fact the insemination can occur between the two of them either during the day in the forest in a very private or secret setting, or at night under cover of darkness, when nobody sees them and they have lain down side-by-side in the men's house where no one else will see them. The Sambia are extremely discrete.

And so they've slept together a few times and I ask Kambo, "Well, do you ever get aroused?" And he says, "No, no. But I feel some kind of heat." And I say, "Well, tell me, what kind of heat is it?" "Well, it's down in the area of my genitals. I just feel somehow more excited, some kind of sensation." So it's that kind of generalized feeling, which one might call a generalized erotic, but not necessarily genital, arousal, and this is the important distinction.

*You would call this homoerotic as opposed to homosexual?*

Homoerotic is much more precise. It doesn't confuse these old, left-over categories with the generalized desires and excitement of the person.

*I came upon a remark by the anthropologist Bruce Knaft in your book *Ritualized Homosexuality in Melanesia*. You seem to agree with it, but don't enlarge upon it. Knaft was referring to the Gebusi tribe in New Guinea, and wrote, "Homosexuality appears for all practical intents and purposes to be grounded in personal affection, rather than obligation." The question this raises for me is: what positive, personal emotional meanings these sex acts have for the boy and for the man who are involved in these acts? What are the positive meanings for these individuals?*

Bruce Knaft is using words in a way that are not quite as precise as I would use them. Homosexual is one. Affection is another. We have to be aware of what kinds of meanings we're

putting into these terms in order to try to be as faithful as possible to the experience of Melanesians, in his case, the Gebusi, and in my case the Sambia. These differences matter a great deal.

But what Bruce is trying to say, I think, is that there is indeed a personal feeling and affection and engagement. These are also some of the terms by which I would describe desire on the part of one individual for another. It is precisely this aspect of personal affection which I feel sits right on the border of ritual practice, but is not encompassed by it. What ritual practice does is to lay down a charter, but it cannot explain and predict individual actions which express this practice.

The ritual charter is a set of roles and rules, with beliefs and attitudes that support them. For the boy the ideal expectation is that the ritual will happen, "I will be inseminated." For the man it is, "I will inseminate him," for the purpose of masculinizing him and making him into a warrior. It provides the male with a sexual outlet, which is perfectly explicit in the sexual ideologies of males in these groups.

That does not explain personal affection, which is a process of individual liking. Two people are brought together whose particular chemistry creates a particular kind of effect on their desires, intentions, feelings, and likes and dislikes. One individual develops a particular liking and friendship, desire, a kind of intimacy with another individual. All this is present in the Melanesian system, though admittedly not in the forefront of it as it might be in a Western system, which has such a powerful ideology of individualism and esthetics and beauty and romance. Nonetheless, it is there, on the periphery.

The question of what this affection means is a real problem concerning the psychology of the Sambia and what we might call the folk psychology of their own desire. If, using Bruce Knaft's quotation, we talk about how a particular individual is affected by another individual and has an affection for him, then we are moving from the general to the particular. And one of the difficulties in going beyond Bruce Knaft's example is that he does not provide individual



cases, which is exactly what we need, and what is missing.

In *Guardians of the Flutes* I provided a few personal tidbits. In the next volume of *Guardians*, which I'm working on now, I intend to provide more, and in the third volume, I hope to deal primarily with the individual cases I've collected. Then I hope to be able to talk in some more precise terms about what these things mean to particular individuals, so that we're able to go beyond this kind of vague, general rhetoric in ways that are more satisfying and meaningful.

*Are Sambia men and boys feeling "romantic" feelings? Does a man fall in love with a boy, or vice-versa, or anything that is comparable to what we know of these experiences?*

Some anthropologists and historians would say that romance is a category restricted to the modern period in Western culture. What I think we can say for sure is that some boys are absolutely infatuated. What do I mean by infatuation? Well, in English, in standard English, some of its usual connotations mean: developing a strong liking, having a kind of longing, having a certain kind of idealization that overlooks the small defects in favor of a certain kind of attraction that the object holds for you. Amongst the Sambia there is a very strong emotional intensity for a short period of time. And when I say a short period of time, for Sambia boys and adolescents it would typically be a couple of weeks, sometimes at the most a couple of months, but rarely more than that. Beyond that point it passes into something else. It becomes transformed into a kind of personal understanding and friendship, which may endure for the rest of their lives. But it is not erotic in the usual sense of the term.

*I think that what we are trying to do here is capture some sort of an impression of the reality of these acts for the individuals involved, and along that line I have a series of questions. If two different boys are having sex with two different men, is there some discussion amongst the boys or amongst the men of their relationship? Do they share their experiences, or are they secretive, discrete, highly individualized? Do they talk*

*about it, and if so how? Are there jokes? Gossip? What words do they use? Is there jealousy?*

Well, as a general rule, the boys will discuss their relationships among themselves, and the men (meaning older adolescents for the most part) will joke a lot about their sexual relations with women, and under certain conditions they'll allude to their sexual relations with boys. For instance, during the time of initiation, there's a lot of sexual joking and a lot of erotic horseplay going on all the time. But that's a special condition. It only happens once every couple of years. In everyday life, as a general rule, men do not refer to their sexual relations with boys because it embarrasses them. But they won't refer to sexual feelings (as opposed to acts) about women either.

These sexual feelings are something they regard as embarrassing, because they represent a desire that they have outside of themselves. Desires can be intimidating or shameful, not the desire for the boy, or the desire for a girl in itself, but somehow the desire for sex in itself. In the case of men's feelings about women, it can even be shameful. A man, for instance, might go to great lengths to hide his sexual desires for women in public. And to have sex with a women can be extremely shameful. A man must be very careful what kinds of signs he gives so as not to give away in public the fact that this has happened. There are, of course, also adolescent boys who are having sexual relations only with younger boys. They would be somewhat embarrassed to talk about their sexual desires for boys. And boys do a little bit of risqué talk, maybe with an intimate friend, but never with a group of their age-mates, unless it is a macho boast. Five or ten years later, when they're older and married, and they are talking about women, they would go to extreme lengths in public to avoid giving the impression that they desired a woman, or that they had had sex with her. This could be extremely shameful, more than when they were adolescents, when they were talking about their desires for boys.

The joking among the young boys about their sexual relations with older males is an entirely different matter. In a way, the boys enjoy talking

**\*woman**



about their sexual encounters with men. They love to gossip about it; they sit around and say all kinds of private, risqué things. Usually the conversations are whispered and there is a lot of discussion. What are they talking about? "Oh, what's this one like?" And, "What's that one like?" As I wrote in *Guardians of the Flutes*, and elsewhere, what they're primarily talking about are the qualities and conditions of the men's semen. I referred to it in *Guardians* as a kind of semenology: like wine connoisseurs who are comparing the relative qualities, values, ages, and tastes, particularly the tastes of semen. Some are saltier, some are sweeter, and so forth.

There are two important aspects of this meta-message discourse of the boys. One is that they're not really concerned with the size of the man's penis. That doesn't really matter to them. They're not interested in the container but in what is contained.

The second aspect has to do with the social control function of this risqué banter and joking. As anthropologists, of course, what we know is that jokes are an important way, on the one hand, of expressing tension; and on the other hand of keeping people in line, of socially controlling them. The boys know that they can be ridiculed and teased by their age-mates. If they get out of line, if they're selfish, for instance, they'll be teased for it; or if they act unmanly, they'll also be teased.

The boy also should not be with the same man too long. It's considered morally wrong if he is. And this is one of the hidden threats of the erotic infatuation that I was talking about before. If a boy is with the same man too long, his age-mates will start to tease him and will accuse him of wanting to be the man's "wife." To be called the woman of the older male, well, that is a terrible insult, and humiliating for the boy. Anything that threatens his masculinity, his honor, his budding desire to be a man should be avoided. So, one of the control functions of the joking (which is ironically a joking about semen and what these males are like — which ones they should go for and which ones they should avoid) is to keep the boys themselves in line so that they don't go beyond the role.

Perhaps one of the hidden meanings in all this is that some of the boys as individuals have desires to continue being in a lover relationship with an older male, but this would violate the warrior role into which they are trying to make a transition.

*If the time that they are allowed to spend with a male is being limited by joking, by social pressures, is this the result of the original ritual charter? Or is the time limitation a consequence of discomfort with homoerotic desire?*

A very difficult question. . . . I would say that the social role of the initiate, who is the fellator, as set down by the ritual charter, dictates a certain broad outline, a boundary. And the boundary says: you shall not go beyond this point. That's the point that the joking controls, that is to say, a boy should not sleep with a man more than a few times over a few months. After that it becomes something else. And that's a violation of the role. So, in that sense, the charter stipulates the boundary condition of the category, the category here being the initiate, the boy, the fellator. In that sense you might say the time limit on the relationship is caused by the ritual charter.

If sleeping together with the same man continues too long, that would be bad, in the sense that the boy would be called a woman. The boy is failing to be an independent, honorable young warrior. It has that meaning for the Sambia.

*Do boys accept this part of the charter? Do some boys feel, let's say, pains of separation because they have to move on to a different man? Do they feel conflicts over the ending of a relation with a particular man?*

The only way I could answer that in any meaningful way would be to talk about individual cases. This is precisely the point that I was making a while ago about Bruce Knauff's quotation. There's a danger in answering such a question too generally. I don't even know if there is a general answer.

If I think about it, there were a few times, a few signs that I remember which could be interpreted as "the problem that the boy felt in



making a transition from one male to another" or "the problem in giving up a particular male." These are very, very difficult matters to interpret, though. The boy is in a situation of going to some lengths to hide what's really going on. After all, these are secret practices, and they're going on at night and in the forest, when no one else is around, so how does one know what really is going on? You only have what people are telling you, and what stories you hear through the grape vine, when the boys are gossiping amongst themselves. With that sort of information one never knows how much is real, how much is just joking. Individual boys were confiding in me their personal feelings, but I think what you are asking me to describe is their feelings of infatuation, feelings of attachment, and loss.

*I'm trying to get to some sort of a reality of how the individuals in these relations are responding to these acts, and to each other. How they feel. I see that as being the bridge point between them and our own Western experience of man-boy relations. A bridge point between meanings, if you will.*

I think some boys experience some problems of transition, of attachment and loss. I would say that it's a minority of the boys. As far as I can tell, most of the boys do not have difficulties with going from one man to the next. In fact, if anything, they will put up a barrier and a resistance to forming an attachment – that kind of attachment in general is not promoted by the culture of Sambia men.

In a very few individual cases a boy forms a deeper feeling, one might call it a longing, or a "relationship," a form of relatedness which is nonetheless time-bound. How much time? A few weeks, a few months.

In 1975-1976, I knew one boy named Moondi quite well. He was 14 when I knew him, and had been an initiate already for six years. He was right about then being promoted from second to third stage initiation, that is, to the point when he stops being the fellator and becomes the older bachelor inseminator. This transition occurs roughly between the ages of 13

and 15. Until 1979 there was a period of time when he also became involved with younger boys. And he did have some younger boys who were partners.

Moondi had a very strong and unusual attachment to this one older man, let's say his name was Tee. Tee at that time had already been married once and his first wife had died. Then he had married again; ultimately he was going to marry a third time and have two wives and several children. Tee was a man who continued to like boys, but because he was married and had children, he did it in a very discrete way, and so long as he did nobody gave a damn. He did what he wanted to do, and the boys loved him. By our standards he was not at all good-looking. He was a brawny kind of stocky, short man, quite muscular and strong, but very good-natured and with a strong personality. This is the very type of man that the Sambia greatly admire.

Now this boy Moondi had an attachment to Tee, and it went on for a long time. Even at the point when Moondi was being initiated into his third stage, there was one time when I saw them together and I knew immediately that they had had sex right before. There were ways it showed. And this amazed me, because I thought: Moondi's getting so old. It wasn't that Tee particularly preferred older boys, in fact quite the contrary, he preferred small boys. Sambia men actually do differ from one another in this respect. It was quite clear to me that it had gone on between them for a long period of time. Tee and Moondi continued to have sexual relations from time to time, even up to the point where Moondi was being initiated. In the next two or three years, when Moondi became a bachelor and was no longer a fellator, relations with Tee ended, but they became very good friends. I should also mention that in this particular period Moondi initiated sexual partnerships from time to time with younger boys, and there was one boy in particular whom he favored. How do I know that? Because he would sometimes sit and talk about it. And I would encourage him, because of course this was precisely what I wanted to understand. Well, by encouraging him of course I'm created a discourse, which is not really normal for Sambia.



But nonetheless, he did talk to me about it; and fantasize about it. And when he fantasized about it, he would get aroused. He slept with his boy several times. I mean, this went on for, I don't know how long, but a period of a few weeks.

What I'm driving at is that on the border of this broad area of social structuring which says: "the partner doesn't matter that much and the vessel doesn't matter that much," that, in spite of this, there's still individual desire. Within desire there's the possibility that the individual actor can express his own likes and tastes. These can sometimes be quite strong but fleeting. I think up to a certain point, they are even romantic, that is, an infatuation, not romantic in the sense of lasting for years — that's the aspect that doesn't exist.

### **Western Paedophilia and Cross-Cultural Comparisons**

*Both critics and defenders of Western paedophile sexual relationships sometimes use cross-cultural comparisons as a politic, some to condemn these relationships, and others to justify them. In the light of the discussion we've had, can you describe a scientific method for making a valid cross-cultural comparison between Melanesian and Western age-determined sexual relationships?*

Well, I think we would have to begin with very elementary things. What ages are we talking about? The Sambia boys are seven to ten when they are initiated. So, one basis for comparison would be to talk about chronologically aged groups, for example, seven- to ten-year-old American or Dutch boys and their Sambia equivalents. Then you would have to ask: what is the degree of emotional and cognitive sophistication of these boys? That is obviously essential to understanding what the comparison might be. Should we assume that the seven- to ten-year-olds in both cultures have the same degree of sophistication? No, we should not. Neither emotionally and possibly not even cognitively.

We tend to think of cognition as something outside culture, as something innate and universal in the mind or the brain. I'm not so sure of that point of view. It is certainly not true of

emotions. Emotions are under such strong cultural control. For instance, the attitude that children should be either sexually sophisticated, or ignorant, is very strongly culturally regulated. So, we have to ask about the individuals in the two different groups: what is their degree of sophistication; to what degree are they being regarded as independent agents?

In Sambia culture, once the boy has been initiated, he's removed from his parents' home. He is no longer under their scrutiny. He is now under the control of the men's society. His immediate mentors and people who are in charge of him are the older bachelors, specifically his brothers and cousins and other such males who live in the men's house with him. His mentors are not his sexual partners, because they're part of his kin group; the sexual partner is always from outside his group. The older bachelors who live in the house with him are his mentors, followed by his age-mates. They offer him support, camaraderie, and social interaction. They do things together: go hunting, go to the gardens, do chores, etc., etc. The boy's father plays an important role in his life also, but from a distance, until he gets somewhat older.

During the first few years the boy is living in the men's house. But the boy is also considered to be responsible for himself. He has to get up, dress himself, clean himself every day, be sure that he has the proper food for himself. By the time he's about age 11 or 12 he has to be prepared to engage in warfare activity. And by the time he's 14, he can go on a war raid.

This kind of socialization the typical Western boy doesn't have. The Western boy, on the other hand, has a degree of privacy that the Sambia boy does not. He is being cultivated to promote his individuality. An American or Dutch boy may have his own room in the house of his parents. He may sleep alone in a bed every night. That's totally foreign to the Sambia. The Sambia never have their own room, and they never sleep in a room by themselves.

By contrast, in Chicago, in the last two or three years I've completed a study of a group of gay and lesbian teenagers between age 14 and 20. One of the things we studied about their



sexual and identity development is when sexual attractions and feelings began. In the Chicago study we found that the average age of first sexual attraction of the boy (or the girl, by the way) is nine-and-a-half, that is to say, well before puberty. By age 11 they're beginning to have some sign of recognition of their own desires toward the same sex.

In fact, this age nine-and-a-half level of first sexual attraction influenced my thinking – empowered me, if you will – about the Sambia experience. I thought, well, after all, if these really bourgeois Americans in an urban setting with their very different kind of social life, and who are typically being treated as children in this infantilizing sort of way that we have in Western culture, well, if they can begin to have their first feelings at age nine-and-a-half, then shouldn't I be rethinking what the Sambia boy aged seven to nine is experiencing?

The Sambia boy is expected to grow up really fast so he can enter into warriorhood quickly. This leads me to believe that he is very early being prepared for erotic relations in the context of being a ritual initiate, a warrior, with certain kinds of feelings, certain kinds of social roles that he takes on, that are specific to the ritual context. The American boy of nine-and-a-half, on the other hand, is being infantilized. This is the way to begin to do a comparison. Look at the ages, look at the degree of sophistication, look at what the culture expects them to do, and then we're starting to have the ingredients necessary to make a comparison.

So already we've created very strong conditions of comparison; we can see some things that are similar and some things that are different. Given these differences and similarities what can we then deduce as possibilities for comparison with respect to their sexual relations? We have to ask, and compare: what kinds of preparedness does a boy have to enter into such relationships?

*In order to arrive at a more accurate understanding of the Sambia, you deconstructed your own language quite radically: from homosexual rituals to age-structured sexual rites, from homosexuality to homoerotic. If we now switch our discussion to Western*

*paedophilia, would you also want to deconstruct the language here? Would you, for example, agree with the use of the word "paedophilia" for this discussion? Is there for you such a thing as paedophilia?*

I would probably proceed with the same line of reasoning as I did with the use of the term "ritualized homosexuality" and point out that paedophilia emerges as a 19th century discourse. It originated with Krafft-Ebing. I talked earlier about the conflation of homo and hetero-sexuality. The original meaning of paedophilia was also the conflation of two kinds of meanings. One had to do with morals and the other with sexual instincts and sexual desire. The moral usually signified moral approbation. It belonged to the history of sin, and later disease. Desire becomes conflated with sin and disease.

It's hard to imagine a discourse that's more consistently punitive and consistently reductionistic than that of the homosexual discourse in the 19th century, but if there was one, I think it would probably be the discourse on paedophilia. Even though we've managed to free ourselves in the last 25 years from some of these chains of the past – this prison house of late 19th century epistemology with respect to same-sex desire – I think we are still entrapped by these left-over 19th century meanings when it comes to paedophilia.

In a way, it's gotten worse than it was even in the 19th century, because of the enormous attention being paid to sexual abuse and child abuse. It's an absolutely riveting discourse in the late 20th century, a particularly American discourse. And so, I think we have to deconstruct the category paedophilia and think about why this was a confusion of two different kinds of things, a moral category and a category of desire or instinct. We also have to realize that paedophilia was viewed as a fundamental moral violation of the relationship between the child and the adult, a violation, that is, of the underlying cultural model which was and still is that of parent and child.

It follows, I think, that the feeling of violation, of moral punishment, that adheres to paedophilia comes from the vast dread of incest which



we have inherited particularly from the 19th century bourgeois ideology. Terrible moral and political sanctions follow from the incest taboo. One way to deconstruct the category of paedophilia would be to see that it contains the seeds of the rhetoric and discourse on incest from the last century. One would have to begin to separate it from the incest discourse.

*Would you abandon the word, and if so what would you put in its place that offers a more accurate description? Can we use for homosexual paedophilia, for example, the phrase you applied to the Sambia, "age-structured same-sex relationships"?*

Frankly I don't know what word or phrase to use for the Western phenomenon. In Melanesia, or in many of the traditional, non-Western societies, the practice takes its primary significance from ritual or ceremony. In the absence of a ritual or ceremony in Western culture, I think one is really forced to be quite creative and think about what kinds of conceptual ideas can be used. Sexual relationships between adults and children are usually viewed as the antithesis of the normal and natural, the antithesis also of the legal. "Age-structured practices" is a neutral concept that is used to denote institutionalized forms of sexualized relations or partnerships between people of unequal ages. Are we justified in transposing this kind of institutionalized form of relationship into a cultural situation where there is no such institutional form? I think that's the question to ask, and I think the answer is that we cannot confuse the institutional and non-institutional forms.

It seems to me it's better to create a new term, something that doesn't appeal to an institutional form, but does perhaps pertain to a particular desire. We have to think about a particular, distinctive desire, that is to say in this case, desire for a younger person, and what it means, how it's elaborated, how it's symbolized. There has also been a positive tradition of paedophilia over the last hundred years, and we have to think of a particular eros, and we have to use metaphors and symbols that have come out of this positive tradition, to talk about it. The meaning and the

evolution of the desire would be a starting point, and would also, by the way, be another point of cross-cultural comparison between Western and Sambia practices.

*If you were to take paedophilia out of the context of abuse, what is it?*

This is a little like asking me to interpret Western homosexuality, which I regard as a meaningless discussion, or Western heterosexuality for that matter, which is equally meaningless. I don't think there is such a thing as homosexuality or heterosexuality, or paedophilia either. These are just vast spectra of activities. Within the spectrum of "paedophilia" are specific relationships, or transactions that exist between people who are younger and people who are older, between a person who has not achieved adulthood and one who has.

I hesitate to use the term child or childhood. It's such a terrible misrepresentation and should be resisted at all costs. If you look closely at the discourse on childhood sexual abuse, as soon as the category "child" is invoked, everything is completely slanted and biased. It is suddenly no longer possible to have a rational discourse. Indeed, you could say that the category "child" is a rhetorical device for inflaming what is really an irrational set of attitudes. We would certainly have to use some other term. As I have said, what we are discussing is desire, and the desire is for a person who is not yet an adult.

In connection with our literature review in preparation for the Chicago research into gay and lesbian teenagers, we asked ourselves, "what is an abusive experience? What is a coercive experience?" Some researchers are now thinking about this as a matter of different levels, one of which is the chronological age difference level. What they find is that if two people have had a sexual interaction and they are within three years age difference, they would never invoke the category of abuse. However, as soon as the age difference is four years or more, then other factors enter in, such as the physical and emotional differences between the two partners. This still does not mean that abuse is the result. It



only means that the possibility of coercion increases between the partners. Certain kinds of factors now enter in that may have been used as a threat or sanction to get favors, or to manipulate. So, if we're going to talk about age-different relations, we have to begin to think about the problem of will, of free will, in a different way, with a different kind of language that's more sophisticated than in the past. It's no longer useful to talk about abuse in some general and monolithic way. It's too confusing. It should be thrown out. What we need is a language which makes finer distinctions and discriminations. For instance, the word coercion under certain contexts is useful. The word manipulation is useful in certain contexts. We need to have some sort of language of intentionality for the younger person, intentionality meaning: what does the younger person desire? What is their will? What is their intention? What are they looking for? What is their interest in the relationship? What is their need? These are all words that we can use to describe some of the feelings of the younger person, and likewise, of course, the older person.

What's problematical in the Western discourse is that the person who has not attained legal age may be subject to undue influence on the part of an older person. As in all other areas of legal and social responsibility, the younger person is not being regarded as a free and independent agent with a will. This raises new ethical problems and ethical responsibilities. As anthropologists studying comparative culture and history, we can contribute to the discussion by developing a more complex language, with more complex ideas, that give a broader range of meanings, not this rather dull and reductionistic sense of something being paedophilia or abuse. These really tell us very little about what's actually going on, the lived reality of the people involved.

*How would this help us to understand or reconstruct Western paedophilia – if I can still use the word?*

Once we describe structures for representing and actualizing desires it still leaves a small area that's left over for the relationship between in-

dividuals and for structures that have not been predicted or explained. We're talking about a special category of desire that is not covered by any of the normative structures. This is the periphery, where there are special individuals. These individuals have special desires, they're not accounted for by normative structures, and we don't know what statistical percentage they make up, whether 1%, 2%, or 5%.

Paedophilia is a kind of desire that occurs frequently enough in the minds of enough people that it has been brought to attention and been the subject of controversy for a long time in Western culture. Paedophilia is really only the sum total of those who have continued to represent or express a certain kind of desire. In that case we have to talk about the context in which individual relationships exist between the persons. What are the relevant facts? Their ages, for example. When can we say that the younger person is able to give consent? Is it age 7, 10, or is it 15? Most responsible Westerners you engage in a discussion about these things, particularly in the context of sexual abuse, will arrive at a certain age threshold where they can say, "Well, that's obviously not abuse." Typically, it's around age 16 or 17. Americans will agree that around this age it is not abuse because the person is no longer a "child." They know what they're doing.

*Can you call paedophiles a minority group who form their own sub-culture? Can you talk about a paedophile community, the way you can talk about a gay or lesbian community?*

If you want to create a cultural minority, which is where your question seems to be headed, a cultural minority within a heterodox, heterosexual hegemony where the normative individual is the married adult, then the problem you first have is to find a basis on which you can claim that this is a cultural minority. And what is the basis? Do these people, for example, live together? Do they have a common community? Is there a ghetto? Do they have common institutions? Do they have certain kinds of ideals, and ideal models they are trying to promote? Do they have cer-



tain kinds of symbols which they're trying to foster? Is what brings them together merely the defense of a certain kind of sexual desire?

Many of these same questions have been raised about the gay and lesbian community. The original answer was that you have to have a sociological community in order to have a real cultural minority. But many people have come to disagree with that answer. Instead they would say that you have to create some sort of social fabric, or a social, cultural network with institutions that give one the feeling that this is a viable, meaningful lifestyle with its own traditions. Or, that if you don't have traditions, you're going to create them. Culture, or sub-culture if you will, is the invention of tradition, the creation of social practices.

*How would you characterize the current American child abuse discussion? Is it a hysteria?*

Hysteria is a very strong word. I might call it an epidemic of cultural contagion, which is a reference to a term used previously to describe the American hysteria about masturbation as a disease in the 19th Century or about Communist witch hunting in the 1950s. Hysteria? It is a strong word, but I think in this case it probably does apply. There have been so many famous cases now, year in and year out, on the front pages of the newspaper, it's quite clear that many of them have been grossly inflated and exaggerated. So, one has to ask: what is in the nature of the polity, within the very fabric of American life, that creates such a hysteria, such a concern with contagion, such a psychic epidemic? I've reflected many, many times on what seems to me a remarkable, a phenomenal aspect of American culture, almost an obsession with these kinds of concerns about sexual abuse. It's often been remarked to me by European colleagues that they find this aspect of American culture strange and mysterious.

What is this fascination with abuse? ... Well ... a guess might be the deep unease with incest in 19th century society that still influences us, and that I referred to already. It might be that if sexual abuse and paedophilia are such terrible dragons, then there must some underlying, probably structural, change occurring in the nature of

American society and the American family, which is again awakening a deep, deep unease with incest. The question might really be: what social conditions have changed in the last 25 years, a period roughly concurrent with the rise of this child abuse phenomenon. You can clearly say that in this period the American family has undergone a profound change, perhaps dissolution. The myth of the happy heterosexual family is at the point of being openly criticized and being regarded in an openly skeptical way. It is increasingly seen as an ideal cultural form which is rarely being manifested in the society. Perhaps this disintegration of the cultural ideal of the family, which has been in the process of change for a very long time, has now reached a fever point, and perhaps this manifests itself in this particular form of a "child abuse epidemic."

We do already know a few things that could contribute to our understanding. For example, we know that the mean age of first sexual intercourse has been falling for a long time. In the United States it seems to have dropped from 15 to 17 in the '60s to 12 to 15 in the 1990s. Some studies have shown that in a sizable percentage, the first age of sexual intercourse is 12 to 14, not long after puberty. That suggests that these young persons, previously thought of as children, are no longer children in the same way that they were before. The category of child is shrinking. What was a category consisting of 18 years has shrunk to a category with only 12 or 13 years. The boundary between the non-sexual and the sexual being becomes a kind of contested ground. In all of the discussions about a sexually liberal or permissive society – the effects of television, the media, movies, rock music – they seem to suggest very powerful images which are deconstructing the category of the child, that are making a child into a more sophisticated, more adult-like kind of social being. The child has become more erotized.

*Has the increasing erotization of the child contributed to the abuse hysteria?*

I would say that it has. The media in particular has increasingly erotized the bodies of younger people, perhaps girls more than boys, though



also boys. We can talk about a concurrent and convergent trend: an increasing hysteria about sexual abuse and an increasing erotizing. If the erotization of the child from the '60s to the '90s has resulted in a younger and younger erotized body, but those bodies are still living at home, it must also create a pressure on the incest fear.

*Is there a social acceptance process that paedophiles can engage in and nurture to improve their situation? A normalization process?*

One of the steps would be the deconstruction of the language and categories being used. Buried in them are very, very old prejudices, fears, and moral approbations. The lessons for cultural and sexual history from the past 25 years of experience is that the deconstruction of these categories goes hand in hand with the freedom of the individual. We have to recognize that one is not trapped in these categories, and that the categories do not explain the desires or intents or feelings of the individual.

Deconstruction is a very important step, but it in turn depends upon two other steps. One is basic research. One of the most important lessons of the gay and lesbian movement is that as more and more scholarly research was done, being gay or lesbian was increasingly removed from the area of stigmatization. It opened up a whole new set of questions, a whole new set of rational processes which became applied to the study of

the phenomenon. What one needs are forms of basic research which open up the whole phenomenon to a new way of thinking, and, closely related, people willing to publicly talk about the research in a way that provides a new kind of fodder for public discourse. There has to be a discussion about what social, ethical, legal, political, and spiritual consequences these kinds of relationships have. This enormously helps people to begin to break down the broad and relatively meaningless stigmatizing categories.

The age-range is perhaps one of the most fundamental questions that people ask from the outside looking in. What age range are people who are interested in younger people talking about? Two-year-olds, five-year-olds, ten-year-olds, what difference does it make? How do you explain it? How do you think about it? What kinds of processes are involved in it? What are the responsibilities that go along with the age question? Questions – well, really they are examinations, investigations – such as these would open paedophilia to a more rational scrutiny. It becomes less possible to entertain monolithic, scapegoating categories such as sexual abuse.

Of course, there is also humor. Another important step towards normalization would be to engage the rhetoric itself, sometimes playfully turning it on its head and poking fun at it. To ask for example: "What is a perfect paedophile?" is a way of engaging some of the prejudices that are implied in it.

### Further reading

Dr. Herdt's writings are too numerous to list. The following were most relevant to this interview:

- *Guardians of the Flute: Idioms of Masculinity*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981.)  
The first of a trilogy of works about man-boy insemination sex rites.
- *Sambia: Ritual and Gender in New Guinea*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1987.)
- (as Editor) *Homosexuality and Adolescence*. (New York: Haworth Press, 1989.)  
The Introduction is very important.
- (with Robert Stoller.) *Intimate Communications: Erotics and the Study of Culture*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.)  
The Introduction is especially useful.

- *Ritualized Homosexuality in Melanesia*. 2nd ed. with a New Introduction. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.)

The Introduction is an essential text in understanding his shift from the use of the term "homosexual" to "homoerotic." It also contains a very trenchant criticism of much contemporary anthropological theory about sexuality.

- "Representations of Homosexuality in Traditional Societies: An Essay on Cultural Ontology and Historical Comparison." *Journal of the History of Sexuality*. Part I (1991), volume 1, pp. 481-504; Part II (1991), volume 2, pp. 603-632.

This two-part article is recommended for its new theory of desire, which is discussed above.



# GRAHAM OVENDEN

## The Fall from Grace and Selected Poems

### Introduction

Graham Ovenden is a painter, photographer, and photo-historian and a founding member of The Brotherhood of Ruralists, a group of artists which includes Mr. Ovenden and his wife, Annie Ovenden, Peter Blake, Graham Arnold, and David Inshaw. As described by Godfrey Pilkington in *Art and Design* in December 1985, the Ruralists were drawn together by the conviction that the overwhelming dominance of modernism on the contemporary art scene seriously undervalued, and even completely ignored, the artistic values with which the Ruralists were most concerned: the romantic, the linear, and the mystical, with strong literary associations. It is in the image of the young girl that Mr. Ovenden found a most profound vehicle by which to communicate these artistic concerns and feelings. Mr. Ovenden's photography and art are never merely portraits of his young subjects.

On 10 March 1993, Mr. Ovenden was arrested by Scotland Yard's Obscene Publications Squad. Although he has never been charged with any crime, agents at Scotland Yard firmly believe that various photographic images taken by Mr. Ovenden are "indecent" as defined under the Protection of Children Act 1978. Under that law, an image is "indecent" when it is determined to be so by a jury or finder of fact applying "common sense," in light of the dictionary definition of indecent.

As defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word "indecent" means "unbecoming, highly unsuitable or inappropriate; contrary to the fitness of things, in extremely bad taste, unseemly; offending against the recognized standards of propriety and delicacy; highly indelicate; immodest; suggesting or tending to obscenity." Judged by recognized standards of propriety and delicacy, Mr. Ovenden should have little prob-

lem with his work, since images of nude children which are no less "erotic," candid or posed, can be found throughout British society in books and magazines, in libraries, and on television. Despite this, a conviction of Mr. Ovenden for any number of his photographs is a distinct possibility, due to the inherent vagueness of the law. Under the law as it currently stands, neither the artist's stated intent nor the context in which the photograph was created is to be considered in determining whether a particular image is "indecent." Similarly, any symbolic content in the work and any assessments based on traditional artistic concerns (e.g., form, line, and shadow) are to be disregarded. Whether the image is part of a larger body of work or was as a study for a painting have also been deemed immaterial to a finding of "indecent." This leaves the decision of whether or not an image is indecent solely to the imagination.

While society unquestionably has a legitimate interest in protecting the physical and psychological well-being of children, it can be said with certainty that Mr. Ovenden's images have not caused harm to anyone. Indeed, when Scotland Yard traveled to the northern-most part of Scotland to interview a young woman whom they believed was Ovenden's most unfortunate victim, they were only rebuffed. "I have never been indecently assaulted by [Graham Ovenden] or forced to do anything against my wishes," the woman, now 20, told agents of Scotland Yard. "Graham Ovenden is one of my best friends and also like a father figure." The woman also strongly objected to law enforcement officials characterizing her nude image as "indecent" or "obscene."

During the raid at Mr. Ovenden's home, Barley Splatt, and during another raid in January at the home and studio of child-portraitist Ron



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Oliver (who is also yet to be charged with any crime), agents of the Obscene Publications Squad announced their intent to rid Britain of all depictions in which nude children appeared. Surely, it was crusaders such as these to whom Lord Houghton of Sowerby was referring when, in protest to the passage of the Protection of

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Children Act 1978, he said: "Some people's minds are like cesspools and they cannot see anything beautiful about some aspects of behavior and human form."

*Laurence A. Stanley, Esq.*  
*14 September 1993*



# GUEST EDITORIAL: FALL FROM GRACE

**Graham Ovenden**

~~The~~ It seems ironic that at this moment in time, when the human animal is once more attempting to direct itself towards a unified relationship with nature, we find (at least in the mindless fundamentalism in the UK and USA) a further distancing of humankind from the roots of our fecund homogeneity. Nowhere is this increasing alienation more apparent than in the widespread tabloid attitude toward child and adolescent sexuality.

If, as rational beings, we take the *cantus firmus* of our unmasked grace – i.e., the naked self – as our point of departure for both the physical and spiritual journey, then whatever overlay of neurosis and guilt (the spring of all corruption) we experience in our progression through life, grace remains the centre, however small, of hope and fulfilment.

If this were only so. . .

The tragedy, of course, is that the adult self has fallen from grace of its own volition and, in its removal from the wholesome amorality of Eden, looks to vent its frustration on that very essence which is most precious – childhood grace. This chosen purgatory is self-perpetuating and so damaging to the child who becomes moulded in the image of such dis-grace. Too often the moralist is convinced he sees with the eye of God, when in reality it is that devil, “Jealousy,” which holds him in his covetous gaze.

The censorship relating to child nudity which prevails in the UK and USA is, at present, draconian – the judicious might be less charitable and call it perverted. In one respect this lamentable state of affairs is the product of license

during the seventies. I cannot and do not offer any moral argument in favour of much material published in Europe and America during that period. Censorship of art, however, is another matter entirely.

If a law were to be enacted which stated unequivocally that no minor under the age of sixteen years may be depicted nude or partially nude, then we may be appalled that any civilised country could pass such crass legislation, but at least we would have a point of reference from which to attack those who were responsible. Unfortunately, in English law – which on matters of censorship is infamous for both its vagueness and its perhaps disingenuous inability to predict the negative consequences of its legislation – lies the ideal vehicle for manipulation. It is here that the moralist exploits both legal ambiguity and social ambivalence and works to define the discourse by his intolerance, thus causing untold anguish to child and adult alike. Bigotry, not justice, must be the outcome.

The UK in particular has an unenviable record of institutionalised child abuse, corporal punishment being but one historically recent indulgence. The impartial observer would also perceive “state-endorsed” child abuse in the current mania for over-manipulation of child witnesses, forced and intrusive “medical” examinations, and the hurried removal of children from home and family. One might well be inclined to think that the British establishment do not like children, certainly do not respect them, such is the behaviour of officialdom and their subordinates.



Needless to say, such an unhealthy environment not only leads to great stress on the part of the serious artist, but more importantly, lays an all-pervading guilt on the human soul laid vulnerable by the creative process. The fact that children still manage to hold to grace and continue to show strength of awareness in their relationships never ceases to be a marvel – and this despite the myriad oppressive emotional responses which seek to obliterate their essential guiltlessness.

Of course, not all agencies of morality are bad, but it is difficult not to come to the conclusion that both the legislature and the law enforcement establishment contain individuals who can only be described as malignant. One of the great self-delusions of the true believer is that he or she is enacting the will of God. Well, the Devil's is a mighty intelligence and works with subtlety, not only through the obvious channel of sin, but with even greater fulfillment as the voice of the self-righteous moralist. Certainly from the point of view of Christian Pantheism, I find it difficult to enter into the nature of these moral cohorts of vice. The narrowness and lack of self-perception exhibited by minds such as these seem a total contradiction to the open, clear gaze of the child. Perhaps it is no coincidence that these moral vigilantes act to destroy childhood's grace while making pretence at rectitude and protection.

Moral ugliness has occasionally been unmasked, but sadly the pervading indifference shown by the general public to the more subtle varieties of official viciousness toward both accused and victim alike makes the possibility of

improvement very remote. If one is specifically considering the visual arts, one of the great insolubilities in the matter of censorship is that the law enforcing agents (who make the initial judgment as to the nature of an image) are in general visually illiterate and, at the same time, invested with an almost unlimited power and discretion to indulge their prejudices and predilections. This brutish ignorance also pervades the court system, where tabloid-engendered fears on the part of the jury and the refusal by the government to face real social problems conspire to make rational conclusions unlikely. In legal, if not moral terms, a defence against obscenity becomes almost heroic.

To finish on a personal observation, I must confess to little optimism that the state can be restrained from persisting on its present course of moral repression and oppression. Through the agencies of his witless evangelical allies, the Devil now reigns and casts the pall of guilt upon child and adult alike. As responsible adults possessed of self-judgment, we can embrace childhood sexuality as a state of innocence: to live in envy corrupts all grace.

*Negotium Perambulans in Tenebris*

#### *Editor's Note:*

We wish to thank Graham Ovenden for contributing an original drawing for the cover of this issue. The drawing on page 24 was also made especially for this issue.



# POEMS AND DRAWINGS

## Graham Ovenden

### THE FIRST SIGHTING

Remember how we wildly raced, the first to sight the sea.  
Then after, when had won the hill

would stop, spellbound,  
to pant and feast our fill.

Each breath to mingle with the salt'borne air  
and eyes halfblinded by the 'mare-flecked glare.

Two children caught, transfixed;  
if pictured by some old and precious art:  
their figures drawn to mark  
and hold the moment's mystery.

(So still will be,  
'till time shall crack or craze his rime  
and film all colour in the mind).

And then those soft, moist, hazy views  
where water, sky, mist and confuse. . .

Oh how we willed to see the silver strip,  
that with our hopes  
seemed so to slip into a void.

But then as nature teased and toyed  
we'd sense the ribbon light laid from  
the land,  
the furthest edge of sea. . .

And as the ocean cleared to cut the sky  
our naked limbs cleaved to the cry. . .

The sea, the sea, the sea. . .



## THE SELF RIGHTEOUS RABBLE

(To Mary Whitehouse, patron saint of the obscene publications dept).

**She** *It's filth. . . these children of the mind;  
see there's corruption drawn in every line!*

**The artist** Yes, corruption. . . if your only wish,  
to find self righteous rage  
and curse what's pictured on this page. . .

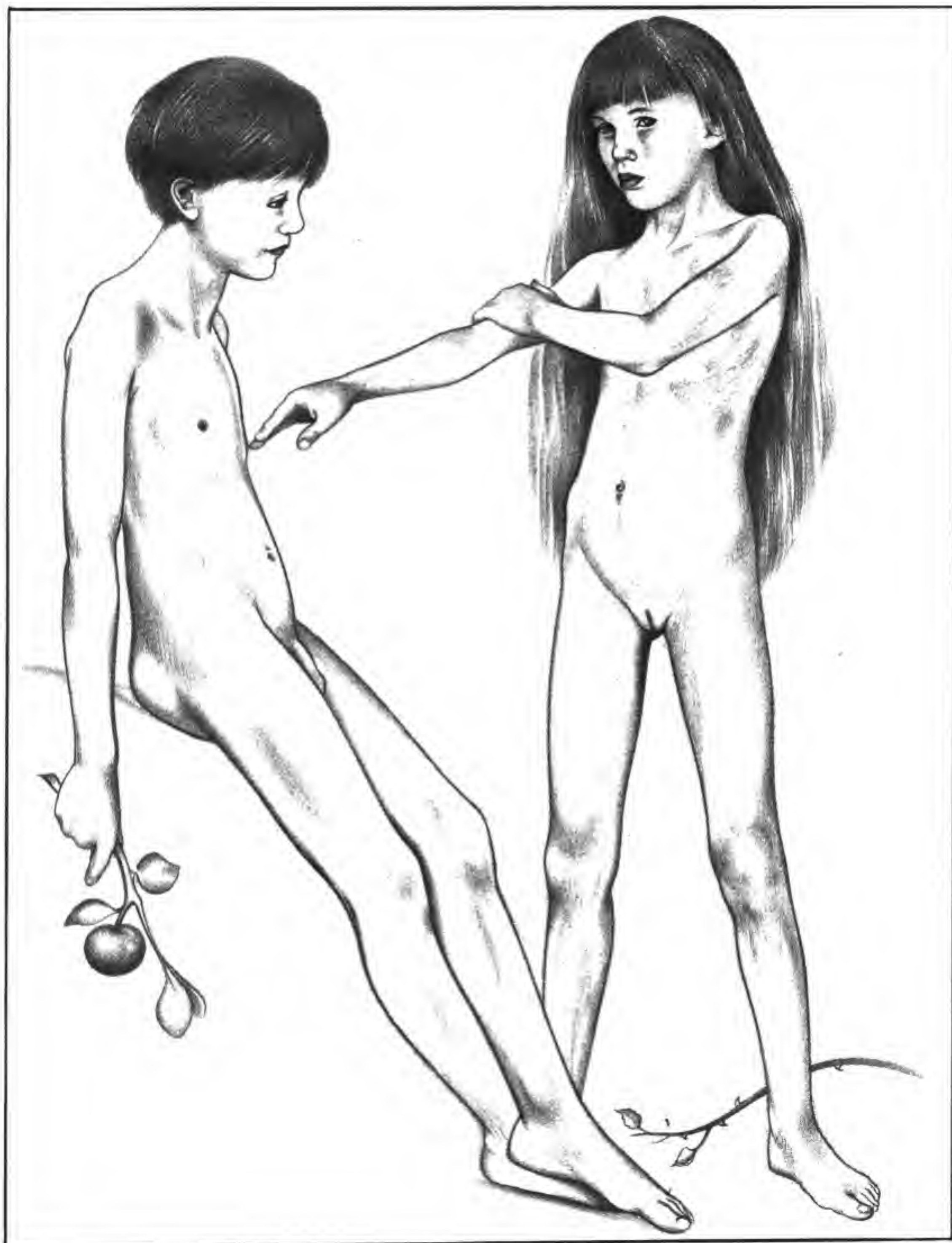
I pity well the kind whose fashion's  
but contempt for art  
that shows its ruth through image stark!

For if you truly looked within  
you'd see reflected there . . . a sin,  
not on the draughtsman's part:  
no, more the mirror of *your* mark.

So keep these sermons for the *blind*  
 who'll ever cant, incessant whine. . .  
 insist their incest's virtue's path,  
 though never heed the inner wrath  
that rightly rends  
 the mask without.

(True hate's *the whore* that loudest shout)!











Before the season turned towards a deeper shade  
we played  
amongst the dappled light  
unfettered by the thought of stalking time.  
Within the compass of our sight  
these small hands might cup  
to drain an ocean:  
the thumb and finger frame a flower's flame  
or with emotion  
point to circumscribe a star.

Such is a child's scale.

That is now memory. . .

And yet – we are still the keeper of our pale past:  
the half remembered child  
                                those years defiled  
to lay as dank clay in a creeping cold.

For while the seasons turn  
   this germ may once more press its point  
   and thrust between the mould,  
 to prove each wonder as it did of old.











A CHILD OF GRACE (For Mr. William Blake)

*Why tear our hearts, you child of grace. . . ?*

To show I'm victim of corruption's face.

*Why bear the worm that seeds your womb. . . ?*

To feed a body broke too soon.

For what you frame is mere the mask  
of. . . anguish, thrawn, set fast.

I'll wear it,  
though 'should sore my flesh  
infest the breast  
of beauty born. . .

it's but a thorn  
which prick.

The gutting of the gluttoned wick. . .  
that flame is spent  
and with it (paid in pain)  
all childhood, rent.

Can "art" be feigned:  
each mark that's chaste, inflamed by vice  
(who'd sell a "pretty passion" for that price. . .)?

No, take this child, your love impart;  
who spurns my rape  
must shape my heart!



# A SHRINE TO LOVE AND SORROW

Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen (1880-1923)

Will H.L. Ogrinc

Some historians feel defeated when forced to silence by a paucity of source material. Others, perhaps with fewer scruples, look upon such lacunae as an opportunity to give free rein to their imagination. The conflict between these two approaches is mainly methodological, although we might observe that lack of evidence deters the scientific investigator, while perhaps inspiring the literary scholar.

As a medievalist, I find that a lack of source material typifies the period, and one simply has to make the best of what one has. However, as a historian I find it painful when source material exists but is inaccessible because access is denied by legal restrictions. But my admiration grows for the "literati," who, faced with fragments, are inspired to piece words together, as an archaeologist assembles potsherds.<sup>1</sup>

What we know about the French poet and novelist, Baron Jacques d'Adelswärd<sup>2</sup> consists very much of pieced together shards, some dubious, others probably assembled in the wrong positions, and many more simply missing. The image which emerges is thus full of guesswork, and must remain so until restrictions on the use of archival material are lifted in the year 2003.

The first fragments I discovered were in *Les amours singulières* (1949) and *Du Vésuve à l'Etna* (1952) by the French author Roger Peyrefitte. It was only in 1977 that I was able to examine a copy of his *L'Exilé de Capri* which had appeared in 1959. In reading that novel I became convinced that Jacques d'Adelswärd was, rather than a character in fiction, a real historical person. My curiosity was aroused. I decided to stu-

dy in greater depth this writer who, following the publication of Peyrefitte's novel, had acquired a reputation as a pitiful poseur whose life had been one great melodrama.

Having decided to study d'Adelswärd, I began to accumulate more fragments, mostly from secondary sources. During the 1980s my curiosity was further aroused by acquaintance with d'Adelswärd's own work which, because of the small editions in which it appeared, is difficult to locate. In the Royal Library in The Hague I found one volume of poetry, two novellas, and a virtually complete set of the magazine, *Akademos*, which d'Adelswärd edited in 1909. I was also able to examine a selection of d'Adelswärd's poetry which a Belgian collector had donated to the Dr. Edward Brongersma Foundation.<sup>3</sup> Confrontation with this authentic material came as something of a shock: it revealed d'Adelswärd as a far more energetic, sincere, and much less frivolous person than the character portrayed in Peyrefitte's novel<sup>4</sup> and in other secondary sources.

The first, but least important, question I asked myself was what went wrong, starting with Peyrefitte? Soon I realized that Peyrefitte had probably just wanted to write a good novel, and that a novelist is not restricted by the rigorous standards of biography. But, then who was the historical person Jacques d'Adelswärd? I had to find additional primary sources, more of the author's own work, newspaper articles, archive materials, and observations about him by his contemporaries.

Peyrefitte's novel proved to be very helpful. I often admired the balance it struck between



being a readable story and dry biographical and bibliographical data. I discovered that Peyrefitte was doing his utmost to make the most responsible use of his material. That suspicion was further increased by reading the definitive version of *L'Exilé de Capri*. Although this edition lacks Cocteau's foreword (found only in the first edition),<sup>5</sup> it is often more detailed, and weaves more bibliographical information into the story. I considered this a generous gesture on the part of Peyrefitte towards his curious readers. However, in the novel, one incident still remains unclear: in 1903 d'Adelswärd was brought before the court on morals charges involving a number of Parisian schoolboys. In both versions of his novel, Peyrefitte glosses over the actual facts of the affair which led up to d'Adelswärd's arrest and subsequent six month prison sentence, five year deprivation of civil rights, and 50 franc fine.

In 1988 I came across some old inventories of important Parisian archives in the National Archives in The Hague. I asked myself whether material concerning this case might still exist, and sent a letter to Paris. The Director of the Archives of the Préfecture de Police informed me at the end of March that a search of the archives had not revealed any relevant material.<sup>6</sup> In May, the chief custodian of the archives of the Paris and Ile-de-France region informed me that "to his regret" the dossier of the affair had been destroyed;<sup>7</sup> he could only furnish a photocopy of the sentence. Meanwhile, I had approached the Archives de France (formerly the Archives Nationales). In mid-March I was told that they did indeed have the material I had requested, but I was at the same time informed that there was a restriction on its being made public until 2003, and that I would have to apply to the director of the archive for access. My written request was refused in April 1988 with the statement that no reasonable arguments could be found to support such a request to the Ministère de la Justice (Ministry of Justice).<sup>8</sup> After a few days of discouragement, I decided not to be stopped by this decision. Had my French perhaps not been correct, or had faulty wording directed my request to the wrong person?

I wrote a letter to the cultural attaché at the

Dutch embassy in Paris asking him to intercede on my behalf. I received a positive and enthusiastic response. There followed negotiations with the Archives de France, and in October the cultural attaché informed me that a compromise had been reached: the Archives de France would not object to my inspecting the dossier provided I gave assurance in writing that I would publish nothing which might reveal the identity of the children involved.<sup>9</sup> After wrestling with this offer, I decided not to accept it, because I already knew the identity of a number of the boys from other sources, and above all because I was unable to obtain any guarantee that the Ministry of Justice would also respond positively to my request.

### *L'Exilé de Capri*

It must first be said that Peyrefitte did outstanding research for his novel. He possessed all the writer's works;<sup>10</sup> he immersed himself in the secondary sources and visited places where d'Adelswärd had stayed; he spoke with many people, including family members, who had known the writer personally. Such efforts have, no doubt, given the novel its reputation for historical authenticity, a reputation neither entirely unjustified, nor fully deserved.<sup>11</sup> Peyrefitte did not want to limit himself to writing a historical biography or a biographical novel, as can be gathered from the remarks of Jean-Paul Sartre who, in 1958, spoke with Peyrefitte in Capri about the structure of the book. Sartre's evaluation, with which apparently the author agreed, was that, "The homosexual theme is very interesting. It also gives you the chance to portray the decadence of a whole society."<sup>12</sup>

The final result, *L'Exilé de Capri* (fig. 1) is a distortion, however brilliant, perhaps revealing more about Peyrefitte and his times than about d'Adelswärd and his. It is a kind of homosexual gossip about a particular segment of that community at the turn of the century: who did it, might have done it, or perhaps could have done it, and with whom. The hero (and, in any case, the historical d'Adelswärd) finds himself thrown together with most of the "notorious" homosexuals of the fin-de-siècle and the belle



époque, who are depicted as motivated principally by promiscuity. But perhaps Peyrefitte was really imposing his own world of the 1940s and 1950s upon d'Adelswärd.



Figure 1 – Cover of the definitive edition (1974)

The point is not that homosexuals of one era are more or less sexually driven than homosexuals of another era, but rather that the reasons for choosing a promiscuous life-style in 1900 were often different from the reasons in the 1950s. These differences are what Peyrefitte denies his readers. He misses the opportunity to provide essential information about the mentality of the people of that time, information that could help us to understand them. D'Adelswärd is to Peyrefitte merely a "phenomenon," a caricature with only a few essential features of his own to distinguish him from all those others who, since history began, have embraced "the love that dared not speak its name." As to the real personality of

Jacques d'Adelswärd, Peyrefitte often maintains a malicious silence. One reads little in the novel about the long struggle so persistent in d'Adelswärd's work between woman and boy, between hetero- and homosexuality. One thing is clear in the novel: d'Adelswärd's ultimate choice was the adolescent boy, because he did not find mature men a reasonable alternative, and not (we might add) because he loathed women.

Another objection I have is to the way Peyrefitte somehow manages to involve d'Adelswärd in the vicissitudes of famous homosexual contemporaries. Perhaps he does this to compensate for the fact that he does not define his hero very well, but the historically curious reader must here be on his guard. For instance, the presence of d'Adelswärd at the confrontation between a group of English tourists and Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas in the Hotel Quisisana in Capri in 1897 is extremely dubious.<sup>13</sup> Jacques d'Adelswärd did indeed admire Wilde, but there is not one scrap of evidence, as far as I know, that they ever saw each other, much less met.

One final point. Considering the ethical norms of the period in which the novel is written and from which Peyrefitte has not been able completely to insulate himself, and considering also the still vigorous, small-minded secrecy in France about the events of 1903 and the decree that the Archives de France tried to impose upon me in 1988, it seems understandable that Peyrefitte chose either to give pseudonyms to a number of persons associated with d'Adelswärd or not to name them at all.<sup>14</sup> He certainly does not give the names of the Parisian schoolboys involved in the scandal; he only notes that in the sentence, reference is made to six boys of whom three were brothers. Strangely, however, earlier in the novel Peyrefitte gives a long list of boys – even divided into the schools they attended! – who might possibly have participated in the events which led up to the trial.<sup>15</sup> All of these people later played important roles in French society.<sup>16</sup> I must admit that I do not understand Peyrefitte's intentions. A number of possibilities did occur to me. Did Peyrefitte not wish to give the names of the six boys actually involved in the



case, either for ethical reasons or because they never became as famous as the boys he did list? Why did he include the names of boys *not* directly involved in the case? Did their reputations have to be cleaned up, and, if so, why? Were these the names which are probably recorded in the dossier but which do not appear in the sentence? One of those on the list, Paul Morand, in his *Venises*\* (1971) recalled d'Adelswärd all too well, and Peyrefitte recently admitted that Morand was one of his more important informants.<sup>17</sup> Or is this just another vindictive act, common to Peyrefitte's books, listing the names to suggest that these boys had more to do with the affair than appeared? We can only hope that after 2003 we will learn more.

### Jacques d'Adelswärd becomes Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen

Of d'Adelswärd's mother, Louise Vuhner, we only know that she came from a Catholic Alsatian family, and that her father is said to have been the founder of the Parisian newspaper *Le Soir*.<sup>18</sup>

On his father's side, his family can be traced back to Baron Georges Axel d'Adelswärd, a Swedish officer who was captured by the French in 1793 and imprisoned in Longwy.<sup>19</sup> There he married a French woman who, according to Peyrefitte, was the oldest cousin of Count Hans Axel von Fersen (1755-1810). Before 1783, von Fersen commanded the French troops who fought in the American Revolution. Later, as a diplomat, he raised a storm in Versailles and arranged the escape of the French royal family to Varennes in 1791; he was made a Swedish field-marshal in 1801, became the personal favorite of Gustav III and his son, but was stoned to death by a mob when the crown prince suddenly died. It is to this same von Fersen that Jacques dedicated his volume of poetry *Chansons Légères* (1900) (figs. 2-3) and whose name he later added to his own.<sup>20</sup>

One descendent of the Protestant d'Adelswärd line was Jacques' grandfather, Renauld-Oscar (1811-1898), who married Amélie Steiner and became a naturalized French citizen in 1832. After serving in the army, he founded the iron

and steel industry in Longwy-Briey, bringing prosperity to the district. In 1848 he was appointed deputy for the Meurthe district in the National Assembly in Paris, where he befriended a deputy from Paris, none other than Victor Hugo. After the coup d'état of 1851, he and Hugo briefly shared exile on the island of Jersey. According to Peyrefitte, the only accomplishment of Renauld-Oscar's son, Axel d'Adelswärd (i.e., Jacques' father) was to die at an early age of yellow fever in Panama.

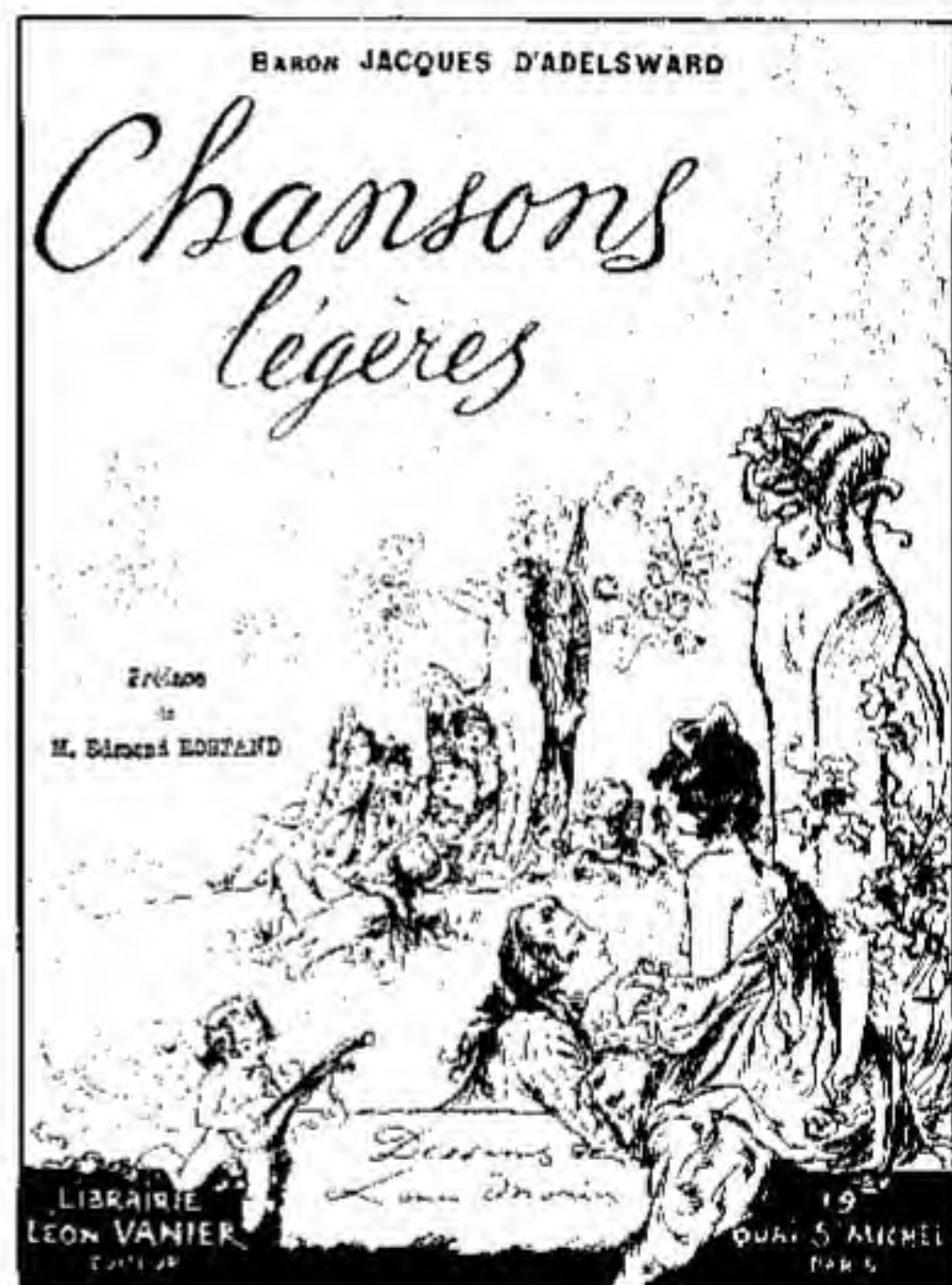


Figure 2 – Cover of the edition of 1901

Not much is known about Jacques' early youth. Peyrefitte provides us with the name of his guardian, Count Audouin de Dampierre, and mentions pleasant outdoor vacations with his grandfather on Jersey. Jacques found these much more interesting than the long summer days spent within the somber walls of Herserange, the family castle near Longwy, days interrupted only occasionally by visits to the steel mills. During one vacation on Jersey, Jacques seems to have



had intimate relations with an unidentified blond Eton schoolboy. In the volume *Chansons Légères. Poèmes de l'enfance* (Light verses: Poems of childhood) his poem, "Treize ans" (Thirteen years old), seems to be dedicated to this youngster, though there is an ambivalence whether it is the poet or (as Timothy d'Arch Smith has suggested) the dedicatee who is thirteen.<sup>21</sup> In the same collection Jacques describes in "À Grand-Père" (To Grandfather), the loving but rather remote relationship between himself and his grandfather. Jacques explained the fact that he hardly knew his grandfather by saying that as a boy he was pre-occupied with exploring the world around him, catching butterflies, and picking flowers.<sup>22</sup>



Figure 3 – Jacques d'Adelswärd in his teens

Jacques passed the greater part of the year in Paris, part of the time in boarding schools, and the rest of the time with his family which, after his father's death, consisted of his mother and two sisters, Germaine and Solange. Jacques remembers his little brother, who died young, in a tender *in memoriam* poem.<sup>23</sup>

His middle school years were characterized by a most tiresome tour of the very illustrious bulwarks of Parisian education: the Collège Sainte-Barbe-aux-Champs, the Lycée Michelet in Vanves, the Lycée Janson-de-Sailly (fig. 4), the Collège Rochefort, and the École Descartes. Saint-Barbe-aux-Champs was chosen by his grandfather because of its noble tradition dating back to 1460. The reason for the rapid change of schools remains unclear. The educational system was probably much the same in all of them; the authoritarian approach could not have varied a great deal.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps the best clues lie in Jacques' character. Considering the spirit of the times, he must have seemed a difficult pupil to his teachers: he had his own ideas about things, and was perhaps a bit egocentric, non-conformist, and rebellious against idle authority. He gives a brilliant picture of the boredom of boarding school study hours in the poetry collection *L'Hymnaire d'Adonis* (The Hymnal of Adonis) (1902). This poem also bears the title "Treize Ans":

*Treize ans, blondin aux yeux précoces,  
Qui disent le désir et l'émoi,  
Lèvres, ayant je ne sais quoi  
De mutin, de vicieux, de gosse.*

*Il lit; dans la salle ils sont  
Tous penchés à écrire un thème,  
Lui seul dans un coin lit quand même,  
Des vers de Musset, polissons;*

*Le pion passe, vite il se cache,  
Semblant travailler avec feu,  
À quelque devoir nébuleux,  
Très propre, soigné et sans tache,*

*Puis calmé, le moment d'après,  
Reprend tout rose sa lecture,  
Se met à changer de posture,  
Pour être de l'ombre plus près;*

*Coule ses mains, sans qu'on devine,  
Dans sa poche percée d'un trou,  
Et là longuement fait joujou,  
Rêveur de voluptés félines!*





Figure 4 – Lycée Janson-de-Sailly (1991)

**Janson (cf p.34)**

### Thirteen

*Thirteen, blond, with knowing eyes,  
Flashing restlessness and desire,  
Street boys' lips tinged with  
The mischievous, even, yes, the vicious.*

*He is reading: in the study hall  
The others are bent, writing an exercise,  
He alone, in a corner, reads  
Smutty poems by Musset;*

*The proctor passes by; quickly he hides himself,  
Pretending devoted concentration,  
At some nebulous task,  
Working properly, neatly, without stains,*

*Calm again, the moment passed,  
Resumes his reading, flushing,  
Shifting slowly  
To be deeper in shadow;*

*Slips his hand, unobserved,  
Into his pocket pierced by a hole,  
And there, for a while, fondles his toy,  
Lost dreaming in feline sensualities!<sup>25</sup>*

*L'Hymnaire d'Adonis*, which swarms with young blond boys, contains many poems directly referring to Jacques' own school years. Were such contacts and meditations as are described in "Crépuscule" (Twilight), "Rêve triste" (Gloomy dream), and "Adieu Mièvre" (Frisky farewell)<sup>26</sup> to have come to light, they would no doubt have led to the immediate expulsion of those involved. I doubt that this happened in Jacques' case; if it had, Peyrefitte would almost certainly have discovered it.

After initial difficulties with his final examinations, Jacques finally obtained the necessary baccalaureate to go to university. He enrolled at Geneva and there in 1898 he published his first collection of poems, *Conte d'Amour* (Tale of love). The same year, however, his grandfather died, and he was called back to France where he tried to get used to the fact that he had received a rich inheritance. In Paris he enrolled in a number of courses without taking any of them very seriously. After his compulsory military service was abridged to ten months, he returned to Paris on 20 September 1902 and fell again into a rather directionless existence.





Figure 5 – Jacques d'Adelswärd in his twenties

He debated between taking up a career in diplomacy or going into politics, took courses at the École des Sciences Morales et Politiques at Saint-Germain-en-Laye and joined the Royalist Party. His urge to show off was temporarily satisfied by the purchase of a royal blue Darracq automobile, driven by a liveried chauffeur. But establishing himself as a writer (fig. 5) offered the greatest promise: he had published two new collections of poems, *Chansons Légères* (1900) and *L'Hymnaire d'Adonis* (1902). He also published *Ébauches et Débauches* (Drafts and dissipations) (1901), and a novel, *Notre-Dame des Mers Mortes* (Our Lady of the Dead Seas) (1902), the fruit of a visit to Venice. Meanwhile, he had become a welcome guest in Parisian literary salons: there the ladies, hoping for a casual flirt or merely seeking an ideal son, gushed over the promising but above all rich young dandy; some probably had never read a word he had written. A number of his fellow artists, however, expected better things from his young talent.<sup>27</sup>

### Baron Jacques and the *Messes Noires* of 1903

In January d'Adelswärd leased a bachelor's apartment at 18 Avenue de Friedland, just two doors away from his mother. The building still stands, and above the top floor windows one can read the incised letters "NC." This is not, however, an homage to Jacques' future boy-friend, Nino Cesarini, but simply the logo of the company that constructed the building, the Nationale Compagnie d'Assurances sur la Vie. It is now occupied by several medical specialists (fig. 6). 1903 was the year of Jacques' moving friendship with Loulou Locré, a pupil at the Lycée Carnot;<sup>28</sup> and of his ultimately disastrous association with Albert François de Warren, a contemporary who appears in Peyrefitte's novel as Hamelin and whose brother was knighted by the Vatican. It was also the year of serious marriage plans involving Blanche de Maupeou, who came from a respected aristocratic family.<sup>29</sup> Nothing, however, was to come of those plans, for the long arm of the law intervened.

By order of the judge for the pretrial hearings, Charles de Valles, Jacques (fig. 7) was arrested by Messieurs Hamard and Blot of the Sûreté on 9 July on suspicion of indecent conduct with minors (figs. 8-9) and offending the public decency. He was brought to the Santé prison for questioning.



Figure 6 – Avenue de Friedland, Nr. 18 (1991)





Figure 7 – Cover with d'Adelswärd's portrait (1901)

The newspapers and magazines were full of the case in the days that followed.<sup>30</sup> Jacques and Albert de Warren were supposed to have held orgies (called *Messes Noires* – Black Masses – by the press) in their homes, involving countless youngsters from the better circles of society, mostly recruited from Carnot, Chaptal, Condorcet, and Janson-de-Sailly schools (figs. 4 & 10). Writing of a confrontation between his father and d'Adelswärd years later in Venice, Paul Morand described how his fellow students used to point out Jacques as he waited expectantly outside their school doors.<sup>31</sup>

According to Peyrefitte, the alleged soirées involved the crème de la crème of Parisian high society: many prominent ladies and gentlemen came to gape at these exhibitionist *tableaux vivants* and *poses plastiques*, and some of the observers actually participated in them – the much admired courtesan Liane de Pougy, for example,

posed as the Callipygian Venus. But scandal erupted following a failed blackmail attempt by Jacques' former valet, Pierre G. (fig. 11) who demanded 100,000 francs in return for his silence. When Jacques' mother refused, he went to the police, who at first refused to believe him. However, Pierre's story was confirmed by a certain Perrin, a blackmailer arrested by Inspector Roux and who seems to have been an intimate acquaintance of Albert de Warren. A number of schoolboys were shadowed and their activities observed, after which the police stepped in. Forewarned, de Warren fled, but d'Adelswärd's mother was forced to retain the famous lawyer, Demange, who had defended Dreyfus.

During his detention, Jacques was examined by a psychiatrist named Valon who, according to the newspaper *Le Matin*, diagnosed insanity, alcoholism, and epilepsy inherited from his grandparents. Valon described attacks during Jacques' youth which had brought him to death's door, causing brain damage which, according to the psychiatrist, condemned him to lead the life of a congenital liar. Valon even claimed that his residence in various boarding schools had only added to his lack of education in moral hygiene, and the psychiatrist concluded that Jacques had a damaged sense of responsibility. In August, he was brought to the prison hospital in Fresnes (perhaps also because the regimen was less severe there) to undergo some unspecified medical treatment. It was at this time that he wrote a collection of poems entitled *L'Amour enseveli* (Love in burial costume), which appeared in Paris a year later. In October he was returned to the Santé, on the same day Albert de Warren, assisted by his counsel Maître Henri-Robert, voluntarily appeared before Judge de Valles.



Figure 8 – Caricature by Kupka (1903)





Figure 9 – “Two Removals” by Kupka (1903)

The trial began on 28 November in the ninth chamber of the Tribunal Correctionnel headed by Judge Bondoux, the court having decided that the proceedings would be held in camera. On 3 December the prosecution lawyer, Les-couv  , outlined the case for the prosecution followed by the statements for the defense by Demange and Henri-Robert. On the same day a guilty verdict was handed down: having already served six months d'Adelsw  rd was set free that evening. Considering that the trial was held in camera, it is easy to understand why so little was reported about it in the press. Only Grandgous-ier, in the republican newspaper *Le Matin*, managed to fill several columns with a piece on “noble deeds” discussed behind closed doors.<sup>32</sup>

It must be observed that the court did not wish to deal with the charge of “offending public decency.” The case was restricted to illegal conduct between a number of teenagers and two young men in their twenties, thus averting the widening of the case and the likelihood that steps would have had to be taken against other, perhaps older, participants. Moreover, accord-

ing to the sentence, “indecent behavior” was cited with only six minors: Berecki, Bosch (Boesch?), Locr  , and the three brothers Adalbert, Jacques, and Ren   Crois   de Pourcelet, sons of a Parisian engineer of whom the older was thirteen (fig. 12).<sup>33</sup> In so doing, it was probably hoped that the affair could be contained and above all the public's appetite for sensation dampened.

Whether this was indeed the intention of the court, or whether, as Peyrefitte suggests, this was the wish of other and more important people, the attempt failed. The degree to which the name d'Adelsw  rd-Fersen still stirs the public imagination is a result not of his literary output but rather of the fabrications circulated about him from 1903 onwards. In 1904, for example, three years before Peyrefitte was born, the pornographer Alphonse Gallais, using the transparent pseudonym of Doctor A.-S. Lagail, brought out a strange book entitled *Les M  moires du Baron Jacques: Lubricit  s infernales de la noblesse d  cadente*, in which he set out to kill two birds



Figure 10 – Lyc  e Carnot (1991)



with one stone. As often in Gallais' books, the nobleman was one target of satire, and this time homosexuality was the other. The writer of these apocryphal memoirs obviously had little affinity for, or experience with, the sexuality of children; whenever there is an opportunity, his frame of reference is the (hetero)sexual behavior of adults. But the real purpose of the book is to allow the author to cast aspersions on everyone around Jacques: he had intimate relations with Oscar Wilde, Pierre Loti, and Jean Lorrain; he had an incestuous relationship with his mother who took his virginity at an early age; Jacques, in turn, deflowered a number of little boys above the skeleton of his own mother. The piece ends with Jacques' death in the prison hospital at Fresnes as a result of "a delicate operation on his anus." The book also contains a poem of 14 stanzas with 8 lines each, entitled "Notre-Dame des Verges Fortes" (Our Lady of the sturdy cocks), a word play on Jacques' novel, *Notre-Dame des Mers Mortes*, of 1902. The poem is dedicated "to my friends de Barden (de Warren)



Figure 11 – Caricature by Hermann-Paul (1903)

and La Lorraine (Lorrain)." It is not surprising that this little book was condemned in the Cour d'Assises de la Seine on 11 October 1913.<sup>34</sup> A few years later the author tried to resurrect it; using the pseudonym Grimaudin d'Echara, he republished the material in Chapter Four ("Chez le Baron d'Adelswäld") of his *Passions de Femmes. Roman vécu de mœurs féminines et autres. Luxures orgiaques et ordurières. Livre III*.<sup>35</sup>



Figure 12 – First page of the sentence

Obviously the public way in which this affair was reported provided a rich source of nourishment for this kind of pulp. But facts were also manipulated at higher literary levels. The previously-mentioned homosexual French writer, Jean Lorrain (pseudonym of Paul Alexandre Martin Duval, 1856–1906), devoted many pages to d'Adelswärd in *Pelléastres: Le Poison de la littérature*, his tirade against what he termed bad taste in literature. His description of *Messes Noires* reads like an eye-witness account; it is not unlikely that he was present at some of the gatherings, even



though Peyrefitte expressly states that Lorrain had not been invited. Taken in context, it would seem that we are dealing with a literary settling of accounts. Here are two people perceived by the outside world as "friends" but who in fact lived in totally separate worlds: a homosexual who worshipped at the shrine of muscle-bound sailors and similar types, and an aristocratic French "Uranian," hankering after loyal intimacy with the companions of his youth.<sup>36</sup> Lorrain's descriptions of d'Adelswärd are telling: not only is Jacques a "snob," but above all "puerile" and "pitiful." In his opinion, the *Messes Noires* do not deserve such a label because they had nothing in common with the Black Masses of Joris-Karl Huysmans, Abbé Guibourg, or Gilles de Rais. Besides, Lorrain added with a sneer, one cannot expect a protestant ever to make a convincing parody of the Catholic mass.

According to him, the *Messes Noires* were nothing more than ordinary literary salons held on the Avenue de Friedland which degenerated into "banal" costume parties with d'Adelswärd at the center (are we supposed to think here of similar gatherings at the house of the German poet *\*Stephan George?*). The most shocking and, in light of Lorrain's personal preferences, "pitiful" thing which occurred during one of the gatherings was the appearance of "an adolescent, stark naked, lying on a white bearskin, his body covered with golden gauze, his forehead crowned with roses and his arms resting on a skull of polished ivory."<sup>37</sup>

Was this the "indecent" for which Jacques was condemned? Peyrefitte's description in *L'Exilé de Capri*, based largely upon Lorrain's report, gives us no further information; at the point where the reader might want clarification, the boys disappear behind a screen of discretion, in this case into the bathroom. What follows is one of the strongest passages in the novel; unfettered by details, the author skillfully uses suggestion to draw the reader to one conclusion: "It" happened in the bathroom. But what actually took place in that bathroom?

When Peyrefitte came to write his memoirs, *Propos Secrets*, the screen of discretion came down. Pity for Jacques' family had prevented

him from detailing in 1959 what he already knew: Jacques followed the boys, who were stimulated by the tableaux, to the bathroom and masturbated them.<sup>38</sup>

After all the build-up, this revelation is not terribly spectacular. Peyrefitte, however, submitted that his information came from the declarations of those involved, such as can be found in the court documents. Peyrefitte claimed that a photocopy of the relevant dossier had been given him by "an important magistrate" through a lawyer, a certain Marcel Mirtil.<sup>39</sup> Upon questioning, the Director of the Archives de France assured me three times that no outsider had ever taken the dossier out of the archive, nor inspected it. What then of Peyrefitte's claim? The simplest explanation would be that one of the two parties was lying. I consider this the least likely alternative. If Peyrefitte had wanted to invent, he would have provided us with a more spectacular climax; and one cannot really expect the director of an archive to know the precise history of all the documents in his care. There is always the chance of a leak; some unscrupulous employee could have been bribed to make a clandestine copy of "Top Secret" material. A duplicate of the dossier might have come into the hands of the defense lawyer, Demange, and his copy might have been the one obtained by Peyrefitte.<sup>40</sup>

In any case, we may know more about this in 2003. Another aspect of the case might also be cleared up then, one which is referred to neither in the sentence nor in Peyrefitte's novel: two newspapers reported that during the police search of d'Adelswärd's apartment a number of pornographic photos were seized – *Le Matin* wrote of "sadistic photos." It was suspected that the photos had been made by a certain Tr., an amateur photographer and brother-in-law of de Warren, a regular guest at the Black Masses. Upon Jacques' arrest, Tr. disappeared. *Le Temps* reported that the police found only sports photos when they searched the photographer's atelier.<sup>41</sup>

### Lord Lyllian

There is one other source which might provide us with some clarification of the events leading

*\*Stefan (cf. Paidika 5:59; other sources corroborate)*



up to the trial, a novel written by d'Adelswärd in Ceylon and Capri in 1904 and published in 1905, entitled, *Lord Lyllian. Messes Noires* (fig. 13). Oddly enough it was dedicated to the *juge d'instruction*, that is to the judge for pretrial hearings. One of his strongest works, it consists of an astonishing mixture of fact and fiction. Only the last quarter of it deals with the affair of 1903; the remainder we must consider Jacques' apologia. It is a book full of mirrors and masks (much of it takes place in Venice) in which a layman, perhaps even a judge, must get lost. Maybe that is why the Dutch writer and essayist, Gerrit Komrij, even though he made a good attempt to unravel its mysteries, called it a "deafening mistake."<sup>42</sup>



Figure 13 – Cover by Claude Simpson

First of all, there is considerable juggling with names. When the reference is to contemporary events, the players assume their real names: Huysmans, Barrès, Louis of Bavaria. With those of d'Adelswärd's circle, and as events become more and more fantastic, the names take on their own masks: the German industrialist Supp (Frie-

drich Alfred Krupp), Sar Baladin (Sâr Mérodack = Joséphin Péladan), Montautrou (Robert de Montesquiou), Achille Patrac (Achille Essebac = A. Bécasse), the painter Chignon (Edouard Chimot), Claude Skrimpton (Claude Simpson). Albert de Warren becomes Guy de Payen. The hero lives on Avenue d'Iéna (de Friedland), and we can recognize Inspector Roux in the police agent Pioux. Jean Lorrain appears repeatedly as the chatter-box and sexual match-maker, Jean d'Alsace, who on one occasion even forgets his wig. We can now understand why Lorrain mounted such a savage attack on d'Adelswärd in *Pelléastres*.

The main character is Renold Howard Evelyn Monroe, Lord of Lyllian Castle in Scotland who at the age of seventeen lost his parents: first his adulterous mother and then his tender loving father. Following a tender puppy-love affair with a fourteen-year-old girl, the young orphan falls into the clutches of Harold Skilde (Oscar Wilde), the writer of *The Portrait of Miriam Green* (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, of course). Skilde falls in love with the innocent youth, but perverts him and turns him into a simultaneous reincarnation of Adonis, Heliogabalus, and Narcissus. Countless men and women, mostly older, court him and bind him to serve their sexual needs. Following the suicide of one of his worshippers during a night-time erotic performance by the Lord in the ruins of a Greek temple, he breaks off his relations with Skilde, who is immediately arrested in England and sentenced to "hard labor." Komrij rightly points out parallels between Lord Lyllian and Lord Alfred Douglas. Chapter Nine even begins with a letter from Skilde to Lord Lyllian which seems a paraphrase of Wilde's *De Profundis* even though this work was only published by Robert Ross in shortened version in 1905.<sup>43</sup>

After protracted wanderings through Europe, filled with memories of his innocent youth and his loving father; after a number of new conquests (which he takes as his due) and the accompanying ennui; and after a short-term love affair with a Gypsy girl in Venice and a "true love" romance with the young Swedish poet Axel Ansen (who unfortunately dies young), Lord Lyllian



finally settles down in Paris. There follows the well-known story resulting in the *Messes Noires*, though d'Adelswärd's perspective is that of the sensation-hungry public. All the ingredients are there: the schoolboys arrive (Lyllian's "choir-boys"); a naked boy lies on an altar and is bedecked with white roses and black lilies, a skull in his hand; Lord Lyllian worships in front of him on his knees while reciting poetry. There even follows a scene in which a sword-wielding Lyllian chases a little boy. Someone in the public asks, "Is he going to cut the children's throats?" The writer's commentary is short but deadly: Black Masses take place only in the fantasy of those who cannot allow themselves to be Rosicrucians!<sup>44</sup>

Lord Lyllian has previously informed us that he only wanted to raise the ethical and aesthetic consciousness of the schoolboys and expose them to good poetry (Byron and Verlaine). He would guide them to experience the magnificent, consoling character of love and so stimulate them into seeking a deserving comrade with whom they would not be ashamed and could share the excitement of discovering life, beauty, and tenderness.<sup>45</sup> In the end Lord Lyllian betrays the boys; he renounces boy-love and abandons his friends to throw himself into the arms of his ultimate love – a young girl of noble birth. The hero is asked to justify himself by one of the schoolboys, André Lazeski (the young Berecki from the sentence?),<sup>46</sup> and is subsequently killed in a *mêlée*. The boy also dies in the fight.

The novel is a breathtaking mixture of truth and fiction providing some new information about pedagogical eros. Where the book is of exceptional value is in casting new light on the writer himself, his character, and his artistry. D'Adelswärd appears in the novel in at least four guises, and he even lets them carry on love affairs with each other. Most important, of course, is the decadent Lord Lyllian. He is offset by the chaste Renold (the name of d'Adelswärd's brother who died young).<sup>47</sup> But he is also the sly old diplomat d'Herseange who bears the name of the d'Adelswärd family castle. The fourth is an artist of his own age, Axel Ansen, with whom Lord Lyllian is only able to exchange a single kiss

before the poet dies. Lyllian realizes that this young man was the first person in his life who loved him without reservation. Axel, of course, was the first name of d'Adelswärd's father.

This is sufficient, I believe, to demonstrate the complexity of the novel, which is a virtually unique manifestation of narcissism. We can rightly conclude, I think, that the early deaths of his little brother Renold and his father placed an ineradicable stamp upon the character of the young Jacques d'Adelswärd.

### The Years of Exile

Immediately upon his release, Jacques tried to make amends for his past. He appeared with bouquet in hand at the door of his fiancée, Blanche de Maupeou, intending to explain all, but was sent away by a servant without a chance to speak with her. In despair, he decided to end his life with a bullet in the head, but his attempt failed. No longer feeling welcome in the Parisian salons, he decided to join the Foreign Legion. That came to nothing because of his delicate health, although Peyrefitte's version is that his rank would have been that of a common soldier because of his jail sentence. He could expect no support from his family, and so there was no choice for him but to leave France.

Precisely why he established himself on Capri is not known. Many writers point to the long history of the island, from its beginnings with the supposed orgies in Villa Jovis of the Roman Emperor Tiberius. Others point to the fact that Marquis Donatien Alphonse de Sade and Lord Alfred Douglas (after Wilde's trial in 1895) had both fled there, and this cannot be excluded as a motivation. However, I believe there were more practical considerations: Jacques knew Capri from vacations during his adolescence; he was thus probably aware of the existence of its international colony of artists and expatriates which might have seemed at that moment his only safe haven, a place where he could build a new life, and, moreover, which he could use as a stage to profile himself. Jacques appears in the writings of a number of authors who lived and worked there: in the memoirs of the English writer



Norman Douglas, *Looking Back*\* (1933), and in his novel *South Wind* (1917); in the memoirs of E.F. Benson; and in the novel *Vestal Fire* (1927) by Compton Mackenzie, in which d'Adelswärd appears as the dandy, Count Robert (Bob) Marsac Lagerström.<sup>48</sup>

Jacques took up residence in the Hotel Quisisana and soon purchased land on a hill opposite the ruins of Tiberius' palace. He commissioned his friend Edouard Chimot to design a villa and hired a local contractor to build it (fig. 14). As the time drew near for construction to begin, he departed with friends to the Far East to visit, among other places, Ceylon (Sri Lanka). He worked on *Lord Lyllian* during that trip; at the same time he began *Le Sourire aux yeux fermés* (The smile with closed eyes) which is imbued with Hinduism and the discovery of opium. He returned to Capri in the spring of 1904, residing temporarily in the Villa Certosella which, according to Peyrefitte, he filled with orchids,

oriental perfumes, jewels, ebony furniture, bronze and copper objects, and "suitcases full of opium."<sup>49</sup> He also hired three Caprian boys to help him in the house and garden.

In July he had to flee temporarily to escape the wrath of the islanders when a local worker was killed building Villa Lysis. In Rome he met a fourteen-year-old construction worker, Nino Cesarini, who immediately stole his heart. Jacques sounded out the boy's family and obtained their permission to take Nino with him as his secretary. The two of them were greeted with understandable suspicion on Capri. Nino, especially, was a problem: not because he was a boy but because he was from Rome and not from Capri.

In the spring of 1905 they visited Sicily, according to Peyrefitte to make a pilgrimage to the grave of Count August von Platen Hallermünde and to visit the photographer Baron Wilhelm von Gloeden in Taormina. Both visit and pilgri-



Figure 14 – Villa Lysis (c. 1986)



mage are possible, even probable, but I can find no documentary evidence of either, nor for a meeting, later, between Jacques and Kuno von Moltke and Philipp zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld.<sup>50</sup> In Taormina d'Adelswärd began his novella, *Une Jeunesse* (A youth), which, together with *Le Baiser de Narcisse* (The Kiss of Narcissus), appeared in 1907. *Le Baiser*, dedicated to Germain Wenzel, must be considered a failure; it is hopelessly mired in its own classical allusions: the principal character, Milès, even drowns in his own mirror image! *Une Jeunesse*, however, is, in the opinion of the writer Rachilde, really a minor masterpiece which deserved the Prix Goncourt. Its plot revolves around the twenty-three-year-old French painter, Robert Jélaine (fig. 15), who is in love with Nino, a sixteen-year-old seminary student. The couple's antagonists are Father Seraphino, also in love with Nino, and a girl, Michaëla, whom Nino loves. Ultimately, the girl dies and Nino decides to become a priest. The novella is dedicated to "N[ino]. C[esarini]. More beautiful than the Roman light."<sup>51</sup>



Figure 15 – Jacques d'Adelswärd  
**Adelswärd**

The construction was finally completed in July: it was handed over by the contractor, and Nino was able to put in place the stone with the inscription "IN THE YEAR MCMV / This villa was constructed by Jacques Count d'Adelsward-Fersen and dedicated to the youth of love." In the autumn they made a short visit to Paris to deliver the manuscript of the poetry volume, *Le Danseur aux Caresses* (The caressing dancer), which was published the following year. They probably went directly from there to Oxford where *Une Jeunesse* was completed in 1906. Back on Capri, Jacques took a fourth Caprian boy into service in order to depart immediately with Nino on a long journey to China. Towards the beginning of 1907, both returned to Italy, Jacques enriched with a collection of 300 opium pipes which he had assembled in China.

The years 1907 and 1908 seem in all respects to have marked a crisis in d'Adelswärd's life. In any case, he found it necessary to restore contact with his family; he visited his sister Germaine, who in the meantime had married the Marquis di Bugnano, a young member of parliament from Naples. He invited his sisters and his mother to visit his new home on Capri, during which time Nino was temporarily installed elsewhere. Now seventeen, the boy was in Jacques' eyes in the full glory of his youthful bloom. Such beauty needed preservation, and Jacques commissioned two artists to immortalize him. Nino's portrait was painted by Umberto Brunelleschi (1879-1949), a young artist from Pistoia who was making an international furore and liked the company of "young poets." The sculptor Francesco Ierace (1854-1937) from Polistena, whose atelier was now in Naples and who had in the meantime achieved national fame, cast Nino's image in bronze. The photo of Nino on the terrace of Villa Lysis (fig. 16) dates from about this time. The boy is wearing a toga, with a diadem around his head and in his left hand is holding a small Nike on a globe, symbols traditionally associated with Roman gods and emperors.<sup>52</sup>

Nino's attractiveness smote others as well. During a visit to Venice, Nino flirted with Alexandrine (Sacha) Ricoy Antokolsky, who found Nino so much to her taste that she even fol-



lowed him to Capri and eventually seduced him. Jacques reacted furiously in a volume of poetry appropriately entitled *Ainsi chantait Marsyas* (So sang Marsyas), an exalted song of praise to his Nino who he felt was about to leave him. "How many tears must it take to wash away *her* kisses?" he asked in the poem "Ce matin, tu dormais comme un petit enfant" (This morning you slept like a small child). The poem "L'Icône" (The icon) is a vision of the future and begins with the conciliatory words, "Later, when you are no longer with me and have left me for another..." But in "La Fripeuse de Moëlle" (The crusher of the pith) the defiler of their common shrine is reproached and Nino receives a lecture on the nature of woman: no matter what guise she may assume, Venus or Eve, a whore remains a whore, and syphilis follows in her wake.<sup>53</sup>



Figure 16 – Glorification of Nino Cesarini

This explosion of passion can only be understood in light of Jacques' consuming fear of losing the boy and the jealousy aroused by that fear. I doubt that Nino really intended to leave

his comfortable situation; rather he would have considered the dalliance as a small adventure and a pleasant distraction from life at Villa Lysis, which had become rather dull.

After this affair the household domestics from Capri were discharged for failing to fulfill their responsibilities and Jacques wired Ceylon to ask that he be sent two Singhalese houseboys.

### The Expulsion from Italy

D'Adelswärd's novel about Capri, *Et le feu s'éteignit sur la mer..* (And the fire was smothered by the sea) appeared in 1909 and caused a local sensation. The author spared hardly anyone in his exposure of island habits and morals (fig. 17).<sup>54</sup> Nino was growing older and Jacques now sought pleasure with Neapolitan boys and in clouds of opium. According to Peyrefitte, he smoked at this time some 30 or 40 pipes a day which sounds like an absurdly high number but actually is not.<sup>55</sup> Events associated with Nino's call-up for military service, and similar festivities at Villa Lysis forced d'Adelswärd to leave Capri.

Jacques invented a pleasant skit for Nino's twentieth birthday in which the boy would be elevated to a "soldier of Mithras." It was performed before a group of friends one night in the Maternània grotto by torchlight. According to local gossip, Jacques himself played an important part as the "handsome youth" Hypathos, while his "fat old cook" played the part of Tiberius.<sup>56</sup> Peyrefitte minutely describes the twenty lashes which the Singhalese boys, playing the parts of slaves, administered at daybreak to Nino's bare buttocks. A passer-by gathering herbs could not understand what was happening; she informed her father, who lodged an official complaint of violation of public decency.

The local authorities took advantage of this circumstance to rid themselves of d'Adelswärd. Fearing a new outburst in the press following the famous Krupp scandal in 1902, the police were kept out of the affair and Jacques' brother-in-law, the Marquis di Bugnano, was asked to intervene.<sup>57</sup> D'Adelswärd was summoned by the Marquis to Naples and given the choice of leaving the country voluntarily or being officially



expelled. Jacques chose the former and returned to France. He stayed briefly in Paris, but, because he was now accustomed to a Mediterranean climate, he soon took up residence in the Villa Mezzomonte in Nice.

The editors promised a point of view free of platitudes and preconceptions. They pledged a return to the tradition of Greek simplicity and natural paganism, and to Latin purity. According to the two editorial statements in the first issue,

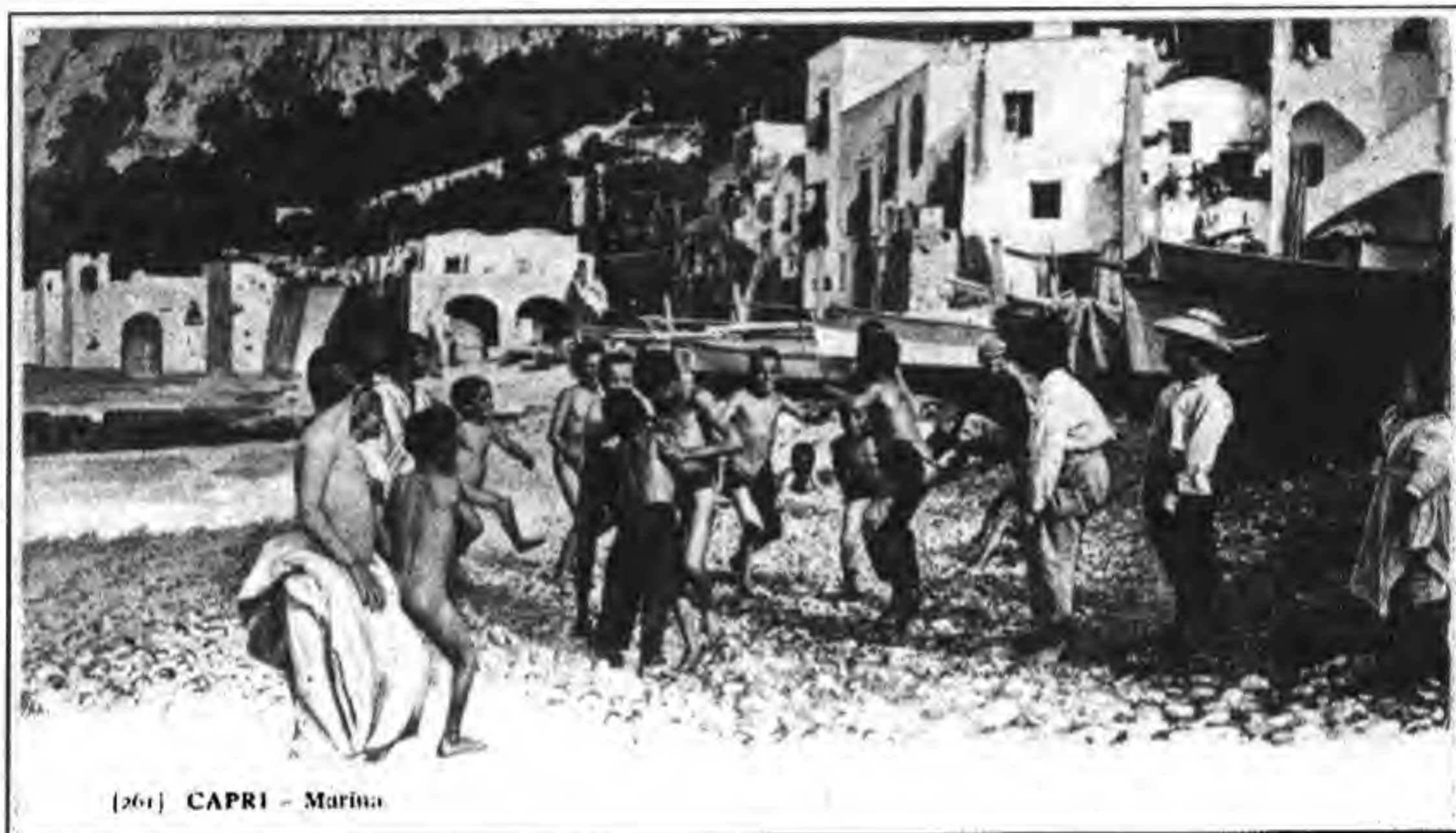


Figure 17 – Bathing boys at Capri (C. 1900)

Jacques could now dedicate all his time to the cultural magazine, *Akademos. Revue Mensuelle d'Art Libre et de Critique* (fig. 18), which he had founded the previous year in Paris and which had appeared monthly from 15 January 1909. Whoever thumbs through the 2,000 odd pages of the 12 issues which appeared must be impressed. The magazine was very well produced and contains countless interesting original stories, poems, plays, and critical essays, and a very impressive array of contributors, some of whom, it must be said, did not keep their promise to contribute.<sup>58</sup> Even Nino, actually in military service, appears as “M. le gérant” (the book-keeper), and in issue 10 there is a little joke: the author of *Baiser de Narcisse*, Jacques himself, is requested to make his name and address known to the editors!<sup>59</sup>

one probably written by Jacques, their greatest enemies were vulgarity, hypocrisy, obscurantism, and ugliness; French culture had to free itself from Slavic decadence, German heaviness, the (Anglo-) Saxon slang of thieves, and Judeo-Christian prejudices.<sup>60</sup> Since they did not wish to confine their vision to France alone, cultural activities in other countries were regularly reviewed and attention was given to what was being published elsewhere, including works by Elisar von Kupffer, Arthur Lyon Raile (Edward Perry Warren), John Henry Mackay, Walt Whitman, and Xavier Mayne (Edward Irenaeus Prime Stevenson).

There were, of course, a number of contributions by Editor Jacques d'Adelswärd (fig. 19) himself, either under his own name or the pseudonym Sonyeuse.<sup>61</sup> In the first issue there is his



"In Memoriam" for the editorial secretary, Raymond Laurent, cousin of Fernand Gregh and friend of Marcel Proust, who had committed suicide in Venice under the hotel window of a young American with whom he was hopelessly in love. His still-warm body was found by none other than Vyvyan Holland, Oscar Wilde's son! But after only one year, Jacques had to stop publication of the magazine as it was consuming enormous sums of money and its circulation remained small.



Figure 18 – The first issue of *Akedemos*  
*Akademos* (see picture just above!)

Early in 1911 Nino was discharged from military service; the two of them set out for the Far East, returning to Nice in 1912. In the meantime, Jacques had completed *Le Sourire aux yeux fermés*, which included a revised version of his essay "l'Extase" (Ecstasy) which had first appeared in *Akademos*. It was published in 1912 and was followed by a volume of poetry, *Paradinya* in 1913. In April Jacques finally received permission to return to Capri, which he celebrated in the long poem, "À l'Italie. Ode à la

Terre Promise" (To Italy: Ode to the promised land).

L'auteur de :

*Et le Veu s'éteignit sur la Mer...*



FERNEN

Figure 19 – Caricature of *d'Adelswärdt* by Moyano (1909)  
*d'Adelswärd*

### The Final Years

With the outbreak of war in 1914, Jacques was asked to present himself for military service. In the French consulate in Naples, he was found unfit for combat and was sent to a hospital to be cured of addiction, though he secretly compensated for his abstinence from opium with the use of cocaine. It was during this period that he met the sculptor Vincenzo Gemito.<sup>62</sup>

Nino was wounded in battle and sent to a hospital in Milan to recover. Jacques returned to Capri, his doctors having declared him incurably ill. In Villa Lysis he took up his old habits and spent most of his time treading back and forth between his study and smoking room. His last published volume of poetry appeared in 1921, *Hei Hsiang. Le parfum noir* (Hei Hsiang: The black perfume) (figs. 20-21), almost entirely devoted to opium. But life had one small



surprise left in store for him: his acquaintance with fifteen-year-old Corrado Annicelli, son of a notary in neighboring Sorrento, who had come on vacation to Capri with his parents.<sup>63</sup> Corrado's mother and father had no objection to their son's association with a man of the world who knew many important people and who above all could stimulate the boy's fluency in French. In Peyrefitte's novel, Corrado is called Manfred, after the half-brother of the Hohenstaufen King Conrad IV.



Figure 20 – Cover of d'Adelswärd's last book

Initially, Corrado was more of a sly fox than a "petit faune" (little faun), as Jacques called him. The boy kept Jacques firmly in tow by expecting all sorts of things in return for his companionship: trips around Italy and the dedication of poems to himself. For the Christmas vacation of 1922, the boy tried to convince Jacques that he was unable to visit him, but Jacques insisted and was invited to come to Sorrento and fetch him. This sort of teasing was probably all part of their erotic play. Corrado also came to Capri, on his

own initiative, for his Easter vacation in 1923. Jacques was still working on his poem cycle, *La Neuvaine du petit faune* (The little faun's novena), which was never published. The manuscript was still in Corrado's possession when Peyrefitte spoke with him years later.<sup>64</sup> For summer vacation, Corrado came again to Capri. Now seventeen, the boy was torn between feelings of sincere love and compassion for Jacques and an intense disgust for his drug addiction. On 15 September, Jacques brought the boy back to his parents in Sorrento, and on his return journey he visited his sister Germaine who, since her divorce, lived near Turin. Alarmed by Jacques' physical condition, she advised his mother to come at once. Pressure was put on him to have his will drawn up.

*Cu passant,*  
*L'inavouable.*  
  
*avec beaucoup*  
*de sympathie*  
*J. Persen*

Figure 21 – Autograph of d'Adelswärd

It seems that on 15 October Jacques felt that his end was approaching. He departed hastily for Sorrento to pick up Corrado. According to Pey-



refitte, the boy, by chance, was home sick from school that day. They immediately left for Sicily; again von Gloeden was visited in Taormina, and the grave of von Platen in Syracuse.<sup>65</sup> They were back in Naples on 5 November, Jacques by now gravely ill. Nino picked them up and took them to Capri. Jacques died after supper that same evening—of an overdose of cocaine dissolved in a glass of champagne, leaving his friends in dismay. Most commentators have assumed that it was suicide. Norman Douglas said that a thunderstorm burst out that night and it maintained its fury for twelve straight hours.<sup>66</sup>



Figure 22 – Jacques d'Adelswärd

Dr. Gatto, who signed the death certificate, gives a heart attack as the cause of death. Jacques' devoted friend Ephi Lovatelli, of Greek origins, prepared the body with rouge and lipstick, sealing his lips with a gold Macedonian coin to be used to pay the boatman carrying him over the River Styx. In order to safeguard the inheritance, Jacques' family spread the rumor that Jac-

ques (fig. 22) was poisoned by Nino out of jealousy.<sup>67</sup> His sister, Germaine, and his mother insisted on a post-mortem examination; it was carried out by the authorities in Naples and lent no support to their accusations. Jacques' body was released and later cremated in Rome. The ashes were placed in the non-Catholic cemetery in Capri. His grave is on a hillside, opposite that of Norman Douglas, whose gravestone bears the inscription, "Omnes eodem cogimur" (We all gather at the same place).

In accordance with Jacques' will, Nino received 300,000 francs, the right to use of the property, and the right to rent it out; Germaine became the owner of the villa, including all of its contents. Jacques' mother inherited the remainder of the capital and title to the mills at Longwy.

As for Jacques' intimates, Loulou married and lived as the proud father of a daughter in a castle in the French countryside. Nino sold his rights to the villa to Germaine for 200,000 lira. His portrait by Brunelleschi and his statue by Ierace were sold to a Swiss antiquarian and have since disappeared. He returned to Rome, where he operated a newspaper kiosk, and died in middle-age in a Roman hospital. Corrado became a talented actor.<sup>68</sup>

#### *Editor's Note:*

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## NOTES

1. The title of this article is a translation of the inscription "Amori et Dolori Sacrum" that d'Adelswärd placed on his villa in Capri (first called "La Gloriette" and later "Villa Lysis") in 1905. The line is taken from an inscription on the church of Santa Maria della Passione in Milan and at the same time served as title for a book by Augustin-Maurice Barrès (Paris: Félix Juven, 1902). The latter contains, among other things, recollections by Barrès of his youth in Nancy where, with the Marquis Stanislas de Guaita, he attended the lyceum. Together, de Guaita and Barrès later founded the Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix (see my article "Boys in Art. The Artist and his Model: Ferdinand and Hector Hodler. A New Approach" in *Journal of Homosexuality* 20: 1/2 (1990), p. 79). Barrès and d'Adelswärd knew each other.
2. The following variations appear: Jacques d'Adelsward(-)Fersen; (Jacques) de Fersen; Fersen; Count (de) Fersen; Baron Jacques. His own publications for the most part list the author as Jacques d'Adelswärd(-Fersen), while the court documents refer to him as Jacques d'Adelsward. Arvid Andrén, in his *Capri. From the Stone Age to the Tourist Age* (Gothenburg: Paul Aströms Förlag, 1980), p. 161, mentions the incredible carelessness to which the writer's name has often been subject: "Fate willed that he, who could not tolerate a single misprint in his poems, had both his first and last names misspelt on his tombstone, which attests that it was raised over the Baron Jaques Adelswärd Fersen." Peyrefitte had previously pointed out in his *L'Exilé de Capri. Édition définitive* (Paris: Flammarion/Le Livre de Poche, 1974), p. 321, that the data on the tombstone were incorrect: his date of birth was not 20 February 1879, but 20 February 1880, and his date of death not 6 November 1923 but 5 November 1923. J. Money (*Capri: Island of Pleasure*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1986, pp. 86, 310, n. 30) obviously overlooked the correction in the date of birth (given accurately in the sentence of 1903). Meanwhile the typesetter has played his part in d'Adelswärd's commemoration. On a map of Capri which I bought there in 1985, Villa Lysis is identified as Villa Felsen; in an article by Boudewijn Büch the writer suddenly becomes "Fersen" (see "Curious Capri" in *Avenue* 21:8, 1986, p. 82); in *Memorie di un Uomo Inutile* by Francesco Caravita di Sirignano (Naples: Fiorentino, 1990), p. 243, he is called Jacques Fersen d'Adelswar. Philip Core carries matters a bit too far in his *Camp: The Lie that Tells the Truth* (New York: Delilah Books, 1984), p. 83 by referring to the author as "Von Fersen, Baron D'Adleswaard" and above all by dating him a century earlier, listing the dates of birth and death of Hans Axel Count von Fersen ("le beau Fersen"), a personal friend of Marie Antoinette and instigator of the flight to Varennes. This is hardly "camp"; it is sheer laziness.
3. The reference here is to a number of notebooks with a handwritten selection from d'Adelswärd's volumes of poetry in the Royal Library at Brussels. The copyist faithfully transcribed the various volumes and noted beside the titles of the poems he does not include in his selection the comment "s.i." ("sans intérêt" or "not interesting"). The copyist clearly made his selection on the basis of homosexual themes and is often sloppy in copying the punctuation.
4. In 1987 Eric Wohl produced a very thorough study of the literary reception of Peyrefitte's, *L'Exilé de Capri* in his unpublished B.A. thesis (which is being reworked into his dissertation), *Mémoire de IVème Année (...) sur Interférences Morales dans le Domaine Esthétique: de Fersen à Peyrefitte* (Memoir of the fourth year [of university] on moral interferences in the aesthetic domain: from Fersen to Peyrefitte) (Kensington, Australia: University of New South Wales, 1987). Wohl concluded that the criticism of Peyrefitte's novel rested more on moral prejudice than on the upholding of literary/aesthetic criteria. In light of this study the question remains why Peyrefitte depicted the hero of his novel as being so pitiful.
5. As Peyrefitte later attested in *Propos Secrets 1* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1977, pp. 157-158) and *Propos Secrets 2* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1980, p. 363), he scrapped Jean Cocteau's foreword following Cocteau's death and upon request of d'Adelswärd's nephew, Count Carlo di Bugnano. Peyrefitte, too, found the foreword not very appropriate, based as it was mainly upon Cocteau's jealousy of the aristocratic d'Adelswärd.
6. Letter of the Préfecture de Police, Cabinet du Préfet. Archive - Musée, Paris, 31 March 1988: "Research in our archives has not enabled us to discover any documents relating to Baron Jacques d'ADELSWARD (Fersen) and Albert de WARREN." The statement implied that either documents of the affair did not exist or that they could not be (were not permitted to be?) found. For further information, the letter referred me to the Ministry of Justice!
7. Letter from the Direction des Services d'Archives de Paris, Paris, 26 May 1988.
8. Letter from the Directeur Général des Archives de France, Paris, 20 April 1988.
9. Letter from the Ambassade van het Koninkrijk (sic) der Nederlanden, Hoofd Pers- en Culturele Zaken, Paris, 4 October 1988.
10. R. Peyrefitte, *Propos Secrets 2*, p. 353.
11. See, for example, J. Money, op. cit., pp. 255, 301.



Although Money was aware that the novel is "a blend of fact and fancy," his study of d'Adelswärd's life is often untrue and unreliable in its details because he a) did not consult a number of sources; b) largely based his facts on Peyrefitte's novel which, above all, he sometimes wrongly interpreted or even read censoriously (perhaps the English translation which he used is here to blame); c) used Compton Mackenzie's novel set in Capri, *Vestal Fire* (1927) (London: Hogarth Press, 1985), and the communications of important Italians, as objective historical sources without considering the possibility that they had colored the facts. For instance, F. Caravita di Sirignano, op. cit., p. 184, refers to Nino Cesarini as "Cesarino Romano" (little Caesar from Rome).

12. R. Peyrefitte, *Propos Secrets* [1], p. 195.

13. R. Peyrefitte, *L'Exilé de Capri*, pp. 19-20; A. Andrén, op. cit., pp. 160-161; J. Money, op. cit., p. 310, n. 30.

14. It definitely concerned persons who were still alive. Recently Peyrefitte has begun in his *Propos Secrets* to reveal a number of their names.

15. R. Peyrefitte, *L'Exilé de Capri*, p. 80.

16. Peyrefitte mentions pupils of the Carnot, Condorcet, and Janson-de-Sailly lycea. D'Adelswärd knew the latter from his own school years. I was able to document, among others, the following names from the Carnot school: André François-Poncet, politician, diplomat and writer who during the Second World War was interned in Germany; Gabriel Marcel (son of art historian Henry Marcel, after 1912 director of the Musées Nationaux), philosopher and writer and spokesman for Christian existentialism; Paul Morand (son of painter Eugène Morand, director of the École des Arts Décoratifs), diplomat and writer; Pierre-Etienne Flandin, repeatedly minister of several departments after 1924, including Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Vichy regime, arrested by de Gaulle and in 1946, upon Churchill's intercession, found innocent.

17. See P. Morand, *Venises* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), p. 39-40; R. Peyrefitte, *Propos Secrets* 2, p. 359.

18. We must of necessity rely upon Peyrefitte for some information about Jacques' ancestry and youth. The newspaper, *Le Soir*, was established in 1867 and offered moderate opposition to the empire. Following the war of 1870 it supported the politics of Thiers and the establishment of a conservative republic. In 1873 the paper was bought by the Orleanists.

19. Ample discussions about Jacques' ancestry in J. Balteau, et al. (ed.), *Dictionnaire de Biographie Française* I (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1933), p. 545.

20. R. Peyrefitte, *L'Exilé de Capri*, pp. 14-15. See also Note 2. For more information about Hans Axel von

Fersen, see N. I. Garde (pseudonym of Edgar Leoni), *Jonathan to Gide: The Homosexual in History* (New York: Nosbooks, 1969), pp. 491-495.

21. The section "Un Souvenir pour une Larme" (A souvenir for a tear) in d'Adelswärd's poetry volume *Les Cortèges qui sont passés* (Corteges of the past) (Paris: Léon Vanier/Albert Messein, 1903), pp. 93 ff., is dedicated to this guardian. J. d'Adelswärd, *Chansons Légères. Poèmes de l'enfance* (Paris: Léon Vanier, 1901), p. 120; T. d'Arch Smith, *Love in Earnest. Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English 'Uranian' Poets from 1889 to 1930* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 118.

22. J. d'Adelswärd, *Chansons Légères*, pp. 156-158.

23. Ibid., pp. 95-96: "À mon Frère Renold" (To my brother Renold). In neither version of his novel does Peyrefitte mention the boy! A good example of boarding school impressions is found in the poem "Innocence," from d'Adelswärd's poetry collection, *L'Hymnaire d'Adonis, à la façon de M. le Marquis de Sade. Paganismes* (Paris: Léon Vanier, 1902), p. 118.

24. On the French educational system at this time, see A. Prost, *Histoire de l'Enseignement en France 1800-1967* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1970), pp. 57 ff., 246 ff.

25. J. d'Adelswärd, *L'Hymnaire*, pp. 136-137. English translation by the author.

26. Ibid., pp. 49, 114-115, 144-145.

27. J. Balteau, op. cit., p. 544; R. Peyrefitte, op. cit., pp. 30, 46. According to Peyrefitte, d'Adelswärd read to his camp comrades, including Edouard Chimot, engraver from Lille, passages from works by Rimbaud, Péladan, and Huysmans. It remains unclear whether Jacques was licensed at law: this was claimed in an anonymous article in *Le Matin* headed "Messes Noires en plein bacchanale," 11 July 1903, p. 2, but was denied by A. Jarry, "L'Âme ouverte à l'art antique" in *MESSES NOIRES. Le Canard Sauvage* 1:19 (1903) [no pagination].

28. The poem, "Noëlleries" (Christmas tales), in the collection *Les Cortèges*, p. 16, is dedicated to this Loulou. R. Peyrefitte, op. cit., pp. 74-75, constructed the last name of Loulou, who lived on Rue de Berri, in the form of a puzzle. To solve the puzzle, one combines the data from P. Larousse, *Grand Dictionnaire Universel du XIXe Siècle* (Paris: Administration du Grand Dictionnaire Universel, 1865-1890), Volume IV, p. 526 and Volume X, p. 613, with the names in the sentence. Loulou was descended from the jurist Jean-Guillaume Locré, Baron de Roissy (1758-1840), author of the 31-volume work, *Législation civile, commerciale et criminelle de la France* (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1827-1832).

29. The engagement was reported in the press. One newspaper announced both the engagement and Jac-



ques' arrest on the same day! See Regina, "La Vie de Paris. L'île de Puteaux" and (Anonymous) "Un scandale Parisien" in *Le Figaro* 10 July 1903, pp. 1, 4.

30. See Note 29 and, among other sources, (Anonymous) "Messes Noires" in *Le Matin* 10 July 1903, p. 2; (Anonymous) "Messes Noires en plein bacchanale," loc. cit.; (Anonymous) "Un scandale" in *Le Temps* 12 July 1903, p. 3; A. Jarry, "Le Périple de la littérature et de l'art. Héliogabale à travers les âges" in *La Plume: littéraire, artistique et sociale bi-mensuelle* 16:343 (1903), pp. 209-210; *MESSES NOIRES. Le Canard Sauvage* 1:19 (1903), the whole issue. The case was not overlooked by the foreign press. The report in the *Berliner Tageblatt* 10 July 1903 (taken directly from *Le Matin*) appears in I. Bloch, *Das Sexualleben unserer Zeit in seinen Beziehungen zur modernen Kultur* (Berlin: Louis Marcus Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1909), p. 698.

31. P. Morand, op. cit., p. 40. Morand recalls the response of his school friends on a walk with his father over the Square of San Marco in Venice, during the course of which they suddenly encountered d'Adelswärd. His father refused Jacques' proffered hand on the grounds that he did not wish to shake hands with a pederast, much to the amusement of the young Morand who observed that his father, without realizing it, did so all day long! Morand must have been mistaken here in the year he cites (1908), for the meeting can only have taken place in 1907.

32. Grandgousier, "Un procès à huis clos. Les Messes Noires" in *Le Matin* 29 November 1903, p. 1, and "Tribunaux. Les Messes Noires" in *Le Matin* 4 December 1903, p. 2.

33. Ms. 3-12-1903, Paris, Archives de Paris. Tribunal de 1ère Instance du Département de la Seine. Police Correctionnelle Neuvième Chambre. Audience publique du Jeudi Trois Décembre mil neuf cent trois, fol. 1-3.

34. A.-S. Lagail, *Les Mémoires du Baron Jacques: Lubricités infernales de la noblesse décadente* (Priapeville: Librairie Galante, An IV du XXe siècle foutatif [=1904]). A clumsy English translation was published in Canada in 1988; it had one positive result: the 1991 reprinting of the original text in France, now provided with page numbers, and the pages printed at last in proper sequence. See: A. Gallais, *The Memoirs of Baron Jacques: The Diabolical Debaucheries of Our Decadent Aristocracy*. Transl. and Introd. by Richard West (Vancouver: Ageneios Press, 1988); P. Cardon (ed.), *Dossier Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen* (Lille: Cahier Gai-Kitsch-Camp XX-4, 1991), pp. 63-95; P. Pia, *Les Livres de l'Enfer. Bibliographie des ouvrages érotiques du XVIème siècle à nos jours. II* (Paris: Coulet et Faure, 1978), p. 441; L. Perceau, *Bibliographie du roman érotique au XIXe siècle*.

II (Paris: Georges Fourdrinier, 1930), pp. 41-43. Perceau, who described the work as "the most horrible of its kind," mis-states the title of the poem as (perhaps a Freudian error): "Notre-Dame des Vierges Fortes" (Our Lady of the sturdy virgins), instead of "Notre-Dame des Verges Fortes" (Our Lady of the sturdy cocks)!

35. P. Pia, op. cit., pp. 535-536.

36. de Fersen, *Lord Lyllian. Messes Noires* (Paris: Léon Vanier/Albert Messein, 1905), pp. 169-171.

37. J. Lorrain, *Pélellestres: Le Poison de la littérature* (Paris: A. Méricant, 1910), p. 135. In the last few years a lot of new studies have appeared on Gilles de Rais and Joris-Karl Huysmans. On the Black Masses of Abbé Guibourg, see U. K. Dreikandt (ed.), *Schwarze Messen. Dichtungen und Dokumente* (Herrsching: M. Pawlak Verlagsgesellschaft mbH., 1970), pp. 69-77, and R. Cavendish, *Die schwarze Magie* (Frankfurt/Main: G. B. Fischer Verlag, 1969), pp. 377-381. It is here revealed in passing that as early as 1889 the newspaper *Le Matin* had given special attention in its news coverage to "Black Masses." This study, on pages 46-49, gives some other details of the Black Masses of Abbé Boullan (1824-1893) who during the 1880s and 1890s had captured the imagination of many in France. Huysmans and Stanislas de Guaita (see Note 1) were members, for shorter or longer periods, of his circle. Typical of all cited examples seem to be accusations of ritual child murder combined with orgiastic convocations. It almost seems as if Lorrain regretted that d'Adelswärd had spared the lives of his little friends!

38. R. Peyrefitte, *Propos Secrets* 2, p. 362.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 361.

40. The furnishing of duplicate copies of court dossiers for the benefit of the accused is a rather recent practice in many countries of Europe (communication from Edward Brongersma). It is unclear whether this began at an earlier period in France.

41. (Anonymous) "Messes Noires," loc. cit.; (Anonymous) "Messes Noires en plein bacchanale," loc. cit.; (Anonymous) "Un scandale," loc. cit. In the sentence there is only reference to "gravures licencieuses" (licentious engravings) which d'Adelswärd showed to the schoolboys.

42. See Note 36. G. Komrij, *Verzonken Boeken* (Amsterdam: Synopsis, 1986), p. 67.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 68; de Fersen, op. cit., pp. 78-83; R. Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1987), p. 551.

44. de Fersen, op. cit., pp. 151-180. I have been unable to discover whether d'Adelswärd himself was a member of the Rosicrucians or only sympathized with them. In any case, Péladan and Barrès, leaders in the



Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique, participated in d'Adelswärd's magazine *Akademos* in 1909. In my opinion, Lyllian's cryptic remark refers to concepts of Péladan about "The Worthy Subject" and "Ephêbic Beauty" (see my article "Neither to Laugh nor to Cry. A Failure in the End: Charles Filiger (1863-1928)" in *Paidika* 1:4, 1988, pp. 38-41).

45. de Fersen, op. cit., p. 162.

46. Erroneously given by Komrij, op. cit., p. 67, as a "Hungarian poet." It was a 17-year-old Polish boy whom Lord Lyllian encouraged to write poetry. From the sentence it seems that not just Loulou Locré but also the Berecki boy had special bonds with d'Adelswärd.

47. de Fersen, op. cit., p. 27; at the threshold of puberty, the boy fondles himself in front of a mirror, fantasizing about a non-existent "brother"!

48. J. Money, op. cit., pp. 86-88. Nino Cesarini, Jacques' later boy-friend, is recognizable in the novel, *Vestal Fire*, in the person of Carlo di Fiore, and Villa Lysis (named from Plato's dialogue on "the good" as the ultimate goal of all human desires) is called Villa Hylas, after the beloved of Herakles.

49. R. Peyrefitte, *L'Exilé de Capri*, p. 130.

50. R. Peyrefitte, op. cit., pp. 169-174, and my article, "Op het snijpunt van twee wegen – John Henry Mackay, anarchist en knapenminnaar" in *Maatstaf* 31:8 (1983), pp. 70-78.

51. J. d'Adelswärd-Fersen, *Une Jeunesse/Le Baiser de Narcisse* (Paris: Léon Vanier/Albert Messein, 1907). The Uranian and expert on witchcraft, Montague Summers (1880-1948) wrote with great sympathy about d'Adelswärd and even dedicated a collection of his poetry to him, *Antinous and Other Poems* (London: Sisley's, [1907]). He incorrectly wrote that the novella took place in Venice, whereas it actually was set near Taormina and in Verona. See M. Summers, *The Galanty Show. An Autobiography by Montague Summers* (London: Cecil Woolf, 1980), p. 236. The supposition made by T. d'Arch Smith, op. cit., p. 156, that Rachilde (pseudonym of Marguerite Aymery Vallette) used Jacques' name for the two incestuous homosexual brothers Fertzen in her novel, *Les Hors nature. Mœurs contemporaines* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1897), must be corrected: in 1897 Jacques had not yet acquired his "reputation"! Possibly Rachilde was referring to Hans Axel von Fersen (see Note 20).

52. For a reproduction of the statue of Nino cast by Francesco Ierace, see J. Money, op. cit., p. 95. With respect to the photo, the same symbols – although in mirror image – can be found on a drinking vessel from the First Century B.C. on which Emperor Augustus is shown in all his majesty, and on a Fourth Century A.D. coin on which the Emperor Constantius II is

depicted as Perpetuus Augustus. The closest resemblance with the photo is found in Second and Third Century A.D. depictions of Zeus Nicephorus, see A. Dimitrova-Milcheva, *Antique Engraved Gems and Cameos in the National Archeological Museum in Sofia* (Sofia: Septemviri Publishing House, 1981), pp. 32-33, Nrs. 13-14a. The photo differs in the following respects: standing posture, lack of scepter, and a Christian cross around Nino's neck.

53. J. d'Adelswärd-Fersen, *Ainsi chantait Marsyas. . . . Poèmes* (Florence and Paris: Léon Vanier/Albert Messein, 1907), pp. 15-16, 23-28. The photo of Jacques in J. Money, loc. cit. dates from this time and gives evidence of d'Adelswärd's increasing use of opium.

54. On the response of the residents of Capri, see J. Money, op. cit., pp. 109-111. One of Jacques' friends suggested that readers might have mis-read the implications of the dots following "mer," which of course means that they interpreted it as "merde" (shit).

55. The use of opium – following the Chinese Chandu method – was very popular with a number of artists, especially since the drug was easily obtainable in European apothecaries, even after the First World War. W. Schmidbauer and J. vom Scheidt, *Handbuch der Rauschdrogen* (München: Nymphenburger, 1975), pp. 139-146, states that the smoking of 20 to 40 pipes (6 to 7 grams) per day was common for the average user (10 grams of opium contain approximately 1 gram morphine, of which 0.2 to 0.3 grams come directly into the blood with smoking). A. Hayther, *Opium and the Romantic Imagination* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), goes deeply into the influence which the drug had on various artists. Jacques' attraction to this particular drug can be explained in part by the fact that from ancient times opium has been used in various mystery cults and initiation ceremonies.

56. A. Andrén, op. cit., p. 161. (Anonymous) "Le triste héros des messes noires Jacques d'Adelswärd meurt mystérieusement à Capri" in *Le Matin* 10 December 1923, p. 1, prints sensationalistic reports from the local rumor mill: the residents of Capri crossed themselves when strange sounds and lights came from similar nocturnal "orgies" held in Villa Lysis.

57. See Note 50.

58. The following are some of the best known names: Paul Adam, Henri Barbusse, Maurice Barrès, Jules Bois, Norman Douglas, Georges *\*Eekhout*, Achille Essebac, Claude Farrère, Jean Ferval, Anatole France, Henry Gauthier-Villars and his wife Colette Willy, Maxim Gorky, Robert d'Humières, Pierre Loti, Maurice Maeterlinck, Octave Mirbeau, Jean Moréas, Joséphin Péladan, Laurent Tailhade, Emile Verhaeren, Renée Vivien.

*\*Eekhout*



59. (Anonymous "N.D.L.R."), "Note de la Direction" in *Akademos* 1:10 (1909), p. 640.
60. "Inaugural" and "Notre But" (Our Aim) in *Akademos* 1:1 (1909), pp. 1-2, 113. N. Douglas, *Looking Back: An Autobiographical Excursion* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1934), pp. 358-366, knew only this issue of the magazine. J. Money, op. cit., pp. 109, 311-312, knew of 10 of the 12 issues but only consulted six.
61. Jacques borrowed this pseudonym from the book by Jean Lorrain, *Sonyeuse* (Paris: Charpentier, 1891).
62. J. H. van Epen, *Compendium Drugverslaving en Alcoholisme. Diagnostiek en behandeling* (Amsterdam: Agon/Elsevier, 1974), p. 90, cites Freud's experiments with curing opium addiction by administering cocaine. This resulted in the patient becoming psychotic. On Gemito, see my article "Street-Urchins: Antonio Mancini (1852-1930)" in *Paidika* 2:3 (1991), pp. 31-47, passim. J. Money, op. cit., pp. 124-126, 134, has d'Adelswärd undertake in 1913-14 another trip to the Far East, with Nino and some women from the colony at Capri. This trip is only mentioned by E.F. Benson and C. Mackenzie and is probably based upon fantasy.
63. R. Peyrefitte, *Propos Secrets* 2, p. 355. J. Money, op. cit., pp. 159, 170, describes Nino after 1918 as a young man who "at last" was set on the straight and narrow path through his war experiences; he was not only decorated but seems to have suddenly taken on Anglo-Saxon morals. He is supposed to have stayed with d'Adelswärd only out of compassion for the "madman"; "they were now 'just friends,' and Fersen's attempts to revive the old sexual relationship were rejected." This is a concatenation, perhaps based upon wishful thinking, of absurdities and suspicions presented as fact which is based in no respect upon existing documentation. Above all, because of Jacques' preference for ephebes, we may assume that the sexual component of the relationship had ended years before.
64. R. Peyrefitte, loc. cit.
65. According to Peyrefitte's novel; I can find no other documentation. Peyrefitte's opinion is highly probable. It raises the question of why d'Adelswärd visited von Gloeden with Corrado just as he had earlier with Nino. Perhaps he wanted both youngsters preserved in the work of the famous photographer of boys of the time. Perhaps these photos will some day come to light! R. Peyrefitte, *L'Exilé de Capri*, pp. 292, 298, says that d'Adelswärd also had sketches made of Nino and Corrado by the sculptor Vincenzo Gemito (see Note 62).
66. N. Douglas, loc. cit.
67. (Anon.) "Le triste héros des messes noires Jacques d'Adelswärd meurt mystérieusement à Capri," loc. cit.
68. J. Money, op. cit., pp. 172, 315; R. Peyrefitte, op. cit., p. 314; *Propos Secrets* 2, loc. cit.

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17. Bathing boys at Marina, Capri (c. 1900). Picture post-card by Richter & Co., Naples. Collection of the author.
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20. Cover of *Hei Hsiang. Le parfum noir* (1921).
21. Autograph of d'Adelswärd, double signed: *Au passant, l'inavouable. F[ersen.] avec beaucoup de sympathie [sic] vraie. Fersen.* (To the passer-by, what we try to conceal. F[ersen.] with lots of sincere sympathy. Fersen.) In: *Hei Hsiang. Le parfum noir* (Paris: Albert Messein, 1921). Collection of the author.
22. Portrait from the *in memoriam* "Le triste héros des messes noires Jacques d'Adelsward meurt mystérieusement à Capri" in *Le Matin* 10 December 1923, p. 1.



# THE SEXUAL EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN

**Theo Sandfort**

## *Editor's Note:*

Dr. Theo Sandfort is President of the Department of Gay and Lesbian Studies at Utrecht University. He is the author of, among other works, *The Sexual Aspects of Paedophile Relations* (Amsterdam: Spartacus, 1982), *Boys on Their Contacts with Men* (Elmhurst, NY: Global Academic Publishers, 1987), and *Het Belang van de ervaring* (Utrecht: Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht, 1988).

The following is the first translation into English of chapters 4 and 5 of his most recent book, *Seksuele ervaringen van kinderen*, (Deventer: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1989). Chapters 1 through 3 appeared in *Paidika* issue 9.

Translated from the Dutch by Frank Torey.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

In Chapters 1 and 2 we described childhood sexual experience to determine what influences these might have upon sexual functioning in later life. We also described our research design and methodology. In Chapter 3 we went on to describe consensual and non-consensual experiences of the young people in our sample. We turn now to a discussion of the situation of the younger partners at the time of the interview (between 1985 and 1986), as contrasted to their experiences and feelings prior to their sixteenth birthdays.<sup>1</sup> We use statistical correlations between several factors thought to be important indicators of present-day sexual functioning and the sexual experience histories of our subjects. These factors include: sexual

desire, ability to be aroused, fear of sexual contact, satisfaction with sexual life, problems with present-day sexual contacts, and physical and psychological complaints.

It should first be noted, however, that sexual functioning can be influenced not only by past experiences but also by current circumstances, such as whether someone is or is not having an ongoing sexual relationship, or has or has not recently had one; the kind of daily activity the person is involved in; and even whether the person lives at home or independently. These circumstances must be taken into account before proposing a connection between early sexual experiences and later functioning. An analysis of



the connection between present-day sexual functioning and early sexual experiences for each aspect of sexual functioning is given below. Various statistical techniques have been used to make this analysis.<sup>2</sup>

The first research objective was to determine what differences might exist among certain groups of young people. Were young people who had had no early sexual experiences in some way different from those who had had exclusively consensual, or those who had had exclusively non-consensual, experiences? Were there differences between the group with both consensual and non-consensual experiences and other groups; between the group with only consensual and the group with only non-consensual sexual experiences? For example, "fear of sexual contact" was examined, and the question asked: did those young people who had had only consensual sexual experiences have more or less fear than those who had had no sexual experiences? Finally we must consider the question: if a trend is observed, could it be merely the result of chance, or is the difference great enough to be statistically significant?

To answer such questions we have compared the average scores of the various groups on various specific measures, for example, the average strength of sexual desire. We examined whether differences are statistically significant and how they accord with the research hypotheses formulated in Chapter 2 regarding the influence of consensual and non-consensual contacts upon the development and expression of those factors. A "significant difference" is sufficiently great that it is highly unlikely to be the result of chance, as determined by the application of established statistical techniques. The chance of it being a result of random variations in the sample of individuals included in the study may be said to be zero (0%) if the variation is sufficiently large in relation to the sample size, or, more typically, less than a certain percentage (typically 10%, 5%, or 1%).

We also asked to what degree the various factors correlated with one another; that is, how strong the link was between factors. One is able to propose a correlation between two factors if it

can be observed that when there is an increase in the value of one factor there is also a corresponding change in the value of the other factor. For example, the "sales record of ice-cream" might correlate with "the length of the days": this would indicate that the more daylight there was the more ice-cream was purchased. Such correlations, or relationships, were found in this research. For example, it appears that the more a person's sexual experiences in youth were non-consensual, the more anxious they are about sexuality in later life.

The strength of a correlation is expressed as a number between -1 and +1; a perfect positive correlation is +1: as the value of one factor increases, so does the value of the other. A factor of -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation: as the value of the one increases, the other declines. Such perfect correlations are, of course, extremely rare in the behavioral sciences. A correlation score of 0 indicates that there is no correlation between the two factors — they vary randomly with respect to one another. An examination of the statistical correlations is then made in order to take into account, on the one hand, what aspects of the youthful sexual experiences influence present sexual functioning, and on the other hand precisely what caused the correlations or differences. In our example, is the increased consumption of ice-cream caused by the longer period of daylight or by warmer weather? In the terms of the study, are differences in present-day sexual functioning caused by the early youthful sexual experiences, or are they caused by other background factors? If those who have had only consensual sexual experiences before age 16 have greater ease in becoming sexually aroused, is this explained by factors other than the early experiences? Could the fact that the person began to masturbate early actually be the factor leading to easy arousal?

The following aspects of youthful sexual experiences were first analyzed:

- The number of partners with whom there was consensual sexual contact.
- The number of partners with whom there was non-consensual sexual contact.
- The degree to which the person was aroused.



- Whether or not orgasm was achieved.
- The degree of physical intimacy.
- The severity of non-consensual sexual experiences.

Following a consideration of these aspects, the following background factors were examined:

- Social class.
- The kind of upbringing (whether raised by parents or parent-substitutes).
- The religious affiliation of the parents, and the importance the parents placed on that affiliation.
- Warmth of relationship with the parents.
- Sexual upbringing (strict or liberal).
- Age of biological sexual maturity.
- Whether sexual games played or not.
- Whether masturbated or not.

Regarding those factors previously listed as relevant to the present-day situation, we examined:

- Sexual experiences after age 16.
- Present relationship(s).
- Sexual contacts in the last 6 months.
- The subject's occupation.
- Present living circumstances.

Our study revealed that few background factors actually did play a role, and we mention here only those that were influential.<sup>3</sup> Analyses were conducted on the total group as well as a variety of subgroups. Some analyses involved only boys, others only girls. Other analyses compared subjects without early sexual experiences with those who had had only consensual sexual experiences before age 16. The various analyses yielded similar, but not always identical, results. A certain correlation would be suggested by one analysis but not by another. In some cases, a correlation cannot be made for the boys or the girls when considered separately, but can be for the group of young people as a whole, because the groups of boys and the groups of girls is each too small to elicit a statistically significant result. In statistical analysis, statistically significant correlations are more likely to emerge as the group upon which the analysis is carried out becomes larger.

## The Present Situation

Roughly half of the 283 people in the group (i.e., 145) now have a steady relationship, although more girls do than boys (41% of the boys compared to 59% of the girls). About one half of these relationships have lasted more than a year, the remaining between a month and a year. All but 7 of the 145 steady relationships are sexual. In general, these relationships are with a person of the opposite sex (129 of the 145 relationships). Of the remaining 16, 15 were exclusively homosexual, and one girl had simultaneous relationships with a boy and a girl. In the case of the 138 young persons who were not currently engaged in a steady relationship, 80 have had a sexual contact in the last half-year with either the person they had been in a steady relationship with (which had subsequently been broken off) or with someone with whom they have had no steady relationship. The sexual contacts of the youths who do not have steady relationships are also mostly heterosexual (65 of the 80). Eight boys and two girls without steady relationships have exclusively homosexual contacts. Two boys and three girls had both hetero- and homosexual contacts in the preceding six months.

Those young people who have had sexual contact in the past half-year are on average older than the others. Those with a steady relationship are of the same average age as those who have no steady relationship. As for "sex or no sex in the last half-year" or "having or not having a steady relationship," there is no difference between young people who are working as compared to those who are still studying. There was a difference among persons still living at home, living alone, or living together with someone. All of those living with someone have a steady relationship, while only half of those who lived alone or were still at home had such. All 27 living with a steady partner had in the past half-year had sexual contact. 85% (of the 103) young people who lived alone had had sexual contact over the last half-year. However, only 65% (of the 153) individuals who still lived with their parents or guardians had had such contacts over this period of time.



## Problems with Present Sexual Contacts

Those who in the last half-year had had sexual contacts were all asked whether they had had any problems during these experiences. Significantly, most of the problems cited were related to one another. These included:

- Fear about whether the love-making would be unsuccessful.
- Feeling ill at ease.
- Difficulty in expressing a desire for sex.
- Difficulty in expressing a lack of desire for sex.
- Pretending that it was fun.
- Wishing the partner would be more active.
- Having to do something that he or she did not wish to do.

When someone is troubled by a certain problem then the chance is great that another problem also plays a role. The above-cited problems all correlated with the following three problems, which are generally considered characteristic of poor sexual functioning:

- Feeling anxious or tense.
- Failing to become aroused.
- Failing to achieve orgasm.

We used these last three problems to compare the young people with each other, and employed a "problem index" to indicate the degree to which in the last half-year problems had arisen in sexual functioning. The averages for problems in sexual contact were expressed on a scale of 1 (none) to 7 (a great many). However, those who had no sexual problems in the past half-year were not considered in this analysis.

Girls had problems with contacts more frequently than boys. For girls, the average score on the problem-index scale was 4.5, while for boys it was 2.5. Only 11 of the 134 girls (8%) reported no problems at all with current sexual contacts, whereas 25 of the 84 boys (35%) were having no problems.

Different causes of anxiety or tension during sexual contact were cited. For boys it was "feeling strange" and "unsure," and to a lesser extent "fear of certain sexual acts," "fear that the girl would become pregnant" and "factors in the relationship." Girls primarily gave as the cause "memories of unpleasant sexual experiences,"

and somewhat less frequently, "feeling strange" and "unsure," and "factors in the relationship." Boys ascribed their inability to become aroused mostly to their physical condition at the time, i.e. tiredness, too much drink, and for a few, distraction. Girls mostly attributed their inability to become aroused to their physical condition and "being distracted." A few girls said that at the time they "did not have any desire for sex" or they "wanted someone other than the partner." Not achieving orgasm during sexual contact was attributed by boys mostly to their physical condition at the time or to their "feeling strange." Some boys said it was caused by "having had no desire for sex." The girls mostly gave as causes "feeling strange" and "being clumsy", that it had happened too quickly, that there was pain, or that they were not used to their partner.

The degree to which the young people had problems in recent sexual contacts correlated with certain background variables. For the boys, there were more problems when the parents had given them no sexual information and had more conservative sexual attitudes. For girls, there were more problems if they had started playing sex games early, if they had begun masturbating before age 16, and if they had become sexually mature at a younger age. Girls also had problems more often when they felt their parents were "cold" and where the religious faith of the parents was an important element in family life. Those who had had exclusively non-consensual sexual experiences had more problems in sexual functioning than the other groups of young people, as can be seen in Table 4.1.

As the psychic and physical severity of non-consensual experiences (as expressed by the severity score) increases, the more extensive and the more serious present-day problems become. In the previous chapter we saw that non-consensual contacts with parents or guardians were the most severe; as might be supposed, those who have had such contacts have the most problems in their current contacts.

We had expected to find that consensual sexual experiences in youth would tend to lead to better sexual functioning in early adulthood. It is true that after consensual sexual experiences



there were fewer problems than after non-consensual sexual experiences. However, there was no significant difference in sexual functioning between the groups with no early sexual experience and the groups with only consensual experiences (see Table 4.1).

was small. There is, however, for boys a correlation between the number and severity of non-consensual experiences and subsequent sexual problems. A positive correlation does exist for boys: they had fewer problems where they experienced orgasm in their sexual contacts before age 16.

**Table 4.1 Present problems\* in sexual contact in relation to sexual experience before age 16**

	<i>No Experience</i>	<i>Exclusively Consensual Experiences</i>			<i>Exclusively Non- Consensual Experiences</i>			<i>Both Experiences</i>
	Total	Y	A/Y	Total	Y	A/Y	Total	Total
<b>Boys</b>	2.74	2.54	2.36	2.49	2.00	3.33	3.00	2.75
<b>Girls</b>	3.45	3.75	5.17	4.14	5.22	5.29	5.27	4.78
<b>Total</b>	3.12	2.92	3.20	3.00	4.89	5.05	5.00	4.44

\* Scored on a scale of 1 (no problems) to 7 (many problems). Only young people who had had sexual contact within the preceding six months were included in this analysis. See Appendix 3 for the number of young people in each group.

Y = Only with age-mates A/Y = Only or also with adults

These correlations were not the same for boys as for girls. Boys who have had consensual sexual experiences have fewer problems than boys who had no sexual experiences as children; however, the difference is not statistically significant. With girls, the group without sexual experience in youth, contrary to expectations, have fewer problems in sexual contacts today than the group with exclusively consensual experiences, but the difference is also not significant.

The correlation between non-consensual experiences and problems occurred mostly with girls. Moreover, the more non-consensual sexual experiences they had with their partners, and the more severe these experiences were, the more sexual problems they have today. With boys there is a difference between those with exclusively non-consensual experiences and those with no experience at all, but the difference is not statistically significant. This may be because for boys non-consensual sexual contact has less influence upon later sexual functioning. The absence of a statistically significant correlation may also have occurred because the number of boys with exclusively non-consensual experiences

### **Sexual Desire, Arousal Ability, and Fear of Sexual Contact**

Valid data regarding current sexual problems could only be obtained for young people who had had relatively recent sexual contacts. We obtained information from almost all of the young people regarding a variety of factors relating to current sexual functioning. The factors for which information was collected include: sexual desire – the extent to which one has desire for sex; arousal ability – the ability in sexual contacts to become aroused; and the degree of fear of sexual contact. In order to compare the groups of young people, each of these factors is expressed as a number ranging from 1 (little) to 5 (a great deal). On this scale the boys have an average of 3.5 for sexual desire, 3.9 for arousal ability, and 1.8 for fear of sexual contact. For the girls: desire 3.2, arousal ability 3.6, and fear 2.1. There is a strong link between the three factors.

For boys, the stronger the sexual desire, the greater the ability to be aroused. The more fear boys have of sexual contact, the weaker is their sexual desire and arousal ability. Fear of sex ap-



pears to diminish desire and arousal during sexual contact. It seems that the more exciting one finds sexual contact the greater becomes one's sexual desire. Fear, and ability to be aroused, thus influence sexual desire. An inverse correlation is less obvious: strong sexual desire does not lessen fear of sexual contact, and it does not increase arousal ability. There is a link between fear of sexual contact and satisfaction with the boys' sexual lives: the less fear the greater the boy's satisfaction.

In the case of girls there appears to be a link between their degree of satisfaction with sexual life and the degree to which they are now experiencing physical and psychic complaints such as fear, depression, pain or sickness caused by psychological problems, sleeplessness, irritability, confusion, and problems in getting along with others. Less fear, greater arousal ability, and stronger sexual desire are usually linked with greater satisfaction and fewer psychic and physical complaints.

For both girls and boys, there is above all a link between early consensual sexual experiences and present-day desire, arousal ability, and fear. Subsequent to consensual sexual experiences, sexual desire becomes stronger, the ability to be aroused increases, and fear of sexual contact diminishes. This is in agreement with the hypotheses we presented in Chapter 2. We should also add that we found that it made no difference whether early sexual contacts were with age-mates or with adults, and that the results were the same for girls and boys.

The relationship between these three factors and present-day sexual functioning was also examined for young people who had experienced non-consensual contacts. For the group of boys who had early non-consensual sexual experiences, sexual desire is stronger, ability to be aroused is greater, and fear of sexual contact is less than when compared to the group of boys who had no sexual experiences. This was contrary to our expectations, but the difference was not statistically significant. Notably, however, in the cases where the non-consensual experience was very severe, sexual desire is weaker, arousal is reduced, and there is greater fear of sexual

contact; this applies to boys as well as to girls.

Boys with both consensual and non-consensual early sexual experiences seem to form an exceptional group with respect to desire, arousal ability, and fear. In comparison with the other young people, they now seem to have stronger sexual desire, they are more easily aroused, and are less fearful of sexual contact. This group differed even more greatly from those who had had no sexual experiences at all.

The strength of sexual desire, the arousal ability in sexual contact, and the fear of sexual contact correlate with some aspects of early sexual experiences: the more partners in exclusively consensual sexual contact a young person had, the more aroused that person was, the more frequent were his or her orgasms, and the more physically intimate these consensual experiences were, the stronger is that person's current sexual desire and arousal ability, and the weaker is his or her fear of sexual contact.

In order to give a clearer idea of the links between desire, arousal ability, and fear on the one hand, and the frequency and nature of early sexual experiences on the other hand, we shall examine these three factors separately.

### *Sexual Desire*

Young people who had exclusively consensual sexual experiences before age 16 have significantly stronger sexual desire than those with no sexual experiences before their 16th birthday (Table 4.2). This applies to both boys and girls, and holds true regardless of whether those sexual experiences were with age-mates or with adults.

The possibility that stronger present-day sexual desire might be the result of other factors was investigated. Sexual desire seemed to be stronger for young people who had masturbated and played sex games before age 16. It could be that strong desire might already have been present at an early age, and that the consensual sexual experiences did not contribute to a stronger desire. It was certainly a real possibility that masturbating and playing sex games might be expressions of strong, early sexual interest. However, these two factors did not seem to us sufficient to explain strong current desire, be-



**Table 4.2** Desire for sexual contact in relation to sexual experience before age 16

	No Experience	Exclusively Consensual Experiences			Exclusively Non- Consensual Experiences			Both Experiences
	Total	Y	A/Y	Total	Y	A/Y	Total	Total
<b>Boys</b>	3.15	3.58	3.59	3.58	2.71	3.85	3.62	3.72
<b>Girls</b>	2.39	3.43	3.48	3.44	3.32	2.93	3.04	3.32
<b>Total</b>	3.05	3.54	3.56	3.54	3.26	3.05	3.11	3.40

\* Scored on a scale of 1 (no desire) to 7 (much desire). See Appendix 4 for the number of young people in each group.  
Y = Only with age-mates A/Y = Only or also with adults

cause we also found that in cases where the young people had neither masturbated nor played sex games, they now had stronger sexual desire if they had had early consensual sexual experiences.

Non-consensual sexual experiences and present-day sexual desire do not correlate as anticipated. We found that for girls there was almost no difference between the group with exclusively non-consensual experiences and the group with no sexual experiences before age 16. But for boys we did find a difference, although it was the opposite of our expectations: the group with exclusively non-consensual sexual experiences, compared to the group with no sexual experiences, have on average stronger sexual desire. We had expected to find that non-consensual sexual experiences led to weaker sexual desire. However, there were only 5 boys in the group with exclusively non-consensual experiences, and the result is not statistically significant.

### ***Arousal Ability in Sexual Contact***

Arousal ability results (Table 4.3) were very similar to the results for sexual desire. Those with exclusively consensual experiences are more easily aroused than those with no sexual experiences before age 16.

Boys with non-consensual sexual experiences currently are more easily aroused than boys with no sexual experiences before age 16, but the difference is not statistically significant. For girls involved in contacts with adults, there is a de-

finite link between current arousal ability and non-consensual sexual experiences: girls who had only had non-consensual sexual experiences are now less arousable.

A significant background factor for present-day arousal ability is masturbation before age 16. Those who had masturbated now have stronger sexual arousal ability, although, just as we had seen above with sexual desire, stronger arousal ability cannot be attributed solely to early masturbation. Even where the young person had not masturbated, where he or she had exclusively consensual sexual experiences he or she is now more strongly arousable than other young people.

### ***Fear of Sexual Contact***

Young people with exclusively consensual sexual experiences are now less fearful of sexual contact than those who before age 16 had no sexual contact. This difference is significant in the case of boys. Girls with consensual sexual experiences have less fear than girls who had no sexual experiences, but this correlation is not statistically significant (Table 4.4).

Young people with non-consensual sexual experiences do not now have more fear of sexual contact than young people who had no sexual experiences. The boys who had non-consensual sexual experiences now actually have less fear of sexual contact than the boys who had no early sexual experiences at all, but the difference is not statistically significant.



**Table 4.3 Arousal ability\* in sexual contact in relation to sexual experience before age 16**

	<i>No Experience</i>	<i>Exclusively Consensual Experiences</i>			<i>Exclusively Non- Consensual Experiences</i>			<i>Both Experiences</i>
	Total	Y	A/Y	Total	Y	A/Y	Total	Total
<b>Boys</b>	3.72	3.93	4.05	3.96	3.41	4.23	4.01	4.09
<b>Girls</b>	3.50	3.90	3.81	3.88	3.77	3.32	3.44	3.65
<b>Total</b>	3.62	3.92	3.89	3.94	3.71	3.44	3.51	3.74

\* Scored on a scale of 1 (least arousable) to 7 (most arousable). See Appendix 4 for the number of young people in each group.  
Y = Only with age-mates A/Y = Only or also with adults

It could be that, before the first sexual contact, there is always a certain degree of sexual fear, and that this fear might be diminished by having consensual sexual contacts. In support of this idea, we found that where the person had masturbated at an early age, the fear was also less. The explanation could be that through masturbation one gains experience in sexual arousal and orgasm, and this could help to reduce later fear of sexual contact.

individual from a very early age more fear of sexuality. We found that where the young person had very religious parents and had not masturbated but did have early consensual sexual experiences, that person now has less fear of sexual contact. Less fear of sexual contact correlates above all with having had consensual sexual experiences.

**Table 4.4 Anxiety\* about sexual contact in relation to sexual experience before age 16**

	<i>No Experience</i>	<i>Exclusively Consensual Experiences</i>			<i>Exclusively Non- Consensual Experiences</i>			<i>Both Experiences</i>
	Total	Y	A/Y	Total	Y	A/Y	Total	Total
<b>Boys</b>	2.17	1.66	1.61	1.64	2.57	1.73	1.90	1.55
<b>Girls</b>	2.30	1.90	2.05	1.94	2.13	2.26	2.23	2.03
<b>Total</b>	2.23	1.73	1.73	1.73	2.20	2.19	2.19	1.94

\* Scored on a scale of 1 (least arousable) to 7 (most arousable). See Appendix 4 for the number of young people in each group.  
Y = Only with age-mates A/Y = Only or also with adults

Our data indicates that greater current fear occurs if the parents held strong religious beliefs. It could be that religious parents keep sexuality from their children and that those young people, through lack of sexual experiences, would now have more fears. It might also be that the religious principles of the parents instill in the

### Satisfaction with Current Sexual Life

The young people in our study are in general reasonably satisfied with their sexual lives. The average degree of satisfaction for boys, expressed numerically on a scale of 1 (very unsatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied) is 7.1; the average for girls is



6.9. This satisfaction is related to several other aspects of their present-day sexual functioning. The less fear there was of sexual contacts, the more satisfied the person is. Girls are more satisfied when their sexual desire and arousal ability are stronger. Physical or psychic complaints also affect satisfaction – both boys and girls are less satisfied when they have more complaints.

The youths' own judgments about their present satisfaction are clearly personal. One boy, for example, explained, "If I hadn't been masturbating, I would give myself a 10, but now I give myself an 8." And a girl said about the number she affixed to satisfaction, "That applies to the last few weeks," while another girl said her number was "for quantity, not quality."

Boys with only consensual sexual experiences are now more satisfied with their sexual lives than boys without sexual experience (Table 4.5). For girls the opposite is the case: girls without early sexual experience are now more satisfied than the girls with exclusively consensual sexual experiences. While the observed trend was contrary to what we had anticipated, it is not statistically significant.

The anticipated correlation between non-consensual sexual experiences and diminished satisfaction does not exist for boys. Girls with non-consensual experiences are, in comparison with other girls, the least satisfied with their present-day sexual lives (Table 4.5), but the difference is not statistically significant.

When we examined the connection between present-day sexual satisfaction and the nature of

early sexual experiences, we found a difference between the boys and the girls. Boys are more satisfied as the number of partners, frequency of orgasm, and intimacy of early sexual experiences increase. For the girls, these factors had hardly any influence at all upon present-day sexual satisfaction. The only significant factor was whether they had experienced orgasm before age 16. However, it is clear that girls are less satisfied with their current sexual functioning as the number of partners in non-consensual sexual contacts increases and as the severity score of those contacts increases.

The connection between early sexual experiences and present-day sexual satisfaction is not simple. In the case of boys, there is above all a connection between consensual sexual experiences and greater satisfaction; with girls there is above all a connection between non-consensual sexual experiences and less satisfaction. It appears that for girls, consensual sexual experiences soften the effects of non-consensual sexual experiences: girls with both sorts of experiences are more satisfied than girls with exclusively non-consensual sexual experiences (Table 4.5).

### Psychic and Physical Complaints

The young people were asked to indicate on a written list the extent to which they have been troubled by complaints indicative of fear, depression, pain or psychosomatic illness, sleep disorders, temper rages, disorientation, and problems with getting along with other people.

**Table 4.5** Current satisfaction\* with sexual contact in relation to sexual experience before age 16

	No Experience	Exclusively Consensual Experiences			Exclusively Non- Consensual Experiences			Both Experiences
	Total	Y	A/Y	Total	Y	A/Y	Total	Total
Boys	6.51	7.39	7.88	7.52	8.00	6.25	6.60	6.88
Girls	7.39	7.17	7.00	7.12	7.30	5.87	6.23	6.97
Total	6.92	7.33	7.61	7.40	7.36	5.91	6.27	6.95

\* Scored on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 7 (very satisfied). See Appendix 4 for the number of young people in each group.  
Y = Only with age-mates A/Y = Only or also with adults



The averages were expressed on a scale of 1 (no complaints) to 5 (many complaints).

The girls are on average somewhat more troubled by psychic and physical complaints than the boys. Girls had an average of 1.9 compared to an average of 1.6 for the boys.

There are more psychic and physical complaints where there were early non-consensual experiences (Table 4.6). The difference is significant for the girls but not for the boys. It made no difference for either group whether the non-consensual experiences were with age-mates or with adults. The effects become stronger as the severity score for the non-consensual sexual experiences increases.

complaints. The correlation between a cold family climate and more psychic and physical complaints is especially strong. Nevertheless, even after taking account of family atmosphere, it appears that non-consensual sexual experiences provide an independent explanation for present-day psychic and physical complaints.

Sexual experiences *after* age 16 had an influence on the complaints. Young adults who had had non-consensual experiences now have more complaints than those who had only consensual experiences or none at all, regardless of their experiences before age 16. The psychic and physical complaints were the only factors with which this connection was observed.

**Table 4.6** Psychic and physical complaints\* in relation to sexual experience before age 16

	No Experience	Exclusively Consensual Experiences			Exclusively Non- Consensual Experiences			Both Experiences
	Total	Y	A/Y	Total	Y	A/Y	Total	Total
<b>Boys</b>	1.45	1.59	1.66	1.61	2.21	1.67	1.78	1.72
<b>Girls</b>	1.52	1.58	1.55	1.57	1.93	2.24	2.17	1.93
<b>Total</b>	1.48	1.59	1.63	1.60	1.96	2.22	2.12	1.89

\* Scored on a scale of 1 (no complaints) to 7 (many complaints). See Appendix 4 for the number of young people in each group.

Y = Only with age-mates A/Y = Only or also with adults

Young people with exclusively consensual sexual experiences also have more complaints than young people without early sexual experiences (Table 4.6). This is contrary to our expectations. The difference is significant for the boys but for the girls the difference is too small to be statistically significant.

When we examine the relationship between current complaints and the nature of early sexual experiences, we see a clear correlation for girls: they have more complaints where they have had more partners in non-consensual sexual experiences, and where these experiences were more intimate and more severe. In addition, where the family was "cold" or parents were "distant," "not very much involved," or "not very loving," the young people now have more

## Conclusion

In Chapter 1 we formulated the following research question: "What is the influence on later sexual functioning of having had in early youth consensual or non-consensual sex with adults or age-mates, or no sex at all?" It was expected that the influence on later sexual functioning would be positive in the case of consensual sexual contacts and negative in the case of non-consensual contacts. It appears that this expectation was to a considerable extent confirmed. Especially for girls, there was a consistent relationship between non-consensual experience and less satisfactory current functioning. This relationship was less clear for boys.

The negative effect of non-consensual sexual



experiences is most strongly expressed in problems in present-day sexual contact, often in "fear and tension," "not being able to become aroused," and "not having an orgasm." There was also a clear connection between early non-consensual sexual experiences and increased psychic and physical complaints. For girls, there is also a clear connection between non-consensual sexual experiences and reduced satisfaction with their present-day sexual lives.

The negative influences of non-consensual sexual experiences become stronger as the severity scores for the experiences increase. Clearly, the non-consensual sexual experiences with high severity scores have a distinct negative influence on sexual desire, arousal ability, and fear of sexual contact. A similar correlation was no longer observable when in the same analysis non-consensual experiences which received relatively low severity scores were included.

The fact that non-consensual sexual experiences have a more evident effect upon girls than upon boys might partially be explained through the relatively few boys who had non-consensual sexual experiences – the number of boys may not have been sufficient for a statistically significant result. It is, however, not inconceivable that boys process non-consensual sexual experiences in a different manner than do girls and that in the case of boys the consequences are less clear.

The positive effects of consensual sexual experiences before age 16 are expressed in greater sexual desire, stronger arousal ability in sexual contact, and reduced fear of sexual contact. With boys there is an additional connection between early consensual experiences and greater satisfaction with their current sexual lives. However, contrary to what was expected, no connection was observed between having had consensual sexual contacts at an early age and fewer problems in sexual contact in later life. Young people with exclusively consensual early contacts do not now have significantly fewer problems than young people who had no early sexual experiences, and for girls, those with no early sexual experience appeared to have the fewest problems with present-day sexual contacts.

The data for young people who had both con-

sensual and non-consensual sexual experiences support our expectations for the significance of consensual and non-consensual sexual experiences. The young people in the mixed group often stand between the group with exclusively consensual sexual experience and the group with exclusively non-consensual sexual experience. It appears that both the positive effect of consensual sexual experience and the negative effect of non-consensual sexual experience are expressed for this group in their present-day sexual functioning.

## NOTES

1. The situation at the time of the interview will be called the "current situation," in order to make clear that it differs from experiences before age 16. We want to emphasize that the "current situation" refers to the period of the interviews, that is, 1985 and 1986.
2. The complete analyses are fully described in Th. G.M. Sandfort, *Het belang van de ervaring* (Utrecht: Homostudies, 1988).
3. See *Het belang van de ervaring*, op. cit., for a complete survey.



## CHAPTER 5

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR RESEARCH RESULTS

The central question for our research was: what is the influence on later sexual functioning of having had in early youth consensual or non-consensual sex with adults or age-mates, or no sex at all? In Chapter 1 we examined the limitations of prior research by others. While we have tried in a number of ways to prevent our research from being affected by such limitations, and while we maintain that our research is of more than limited applicability, we must point out that our research does have some limitations. The significance and possible limitations of our principal findings are discussed below.

#### Most Important Results

Our hypothesis was that consensual sexual experiences act as positive learning experiences, and non-consensual sexual experiences act as negative learning experiences. In Chapter 4 we saw that our hypothesis was generally borne out by the research results. The negative effects of non-consensual experiences are expressed in later life mainly through problems in connection with sexual contacts and an increase in psychological and physical complaints. In comparison with other girls, girls who had non-consensual contacts were currently less satisfied with their sexual lives. The effect of non-consensual contacts is proportionally greater as the physical or psychological severity increases – problems were found to occur more frequently. Minor non-consensual experiences had little influence upon present-day sexual desire, arousal ability, or fear of sexual contact, but the more severe experiences certainly did.

Non-consensual sexual experiences with adults also seemed to have a greater negative influence than those with an age-mate. This greater negative effect is possibly explained through the fact that non-consensual sexual experiences with adults had, on average, higher severity scores, which is in turn coupled with just such an increase in negative effects.

Young people who had consensual sexual experiences at a young age now have more desire for sex, they are more easily sexually aroused, and they have less fear of sexual contact. These results were the same, for both girls and boys, whether the partner was an age-mate or an adult. In addition, boys who have had such experiences are, in comparison with other boys, now more satisfied with their sexual lives.

Some background effects also emerged as significant. For example, young people who masturbated before age 16, in comparison with those who did not, now have more desire for sex and less fear of sexual contact. The religious beliefs of the parents also played a role: where a strong religious faith was important to the parents, the youths had more fear of sexual contact.

As we saw in Chapter 1, several other researchers examined aspects of sexual experience to determine their consequences in later life. Their research showed that there was more trauma if the contact was with a father or father figure. Our research did not distinguish between contacts with parental figures and contacts with other adults. However, indirect comparison can be made with our research by examining the aspects of the sexual experience on which the severity scores are based. When this is done, we find that the consequences of non-consensual sexual experiences appear to be proportionally more negative as the severity scores increase.

The severity score seems to be most strongly affected by the degree to which force was used in the non-consensual sexual contacts. The score is highest where great force was used. It is also clearly higher where the initiative for the sexual contact did not originate with the younger partner. In experiences generally classified as "non-consensual," high severity scores also occurred where the younger person was threatened, the other partner was an adult, the sexual contact was repeated often, and the partner had more power. This agrees with the findings of other re-



searchers who have also found that there are more negative consequences when the contacts are accompanied by force or aggression, or when the adult was responsible for the care of the youth.

In our investigation we also paid attention to the possible influence of sexual experiences after age 16. It seems that they had little effect upon sexual functioning in the period shortly following them, regardless of whether they were consensual or non-consensual, with one exception: there is a clear connection between non-consensual contacts in early adulthood and present-day physical and psychological complaints. Those who had non-consensual sexual experiences after age 16 have more such complaints than those who had only consensual sexual experiences after age 16. Aside from the connection between later non-consensual contacts and current physical and psychological complaints, there appeared to be no connections between the other measures considered and present-day sexual functioning. This suggests that sexual functioning, the degree of desire for sex, the ability to be sexually aroused, and fear of sexual contact are in large measure determined by contacts experienced before age 16.

### Limitations of the Investigation

In interpreting the research results, a number of limitations must be kept in mind regarding the age group researched, the concepts used, the research method employed, and the validity of the results obtained.

We had decided to investigate a group of young people aged 18 to 23: old enough on the one hand to have enough distance from the past to be able to talk about it, while on the other hand not so old as to have forgotten about it, or for the memories of the experiences to have become recolored. There were, however, some disadvantages inherent in researching individuals in this age group: it is a time of great change in their lives, and the degree of maturity varies greatly among individuals. It is also possible that any long-term effects of non-consensual sexual contacts may only become visible at a later time.

Persons aged 18 to 23 can obviously differ greatly from one another. While one might be married and be considered fully adult, another might still be living at home and be largely dependent upon parental figures. Differences in living situations can influence the research results, and can help explain the differences between the young people. Consideration of present-day living situations helps to take account of this influence. However, it is not impossible that an investigation of somewhat older subjects could yield different results. Differences among the subjects in such matters as the current living situation would be reduced in later life. Subjects who at the time of the interviews had not yet had sexual experiences are likely to have such experiences in the course of the next few years, and it is quite possible that the differences noted would diminish over time.

It is also possible that the effects of non-consensual sexual experiences only surface later in life.<sup>1</sup> That is often proposed, but there is little support for this in the scientific literature. A delayed onset of problems might apply only to the older (Dutch) generation. While the taboo on talking about incest and similar subjects has greatly diminished in recent decades, children of earlier generations did not dare talk about these things, and problems might therefore not surface until later in life. In any case, in our research it seems that young people who have had non-consensual sexual experiences clearly tend to experience problems later. It is possible that those problems, perhaps because of an altered living situation, will change over time.

While we have precisely described what we mean by certain concepts, such concepts as "fear of sexual contact" and "desire for sex" are not as clear they might at first appear. In interpreting the results, it must be kept in mind that fear of sexual contact can have a variety of different causes, such as prior negative experiences, fear of pregnancy, uneasiness over the sexual act, or fear of abandoning oneself to orgasm. Fear can also influence sexual functioning in a different way: while for one person fear inhibits arousal, for another it can strengthen it.<sup>2</sup>

Sexual desire is also a vague concept. We have



defined it as a tendency to seek out sexual situations and to enter into sexual contacts, but that definition says nothing about motives. One person might want to awaken sexual lust while another might be trying to obtain attention or love. We found no connection in our investigation between non-consensual sexual contacts and the strength of sexual desire. It is not impossible, however, that after non-consensual sexual experiences the young person has other motives for seeking sexual contact. It could also be that the young person's sexual desire remains very strong despite the non-consensual sexual experience; he or she is no longer looking for love, but rather for attention and affection, things which he or she hopes to regain through sex.

Despite our criticism that other investigators are biased who consider sexual contacts between adults and child as by definition "child abuse," an indirect bias exists in our own research. We assign positive values to "stronger sexual desire," "greater sexual arousal ability," "less fear," "fewer sexual problems," "greater satisfaction with one's sexual life" and "fewer physical and psychological problems." Not everyone would agree with this. People would surely agree that more problems, greater fear, and more complaints are undesirable, but there might be considerable disagreement regarding the other points mentioned. For example, people who find strong sexual desire troublesome might consider it a disadvantage. Realizing this, we asked the young people themselves to evaluate their satisfaction with their present-day sexual lives. Their own judgments showed that, in the case of girls, desire and ability to become aroused are clearly linked to satisfaction with their sexual lives. This, we felt, supported our point of departure, or our own "bias."

The research method we used also has its limitations. When using information provided directly by a young person, we have to take into consideration the possibility that he or she has shaded the recollection in one way or another in order to make the story consistent. Their recollections might have been altered to suit their current norms and beliefs. The workings and reliability of memory must also be considered a

limitation because our questions related to information, experiences, and feelings from the past.

Our strategy of obtaining information directly from the young person might explain why we found differences in sexual desire between boys and girls, because the responses might have been given to conform to the stereotype that men have stronger sexual desire than women.<sup>3</sup> It could be that there is no real difference between males and females.

Past feelings and experiences can be re-colored or important facts forgotten or repressed. One thing can be forgotten more quickly than another. Someone who had a single sexual contact before age 16 is not likely to forget it quickly, while someone who has had many sexual contacts might not recall all of them. Past experiences and feelings can also be judged according to how one feels about them at the moment. Someone who is presently feeling bad might remember the past in a more negative manner than someone who is now feeling good. This can influence the reporting of the background variables which we investigated, for example, the atmosphere in the home. The relationship we found between a cold familial climate and present-day complaints might have another cause: young people who now have many complaints might describe their past more negatively than it really was.

The results of the research could have been affected by the functioning of memory, but the degree to which this is the case is not clear. It was our intention, in adopting techniques to accurately elicit memories, to minimize the effects of selective and inaccurate recollection. These concerns were reflected in the way we structured our questions, allowed the subject to re-live their experiences, and stimulated memories through the use of examples.

The results obtained cannot be applied to every young person. The relationships we found between the average scores for each of the groups of subjects studied who have had certain sexual experiences do not imply that a link exists between non-consensual youthful sexual experiences and later problems in sexual functioning for everybody in that group. There will certainly be exceptions to this trend. There will also



be young people who, having had only consensual sexual experiences before age 16, now have problems in sexual contacts, just as there will be young people who, having had only non-consensual sexual experience, now have a satisfactory sex life. It is important to keep in mind that in this research we are dealing with relationships and trends, not absolute correlations.

It is also not clear to what extent the relative frequency of early consensual and non-consensual experiences, both with age-mates and with adults, is an accurate reflection of the reality. Such a determination would have required the selection and study of a very large sample drawn at random, which was beyond our resources. Our sample was composed of volunteers, one possible result of which may be that young people with very disturbing non-consensual sexual experiences may have been either over represented or under represented in the sample. Moreover, this was a group of young people who grew up in a particular era. The interviews were conducted in 1985 and 1986, and their sexual experiences took place between 1967 and 1984. Sexual attitudes during that period underwent great changes. The psychological processing of sexual experiences could definitely be affected by a number of significant changes which occurred during the period in question: the breaking of the taboo about discussing incest, an increase in the willingness to discuss sexual matters, and a tendency to report matters to the authorities more readily. The AIDS threat might also have influenced sexual development; fear of AIDS may have discouraged sexual experimentation and led to a reduction in the number of partners or in the frequency and variety of experiences.

Finally, we must keep in mind the influence of the culture of the specific country in which the research was done. If sex at an early age, or sex with adults, was less acceptable in another country than was the case in The Netherlands between 1967 and 1984, then the effects of such experiences could also have been different. The same investigation conducted in another culture could reveal different links between consensual and non-consensual experiences and present-day functioning than our investigation did.

## The Significance of the Research Results

While there are limitations to our research, this does not mean that the results are without significance. Among other things, this investigation lends support to the idea that sexual desire, arousal ability in sexual contact, and fear of sexual contact are to a certain extent learned. This happens not only through the reactions of parents to sexual behavior but also through the influence of early sexual contacts.<sup>4</sup>

It also appears reasonable and necessary to begin to make a distinction between early consensual and non-consensual sexual experiences. Contrary to what is generally held, this distinction must be made not only with respect to sexual contacts with age-mates but also to sexual contacts with adults. The importance of this distinction can be seen in the fact that the effects of consensual and non-consensual sexual contacts are very different. Consensual sexual experiences appear to have had a positive influence, and non-consensual experiences a negative influence, upon sexual development.

Important distinctions must also be made between different kinds of non-consensual sexual experiences, because there is great variety in such contacts and situations. It also appears that children sometimes take the initiative in a sexual contact that becomes non-consensual. The behavior of the partner can range from little more than clumsiness to outright abuse, and from persuasion to physical threats. Later sexual functioning tends to be affected in proportion to the severity of the non-consensual experience.

The term "sexual abuse" is commonly used to describe a wide range of sexual experiences. The same term is used to describe certain kinds of consensual experiences in addition to non-consensual experiences of greater or lesser severity. We must conclude, therefore, that the term "sexual abuse" as currently used is not very useful. In research, social work, and the legal system, it would be better to use a descriptive terminology which more accurately reflects the nature of the relationship and the sexual acts occurring within it. Such usage would also do better justice to those involved.



The moral conviction that a sexual contact between an adult and a child is by definition child abuse is not supported by our research. To the contrary, our research indicates that there are young people who at an early age had non-abusive and positive consensual sexual contacts with adults. Differences in power due to differences in age or experience do not necessarily lead to contacts which are non-consensual. Consensual sexual contacts with adults do not correlate with problems in sexual functioning in later life, and in fact the effects appear to be the same as for consensual sexual experiences with age-mates.

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## NOTES

1. Browne, A. and Finkelhor, D. "Impact of Child Sexual Abuse: A Review of the Research," in *Psychological Bulletin* 99 (1), pp. 66-77, 1986.
2. Bancroft, G., *Human Sexuality and Its Problems* (Edinburgh: Livingstone, 1983).
3. Howells, K. "Sex Roles and Sexual Behavior," in D.G. Hargraves & A.M. Colley (eds.) *The Psychology of Sex Roles* (London: Harper & Row, 1986), pp. 268-286.
4. As Fisher has claimed in Fisher, W.A., Byrne, D., White, L.A., & Kelly, K. "Erotophobia-Erotophilia as a Dimension of Personality," in *Journal of Sex Research*, 25(1) (1988), pp. 123-151.



## APPENDIX 1

Characteristics of the Investigations Cited in Chapter 1.<sup>1</sup>

Researchers	Area of research <sup>2</sup>	Sample	Research Method
Baker & Duncan (1985)	Prevalence of sexual abuse in Great Britain	2019 subjects older than 15; representative sample	Interviews in connection with general attitude research
Bernard (1981)	Effects of paedophile relations at an early age	30 adults at occasional meetings	Oral interviews, written tests. Biographical
Conte and Schuerman (1987)	Factors which increase influence of sexual abuse	369 children with abuse experience, from social workers, and 318 without	Behavior judgements by parents and social workers
Ensink & Albach (1983)	Prevalence in connection with research into fear of sexual violence	279 women older than 16. Representative sample, Leiden	Oral interviews
Finkelhor (1979a, 1980, 1981)	Sexual abuse and brother-sister contacts, prevalence, risks and consequences	769 students, 75% younger than 22. Non-representative group	Written questionnaire, filled in connection with class
Fromuth (1986)	Influence of parental support on the effects of sexual abuse	383 women, students with an average age of 19, nonrepresentative group	Written questionnaire
Gruber and Jones (1983)	Factors which influence the chance of sexual abuse in the youth	20 abused and 42 non-abused female persons aged 12 to 17	Interviews in connection with an assistance program for juvenile delinquency
Kercher & McShane (1984)	Prevalence of sexual abuse	1056 persons older than 17, representative sample, Texas	Written questionnaire
Kilpatrick (1986)	Correlation between sexual experiences in youth and later functioning	501 woman from 18 to 61, with an average age of 28. A non-representative group	Written list filled out in various situations
Landis (1956)	Sexually deviant experiences in adults, their prevalence and consequences	1800 students	Written questionnaire in connection with classes
Russell (1984, 1986)	Prevalence, risk, consequences and trauma of sexual abuse	930 representative women	Oral interview
Silbert and Pines (1981)	Connection between early abuse and prostitution	200 street prostitutes aged 10 to 16	Interviews carried out by people from the prostitution world
Symonds, Mendoza and Harrell (1981)	Forbidden sexual behavior between relatives	109 people aged 26 to 45. Predominantly men solicited through newspaper	Part personal, by telephone and written
Tindall (1978)	Consequences of relations with a "paederast"	9 situational studies of men aged 25 to 46	Interviews and correspondence
Van der Mede (1983)	Prevalence of early sexual experiences with adults	594 students 17 to 35 (average 19). Aselect sample	Written questionnaire
Vennix (1983 a & b)	Prevalence and consequences of sexual experiences with adults	529 people living together, aged 25 to 55, average 39. Representative sample	Interviews, research into experience of sexuality

1. This overview is not complete; the investigations have been selected to show variation. For a more complete overview see, among others, Constantine (1981), Draijer (1985), Finkelhor (1986), Kilpatrick (1987), Travin et al. (1985)

2. For the descriptions of the investigations we have used the researchers' own terminology. Comparisons between the investigations are thus limited: the same terms are used in different ways.



## APPENDIX 2

Consensual and non-consensual sexual experiences before age 16 broken down by relationship to the partner

<i>Kind of Partner</i>		<i>Boys</i>		<i>Girls</i>	
		<i>Consensual</i>	<i>Non-consensual</i>	<i>Consensual</i>	<i>Non-consensual</i>
<b>Friend</b>	Male	37	3	103	35
	Female	97	4	6	2
<b>Family Member</b>	Brother	3	1	0	15
	Sister	3	0	1	1
	Father	2	3	2	24
	Step- or Foster Father	1	1	1	6
	Mother	1	0	0	1
<b>Other Family Member</b>	Male	5	1	2	22
	Female	6	1	3	0
<b>Acquaintance</b>	Male	15	4	33	39
	Female	33	2	1	1
<b>Stranger</b>	Male	11	4	11	7
	Female	7	0	0	0



## APPENDIX 3

### Sample size by sex and nature of experience\*

	<i>No Experience</i>	<i>Exclusively Consensual Experiences</i>			<i>Exclusively Non- Consensual Experiences</i>			<i>Both Experiences</i>
	Total	Y	A/Y	Total	Y	A/Y	Total	Total
<b>Boys</b>	19	35	14	49	1	3	4	12
<b>Girls</b>	22	16	6	22	9	21	30	60
<b>Total</b>	41	51	20	71	10	24	34	72

\* Only for those who had had sexual experience during the six months preceding the interview (applicable to Table 4.1)

Y = Only with age-mates A/Y = Only or also with adults



## APPENDIX 4

### Sample size by sex and nature of experience\*

	<i>No Experience</i>	<i>Exclusively Consensual Experiences</i>			<i>Exclusively Non- Consensual Experiences</i>			<i>Both Experiences</i>
	Total	Y	A/Y	Total	Y	A/Y	Total	Total
<b>Boys</b>	39	46	17	63	1	4	5	16
<b>Girls</b>	34	18	7	25	10	31	41	60
<b>Total</b>	73	64	24	88	11	35	46	76

\* Applicable to Tables 4.2 through 4.6

Y = Only with age-mates A/Y = Only or also with adults



## BOOK NOTES

Compiled by Frits Bernard, Edward Brongersma, Joel Crawford, Joseph Geraci, and Will Ogrinc.

### Books

**Abbott, Dwight Edgar and Jack Carter.** *I Cried, You Didn't Listen: A Survivor's Exposé of California Youth Authority.* San Francisco: Publisher's Group West, 1991.

Autobiography: deals with male prostitution and experiences in the criminal justice system in California.

**Baker, Ian David.** *Younger Days.* London: Gay Men's Press, 1993.

Photography. Street photographs of boys are so common that few books convince one of their worth. Baker's photographs are not always free from cliché but for the most part his is a sure eye that sees scenes as careful compositions. The photographs are at once formal and spontaneous and this lends the book enough added value to make it quite worthwhile. We rarely recommend photobooks but this deserves notice. Mid- and late-teen boys depicted.

**Berry, Jason.** *Lead Us not into Temptation: Catholic Priests and the Sexual Abuse of Children.* New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Theorizes that the Roman Catholic Church tends to be more lenient to priests who have paedophile contacts than to those who have heterosexual ones.

**Bianciotti, Hector.** *Ce que la nuit raconte au jour.* Paris: Grasset, 1992.

Autobiographical novel about an Argentinean farm boy who joins a seminary to become a priest. His love for another youth provokes a religious crisis. Translated into French from the Spanish.

**Blonski, Wladimir.** *Der Sohn des Päderasten.* Trans. by Adam Selerowicz. Darmstadt: Foerster, 1992.

German translation of a Polish novella about a kind of paedophile Casanova. Includes some pages of boy-love poetry.

**Brongersma, Edward.** *Loving Boys: das pädosexuelle Abenteuer, Vol. I.* Frankfurt am Main: Foerster, 1992.

German translation of *Loving Boys*, Vol. 1.

**Cantarella, Eva.** *Bisexuality in the Ancient World.* Trans. by Cornac O. Cuilleainain. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

Interesting study, including boy-love as a sub-text of bisexuality.

**Carpenter, Humphrey.** *Benjamin Britten. A Biography.* London: Faber and Faber, 1992.

Reveals the composer's infatuations with 12-year-old boys, first with boys from the lower class whom he wanted to adopt and later with choirboys. Britten's own feelings seem to have been filled with guilt, and Carpenter implies (rightly or wrongly) that boy-love was incidental to Britten's life and creativity.

**Cohen, David.** *Law, Sexuality, and Society. The Enforcement of Morals in Classical Athens.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

A useful examination of proscriptions against sexuality, and also progressive attitudes, in ancient Athens. Does not give a clear enough picture of exactly how private behavior and public laws balanced.

*Crime without Victims.* Introduction by Preben Hertoft. Translated from the Danish by Edward Brongersma. Amsterdam: Global Academic Publishers, 1993.



A volume of positive essays and interviews about paedophilia, put together by the Danish paedophile work-group and first published in 1986.

**Cueso, Allan.** *Homosexual Characters in Young Adult Novels.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1992.

Very useful bibliography.

**Dalstar.** *De Palingvijver.* Amsterdam: In de Knipscheer, 1993.

A novella about a seven-year-old boy who, during a trip to the countryside, views with wonder his first erection, sees a couple having sex, and otherwise becomes conscious of sexuality.

**Delon, Michel (ed.).** *L'Enfant du bordel, ou les aventures de Chérubin.* Cadeilhan: Éditions Zulma, 1992.

Reissue of a French erotic novel commonly accredited to Pigault-Lebrun (though Delon disagrees) that first appeared in 1800. A very rare two-volume edition also exists in Portuguese, the second volume continuing where the original French ended.

**Dijk, Lutz van.** *Ein erfülltes Leben—trotzdem ... : Erinnerungen Homosexueller 1933-1945.* Reinbek/Hamburg: **\*Rowolt**, 1992.

Autobiography, with some stories about friendships and sexual experiences as a homosexual youth.

**\*Rowohl**

**Doisneau, Robert.** *Les Enfants. Les Gosses.* Tokyo: New Art Seibo/Libroport, 1992.

Collects some of the best images of European boys by this popular French photographer.

**Doucé, Pasteur Joseph.** Three years after his assassination for "paedophilia" (See Paidika, Issue nr. 7, pp. 14-16) the culprits have still not been brought to justice. However, the following works should keep public awareness alive.

—**d'Eaubonne, Françoise.** *Le scandale d'une disparition: vie et oeuvre du pasteur Doucé.* Paris: Éditions du Libre Arbitre, 1990.

—**van Kilsdonk (et al.)** *Voor alles pastor: de zorg van Joseph Doucé voor seksuele minderheden.* Aalsmeer: Het Dabarhuis, 1993.

—**Middleton, William.** "Last Rights." *Out* 1:3, Dec.-Jan. 1993. The best summary in English we know of.

**Doumas, Christos.** *The Wall Paintings of Thera.* London: The Thera Foundation, 1991.

The wall paintings and graffiti at Thera are one of our sources of information about Greek boy-love. The only volume illustrating all the wall paintings.

**Drevet, Patrick.** *My Micheline.* London: Quartet, 1993.

Memoir novella describing summers travelling with his mother on a special, local French train, the "Micheline." Has beautifully written, Proustian passages on his nascent sexual feelings for other males.

**Dueweke, Stephen.** *Playing Soldiers in the Dark.* Chicago: Bagman Press, 1992.

Novel about the sexual awakening of a 14-year-old boy.

**Esser, Kevin.** *Something like Happiness.* Amsterdam: Acolyte Press, 1993.

Novel. A 14-year-old boy falls in love with younger boys.

**Fry, Stephen.** *The Liar.* London: Mandarin, 1993.

A 15-year-old public school boy is in love with a slightly younger class-mate. The book follows the two lives through boarding school and later to Cambridge. Very funny, erotic, and well written.

**Gould, Andre.** *A Summer's Exile.* London: Gay Men's Press, 1993.

Novel about a friendship between two pubescent boys growing up in the American midwest.

**Greene, Harlan.** *What the Dead Remember.* New York: Plume, 1992.

Reprint of a well-written novel.



**Harington, Donald.** *Ekaterina*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1993.

Fanciful, comic novel about a "princess" who escapes to New York and has a sexual fondness for boys "who do not yet shave."

**Hennig, Jean-Luc.** *Mon beau légionnaire*. Paris: Albin Michel, 1992.

Novel about a 13-year-old boy falling in love with a soldier.

**Hicks, Robert D.** *In Pursuit of Satan. The Police and the Occult*. Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1991.

Contains a chapter which convincingly argues the point of view that American satanic ritual abuse was concocted by the police and the far right religious fanatics and that there is no evidence to support it.

**Huston, Bo.** *The Dream Life*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.

A road novel about a man and a boy involved in a sexual relationship.

**John, Edmund.** *The Flute of Sardonix*. Llandogo: The Old Stile Press, 1991.

A limited edition reprint of one of the best of the Uranian poetry volumes, published in an edition of 250 copies. The illustrations of nude boys by Nicholas Wilde that accompany the text are amongst the best we have ever seen.

**Kilvert.** *Kilvert, the Victorian: A new selection from Kilvert's diaries*. Edited by David Lockwood. Bridgend: Seren, 1993. ISBN 1 85411 077 2.

Kilvert's diaries are one of our sources of information about girl-love in 19th-century England. The English poet, William *\*Plommer*, edited the first, three volume version (1938-1940) and did a one-volume condensation in 1944 that has long been out of print. Lockwood includes some passages not found in either Plommer edition, and there is a section of interesting photographs. The book, published by a small English press, is hard to find.

*\*Plommer*

**Koller, Hans-Christoph.** *Die Liebe zum Kind und das Begehren des Erziehers. Erziehungskonzeption und Schreibweise pädagogischer Texte von Pestalozzi und Jean Paul*. Weinheim: Deutscher Studien Verlag, 1990.

**Komrij, Gerrit.** *De Pagode*. Amsterdam: De Arbeiderspers, 1992.

A novella about a servant who reflects back on the relationships he had with his employer's two sons.

**Kröhnke, Friedrich.** *P 14*. Zürich: Ammann Verlag, 1992.

Novel about a love affair between a West German boy-lover and his young East German friend.

**Lammers, Jos.** *Vrijen met jezelf. Een boekje voor kinderen die meer over zelfbevrediging willen weten*. Amsterdam: Van Goor, 1993.

A masturbation guide for children, very amusingly written, and progressive.

**Lawler, J.** *Rimbaud's Theatre of the Self*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.

**Lieshout, Maurice van (ed.).** *Een groeiend zedelijk kwaad. Documenten over de criminalisering en emancipatie van homoseksuelen 1910-1916*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1993.

Anthology of documents pertaining to the passing of age-of-consent laws in the Netherlands in 1911.

**Lohmüller, Otto.** *Tempelritter auf Fahrt. Eine Fahrtengeschichte*. Gengenbach: Lohmüller, 1989. Story about a group of boy-scouts on a trip to southern France.

**Mann, Sally.** *Immediate Family*. New York: Aperture, 1992.

A very extraordinary photo book about American childhood. An examination of children mirroring male and female gender roles. A completely unsentimental book.



**Messina, Annie.** *Le myrte et la rose*. Paris: Viviane Hamy, 1992. Translated from the Italian, *Il mirto e la rosa*, (1982).

Novel about the love of a prince for a slave boy, told in the style of an Arabian 1001 nights story. A recent Italian edition has also appeared, Palermo: Sellerio Editore, 1991.

**Mitterauer, Michael.** *A History of Youth*. Trans. by Graeme Dunphy. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.

Tends a somewhat to psycho-history, but it is an interesting follow-up to other histories of childhood.

**Murray, Stephen O.** *Oceanic Homosexualities*. New York: Garland Press, 1992.

Several essays in this anthology (see e.g. Gilbert Herdt) deal with man-boy sexuality.

**Parker, W. H.** *Priapea: Poems for a Phallic God*. London: Croom Helm, 1988.

**Pascal, Mark** (ed.). *Varieties of Man-Boy Love: Modern Western Contexts*. New York: Wallace Hamilton Press, 1992.

Positive anthology published by NAMBLA.

**Penna, Sandro.** *Remember Me, God of Love*. Translated by Blake Robinson. Manchester: Carcanet, 1993.

Poetry and prose poem passages about meeting and observing adolescent boys.

**Poel, Sari van der.** *In de bisnis: professionele jongensprostitutie in Amsterdam*. Arnhem: Gouda Quint, 1991.

A doctoral thesis (Utrecht University, 1991) with information about teen-age boy prostitutes in Amsterdam.

**Richlin, Amy.** *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Contains boy-love information. Revised version of the 1983 edition.

**Schmidt, Michael.** *The Colonist*. London: Gay Men's Press, 1993.

Coming-of-age novel. An English boy growing up in Mexico befriends the gardener's son, Chayo. A sexual attraction grows. Has echoes of A.J. Cronin's *The Spanish Gardener*. The book starts up well and is quite beautiful in its rendition of the early friendship between the boys, but it does not live up to its promise and has a dreadful ending. This book has also been published under the title *Green Island*.

**Strittmatter, Thomas.** *Raabe Baikal*. Zürich: Diogenes, 1990.

Interesting boarding-school novel.

**Summers, Claude J.** *Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment England: Literary Representations in Historical Context*. Binghampton: Haworth Press, 1992.

Solid anthology, with boy-love information.

**Tomas, Stefan.** *Knieriesen*. Hildesheim: Claassen, 1992.

Novel about a boy's suffocating life in a Franciscan boys' boarding school in the 1960s. With extraordinary passages about sexuality.

**Turnbaugh, D. B.** *Duncan Grant and the Bloomsbury Group*. Secaucus: Lyle Stuart, 1987. Biography of the Bloomsbury artist which discusses his ephebophilic affairs and infatuations. Illustrated.

**Werremeier, Friedhelm.** *Haarman*. Cologne: vgs, 1992.

Novel.

**Zijlstra, Jaap.** *Ik zie je zo graag: gedichten*. Baarn: de Prom, 1991.

Boy-love poetry.



## Articles

**Fontaine, J.S. La.** "Concepts of Evil, Witchcraft and the Sexual Abuse of Children in Modern England." *Etnofoor* 5:1/2 (1992), pp. 6-20.

Takes a critical look at the English reaction; though la Fontaine's work in general is very biased, this essay is less so.

**Johnston, Shawn A. et al.** "Naiveté and Need for Affection among Pedophiles." *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 48:5 (1992), pp. 620-627.

Still an unacceptable medical model, but more benign than previous theories.

**Leahey, T.** "Positively Experienced Man/Boy Sex; the Discourse of Seduction and the Social Construction of Masculinity." *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* 28:1 (1992) pp. 71-88.

*Literatuzzi*, 13/14 (1993).

A special issue of this German journal devoted to the theme of homosexuality in literature, including "Paedophilia and Literature."

[more detailed reference in *Paidika* 11, p.67]

**Okami, Paul and Amy Goldberg.** "Personality Correlates of Pedophilia: Are They Reliable Indicators?" *Journal of Sex Research* 29:3 (1992), pp. 297-328.

Okami's work is interesting, and should be followed. He argues a much less negative model of pedophilia than most.

**Parent, A.S. & S.B. Wallace.** "Childhood and Sexual Identity under Slavery." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3:3 (1993).

**Parin, Paul.** "Aus der psychoanalytischen Behandlung einer schweren Sexualstörung." *Zeitschrift für Sexualforschung* 6:1 (1993).

A reprint of a 1955 tract on paedophilia.

**Ramsauer, A.** "Ich hatte echt Glück." *Ander-schume Kontiki* 7:3 (1992), pp. 13-15.

Interview with a 22-year-old who, as a young boy, had a sexual relationship with a man.

**Smits, A.** "Schoolleeslijst voor na de vakantie: de speurtocht naar Franse en Duitse kostschoolromantiek." *Expresso* 5:3 (1992), pp. 26-27.

A useful bibliography.

## Incomplete References

The following titles lack complete bibliographic citations, but were felt important enough to include. Readers are requested to supply the missing information.

**Braudeau, Michel.** *Le livre de John*.

Novel. A 15-year-old boy is given to the care of his mother's best friend, who falls in love with him. [Editions du Seuil, 1992]

**Calasso, Roberto.** *Die Hochzeit von Kadmos und Harmonia*.

Mythological novel about gods of ancient Greece, inhabiting an imaginary land, and preferring boys to women. Translation from Italian original. [Frankfurt-am-Main: Insel Verlag, 1990]

**Couch, Michael J.** *My Friend is My Enemy*. 3 vols.

A young boy is forced by the Nazis to work for them. He befriends a German boy.

[Winchester, Hampshire: Michael J. Couch, 1991]

**Eissler, K.R.** *Leonardo da Vinci. Psychoanalytische Notizen zu einem Rätsel*.

Uses Freud's theories about Leonardo as a starting point to analyze the artist's work and life, with a good discussion of boy-love included.

[Basel: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1992; English version published New York, 1961]

**Fleischhammer, Manfred, (ed.).** *Altarabische Prosa*.

Anthology of Arabian prose texts that includes the story "The Strange Erotic Adventures of a Traveller" which describes boy- and girl prostitution. [Leipzig: Philipp Reclam, 1991]

**Haefs, Gisbert.** *Alexander I. Hellas*. \*

Historical novel about the youth of Alexander, which also deals with his sexual affairs.

\**Alexander in Hellas* (!) [München: Heyne, 1994]



**Jungjohann, Eugen.** *Kinder klagen an.*

Describes physical and psychic abuse of children; concludes that one answer to the problem is that relationships be allowed. [Frankfurt-am-Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1993]

**Mauritsch, Peter.** *Sexualität im frühen Griechenland. Untersuchungen zu Norm und Abweichung in den homerischen Epen.*

In the last chapter the author tries to theorize why there is no boy-love in Homer.

[Wien: Bolhau, 1992]

**Rudolphi, Joachim.** *Der eingebildete Arzt.*

A volume of short stories, of which "Aber ewig ist nur das Wort" concerns a medical student's obsession with young boys.

[Frankfurt: Materialis, 1995]

**Silbermann, Alphons.** *Verwandlungen. Eine Autobiographie.*

Autobiography of a sociologist and boy-lover.

[Bergisch Gladbach: Lübbe, 1990]

**Thiekötter, Friedel.** *Der Kaiser und der Photograph: Zwei Gedichte.*

Poems about Emperor Tiberius and the boy photographer Wilhelm von Gloeden.

[Dulmen, 1991]

## Rediscovered Works

We invite our readers to inform us about early and out-of-print works that may be of interest. Please include complete bibliographic citations where available.

**Shairp, Mordaunt.** *The Green Bay Tree.*

Play, first performed in 1933, about a man who falls in love with the "voice" of a choirboy and buys him from his father for £500. He raises him indulgently, giving him everything he wants, but when the boy is older and wants to marry a sensitive girl, the man stops his allowance. The boy's real father arrives and in a fit of hatred shoots the man dead, but the grief-stricken boy now takes up the dissolute ways of the man he had come to love.

## Editor's Note:

We are pleased to announce the new 13-volume series, *Studies in Homosexuality*, published by Garland Press, New York. Several volumes contain essays first published in *Paidika*. These include:

"The Entimos Pais of Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10," Donald Mader (vol. 12).

"The Life of a Christian Boy-Lover: The Poet Willem de Mèrode," Hans Hafkamp (vol. 8).

We wish to thank Wayne Dynes and Garland Press for inclusion.



## BOOK REVIEW

*Childhood and Sexuality: A Radical Christian Approach.* John L. Randall. (Pittsburgh: Dorrance, 1992.), 208 pages. Reviewed by Donald J. West.

This temperately argued work, by an English school teacher, will not be popular at home, where any hint of softness towards child sex abuse is worse than politically incorrect. It will be dismissed as a product of the hated "paedophile lobby," yet another attempt to rationalize the exploitation of children for the gratification of adults' deviant sexual desires. The invoking of Christian principles to justify greater tolerance will seem insultingly perverse to those who identify religion with resistance to sexual dissidents.

Randall suggests that healthy sexual development is helped by sexual information and sexual exploration during childhood. He points out that experimental deprivation of normal opportunities for sexual rehearsal play in primates produces adults lacking sexual competence and unable to rear their young properly. He cites anthropological evidence that permissiveness towards children's sexual behaviour and unconcern about children's awareness of adults' sex lives seems to work well in other cultures. He argues that social pressures are responsible for what Freud called the latency period during which, to superficial appearance, young children seem unconcerned with sex. He cites the Norwegian psychologist Thore Langfeldt's observation of overt sexual behaviour among infants and children when they are left to themselves. The examples Randall quotes are well known to sexologists. Also widely acknowledged are the unwanted side effects of sexually repressive upbringings and enforced sexual ignorance, namely paralysing anxieties and inhibitions, guilt feelings, sexual frigidity, emotional frustrations, neurotic reactions, ruined marriages, and all kinds of deviant impulses and practices.

The author, however, is not sensitive enough

to the problems surrounding an active sexual life in the complex world of our western, tightly organized societies. We are not, after all, relaxed tribal societies, and the question has to be asked how accurate this comparison is for us. Unwanted pregnancies, especially among school-girls, cause medical, social and economic problems. In the age of AIDS certain unsafe sexual acts have proven lethal. Sexual pleasure is all too often complicated by jealousy, possessiveness, domination, obsessiveness, and hosts of relationship problems. The wish, therefore, to postpone sexual practice until some hypothetical age of maturity well beyond puberty, however impractical, is at least understandable. In England all sexual acts between two persons under age 16 are still illegal.

The author is surely right to argue for a better balance and a less ostrich-like attitude to children's sexual needs. The atmosphere of moral panic that surrounds the topic makes research impossible in most countries. Given the greater openness about sex in the media and the proliferation of adult pornography or even soft-core erotic images, the pretence of innocence for children becomes less and less feasible and the political and religious conflicts over sex education in the schools, most notably the recent statutory ban in Britain on positive portrayals of homosexual relationships, becomes less and less realistic.

Moral outrage leads to serious mishandling of cases concerning children's sexual encounters with adults and to indiscriminate and damaging interventions based on beliefs for which the evidence is at best flimsy. For example, the assumption that any form of sexual interaction between a child and an older person, whether unwanted, painful, sought after, or enjoyed, must inevitably lead to serious psychological damage is not only unjustified, but flatly contradicted by survey findings that a substantial proportion of the population has had some such experience. It does not make for rational discussion to lump to-



gether under the catch all term "abuse" such disparate behaviours as nude exposure, intimate tickling, forcible rape, adolescent crushes, coercive incest, heterosexual initiation, adolescent prostitution, and consensual homosexual affairs. To divide all participants, regardless of circumstances, into victims and offending monsters can involve much unnecessary cruelty, especially if the child is removed from home to an abusive institution and the older partner is confined to prison and subjected to assaults by vengeful inmates. Randall suggests that given more considerate counselling some supposed victims of early sexual infatuations, instead of being traumatised, might be left with no more than, as he puts it, a "beautiful memory". (p. 238)

A penultimate chapter (before the brief "Afterthought") seeks to portray the writer's position as a Christian viewpoint. Religious it may be, in so far as it lauds sexuality, and also child sexuality, as a natural, God-given and welcome aspect of creation; but this is far removed from what most people understand by Christian dogma, supported as it is by biblical texts apparently condemnatory of masturbation, homosexuality, fornication, and adultery. Randall suggests alternative interpretations of these texts and accuses traditional church teaching on sex of going far beyond biblical injunctions in insisting

on chastity before and outside marriage and in its unequivocal condemnation of homosexuality. He points out that at the same time the Church conveniently ignores many other biblical injunctions, such as the requirement of fathers to have their sons stoned to death for gluttony or drunkenness (Deuteronomy, 21, v. 20). One can sympathise with his discomfort and his yearning for a more enlightened "theology of sex," such as that expounded in 1963 by the pamphlet "Towards a Quaker View of Sex," but so long as Christianity remains inseparable from the claim to absolute truth on matters of sexual morality, his claim to hold a Christian point of view can hardly be sustained.

This work is both brave and useful in calling attention to the fact that a relationship between a young person and an adult that includes a sexual element is not always traumatic and corrupting. Sex is a powerful weapon for good and evil. Recognition of children's sexual needs and feelings heightens awareness of their vulnerability. Young children do need protection, though not the current ones that go overboard with interventions more brutal than helpful.

*Donald J. West, M.D., F.R.C. Psych., is Emeritus Professor of Clinical Criminology, Cambridge University.*



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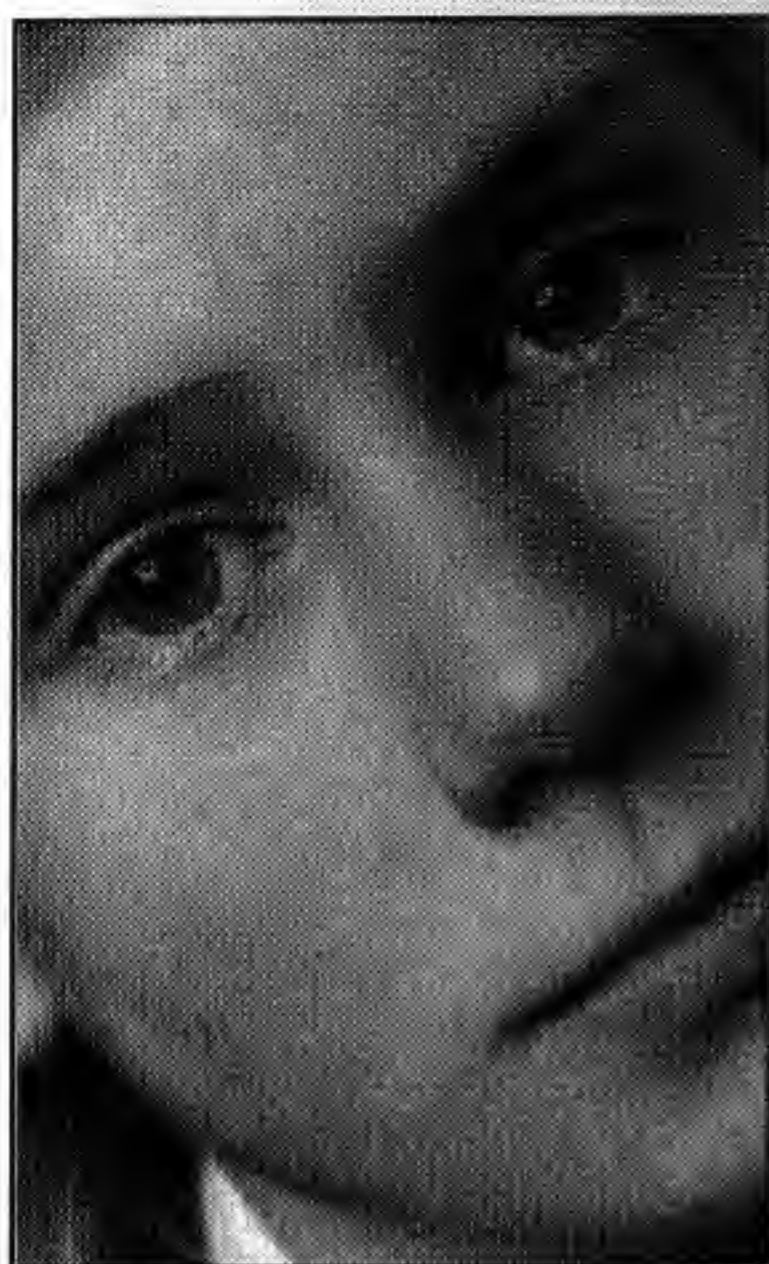
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