

Pedohebephilophobia¹: Response to Commentaries by Janssen, Malón, and O'Carroll

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I am gratified by the interest that has been shown in the "Androphilia" paper (Riegel, 2011), and honored by those who have contributed commentaries. As was noted in the paper, no claim has been made to have "all the answers," nor even to attend to all the questions. The intent was to revitalize the discussion and promote further investigation of boys' issues; whereas many other related issues, including those of girls and women, were left to other authors and occasions. These three commentaries are evidence of at least some degree of that revitalized discussion.

All of the commentaries gravitated, to a greater or lesser degree, from the "psychosexual development of boys" to the equally "hot button" issues of pedophilia and child sexual abuse, so this present response of necessity must also address those latter issues in detail. It is regrettable that several other apparently positively-inclined and respected authors who were made aware of this opportunity refrained from commenting – perhaps because they felt concerned that to step into this fray would be professional suicide, with the danger of having their careers derailed.

The discussion would have been enhanced and broadened if victimological points of view had been presented for discussion, but even though Editor Coleman "had hoped to solicit a [presumably opposing] commentary on the article, [he] was not able to find anyone to do this" (2011, p. 1). Other authors who would seem to have victimological persuasions were made aware of both the paper and the call for commentaries through, among other channels, a very active list serve known as SexNet. Perhaps there is a message in these abstentions: that victimological precepts about boyhood sexuality are essentially indefensible when brought to light and directly challenged.

Malón and O'Carroll are generally in concurrence on the original objective and significance of the paper, which was to review the pertinent literature, present what limited evidence that is available, and point out the current scarcity of both valid new research and productive discussion. They also speak knowledgeably and eloquently of the current unhappy state of warfare between victimology on one side and sexology and science on the other. While science by nature is – in due time – self correcting, the decades-long tenure of the child sexual abuse/pedophilia hypotheses still is "permeating our discussions about our problems and dilemmas in human sexuality. . . , everything starts and ends in the Manichaeian pursuit of innocent and guilty people. This means that all discussion is out of place; that debate, questioning, and new ideas are nonsense" (Malón, pg. ??, this issue). And O'Carroll speaks from experience of other "brave soldiers" (pg.??, this issue) who have been wounded by the shrapnel of academic and societal inquisitions; one can only hope for their recuperation and return to the field of battle.

Janssen, on the other hand, begins by pejoratively mislabeling the paper as a "defense of pederasty;" which it is not, although this present rejoinder speaks to "consensual sexually

¹ "Pedohebephilophobia" is a tongue-in-cheek reference to the current DSM paraphilia circus.

expressed boy/older male relationships." After chasing this false hare, his contribution then descends into sarcasm, satire, and ridicule, all mired in post-modern gobbledygook. Regrettably, therefore, any worthwhile insights from which readers might have benefited – a colleague who is more proficient in gobbledygook claims there are hints of a couple, though I confess I find them elusive – are lost in obscurity. But it is sad that such an apparently knowledgeable writer chooses not to present his thoughts in a manner and mien that will be readily understood and appreciated by the average reader of this journal.

Much of the willful ignorance and current propaganda about sexuality traces back to Augustinian sexophobia, which taught that the only acceptable form of sexuality is reproductive. But the driving force behind sexual activity in younger males is not procreation. A horny young boy isn't at all interested in "making a baby," he simply wants to experience what is arguably the most intense physical pleasure possible for him: the building excitement of arousal, the thrill of orgasm and – when he is old enough – ejaculation. As evidenced by the prevalence of masturbation, coupling with a female is not a requisite of young male sexual activity, and a boy's autoeroticism, as well as interaction with other boys or older males – among other sometimes unusual experiments – can be sufficient and fulfilling. Unless and until, of course, western iatrogenic sexophobic brainwashing begins to distort the boy's innate sense of his own sexuality (Calderone, 1979).

Boys, obviously lacking access to publication outlets and having no other public voice of their own, are completely dependent for consideration in this debate on those who honestly try to understand, represent, and advocate for them as they really are, sexual and otherwise, as opposed to those who portray boys as they think they ought to be. So if these discussions eventually result in the exorcising of the current state of sexual repression for all boys – and therefore for any boy interested in sexual explorations – it would seem to be appropriate to the Hippocratic principle of *primum non nocere*.

PEDOHEBEPHILOPHOBIA SCRUTINIZED

While, as noted above, none submitted commentaries, there are victimologists who for decades have attempted to justify the deliberate suppression of boyhood sexuality by playing the child sexual abuse/pedophilia/pederasty card. This is suspect on many levels, including the obvious evasion of the real issues at hand through this diversionary tactic, as well as in that legitimate research and honest discussion in these areas have the potential "to undermine a host of expensive treatment and prevention projects" (Zuger, 2010) in which these operatives have a vested pecuniary interest. Even the shibboleth of "man/boy" (never "boy/man," or "boy/older male" as below) reveals their bias.

The concept that all sexually expressed boy/older male relationships are intrinsically harmful is the rationale behind the victimological pedophile hypothesis espoused by Finkelhor (1981, 1984) and others. This model would collapse like Dawes' house of cards (1994) if it were to be generally understood and accepted that, as the Androphilia paper argued (Riegel, 2011), boys are entitled by their very humanity to the right to such investigative and exploratory relationships so long as they do no real – as opposed to culturally imposed or imagined – harm to others or to themselves. A boy's psychosexual developmental experiences normally are desired,

pleasant, and gratifying adventures for him, but socially inflicted shaming and repression can result in resentment, frustration, anger, and even significant maladjustment and antisocial behavior (Prescott, 1975).

Clancy admitted that she "cannot offer a clear theoretical model as to exactly how and why sexual abuse damages victims" (2009, p. 142), Menninger noted "The assumption is, of course, that children are irreparably ruined by such experiences. . . . [I] point out that in the cold light of scientific investigation no such devastating effects usually follow" (1942, p. 283), Wilson observed that "men who have relationships with boys often do so for benevolent reasons . . . (1981, p. 134)., and Levine, for one, raised the question: "if there is such a thing as a pedophile at all . . ." (2002, p. 25). It must then be asked if the principal – if perhaps not the only – harm from boy/older male consensual relationships comes not from interactions with "pedophiles," but from the inappropriate and overblown reactions of parents, other adults, and the social, legal, and judicial systems.

The overlapping superstitious, religious, "moral," academic, and legal concepts of pedophilia as they apply to boy/older male relationships are seen by some scholars (e.g. Wilson, 1981) as nothing more than specious social constructs having no basis in reality. These dogmata may well be the direct outgrowth of societal inability and/or unwillingness to understand and accept the sexual explorations and experimentations that are an intrinsic part of boyhood. It must be kept in mind, however, that there are, in fact, those – often parents or other family members – who do emotionally and physically assault children. Some percentage of these assaults have a sexual component, and a few of these sexual assaults involve strangers. But the vast majority of the "boy sexual abuse" cases which show up in the courts and are paraded in the media seem to involve boys who knew and were fond of the older party, and who believed, prior to being forcibly told otherwise, that they were consenting to the sexual involvement. The older persons – the so-called "pedophiles," usually males – who are described by Levine as "not generally violent . . . [and who] very rarely use force or cause physical injury in a youngster" (2002, p. 25), appear to have felt they were in compliance with the boy's wishes, even while being aware that they were at odds with social and legal norms.

There is evidence for the familial transmission (Gaffney, Lurie, & Berlin, 1984) of the emotional and sometimes sexual attraction that an older boy or adult male may have for a younger boy. It also may be hypothesized that contributing factors, among many other possibilities – too many to address here – may include a nostalgic desire to relive vicariously the "halcyon days of youth," or an attempted compensatory fulfillment of an unpleasant emotionally and/or sexually repressed boyhood. The etiology of these apparently benign – but artificially pathologized – attractions is another area, in addition to boyhood sexuality, that needs extensive fresh and unbiased investigation and discussion.

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