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“Apparently, I am a Pedophile:” Living and Coping as a Child-Lover in the Netherlands

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“Apparently, I am a Pedophile:”
Living and Coping as a Child-Lover in the Netherlands

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Fall 2005

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Abstract

The term “pedophile” is among the most loaded and controversial in Western culture. In my study I seek to gain a better understanding of the men that would fall into the category of “pedophile,” a phrase that is more often than not misused and misrepresented by our society. To gain this insight I have interviewed six self-identified child-lovers or pedophiles about their life experiences with these feelings, how they came to realize their feelings, how they came to terms with their feelings, how they express their feelings, and how they cope with their feelings. The paper discusses and defines certain misused terminology, examines past research on the topic of pedophiles and child-lovers, and attempts to better represent a group that is not allowed to vocalize their feelings.

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I encourage anyone that has questions or comments regarding this paper to contact me.

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Introduction

In this study I seek to understand the experience of child-lovers from the point of view of the child-lovers themselves, specifically in the Dutch context. I do not plan on discussing the age of consent debate, but rather try to gain an understanding of a set of feelings that is one of the most vilified and intolated. I am interested in this topic because of the fact that these men are viewed as less than human based on their feelings, which sounds somewhat similar to the ways certain forms of sexuality have been viewed in the past, including homosexuality. I want to gain a better understanding of child-lovers and how they function in society from accounts of their own experiences rather than simply accepting the stereotypes of “sexual predators” and “perverts” that permeate the media.

My initial research question is: *How do child-lovers in the Netherlands express, understand, experience, and cope with their feelings?*

I have conducted interviews with six self-identified child-lovers to help me answer this question.

Significance of the Study

One of the most significant aspects of this study is the fact that the issue of child-love is so taboo and unspeakable. Very rarely do we hear about child-love as an acceptable set of feelings. The only times the popular media even begins to approach the topic of child-love is in the context of pedophile hunts and sexual abuse, the latter of which could be argued is not a form of child-love. Even more rare is the chance for child-lovers to speak for themselves and tell their own story.

My study seeks to give some of these people a voice that they might not normally have, and to share their stories and experiences with those that haven't heard them. This study is important to child-lovers, anyone that has entertained thoughts of child-love, people that have not given the topic much thought, and those that are vehemently opposed to these feelings. Dialogue about the subject is practically non-existent aside from underground, subcultural and academic circles, and just getting information and life-stories into a more public and palatable medium would help further the dialogue.

As a result of my research I will hopefully gain enough knowledge to create a study that will contribute to the child-love discourse that in turn benefits those struggling for acceptance with their feelings. From my research I have found that some child-lovers would want their (anonymous) stories and experiences to be shared with a wider audience of people, and as a result I hope that I am in some way benefiting the child-love community.

The Netherlands and the Child-Love Movement

The Netherlands has a strong history with the child-love movement. Dr. Frits Bernard, a clinical psychologist who was central to the formation of a child-love movement in the Netherlands, writes about this history. Before 1955 any form of "pedophile emancipation" movement was virtually non-existent. (I use the term "pedophile" here because it appears that this is the preferred term that the author uses). There was no public dialogue about this issue and pedophiles were forced to live in isolation. The only place in which there was dialogue was in psychiatric circles, which viewed pedophilia as an illness and did not contribute anything to their emancipation.

Pedophiles could not speak with others about their feelings and had no form of organized community (Bernard).

In the late 1950s Bernard helped form the “Enclave Kring” in The Hague, the first pedophile organization in the Netherlands, after plans to start such an organization through the Dutch homosexual organization COC dissolved due to fear. The Enclave moved to Rotterdam in 1960 and eventually developed into the International Enclave Movement (Bernard). The philosophical framework of this movement included “develop[ing] new moral views concerning pedophilia based upon scientific investigation of facts rather than upon traditional moral judgments which find pedophilia unacceptable” (Bernard). This organization allowed pedophiles to organize communities and get in touch with one another while offering aid and support for people with pedophilic feelings. Enclave also placed some importance on fair scientific research of pedophile issues (Bernard).

The 1970s was an important decade for the child-love movement in the Netherlands. The NVSH (Netherlands Association for Sexual Reform) helped foster the National Pedophile Workgroup after a long history of rejecting pedophilia. During this decade books were published and scientific research was carried out. Symposiums and congresses were held around the Netherlands in Amsterdam and Breda (Bernard). The workgroup became more vocal and visible in the media while the main focus of the group shifted to the emancipation and advancements of children’s rights (Bernard).

In the 1980s the pedophile emancipation movement was questioned. During this era “...it again became acceptable to treat pedophiles as sick people and perpetrators of criminal offences” (van Daalen). From my interviews I have found out that Dutch public

opinion has only gotten more negative towards pedophilia since this time. Most of my interview subjects agree that, even though there is some acceptance of pedophilia among some educated people and intellectuals, we do not currently live in a time in which Dutch society is open to acceptance of child-lovers. Some mentioned that this might be a result of pressure from the United States.

Despite public opinion, there are a number of Dutch resources for people dealing with pedophilic feelings. In 1982 the child-love advocacy group MARTIJN was created in the Netherlands, the most important of any such groups of the time. The child-love support group JON is run through the NVSH. This is the support group that all but two of my interviewees either have attended in the past or currently attend. There are also a number of Dutch online forums, communities, and message boards for people with feelings of child-love to share their thoughts, meet people with similar feelings, and engage in dialogue about various issues related to child-love. These include jongensforum.net for boy-lovers, meisjesforum.net for girl-lovers, martijn.org, and pedofilie.nl.

The COC and Pedophilia

There has been much debate as to whether or not pedophilia is a homosexual issue, and this debate can be seen in the complicated history of the pedophile movement and the Dutch homosexual group COC. Theo Sandfort documents this history and I will briefly outline his article using Sandfort's subsections. In the period from 1946 to 1958, pedophilia was viewed as a part of homosexuality. Early COC magazines included images of young boys (Sandfort 90). The COC and the gay movement were at first

cooperative with the pedophile emancipation movement and included articles on pedophilia in their magazine *Vriendschap* (Bernard). These articles and the idea of pedophilia in general became increasingly controversial within the COC, leading the group to announce in 1958 that it would close debate and dialogue on pedophilia (Sandfort 95).

The period from 1959 to 1963 was defined by “severance of pedophilia from homosexuality (Sandfort 95). A controversial article by Brunoz appeared in the COC magazine in 1959 expressing the opinion that pedophilia and homosexuality are different, unrelated forms of sexuality. Articles and symposiums of the time also reflected the separation of these two identities (Sandfort 97).

The years 1964 to 1974 included “dissociation from pedophilia and other nonconformist homosexual behavior” on part of the COC (Sandfort 98). In order to gain more mainstream and widespread acceptance of homosexuality, the COC divorced itself from any form of sexuality that might hurt its image and make acceptance of homosexuality more difficult—including pedophilia. This separation also is a result of a common critique of homosexuality that homosexuals seduce children into sex and try to “recruit” young people (Sandfort 99).

Over the course of the seventies and into the early eighties, there came a more gradual acceptance of pedophilia within the COC. The COC published an entire issue of their magazine devoted to an unbiased view on pedophilia (Sandfort 103). This acceptance could be seen as a result of greater publicity from pedophile emancipation groups and greater importance placed on sexual liberation (Sandfort 104).

The current state of affairs between gays and child-lovers is not looking good for the child-love movement, however. Interviewee Eric tells me “There is not any relation any more. Gays keep far distance from 'pedophiles'. They do not want to be compared with them. Pedophiles are 'deviates' in the eyes of the gays.”

Defining Terms

I would like to discuss and clarify certain terms that I use in my paper and certain terms that have extremely loaded and often misrepresented meanings in popular culture and society.

Pedophile:

The term “pedophilia” was first coined in 1896 by Vienna psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing (Wikipedia). Today, there are many different and conflicting definitions of this term and its variant “pedophile” available. This fact is important because there is very little continuity and an obviously inherent bias in many of these definitions. Merriam-Webster English dictionary defines “pedophile” as “one affected with pedophilia.” “Pedophilia” is then defined as a “sexual perversion in which children are the preferred sexual object.” This definition is very obviously negatively biased, making sure to describe pedophilia’s “perverse” nature. This definition also interestingly names the child as a “sexual object,” which goes against the child-love movement’s pleas to acknowledge children as (sexual) subjects.

The American Heritage English dictionary has a more neutral and accurate definition of “pedophile”, “an adult who is sexually attracted to a child or children.”

“Pedophilia” is defined as “the act or fantasy on the part of an adult of engaging in sexual activity with a child or children.” This definition is better than that of the Merriam-Webster dictionary because it makes a distinction between sexual acts and sexual desires, but this definition still emphasizes a desire for sexual *activity*, as opposed to perhaps what is only a sexual arousal. “Pedophilia” should be mainly used to describe feelings or desires, not acts.

The American Psychiatric Association’s DSM-IV (1994) defines pedophilia as “a person who over at least a 6 month period has recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children (*age 13 years or younger*).” Pedophilia’s inclusion in the DSM is representative of the way it is viewed in the psychiatric community. The definition later includes this sentence: “Pedophilia involving female victims is reported more than pedophilia involving male victims.” This definition makes no distinction between “victim” and willing participant. One important aspect of this definition, however, is the fact that it makes a clear distinction of puberty. “Pedophilia” refers to feelings for *pre-pubescent* children.

In a discussion with one of my interview subjects Eric, he made clear that the term “pedophilia” is almost always mistranslated. Φιλία is the Greek word for friendship, not for ‘love.’ To describe pedophilia, he wanted to use also ‘care,’ Χάριτη in Greek. This definition is very different than the common interpretation of “pedophilia” as *sexual* desire for children. Eric explained that sexual desire is just one aspect of myriad other emotions and desires a child-lover feels towards children. These non-sexual

aspects to pedophilic feelings include attraction, fascination, friendship, charity (care), admiration, love, and beauty.

Acceptance among the child-lover community of the term “pedophile” varies from person to person. Some reject the term for its harshly negative connotations that have snowballed from a century of oppression, while others embrace the term for its positive meanings and the simplistic truth of its original meaning—love for children—or “friendship with children” according to Eric.

Unless otherwise explained, I will be using the term “pedophile” in my paper to refer to *feelings* of child-love. The term “pedosexuality” will refer to *sexual acts*.

Child-Lover:

Firstly, this term and its variant of “girl-lover” and “boy-lover” are not included in the dictionaries I used. The internet encyclopedia Wikipedia.com has a definition of the term that seems to fit in with the tenets of the child-love movement: “A child-lover is a pedophile or ephebophile who asserts that their attraction to prepubescent children or adolescents is not solely sexual (though the term may also encompass people not primarily attracted to children, or those who claim that their attraction is nonsexual).”

The important aspects of this definition are the emphases on the non-sexual aspects of child-love. As this definition states, feelings of child-love can be only partly sexual or mainly non-sexual. Everyone who I interviewed is a part of the child-love movement and most accept this term, although some find that it dances around the issue.

I do not believe that anyone finds it offensive, however—possibly just too politically correct.

It is important to note that the term “child-lover” is a self-identification term (Wikipedia). This identity is rarely forced upon someone, but it is a term that has been created as a means of finding acceptance and many are willing to accept into their lives.

Child-lovers tend to divide themselves into two categories: boy-lovers and girl-lovers. Boy-lovers are those whose feelings are mainly directed towards young boys and girl-lovers are those whose feelings are mainly directed towards young girls. It should be noted that the child-lover might be either male or female. It is unclear as to why there is such a divide between boy-lovers and girl-lovers, but this separation into preferential categories has a long history (Visser). Even though both boy-lovers and girl-lovers exist, boy-love seems to be more public, perhaps due to the history of man/boy love and the gay movement (Visser).

Ephedophile:

Wikipedia defines ephedophilia: “‘Ephedophilia,’ from the Greek *ἔφηβος* (ephebos) ‘adolescent’ and *φιλία* (*philia*) ‘love/friendship’, is a sexual preference or orientation in which an adult is primarily or exclusively sexually attracted to adolescents (usually people between the ages of 13 and 16).”

It is important to make a distinction in terminology between “pedophile” and “ephebophile.” Ephedophilia refers to pubescent or post-pubescent children while pedophilia refers to pre-pubescent children. None of the men that I interviewed defined themselves as ephedophiles, although many of them described feelings for boys of 13, 14,

or 15 years of age as well as younger boys. Their attraction concerns *the child in the boy*, not *the young adult man* in the boy.

While it is important to separate these terms, they do not always hold separate in individual cases, including my interview subjects. The range of feelings that a person feels is complex and imprecise and therefore people do not always fit into pre-existing sexual identities, as is the case with “heterosexual” and “homosexual” as well. These terms are better used to describe certain feelings rather than for identity formation. Also, adolescence and puberty are transitional phases that are not clearly defined. We rely on biology as well as cultural norms to define these terms. This fact makes terms such as “ephebophile” hard to define as well.

Some argue that sexual attraction to adolescents is normative behavior, biologically defensible, and would not be considered a paraphilia. Some argue that the term ephebophilia should only be used when attraction to adolescents is the primary attraction (Wikipedia).

Pederast:

Pederasty is a term that describes an erotic relationship or bond between an adolescent boy and an adult male. This term is very often used to describe the sort of cultural practices found throughout history all over the world that involve sexual relationships between adolescent boys and adult men. “Pederasty” is most often used today to describe sexual relationships and sexual acts between men and boys under the age of consent (Wikipedia.com).

The American Heritage dictionary defines a “pederast” as “a man who has sexual relations, especially anal intercourse, with a boy.” Merriam-Webster dictionary defines pederast as “one that practices anal intercourse especially with a boy.” It is interesting to note that one definition puts more emphasis on the gender of the youth, while the other definition puts more emphasis on the sexual act itself.

Definitions and descriptions of this term are very unclear and variable. For the purposes of this paper, I will say that the term “pederasty” describes a sexual experience, relationship, or act of any kind between an adolescent boy and an adult male.

Child Molester:

WordNet 2.0 dictionary from Princeton University defines “pederast” similarly to the aforementioned dictionary definitions, while also listing “child molester” as a synonym. This is an example of how terms can lose their neutrality and connote a certain coercion or harm. Including this synonym is problematic and incorrect because it erases any argument for consent of the adolescent.

The term “child molester” is very often misused to describe and identify pedophiles, ephebophiles, and child-lovers. This term is often used in the media and among mainstream cultural attitudes in reference to any form of child sexuality. The term does, however, serve a purpose—to describe a person who psychologically or physically mistreats a child by coercion or force into a sexual scenario. Most people would agree that child molestation is morally wrong, including *all* of the men that I interviewed.

The problem with this term arises when it is used incorrectly to describe consensual sexual relationships between children and adults, consensual intimate friendships between children and adults, and feelings or desires for “sociolegal” children under the age of consent (Ames). Very often “child molestation” is used to describe any sexual act that involves a person under the age of consent, reflecting the ways in which child sexuality is viewed in Western culture today, including the Netherlands. The term is also related to periods of moral panic in regard to child sexuality.

Philip Jenkins recounts the history of the “child molester” in *Changing Concepts of the Child Molester in Modern America*. He describes the moral panic of the 1980s and 1990s and how it targets pedophiles and therefore helps to further confuse terminology: “The new perceptions were reflected in the language used by both expert and popular opinion, in which the term *pedophile* described virtually anyone who had been sexually involved with a minor and contained ever more sinister connotations of obsession and violence” (Jenkins 190). This is relevant to Dutch perceptions of these terms because the United States has played a large role in growing anti-pedophile sentiment in the Netherlands (Eric, 2005).

In her book *Harmful to Minors*, Judith Levine describes a relatively new phenomenon of “children who molest.” This phrase refers to children under the age of consent, oftentimes pre-pubescent children, who engage in sexual acts with other children. These acts are sometimes consensual and sometimes not, but the phrase is important because it shows how the search for “child molesters” has exceeded the traditional boundaries of adulthood and into childhood itself.

I want to reiterate that the men that I interviewed are absolutely *not* “child molesters.”

Tenets of The Child-Love Movement in the Netherlands

I will briefly describe the platform of the MARTIJN association. I must note, however, that agreement or disagreement with any such platform varies from person to person. Not all of my interview subjects may completely agree with MARTIJN’s statement, but I believe that it gives a good sense of the movement. Also, most of my interviewees have contacted MARTIJN due to their feelings, or are at least familiar with their literature. This gives a sense of the information available to child-lovers in the Netherlands.

MARTIJN’s website contains the following statement:

The members of MARTIJN Association have various occupations and views on a lot of subjects. However, what they have in common is the aspiration towards a free and humanly society as far as relationships and sexuality are concerned. MARTIJN Association is against violence, force and dominance in relationships, stands for honesty, openness, lust and love. MARTIJN Association advises everyone to observe the law (martijn.org).

Wikipedia’s page for “child-love movement” contains a summary of the basic objectives of this movement:

- Change public perception of pedophiles
- Assert a difference between child-love and child sexual abuse

- Push for the decriminalization of child pornography possession
- Push for the abolition or revision of age of consent legislation
- Increase awareness of medical evidence of sexual activity in young children
- Support movements and organizations that push for increased children's rights (wikipedia.org)

Not all of my interview subjects may agree with all of these objectives as they are highly disputed within the child-love community, but this gives a basic outline of the child-love movement that I refer to.

21 Styles of Living

JON describes itself as “a Dutch local support group for people that have the ability to fall in love with children” (JON website). According to its homepage, JON urges members to responsibly and legally handle their feelings. JON preaches self-acceptance of these feelings of child-love and encourages dialogue among child-lovers as a healthy means of dealing with their feelings. JON’s website is available in six different languages.

All but two of my interview subjects is or has been a part of this organization. As a result, it is important to view their words and analyze this data in terms of JON’s philosophy and objectives.

The main part of the JON group’s literature that I will be using is the section of their website titled “21 Styles of Living.” This section maps out the different means of coping with feelings of child-love. Not all of these methods are healthy or positive, but

they cover the range of possible scenarios for a person dealing with feelings of child-love. The JON group created this list and each section contains an anonymous quote or quotes from real (former) JON members.

I will include this list and my own explanation here. These “styles” will be able to be recognized in my analysis section.

21 Styles of Living

1. *Virtual*: Viewing pictures, erotic or non-erotic, online and/or using chatrooms or message boards to express or talk about one’s feelings
2. *Dolls*: Owning dolls as a substitute for real children around one’s home.
3. *Hobbies*: Spending time with various hobbies as a means of devoting energy to something constructive. This could also be a means of meeting children with similar interests. This contract is neutral and safe and the focus is on the activity, not the child.
4. *Sports*: Joining a sports team as a means of gaining friendships or comradery and combating loneliness. This could also include coaching a youth sports team.
5. *Spontaneously Playing and Friendship*: Maintaining a friendship with a child that is based around activities, playing, and trust. There is an interest in maintaining equality between child and adult.
6. *Giving Care*: This could include taking on the role of a teacher, childcare worker, foster parent, or mentor. There is an emphasis on responsibility or upbringing. This type of work requires genuine love for children.

7. *A Family*: This includes playing with one's own children or having other parents' children over to play. This could also include bathing, showering, or sleeping in the same bed, but it is *not* a matter of sexuality.
8. *Looking Back*: Acknowledging that children are no longer in your life and are a part of your past. This could include looking at old photo albums or reminiscing about past experiences to conjure up old feelings.
9. *Action and Research*: Transforming frustration and anger into action. This could include reading research and articles on the topic of child-love and keeping up with what is happening in the community. One could discuss these findings with friends, family, or other child-lovers, or write letters to magazines. There is an emphasis on trying to create awareness and change, albeit slowly.
10. *Get an education*: This could include learning about one's feelings or preparing to get a professional education to work with youth or another interest.
11. *An alternative*: Substituting intimate contacts with children for safe and legal intimate contacts with non-children, adults, or older adolescents. This is not necessarily an ideal situation, but it can be reasonably satisfying.
12. *Arrested*: Finding yourself arrested for any number of reasons.
13. *Successful treatment*: Convincing oneself that one is "cured" of feelings of child-love and attempting to live as a "normal" man or woman. This also includes breaking off contact with children and other child-lovers, attempting to engage in "normal" heterosexuality, or focusing one's energy on another neutral activity.

14. *Denying*: Denying one's own feelings and desires of child-love. This could also include expressed hatred for "pedophiles" and could include anger.
15. *Blocked*: Upon discovery of one's feelings of child-love, some people may not be able to function the way they usually do or be able to live their life confidently and happily. These people may stop their education or work and live in a constant state of fear, frustration, and confusion. This may also include contempt (and a resulting self-hatred) for "pedophiles." Feelings of child-love are too strong to suppress but too dangerous to act out, resulting in "blockage" of one's life.
16. *Enjoy living*: This includes accepting one's feelings and desires as healthy and using them to bring oneself happiness. This could include enjoying the positive feelings of child-love that arise when one sees a "beautiful young boy" or girl on television, in movies, or in public.
17. *I Tell My Story*: Writing down or telling one's personal life story on a website or in book form. This shows a desire to share knowledge and an experience of child-love from a very personal standpoint in order to open other people's minds.
18. *Splendid Isolation*: This includes keeping knowledge of one's feelings of child-love very private and not sharing them with anyone. This could include avoiding other child-lovers and support groups. Splendid Isolation could also include avoiding social interactions entirely.
19. *Married Man*: Getting married or realizing one's feelings of child-love while in a marriage. When married, one has to be very secretive about his or her

feelings for fear of breaking up a marriage that one wants to keep together. It would be too “risky.”

20. *I have to do something now*: An overwhelming feeling that one should do something positive or constructive with feelings of child-love. It is hard to know exactly what to do, however.
21. *Reader's Turn*: Developing one's own style of living.

Coping with Feelings and Desires of Child-Love

The “21 Styles of Living” can be divided into subsections and grouped together based on similarities. With the help of Frans Gieles, I have made a schema for coping with feelings and desires of child-love that can be used to view the life-stories of child-lovers.

Styles of Coping in Contact with Children:

A. Acceptance

1. Non-sexual Contact – Safe and healthy for child and adult; conscious of one’s feelings and trying to enjoy them
 Dolls, Hobbies, Sports, Spontaneously Playing and Friendship, Giving Care, A Family, Looking Back, Get an Education, Enjoy Living
2. Sex without Contact
 Virtual
3. Sex Contact(s)

B. Non-Acceptance

Denial, Blocked, Successful Treatment *

Styles of Coping in Contact with Society and Adults:

A. Isolation

Arrested, Splendid Isolation

B. Action

Action and Research, I Tell My Story, I have to *do* something now

C. Adaptation

An Alternative, Successful Treatment *, Married Man

* Treatment can be used as a change agent to transform one’s feelings into either acceptance or non-acceptance/denial.

Research Studies

In this section I will briefly describe some research studies that have been done related to my own study.

Finkelhor's Continuum

The meta-analysis by Araji and Finkelhor in their study "Explanations of Pedophilia: A Four Factor Model" (1986) attempts to summarize the research on pedophilia. They come up with a four-factor model to summarize the existing theories of pedophilia: 1) emotional congruence – "why the adult has an emotional need to relate to a child," 2) sexual arousal – "why the adult could become sexually aroused by a child," 3) blockage – "why alternative sources of sexual and emotional gratification are not available," and 4) disinhibition – "why the adult is not deterred from such an interest by normal prohibitions" (Finkelhor 145).

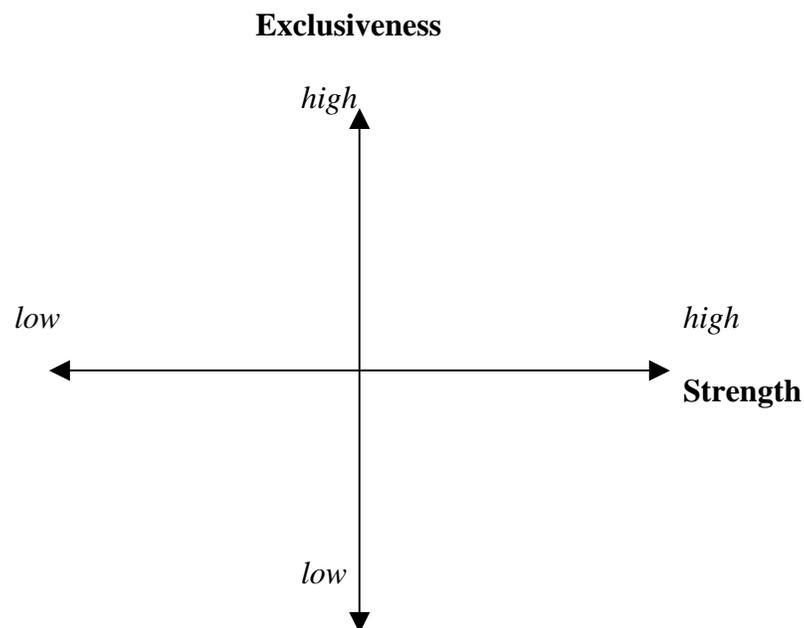
From their meta-analysis, Araji and Finkelhor list a number of reasons that might contribute to each of these four factors, including arrested development, low self-esteem, narcissism, operant conditioning, fear of adult females, trauma, stress, impulse disorder, and psychosis (Finkelhor 147).

The problem I have with this study is that it even seeks to "explain" pedophilic feelings and desires as if it must be explained. My interviewees all expressed that their feelings of child-love were present from an early age and were undeniable. I do not see a reason to explain the existence of these feelings. Especially for the purposes of my study, I want to just accept the child-lovers' feelings for what they are to then delve deeper into their experiences.

Viewing the ways in which clinical practice and the criminal justice system view pedophilia and pedosexuality and the factors that might cause it is important in doing my research. I do not necessarily want to be influenced by this research, but I want to know what is being said about “pedophilia” so I have something to compare the life stories that I gather to.

The four-factor model seems somewhat limiting and conservative, stripping the child-lover himself of any autonomy or free will. One useful and constructive aspect of Araji and Finkelhor’s meta-analysis is their suggestion of viewing feelings of child-love on a continuum, which appears to be a good step in breaking free from a dichotomous view of pedophilia. They explain: “The idea of a continuum on each of two dimensions has a number of advantages. First, exclusivity and strength of pedophilia are separable issues and need to be looked at separately.

Although it seems plausible that strong and exclusive pedophilia tend to co-occur, this is not always the case” (Finkelhor 158). Thus, I can view my interview subjects in terms of this continuum and place each of them within it.



Ames, Houston, and Trouble with Definitions

In the article “Legal, Social, and Biological Definitions of Pedophilia,” M. Ashley Ames and David A. Houston make the distinction that while there is indeed quite a bit of historical record regarding sexual relations between children and adults, not much is known about what causes pedophilia or if it relates to sexual aggression (Ames 333). Ames and Houston review previous research on pedophilia to come to the conclusion that there is a discrepancy in the way “pedophiles” and “children” are defined in cases of “child molestation.” They argue to distinguish between biological and sociolegal children. “Biological children” refers to pre-pubescent children while “sociolegal children” refer to persons under the age of consent (Ames 334). Putting these two groups of minors into the same category confuses cases of adult-child sexual relations and confuses definitions of “pedophile.”

This article relates to my study in that it recognizes the confusion in trying to define a pedophile. As I have mentioned before, there is much variation in those who have or desire sexual relations with someone under the age of consent, but they are more often than not all grouped together in the category of “pedophile” without much thought as to variation within that category.

Sociological Aspects of Pedophilia

Ken Plummer’s paper “Sociological Aspects of Pedophilia: paper to be presented as part of a symposium on pedophilia at the International Conference on Love and Attraction, Swansea 5th-9th September, 1977” uses interviews with pedophiles to attempt to gain a better understanding of the issue. Plummer attempts to see whether pedophilia

can be viewed using the same sociological criteria that were once used to legitimize homosexuality— 1) the relativisation of deviance, 2) the humanization of deviance, and 3) the normalization of deviance (Plummer 2).

These categories can be better explained through Plummer’s descriptions.

- 1) *The relativisation of deviance* – “That whereas deviance used to be seen as an absolute, as something within individuals, sociologists have stressed that deviancy is a relative category; rather than being intrinsic and inherent in any act it is a property bestowed upon acts by others” (Plummer 1).
- 2) *The humanization of deviance* – “That whereas deviants used to be seen in stereotypical terms as bizarre folk, slightly beyond the human pale—as inhuman sex monsters and sex fiends—the sociologists have attempted to humanize the variant: stereotypes are debunked and demythologized and the sexual experience is located in the total experience of the individual, rather than being torn away from its social context”(Plummer 2).
- 3) *The normalization of deviance* – “That whereas the deviant used to be seen as a sick, pathological, deeply-disturbed individual, the sociologist has stressed the normality and the legitimacy of the diverse sexual experience: it is now seen as a way of life, a political act, or a valid relationship” (Plummer 2).

This comparison of homosexuality and pedophilia and the ways in which they are viewed sociologically could be used to view the data that I collect from my interviews. This type of comparison is something that I have personally been thinking about when dealing with the issue of pedophilia in my mind. Can it be viewed and ultimately liberated in the same way homosexuality has been? Plummer’s research concludes that

these sociological arguments can help to make sense of pedophilia, but not necessarily reach the acceptance that homosexuality has achieved. This article also helps legitimize my study in that Plummer argues that it is extremely important to listen to the pedophiles (and children) themselves. In conducting my interviews, I am contributing to the “humanization” of the child-lover. As Plummer describes, I am attempting to debunk stereotypes by describing and contextualizing the experiences of my interview subjects.

It should be noted, however, that many of the child-lovers I interviewed were wary to compare their own experiences or feelings with those of homosexuals.

Aggression Against Pedophiles

In the article “Aggression Against Pedophiles” well-known child-love activist Edward Brongersma documents the history of this aggression, or the ways in which “pedophilia” has been vilified in the past. Not all of the history involves vilification, but the bulk of the article is used to describe this side of the issue because of its dominance and importance in looking at the ways in which pedophilia is viewed today. The article discusses changes in the ways pedophilia has been viewed as a result of cultural, religious, and moral changes, as well as changes in the law. I will not transcribe this long and complex history here, however.

Brongersma suggests some reasons for this aggression against pedophiles, including repressive pedophilic tendencies in everyone. The second half of the article is an emotive and frantic defense of pedophilic desires and consensual pedophilic relationships. I believe that this emotional aspect is sometimes very much needed in discussing an issue such as child-love that has so many personal and emotional

associations. This article is good for my study because my research is dependent on the way society views “pedophilia” and as a result has treated or conditioned the contemporary pedophile.

Theoretical Framework

In analyzing the data that I have collected in my research study, the experiences child-lovers, I will be guided by the theoretical frameworks of Michel Foucault and Paula Moya.

In the chapter “The Deployment of Sexuality,” of his *History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault defines power: “...power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society” (Foucault 93). This statement contains two important elements. Firstly, Foucault makes clear that power is a *name* that we attribute to a social situation. This distinction acknowledges the ways in which we *interpret* displays of power. Secondly, the “complex strategical situation” refers to the real human interactions and decisions that contribute to “power.” Foucault maintains that “[p]ower is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere” (93). This kind of power-web theory is key to Foucault’s argument. Power is not a property, but rather a network of power relations with innumerable points in relation to someone or something else.

The idea of power is very important in analyzing the lives child-lovers. One of the main arguments against concepts such as “pedophilia” is that there are inherent power inequalities in adult-child relationships. Such people would argue that the adult always has the most power in these relationships. Interviews and research show that this is not always the case. In many cases of consensual adult-child sexual relationships both parties would admit that the younger person had a significant amount of “power” and agency in the relationship. Foucault’s theory that power comes from all directions in

every situation could be used to support such relationships that would normally be viewed as an abuse of power on part of the adult. We must acknowledge that power relationships do not inherently follow binaries such as “older/younger” (the older person being inherently more powerful in any relationship than the younger person).

The idea of power fits into my topic in other ways as well. For example, from my research, the lives of the men who I have interviewed have had to struggle for their own power and agency over their own lives. The silencing effect that the popular conception of “pedophilia” has over child-lovers robs them of some amount of power and agency while privileging and giving more power to those who agree with the masses in the fight against “pedophilia.”

Paula Moya explains the tenets of realist feminism (in her interpretation of Cherrie Moraga):

According to the realist theory of identity, identities are neither self-evident, unchanging, and uncontestable, nor are they absolutely fragmented, contradictory, and unstable. Rather, identities are subject to multiple determinations and to a continual process of verification which takes place over the course of an individual’s life through her interaction with the society she lives in. (Moya 139).

This “continual process of verification” is the ongoing collection of everyday experiences that a person lives with. It is this process that Moya wants to emphasize—the ways in which we experience our identity, sexuality included, in the real world. Moya wants us to claim these experiences as the stuff of our identities. This theory of identity linked to experience is crucial for my research study since it is focusing on the life *experiences* of child-lovers. What I am interested in is not necessarily why a person could be attracted to a child or younger person. What I am interested in is how their life experiences have shaped their feelings and how their feelings have shaped their life experiences.

The aforementioned Moya quote emphasizes “interaction with society,” and this type of interaction is extremely important in analyzing the lives of people who are vilified by a society that doesn’t accept their feelings. Using Moya’s theory as a framework, I believe that the best way to come to understand the men that I am studying and their resulting sense of identity is through understanding their experiences. I am attempting to avoid pinning these men down as “pedophiles” or any other limiting term because their sexuality can best be described and defined by their own words and through their descriptions of their own specific and personal life experiences.

Assumptions

Before starting this research study, I had a number of assumptions about child-love and those who have such feelings. Firstly, I was still fixated on the terms “pedophile” and “boy-lover.” I think that I was still using “pedophile” without much thought because that is the word that I have heard most in reference to people with sexual feelings for children. After doing some independent research before coming to Amsterdam I found the term “boy-lover,” and decided that that term was better. Only after doing research here did I find out that “child-love” is the most widely preferred term for people with pedophilic feelings.

Perhaps my biggest and most incorrect assumption was that sexual desire is the most important feeling for child-lovers. I have since learned that this is absolutely not the case.

I assumed that there would be some child-lovers willing to speak to me about their feelings and didn't really think much about their potential suspicions about my project and the way I would represent them. I also did not think about how the people I would interview would view *me*. Since I was so focused on understanding child-love and finding interview subjects, I did not stop to think about my motives for doing this project and how I would explain my project to my interview subjects. I did not think about the interest that my interview subjects would have in my project and the questions that they would have about my life and thoughts.

Methodology

The stigma attached to child-lovers and the secrecy that they must maintain as a result invariably make it difficult to research this topic, but that is precisely the reason that I wanted to study these feelings. Luckily, I have been exposed to the right people to give me access to contacts to make this study happen.

Norbert de Jonge, a publicly “out” child-lover, delivered a lecture in my class. I contacted him about helping me with my research, and he in turn gave me a list of people that I could contact who may have been able to help me. Frans Gieles, now my academic advisor, came to the rescue and put me in contact with my interview subjects. Gieles is a PhD in forensic orthopedagogy (working with criminal youth) and volunteers some time leading child-lover support groups, in addition to contributing several articles on child-love and acting as webmaster to ipce.info, a website that compiles massive amounts of research and literature on child-love. Several sources have named Gieles among the most important child-love acceptance contributors and advocates worldwide.

The main method that I have chosen to study this group is individual interviews. I believe that this method is good because it allows for anonymity and an in-depth conversation about their lives, opinions, emotions, and experiences. The main point of my research study is to understand child-lovers *through their own words*. Four of my interviews took place in the homes of the subjects. This was on their terms and is most likely a way of keeping the interviews more anonymous and allowing for a more honest and thorough interview. It is easier to speak more openly about such a controversial and stigmatic topic when one knows that no one is eavesdropping in on the conversation.

Another interview was conducted differently, however. This was an interview with two people simultaneously in a cafe. This was done at the request of the interviewees, and I found no problem in this method. Perhaps a more “*gezellig*” interview would return interesting data and make the interviewees more at ease. (“*Gezellig*” is the Dutch word for cozy, often in terms of gatherings of people). The interviews took place all over the Netherlands in various cities that I will not list due to issues of anonymity.

I created a list of interview questions to use as a framework and starting point for my interviews, and very often I had to ask new, spontaneous questions based on the information I received. Sometimes the interviews led into a discussion, but the bulk of the time was spent listening to my interview subject speak while I took notes on paper. The list of my interview questions is included at the end of the paper. I have given pseudonyms to all of the interview subjects, except one who chose a name for himself.

I must acknowledge my interview sample and the various identities that are either constant or vary within this sample. Firstly, all except for two of my interviewees are involved with the child-love support group JON. Actually, they have or are currently dealing with their feelings in a constructive way. My interview subjects have all come to terms with their feelings on some level and are very aware of the consequences that might come with their feelings.

All of my interviewees are active within the child-love community. They attend meetings, visit online forums and message boards, or seek out information or literature regarding their feelings. Everyone I have interviewed is attempting to constructively cope with their feelings and educate themselves to varying degrees. My sample also only

includes people that were not only willing, but rather eager to speak to me about their feelings.

My sample represents only a certain type of child-lover and my study does not deal with people that are very uncomfortable with or are in complete denial of their feelings. My study does not represent all people with pedophilic feelings and desires. This is not to say that my interview subjects were identical, however, as there was much variation in the data that I gathered from person to person, in addition to similarities.

My interview subjects are all white males of varying ages ranging from 29 to 62. There are both male and female child-lovers, but the ones that I have been introduced to are all male. Male and female child-lover communities are rather separate, but groups, internet forums, and conventions do exist for both. The community that I happened to find myself introduced to, and the community that is perhaps the easiest to access, is the male child-lover community.

All of my interview subjects also are primarily interested in young boys rather than young girls. There are some girl-lovers that attend JON meetings, and I was put into contact with some as well, but my interview sample ended up being exclusively boy-lovers. This fact was unintentional and rather circumstantial, but nevertheless affects the ways in which my study can be read and applied.

Analysis

The data that I collected through my interviews can be divided into categories: feelings for children, identity, realization of feelings and initial coping methods, “coming out,” relationships with children, sexuality, interactions with society and societal views, and coping methods (past and present).

Overview and Introduction to my Interview Subjects

In total I interviewed six men about their feelings of child-love. I will introduce them chronologically by order of interview.

Eric, 62, identifies himself as a “father and grandfather” among other identities. He is not currently employed, but he devotes time to the child-love movement and has many intellectual pursuits and interests, including learning Arabic and Greek. Eric described himself as intellectual and caring (Eric, 2005).

Tobias, 29, identifies himself as a “young man, Dutchman,” with an interest in theology who likes to work with people, especially children. He attended university for theology and currently works with autistic children. Tobias described himself as an open, friendly man, who can be stubborn sometimes. He likes to discover, go abroad, and encounter new experiences and situations, while emphasizing his love for people and desire to get involved in various causes (Rob, 2005).

Chaos, 35, describes his ideals as “socialistic” and mentioned his desire to hang a pirate flag outside his home. He is “principally unemployed” because he said that he refuses to work for someone who makes a profit off of him. Chaos chose this pseudonym

because he is always “in his head, quite chaotic,” and that he often “think[s] faster than [he] can talk.” He also describes himself as relaxed and short-tempered (Chaos, 2005).

Ron, 41, is a technics teacher for twelve to eighteen-year-olds. He described himself as a man who is “always busy, always working on things,” and very occupied. He said that “doing nothing is the hardest thing to do for me.” Ron said that he is socially engaged and aware, while trying to make society a good place to be. He is constantly “longing for growth,” being stronger, and being better able to make decisions. Ron also described himself as a “happy bachelor” (Ron 2005).

I met with Wim and Steven together in a cafe. Wim, 24, works with autistic children of all ages. He used to do a study one day a week where he worked with children with special needs who live in a difficult home situation. Wim often helped the children with homework. He previously worked with elderly disabled people, and before this he worked with autistic children also. He has been in the field for 3 or 4 years. Wim said that he has a “positive life attitude” (Wim, 2005).

Steven, 30, described himself as a “typical nerd with more of a social attitude—sometimes.” He is a “self-employed IT person and programmer.” He enjoys being by himself and this is often a topic of discussion for him. Steven also described himself as “pretty easy-going,” while taking “things as they come.” He said that he has lots of plans but is not working hard towards them. Wim and Steven also describe themselves as “a bit of activists” (Steven, 2005).

Feelings for Children

All of my interview subjects described their feelings for children as multifaceted and often having very little to do with any form of sexuality. Eric used the terms “caring,” “friendship,” and “attraction” to describe these feelings. (“Love is a too great word”). Tobias described his feelings as an “attraction” that is emotional, sexual, and spiritual—“deeper than just sexual.” He said that “If I see a child, I see an image of God.” Chaos said that children are “nice to relate with, spend time with.” He emphasized love and friendship and noted that his feelings are not pointed towards sex, while Ron said that “sex is not the purpose of child-love.”

Ron described his feelings for children as a “tenderness.” He believes that he can teach children and that it is “interesting to see how children discover the world.” He believes that children have a clean and honest view on the world. Wim said that he has the “ability to fall in love with children,” in addition to a desire to make them happy. He describes his attraction to children as “mental and physical.” Steven describes a sexual attraction while noting that in many contacts with children there is no sexual aspect at the time and that there is sometimes only an attraction to “hang out.”

My interview subjects described the intensity of their feelings at my request, as I was influenced by Finkelhor’s continuum. Most of my interviewees described their feelings as very strong and persistent. Ron described this intensity of his feelings: “Every day they are present.” Tobias said that these feelings are really part of his life and who he is but that he doesn’t “obsess” over his feelings. In regard to his feelings, Ron said that he “can’t remove [them]. It’s like amputating a leg that is healthy. It will make me a cripple.” He also made clear that life has more to it as well. Child-love is an essential

part of his life, but not the only thing that he likes. Child-love does not define him. Chaos emphasized that he “needs” this form of contact.

Steven, on the other hand, said that his feelings aren't *that* strong, but that this sentiment is influenced by reality. He said that the intensity of his feelings have gone down because of the lack of possibility of love relationships, but noting that “it’s different when it’s only in your head.” He later said that he is significantly more attracted to children than adults, which is a commonality among all of my interviewees.

Eric, on turn, said that the grade of intensity of his feelings was different in different stages of his life—for example, more on the background during his marriage.

Most of my interview subjects specified a certain age preference for the boys that they had special feelings for. Eric said: “children; boys a bit more than girls.” Tobias said that his feelings are “exclusive to boys age 7 to 14,” while Chaos said that he is attracted to 4 to 14 year olds. Ron said that he has a sexual attraction to boys 11 to 13. Wim’s preference is boys ages 9 to 13, and Steven said 10 to 14, but that he has a “broader view” on these age restrictions than some others do. Wim agreed that Steven’s view is broader than his own.

Identity

I asked my interviewees how they would choose to identify their feelings for children. Their responses happen to fall into the existing set of terminology that I describe in the introduction.

Eric chose the term “child-lover” to describe himself, but emphasized that he is a person with multiple identities. Tobias chose the term “boy-lover,” adding that

“pedophile” is a difficult and loaded term. Chaos embraces the term “pedophile,” however, even though the media gives it a new meaning: “You can call it boy-love, but let’s face it, I’m a pedophile.” Ron also embraces the term “pedophile” as well, but he specified that his use of the term refers to the translation “love towards children.” Steven said that he identifies himself as a pedophile to people he knows well, but doesn’t care for terminology. Wim said that if he had to choose a term, he would choose “boy-lover,” but that he would also identify as a pedophile if someone asked.

Some of the men chose the more politically correct terms while others didn’t care for them. This shows the highly disputed nature of terminology but also speaks to the meaninglessness of words as well. Steven mentioned that people tend to make their own definitions because of disagreements and misconceptions. There was a common theme of embracing a multiplicity of identities of which their feelings for children are only one aspect. There is no term that is adequate to describe the totality of their feelings and beings.

Realization of Feelings and Initial Coping Methods

All of my interviewees said that they realized their feelings of child-love from a very young age, while some knew earlier than others. Eric said he was aware of them since age 6. Chaos said that he had “pedophilic feelings” all of his life and that they are innate, that he was born with them. He recounts a memory of having a crush on a fellow 6-year-old. Tobias, Ron, and Wim became aware of these feelings at the older age of about 12 or 13. Wim’s first memory of his feelings is when he found himself attracted to 10-year-old boys when he was 12.

Initial reactions to these feelings were extremely varied. Some expressed very little or no emotional conflict while others had a great deal of trouble dealing with their feelings. Eric and Steven said that they have always accepted their feelings of child-love and have never really felt shame related to them. Tobias, however, said that he did feel shame as a teenager. He tried to suppress his feelings and “prayed for change.” Ron felt some shame upon realization, but he thought that he had to accept his feelings because they are so fundamentally a part of him. Wim said that he was resistant to accept his feelings of child-love because he only knew that pedophiles “harm children,” and that he knew that he would never harm a child and didn’t want to become that person. As a result of this, he was ashamed of his feelings. Wim also thought that he would eventually fall in love with a girl, but by age 18 he realized that wasn’t going to happen.

Chaos’s struggle to accept his feelings had much heavier consequences. He first fully understood his feelings while watching a television talk-show on pedophilia when he was 16. After this moment his “view of the future became black” because he didn’t know what to do with his feelings. He was forced to hide them. Chaos “didn’t cope. [I] took all kinds of drugs. Marijuana, coke, heroin...valium, lots of valium.” This led to a heroin addiction that started when he was 16 as a means of suppressing his pedophilic feelings. Chaos said that he couldn’t accept himself for fourteen years. It was the group JON who has helped him to accept his feelings, which in turn has helped him to successfully combat his drug addiction. He is free from drugs now.

Most of my interviewees sought help from the internet or from organizations to help cope with their feelings, although this fact is also dependent on age as many of these resources are relatively new (MARTIJN) or reliant on the internet. When Tobias was 18

he found information on child-love on the internet through MARTIJN's website. He came into contact with the group JON through MARTIJN. In 2000 Chaos used the internet to get in touch with other child-lovers and speak about his feelings. He also got into contact with the group JON through these means.

Wim said that he first used the internet to do research into his feelings when he was 20 years old. The term "boy-love" was useful in finding information, he said, and through these means he was able to get into touch with and make friends with people with his same feelings. Wim first began accepting his feelings when he learned the difference between "pedophiles" and "boy-lovers," and the fact that "sex offenders" were a completely different category of people. Steven noted that "a lot has changed in the last four years" in the child-love community. The internet has become the primary source for younger people dealing with their feelings, making real-life support groups such as JON somewhat irrelevant.

"Coming Out"

All of my interviewees described some sort of "coming out" process to family and close friends. Coming out to one's parents often came first. Tobias's mother found out about his feelings of child-love when she received information from MARTIJN in the mail that Tobias thought he had sent to his work address. His mother said that she had already suspected this. Chaos said that his father "pulled it out of him" when he was 22, insisting that he tell him what his problem was. When he was 24 he told one of his brothers who then told his mother. He later found out that his other brother also has pedophilic feelings. Ron told his parents about his feelings when he was 16 or 17.

Steven's mother found out when he was 23 while talking about a young friend he had. Wim told his mother when he was 21 or 22 and wrote his father a letter. In Eric's case, the coming out was to his wife and his children, also to his brothers and sisters and to some friends and colleagues.

Most of the family members of my interviewees tried to be very understanding of their feelings. Tobias said that when he told his father and brother (a year after telling his mother) they understood that he couldn't change his feelings. Ron said that his parents told him: "We will still love you." Steven said that his father, stepmother, and brother were rather reserved when they found out and that they didn't talk much about it. Wim's mother had a difficult time with his feelings at first, but she eventually went out of her way to understand child-love. Wim noted a deep respect for her acceptance. His sister allowed him to go out with her 11-year-old son, which is the "best form of acceptance [he] could ask for."

Some interviewees felt the need to tell non-family-members first. Ron mentioned that he first talked about his feelings when he was 15 or 16 with the leader of his youth group before telling his parents. His urge to talk was "strong."

Relationships with Children

All of my interviewees recounted stories of relationships with children. These can be divided into three subcategories—institutional relationships, friendships, and relationships with sexual aspects. These categories are not always mutually exclusive.

Institutional Relationships:

Many of my interviewees have relationships with children as a result of their jobs or volunteer work. These types of relationships display their intense desire to care for children. Eric said he has had many positive experiences with children as a result of work with youth in children's homes and his care for foster children. Tobias's job puts him into contact with autistic children and he also volunteers at a children's club giving group cooking lessons. Ron's job as a technics teacher currently puts him into contact with children. He also used to be heavily involved in the church, giving Christian educational lessons to children and serving as a youth counselor for eight years. Ron once had an official job in the church where he specialized in youth services. As previously mentioned, Wim works with autistic children and used to work with children with special needs. He also worked on a summer program in Hungary for children with no attention available to them during those months.

Chaos said that he would like to work with children. When he tried to find such a job he was told that he was not allowed to because of his pedophilic feelings that he was open and honest about.

Friendships:

Most of my interviewees described some sort of friendship with children that occurred outside of a job or mentoring position. Tobias recounted one recent friendship with a 5-year-old who was the son of a co-worker at his youth group. Their friendship involved going to the zoo, swimming, and visiting museums about once every two weeks to month. He described this boy as "very kind" and "quite pretty," mentioning that other

child-lovers were jealous of this relationship. Tobias said that his interactions with his young friends involve playing on a playground, chess, computer games, relating to the child, and finding the “special side” of the relationship. He tries to get in contact with the whole family as well as a means of gaining their trust. Tobias said that he is well liked in the community.

Chaos described one friendship, his only friendship with a child, saying that he “never thought [it] possible.” He met this boy through the boy’s father who he has known for 15 years. They played computer games, soccer, and walked the dog. Chaos said that he “just wants him to be happy” and that he “spends too much money on presents.” He makes clear that he didn’t show interest in a friendship until the boy did, after which he showed “a lot of interest.” The friendship lasted one year.

Ron describes many “very close” friendships with children that lasted for a few years. He said that these children often “don’t get attention from their parents,” and that “what they didn’t get at home they could receive from [him].” He met these boys through other child-lovers, at swimming pools, or on the street. The boys’ parents often knew that they were at Ron’s home. Ron emphasized that he always respected the boys’ choice in “exchanged tenderness.” He mentioned one friendship with a 10-year-old boy who wanted sexual contact. Ron refused this kind of contact, however, as he said that it was “not good for the relationship.”

Steven described his relationships with children as ranging from casual acquaintances to friendships to friendships with secret love. One boy showed an interest to be around Steven a lot and even said “I love you” once, but which Steven describes as “the 10-year-old version” of the phrase. The boy grew out of this when he was around

13, however. Steven met another 11-year-old boy at a bar where his mom was drinking. They grew “close-ish,” while Steven was secretly falling in love with the boy. They would eat dinner, watch TV, and get to know each other better, but eventually the boy grew disinterested while Steven’s feelings grew stronger. He describes this as a “normal friendship” and added that adult/child friendships and relationships are not too different from adult/adult friendships and relationships.

Wim said that he had many friendships with children, but noting one especially deep friendship with an 11-year-old. He met the boy at a swimming pool where they talked, and upon another meeting Wim said that he “really fell in love with him.” They would chat online and talk about sports clubs, and the boy would call Wim every week. Wim said that if the boy didn’t call he would “break down.” The boy’s parents had their doubts about Wim, but thought that the relationship was fine. Wim describes the boy as having “emotional and social problems” that he believed he could help him with. One time the boy jumped into Wim’s arms; he notes that this is the first time he saw the boy “show gratitude to anybody.” He believed that he really made a difference in this boy’s life. After moving into what could be described as “the ghetto,” the boy was prohibited to see Wim. A year later they were reunited again at a swimming date but the relationship eventually drifted away.

The friendships that my interviewees described to me seem pleasurable, healthy, constructive, and beneficial to both the adult and child.

Ron acknowledged the fleeting nature of these relationships, however: “You can be friends, but you can’t be partners. It is a tragedy.”

Relationships with a Sexual Aspect:

Some men that I interviewed reported sexual relationships with children. In Eric's case, one such relationship had unfortunate consequences. He describes a friendship in which a boy visited his house from age 7 to 15, with "interruptions of months and years" when Eric was in his mid-40's. Eric said that when the boy was at his house he insisted on being close to Eric. The boy "refused to sleep alone." When the boy was around 28, however, he accused Eric of molestation. Eric describes the scenario: "His school carrier was a disaster. He developed to be a criminal who did not pay his bills, so was in danger and on the flight. He went to a psychologist, saying 'I have problems'. The psychologist found out about our relationship and said he had found the source and cause of his problems. The therapy was: *accuse*."

As a result of this accusation Eric spent six months in prison. After this court trial he felt forced to move to another town. He said that he is not sexually active with children anymore. I want to point out that this six-month sentence is years less than what would be sentenced in the United States.

Eric, as well as my other interviewees, makes clear that any sexual relationships he had with children were *always* consensual.

Tobias said that he had "several [sexual] contacts" with boys as a teenager, when it was "easier." He describes one such relationship that occurred when he was 13 to 16 with a neighborhood "pretty-boy" 5 years younger. They would play war, computer games, swim, and mountain climb. "Sex" with the boy involved touching each other and sometimes oral sex, and sometimes they would make games out of it. Tobias said that the boy was eager to play in the beginning, but his own sexual interest grew stronger as

he grew further into adolescence. Tobias maintains that he “never pushed him” into any unwanted contact. The boy has a girlfriend now and they are still in touch. Tobias said that the boy “doesn’t have bad feelings” towards him and that he “doesn’t seem to be a victim.”

Tobias describes one other relationship with a boy 4 or 5 years younger than he was when he was 11 or 12. This friendship gained a sexual aspect when Tobias was about 15. Tobias said that the boy “initiated undressing” and that it was a “great experience.”

Ron said that he had nine or ten sexual relationships with children in total, each relationship containing five to ten sexual experiences. Ron described many of these relationships as containing tenderness, sleeping in the same bed, kissing, lying naked in bed with “sexual touching,” or rubbing.

The first of such a relationship was with a neighbor boy whom he babysat. Ron said the 11 or 12-year-old boy was “eager to receive tenderness.” The boy chose to sleep in the same bed as him and share a shower with him. The boy learned from Ron how to “pull [him]self off.”

One “mid-pubescent” 13-year-old boy made advances to Ron. He would undress to nudity in front of him, “seeking it out.” Ron said that the boy liked to be his slave, with touches of S&M.

Ron said that the boys express trust in him, and that he finds this trust satisfying. These are open relationships and good friendships where they have “nothing to hide.”

Ron mentioned some sexual relationships with Moroccan boys whose ages range from 10 to 14. Ron said that one boy penetrated him, but that he much prefers

“tenderness and hugging.” He said that these boys liked more of the “hard fucking” and that the only place they allowed him to touch them was their penis. Any type of “caressing” would mean that they are “faggots.” At least one boy stole things from Ron’s home, including a laptop which he eventually got back. Ron’s last friendship with a sexual component was with a boy whose friendship lasted until age 16 when he was 36. This friendship ended when the boy borrowed money from Ron and never returned.

Ron said that the decision to cease sexual contact with children coincided with the time when he got responsibility in the church. He said that at that time in his life he was “more longing for responsibility rather than sexuality.” Ron now says that it would be “very foolish” to have sexual intercourse with a child because one’s “life would collapse” because of society.

Wim reported that one of his young friends wanted a sexual relationship with him but he refused, saying that he couldn’t engage in such a relationship because it was illegal.

Chaos and Steven said that they have never had sexual relationships with children. Chaos specified that he wouldn’t want sexual contact with a child unless the child initiated this.

Sexuality

My interviewees all have different sexual experiences and sexual habits at different points in their lives. All of my interviewees said that their primary sexual attraction is young boys, but their actual experiences do not necessarily follow this exclusivity.

Eric was married with sexual contact for fifteen years and also had some sexual experiences with other women and young men. Ron said that he had sexual intercourse with two men. One situation was with a 29-year-old “bisexual” man when he was 24. Ron describes this encounter as “nice” but not enough to long for. He said that there was more “tenderness” than a sexual component.

Steven mentioned that he had sexual experiences with men his own age or older. He said that he had a boyfriend of his own age when he was 24, but that he “didn’t know what was going to happen” in the future in regards to his sexuality.

Wim said that when he was 21 he met a man in his 60’s who “fancied” him, and this resulted in some sexual experiences. This relationship ended when Wim met the person that he is currently in a relationship with now. Wim has been living together with his current 26-year-old boyfriend for two years, but they have been in a relationship for five years. They met because of their shared feelings of child-love. Wim said that he is “not really sexually attracted” but “mentally” attracted.

Chaos said that he hasn’t had any sexual experiences. He does recall one situation when he was 26 or 27 in which his female neighbor was “in love” with him. They went out on a date and the next day the woman asked him to have sex. Chaos wasn’t interested, however.

Interactions with Society and Societal Views

My interviewees have had many positive experiences with society. They also described having many painful experiences with society once people found out about their feelings of child-love. All of my interviewees have an opinion on the ways in which society views their feelings. I have also included in this section their views on children's sexuality.

Experiences and Interactions with Society and Societal Views:

Some of my interviewees describe many positive experiences in their communities. Tobias said that he is well liked through his church work and that "people know [him]." Ron said that "everyone was happy" with his work in the church, and even got an official job making church decisions.

None of my interviewees described any negative experiences in their fields or volunteer work unrelated to societal reactions to their feelings. There were some extremely painful instances of such prejudice, however. Tobias briefly mentioned that he was fired from his church job because of his feelings. As I mentioned before, Chaos was told he was not allowed to work with children as a result of his feelings of child-love.

Ron emotionally describes a very painful experience. At the church that he worked at, one boy said that he couldn't come to services due to some sort of logistical complication. Ron told the boy that he could sleep at his house if he wanted to. Two women happened to overhear this, however, and reported to the Vicar that Ron might have pedophilic feelings. The Vicar confronted Ron, asking for an honest answer to the question, "Are you a pedophile?" Ron chose honesty as the best route and told him that

he is a pedophile. The Vicar then told him that he was “not suited” for his job and fired him indefinitely. Ron stressed that he worked for eight years in youth groups and nothing bad has ever happened. Ron also mentioned that the Vicar was not allowed to speak of his feelings with the church committee but he did anyway. Ron sites fear as the reason for his being fired. He said that “they couldn’t reason anymore.”

Ron said through tears that as a result of the incident he was “*destroyed* inside at the core of [his] being.” He said that he was ripping curtains off the wall and throwing things in his apartment. He said that the topic is still “so emotional.”

Wim recounted a similar story. When he was working at the children’s camp in Hungary, Wim became friends with one boy. After about a week and a half at the camp, the staff had conversations about relationships. Wim said that he “really broke down about this” because he couldn’t express his experiences and feelings. People began to ask why he was so upset, and he finally told one female colleague about his feelings and his relationship with the boy at the camp. Wim said that she “trusted and accepted” him. She told a fellow colleague about Wim’s feelings and then told Wim that she felt “obliged” to watch him. News of his feelings eventually got to headquarters in the Netherlands, and as a result Wim was forced to return early from the camp. Wim decided that the female colleague “actually wasn’t worthy of trust.”

Opinions on the Ways in Which Society Views Their Feelings:

All of my interviewees have opinions on the ways in which society views their feelings. They all agree that there are countless misconceptions about child-love and pedophilia. Overwhelmingly, all of my interviewees agreed that society puts too much of

an emphasis on sexuality and sex in child-love. Tobias also said that people view “pedophiles” as having “disturbed emotional development” and that the mainstream always sees children’s sexuality as harmful.

Chaos said that “it’s all misconceptions,” citing “prejudice,” “bullshit,” “the media,” and “fascists [that] are in power.” He said that there is a “real problem with public opinion” and that their views are based on prejudice while his are based on fact. “Heteros’ think about sex all day, so they think pedophiles do too.” As a result of these misconceptions he believed that he himself was a “monster who dares not look at children.” He expressed frustration that he can’t change this popular opinion.

Ron mentioned the common misconception of confusing pedophilia with pedosexuality, or pedophilic feelings and desires with pedosexual acts. He describes “pedophile deeds” that are done out of love, such as organizing youth holidays. Ron said that people are afraid of him “doing wrong things sooner or later,” a fear that he himself does not have. He also said that “people are not willing to learn” the truth about child-love. Ron said that societal attitudes toward child-love are the cause of abuse stemming from repression, that abuse is not a “nature of the feelings.”

Some have a more optimistic view. Steven said that, while there are loads of misconceptions about terminology due to ignorance, he “never wants to get to the point where frustration takes over.” He does not want to blame society and other people for a “bad situation.” He said that it is a “trap that you start blaming society.” Wim adds that if he takes time to explain his feelings then people begin to understand more, although this process can “take a lot of time.” Steven said that he is not occupied with these misconceptions because he does not encounter them much in daily life.

As I have shown before, these general societal views on pedophilia can be extremely harmful to the emotional and psychological well being of people with feelings of child-love.

I asked the men how they would like to be viewed by society. Eric said that he wants to be viewed as a person with multiple identities. Tobias said that he wants to be viewed “just the way I am.” Chaos said that he wants to be viewed “as a person, a normal human being who is capable of friendship with a person,” not just molestation. Ron said that he wants to be viewed as “honored” and “responsible,” citing his “big warm heart for children.” Steven said that he would like people in his neighborhood to view him as “maybe a bit weird, but not dangerous.” He would also like it if people “didn’t care.” Wim said that he wants people to view him as “correct” and “factual.” He said that he doesn’t care if people judge him, as long as these judgments are based on fact.

I asked my interviewees to remark on traditions of Dutch tolerance and how they apply to child-love in the Netherlands. The responses were overwhelmingly negative. Eric said that these traditions used to include child-lovers more than they do now. Chaos said that child-love used to be “unspoken but tolerated.” He said that “tolerance is history, we don’t know it like we used to.” Steven and Wim agree that there isn’t much Dutch tolerance anymore in general in the past few years. Steven also added that he doesn’t know about the Dutch mindset being “different from others.” Wim said that people just agree with the mass view of child-love because “arguments are lacking.” Tobias added that child-love is not as taboo in the Netherlands as in America, however.

Ron and Eric said that some educated people do accept child-love, but within limits. Ron said that most agree that caring and loving a child is acceptable, while sexual

intercourse is not. He also said that these people think it is good to work with children “unless you’re a pedosexual.”

As a result of these societal views, my interview subjects have to hide their feelings to varying degrees. All of my interviewees agree that a child-lover cannot really publicly express their feelings. Eric said that his feelings must be hidden because of public moral opinion and the law. Tobias said that “of course” he feels silenced as a result of his feelings. He said that he can’t talk about his feelings at work and that he would like to be more open—but he can’t for his own safety. Tobias also added that the parents of his “little friends” don’t know the full extent of his pedophilic feelings. Chaos said that there is “no freedom of speech” for him and that he wants to say a lot—“Democracy is a farce.”

Ron said that, even though he has to keep silence on his feelings, most of the time it is not a problem because his feelings don’t play a role in his everyday life, that it is “not their business.” Despite this Ron said that he can be open about his feelings to complete strangers (myself included). Steven said that he doesn’t tell people in his neighborhood, but that he wouldn’t mind if they found out. Wim said that he is “as open as [he] can be without taking too many risks.” He cannot tell his colleagues about his feelings because he would lose his job.

Views on Children’s Sexuality:

Many of my interviewees expressed some opinion on children’s sexuality and what is or is not healthy for a child. Ron said that if a child engages in voluntary sexual intercourse it is harmful that the child cannot talk about his feelings to anyone. He

believes that sexual contact may be harmful if the child is coerced, although he says that force is not always harmful, such as how children are “forced” to do homework, chores, etc. Tobias said that he believes that children’s sexuality is “not the same as [that of] adults,” and that children express their love through hugging. He said that sex games that children play are used to explore their bodies and feelings, that they are “not an expression of love.” He further described children’s sexuality as “nice feelings” and “egocentric.” Tobias said that he *does* believe that it is good for children to explore their bodies, especially because they are told that their bodies are “bad.”

Wim said that he disapproves of sex with minors because he still isn’t sure whether or not sexual contact causes harm. Steven added that he “doesn’t think the child-love movement should be promoting child sexuality” and that it should be left for other people to fight for.

Coping Methods

Each of my interviewees has his own individual way of coping with his feelings of child-love and has gone through many coping methods over the course of his life. In the previous sections of the analysis I have already mentioned some ways that my interviewees have coped with and processed their feelings. These coping methods are not absolute, finite, or rigid. They can be subtly expressed in a person’s everyday life or they can be more obvious and conscious. I must emphasize that coping with these feelings is a *life-long process* that changes and evolves over time. Different methods of coping are used at different points in a person’s life and can be used simultaneously. These methods of coping can all fall under one of the “21 Styles of Living” that I wrote about previously.

As I have previously described, all of my interviewees have used or are currently using existing internet chatrooms, message boards, or forums to discuss their feelings with other child-lovers. This contact proved to be extremely successful, healthy, and constructive. This type of contact is not just for their own benefit, but for that of other child-lovers as well. Wim explicitly said that he “has a desire to help people with pedophilic feelings.”

Some of my interviewees sought professional help in dealing with their feelings. Chaos said that he recently went to see a psychiatrist, but he thinks that “they just want to cure [him] for his disease” and that those in the medical and psychological fields are “prejudiced.” In contrast, Eric said he has had a psychotherapy he was very content with. Ron said that he briefly underwent therapy when he was 25. Steven said that in the Netherlands there may be a chance of seeing a psychologist that will help a child-lover constructively cope with his feelings, although there is no institutionalized professional help for child-lovers.

Ron also described a period of denial of his feelings. When he was 27 he decided to “give up pedophilia,” but couldn’t. He said that his feelings were “in a coffin kicking and screaming.” Ron said that this process took “a lot of energy” and was determining how he lived his life. He said that it “took part of [my] freedom.”

Chaos is the only one of my interviewees that displayed and expressed long periods of social isolation. He said that he has “always had a great aversion to society” and it was only getting worse as a result of his feelings.

Many of my interviewees have said that they attempted to educate *themselves* about child-love. This includes literary and internet research, speaking to other child-

lovers, and reading scientific studies and academic articles. Eric and Chaos eagerly showed me books that they had read on the topic to educate themselves. In our conversation, Tobias referenced a study on children's sexuality that he read. Ron said that he did a lot of research into what is harmful about pedophilia. Wim said that he "really studied what the consequences [of sex with minors] may be."

Many of my interviewees attempt to educate others about feelings of child-love in various ways and degrees. All of my interviewees are committed to this type of education if not only by the fact that they agreed to participate in my study. Ron said that he once gave an interview for a radio station and newspaper, even though people had very negative reactions. Steven and Wim created and run a child-love information website that gives information to people that want to learn about the topic. They said that this website (which hosts many other websites of various topics as well) has a "more open and less narrow view."

Steven recorded interviews for two Dutch television shows, only one of which aired. About the segment that didn't air, Steven said "the organization filmed a lot, but there wasn't a story to be made." Steven found out about the other interview on a child-love forum. This interview was with a local Amsterdam TV station on one of their youth programs with a studio audience of 16 to 23-year-olds. He said that this segment didn't have "much of a conclusion" and he isn't "totally happy with the end result." Many of Steven's neighbors found out about his feelings through this program, including his 10-year-old neighbor. Steven added that it is important to remember that such educational missions can be frustrating because "you're not going to change everyone's minds."

Wim and Steven simultaneously responded “yes” to my question of whether they wish to educate people about their feelings. Steven said that this education “makes the world a little bit better” and “really has some use” while Wim said that he “doesn’t want other people to go through what [he] had to.” Wim recently wrote a letter to sex educators urging them to teach children about child-love. Eric contributes by writing articles about child-love that he posts on the internet.

About this education, Tobias said that he doesn’t “*wish to*” but “*has to* teach.” Ron said that he is “willing to educate if people are open to learning,” adding that many people are not willing to learn.

My interviewees see relationships or contacts with children as vital to the coping process, although the actual contact each person has with children varies. I have already described the contact that my interviewees have with children. Tobias importantly points out that it is negative and destructive to avoid all contact with children.

Each of my interviewees has his own way of dealing with his sexual desires for children. These coping methods seem to revolve around private self-gratification and fantasy. Sexual needs and desires vary from person to person. Tobias said that he swims every Saturday at a nudist swimming pool with children, and that this is “enough” for him. He said that he used to view child pornography, but he started viewing children as “sexual objects,” which he didn’t want to do. This led to more of an unhealthy “obsession” with children. Tobias added that “sex does not need to be fulfilled to be happy,” although also admitting that he does have to suppress the sexual aspect of child-love to some extent and that he “misses” this sexual aspect.

Chaos said that he doesn't like pornography, including child pornography. He said that he does like pictures of children who are "normally dressed." Chaos said that children look "just as good with clothes on" and that some look "better with clothes on." He added that naked children don't attract him, but that he wouldn't mind if a child took his clothes off.

Ron said that he has no sexual intercourse at all now. He said that it would be dangerous for the child and himself. Ron said that he finds sexual gratification "in private with curtains closed." He said that he sometimes views child pornography on the internet only when the child appears to be "having fun" with other children or by himself. He must be very careful with this pornography, however, as it would be "very dangerous to have it found." Ron said: "I learned to accept that I can't live the way I want to live. This heaven on earth is just fantasy."

Many of my interviewees just try to enjoy and have fun with their feelings for children. Ron said he just tries to enjoy these feelings and focuses on "not feeling bad anymore." Chaos said that he is "not afraid anymore to express [his] feelings." He has learned that "love and friendship are positive." Wim chooses to "express his sexuality in words." He said that he enjoys being with boys, pointing them out, talking with others, and making remarks to friends in places like amusement parks. Steven agreed, "yeah, that's fun."

Currently all of my interviewees have relatively positive outlooks on their feelings for children. This acceptance came as a result of the years of coping that I described. Tobias emphasizes that "you can live with it. It is not a disease. Accept yourself the way you are. Harmony with yourself."

Conclusion

From my research and the six interviews that I have completed, I have new insight into my question of how some child-lovers in the Netherlands express, understand, experience, and cope with their feelings, although my research cannot speak to all people with such feelings.

My research sample has led me to some conclusions. All of my interview subjects described their feelings for children as multifaceted and often having very little to do with any form of sexuality. Most of my interviewees described their feelings as very strong and persistent. Most of my interview subjects specified a certain age preference for the boys that they had special feelings for.

Some of the men chose the more politically correct terms while others didn't care for them. This shows the highly disputed nature of terminology but also speaks to the meaninglessness of words as well. There was a common theme of embracing a multiplicity of identities of which their feelings for children are only one aspect. There is no term that is adequate to describe the totality of their feelings and beings.

All of my interviewees said that they realized their feelings of child-love from a very young age, while some knew earlier than others. Initial reactions to these feelings were extremely varied. Some expressed very little or no emotional conflict while others had a great deal of trouble dealing with their feelings. Most of my interviewees sought help from the internet or from organizations to help cope with their feelings. All of my interviewees described some sort of "coming out" process to family and close friends. Coming out to one's parents often came first. Most of the family members of my interviewees tried to be very understanding of their feelings.

All of my interviewees recounted stories of relationships with children. These can be divided into three subcategories—institutional relationships, friendships, and relationships with sexual aspects. These categories are not always mutually exclusive. Many of my interviewees have relationships with children as a result of their jobs or volunteer work. These types of relationships display their intense desire to care for children.

Most of my interviewees described some sort of friendship with children that occurred outside of a job or mentoring position. The friendships that my interviewees described to me seem pleasurable, healthy, constructive, and beneficial to both the adult and child, even though they tend to be temporary.

Some men that I interviewed reported sexual relationships with children while others have abstained from such relationships. My interviewees all have different sexual experiences and sexual habits at different points in their lives. All of my interviewees said that their primary sexual attraction is young boys, but their actual experiences do not necessarily follow this exclusivity.

My interviewees have had many positive experiences with society. They also described having many painful experiences with society once people found out about their feelings of child-love. All of my interviewees have an opinion on the ways in which society views their feelings. They all agree that there are countless misconceptions about child-love and pedophilia, despite the history of tolerance in the Netherlands. Overwhelmingly, all of my interviewees agreed that society puts too much of an emphasis on sexuality and sex in child-love.

These general societal views on pedophilia can be extremely harmful to the emotional and psychological well being of people with feelings of child-love. As a result of these societal views, my interview subjects have to hide their feelings to varying degrees. All of my interviewees agree that a child-lover cannot really publicly express their feelings.

Each of my interviewees has his own individual way of coping with his feelings of child-love and has gone through many coping methods over the course of his life. All of my interviewees have used or are currently using existing internet chatrooms, message boards, or forums to discuss their feelings with other child-lovers. Some of my interviewees sought professional help in dealing with their feelings. Many of my interviewees have said that they attempted to educate themselves about child-love. This includes literary and internet research, speaking to other child-lovers, and reading scientific studies and academic articles.

Many of my interviewees attempt to educate others about feelings of child-love in various ways and degrees. My interviewees see relationships or contacts with children as vital to the coping process, although the actual contact each person has with children varies. Each of my interviewees has his own way of dealing with his sexual desires for children. These coping methods seem to revolve around private self-gratification and fantasy. Sexual needs and desires vary from person to person.

Many of my interviewees just try to enjoy and have fun with their feelings for children. Currently all of my interviewees have relatively positive outlooks on their feelings for children. This acceptance came as a result of the years of coping that I described.

In a bird's-eye view, I can say that my assumption that sexuality should be the central desire of child-lovers appeared to be *not true*, at least for my sample. I want to plea for the use of correct and neutral terms to describe child-love, especially to make a difference between *feelings (pedophilia)* and *acts (like pedosexuality)*. It became clear that society and even professionals have a lot of misconceptions about this topic. So, all the men of my sample had to cope with their feelings, a process of several years. All succeeded, mostly by educating *themselves and one another* about the nature of their feelings they have to live with. I may say that it is my strong impression that all of them are able to live with their feelings in a constructive, positive, and healthy way.

Since my research study speaks to only a very specific group of child-lovers, I can make some recommendations of further study. I still have some questions about these feelings and how certain people experience them. I am interested in the people that are less open and comfortable with their feelings, people that suppress these feelings, or people that are not involved in the child-love community. I am also interested in how people in nations outside the Netherlands experience and cope with their feelings, especially the United States in the contemporary political and moral climate. There is a wide range of people with pedophilic feelings and desires, and I believe that it is important to learn about these people and how their lives are affected by their feelings to gain a better understanding and an awareness that can help to eradicate irrational fears and prejudice.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1. How would you define yourself?
2. How would you describe your feelings for children?
3. How strong are these feelings?
4. How would you define your sexual identity?
5. Do you think that you fit into any pre-existing label regarding your feelings?
6. What misconceptions do people have regarding your feelings?
7. How would you like to be viewed?
8. Do you ever feel silenced as a result of your feelings?
9. If so, how?
10. What kinds of experiences of any kind have you had with children in the past?
11. What kinds of sexual experiences of any kind have you had in the past?
12. Did you have any sexual experiences with children?
13. How open are you with your feelings?
14. Do you feel that your feelings are something to hide? To share?
15. Do you wish to educate people about your feelings?
16. How would you describe your personality?
17. Do you think that your feelings and your personality are linked or related?
18. What do you think is positive (and negative) about your feelings?
19. Is there a difference between your desire and your sexual activity? In other words, do your sexual activities fit with your desires?
20. How do you express your sexuality?

21. Is there some part of your desires that you don't act upon? Explain. Why?
22. How do Dutch traditions of tolerance include child lovers?
23. Have you ever felt ashamed of your feelings?
24. Do you accept these feelings?
25. If so, how have you come to accept your feelings?