
3. Men Who Have Sex with Children

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ABSTRACT. Child molestation is common in modern Western societies, as it has been historically and in other cultures; there are even cultures in which sex with young boys is obligatory. In modern Western societies, a sizeable proportion of child molestation involves physical coercion, but a very small proportion results in physical injury. In view of the incidence of these behaviors, however, the absolute numbers of physical injuries are substantial. Heterosexual, homosexual, and incestuous offenders differ from each other in important ways, including recidivism. Homosexual offenders are the most likely to recidivate and incestuous offenders the least. There is ample evidence that repetitive child molesters, particularly those who select unrelated victims, prefer children as sexual partners. Sometimes, however, children are selected as surrogates; in these instances, opportunity, alcohol, and difficulties in relations with adults play an important role. The behavioral treatment of child molesters has made a promising beginning and comparative studies of different treatment methods are now in order. Much more knowledge is needed about the development of both normal and inappropriate sexual age preferences.

SOMMAIRE. L’agression sexuelle à l’encontre des enfants est un phénomène courant dans les sociétés occidentales modernes comme il a toujours été dans l’histoire et dans d’autres cultures; il existe même des cultures où il est obligatoire d’engager des relations sexuelles avec les jeunes garçons. Dans notre société, une proportion importante des agressions sexuelles à l’encontre des enfants fait intervenir la coercition physique mais une très petite proportion entraîne un préjudice corporel. Vu l’incidence de ces comportements, les nombres absolus des agressions physiques demeurent importants malgré tout. Les délinquants hétéroséxxuels, homosexuels et incestueux diffèrent les uns des autres à plusieurs égards et, en particulier, sur le plan de la récidive. Les délinquants homosexuels sont ceux qui ont le plus de probabilités de récidive tandis que les délinquants incestueux en ont le moins. Il existe une preuve importante que les auteurs d’agressions sexuelles répétées à l’encontre d’enfants, en particulier ceux qui choisissent des victimes qui n’ont pas de lien entre elles, préfèrent les enfants comme partenaires sexuels. Cependant, il arrive parfois que les enfants soient choisis à la place d’adultes et, dans ces cas-là, le caractère occasionnel, l’alcool et les difficultés dans les relations avec les adultes sont des facteurs importants. Le traitement behavioral des agresseurs d’enfants a eu un succès remarquable et des études comparatives sur les différentes méthodes de traitement s’imposent maintenant. Il est nécessaire de faire des études plus approfondies sur le développement des préférences sexuelles liées à l’âge qui seraient à la fois normales et anormales.

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INTRODUCTION

Sexual behaviors, like any others of social importance, are complex and are determined in a multidimensional fashion. This multidimensionality of determining events causes major methodological and interpretive problems when particular sexual behaviors are to be explained theoretically. The occurrence of the behaviors themselves are seldom sufficient for inferences about their causation. Although these problems are perhaps obvious, their effects are often not, particularly concerning a topic such as sexual interactions with children, which is laden with a priori assumptions and value judgments. I will, therefore, begin this review by attempting to clarify certain conceptual issues before turning to substance.

Sexual behaviors are species-typical and consummatory in nature; there is, therefore, an almost irresistible inclination to ascribe the adjective “natural” to those behaviors that are related to procreation and the adjective “unnatural” to those that are not. Clearly, from an evolutionary viewpoint, it would be strange indeed if behaviors that led to the continuation of the species did not have some advantages. We might think, for example, that, for males, there is something inherently attractive about sexual activities with reproductively viable women. Regardless of the truth or falsity of this proposition, however, it should be clear that sexual acts of various kinds can be motivated in a variety of ways simultaneously. In particular, it is probable that most sexual acts are determined simultaneously by a mix of environmental contingencies and organismic variables.

To clarify this matter, consider an experiment in animal behavior. Rats in an experimental chamber are given the opportunity to drink sweet water out of a drinking tube. If the rats are sufficiently hungry, they will lick the tube in a burst-like manner with a species-specific frequency. They do not have to be taught this response. It can be arranged, however, for this licking response to have a variety of additional consequences; for example, licks can be consequtuated with an aversive event such as electric shock. One could arrange a positive relationship between response occurrence and shock (punishment), a noncontingent relationship between licking and shock, or a schedule in which licks avoid shocks that would otherwise be delivered (free operant avoidance). These contingencies of reinforcement can be thought to lie on a continuum based on the degree and type of their correlation with the behavior of interest. Such a situation, involving two schedules targeted on the same response (in this case, shock and sweet water consequeating licking), is termed a “conjoint schedule.” Conjoint schedules affect species-typical behaviors in a lawful manner (Quinsey, 1972).

The methodological point that the previous experiment illustrates is that by looking at the licking behavior of these animals alone, we in fact cannot tell what is motivating their responses. Because of the experimental arrangement, however, we know that some animals are licking in spite of shock and some animals are licking both because of their hunger and to avoid shock. In the area of socially important behaviors, such as sexual activity, multiple determination is ubiquitous and extremely complex; as we shall see, different societies have imposed complicated rules that reward, punish, or ignore sexual interactions between men and children. Furthermore, we often do not know what the contingencies actually are (or were) for a given individual or group. This problem has spurred a variety of approaches to the problem of sexual motivation in recent years.

A related issue concerns inclusive fitness: Because sexual behaviors are so clearly linked with evolutionary success, it is natural to think of sexual motivation as being part of “human nature” and to be relatively invariant (Ford, 1960). Unfortunately, the elements of sexual behavior that are invariant are not well understood. In addition, such an approach is ill-suited when we wish to examine individual differences in sexual behavior and what causes them (e.g., Buss, 1984).

The primary focus of the present paper is on men who have sexual interactions with children in modern Western societies. Because these behaviors are criminal offenses, in addition to being viewed for the most part as immoral, the latter part of this chapter treats sexual behaviors with children as crimes and focuses on the modification and prevention of these behaviors. In order to have a less parochial theoretical view of these behaviors, however, the first part of the chapter is concerned with the description of societies and periods of history in which these behaviors were more or less accepted.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES

There have long been scattered reports of sexual behavior between adult men and children in a variety of cultures (Carstairs, 1964). For example,
Henry (1964) reports that, among the Kaingang of the Brazilian highlands, "The growing child's sexual experience is primarily humorous, often illicit, administered by adults, and apt to be violent in the case of girls" (p. 18). The anthropological literature on homosexuality has been particularly sparse and of uneven quality (Fitzgerald, 1977).

More recently, however, adult sexual behavior with children has received some attention from anthropologists with the systematic study of ritualized and obligatory homosexual activities with male children occurring in parts of Melanesia. Homosexuality in this part of the world is ritualized in that it involves male initiation rites, has religious connotations, is condoned or prescribed by broader social roles and rules, and is structured by age and kinship rules and taboos (Herdt, 1984a). Herdt estimates that 10-20% of Melanesian societies practice ritualized homosexuality or have practiced it in the recent past. This institution is characteristic of Papuan-speaking societies of the southwestern New Guinea coastal fringe and certain islands to the east of New Guinea (it also occurs in parts of Australia but that area has not received much systematic study in this connection).

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of societies that have institutionalized homosexual eroticism between men and boys is the degree of gender polarity and antagonism. Males belong to secret societies and gain prestige from warfare and head-hunting. Women's status is very low. There is a strict separation of labor along gender lines and residential separation as well. Women do not participate very much in public affairs, often have no choice in the selection of a marriage partner, and have little control over their economic products. In addition, beliefs about the polluting effects of women's bodies are common, as are negative images of women in myth and idiom (Herdt, 1984a).

The Sambia of the fringe highlands of eastern New Guinea practice obligatory homosexual fellatio in secret male societies (Herdt, 1984b). The practice is strictly age-graded, with boys starting at age 7, or somewhat older, by performing fellatio on older men. These homosexual behaviors are promiscuous within certain limits: Homosexual contacts are not permitted among age-mates, fellow clansmen, matrilateral kin, or ritual sponsors. It is noteworthy that homosexual taboos are closely related to heterosexual (incest) taboos, as ritual sponsors are viewed as "parents." In addition, the taboo on age-mates reflects the asymmetry of heterosexual relations between the stronger male and a weaker female. As a boy becomes older and further initiated, he switches from fellating to being fellated. This homosexual activity continues until he fathers children. Similarly, marital relations are begun with fellatio, which continues until the woman is "strong enough" for vaginal intercourse and the bearing of children. Marital sexual intercourse is, in general, viewed as procreative work.

There is an elaborate belief structure concerning the value of semen, which is seen as a scarce resource. Semen is necessary for a boy's growth and for his own later use in fathering children. Relations with women are seen as particularly semen-depleting, and this semen must be replenished by drinking the white sap of certain trees. The growth-inducing properties of semen are reflected in myths that equate the penis with secret flutes and women's breasts.

Perhaps not surprisingly, there is a great deal of cross-gender antagonism in Sambian society. Erotic attraction plays an important role for the older partners in ritualized homosexuality. The boys must often be coerced into their initial homosexual contacts and they do not achieve orgasm, although they do become erect when performing fellatio as they become older. Men find boys more sexually arousing the younger they are and some men have difficulty switching to exclusive heterosexuality when they have children. Herdt believes that the primary motive for these activities is simply homoerotic play and that the beliefs concerning the fellator's growth are primarily rationalizations.

These homosexual contacts may have an important social function, of which more will be said later. Because the groups that have homosexual relationships also exchange sisters for marriage, the homosexual relationships can cement social contacts between potential sisters for marriage, which may become affines (related through marriage) and later kin (Herdt, 1984b).

Other societies that practice ritualized homosexuality exhibit different features within a similar cultural framework. Among the Marind-Anim of southern New Guinea, boys are taken to live in the men's house when just past infancy (Van Baal, 1984). As the boy's puberty approaches, he is introduced to anal intercourse by his mother's brother who "feeds him" analy for 3-4 years. There is also ritual homosexual promiscuity in connection with various rites. The Marind-Anim
are very concerned with fecundity, which was very low even before the arrival of venereal disease. Part of the difficulty has been female sterility caused by vaginal irritation. This irritation, ironically, is associated with the fertility rite of having a woman copulate with large numbers of men in succession at marriage and at the first menstruation following pregnancy. The mixture of semen and vaginal fluids is gathered on these occasions and is thought to be a potent medicine. Although women have higher status among the Marind-Anim than among the Sambians, the males appear to Van Baal to be dissatisfied with their gender role; hence their belief that semen is the source of all fertility and growth and their preoccupation with male activities such as head-hunting.

Among the Big Nambas of North Vanuatu (an island near New Guinea), ritualized homosexuality also occurs in a context of extreme male ideology (Allen, 1984). The situation is somewhat different, however, in that the leading man of each village has an almost complete monopoly on the labor and sexual services of the women and the teenaged boys of the village.

The Kimam Papuans of southern New Guinea also exhibit ritualized homosexuality involving anal intercourse with young boys (Serpenti, 1984). The boy's mother's younger brother is the preferred mentor who performs this task. They also preferentially select young girls (as young as 8 years of age) for sexual activities designed to produce semen to be used as medicine. Girls of marriageable age are tested sexually by many men in succession to be sure they are ready for marriage. There is also promiscuous male–female intercourse associated with mourning rites.

There are other societies in this area that practice ritualized homosexuality or that employ homosexuality as a mythic theme. In general, all of these societies perceive sperm as creating growth and strength in prepubertal boys. It is of interest, however, that the method of "sperm-feeding" varies over these societies. Some employ anal intercourse, some fellatio, and some masturbation and the smearing of sperm on the boy's skin. Different societies do not always approve of their neighbor's methods (Sorum, 1984).

Enough has been said to illustrate the nature of the "variations on a sociosexual theme in Melanesia" as Lindenbaum (1984) has described it. How is this ritualized homosexual theme to be explained? Herdt (1984a) suggests that a number of elements combine in these societies to produce the phenomenon. First, he notes that these societies are ecologically marginal and involve small populations. Surprisingly, within these small populations there are markedly imbalanced sex ratios at birth in favor of males; this initial imbalance is then exacerbated by polygamy and late menarche. To this shortage of women, Herdt adds taboos on sexual activity with women, heterosexual restrictiveness, and residential separation of the genders. Second, there are beliefs concerning the undesirability of women and the efficacy of semen in the promotion of growth. Finally, Herdt notes the sexual attractiveness of boys: For example, among the Wogo it is well recognized that some boys are more attractive than others and, among the Sambians, some boys are seen as more attractive by the bachelors, as are some bachelors by the boys.

Schwimmer (1984) emphasizes somewhat different issues in the explanation of ritualized homosexuality. He notes that the status of women in these societies is not always low and that ritualized homosexuality may well be a result of gender competition rather than gender dominance. Because marriage partners are closely related, and women owe some loyalty to their brothers (who are often potential enemies), women are in fact a threat. This threat is dealt with by the creation of male secret societies that use homosexual relations to create bonds within their warrior group.

Lindenbaum (1984) has attempted to integrate and extend the explanations offered by Herdt and Schwimmer. She observes that the occurrence of ritualized homosexuality is far from random in Melanesia and contrasts societies which do and do not practice ritualized homosexuality in order to find explanations. In the New Guinea highlands, there are exchanges of shells, feathers, and pigs in initiation ceremonies as opposed to the exchange of semen. Where the exchange is most elaborate, there is no initiation. The concern is with the production of men of status, not so much the production of "men" per se. These societies do not have ritualized homosexuality. The eastern highlands are intermediate in that homosexuality is a symbolic theme but is not practiced. In the lowlands, ritualized homosexuality is very common. These lowland societies are small and live in precarious environments. Marriage is by sister exchange and there is no bride price. Sister exchange is a difficult way to obtain wives because it must involve equity or debt on the part of one of the parties. This problem of inequity or potential inequity is addressed by ritualized homosexu-
uality in which the ideal insemiinator is a boy's sister's husband. Semen, therefore, is, like bride service, a covenant which keeps the sister-exchange mechanism intact. Bride price makes its appearance as sister exchange and ritualized homosexuality disappears (Lindenbaum, 1984).

The phenomenon of ritualized homosexuality illustrates the complex interweaving of variables at the societal and individual levels. In the context of the animal experiment mentioned in the introduction, these are complex conjoint schedules indeed; clearly, however, in these exotic societies, sexual behavior with boys is encouraged in a variety of ways. We can observe, therefore, an interaction between sexual behaviors and positive societal sanctions that is not found elsewhere in contemporary societies. The anthropological data indicate that any explanations of sexual behaviors between adult men and children will involve not only sexual attractiveness but also societal constraints and supports, not to mention the beliefs and attitudes of the participants.

HISTORICAL STUDIES

The historical literature concerning sexual activities occurring between men and children is very small; de Mause (1974) notes that children's lives have not been recorded well and that historians have in general ignored the history of childhood. From what literature there is, however, it appears that the level of child care deteriorates as one goes back in time (de Mause, 1974). The literature concerning sex with children appears much better developed in the case of boys (see Jones, 1982) than in the case of girls, about whom there is little literature. (From what is available, the lack of commentary appears to reflect its acceptance and ubiquity.) For purposes of exposition, the sexual use of boys will be considered first.

It is well known that boys were the subject of a great deal of sexual attention in the ancient Mediterranean societies. In Crete and Boeotia "pederastic marriages and honeymoons" were common. There were child brothels in every large city. Sexual use of boys was common by their teachers and their masters. In Greece and Rome, infant boys were sometimes castrated because intercourse with castrated boys was thought to be particularly arousing (de Mause, 1974; Rush, 1980).

The best known sexual activities between men and boys occurred in ancient Greece, where it was normative among the upper classes (Vanggaard, 1972). Despite the frequent allusions to "Greek love," however, most of our information comes from a fragmentary Athenian literature during the period 490–323 B.C. (Ungaretti, 1978). Homosexual relationships in ancient Greece were strongly hierarchical in that the boy, preferably postpubescent but yet unbearded, was pursued, loved, and subjected to anal intercourse by a warrior-hero. The boys involved in these activities received instruction from their mentor/lover. The boys were expected to be sexually passive and were valued for their sexual attractiveness (Ungaretti, 1978); specific attributes such as buttocks and thighs were mentioned in this regard (Vanggaard, 1972). Men who were sodomized by boys were held in contempt. Warriors would take their boylovers with them during military campaigns and would capture enemy women for sexual purposes as well, when possible. The status of women in ancient Greece was low, although some courtesans were of high social status. In general, however, women were sequestered in the home; adultery was punishable by death (Ungaretti, 1978).

Ungaretti (1978) has concluded that, because the ancient Greek family was dominated by the male head of the household and marriage was seen as an economic and reproductive unit, the institution of homosexual relations between men and youths kept the emotional, sexual, and intellectual needs of the men from burdening the marital relationship. Because relationships among men were so fiercely competitive, homosexual relations among age peers were an impossibility. Aristotle's contemporaneous views on this phenomenon are intriguing; he thought that homosexual relationships kept men from being dominated by their wives (Ungaretti, 1978) and that boys who had been used sexually by men from a young age would grow up to become homosexuals (de Mause, 1974).

The parallels between ritualized homosexuality in Melanesia and homosexuality in ancient Greece are striking. In both cultures the status of women is low, there is a great deal of sexual restrictiveness, the men are organized into warrior groups, male machismo is prized, male youths are valued for their sexual attractiveness, the homosexual relationships are age-graded and asymmetrical, and the boys receive tutoring from their lover/mentors.

Opinions about homosexual relations between men and youths changed over time and, indeed, were changing in ancient Greece. Increasingly,
sexual relations between adults and children were viewed negatively. Essentially, the Western world went from a set of environmental or cultural contingencies that encouraged sexual interactions with boys to one that discouraged it. There is no doubt, however, that such behaviors continued.

After the 12th century, European law conformed increasingly to the Christian ethic (Goodich, 1976). Evangelical fervor condemned Jews, usurers, apostates, heretics, prostitutes, magicians, and sodomites. There was a close connection in medieval law between heresy and sodomy (heretical sects were often accused of sodomy and sexual libertinage). The theological justification for the prosecution of homosexuals was provided by the biblical destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The penalty for heresy and sodomy was death by burning. Torture to obtain confessions was common by the Inquisition, which investigated both heresy and sodomy. Despite all of this prosecution, however, such illicit sexual activities continued to occur and to be punished. In the 1300s, for example, boys were being prostituted in Florence. The boys were not treated as harshly under the law as older men (Goodich, 1976).

In the 15th century, there was the infamous case of Giles de Rais, who raped and murdered more than 40 peasant boys in his Brittany castle. At his trial in 1440, he claimed to have been influenced by written accounts of the Caesars, such as Caligula (Brownmiller, 1975).

The Marquis de Sade (1785/1966) wrote the first detailed account of sexual fantasies involving children. His unfinished but very lengthy "The 120 Days of Sodom" was written in the Bastille in only 37 days; he considered it his masterpiece and he was convinced it had been lost during the French Revolution. The book reappeared much later, however, and has given us an unusual look at sexual fantasy involving children. The book contains detailed descriptions of every bit of sexual nastiness that can be imagined and makes modern sadistic literature appear rather innocent. Simone de Beauvoir (1951/1966), in a perceptive essay, asserts that Sade's chief value is in his ability to disturb us. Sade is disturbing and is so deliberately; his method is to invert the values of the society in which he lived. For example, sex with a boy would be better than sex with a girl because it is more unnatural; it would be better yet if the boy suffered and was later killed; having the offender be a bishop would improve the story further, particularly if he were not caught and punished for the crime. Other details, like having the parents watch the torture and suggesting that these sexual murders occur very frequently and will continue forever would be worked into the plot whenever possible. Sade does not want us to like his "heroes" and goes out of his way to make them contemptible rather than grandly evil; the sexual acts themselves are treated in the same way, partly through endless repetition.

It is not clear which, of all of the sexual activities Sade describes with such gusto, he himself found sexually arousing. Apparently, he did enjoy being the recipient of anal intercourse and enjoyed inflicting pain but there is no evidence that he was sexually involved with children. The historical value of Sade's work in the present context is that it clearly shows the psychological availability of sadistic fantasies involving children at the time of the French Revolution. The theoretical questions raised by the wide variety of sexual misbehaviors that Sade describes are several. Chief among these pertains to the connection among these widely different fantasies. Preferred sexual fantasies are usually thought to be idiosyncratic and limited in number for any one individual. Is Sade an anomaly, or is it common for others to be sexually aroused by all manner of sexual misbehaviors? In short, can naughtiness per se be a sexual cue? Can something be erotically attractive only because it is forbidden? At present we have no answers to these questions but they are at the heart of an explanation of sadism. We will return to these questions when we consider research on the sadistic use of children.

In the 18th century, there was widespread use of boys as passive sexual objects in many parts of the world: China, Japan (among the Samurai), sub-Saharan Africa, and the Islamic areas of Turkey, Egypt, Arabia, and India (Trumbach, 1977). These homosexual behaviors were practiced quite openly and did not arouse public indignation or incur punishment as they did in Europe at this time. Although England was perhaps the most punitive of the European countries in the 18th century concerning these matters, there was a flourishing homosexual underground in London involving a specialized argot and illicit meetings between men of all social classes in latrines, parks, and brothels. Young boys often sold themselves as prostitutes (Trumbach, 1977).

In view of this punitive climate of English opinion, it is of considerable interest that a literature appeared in England in the late 1800s which attempted to justify and glorify sexual interactions
with young boys. This literature was written by the “Uranian” poets (Taylor, 1976), of whom the best known was Oscar Wilde. Taylor concludes:

The Uranians, in their poetry, constructed and amplified an image of their sexual orientation as God-given and divinely-sanctioned, as a means of overcoming or of ameliorating class barriers, as erotically and aesthetically superior to other affective attachments, and as a means of recapturing their own lost youth. Add to that their recognition of the inevitable transience of its availability, and we can see that these poets managed to formulate a set of motives for conventionally negatively-sanctioned sexual activity which enabled its enactment as guilt-free behaviour. (p. 108)

What little historical literature there is on the sexual use of young girls has been reviewed by Rush (1980). The phenomenon was essentially seen as unremarkable. In Sumerian tablets of 5,000 years ago, the goddess Ninil is depicted as refusing intercourse on the grounds that she was too young and too small. From the Book of Numbers in the Bible and from Talmudic tradition until the 12th century, it is clear that a girl 3 years of age plus a day could be betrothed by intercourse. Rapes of boys under 9 years of age and girls under 3 years of age were not punished as they were viewed under the law as “invalid.” In Roman times the sexual use of young, particularly slave, girls was common.

In sixth-century Christian society, 12 years of age was the age of marriage for girls and 13 for boys, although marriages were arranged for girls who were much younger. Consent was thought to be desirable but penetration was binding; sex with a female under 7 years of age, however, was not considered to be valid in a legal sense (Rush, 1980).

Good criminal records exist for Venice in the early Renaissance of the mid-1300s (Ruggiero, 1975). These records indicate the frequency of certain crimes and their punishments; sometimes descriptive material is available as well. Many crimes were dealt with extremely harshly; for example, a man who had sexual relations with a boy was burned. Heterosexual rape, however, was dealt with far more leniently. An examination of the penalties indicates that rapes of females under 12 years of age were punished on average by about 2 years in jail, rapes of unmarried but marriageable women by less than 6 months in jail, and rapes of married women by approximately 1 year in jail. Penalties were often in the form of fines and so strongly favored the upper class, who appeared to commit more than their share of rapes. Rapists apparently did not rape above their class, as the females were almost exclusively of the same or lower class than the rapists.

In the 13th century, England began to recognize sex with a female under 12 years of age as statutory rape (Rush, 1980). Unfortunately, the effect of this ruling is unknown as it was interpreted ambiguously for a very long time. With the industrial revolution in Victorian England, the prostitution of female children was recognized as an important and increasing social problem. There was a flourishing international “white slave” trade and it was not uncommon for girls to be kidnapped and coerced into prostitution in England and the United States. The exploitation of these girls and their resultant severe health problems was a scandal (Rush, 1980).

It was not only in Western countries that female children were commonly used sexually. In India, child marriage was legal until 1955. Hindu religion prescribed child marriage and there were numerous health problems caused by the sexual intercourse to which very young girls were subjected (Rush, 1980).

This historical summary has documented the widespread occurrence of sexual activities between men and children in cultures and periods of history that vary widely in their attitudes toward the behavior. Because of the incompleteness of the data, many questions remain unanswered; in particular, it would be interesting to know how common it was in various times and places for men to engage in sexual activities with children exclusively, instead of intermittently, and how this phenomenon varies with societal regulation of sexual behavior.

The ubiquity of sexual behaviors with children and the persistence of these activities in the face of strong punishments in certain societies are the most salient features of this review. We can conclude, therefore, that sexual activities with children are inherently attractive, at least to some men, that an interest or preference for these sorts of behaviors are easily learned under a wide variety of circumstances.

INCIDENCE

Turning to Western contemporary society, many researchers who have investigated sexual crimes
perpetrated against children have made various estimates of their frequency. Unfortunately, however, these estimates are extremely difficult to evaluate. A number of important methodological issues must be borne in mind before the difficulty of the problem becomes apparent (e.g., Elliott, Ageton, Huizinga, Knowles, & Canter, 1983). First, authors have frequently confused prevalence with incidence. Prevalence refers to the proportion of individuals in a given population who have engaged in a particular behavior within a specified period of time (e.g., a year or a lifetime). Incidence, on the other hand, refers to the numbers of behaviors of a particular type which occur in a specific population in a given time. Obviously, prevalence figures must be lower than incidence figures for the same populations and the same time intervals. A further complication ensues when the at-risk population is defined (e.g., all males or all males over 16 years of age). The problem becomes more acute in estimating the incidence of crimes such as incest, where part of the definition of the crime involves the relationship of the offender and victim (number of families having children of certain ages or number of families in which the biological father is present).

The magnitude of the difficulties increases severalfold when the definition of the offense is considered. Many of the offenses are in fact quite minor and involve exposing the genitals or the fondling of nongenital areas through the victim's clothes. Often the offense occurs among social intimates. Given the well known vagaries of recall, such incidents will often not be reported by victims or offenders.

Data on the number of offenses can be gathered from three sources: police data, offender reports, or victim reports. Each source of data is subject to its own problems of interpretation; conversely, each source of data sheds additional light on the subject.

Considering police report data first, one must not confuse crimes known to the police, arrest data, and conviction data. With respect to crimes known to the police, there is also the distinction to be made between founded (where the police believe a crime has been committed) and unfounded crimes (where the police believe that the allegation is spurious). Depending upon one's purpose, any of these sorts of police data may be appropriate. When one is most concerned that the crime actually occurred and wants a conservative estimate, conviction data should be employed. It is of interest that convictions for sex offenses are less common than often believed; for example, Chiswick (1983) indicates that offenders found guilty or cautioned for sex crimes in England make up less than 1% of offenders found guilty of indictable offenses for that entire country.

The problems inherent in using police data are many. Police reporting and arrest policies vary over both time and jurisdiction. In addition, there is a very poor correspondence between legal category or charge and actual behaviors; it is often not even possible to distinguish sexual from non-sexual crimes against the person. Court records or police descriptions of the behaviors are far superior to simply using "rap sheets" because of these ambiguities. There is also the well known problem of the victim's failure to report offenses that do occur. This failure to report is, of course, very likely when the victim is a child and is more likely the more minor the offense. It is highly probable that such under-reporting varies directly with the socio-economic status of the child and the relationship of the offender to the victim.

Offender reports can be gathered in several ways. The most common is in interviews with convicted offenders. These data often suffer from the offender seeking to conceal the frequency and specific nature of his crimes because of the very real possibility that such information will lead to an increased sentence, a longer time which he will spend in a correctional or psychiatric institution, or poorer treatment at the hands of fellow inmates or custodial personnel. Persons who have volunteered for treatment and have been guaranteed anonymity are likely to be more forthcoming in this regard. The difficulty, however, in interpreting data from known offenders, whether institutionalized or not, is in knowing how typical they are of some population. It would be better, of course, to ask some large and demographically stratified population of males the same questions under conditions of anonymity. The problem in all of this self report revolves around the nature of the behaviors themselves. It requires very special circumstances for a person to admit that he has, for example, buggered a child, when that offense is not already known to the police or questioner. Finally, there are the methodological issues involved in any retrospective interview technique, such as differential recall. These latter problems can be addressed, if not eliminated, by providing specific temporal anchor points and careful structuring of the questions.

Many of the same issues apply to victim reports. The problems of accuracy are compounded, how-
ever, by the young age of the victims, who often do not have the vocabulary necessary to describe what has happened to them, and by the long time that has elapsed if older persons are asked about their childhood victimization. The same issue as in the offender case arises as to whether only known victims will be interviewed or whether demographically stratified populations of at-risk individuals will be interviewed. The ethical problems in asking children such questions are not to be underestimated.

Before proceeding with a discussion of the incidence of the behaviors that are the subject of this chapter, it is necessary to describe them in more detail. Broadly speaking, we are interested in sexual interactions between adult men and prepubertal children; this definition can be operationalized as a sexual interaction between a male who is 16 years of age or older and at least 5 years older than the child, who, in turn, is 13 years of age or younger. Varying definitions have been used in the literature but the papers which will be reviewed more or less conform to this operationalization. The men who engage in these sexual behaviors have been termed "child molesters" or "pedophiles" and the children involved have been called "victims." Although these terms carry evaluative baggage, they are so common in the literature that they will be employed in the remainder of the review. The sexual behaviors of concern to this review involve touching of the genitals, buttocks, or breasts or those behaviors involving exposure of the genitals. The sexual behaviors will be considered in more detail the more that they involve coercion and aggression.

This chapter is concerned primarily with the characteristics of sexual offenders against children. However, this concern only makes sense if some men are more likely to commit sexual offenses against children than others; if men are equally likely to commit these offenses, then we should be interested exclusively in situational variables, such as differential opportunities or societal sanctions.

Sexual interactions between men and children are a common occurrence in Western societies. In 1953 Kinsey et al. (cited in West, 1981) interviewed over 4,000 normal females in the United States. Their prevalence figures indicate that 24% of the sample had been approached sexually by a man over 15 years of age and at least 5 years older than themselves when they were under 14 years of age. Nearly half of the men involved were acquaintances or relatives. The sexual behaviors seldom involved coitus (3%) and were often minor (31% involved petting and fondling without touching of the genitals). Only one of the respondents indicated that she had received serious injury but many reported having been upset by the experience.

More recently, Finkelhor (1979) gathered interview data from 530 female and 266 male American college students regarding their childhood sexual experiences with adults and older adolescents. Females reported that they had had a sexual experience with an adult when under age 12 in 11% of the cases, whereas males reported such sexual contact in 4% of the cases. When young adolescents and sexual contact by older adolescents was included, the figures rose to 19% for females and 9% for males. For females, family members were involved in 43% of the cases, acquaintances in 33%, and strangers in 24%. The situation was quite different for boys, where the corresponding figures were 17, 53, and 30%. For females, 37% of the sexual contacts occurred at 9 years of age or younger, 47% between ages 10 and 12, and 16% between ages 13 and 16. For males, 27% of the contacts occurred before 10 years of age, 41% between ages 10 and 12, and 32% between ages 13 and 16. A regression analysis indicated that use of force and partner's age best predicted how much trauma females said they experienced.

Much more extensive information has recently become available from a Gallup poll based on a national probability sample of Canadians over 18 years of age. (Committee on Sexual Offences, 1984a; 1984b). There were 2,008 persons who provided complete information under anonymous conditions; this represents 94% of those contacted. Fifty-four percent of the females and 31% of the males had received unwanted sexual attention at some time in their lives. The majority of these events took place before the respondents were 18 years of age. Females were victimized twice as frequently as males.

Of those persons who reported having been victimized, the age of the first unwanted sexual contact was recorded and the type of contact was noted. For persons who reported being victimized before age 13, the types of acts involving female victims were: offender exposure (41%), threatening (7%), touching (30%), and assault or attempt (22%). For males, the corresponding figures were: 37% (exposure), 6% (threat), 42% (touch), and 15% (assault or attempt). Of those sexual behaviors involving physical contact before age 16, 1 male reported being victimized for every 2.6
females. For males, 56% of this contact involved physical coercion and 6% threats; for females, 58% involved physical coercion and 3% threats. With respect to injury incurred during the first unwanted sexual contact, 4% of males and 20% of females reported physical injury and 7 and 24% of males and females reported emotional or psychological trauma. The finding that more than half of the sex offenders against children used coercion to achieve physical contact was also obtained by De Francis (1969), who also observed an inverse relation between the amount of force employed and the degree of the relationship between the offender and victim.

For victims younger than 15 years of age, where the offense involved physical contact, the distribution of offenders by their relationship to the victim was noted. Strangers were involved in only 18% of the cases. Friends and acquaintances made up 48% of the offenders. The remainder were incest (10%), other relatives and family (11%), guardians or persons in a position of trust (4%), and other known persons (9%). Over half of the assaults on children occurred in the victim's home.

Only 11% of the male victims and 24% of the female victims reported the first instance of unwanted sexual attention to another person. Victims were much more likely to report an incident the more serious it was.

It was of interest that there was no effect of respondent age on the reported frequencies of childhood victimization. This null finding supports the view that the frequency of sexual assaults did not change over time (it must be remembered, however, that because all of the respondents were over 18 years of age, the recent past was not covered).

The estimates that can be derived from this Gallup survey are the best that can be made at the present time. It is one of the few that have asked detailed questions pertaining to sexual assault against children. The aspects of the results that are most important are the frequency with which boys are molested, the large numbers of sexual assaults against children in general, and the sizeable minority of victims who report physical and emotional damage occasioned by the assaults.

Central to the present review is the question of differential incidence over offenders. It is very clear, on the basis of child molester self-reports, that at least some men commit very large numbers of offenses. Bernard (1975) gave a questionnaire to members of the Dutch "Working Group of Pedophilia." Of the 50 pedophiles polled, 96% preferred boys (this figure does not, of course, reflect the proportion of homosexual child molesters among child molesters in general). These respondents indicated that they were quite young when they became aware of their pedophilic tendencies (8% at less than 10 years of age) and had had their first contact with a child at a young age (6% at less than 10 years of age). The preferred partner age ranged broadly but peaked at ages 11 and 12. The number of children contacted by each pedophile ranged from less than 10 (30%) to 10-50 (28%), to 50-300 (14%); some respondents answered some (6%) or many (24%). Fifty-four percent reported that they had a regular child partner at the time they filled out the questionnaire. Many of the pedophiles had traveled to other countries for boy prostitutes with whom to perform anal intercourse; Mediterranean Europe and North Africa were favored locations. Most of the respondents used various forms of erotic material that related to their preferences (e.g., magazines, photos). Over half of the pedophiles had been sentenced for pedophilia and 38% had received psychiatric treatment for their behavior but, interestingly, 90% of this admittedly select sample had no wish to abandon their sexual behaviors with boys.

Additional self-report data have been collected by Abel, Mittelman, and Becker (in press); these reports, however, were obtained from outpatients voluntarily seeking treatment for their sexual problems in New York City and Memphis, Tennessee. An elaborate system for protecting subject confidentiality was in place. The 232 child molesters who were interviewed reported a mean of 238 attempts to molest children under 14 years of age and 167 completed molestations; they reported an average of 76 victims. The men who committed acts of child molestation also reported the commission of a variety of other sexual crimes: 30% had exposed themselves to children and adults, 17% had committed adult rape, 14% voyeurism, and 9% frottage. The sexual behaviors of 85% of the child molesters involved physical contact; usually fondling or oral sex. Most of these men started becoming aroused to children at young ages; over half of the homosexual and 30% of the heterosexual pedophiles reported such arousal before age 15. There was often a lengthy period before this inappropriate sexual arousal was acted upon. Over 60% of the child molesters received no psychiatric diagnosis and showed no signs of psychopathology (other than paraphilia,
a diagnostic term applied when an unusual act or image is required for sexual excitement). Most of the child molesters were primarily heterosexual in their orientation.

Both the Bernard and the Abel, Mittelman, and Becker samples were questioned under conditions that would guarantee anonymity to the respondents. The very high incidence rates which were obtained in these studies are undoubtedly due to this fact. Such high frequencies are occasionally reported by child molesters whom this author has interviewed in maximum security psychiatric institutions, but they are common neither in his experience nor in the literature more generally. Although the representativeness of the samples interviewed in these two studies may be questioned, it is clear that there are some child molesters who commit offenses very frequently. Even in prison settings under conditions of anonymity, child molesters (n = 54) report an average of 11 sexual offenses for which they were never charged (Groth, Longo, & McFadin, 1982). The modal age at first reported offense was 16 years.

As an aside, it is of interest to consider to which of the many possible populations these samples should be related: all men, all men who have been sexually aroused by children, all sex offenders, all men who have molested children, all men who have molested unrelated children, men who have coerced children into having sex, men who have been incarcerated for a sexual offense with a child, men who have committed more than one sexual offense involving a child under conditions of societal disapproval, and so on. The population that is selected says a great deal about how the problem is viewed.

In view of the methodological difficulties outlined earlier (see, Freund, Heasman, & Roper, 1982), it would be fruitless to attempt to provide accurate estimates of the incidence of sexual crimes against children, of the number of victims, or of the number of offenders. It is sufficient for our purposes to note that sexual crimes against children are common and that some offenders commit large numbers of such crimes.

**FOLLOW-UP STUDIES**

Much of what we know about child molesters comes from studies of known groups of offenders; these offenders are often institutionalized. The most important type of study that has been performed on these individuals concerns their post-release commission of new sexual offenses against children. These studies are important because they are directly related to issues of social policy, such as the need for and the efficacy of treatment interventions, and the adequacy of release decision-making. The studies reviewed in this section will be those that do not compare different treatment conditions and do not attempt to predict outcome from measures of therapeutic change. Studies that study child molesters primarily as part of larger groups of sexual offenders (e.g., Christiansen, Elers-Neilson, Le Maire, & Sturup, 1965) will not be reviewed.

In an early English study, Radzinowicz (1957) studied 1,985 sex offenders before the courts and their 1,994 victims. The offenders were followed up for a 4-year period subsequent to their conviction or release from prison. Sixty-nine percent of the victims were female. Of these, 25% were under 8 years of age and a further 44% were under 14 years of age. For the males, 20% were under 8 years of age and 53% were between 8 and 14 years of age. Eight-two percent of the victims of an indictable sex offense were under the age of 16. Of the offenders, 50% were convicted. Seventy percent of the offenders were strangers or casual acquaintances of the victims. Sixty percent of the offenses were classified as minor from the police reports. Of the 1,985 offenders, 83% had never been convicted for a sexual offense previously; however, about one-fourth admitted to having committed previous sexual offenses. The proportion of offenders who had had previous convictions was higher for men offending boys than girls.

Despite the short follow-up period from conviction or release from prison, 20% of the sample was convicted of a sexual offense. Of the heterosexual child molesters, 13% were reconvicted; the comparable figure for homosexual child molesters was 27%. New sexual offenses usually involved the same type of victim. Sexual recidivists were more likely to reoffend.

In a more recent English study, Gibbens, Soothill, and Way (1981) followed 48 men charged in 1951 with unlawful sexual intercourse with an unrelated female of under 13 years of age as well as a similar sample of 62 men charged in 1961. Sixty percent had had no previous serious offenses and 11% had been previously convicted for sex crimes. Many of the previous offenses involved property. In the 24-year follow-up period for the 1951 group, 46% were reconvicted and 19% were convicted for a new sexual offense. These calculations were adjusted for opportunity to reoffend.
In the 1961 group, the comparable figures for the 15-year follow-up were 35 and 5%. Gibbens et al. observed that these offenders continued to commit new sexual offenses for very long periods after their index offense and conclude that sex crimes against young children do not show the fast drop in frequency with age that is characteristic of property offenses. In a separate study, Gibbens, Soothill, and Way (1978) followed the criminal careers of men convicted of father–daughter incest; there was a very low rate of sexual recidivism among these men.

Fitch (1962) studied 139 men who were convicted of sex crimes against children and sent to a British prison. Of these, the index offense was homosexual for 45% of the sample and heterosexual for the remainder. Of those offenders who had committed more than one sexual offense, 82% had remained constant with respect to victim gender. The homosexual child molesters had committed more nonsexual and sexual offenses previously than had the heterosexual offenders. More important, homosexual offenders were twice as likely to be convicted of a new sexual offense upon their release from prison. Sexual reoffenders had committed more previous sexual offenses and had committed their first sexual offense at an earlier age than nonrecidivists.

Perhaps the best follow-up study has been conducted by Frisbie and Dondis (1965). They studied “sexual psychopaths” who had been treated in a maximum security psychiatric institution in California and discharged to the court as improved. Based upon the relation of the victim to the offender and the victim gender, the sample consisted of 1,035 heterosexual, 428 homosexual, and 49 bisexual child molesters. Of the heterosexual sample, there were 318 cases of father–daughter or father–stepdaughter incest. The victims in the incest cases tended to be older (8–17 years of age) than the unrelated victims who were usually under 11 years of age. The homosexual offenders were more frequently younger, better educated, single, and diagnosed as sociopathic than the heterosexual offenders.

The incest offenders had a cumulative 6-year recidivism rate of 10%, the heterosexual offenders against children less than 13 years of age had a recidivism rate of 22%, and the recidivism rate for homosexual child molesters was 35%. Most reoffenders maintained the gender of the victim involved in the index offense. The recidivism rate of the bisexual offenders was similar to that of the heterosexual offenders. Recidivists tended to be younger and were more frequently diagnosed as sociopathic.

In a sequel to the Frisbie and Dondis study, Frisbie (1969) conducted a followup of 887 men 18 years of age or older who had been convicted of a sexual offense involving bodily contact with a minor under 18 years of age; 75% of the offenders were heterosexual. An effort was made to interview offenders whose victims were less than 14 years of age and offenders who were already sexual recidivists. Of the 617 offenders who were released, 15% were convicted of a new sexual offense within 3.5 years. Frisbie concluded on the basis of the follow-up interviews that economic stress, overcrowding and lack of privacy, unsatisfactory familial relationships, difficulties in occupational or social situations, health problems, and aging were all unrelated to recidivism. Instead, the following variables were found to be important: alcohol abuse, unorthodox ethical values, problems in establishing meaningful relationships with adult females, and the desire for physically immature females as sexual objects.

Taken together, these data indicate that recidivism increases with the number of previous sexual offenses, the selection of male victims, and the selection of unrelated victims.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILD MOLESTERS**

This section concerns the issue of how and whether child molesters are different from other males. It should be clear from the material already reviewed, however, that the commission of an act of child molestation cannot, in itself, be used to infer much about the personal characteristics of the offender because the motivation of the behavior can be controlled by a variety of extrinsic factors. In the same way, we could not reliably deduce why the animals in the drinking experiment were drinking when we were not aware of the environmental contingencies (see Swanson, 1968). In this connection, the early literature exhibits an astonishing naiveté in postulating predictable character types primarily on the basis of offense characteristics (e.g., Kopp, 1962).

Conceptually, it is not clear — without some sort of articulated theory — from what sorts of persons child molesters should be expected to differ. This is the same issue of comparison-group choice that was raised in the section on incidence. Investigators have, in general, taken an atheoretical approach and looked for differences between in-
stitutionalized child molesters and other known groups, which they then try to interpret. Unfortunately, such differences that are found may be attributable more to the vagaries of criminal justice policy and admission procedures than to differences between offender types.

The study of institutionalized or other highly selected populations of child molesters is far from useless, however. The data are directly relevant to similar populations of offenders and are the first step toward program evaluation efforts within the institution itself. Moreover, if similar findings emerge over institutions and settings which vary widely in their characteristics, we can have some confidence that the differences are true of some larger population. Finally, we should expect that institutionalized samples will be biased in useful ways by differential recruitment of more serious offenders (e.g., those who cause physical damage) and more repetitive offenders (those who have more opportunities to be apprehended). In terms of interventions designed to lessen the frequencies of child molestation based on the alteration of offender variables, it is obviously the more serious and repetitive offenders in whom we should be most interested.

DESCRIPTIVE STUDIES

There are a number of studies that are primarily descriptions of various intact groups of child molesters. They primarily involve institutionalized samples of varying sizes and present demographic, diagnostic, and some offense description data. The results of these studies reflect in part the different admission and referral systems that determine the availability of the offender population. These papers are part of a larger body of literature in which sex offenders are not necessarily classified by offense type. Reports that describe child molesters as a separate entity include those by Earls, Bouchard, and Laberge (1984); Gebhard and Gagnon (1964); Henn, Herjanic, and Vanderpearl (1976); Law (1979); Mandel, Bittner, Webb, Collins, and Jarcho (1965); McGeorge (1964); Myers and Berah (1983); Revitch and Weiss (1962); Shoor, Speed, and Bartlet (1966); and Swanson (1968).

It would be pointless to compare and contrast the findings of all of these various studies; however, in order to give some flavor of the findings, the Earls, Bouchard, and Laberge (1984) investigation will be described in more detail because it is one of the few to perform some statistical analyses and interrater reliability checks on data coded from files. The sample was comprised of men incarcerated in Quebec federal penitentiaries, all of whom had sentences of over 2 years. Of 165 men, 112 had been sexually aggressive against adult women, 34 were child molesters (44% with male victims), and 19 were sexual murderers. In the context of the dangerousness of child molesters, it was of interest that the mean victim age for the sexual murderers was 16 years with 21% of the victims under 11 years of age. The victims of the child molesters were hospitalized at least one night in 5% of the cases, but there was mention of at least some injury in 32% the cases.

The child molesters, like the other offenders, came from multiproblem, low socio-economic status homes; had completed little formal schooling; and were often unemployed. They were much more likely to have been victims of sexual aggression themselves as children or adolescents (53%) than the other offenders; it was of interest that 63% of these childhood victimizations were perpetrated by nonfamily members. Eighty-two percent of the child molesters had had a previous conviction and 50% had had a previous conviction for a sex offense. Fewer of the child molesters had abused alcohol or drugs. The child molesters averaged 36 years of age at the time of the index offense, significantly older than the other offenders.

Turning to the offenses themselves, the child molestations were different from the other sexual offenses in that there were never accomplices involved, they were more frequently premeditated (91%), and seldom involved alcohol or drugs (26%). The victims (all under 14 years of age) averaged 11 years of age; of these, 38% were close relatives and 28% were strangers. Considering the index conviction, there were more victims involved in the child molestations (an average of 2.7) than in the other sex crimes.

Considered in the light of the victimization surveys, we can see that a sample of offenders sentenced to a penitentiary term of 2 years or more is not representative of child molesters in general, as child molestation is characterized by greater offense severity.

There is a large separate body of literature concerning father–daughter incest (e.g., Finkelhor, 1978; Frude, 1982; Meiselman, 1978; Russell, 1983; Vander Mey & Neff, 1982). Father–son incest appears to be a much rarer phenomenon (Dixon, Arnold, & Calestro, 1978; Langsley, Schwartz, & Fairbairn, 1968). Included in this
literature are victimization surveys, a large number of reviews that express a variety of very strong opinions, and some descriptive studies of incest offenders (e.g., Gebhard, Gagnon, Pomeroy, & Christenson, 1965). A description of 78 German incest cases presented by Maisch (1972) will be reviewed here because of the detailed manner in which his results were presented and integrated with the previous literature. Maisch begins with a review of the relevant European and American laws concerning incest and properly notes that, for a behavior that is supposedly subject to a universal taboo, there is tremendous variance in the amount of past and present legal tolerance for father-daughter incest. Turning to the description of the incest cases themselves, the principal difference between incest and other forms of child molestation was in the extended duration of the sexual relationship (see De Francis, 1969). It was rare for the sexual behaviors to occur only once or twice; indeed, the behavior often began when the female approached puberty and continued until she was 15 or 16 years of age. The nature of the behavior varied as a function of victim age; fondling at younger ages was followed by coitus as the daughter became older. Quite often, the father precipitated the severance of the relationship by his jealousy of the daughter’s contact with her male peers.

The incest offenders tended to come from lower socio-economic strata but typically did not live in overcrowded housing. Similarly, De Francis (1969) found in a comparison of incestuous and nonincestuous cases in New York City that the greater the degree of family disorganization and pathology, the greater the probability that the offender would be related to the victim. De Francis also observed that the victims in both incest and nonincest cases were poor; half of the families involved were receiving welfare. In a comparison of the literature on child familial physical abuse and familial sexual abuse, Avery-Clark, O’Neil, and Laws (1981) have noted that families which are involved in either form of abuse were subject to frequent crises and lived in chaotic circumstances (see Patterson, 1982). In the Maisch study, most of the offenders appeared to be normal in a psychiatric sense and had fewer previous criminal convictions than other groups of sex offenders. There were a number of factors that appeared to be predispositional on the basis of their frequency of occurrence; in order of descending importance, these were: prior family disorganization, disturbed marital relationship, disturbed marital sexual relationship, “psychopathological personality” of the offender, and heavy offender drinking. A large percentage of alcoholics among incest offenders has also been observed by Virkkunen (1974). In agreement with other surveys, Maisch found the recidivism rate of incest offenders to be low.

TYPOLGICAL SCHEMES

As pointed out earlier, typologies of child molesters can have immediate practical relevance if they are related to recidivism rates or to the selection of treatment methods or targets for specific intervention (Quinsey, 1977). To this can be added the possible heuristic use of such typological schemes in guiding subsequent research. Typological schemes, given real heterogeneity among child molesters, represent an initial step toward theoretical explanation. We have seen that a simple grouping of child molesters into heterosexual and homosexual and related and unrelated victim classes represents a large increase in our ability to predict recidivism. It is not difficult to see that such a classification scheme could relate directly to treatment interventions as well (if only in the sense that one is attempting to alter the selection of particular types of victims).

Other differences have been noted between heterosexual and homosexual child molesters as well. The average victim age of homosexual child molesters is older than that of heterosexual child molesters (Mohr, Turner, & Jerry, 1964). Heterosexual incest is much more frequently reported than homosexual incest (Dixon, Arnold, & Castero, 1978; Langsley, Schwartz, & Fairbairn, 1968; Quinsey, 1977). Fewer homosexual than heterosexual child molesters report drinking at the time of the offense and, although both groups of child molesters have extensive histories of alcohol abuse, there is a trend for more heterosexual child molesters to have such a history (Rada, 1976). Homosexual child molesters report different sexual histories (for example, earlier onset of puberty) than heterosexual child molesters (Nedoma, Mellan, & Pondelickova, 1971).

The proportion of child molesters who choose male victims is surprisingly high. Estimates of the proportion of men who prefer adult men to those who prefer adult women as sexual partners cluster around 5% (Freund, Heasman, Racansky, & Glancy, 1984). However, a number of reports that describe the proportions of heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual child molesters in a variety of settings indicate that homosexual child molesters
are at least one third of the total (Freund, Heasman, Racansky, & Glancy, 1984). A finding of this magnitude is probably not an artifact of differential offense frequency, and we are left to speculate as to why such a large percentage of child molesters are homosexual when such a small percentage of men who prefer adults are homosexual. Lest there be confusion, it must be pointed out that most homosexual are not child molesters.

A typology based on victim gender and relatedness represents the null hypothesis in that a more elaborate typology would have to do better with respect to treatment issues or prediction of recidivism. None of the more elaborate typologies which have been advanced so far meet these criteria.

Categorical schemes have involved offender age (Mohr, Turner, & Jerry, 1964; but see Wilson & Cox, 1983), adequacy of social skills (Cohen, Seghorn, & Calmas, 1969), or a combination of victim type and presumed etiology (Gebhard, Gagnon, Pomeroy, & Christenson, 1965; Groth, Hobson, & Gary, 1982; McCaghy, 1967; 1968). The Gebhard et al. scheme is typical of many and involves classifying offenders by victim age and relationship and by type of act (e.g., aggressive) and then within these categories into subcategories: pedophiles, sexually underdeveloped, amoral delinquents, situational cases, mental defectives, psychotics, drunks, and senile deteriorates. These typological schemes have not been empirically related to recidivism or treatment outcome.

Rather than present a detailed review of the typologies mentioned above or the many similar schemes that have been presented in the literature (e.g., Fitch, 1962; LaMontagne & Lacerte-LaMontagne, 1977; West, 1965), some general methodological problems will be described which will indicate why such efforts have not and will not prove useful. The interested reader can find a complete review of these typologies in Knight, Schneider, and Rosenberg (in press). The basic problem with most of these efforts is that interjudge reliability of the categorizations have not been assessed; we have no way of knowing whether independent observers would agree on the classification of a given offender. Many (but certainly not all) of the variables employed are highly inferential, for example, whether an offender is viewed as “situational.” Such a judgment often depends on an offender’s luck in not being caught more than once and on how convincing a storyteller he is. Because much offender verbal behavior in this situation is basically exculpatory, one has to be extremely skeptical. It is, of course, likely that a situational cause will be “found” when no other cause presents itself.

A further problem arises when the classification is dependent primarily on the offender’s history: For example, offenders are often classified as psychopathic or sociopathic. Such a classification can be made in a variety of ways but usually rests on the number of previous offenses and the absence of major mental illness. Investigators will then sometimes turn full-circle by demonstrating empirically that the sociopathic offenders have committed more previous offenses than nonsociopathic offenders (e.g., Virkkunen, 1976). Quelle surprise!

A somewhat more amusing example of a similar phenomenon was provided by an author (who shall remain anonymous) who succeeded in demonstrating that offenders who were judged to be “immature” were younger than those who were not. As an aside, and to further witness the abysmal weakness of much of this literature, “psychological immaturity” is often advanced as an explanatory principle for pedophilia in general, based upon the resemblance of the looking, exposing, and fondling behaviors often indulged in by child molesters to those exhibited by children. In view of what pedophiles say about themselves and their concerns (e.g., Bernard, 1975; Rossman, 1976), such behaviors are more parsimoniously viewed as the result of offenders’ desiring to avoid charges of rape, desiring not to hurt the victim, victim noncompliance, and the physical difficulty involved in penetrated small children. At the very least, one needs some corroborative data to support the conclusion that child molesters are immature.

Other problems in classification arise because of a lack of mutual exclusiveness among the categories; for example, “drunk” offenders could presumably overlap with every other category of offender. An overlapping categorical scheme (fuzzy sets) is workable but only with explicit decision rules. Finally, the coverage of these schemes has seldom been investigated and has never involved cross validation.

All of these difficulties stem from the conspicuously casual manner in which these schemes are derived. Basically, investigators gather some summary demographic statistics and some interview material and relate them in some intuitive fashion to offense descriptions. Although this is a sound strategy before one begins a research proj-
pect, it is not the desired end-product. As pointed out elsewhere (e.g., Quinsey, 1984a), the sensible approach involves theory-driven or empirical-clustering algorithms on large multivariate data sets. These clusters can be tested on or, indeed, are partially derived from recidivism data.

Recently, some investigators have begun to approach the taxonomical problem from a clustering perspective. Knight, Schneider, and Rosenberg (in press) subjected 33 variables gathered on 125 rapists and child molesters to factor analysis to obtain four factor scores (substance use, social competence, antisocial behavior, and offense impulsivity) that were used together with a sexualized aggression scale in a cluster analysis. These data, although preliminary, revealed interpretable subtypes. Additional similar work with larger samples of child molesters should bring order to the repeatedly observed heterogeneity of these men.

This section on typologies has implications for what follows. As noted above, offenders vary in some important ways according to the gender and relationship of their victims. Clinical impressions suggest that a variety of other differences exist among these men. With this thought in mind, it can be appreciated why attempts to differentiate child molesters from other sorts of persons have often not proved fruitful. Differences may not be found between groups of child molesters and other persons because there really are no differences or because the heterogeneous nature of the child molester group chosen for comparison masks differences which are in fact there.

PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS

Psychological tests are, in essence, highly structured interviews. As in less structured interviews, the perception of the interview situation by the interviewee is of the utmost importance. Often the testing or interviewing situation is perceived by a sex offender as one in which he must portray a particular image of himself. Sometimes this image is portrayed in terms of an account of the deviant activity. Accounts can have self-presentation functions even under conditions where the interviewer is not asking for an account. Even when the offender is not deliberately lying, the accounts that are provided are affected by a variety of factors in the interview or testing situation. McCaghy (1967, 1968), for example, has described how child molesters will attribute their offense to alcohol in order to disavow sexual deviance and how offenders will adopt the language of their therapists in order to secure their release. Taylor (1972) obtained 86 accounts offered by sex offenders for their crimes from a variety of sources and classified them into types. In terms of the decreasing degree of voluntary control implied by the accounts, they were: breakdown in mental functioning \((N = 41)\), inner impulse \((N = 12)\), defective social skills \((N = 12)\), victim implication \((N = 6)\), desire for special experiences \((N = 7)\), wish to frighten or hurt \((N = 3)\), and refusal to accept normative restraint \((N = 5)\). Which sort of explanation an offender proffers can have important consequences for him. Taylor found that magistrates were more likely to rate an account as highly believable, the less voluntary it was (importantly, however, the least voluntaristic accounts were both highly accepted and rejected as plausible explanations by the magistrates). When considering the literature on psychological testing as well as interview data on child molesters, the possible self-presentational strategies of the respondents, who are certainly in social predicaments, must constantly be borne in mind.

The literature on the psychological testing of child molesters has been reviewed several times previously (Langevin, 1983; Lester, 1975; Quinsey, 1977); it is reviewed here in some detail not because of the importance of the findings but because child molesters are so frequently assessed by means of psychological tests. This literature is rather poor scientifically (for example, there is the persistent problem of investigators using multiple univariate tests instead of multivariate techniques in studies employing tests with many subscales), although some of the more recent studies reflect increasing sophistication. One of the primary problems in this area is that investigators have not always appreciated the strategy that persons who have been charged with a sex offense against a child are most apt to employ; these persons are likely to attempt to appear contrite, compliant, and reformed. These attempts are likely to be more marked on the part of child molesters than other offenders because there is little in the way of subcultural support for such offenses available in the offender's immediate environment. Remarkably, this problem sometimes escapes the grasp of even very sophisticated behaviorally oriented scientists (e.g., Cliffe & Parry, 1980).

Occasionally, clinicians employ psychological tests, such as projectives, which are more or less opaque to the subject, to circumvent problems of dissimulation. Unfortunately, the very properties
that make these tests difficult for the subject to interpret render them difficult for anyone else to interpret as well. It would be expected that a subject would adopt a very guarded response style when responding to ambiguous stimuli under these conditions. This expectation has been confirmed by Stricker, who analyzed semantic differential ratings of Rorschach cards (Stricker, 1964) and the Blacky pictures (Stricker, 1967). More promising results, however, have been obtained by Schlesinger and Kutash (1981), who elicited interpretations of ambiguous pictures by asking sex offenders and drug abusers to describe the “crimes” involved. Subjects produced stories that were related to the types of crimes they had committed and went far beyond the information given. More work on this criminal fantasy technique might prove useful.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, the instrument most commonly used to assess child molesters is the MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory); it has been said that, in view of the proliferation of these investigations, every man, woman, and child on earth will have published an MMPI study by the year 2000. Early studies (e.g., Marsh, Hilliard, & Liechti, 1955) developed special scales to discriminate mixed populations of sex offenders from other groups of known composition (see Atwood & Howell, 1971). The first study to examine child molesters as a separate group was conducted by Toobert, Bartelme, and Jones (1958). They obtained MMPI data on 120 California prison inmates who had committed a sex offense against a child less than 12 years of age and on 160 inmates who had not committed a sex offense. The child molesters were significantly different from the prison controls and a sample of normal men from Minnesota on 27 items. Cross validation indicated that the 27-item scale differentiated a new sample of child molesters from a new sample of nonsex offender inmates but not from a group of neurotics. The sex offenders scored highly (in descending order) on the psychopathic deviate, depression, femininity, and paranoia scales. Toobert and his colleagues concluded that sex offenders who scored low on the scale were simply psychopathic, whereas those who scored highly were religious, sexually dissatisfied, interpersonally inadequate, experiencing guilt, and highly sensitive to others’ judgments. Such a grouping of traits is hardly unexpected, given the offenders’ circumstances, and a perusal of the items indicates very clearly that most involve the offenders’ arrested and incarcerated status. The items include: “I enjoy children” (scored false), “I have never indulged in any unusual sex practices” (scored false), “I believe that I am a condemned person” (scored true), and so on.

Subsequent research has confirmed the finding that child molesters typically peak on the psychopathic deviate scale (e.g., Panton, 1979); however, it has been found that the more violent offenders tend to score next highest on the schizophrenia MMPI scale (Armentrout & Hauer, 1978; Panton, 1978), as do recidivistic child molesters (McCready, 1975). Unfortunately, such a pattern of response is not only common among institutionalized child molesters but also among a wide variety of other offenders as well (Quinsey, Arnold, & Pruesse, 1980).

Langevin, Paitich, Freeman, Mann, and Handy (1978) reported data from the MMPI and 16 personality factor (PF) tests gathered from 27 father or stepfather incest offenders, 29 heterosexual child molesters, and 22 homosexual child molesters. Their results emerged from discriminant analyses of data from the aforementioned groups, a group of normal controls, and a variety of other groups of sexually anomalous men who were outpatients or incarcerated awaiting trial. The homosexual child molesters presented an emotionally disturbed pattern on the MMPI, scoring more highly than the controls on the depression, schizophrenia, psychopathic deviate, paranoia, and social introversion scales. On the 16 PF, they were more conservative and shrewd but less intuitive and group-dependent. The heterosexual child molesters exhibited a “tense” profile, scoring highly on the MMPI hypochondriasis scale and the tension scale of the 16 PF. They scored highly on 16 PF scales measuring reservedness and shyness but differed from the homosexual child molesters only in being less conservative. They also produced considerable evidence of emotional disturbance. The incest cases, in contrast, appeared more emotionally stable than the other groups but were the least assertive. None of the child molester groups showed high femininity scores.

Incarcerated child molesters have also been studied with the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (Fisher, 1969; Fisher & Howell, 1970) and semantic differential tests involving ratings of their real and ideal selves (Dingman, Frisbie, & Vanasek, 1968; Frisbie, Vanasek, & Dingman, 1967; Vanasek, Frisbie, & Dingman, 1968). In general, these studies have produced findings
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interpretable in terms of their respondents' living conditions and attempts to impress the examiners.

Howells (1979) compared the responses of 10 nonsex offenders and 10 heterosexual child molesters undergoing group therapy on the Repertory Grid test, which requires the subject to specify the manner in which one stimulus is different from two others. Subjects were given the concepts of males and females of varying ages to evaluate. In the case of the child molesters, the female children were described as victims. The constructs elicited in the two samples were similar but there were some differences; the child molesters tended to view both men and women in terms of dominance and submission and to be preoccupied with small body builds. They saw their victims as passive and nondominant. Howells recommends further investigation of child molesters' perceptions of children in the areas of low dominance, physical slimmness, and "innocence."

In summary, incarcerated child molesters produce test responses suggesting psychopathy (as do many other institutionalized samples), exhibit signs of emotional disturbance, respond in a very guarded style, and, in the Howells study, we see the first indication of a preference for immature body shapes. There are, in addition, some indications that heterosexual, homosexual, and incestuous child molesters respond differently on these tests. Overall, however, the yield from this line of investigation has been meager. Many of the differences that have been found are plausibly related not to enduring personality characteristics but to simple details of the offenders' histories (e.g., admitting having committed a sexual offense) or the response of the offender to arrest and surveillance. It is of interest that none of these studies attempted to predict recidivism or treatment outcome.

Fortunately, some of the findings produced by studies of incarcerated samples have also been obtained in a study of 77 members of an English pedophile self-help club (Wilson & Cox, 1983). Although this sample is clearly biased, it is at least biased in a different manner than the studies reported on above. About half of the club members agreed to take the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire and another specially constructed questionnaire. In agreement with the picture obtained in other studies, these child molesters (most of whom were interested in boys) presented themselves as introverted, shy, sensitive, lonely, depressed, and humorless. They did not, however, report guilt, as has been observed in other studies.

CLINICAL ASSESSMENT

Psychological tests are often used in broader clinical assessments of child molesters that are performed for various purposes, such as sentencing, deciding on the appropriateness or type of treatment, and release decisions. Thus, the questions that are at issue can relate to the presence of a specifiable mental illness, the responsiveness of an offender to any treatment or a particular treatment, and the dangerousness of the offender. The issue of diagnosis and the presence of a particular mental illness is no different with child molesters than with any other persons and will not be commented on further here; suffice it to say, as mentioned earlier, that a minority of child molesters have major mental illnesses and most are diagnosed as personality disordered. The issue of how clinicians decide on the treatability of child molesters has not received systematic study, but there is reason to believe, from studies of the assessment of treatability of heterogeneous groups of offenders, that clinicians would, in general, be pessimistic as to outcome and exhibit a high degree of disagreement among themselves with respect to offender treatability and to the applicability of particular treatment modalities (Quinsey & Maguire, 1983). More research is required on this point.

The assessment of dangerousness of child molesters has received some study. Dix (1975) attended ward conferences in a maximum security psychiatric institution in which recommendations were made about the continuing dangerousness of sex offenders (most of whom were child molesters). Dix's impression was that eight variables were related to a judgment of lessened dangerousness: verbalized acceptance of guilt and personal responsibility, development of an ability to articulate resolution of stress-producing situations, no report of deviant sexual fantasies, responsible behavior, having served "long enough" for the particular crime, achievement of maximum benefit from hospitalization, favorable changes in community circumstance, and the potential seriousness of a new offense should one be committed. Dix thought that very little time was spent in specifically addressing how dangerous the patients were; the probability of an offender getting in trouble again was never discussed with any precision.

Unfortunately, when clinicians are asked to specify the probability of a child molester reoffending upon release, the data are not encour-
aging. Quinsey and Ambtman (1979) had four experienced forensic psychiatrists and nine high school teachers study the psychiatric assessments (including relevant data from the patients' stay in a maximum security psychiatric institution), histories, and offense descriptions of 9 child molesters, 10 property offenders, and 11 serious offenders against adults. The three types of patient data were presented both separately and together on separate occasions to each judge. Ratings were made of the likelihood of a property offense, likelihood of an assaultive offense, and the seriousness of an assault, should one occur. Raters also judged whether a patient should be released from maximum security institutions. Agreement among judges within occupational categories was very low both in the ratings and in the release decisions, but the teachers and psychiatrists made, on average, similar judgments. Ratings of the combined data were very well predicted from a linear combination of the three data types. Psychiatric and psychological assessment data and the patients' progress in the hospital made little contribution to the appraisal of the overall file. These data indicate that clinical assessments of dangerousness in these cases are determined primarily by offense severity and secondarily by patient history and are of very low reliability.

It may be comforting, in view of these data, to learn that processing decisions in the criminal justice system are quite often affected only trivially by clinical judgments. Konecni and Ebbesen (1984) studied the processing of mentally disordered offenders in California. Persons who engaged in abnormal sexual activities or offenses were interviewed by three court-appointed psychiatrists, who filed a presentence report containing a diagnosis and a classification of "mentally disordered sex offender" or "not a mentally disordered sex offender." In brief, it was found that if an offender had committed a previous sexual offense, he was diagnosed as a sexual deviant and classified as a mentally disordered sex offender. The judge almost invariably followed the psychiatrists' recommendations. In one sense, therefore, the clinical appraisal had an effect on the decision. When the basis of the appraisal is considered, however, it is apparent that it was entirely superfluous.

SEXUAL AGE PREFERENCES

Because the behaviors under discussion are sexual in nature, sexual preferences for children would be expected to be of great significance. We would expect, for example, that persons who choose a particular type of partner exclusively would have an erotic preference for that type of person. Given that one cannot always obtain what or whom one wants, an even clearer indication of preference is the imagining of certain sorts of persons during sexual or masturbatory fantasies. Of course, people would be expected to vary in the narrowness of their preferred categories of imaginary partners, and some persons might prefer several categories of partners. It would be better, therefore, to speak of relative erotic or sexual preference. For example, men who repeatedly seek sexual contact with young boys would be expected to report sexual fantasies involving exactly those sorts of activities and partners and to have fantasies involving other sorts of persons less frequently, in addition to finding them less arousing. Under conditions of anonymity or trust, child molesters often do report sexual fantasy material that is in accord with their histories of victim choices.

It would not be difficult to imagine, however, that on occasion, partners would be selected from a nonpreferred category because of special circumstance, such as the unavailability of persons with the preferred attributes. Such a phenomenon is common in prison, for example, where ordinarily heterosexual men become involved in homosexual relationships. This observation is not novel; many years ago, the noun "bugger" was defined as a term of endearment used among sailors.

Although the importance of sexual attractiveness might seem obvious on the basis of common observation, and perhaps even tautological, the idea that child molesters prefer sexual interactions with children because they find them sexually appealing has not won universal acceptance. The very fact that some child molesters exclusively choose boys and others girls would appear to be difficult to explain without invoking the concept of sexual preference. These observations notwithstanding, it has been argued that child molestation is not a sexual act. Groth, Hobson, and Gary (1982) assert, for example, that

as with other forms of sexual assault (rape, indecent exposure, obscene telephone calling, and the like), sexual desire or passion does not appear to be the primary determinant of such behavior. Child molestation is the sexual expression of non-sexual needs and unresolved life issues. Pedophilia goes beyond sexual need and is, ultimately, a pseudo-sexual act. (p. 137)
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Of course, as the animal experiment described at the beginning of this paper illustrates, consummatory behavior can be motivated by a number of contingencies simultaneously. It is not clear, however, whether multiple incentives would qualify a sexual act to be designated as pseudosexual. Operationally, the question becomes one of whether child molesters (particularly repetitive child molesters) are differentially sexually aroused by prepubertal children. The answer to this question, as will be seen below, is unequivocally "yes."

The scientific work on sexual preference measurement was begun by Dr. Kurt Freund. Over the course of many years, Freund developed and validated a means of measuring erotic preference among child molesters. His early work demonstrated that child molesters could be discriminated from nonchild molesters on the basis of a physiological measure of sexual arousal (Freund, 1965). Freund developed a means of measuring penis volume changes that occurred in response to slides of persons varying in age and sex. The rationale for the use of this measure was that changes in the state of arousal should be reflected most clearly in the relevant consummatory organ (Freund, 1977). Subsequent research using the phallometric method has employed circumferential gauges as well as volumetric devices. Methodological reviews can be found in a number of sources (Earls, 1984; Earls & Marshall, 1983; Freund, 1981; Laws & Osborne, 1983).

In an important study of sexual preference, Freund (1967a, 1967b) presented slides of males and females of varying ages to 35 heterosexuals, 25 homosexuals who preferred adult males (androphiles), 27 heterosexual child molesters, 23 homosexuals who preferred 13-17-year-olds, and 20 homosexual child molesters. As has been found by others, the homosexual child molesters' average victim age was older than the heterosexual child molesters' average victim age (11 years of age versus 8 years of age). Group assignment was based on previous choice of sexual partners because quite a number of these men claimed to prefer adult females as sexual partners. Each of the groups showed the largest erectile responses to the category of persons who matched their history of victim/partner choice. The heterosexual men responded less as the female stimuli decreased in age, although all of the female stimuli elicited a response; there was little and no differential response to the male series. Among the other subjects, however, the amount of sexual arousal elicited by persons of the nonpreferred gender varied over age in the same relative order as the amount of response elicited by the preferred gender. Thus, for example, among female stimuli, androphiles showed the largest response to slides of adult women, and homosexual child molesters responded most to slides of female children. This finding suggests that body size and body shape as it varies over age is a critical determinant of sexual attractiveness.

Phallometric investigations have found that the age preferences for stimulus persons of the preferred gender are nearly identical for heterosexual and homosexual men who prefer adult partners (Freund, Langevin, Cibiri, & Zajac, 1973). In addition, it has been shown that men who report bisexual preferences for adults are indistinguishable on phallometric measures from homosexual men (Freund, Scher, Chan, & Ben-Aron, 1982). Bisexual preferences have been found in phallometric investigation, however, among groups of heterosexual and homosexual child molesters defined by victim choice (Freund & Langevin, 1976; Freund et al., 1982).

The finding that child molesters can be discriminated from nonchild molesters on the basis of their penile responses to slides of persons varying in age and gender has been replicated. Quinsey, Steinman, Bergersen, and Holmes (1975) compared 20 child molesters and 10 nonsex offender patients from a maximum security psychiatric institution with 11 heterosexual noninstitutionalized control subjects. Heterosexual child molesters responded most to slides of female children, homosexual child molesters most to slides of male children, and bisexual child molesters most to slides of little girls. The child molesters were discriminable from the groups of nonsex offenders (who did not differ from each other) on the basis of penile tumescence measurements but not on the basis of their rankings of the slides in terms of sexual attractiveness.

Incestuous child molesters appear less frequently to have inappropriate sexual age preferences. Quinsey, Chaplin, and Carrigan (1979) matched incestuous child molesters with child molesters who had selected unrelated victims on the basis of victim age and gender and the offender's age at the time of testing. One group of incestuous offenders had victimized either daughters or stepdaughters and another had chosen other relatives as victims. Incestuous subjects with daughter or stepdaughter victims showed more appropriate age preferences than their matched controls, but there was no significant differences
injury is more easily measured than psychic trauma and, in addition, is of great importance in its own right.

A persistent problem in the literature is the confusion of the probability with which a child molester will commit a future offense and the probability with which he will commit a future violent offense involving injury (Quinsey, 1977). The respective likelihoods of these two phenomena are vastly different.

Turning first to child murder, the statistics make it abundantly clear that sexual homicides involving children are extremely rare. Compared to automobile accidents, the most common cause of violent death among children, death by sexual homicide is a statistical oddity. Even among child murders, sexual murders are very rare. Myers' (1967) 25-year survey of prepubescent homicides in Detroit found that 3 out of 83 victims had been killed in a sexual assault. Most of the murders were intrafamilial; mothers were the assailants in 43% of the cases. In New York City, Kaplun and Reich (1976) found similarly that the mother was the most frequent assailant in child homicide. Of the 112 victims killed between 1968 and 1969, 2% were killed as part of a sexual assault. Both of these studies linked child homicide to ongoing child abuse, poverty, and chaotic living conditions.

We have seen from the survey literature that a relatively small proportion of persons report having been injured during a sexual assault and that most of these injuries are minor. In fact, Gebhard, Gagnon, Pomeroy, and Christenson (1965) reported that none of the 18,000 persons interviewed by the Kinsey group claimed to have been sadistically victimized as a child.

These data, nevertheless, do indicate that the physical injury of children as a result of sexual assault should be regarded as a significant problem. Small proportions of samples become very large absolute numbers when extrapolated to entire populations. When the very high incidence of coercion and threat in sexual assaults on children are considered (Committee on Sexual Offences, 1984a, 1984b; De Francisco, 1969), the magnitude of the problem increases considerably.

In summary, a small proportion of child molesters commit sexual acts causing injury and a small proportion of children are physically injured by child molesters. However, the absolute numbers of injuries, particularly minor injuries, and the number of assaults involving coercion and threat is substantial.

In view of the public concern about dangerous child molesters, the amount of research that has been done on them is astonishingly slight. Much of what has been done is at the anecdotal and case report level (see Quinsey, 1977, for a review of this literature). We have already seen in the section on clinical assessment that clinicians are not particularly good at predicting dangerousness among child molesters.

Recently, however, there has been a small amount of work in this area. Most of this research, of course, concerns child molesters who have been institutionalized. Such groups of institutionalized men are likely to be differentially comprised of dangerous offenders for several reasons. Men who have inflicted injury on their victims are more likely to have the crime reported, more likely to be charged, more likely to be prosecuted with vigor, and more likely to receive long sentences or other incapacitating dispositions. A cross section of institutionalized men will contain a differentially large proportion of serious offenders simply on the basis of sentence length alone. In addition, child molesters who have high offense densities will be differentially represented because of their greater opportunity to be arrested.

We must concern ourselves with two questions in connection with dangerousness. First, are some child molesters more dangerous than others or are physically injurious sexual acts distributed at random over offenders and occasions? Second, if some offenders are more likely than others to commit physically injurious acts, how can we identify who they are? These empirical questions have to be addressed through systematic follow-up or longitudinal research. The difficulties in the prediction of dangerous behavior are well known and include the difficulty in predicting a phenomenon having a low base rate of occurrence (e.g., see Quinsey, 1984b). There are situations, however, particularly with offenders confined in situations where there is considerable discretion concerning release, in which the base rate might increase for persons who have been repeatedly passed over or turned down (Quinsey, 1980). Because of the low base rate of physically injurious behaviors among child molesters, follow-up studies would have to employ enormously large samples in order to identify predictive variables or to select a sample with a high base rate on the basis of what is already known. In any event, the type of large-scale research with long follow-up periods, which would be necessary to address these issues, has not been accomplished (Quinsey, 1977). At present, the best that can be done is to examine postdictive studies, that is, studies that attempt to discriminate among child molesters who are known
among the other groups. This finding makes sense because it would be expected that men would shift to their next preferred category of person when there was difficulty in obtaining a person from their preferred partner category; thus in disturbed marriages, some men might be expected to shift their sexual attentions to their pubescent daughters because men prefer pubescent girls next to adult females (Freund, McKnight, Langevin, & Cibiri, 1972). This “surrogate hypothesis” of incest fits in with the low recidivism of incest cases, the differential involvement of pubescent female victims, the frequent prior marital unhappiness observed in incestuous families, and the commonly observed disturbances of the father’s sexual relations with his wife together with opportunities for sex with his daughter (Maisch, 1972). This hypothesis is not inconsistent with data indicating that some incestuous fathers have inappropriate sexual preferences (Abel, Becker, Murphy, & Flanagan, 1981); obviously, some child molesters have children. It would be expected, however, that incestuous men with inappropriate sexual age preferences would be more likely to victimize their children at earlier ages, sometimes choose their sons, and to molest children who are not related to them as well.

As with other measures applied to child molesters, the possibility of faking must be considered in interpreting penile response data. Freund, Chan, and Coulthard (1979) assessed a large group of men who had a history of child molestation. In addition to replicating the finding that most men with a repetitive history of such offenses exhibit inappropriate sexual preferences, they found that men who admitted their preference for children were more likely to exhibit such a preference phallometrically. That result was likely due to faking instead of a real preference for adults was demonstrated by an increase in the proportion of “correct diagnoses” when the testing procedure was altered with the addition of a priming technique. The priming technique involved the presentation of a stimulus which the person claimed to prefer prior to the presentation of the target stimulus (a stimulus person from the category which the person is suspected of preferring on the basis of his history of victim choice).

Freund has concluded on the basis of this and his earlier studies (Freund, 1971, 1976, 1977, 1981) that several procedural issues are important in dealing with faking. First, the presentation of stimuli should be brief, unpredictable, and impressive. Second, only “admitters” should be used for theoretical work on the structure of sexual preferences. Third, the measurement of change in a therapeutic situation is extremely problematic because subjects gain experience in the measurement situation in a setting with very strong demand characteristics. Fourth, more work needs to be done on the prevention of faking using techniques such as priming.

Other investigators have shown that some, but by no means all, men can voluntarily influence their penile responses both by suppression or inhibition and by facilitation or production in accord with instructions (Henson & Rubin, 1971; Laws & Holmen, 1978; Laws & Rubin, 1969; Quinsey & Bergersen, 1976; Quinsey & Carrigan, 1978; Rosen, Shapiro, & Schwartz, 1975). The implications of these findings are clear. The measurement of sexual arousal by penile response is, at present, the best technology available for the investigation of age preferences. This technology, however, cannot be applied blindly because the testing situation is psychologically complex. Unfortunately, a test result indicating inappropriate preferences is more easily interpretable than one which indicates appropriate preferences because in most situations offenders claim nondeviance; test results, therefore, often indicate deviance or are difficult to interpret. Because these measures are the best available, they are becoming more commonly used; this raises the disturbing probability that strategies for self-presentation in phalometric testing situations will become part of the institutional offender culture. The irony of all this is the greater the weight assigned to these measures by persons who decide on the disposition of offenders, the less will be such measures’ validity.

**DANGEROUSNESS OF CHILD MOLESTERS**

The issue of the dangerousness of child molesters is perhaps the most confused in the literature. In the present discussion the term “dangerousness” will designate the probability with which a person can be expected to commit an act that physically damages a child. Thus, “dangerousness” is a prediction of the probability of future behavior and a “dangerous person” is one who is expected to inflict future physical injury when unconstrained. In this scheme, the most dangerous child molester would be a person who is expected to kill a child. None of this is meant to deny the psychological suffering which can be inflicted on victims; the restriction on the concept of dangerousness is made to impose some order on the literature by means of an unambiguous definition. Physical
to have committed physically injurious acts from those who are not.

Even if such a discrimination could be achieved and be shown subsequently to have predictive validity, our problems would not necessarily be over. As the section on follow-up studies and recidivism has demonstrated, most of the variables that are known to be related to postrelease offenses relate to the offender's history of offending and, therefore, cannot change. From this perspective, we know all that we will ever know about an offender's dangerousness the moment that he commits his offense (Quinsey, 1977). What is required to circumvent this problem is the identification of groups of offenders with high base rates using static historical variables and the further identification of dynamic variables which can reflect lesserened dangerousness within this group as a result of some intervention.

There are a variety of ways in which injury to a child could arise in the commission of a sexual assault. Because child molesters frequently resort to threats and physical force to effect sexual contact, injury could result from the child's struggle or escalation could ensue if the child refused to be intimidated. Injury could also occur from the type of sexual act employed, for example, intercourse with very young children. Child molesters might also attempt to eliminate the witness to the sexual assault in panic or as a result of premeditation. Finally, some child molesters might derive sexual pleasure from the infliction of pain, degradation, and fear. Injuries to victims that occur as a result of physical intimidation and penile penetration are described more frequently in the criminal histories of institutionalized child molesters than has been assumed (Marshall & Christie, 1981).

It has also been found that some child molesters are differentially sexually aroused by descriptions of sexual acts with children that involve force or sadism. Marshall and Christie (1981) present some data for individual child molesters that demonstrate such arousal. Abel, Becker, Murphy, and Flanagan (1981) have found, with a small sample of child molesters who were treated as outpatients, that the greater the amount of sexual arousal (measured phallometrically) to audiotaped descriptions of coercive sex with children (as opposed to "consenting" sex with children), the more violent the child molester's previous offenses against children. Avery-Clark and Laws (1984) have replicated and extended this basic finding. They studied 15 institutionalized child molesters judged to be quite dangerous on the basis of their offense descriptions together with 16 who were judged to be less dangerous. Elements of the offense leading to the more dangerous categorization were: the use of more force than required to obtain victim compliance, the use of aggressive behaviors, and unresponsiveness to victim expressions of discomfort or pain. The stimuli were audiotaped descriptions of interactions between a man and a child (male or female depending on the history of the offender), which varied according to the type of sexual activity and the amount of force described. The more dangerous child molesters did not differ from the less dangerous in their penile responses to descriptions of consenting fondling and intercourse or nonconsenting intercourse but did show more arousal to the stories involving aggressive sex and assault. These data clearly indicate that some child molesters have sadistic sexual preferences and that these preferences are related to the commission of more injurious sexual assaults against children.

A similar conclusion has been reached in the study of offenders against adult women (Quinsey, 1984a). In cases of extremely violent rape against women, sadistic fantasies are known to be very important. MacCulloch, Snowden, Wood, and Mills (1983) have found among highly violent institutionalized sex offenders that most not only fantasized about sadistic sexual activities before the index offense but that most had actually carried out behavioral rehearsals before the violent act itself.

The relevance of sadistic fantasies in the prediction of dangerousness is obvious. In rare and extreme cases these fantasies relate to sexual murder. Very little research, particularly follow-up research (for obvious reasons), has been conducted on child molesters with histories of sadistic violent behaviors resulting in victim death. What little is known from clinical experience suggests that once these fantasies are established, they do not dissipate with time (e.g., Freund, 1976).

**TREATMENT OF CHILD MOLESTERS**

Because of our incomplete knowledge concerning the etiology of child molesting and the historically nonempirical approach to intervention, it is perhaps not surprising that the treatment of such offenders has been marked by confusion and failure. The early treatment literature consists almost completely of case reports, vague descriptions of group therapy, and assertions of treatment success without documentation (Quinsey, 1977). In many jurisdictions, special legislation has been implemented, which provides for the indeterminate
detainment of dangerous child molesters. These efforts have either failed or remain controversial; sometimes the wrong sorts of individuals have been admitted, and often no one knows what to do with the offenders once they are incarcerated (Greenland, 1977, 1984; Meeks, 1963). Under the best of circumstances, admission, treatment, and release decisions are extremely difficult (Kozol, Cohen, & Carofalo, 1966).

There are, however, signs that the situation is improving rapidly (Crawford, 1981). The more recent literature on the treatment of child molesters is more empirical in nature, much more humble in its claims, and attempts to tailor the treatments to theoretically relevant aspects of the offenders’ behaviors. The number of studies, reviews, and investigators have also increased, leading to the possibility of replication, joint follow-up efforts, and the comparison of different treatment techniques—all of which are necessary for the accumulation of clinical knowledge. Doubtless, this new activity will lead to disappointment and frustration as well as to new leads. However, given the variety of treatments that have been used for sex offenders, it is almost as important to demonstrate conclusively that something does not work as it is to demonstrate efficacy.

Intervention to eliminate child molestation can take a variety of forms. There are preventative measures that focus on limiting opportunities or on teaching children resistance and/or avoidance strategies (e.g., Brassard, Tyler, & Kehle, 1983; Poche, Brouwer, & Swearingen, 1981). These approaches, although important, will not be considered further here because they are outside the purview of a study concerned with offenders.

Traditionally, the state has relied on the incapacitation, deterrence, and punishment provided by incarceration. The incarceration of child molesters has never been formally evaluated as an intervention technique by being compared to some other forms of intervention, although the conviction rates for this type of offense do not encourage optimism. It seems clear, however, that incarceration will continue to be used for the foreseeable future because of societal reactions to these offenses and because of the undeniable incapacitation of aggressive offenders that confinement provides.

Efforts to modify child molesters themselves have focused on a number of variables either singly or in combination. The variables chosen for intervention are those conditions that clinicians judge to be either etiologically relevant or necessary for the commission of the offense for child molesters in general or for specific offenders. Efforts have been made to teach offenders self-control through guilt induction, empathy training, the acceptance of personal responsibility (e.g., Groth, 1983; Longo, 1983), and specific strategies for the avoidance of high risk situations (e.g., Pithers, Marques, Gibat, & Marlett, 1983). Disinhibitory factors, such as alcohol abuse and high stress, have also been addressed. In cases of incestuous offenders, curtailment of opportunity through removal of the offender from the home is a technique used frequently (Finkellhor, 1983), as is marital and family therapy (Giarretto, 1976). Values and beliefs that facilitate child molesting have been treated through sex education and direct confrontation of the validity of these beliefs (Abel, Mittelman, & Becker, in press).

The sexual nature of these acts is also reflected in treatment approaches. Difficulties in obtaining gratification from adult partners have been approached through sex education, social skills training, and treatment for sexual dysfunction. Sexual preferences for children have been targeted by attempts to make children less attractive as sexual objects through the association of child molesting with aversive consequences (aversive therapy), as well as other techniques. Attempts have also been made to eliminate sexual arousal, which is a necessary condition for sexual performance, by alterations of the hormone system through castration or medication (Berlin, 1983). Drugs to reduce overall sexual arousal have been used as temporary expedients (while other treatments are being applied) or as long-term treatments in themselves. There have been some reports of success with these treatments but long-term follow-ups of treated child molesters are seldom reported, and treatment dropouts are a problem.

Most of the recent programs that have received evaluative attention are comprised of several modules which are offered to offenders on the basis of their individual needs. These modules commonly include: sex education (with an emphasis on values), social skills training, a program for the elimination of inappropriate sexual arousal (age preferences or sadistic sexual interests), and training in self-control techniques. Descriptions of these types of programs can be found in several sources (e.g., Abel, Becker, & Skinner, in press; Abel, Rouleau, & Cunningham-Rathner, 1984; Marshall, Earls, Segal, & Darke, 1983; Quinsey, Chaplin, Maguire, & Ufold, in press).

Two kinds of outcome data are relevant to the evaluation of these programs: the achievement of proximate goals and the achievement of ultimate
or distal goals. With respect to proximate goals, an effort is made to determine whether offenders change on variables that the intervention targets. The evaluative data on this point have been very positive. Whitman and Quinsey (1981) demonstrated that child molesters can be taught to interact more skillfully with adult females with a brief heterosocial skill-training intervention involving modeling, coaching, and videotaped feedback; similarly, sex offenders very readily acquired sexual knowledge from a sex education course offered in a lecture and group-discussion format. With respect to inappropriate sexual age preferences, aversion therapy has been shown to make significant changes in the relative arousal elicited by adult and child slides (Quinsey, Chaplin, & Carrigan, 1980). This latter finding is in agreement with a substantial literature (Quinsey & Marshall, 1983).

Before turning to the literature on outcome, some problems in this literature should be addressed. The short-term changes produced by these programs are quite impressive, as we have seen; in addition, they appear to be specific to the type of program that has been implemented. There are, however, variations in the efficacy of these treatments—particularly in the modification of deviant sexual arousal—which are not at all well understood (Quinsey & Marshall, 1983). In addition, the theoretical interpretation of changes in penile responses to the stimuli used in treatment is moot. Do these changes reflect the offender’s implementation of a strategy to control his sexual arousal, which we hope will generalize to nonlaboratory situations, or do they reflect a fundamental realignment of sexual preference structure? If the former, then the only difference between successful training and faking is in our opinion as to the offender’s attributions about the nature of the strategy and its generalizability.

Turning to outcome data, Kelly (1982) reviewed 32 behaviorally oriented treatment studies of which 26 reported data from follow-up periods ranging from 2 weeks to 6.5 years. A total of 176 child molesters were treated in this series. Nearly 90% of these treatment efforts attempted to decrease urges to molest children (mostly through some variant of aversion therapy), and half tried to increase sexual behaviors directed toward adults. Most of the studies targeted more than one behavior. All of the studies reported at least some success; in particular, there was a reported reduction (as indexed by various measures) in urges to molest children in 95 of the 121 offenders for whom this was attempted.

There have been a number of recent studies that have presented follow-up data on child molesters as a separate group. Maletzky (1980) treated 38 child molesters with assisted covert sensitization. This procedure is a form of aversion therapy that involves pairing thoughts of child molestation with aversive imagery (covert sensitization) and assisting this procedure with the pairing of aversive odors with thoughts of child molestation (olfactory aversion therapy). Twenty-four weekly sessions were given, followed by 12 booster sessions over the next 3 years. Outcome data included police reports, client self-reports of fantasies and behavior, and penile plethysmography. Nearly 90% of the child molesters achieved a 75% reduction in overt and covert pedophilic behaviors and maintained this over a 30-month follow-up. No difference in outcome was obtained between self- and court referrals.

One of the important factors responsible for Maletzky’s encouraging results may be the provision of continued follow-up and treatment. Quinsey, Chaplin, & Carrigan (1980) found that, among subjects given aversion therapy, posttreatment sexual preference for children was related to subsequent recidivism over an average 29-month follow-up period. However, this relationship was lost with a longer follow-up period (Quinsey & Marshall, 1983). Penile circumference assessment data of two subjects who had recidivated indicated that their pretreatment sexual arousal pattern had returned. None of the subjects in these studies had received behavioral treatment subsequent to their release from maximum security institutions.

Abel, Rouleau, and Cunningham-Rathner (1984) have reported preliminary outcome data on an outpatient treatment program that included social skills training, confrontation of deviant beliefs concerning sexual misbehaviors, and methods to reduce deviant sexual arousal. Reduction of deviant arousal was accomplished with covert sensitization and satiation (the latter is a procedure involving the extensive rehearsal of deviant fantasies in a nonsexually aroused state). Of a mixed group of self-referred sex offenders, 89% of 44 offenders who were contacted at 6 months and 79% of 19 offenders who were contacted at 12 months reported, under confidential conditions, no further deviant activity. Incest offenders and heterosexual child molesters recidivated very seldom; recidivism, when it did occur, was primarily among homosexual child molesters.

Davidson (1984) evaluated a behavioral program involving the modification of deviant
arousal patterns, group psychotherapy, and social skills training, which was conducted in a maximum security penitentiary. Thirty-six treated men whose victims were under 12 years of age were matched on victim age, gender, and relationship with 36 men who had been released from prison before the treatment program was established. Over a follow-up period with a maximum of 60 months, the treated group averaged .0124 convictions per man-year at risk, whereas the untreated group averaged .0562 convictions—a clinically and statistically significant difference.

Taken as a whole, these treatment studies provide grounds for cautious optimism. Practically, they suggest that brief, focused treatments can be effective, particularly when combined with continuing community intervention. Thus, for child molesters who have high densities of offending, such interventions appear cost-effective and socially beneficial. Theoretically, these studies support the idea that inappropriate sexual arousal is a central etiological element in sexual behaviors directed toward children.

This area of investigation now requires some comparisons of different treatment techniques so that a better theoretical understanding of the therapeutic process and critical therapeutic elements can guide the improvement of future treatment methods.

THEORIES OF CHILD MOLESTATION

A complete and satisfactory theory of child molestation is, of course, beyond our grasp at present because of limitations in our factual knowledge. We can see, however, from the material that has been reviewed thus far, the general form such a theory might take and some important observations that a theory must explain. This section will attempt to bring together the principal observations and discuss their implications for an etiological theory. No attempt will be made to review the very limited and often fanciful theoretical statements that have been made in the literature (the interested reader is referred to Howells, 1981).

In order to facilitate the discussion that follows, a brief recapitulation of the major findings in the literature is in order. Child molestation has been observed in a wide variety of temporal and cultural contexts. Where it is common, it is accompanied by cultural beliefs that support and structure its practice. It is important to note, however, that child molestation has persisted in societies which condemn and punish it severely. In contemporary Western societies, child molestation is a common occurrence. Physical coercion and threat are often involved in these offenses, but serious physical injury to children occurs in but a very small percentage of offenses. Child molesters who are or have been incarcerated, however, are much more likely to have injured their victims. Some child molesters contact many victims over long periods of time but are seldom arrested. Homosexual child molesters prefer older victims, are less likely to be incestuous, and have higher sexual recidivism rates than heterosexual child molesters. Incestuous offenses are more often repeated over long periods of time but incest offenders have lower recidivism rates than other child molesters. Psychological test data indicate that child molesters score highly on psychopathy and tend to be shy individuals. Clinicians show poor agreement about the dangerousness of child molesters. Although treatment approaches for child molesters must be considered experimental, behavioral methods appear promising.

The principal difference between child molesters and other people is that child molesters are more sexually responsive to children. Most men are, however, to a lesser extent, responsive to younger females as well, such that they exhibit an age preference gradient. We might infer, therefore, that children are chosen because they are either preferred as sexual partners or are surrogates or second choices. We would expect phallometric testing to indicate inappropriate preferences whenever a person reports being attracted to children, exclusively chooses children as sexual partners, and goes to great lengths to contact children sexually. Inappropriate sexual age preferences would be considered more likely when male victims are chosen (because most nonsex offenders show little interest in male children) and where the victims are very young. It is more likely that inappropriate age preferences are involved in causing sexual interactions with children in modern Western societies than in times and places where this behavior is normative. Simply put, when the behavior occurs in spite of the penalties and contempt that can result from sexual interactions with children, we should conclude that it is more attractive. Nabokov (1955) provides a compelling fictional account of a child molester's struggle to conceal his preference for little girls in order to avoid the negative consequences of discovery. In this connection, it would be of great interest to study the sexual age and gender preferences among men from societies which practice ritualized homosexuality.
What might lead a person who prefers adult partners to choose a child as a sexual object in the face of extremely aversive contingencies? The temporary or permanent unavailability of the preferred type of partner would, of course, be a necessary condition for this type of interaction (Frude, 1982). Thus, we would expect this type of child molester to be experiencing marital discord and a poor sexual relationship with his wife or to be unattached. We would expect that he would have difficulty attracting and keeping adult partners because of homeliness (Berman & Freedman, 1961), real or self-perceived lack of social skills (Segal & Marshall, in press; Wilson & Cox, 1983), and excessive shyness (Wilson & Cox, 1983). Relatively low intelligence or organic defect has also been sporadically reported in the literature, but because these diagnoses often lead to placements in institutions where sex offenders are seldom studied, no definitive statement is possible. In addition, we would expect such a person to be relatively unresponsive to aversive societal sanctions because of poor socialization, as reflected in high psychopathic deviate scores on the MMPI and by the frequent commission of property crimes. Alcohol abuse would be expected to lead to the same result, and such a history is often marked among child molesters (Henn, Herjanic, & Vanderpearl, 1976; Marshall & Christie, 1981; Rada, 1976). Opportunity would also play an important role in this type of offense, particularly when it involves a low probability of discovery. Such opportunity can be provided by familial living conditions or by seductive behavior on the part of the victim (Virkkunen, 1975, 1981; Yates, 1982).

It is of interest that these behaviors are often accompanied by a complex of justificatory beliefs; this was observed in Melanesian societies that practice ritual homosexual pedophilia, in ancient Greece, among the Uranian poets, and among many present-day child molesters (e.g., Abel, Rouleau, & Cunningham-Rathner, 1984). A good guess is that such beliefs arise as a consequence of the behaviors rather than as their cause, but there are no data on the issue one way or the other.

In summary, there are two issues in the genesis of sexual behavior with children. One involves a continuum of relative sexual preference for children and the other a variety of reasons why children are chosen as sexual expediency. These two phenomena are, of course, not mutually exclusive but additive. Aside from the issues involving sexual preference, an explanation for child molesta-

- tion can be expected to come from general criminology and behavior theory; thus, these phenomena need not detain us further and we can turn our attention to the acquisition of sexual preferences for young children. The development of sexual interest in sadistic activities is probably similar in child molesters and rapists, and the reader is referred to Quinsey (1984a) for a detailed discussion of this topic.

From an evolutionary viewpoint, it would appear that an exclusive preference for young children is a very costly error in male reproductive strategy. Because of this and related observations (Quinsey, 1984a), it seems plausible that such preferences are learned. However, because of the importance of sexual preferences in reproductive success, it is unlikely that they would be entirely unconstrained by natural selection. We don't, after all, observe persons who prefer trees as sexual partners. As argued elsewhere (Quinsey, 1984a), some preferences are likely to be much more easily learned than others. Stimuli that are associated with reproductively viable females are plausible candidates for "prepared" or easily conditionable status: These would include youthfulness, primary sexual characteristics, signs of good health, and secondary sexual characteristics (see Symons, 1979). It is not difficult to imagine circumstances in which youthfulness might become the dominant cue, particularly because a viable male reproductive strategy might involve forming a long-term relationship with an immature female. This account is obviously highly speculative, but it does lead to the prediction that female children should be more commonly selected as victims than male children, that bisexual preferences should be more common among child molesters (because youth is more important than primary sexual characteristics), and that age preferences should be similar for preferred and nonpreferred genders. As we have seen, Freund's research supports these predictions.

A great deal of research is yet required before a theoretical account can be given for the development of inappropriate sexual age preferences. There are a few leads, however. The first lead involves the age at which inappropriate sexual preferences are first reported or noted. We know that, among men who prefer adult males as sexual partners, these preferences are reported to be manifest at very early ages (Bell, Weinberg, & Hammersmith, 1981). Similarly, child molesters report becoming aroused by children at young ages, although these reports show considerable
variance (Abel, Mittelman, & Becker, in press); it should be noted in this connection that the detection of “inappropriate” sexual attraction for young children becomes increasingly difficult and then impossible as the informant reports about his earlier and earlier ages. Child molesters sometimes report that their fantasies concerning children precede their overt behaviors by a considerable period of time; this temporal gap may be a period in which the behavior is uniquely susceptible to intervention.

A second lead is provided by the very high frequency with which child molesters report being sexually victimized themselves as children. From a social learning perspective, one has no difficulty with such a finding. One possible source of inappropriate sexual interest has not been supported, however; child molesters report having been exposed to less pornography at young ages than normal subjects (Goldstein & Kant, 1973).

Our understanding of the development of inappropriate sexual age preferences is, however, extremely handicapped, as there is little known about the development of normal sexual age preferences despite the well documented interest children have in sexual activities (Goldman & Goldman, 1982; Langfeldt, 1981). It is unknown whether the development of normal sexual age and gender preferences involve the acquisition of sexual interest in particular age- and gender-related cues, the inhibition of already existing interests, or some combination of both. Several hypothetical scenarios present themselves for consideration: A preference for adult females exists from birth or from a very early age, this preference for adults develops slowly over the course of childhood; there is a preference for same-age female peers that shifts upward with age; and there is an initial preference for age peers and older females but the interest in younger females is progressively inhibited. In the absence of empirical work in this area, other scenarios could doubtless be advanced.

There may be ways to approach the subject of the development of sexual age preferences indirectly which have not yet been tried. Sheer physical attractiveness is related to sexual attractiveness in a general way, but the relationship between esthetics and sexual arousal is at present unclear; equally unclear is how this relationship might vary with age. It is known that physical attractiveness has profound effects on person perception (Berscheid & Walster, 1974) and is a principal determiner of dating desirability (Berscheid, Dion, Walster, & Walster, 1971; Walster, Aronson, Abrahams, & Rottman, 1966). Cross and Cross (1971) studied preferences for facial photographs that varied in age and gender among subjects from 7 years of age to adult. Males of all ages preferred to look at pictures of 17-year-olds. The preferences of adult men declined in the following order: 17-year-old girls, adult females, 17-year-old males, 7-year-old girls, 7-year-old boys, and adult males. The preferences of the 7-year-old boys, on the other hand, declined in the order: 17-year-old boys, 17-year-old girls, 7-year-old girls, adult men, 7-year-old boys, and adult females. Although some of these differences in ratings were small, they are nonetheless suggestive in the present context. It would be of great interest to know how ratings of attractiveness would vary over age and gender with full-body photographs of people in bathing suits. Further research on the relation of esthetic judgment to sexual preference may prove fruitful.

In conclusion, an explanation of the development of inappropriate sexual age preferences is probably best approached from the study of appropriate sexual age preference development. Such a theory would go a long way toward an explanation of child molesting. Among child molesters themselves, comparisons of sadistic and nonsadistic offenders and further comparisons of homosexual, bisexual, and heterosexual child molesters may provide important practical and theoretical insights.

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