Notes
Angelides: Historicizing affect, psychoanalyzing history: pedophilia and the discourse of child sexuality


9. 
   ○ Joel Best, Threatened Children: Rhetoric and Concern About Child-Victims (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990);
   ○ Philip Jenkins, Moral Panic: Changing Concepts of the Child Molester in Modern America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998);
   ○ J. Richardson et al. (Eds.), The Satanism Scare (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1991);


14. The problem with this kind of explanation, as Lloyd de Mause points out, in “The Psychogenic Theory of History,” *The Journal of Psychohistory*, 25 (1997), p. 113, is that “the explanation that ‘culture determines social behavior’ is simply a tautology. Since ‘culture’ only means ‘the total pattern of human behavior’ . . . to say ‘Culture is what makes a group do such and such’ is merely stating that a group’s behavior causes its behavior.”


19. See Tim Dean & Christopher Lane, “Homosexuality and Psychoanalysis: An
20. Elements of the child sexual abuse and protection movement have responded to the moral panic theorization by arguing that it is part of a “backlash” against acknowledging the severity of child sexual abuse. Interestingly, ‘backlash’ theorists also attempt to explain the highly emotive nature of child sexual abuse, but similarly offer no adequate psychical analysis, other than to presume as self-evident certain tenuous assumptions about human subjectivity.

In one particularly absurd example, which I feel compelled to quote at length, John E.B. Meyers, “Definition and Origins of the Backlash Against Child Protection,” in John E.B. Meyers (Ed.), The Backlash: Child Protection Under Fire (London: Sage, 1994), offers the following explanation:

“To appreciate why child sexual abuse evokes such strong emotions in adults, it is helpful to engage in a simple mental exercise. First, put any thought of child abuse completely out of mind. Shift your thoughts entirely away from child abuse. This done, ask the following question: What do adults feel strongly about? Children come immediately to mind. Normal, healthy, non-abused children evoke strong emotions in adults.

Now put children to one side and ask the same question: What else do adults feel strongly about? Victimization. Few subjects evoke stronger emotions than victimization.

Most of us are victims at some point, and the anger and helplessness that accompany victimization are strong emotions indeed.

Finally, put children and victimization aside, and ask once more: What do adults feel strongly about? Sex! Few subjects evoke stronger or more varied emotions than sex and sexuality.

Now, put the three together—children, victimization, and seks—to form child sexual abuse, and the stage is set for emotional fireworks. Few events evoke stronger feelings of outrage, scandal, and pity than the sexual victimization of helpless children.

Thus one element of the backlash movement is the sheer strength of emotion the subject stirs up in adults” (19-20).

This is nothing short of baffling to me, and unfortunately I don’t have the space to offer a critique. I share no such responses to those questions. I see this not as analysis or explanation but as an exercise in normative pedagogy.


23. Dean, Beyond Sexuality, p. 159.
24. As unlikely as my analysis might seem to many readers, the fact that any discussion of sexuality appealing to psychoanalysis tends to elicit extremely passionate, if not hostile, responses, leads me to believe that at the very least this might be an effective strategy for kick-starting debate.

25. It seems to me that too often rigid disciplinary boundaries function to foreclose interdisciplinary exchanges; exchanges that may very well lead to productive theoretical debates and conceptual innovation.


27. In his earlier work, Freud often used repression interchangeably with defense, suggesting anxiety, and thus neurosis, to be the result of repression and the damming up of instinctual impulses. The introduction of his structural model of mental functions in *The Ego and the Id* (1923), PFL 11, led to a revision of the theory of anxiety. In *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926 [1925]), PFL 10, Freud reversed his earlier formulation, arguing not that repression causes anxiety but anxiety repression (Freud, 1926). See Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1933), PFL 2, p. 118, where he reiterates this view. I would argue that neurosis is dependent upon both of these formulations of anxiety.


30. Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, p. 127. According to Freud, the typical developmental events identified by psychoanalysis as most likely to give rise to traumatic situations for every child are birth, separation anxiety, castration anxiety, loss of love objects, and loss of super-ego love (*Inhibitions*, 1926 [1925]).

31. See Evans, *Sexual Citizenship*; Alice Miller, *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society’s Betrayal of the Child* (New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1984); Vikki Bell, *Interrogating Incest: Feminism, Foucault and the Law* (London: Routledge, 1993). In a footnote appended to *Three Essays* (1905), PFL 7, in 1920, Freud argued that “There is, of course, no need to expect that anatomical growth and psychical development must be exactly simultaneous” (93). Moreover, as he stated in “The Sexual Enlightenment of Children” (1907), PFL 7, “except for his reproductive power, a child has a fully developed capacity for love long before puberty; and it may be asserted that the ‘mystery-making’ [i.e., dialogic repression of child sexuality] merely prevents him from being able to gain an intellectual grasp of activities for which he is psychically prepared and physically adjusted” (176).
After summarizing more recent research on child sexuality, L.L. Constantine, “Child Sexuality: Recent Developments and Implications for Treatment, Prevention, and Social Policy,” *Medicine and Law*, 2 (1983), argues “nothing in the preceding summary supports the notion that child sexuality is in any fundamental way different from adult sexuality” (61). Ronald and Juliet Goldman, *Show Me Yours! Understanding Children’s Sexuality* (Penguin: Ringwood, 1988), claim that the “evidence is that earlier experience and understanding of sexuality is well within the moral competence of children” (226).

32. Christopher Bollas also argues that sexuality is inherently traumatic for all children. For a different reading of this than the one offered here, see his *Hysteria* (Routledge: New York, 2000).


35. Among exemplary feminist texts are:
   - Diana E.H. Russell, *The Politics of Rape: The Victim’s Perspective* (New York: Stein & Day, 1975);
   - Diana E.H. Russell, *The Sexual Trauma* (New York: Basic Books, 1986);
   - Ann W. Burgess et al., *The Sexual Assault of Children and Adolescents* (Lexington: D.C. Health, 1978);
   - David Finkelhor, *SexuallyVictimized Children* (New York: Free Press, 1979);


37. For a summary of research on child sexuality until 1983, see Constantine, “Child Sexuality” (1983), pp. 55-67. For discussion and references to child sexuality in decades prior to the 1980s, see P. Jenkins (1998); Sterling Fishman, “The History of


42. See Angelides, “Feminism, Child Sexual Abuse.”

43. For instance, it is very rare to describe a young child as being gay or lesbian, even within biologically determinist discourses.

44. Foucault, History of Sexuality, p. 34. It seems that throughout the last two decades we have spent immense effort evacuating sexuality from the conceptual field of childhood at the same time as we have evacuated asexuality from the conceptual field of adulthood. This might be seen as one way of securing the distinction between child and adulthood.

45. I will detail this argument below.

46. In fact, I argue that it is negligent to continue to avoid the subject; in my mind, we are morally and ethically obliged to address child sexuality.

47. Anthropology has also often incorporated discussions of child sexuality; unlike psychoanalysis, though, it has not been a central organizing concept. In “Has Sexuality Anything to do with Psychoanalysis,” International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 76 (1996), André Green laments the fact that within the last ten years or so there has been a waning of interest in the concept of sexuality within psychoanalysis. He puts this down to the “contemporary fashionable focus on object relations” within the United States (871). As I have been suggesting, I would see this development as also bound up with the feminist discourse of child sexual abuse and the fear of pedophilia.


“The language of Eros is the language of touch,” she says, “and we learn this language as infants, in the arms of those who first care for us. As we grow into adult sexuality, we alter this language, extending its range and our own fluency. But its deep structure, the grammar of how we experience touch, is absorbed in the context of our earliest relationships” (6).


55. Laplanche, Interview, p. 10.


57. Laplanche is attempting to draw out what is already there in Freud’s work, but which remains mired by the limitations of his time and discourse. For instance, in *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (1940 [1938]), PFL 15, Freud says “By her care of the child’s body she [the mother] becomes its first seducer” (423).


59. Laplanche, Interview, p. 10.

60. Freud certainly recognized the sexually stimulating, or seductive, nature of the parent-child relation. See, for example, *Three Essays* (1905), PFL 7, where he notes that:

“A child’s intercourse with anyone responsible for his care affords him an unending source of sexual excitement and satisfaction from his erogenous zones. This is especially so since the person in charge of him, who, after all, is
as a rule his mother, herself regards him with feelings that are derived from her own sexual life: she strokes him, kisses him, rocks him and quite clearly treats him as a substitute for a complete sexual object” (145).


62. Laplanche rejects the Lacanian idea that the unconscious is structured like a language.

63. Freud, Three Essays, 145. Or as he noted in Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood (1910), PFL 14:
   “A mother’s love for the infant she suckles and cares for is something far more profound than her later affection for the growing child. It is in the nature of a completely satisfying love relation, which not only fulfill every mental wish but also every physical need; and if it represents one of the forms of attainable human happiness, that is in no little measure due to the possibility it offers of satisfying, without reproach, wishful impulses which have long been repressed and which must be called perverse” (209-210).

64. At the same time as our culture desperately attempts to purge childhood of the stains of sexuality, it also attempts to construct the normative child as one who is free from forms of psychological conflict and trauma. The recently invented conditions of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) are examples of the increasing medicalization and pathologization of childhood conflict and anxiety. In psychoanalytic terms, it would not be unlikely that, in many instances, there might well be childhood sexual conflicts at the heart of such conditions as ADHD and ODD. The more we essentialize seemingly ‘deviant’ child behaviors and continue to confuse psychological symptoms with diseases or medical conditions, the further away we are from understanding childhood psychological dynamics. The end result of attempts to eradicate conflict, anxiety, and trauma from childhood psychology is often more insidious forms of child abuse. Recent deaths of children medicated for ADHD in the US with such stimulant drugs as Ritalin and Dexedrine is a tragic case in point. See John Merson, “The Wild Ones,” Good Weekend, 11 May 2002, pp. 20-25.

65. In An Outline of Psycho-Analysis (1940 [1938]), PFL 15, Freud says, “No human individual is spared such traumatic experiences” (419).

66. I am not here suggesting that we must accept the entire Freudian theory of the
Oedipus complex. At a minimum, however, I accept the notion of oedipal desire. In other words, we do not have to jettison the notion of oedipal desire entirely just because we may not agree with Freud’s formulation of the Oedipus complex. Unfortunately, however, the feminist discourse of child sexual abuse has done just that, ostensibly on the grounds that Freud covered up the reality of child sexual abuse when he abandoned his seduction theory. See Miller (1984).

67. Sandor Ferenczi, in “Confusion of Tongues Between Adults and the Child” (1933), Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-analysis (London: Hogarth, 1955), pp. 156-167, describes as inevitably traumatic the imposition of the adult’s language of passion onto the child.

“If more love or love of a different kind from that which they need, is forced upon the children in the stage of tenderness, it may lead to pathological consequences in the same way as the frustration or withdrawal of love” (164).

68. The psychoanalytic literature on love and guilt is enormous. For a classic example, see Melanie Klein, Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works 1921-1945 (London: Virago Press, 1988).

69. Oxenandler’s The Eros of Parenthood is a superb attempt at initiating just such a language.

70. As we will see, however, this is an expanded and reformulated notion of repression.


72. Freud argues that repression proper requires a repressing agency, the ego or super-ego. On after-pressure, see Inhibitions (1926 [1925], PFL 10, p. 245; “Repression” (1915), PFL 11.


75. One of the problems with Billig’s approach, however, is that he evades the question of intra-psychical dynamics. In his attempts to broaden the concept of repression and avoid some of the shortcomings of the Freudian over-emphasis on intra-psychical functions, Billig leaves unspecified the relationship between dialogic repression and intra-psychic repression. We are therefore left with an account that privileges repression as a function of language/discourse and leaves unanswered the question of what happens within the actual psyche to the discursively repressed (or the unsaid).
76. Somewhat like Lacanian theorists, Billig elevates the role of language as constitutive of the un/conscious (although he does not specify what the structure of the unconscious might be). In following Laplanche, I resist the idea that the unconscious is structured like a language, just as I resist the idea that the unconscious is solely a function of language. Of course, language acquisition and use must entail retroactive and ongoing effects on the formation and action of the unconscious, but I think it is not necessary, and is indeed unproductive, to attempt to specify any precise contents or structure of the unconscious. In specifying this, one cannot fail, on some level, to posit an ahistorical notion of language and discourse relations. While I have argued that a form of primal repression is achieved without the preverbal infant having attained the broader skills of language use, it is a repression that is still situated within—and thus can be viewed as an effect of—language/discourse. By this, I mean that because the (m)other is a language user, her subject position is situated firmly within relations of signification. As such, her unconscious messages (enigmatic signifier) are also inextricably bound up with language/discourse. Therefore, while it is possible to argue that language/discourse does not directly constitute the child’s primordial unconscious—thus implying a one-way transposition of language into the child’s psychic structure—a certain relation to (the world of adult) signification does constitute the child’s primordial unconscious.


78. Sigmund Freud, Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego (1921), PFL 12, p. 95.

79. In Studies on Hysteria (1893-1895), PFL 3, and “Repression” (1915), PFL 11, Freud used the term repression as a general category to refer to the different ways of pushing aside certain desires. A. Freud, in Ego, reformulated this to argue that the term defense mechanisms should be used as the general category, within which repression is but one of its forms. Within this category, she included such things as regression, reaction formation, isolation, undoing, projection, introjection, turning against the self, reversal, sublimation, or displacement. In order to stress the interpsychic (dialogic) rather than primarily intra-psychic nature of repression, I am using repression as the general umbrella category. In other words, I consider the nine defense mechanisms Anna Freud identified as different forms of repression.

“a number of individuals who have put one and the same object in the place of their ego ideal and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego” (147).

81. Elaine Showalter employs a more generalized psychoanalytic framework to argue that phenomena such as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Gulf War Syndrome, Recovered Memory, Multiple Personality Syndrome, Satanic Ritual Abuse, and Alien Abduction are modern forms of hysteria. See Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Culture (London: Picador, 1998 [1997]).


83. Hollway, “Gender Difference,” p. 256; Cathy Urwin, “Power Relations and the Emergence of Language,” in Henriques et al., Changing the Subject.

84. See Angelides, “Feminism, Child Sexual Abuse.”

85. See Steven Angelides, “Child Sexuality and the Culture of Melancholia” (unpublished manuscript) for a discussion of the way these unresolved and unsymbolized affects are producing melancholic cultures of considerable proportions.

86. Although referring to abusive sexual encounters between adults and children, in “Confusion of Tongues” Ferenczi comments on the way in which children identify with adults and easily introject “the guilt feelings of the adult” (162).

87. See Angelides, “Feminism, Child Sexual Abuse” for a discussion of some of the social and psychological problems this erasure of child sexuality creates. Steven Angelides 109