

A strong social voice on one hidden crime in our society: Victoria D. Burgess. Protect children from sexual abuse. A guide for: Parents, teachers, law enforcement, anyone else.

Salt Lake City. 63 p.

A book review

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Supporting websites of the author:

A strong social voice on one hidden crime in our society

http://www.iianthropology.org/anthhidden_misdeed_child_sex_abuse.html

Anthropology of hidden crime

http://www.iianthropology.org/anthhidden_misdeed.html

History of popular culture. Teacher's resources

http://www.iianthropology.org/aislc_hpc_teachers_resources.html

A strong social voice on one hidden crime in our society

Victoria D. Burgess. Protect children from sexual abuse. A guide for: Parents, teachers, law enforcement, anyone else. Salt Lake City. 63 p. [No year of publishing]

The book of Victoria D Burgess consists of Preface (p. i) and 6 chapters: Chapter 1. Conflicting messages about pedophilia (pp. 1-9); Chapter 2. Present problem (pp. 11-19); Chapter 3. Pedophile Profiles (pp. 21-27); Chapter 4. Identifying boys (pp. 29-38); Chapter 5. Protecting our daughters (pp. 39-52), and Chapter 6. Treatments (pp. 53-63).

To begin with “Protect children from sexual abuse. A guide for: Parents, teachers, law enforcement, anyone else” is one of the essay-like books about which the reviewers usually finish: a book that everybody needs to read. Not only because it was written in academic format but at the same time has intriguing style, but because the topic matters and the author wrote every sentence with the ink of her heart and, unfortunately, as a result of her rich professional experience.

We can learn from the book that Victoria Burgess was an Alienist for the Utah State Board of Pardons (1988-1992) (p. ii) and has been working as a Licensed Clinical Psychologist, a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, and as a teacher of Psychology on a college and university level (pp. vi-vii).

The subject of Chapter 1 is sexualization of children (pp. 1-9). The children themselves do not communicate sexuality, but these are the adults who accept them as “sexual objects”. Then, sexualization of children sends a conflicting message on pedophilia. Burgess uses academic and everyday instances to connect also the problem with the children – parents relationships referring to Sigmund Freud who claimed based on his personal experience that all children sexually lust after the opposite sex parent (p. 1). Although the children began to build a

self-awareness of their sexuality since very young age, it looks the author's notion is that it is the social space of family where would be found the first signs of molested children (p. 7). One more boundary based opposition was proposed – the conflict of age in different cultures' contexts. In other words, the problem of sexuality of the children is a problem of how the children accept the adults and the adults the children, as well as what is the relation to the age. The controversial interpretation that the women (and not only American – L.N.) prefer hairless armpits, legs, [face – L.N.] and even pubic areas to look young and more attractive (p. 7) may have been only partially true. Regarding the axillary hair, today we live in the era of the deodorant, but in past absence of such may have caused unpleasant odors and uncomfortable social relationships. As a matter of fact it is stated that the axillary hair removal began to have been advertised in 1915 when the sleeveless dress came into fashion and the ads about leg hair removals even postdate the former (1925). It seems at the beginning it was a status sign of wealthier women although obviously gradually became an American pattern to a level at which today axillary hair raises highly negative emotions even among American women. But such gender style depends on the paradigm. Sexuality typifies the women while hairless armpits and legs are not a universal cultural phenomenon – in some cultures missing underarm hair may consider even as a deviant behavior.

As Burgess states, any behavior can be considered deviant as a result of public consensus (p. 8). She writes: “From the Greek to the Roman as well as from English to American Art and Literature, children have been sexualized” (p. 1). And she concludes: ... sexuality and sexual abuse are two different things”. Acceptance of the children as sexual being is a historical and debatable issue, while the cultural experience on its side, including often mental health issues

born from the sexual abuse, infers that “children should be not sexualized in any way by adults” (p. 9).

Chapter 2 (Present problem) analyzes what is sexual abuse of child. It is “initiating a child to any sexual activity or behavior” and includes inviting or forcing a child to touch or to be touched sexually, or object intercourse, oral sex, masturbating in the presence of child, genital intercourse, juvenile prostitution, and sexual exploitation through child pornography (p. 11). Burgess introduces the concept of informed consent and explains why the children cannot provide such - “because they cannot fully understand adult-child sexual contact or predict the consequences”. The logical conclusion follows that the child needs to have protection, security and love and children often reveal their victimization just when become adults (pp. 12-13).

Three aspects of pedophilia have been analyzed in this chapter – incest, trusted friend abuse, and stranger pedophilia (pp. 12-19). There are no social-economical, ethnical or cultural preferences (p. 13) and it is largely a hidden crime (p. 15). Internet has made Pedophilia from isolated in organized hidden crime since there are Pedophile support groups that may even exchange child pornography (p. 17). According to the Statistics of the National Center of victimization of children, one in five kinds are approached for sex on Internet (p. 17).

Pedophile profiles (chapter 3, pp. 21-27) are described as chronic and since it is a hidden crime, majority of the pedophiles are not caught, convicted, nor put in prison (p. 22). Burgess describes 19 characteristics of child sex offenders, which include her professional experience as a forensic psychologist. They are usually heterosexual and attempt a control and power over the victim, at age between 17 and 77, with a specific gender orientation (boys or girls) toward their victims which are carefully chosen, not a stranger, with poor interpersonal skills with other

adults and often angry, rarely well educated, manipulative, passive, trustful, no empathy, etc. At the time of conviction they may have 350 sexual cases (pp. 25-27).

In the next two chapters Victoria Burgess provides a distinguished characteristics of the sexually abused boys and girls. In it remarkable that regarding the boys, the concept of socialization has been used not in a positive context but in negative – how boys become sex offenders. I would point to two mentioned characteristics – most sex offenders were sexually abused when were young (p. 31) and pornography is a huge factor in turning to this crime (p. 32). Then, the question comes – What kind of socialization is development of personalities of sexual abusers – poor, dysfunctional, or we may even need to find another term and to keep socialization for embedding of positive values only in the individual as a member of humans society? Feria et al. formulated the problem as a function of the socialization process that in some cases generate deviation that submerge in the criminal social subspace (Feria et al. 2006) (cp. Family (online), Beirne & Messerschmidt 2005). Since crime is not the goal and in the norms of society, but a defect social product and out of the social norms, it probably should not be included in the concept of socialization, but treated as a social deviant, which target in fact is socialization. Emergence of hidden crime and invisible negative social behavior is a result of unsuccessful socialization. Then, socialization is a process of integrating the individual into the society, but this process can be incomplete, unsuccessful and even defect. In other words it is not the socialization process that generates deviation, but these are the individuals who do not accept or do not follow all steps of successful socialization. The problem of crucial since socialization can be substituted by ideologization even as a state policy and such substitution may create whole group of people who in fact are beyond the process of socialization based on the humanistic social norms and values. In addition, the social group of pedophilia in fact exists not

only because of the incomplete process of socialization, but also because in many cases socialization does not co-exist with enculturation as a process of development of the individuals with self-awareness of own self-esteem beyond her/his place in society. Everybody wants to succeed in this society, while for many reasons the social space of active performing is in many cases limited, and it is not the socialization, but enculturation that helps the individuals to keep their attitude and positive relation to society. Pornography is one of the strongest deculturation factors that in turn reflects on the socialization and stimulates emergence of individuals and group that actively play their roles in the invisible (and for this reason borderless space of realized imaginary and dysfunctional or dangerous sociality).

Burgess has differentiation approach to boy and girls on the topic of pedophilia. The suggestions how the young boys (chapter 5) to be prevented becoming either sexual abusers or victims of sexual abuse are (pp. 33-37) include: permission and verbalizing of the emotional life of the young boys, teaching in emotional courage and how to become men, find a safe place to express the maleness, development of “Anti bully program”, avoiding harsh disciplines, eventual later involvement in school, more male teachers in the elementary schools, high quality daycare, emotional literacy. Further toward the end of the chapter, the author accounts characteristics that in combination represent risk identification for future abusive behavior of the boys: poor impulse control, highly impulsive and aggressive behavior, victimization of their peers, torturing animals, constantly in trouble for fighting, stealing and vandalism, poor verbal skills, lacking the ability for empathy, use of pornography, even if introduced to the child by a parent (p. 38).

The next chapter (pp. 39-52) emphasizes on the victimized girls and how to prevent girls from sexual abuse. According to Burgess, early sexualization of the girls is a problem of socialization. Today even Barbie is “sexier” and “hipper”(p. 41). From these perspectives, the

first suggestion is the parents to stop giving the girls “Bratz and “come hither” Barbie dolls as gifts”, supporting wearing uniform at school, sharing equally of all household and outside chores by boys, girls, men and women in the family, building self-esteem of the daughters by parents, teach the girls say “no” with whole body and mind and to speak directly and clearly, to defend their positions, engage them on adventures and learning new skills and how to do not-female (“dirty”) things, involve them in team sports and in self-defense training, selecting movie and music interest (p. 50), reject sexualized American advertising, be active against promoting gender bias and inequality.

The last chapter (pp. 53-63) includes comments on the protections from becoming victims of pedophilia that concern both sexes and on treatments of the victims and protection from the pedophiles. The last includes “Amber alert”, high tech bracelets, limited access to computers, warning signs, education, etc. Patience is required for the victims, as well as counseling of the parents (pp. 57-58). On the other side of the coin, proposing new treatments of pedophiles are required, increasing incest punishment, more research, DNA testing, etc. Burgess concludes: “Our inability as a society to resolve this terrible problem that threatens the youngest and most innocent of our population should not be considered a burden, but a necessity. Are we courageous enough?”

Since I started with the conclusion, the most I can add as final words is that this is one of the academic essays that not only immediately made me think on big issues but also touch my heart. It made me immediately share the reading with my students. The emotional reaction of some of them had showed that the essay of Burgess can touch everybody who would find time and willing to read her insights into one of the most critical for the global humanity issue –

pedophilia. And all together to make our voice strong reading what the back cover page of Victoria Burgess clearly states:

Stop! We really have to stop it!

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