

The first issue in two years! That must mean something...

interchange

Volume 6 • Fall 2007



online postings by **emi koyama**

Interchange #6 (Fall 2007)
Confluere Publications
PO Box 40570
Portland Oregon 97240

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Layout & Design by Confluere Publications

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What is Interchange?

Interchange is originally a section within [Eminism.org](http://eminism.org), the online propaganda center created by Emi Koyama (that's me!). Interchange basically archives some of the most interesting postings Emi made to various electronic mailing lists and message boards, although sometimes I include things that don't fit into this criteria. This 'zine is the "best of" collection of the online version, so to speak.

You can find the entire Interchange archive online at:

<http://eminism.org/interchange/>

Who's this Emi chick anyway?

Emi Koyama is a multi-issue social justice activist who synthesizes feminist, Asian, survivor, dyke, queer, sex worker, intersex, genderqueer and crip politics. Emi is the founding director of **Intersex Initiative** (www.intersexinitiative.org) and has presented extensively on intersex activism, working-class sex worker feminisms, and the domestic violence "industry."

Emi is also the founder of **Confluere** (www.confluere.com), an "alternative speaker's bureau without the (centralized) bureau" and is responsible for putting the "emi" back in feminism via **Eminism.org**.

#85: Exploiting the Dead

Forum: Transecting the Academy list

Date: 11/07/2005

I and the rest of the Southern California Transgender Community Coalition invite all of you to the Los Angeles Day of Remembrance. (If you know of DOR activities happening in your city, I would encourage you to attend and contribute.) This is the day when we remember those who have been killed due to gender based violence and hate. Use this opportunity to take a long, hard look at the reality of evil in our world. This is a good time to acknowledge the darkness that resides within, but also to embrace our Divinity, each of us as Beings of light. We are all capable of so much evil, each and every one of us, but we are also capable of such goodness and compassion. We mourn those who have fallen due to transphobia and genderism, but we also celebrate their lives and their contribution to the Universe.

I've attended Day of Remembrance events for several years, but it always bugs me to hear people say that these people were killed because transphobia. For great majority of them, they were also killed because of racism, sexism, poverty, etc. We as a community seem to only honor poor trans people, trans people of colour, trans people living or working on the street, etc. after they are dead, and even then only one aspect of their lives...

- ek

<http://eminism.org/>

#86: Stripping for Extra Credit

Forum: WMST-L

Date: 08/03/2005

On 12/6/05 11:42 AM, "Tamarah Cohen" wrote:

Not unrelated: what of the undergrad who proposes to prostitute herself in the form of stripping as "action research" for a WS class?

One thing I would suggest is to tell her to consider the economic impact on people who feed their families and pay their bills through stripping. Amateurs who are in it for research or for "experience" depress earnings for the pros.

Besides, what are they proposing to study by stripping anyway? Surely, you can't learn anything about being dancers just by stripping for a week or two. (But then, lots of scholars seem to be convinced that *Nickel and Dimed* actually represents what it's like to be poor in America, so I guess these students aren't that far off.) They might learn something about men's attitude at strip clubs, or learn about themselves in terms of how they feel about their own bodies and sexualities, but I don't know if that's what needs to be studied for the course.

I have a question. Do you always use the phrase "prostitute herself (himself/ themselves)" when we are talking about work, e.g. "I prostitute myself as a Women's Studies professor"? If not, why would you choose it in this case? It seems to imply some sort of value judgment.

Emi Koyama

<http://eminism.org>

Date: 12/07/2005

On 12/6/05 10:11 PM, "Tamarah Cohen" wrote:

I distinguish prostitution (i.e., the commercialization of sexual violence) from other kinds of work.

But stripping is not prostitution. If you distinguish prostitution from other kinds of work, then why did you use the phrase "prostitute herself as..." when talking about something other than prostitution? That seems to conflate the two classes of work that you are trying to distinguish.

Emi Koyama

<http://eminism.org/>

Date: 12/07/2005

On 12/7/05 6:40 AM, "Rebecca Whisnant" wrote:

I would be very concerned about the wellbeing of the student who proposes to engage in stripping as "action research." She may well have a glamorized idea of what is involved, and she may find that being exposed, ogled, called abusive names, and groped by strange men is more upsetting than she had anticipated.

That is true, but it's not like female college students never strip at a club—it may be unpleasant, but most people deal. Having the concern and sharing it with the student is one thing, but we shouldn't be underestimating what a young woman can handle. With any sort of job, there's a chance that the actual work would turn out unpleasant in ways that one didn't expect, and this one is no different.

What I would question about this "action research," other than its impact on other women who work there, is the scholarly value of such "research." I really don't see what the student is proposing to study by doing this "action research."

Also, though Emi and I disagree about almost everything in this area,

You'd be surprised how much we actually agree. For example, I'm equally as critical as you are of the glamorising of sex industry (it hurts workers' collective interests). I'm annoyed as hell of the "sex positive" activists who don't recognise how race, class, nationality, etc. diminish occupational choices for many women. I participate in activism to push Japanese government to take responsibility for the trafficking and gross exploitation of the "comfort women" during the WWII. I also happen to believe that while I support freedom of expression, I consider it valid to critique pornography and other manifestations of sexual fantasies, including those involving prostitution, for its sexism, racism and other patterns of domination.

I think sometimes people are too quick to decide whether I'm on their side or not, and once they decide that I'm not one of them they tend to associate me with positions that I don't support at all, such as those expressed by the "sex positive" authors. I'm pro-worker and pro-women, but I've never expressed myself as pro-porn or pro-prostitution (well, I'm not anti-these either, so that could be an area we genuinely disagree).

Finally, as for whether stripping is prostitution, that of course depends on how one defines prostitution, and there are different defensible definitions.

I concede that the definition is contested, but the vast majority of prostitutes and dancers will find it very offensive to call stripping a form of prostitution. Feminist theories that define prostitution broadly to include stripping, porn modeling, phone sex operation, etc., are completely divorced from the lived experiences and thoughts of women who actually perform those labour. That, to me, is a fundamental flaw for theories that purport to be feminist, because I don't subscribe to the top-down, ivory tower version of feminism.

#87: There's More to CAH than Gender Issues

Forum: WMST-L

Date: 05/25/2006

On May 25, 2006, at 12:14 PM, Michael Kimmel wrote:

In my never-ending quest to understand and debunk the casual essentialism of mainstream popular culture, I wonder if any listmembers have references for critiques of the CAH research. That's the research on Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia, the genetic abnormality that affects girls and "causes" them to like playing with trucks and guns instead of Barbie.

Michael,

As a point of information, CAH does occur in genetic males and females at approximately equal frequency. Boys with CAH simply doesn't receive equal attention from gender theorists because boys with extra androgen isn't considered pathological in the same way girls with the same situation. Of course, it's still considered a serious medical issue, as there's a huge risk of adrenal crisis unless proper treatment is prescribed. However CAH among genetic males just isn't considered a crisis of gender. See www.caresfoundation.org for more information about CAH (note: I don't personally endorse some of their positions, and I'm not even sure if I can recommend them as a good resource for the parents of children with CAH—but they do have some basic info nonetheless.)

There are many things to be critiqued about the medical treatment of people with CAH that are worth feminists' attention beyond the obvious surgery question. For example, there's a serious ethical concern over the uses of dexamethasone by a woman suspected of carrying a genetic female with CAH, whose main purpose seems to be the suppression of the fetus' clitoral enlargement. As a proof of this, they would abandon the DEX treatment once the fetus is discovered to be genetic male. There are side-effects to this treatment to the mother, but they are almost routinely being told that this is necessary for the child to be born healthy—which in reality only means "normal sized clitoris."

But as far as scientific evidences go, the connection between CAH females and their preference for stereotypically masculine toys and plays seems very strong, even in the presence of the parenting to the opposite direction (it's fairly common for parents to prohibit a girl with CAH from boyish interests while her non-CAH sister is free to explore her tomboyish side, since parents are told from early on that there's a significantly increased risk of "turning gay.")

In related topic, let's compare CAH females with girls with other forms of DSD (disorders of sex development). They may appear identical from external examination, but the conditions in which the brain receives an increased

“shower” of androgens as fetuses consistently come out more likely to be boyish or gay (or trans, for that matter), even when they report similar parental influences.

The mainstream culture always distorts scientific findings and make everything too simple, but I think it'd be dishonest for any scholar to not recognise that hormones to play huge role in shaping one's tendencies in this world. That said, how these tendencies play out has a lot to do with what's culturally available, as do what's defined as masculine or feminine in a given cultural context.

Emi Koyama
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<http://www.intersexinitiative.org/>

#88: Important Historical Figures Were Humans, Too

Forum: WMST-L
Date: 05/25/2006

After a discussion about Margaret Sanger's positions that are considered eugenicist and wrong today...

On Jul 23, 2006, at 10:23 AM, Miriam Reed wrote:

Whatever else Magaret Sanger said or may have said, she did say that EVERY women should be able to decide for herself when and how and under what circumstances she should give birth to her children.

Right, and Thomas Jefferson wrote “all men are created equal.” The problem is which “men” Jefferson chose to include when he wrote “all men,” and which “woman” Sanger chose to include when she said “every woman.”

I don't know why we have to go back and forth on this. No one is saying that Margaret Sanger is an evil person—just that she was human like the rest of us. What's the point of insisting on the above if she didn't actually mean “every woman” as we understand and believe it should mean today?

emi koyama

#89: Moral Panic Does Not Protect Children from Harm

Forum: CAVNET

Date: 09/30/2006

In a list specific to professionals working in the field of domestic violence, a discussion breaks out about NAMBLA, the notorious organization North American Man-Boy Love Association. This post was rejected by the moderator without explanation.

On Sep 30, 2006, at 5:33 AM, Kathleen Dunkelberger wrote:

Thanks for this info. I never would have known there were organizations in our society that freely write about breaking the law and performing these perverted acts upon children... I am amazed that they are actually allowed on the internet to enlist more sickos like themselves. From reading the nambla website it appears they try to state they are for gay and lesbian rights but obviously they fail to recognize that all people, heterosexual or homosexual, still have an obligation to respect the law and children. JUST because a person is a gay or lesbian does not give them the right to break the laws in this sick manner by seducing our kids into their way of life.

I do not agree with the political aims of NAMBLA (I think that age of consent laws are good and necessary), but I find the extreme hostility toward and disparagement of those attracted to people who are underage problematic and alarmingly similar to the attacks against lesbians and gay men (e.g. "seducing the young into their way of life").

Further, to say that NAMBLA is failing to "recognize that all people, heterosexual or homosexual, still have an obligation to respect the law" fails to recognise that consensual adult homosexual sex had been illegal in many states until just a few years ago. NAMBLA's position, as I understand it, is that age of consent laws, like sodomy laws, are discriminatory and should be abolished. Whether or not we happen to agree with this, stating that they advocate breaking or disrespecting laws does seem reminiscent of the attacks targeting lesbians and gay men in the past.

We don't usually get to choose what we feel attracted to—it just happens. One should not be labeled "pervert" or "sick" for something that is beyond her or his control, because it is disrespectful. If calling homosexuals "perverts," "sicko," or "criminals" hasn't made them straight, calling these people these names won't do any good either.

On the other hand, we are in control of our own behaviours, and as such we are personally held accountable for the actions we take. We need to communicate to these people that our laws will severely punish adults who engage in sexual contact with underage folks without demonising them for having sexual feelings that they cannot control.

Beware of group psychology: when people are isolated into a small group with like-minded individuals, their shared views and values become more extreme or pronounced than they were in the beginning. This is what happens in many religious and political cults.

If we push them underground by persecuting them and shutting down their websites, they will have only themselves to talk about their desires, which is likely to result in their developing justifications for acting out on them. By engaging them and having mutually respectful relationships with them, we can help them retain sense of reality. Further, they are more likely to seek counseling to refrain from acting out their sexual attraction if we didn't demonise them for holding such desires.

Emi Koyama
<http://eminism.org/>

Several months after posting "Moral Panic Does Not Protect Children from Harm" on my website, I received two long emails from the original author of the note I criticized. Unfortunately, she does not seem to understand what I am trying to say. Below is my reply to her. I have not heard from her since.

Forum: Private email
Date: 02/27/2007

Hi Kathleen,
Thanks for your email.

On Feb 25, 2007, at 6:11 AM, Kathleen Dunkelberger wrote:

We have never met and I know nothing about you or your work. I came upon your site purely accidentally as I searched for an article I wrote in the past. To my surprise, you have used my name and part of one note on your site that I sent to several individuals. I am not sure how you would get a note that you claim was "rejected by the moderator" but I do know that note did appear on at least one other list related to child abuse and disability issues and there was much discussion and dialogue among the members. I also received numerous emails supporting my views.

You've misread my statement, or perhaps it was unclear. Your message obviously was approved by the moderator and sent to the entire membership. I received it because I'm on the same list. It was my response (reproduced on my website) that was rejected, with no explanation given.

Sadly, this note was one of hours of conversation and dialogue with others on this topic of child abuse and only using one may have not revealed the entire theme or exact messages.

If you feel that your message was quoted out of context, I invite you to send me an explanation/statement to be posted alongside my comments. That would give readers the full context so that your message is not misunderstood.

However, I do find that some of your response is contradictory as in one statement you claim that we are not able to control what we desire and “One should not be labeled for something that is beyond his or her control” Then later you state, “On the other hand we are in control and responsible for our behaviors”???

Simple. Desires are something that we feel, and like any other feeling they simply come to us. We can't control whether or not we feel attracted to certain people, or to members of the same sex or opposite sex, or whatnot. People should not be demonized for sexual attraction and desire.

However, how we deal with our desires and attractions in our behaviors is entirely chosen. For example, most of us don't sexually assault someone against their consent or will just because we are sexually attracted to them. If someone did, that person would be responsible for that behavior, and it would mean that she or he would be punished. But the punishment applies to her or his behaviors, not toward the attraction.

(Thoughts and behaviors are connected by the way and what we feed grows—one must control the thought if he or she WISHES and CHOOSES to control the behaviors! It is truly a choice and there are many books that discuss this to help you better understand.)

I agree that our thoughts and behaviors are connected. But I'm talking about emotions, not thoughts. Bad thoughts can be changed through persuasion, or more clinically, through cognitive therapy. Emotions and sexual attractions, on the other hand, simply come to us.

Attempts to control people's sexual attraction throughout the history have been nothing but failure: even the most inhumane, brutal persecution of gays and lesbians hasn't been successful at actually transforming them into heterosexuality; it only pushed them into hiding. Therapies designed to “cure” pedophiles have been likewise unsuccessful.

We need strategies to control behaviors, not emotions or sexual feelings. Cognitive behavioral therapy (which I am partial to) attempts to modify behavior through adjusting unhealthy cognitive errors. For example, a pedophile might think that children are enjoying having sex with him, which clearly is delusional. We could confront this pedophile with something written by adult survivors of child sexual abuse, for example, so that he can recognize that his original thought/cognition was a product of his own sexual fantasy, and not reality.

He can be helped to arrive such understanding further if the society were to stop demonizing sexual fantasy as long as he knows that it's just a fantasy and doesn't act on it. For them to understand and respect this all-important line between fantasy and reality, we must also recognize it too: nobody should be persecuted, demonized, targeted, discriminated, etc. for simply having a sexual fantasy, no matter how horrifying it might be; but if they act on it in reality, then we will punish them.

This is just a very simple example of how I believe that someone could stop behaviors that harm children, while fully respecting the humanity of the person who has sexual attraction toward them. If condemning someone for having certain sexual desires were a realistic strategy, homosexuality would have been extinct many centuries ago.

I also wrote that the gay and lesbian community should be outraged that this group uses the gay and lesbian rights issue to rationalize and hide behind this pedophilia.

You should know that at least some gays and lesbians will be more offended by what you had stated in the post to the list than by NAMBLA's politics because your writing re-enacted many of the hateful and painful tropes against gays and lesbians. I believe that offense was not intended, but I ask that you be more careful when discussing controlling someone's sexuality, because gays and lesbians continue to face social and political pressures to control their own sexuality and your message was hurtful.

I think sites like NAMBLA also allow for sharing of information and ammunition for "grooming" (as perpetrators call it) and thus harming more children with increased abilities to perform these crimes.

It would have been ideal if nobody ever felt the sort of sexual urge members of NAMBLA must feel. But the fact is that they exist, and they will continue to exist for the foreseeable future whether they are visible or invisible. I'm more scared of invisible networks of pedophiles that do exist and will become more rampant once we remove them from visible areas of the internet.

It seems to me that you are more motivated by your own desire to make something go away because it makes you feel uncomfortable. Making websites like NAMBLA's will not reduce child abuse, and will probably increase it drastically. In order to truly reduce child abuse, I believe that we as the society engage with them in mutually respectful way and encourage them to address their sexual needs in ways that do not involve any children (and those who do involve children must face penalty).

You comment about group psychology and state if we push them underground and not let them discuss their desires or isolate them they will become more extreme. I believe this is exactly what is happening with these sites. I certainly didn't read anyone talking about trying to get help or counseling to stop their criminal behavior on the NAMBLA site! IN fact, it was quite different in that they fuel off of each other to rationalize and justify their behaviors and I do believe this will make their behaviors even more extreme.

No, because we as the society does not give them the basic respect as human beings. I am not arguing that NAMBLA's site is a good resource. I am arguing that attacking them as "sick" or "perverts" only pushes them to "rationalize and justify their behaviors" further. We can't stop that until we convince them that we respect them as fellow human beings and that our only concern is to protect children (as opposed to being sexual morality police).

By stating someone is not responsible for what they desire gives them an excuse and “greenlight” to continue their behavior. (Just like in domestic violence issues when we send the man to anger management or a batterers group...he thus has a “problem” and it sends the message that he is not responsible for his behavior when in fact he is!

That example actually helps my argument, and disproves yours. Men who abuse their partners are not having “emotional problem.” Controlling their emotions through psychotherapy therefore is not a solution. It is their behavior—and erroneous cognitions, part of which involves sexist attitude and sense of entitlement—must be controlled. Punishment, of course, can help change one’s erroneous cognition, if he was thinking that the society won’t take his actions seriously or that he was entitled to act in ways that hurt others. So, your own example shows that my strategy is what actually works.

This distorted attitude that society has and the messages we send by providing therapy for a CRIME predator just reinforces the behaviors and gives the criminals more power over the victims....

You seem to be motivated more by the desire to do something horrible in revenge to people you think are bad people. I am motivated by the desire to protect children. What’s important to me is not that the perpetrator is condemned and demonized, but preventing and ending violent acts. Yes, I believe in accountability; but I also believe in respecting humanity in all people.

I am always amazed at how the attitudes in society constantly sympathize and empathize with the criminals/perpatrators of crimes while little to no focus, empathy, funding etc goes to the victims?

If you think that the society sympathizes with pedophiles and has no empathy for abuse victims, you must live in an entirely different planet. Get out into the street and ask 100 people which they feel more sympathetic toward: pedophiles, or child abuse victims. I bet that all 100 people say child abuse victims.

Much interest is invested into alleged “rehabilitation” of the predator, but we all know that rehabilitation is very rare in these cases if at all. There is such a high recidivism rate.

Because people like you prevent the real solution.

Many times they only go into court ordered treatment after they get caught and continue their behavior even after this “therapy” or rehabilitation.

Okay, here’s one point I might agree with you: I oppose any reduction of criminal penalty in exchange for receiving therapy or rehabilitation in cases involving violence or abuse. My reason for that primarily is to protect the integrity of therapy itself. Imagine that there was an offenders’ group counseling where 90% of the attendants weren’t serious about changing their behaviors—not only will those people not get anything out of the therapy, they will ruin it for the remaining 10% of the people who actually want to change.

Therapy should be offered, but without any incentives such as reduced sentences so that only those who are truly eager to change their behaviors (small minority, unfortunately) are given it. In fact, they shouldn't just be given it—they should sacrifice something in order to have the privilege to receive therapy, to make sure that only truly serious ones would show up. Counseling only works when clients' goals completely align with the therapist's goal.

As you know, many times in courts the entire focus ends up being on the victim's behavior (past or present) and the facts are twisted to determine the victim ASKED for or deserved the rape/assault etc.

Yes, that's the job of the criminal defense attorney. Due process is generally a good thing, although it means that the court would err on the side of letting guilty ones off the hook rather than punishing innocent ones.

If you have ever worked with victims and perpetrators (or even watched one evening of to catch a predator) you will realize that these guys actually blame the child...almost every time and innocent childish acts such as a five year old doing a cartwheel in a dress will be twisted by the predator as if this child is acting sexually toward him and wants him sexually. So, if we actually believe that these guys have no control and send them to therapy, we too are feeding into their lies and this is not helping them and certainly we are not helping the millions of children that are abused in our world.

First, their cognition is erroneous, which can be addressed through cognitive behavioral therapy before or after he or she actually commits the crime (preferably before). Second, demonizing their sexual desire does nothing to stop their abuse. Third, they should be held accountable for their actions, because it's not true that they "can't help" their behaviors; they can.

Another concern is that what we focus on and "feed" in our minds grows.... Many times perpetrators will have thoughts first and then step up to pornography, telling others with similar thoughts etc then acting on it.... So my concern again with the sites like nambly is that this is an avenue to again, fuel this fire and to rationalize as if it is normal and appropriate because now they are getting the support of each other AND growing stronger with more in numbers. What about the guys that also end up on this site with allegedly no intent to act but because of the "support" they do???

My question is, how come there aren't just as big websites where these "guys with no intent to act" can share their feelings in safety to keep themselves and each other in check? Well, there isn't such a website, because they would be severely attacked, demonized and cut off from most of the society once they admit to their sexual attraction. Once they are isolated and have little to lose, it doesn't take much to cross over the line to the fantasyland. In this way, I believe that the society is complicit in the abuse of children.

Also, these guys know they are wrong. That is why they hide their faces on to catch a predator, that is why they rarely list their names on the sites

they write into, they do not share this with coworkers or families and THEY isolate the child.

They are afraid of being persecuted, because even if they don't act on it, just by admitting having sexual desire for children they would be demonized. We need to end the persecution of those who do not act on their pedophilia before they would feel safe discussing their sexuality openly—which opens the door to their receiving the psychological care they need.

We in society need to step up to stop this nonsense of enabling the predators.

As I see it, people like you enable the predators by blending them with those who are pedophiles but do not act on that sexual desire. Your statements reads like “just do it, because whether or not you actually hurt the children we'll persecute you just the same.”

Some people learn from the stick and others the carrot as one psychiatrist once told me....these people will only learn from facing the accountability of negative consequences for their actions....NOT thru therapy or rehabilitation which clearly gives them more power to harm others.

Again, I don't disagree that people must face consequences for their *actions.* An action is where one engages in sexual contact with the child; for the person to be attracted to children is in and itself not a crime, nor does it harm any child.

And if your sympathy lies with the criminals (UNLIKE MINE) - how do you think enabling them will help them???

I don't particularly have sympathy for “the criminals”— although I believe in having empathy for all people, even those most despised by the society. My primary goal is to reduce harms done to children. Yours seems to be getting back at the bad guys and thereby releasing your own anger.

Part of rehabilitation is to have remorse and take responsibility AND TO NEVER DO THE CRIME AGAIN. IF they do not think they are wrong because we enable them, we are not helping them to change.

Again, I don't disagree that one has to take responsibility for his or her actions. As I've explained, I also believe that erroneous cognitions are often at the roots of bad behaviors, and there are therapeutic techniques specifically designed to address that. Calling someone “sicko” or “perverted” as you do is simply unhelpful.

AND finally, what about the parental rights to raise our kids in ways we feel are appropriate and safe? That is a right that is not discussed nearly enough in our world...to think these predators are only robbing the children of rights is a lie and a huge understatement...their behaviors violate the rights of individuals, entire families AND communities!

You are forgetting the fact that most child sexual abuse are perpetuated by parents or close relatives.

This is another theme in society...let's not offend the poor criminal / predator! They have just ruined the lives of numerous people thru their horrid and violent acts but let's be careful not to hurt their feelings by calling them a name or prosecuting them.

That is a distortion of what I wrote on at least two fronts. First, I'm not talking about "not offending" predators; I'm arguing that moral panics don't solve problems, but it further complicates it. I care less about whether or not I offend pedophiles—but I do care that we reduce child abuse, and I believe that statements such as yours are harmful in that way. Simply put: if we call someone a monster, don't be surprised that he/she would act like one.

Second, I never opposed prosecuting those who abuse children. You are making that part up out of nowhere.

What is ...is! Instead of focusing on the real issues, society also plays into the manipulation by having to be very careful not to offend the criminal/rapist/child abuser.....

No, you are the one who is so caught up in attacking the perpetrator that you've lost sight of the real issue, which is how we as the society can reduce child abuse.

I hope you see how twisted, alarming and dangerous your thinking is to defend them?

I do not defend those who abuse children. I would however defend those who are struggling with sexual desires toward children and yet are finding ways to stay away from abusing children. I imagine that they did not choose to have such sexual desires any more than gays choose to be gay, or straight people choose to be straight for that matter, and that they realize that it would be wrong to use children to satisfy their own sexual needs. If we as the society were truly serious about preventing abuse, we should be accepting, supporting and providing assistance to these people so that they can continue to behave responsibly.

I do not hate anyone despite what they do but I do hate these violent acts and the indifference in our society to make social changes. I am just saying we need to focus more on being proactive - justice - peace and healing OF THE VICTIMS...and less time and money and energy on consoling the perpetrators.

Your comments betray some of the sentiments expressed here: your statements were hateful, even if you did not intend hatred; they were violent, in the sense Coretta Scott King uses the word "violence," despite your peaceful intention. And your statements focused on attacking and vilifying the bad guys—which is sometimes necessary and understandable, but I wouldn't call that a proactive stance.

In your response, you relate it to how gays and lesbians were treated in the past....when in fact this is entirely different.

Yes, they are entirely different—and yet your attitude was the same. It is called moral panic—which is where public's emotional reaction is so strong that it precludes any realistic analyses or solutions, further complicating the original problem.

This is not an adult gay/lesbian or adult heterosexual issue so let's not make it one...

You've turned into one by your choice of rhetoric. If that was not your intention, you should be more careful next time.

I also have been thinking more about what you claim in the response to my note that these individuals that violate and commit these violent acts onto kids do not have control over what they desire... if that is in fact true (I disagree)...but if it is true as you state, that should be all the more reason to lock them up for good, perhaps castrate them and cut off their hands then throw away the key to protect society including the hundreds of children they will continue to rape since they just are so primitive that they have no control over their desires!

Now you sound more like a fascist than a feminist. I'm assuming that they don't choose to feel attracted to children any more than heterosexuals choose to fall in love with the opposite sex, but of course each heterosexual person has a choice to make about what to do about her or his sexual desire. Some go ahead and engage in sexual contact without consent (i.e. rape), and they should be punished. But most of us don't do that. That we do not choose target of our own sexual desires does not mean that we don't choose our own behaviors.

That is all the more reason NOT to pay millions to attempt to rehabilitate them, right?

That is the reason to stop spending money in attempt to change their sexual desires. We can focus our resources on helping them maintain healthy sense of reality (cognition) in order to control their behaviors.

Any parent that has a child that was raped and/or killed would probably agree that more needs to be done....

Which is why we have the court system and does not allow victims or their families to simply go after the offender.

We in society must dictate what will be tolerated and some things are just not negotiable!

Remember, we already agree that adults having sexual contact with children is not okay, so no disagreement here.

We need to send a clear message and not allow people to turn this into something other than what it actually is!

As I've stated above, the only message you are sending is: "just do it, because you've got nothing to lose anyway."

- ek
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#90: Prison is Not the Solution to Hate Crimes

Forum: QSTUDY-L

Date: 02/21/2007

This discussion is about a federal hate crimes legislation, prompted by a legislative "alert" from right-wing American Family Association urging its members to oppose the bill in order to stop so-called homosexual agenda.

On Feb 21, 2007, at 11:22 AM, Sarah Karpman wrote:

Sometimes when I read these AFA alerts I think for a moment that it's parody, because these people are just so unbelievable in their tactics. Unfortunately it's not. Please get in touch with your Reps in support of HR 254, because this is what we're up against.

Simply because AFA opposes a bill is not a good reason to support it. HR 254 includes provisions that would "enhance" sentencing, which means longer sentences for those convicted of hate crimes. Personally I don't believe that feeding more people into the prison industrial complex longer is the way to fight hate crimes. People almost never become less hateful as the result of being in prison for years.

- ek
<http://eminism.org/>

#91: GenderPAC's Dis-Invitation

Forum: QSTUDY-L

Date: 01/22/2007

This just happened...

1. Someone from GenderPAC emailed me, inviting me to speak on a panel about gender theories at its GenderYOUTH Leadership Summit this May. No honorarium. I agreed.
2. Then a couple of months later, the same person emailed to ask me to present another workshop on intersex at the said conference. No honorarium.
3. I accepted the second invitation, but expressed dissatisfaction about GenderPAC's continuous request to provide something for nothing. Here's the excerpt from my email:

I would accept the invitation to present a workshop on intersex issues during the conference, but GenderPAC needs to stop this practice of asking for free services from any source without regard to who or what it is freeriding on.

An organization with a \$800,000+ budget whose conference primarily serves middle-class college students shouldn't be asking those of us struggling to pay rent to sacrifice our time and energy to provide free contents for the for-fee conference. It's morally reprehensible and contrary to the GPAC's stated mission toward achieving social equality and justice.

It's not "unfortunate" that there is no money to pay presenters; it's the direct consequence of GPAC's deliberately set priorities, which, I'd argue, are wrong, immoral, and unethical. The thing is, if GenderPAC had prioritized properly compensating presenters (or at least compensating those who don't draw salaries from universities or big non-profits), it could have easily done so.

4. GenderPAC responds. Its explanation for not paying presenters are: 1) other national conferences don't pay workshop presenters either (headliners like Judith Butler are offered money, but she generously agreed to speak for free); 2) this conference actually loses money; 3) money to presenters would mean less money for scholarships and other assistance to participants; 4) GenderPAC's budget isn't that big compared to other national organizations. Then it states:

I appreciate the concerns you raised, and hope our answers provide at least some additional perspective. In any case, given your dissatisfaction with our

policies and the depth of your disapproval, we would like to ask that we put the invitation on hold for the time being while we rethink things from this end. If we decide to move ahead we will certainly reach out to you.

5. My reply to “why GPAC can’t pay the presenter” part:

The difference is that GenderPAC approaches speakers it wants to invite, or at least it did in my case, rather than speakers approaching GPAC to request a workshop slot. That’s not the case with Creating Change, or NOW conference (I don’t know anything about FMF conference). I can think of only one conference that I have been individually approached to present, which is True Colors conference in Connecticut, which does (did) pay workshop presenters.

Besides, I’d argue that the conference culture that is eating up the “activist” industry is wrong—that it keeps grass-roots activists from participating in national agenda-setting, allowing those with the institutional funding or those who are independently wealthy to determine the course of our movements.

Of course, paying the presenters won’t fix that problem, but I fear that organizations such as GPAC are not even recognizing it as a problem in praising speakers who are privileged enough to be able to “agree to speak for free.” How many Judith Butlers are we silencing and excluding from our movements just because they don’t have highly paid academic appointments like she does?

It’s this complete lack of class consciousness that I find problematic more than whether or not I get paid personally. I do present a lot of workshops with little or no honorarium, which I am willing to and able to do most of the time, but there’s a matter of principle here. There could have been many ways you could have expressed sensitivity toward class issues while you explain why GPAC is unable to compensate speakers, but your response was defensive and didn’t really give me the sense that GPAC cares about class issues or how it might affect activist movements.

Then in response to the dis-invitation:

I’m disappointed to find that GPAC cannot stand slightest of disagreements or criticisms from someone whose perspective it must have valued enough to invite in the first place. It has now taken one step further from simply excluding poor and working class people by upholding the middle-class conference culture: it is now actively shutting out someone for speaking out against it. I’m also deeply disappointed because I was looking forward to meeting the youth at the conference.

- ek

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#92: DOMA and Intersex Existence

Forum: WMST-L

Date: 10/10/2006

On Oct 10, 2006, at 10:59 AM, Mary Schweitzer wrote:

Take a look at this article from today's Philadelphia Inquirer:

"Scientists are contending there's no clear definition of the gender divide. [...]

"Twenty states have already passed constitutional amendments to restrict marriage to a union between a man and a woman, and eight more will be voting on it this November, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. But Pranzarone predicts that once lawyers start representing intersex cases, these laws will fall apart."

Nothing here that would be news to this group, but I thought this was a very accessible, short article for that could be useful in starting a discussion of the issues among undergraduates.

Mary,

I'm sure that this article would "start a discussion," but it's nonetheless a weak argument against DOMA (defense of marriage act/amendment) legislations.

The argument is weak because everyone in the U.S. has one legal sex regardless of her or his physical characteristics, which can be used to determine who one is allowed to marry. DOMAs typically do not contain any particular definition of legal sex, leaving it for the Courts to determine when there's any doubt. An intersex individual may have a case arguing that her or his legal sex was determined wrongly, but that won't make DOMAs fall apart.

Further, this sort of gimmicky, authoritarian use of pop science and pseudo-science to promote social agenda is exactly what enrages the anti-gay side and leads to the deterioration of civic debate. If we oppose DOMA, it must be because we believe as I do deep in our hearts that same-sex couples justly deserve equal treatment under law to opposite-sex couples, and not because it's scientifically difficult to define precisely whom to hate or to discriminate. The problem with DOMA is not that it's ambiguous, but that it's discriminatory.

Arguing that "there is no clear definition of the gender divide" will not win the minds and hearts of those who oppose marriage equality; it only encourages more clever wording in these laws. We need to appeal to people's sense of decency, fairness and humanity if we were ever to win this debate.

Emi Koyama

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#93: “Intellectual Diversity” vs. Academic Freedom

Forum: SWOP-USA list

Date: 04/13/2007

Below is an exchange over Virginia Commonwealth University provost and vice president's decision to prohibit Sex Workers' Art Show to be hosted at the institution, in response to complaints from students' parents and local politicians.

On Mar 30, 2007, at 11:27 AM, Holly Pottle wrote:

Gee, I wonder if there's the same level of outrage about college/university money going toward supporting the “anti's” events, such as paying “anti's” to come and speak or the feminist anti-pornography conference that appeared to be presented by Wheelock College. Is there the same level of outrage about colleges/universities paying professors, such as Gail Dines and Katherine MacKinnon, to be on the faculty and promote their anti-sex work agendas? If the anti's have the right to be on college/university campuses, then so do we. It seems like there's a major double standard going on.

Actually, anti-porn/anti-prostitution feminist scholars and speakers aren't necessarily loved by universities either, and their academic positions and credentials are constantly being challenged.

Further, I'm weary of the argument that says “if the anti-porn speakers/scholars have the right to be on campus, so do the other side”—this is precisely the rhetoric of the so-called “intellectual diversity” movement, which is funded and coordinated by far-right think tanks and foundations, and is arguably the worst threat facing academic freedom today. If you don't know what I'm talking about, google “intellectual diversity” and you'll see what I mean. We need to stay as far away as possible from these folks.

Also, while the Sex Workers Art Show is intended to be about breaking down stereotypes and raising awareness, I've heard at more than a few campuses that many students perceived it simply as a strip show that is slightly preachy. Conversations like “did you see the strip show last night?” are common, according to the students I've spoken to. So I can't really say that some parents' responses or the school's position that the content of the show was not something administrators' had expected are completely unreasonable. (I don't mean to defend their banning of SWAS though—I think it should be up to the students, not parents, administrators or politicians, to decide whether or not to invite SWAS again.)

- ek

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Date: 04/14/2007

On Apr 14, 2007, at 3:16 AM, Starchild wrote:

The movement for intellectual diversity isn't just supported by the far right. Lots of Libertarians, as well as principled people on the left, support it too. Partly because our views also tend to be shut out at American universities, but also because it's the right thing to do.

[snip]

Besides, more than a few sex workers think conservatives have some good points, just as leftists do. [snip] But even if you believe in using government aggression to forcibly redistribute wealth, and additionally don't believe in the right to self-defense or any of the other freedoms typically advocated by people on the right, it's pretty hard to argue with the idea that university campuses should generally be places where students can be exposed to a wide range of political and intellectual views, rather than places where a single ideology dominates, whether it be liberal, conservative, libertarian, or whatever.

Starchild,

Obviously, if you define "intellectual diversity" to mean students' individual freedom to express their political views freely, then many people other than the far right would support such thing. But that is precisely how the far right deceives the public: when they say intellectual diversity, they aren't actually promoting more freedom, but less. What they advocate for isn't tolerance for unpopular political views, as they sometimes claim, but the suppression of academic freedom on campuses.

I can see that you are using the term "intellectual diversity" to mean something other than what is being promoted on campuses by the nationally coordinated far-right political machine, but it's disingenuous to not acknowledge that the vast majority of those proclaiming such position want to shut out libertarian views as well as liberal ones. And what are libertarians doing defending a political movement that believes in using government aggression to forcibly redistribute political expression on campuses anyway?

If it is the suppression of conservative or libertarian views (or any political views for that matter) that you are concerned about, then we already have the language for that: freedom of speech, or academic freedom in the case of speech on campuses. The "intellectual diversity" movement is not about freedom, but about promotion of far-right political ideology and the censorship of political views of college professors and student groups alike.

- ek
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#94: Cynicism in the Anti-DV Movement

Forum: CAVNET

Date: 05/29/2007

Below is part of the discussion about a domestic violence conference being organized by a group of anti-feminist scholars and "men's rights" activists.

Hi Molly,

On May 29, 2007, at 6:34 AM, Molly Dragiewicz wrote:

This is not a legitimate conference. The speaker slate is made up of people who are virulently opposed to feminism and/or who claim that women are as violent as men, and the organization was created by fathers rights activists and a couple of scholars who actively attacked and continue to attack VAWA and other laws and services for battered women and the research that demonstrates that violence is gendered.

Looking at the flier for this conference as well as its website, I do recognize the anti-feminist bent. However, many of the topics listed (such as misuse of restraining order, negative effects of mandatory arrest, power and control within the domestic violence industry, etc.) are important issues to me as a feminist and it has been extremely frustrating trying to address them within the mainstream anti-DV movement.

Perhaps they don't really care about the social justice aspect of these issues and are cynically using them as weapons to discredit the movement against domestic violence, but I wish that the mainstream anti-DV movement took more interest in addressing these issues (and didn't rely so much on law enforcement and bureaucracy) so that they can't be appropriated by these people.

I agree that this is not a group that I'd like to associate with because I think it is sexist and disingenuous, and I appreciate you for pointing that out. But I am also concerned about the notion of "legitimacy" being applied here: I also question the current state of VAWA under Alberto Gonzales at DOJ, reliance on the law enforcement in the neoliberalist state, mandatory reporting and arrest laws that deprive choice from victims, disproportionate focus on shelters, etc., from a feminist social justice standpoint, and I fear being denounced as "illegitimate" for voicing these views.

Emi Koyama

<http://eminism.org/>

Date: 05/29/2007

On May 29, 2007, at 2:48 PM, Molly Dragiewicz wrote:

Hi Emi,

Feminist scholars and activists are among those most critical of the practices you name, but I also understand that many advocacy organizations have resorted to damage control and using the available tools rather than focusing on broad based social change. Many people in the mainstream DV movement have that same concern. I fear that in this context however these issues are being used cynically. The issues are legitimate but presenting a group and event as something that it is not is not. You present your views as they really are and make no attempt to disguise your beliefs, where you are coming from, the issues that you think are important, and advocate what you think should happen and why. I am all for open debate and discussion about the best approaches and remedies, but I seriously doubt it will be found at that event where the common denominator is the denial that gender and power are relevant to violence.

Hi Molly,

Thanks for your comments. I also view their interest in exploring problems with the law enforcement approach (or same-sex DV for that matter) as cynical, but there is also cynicism on the part of mainstream anti-violence organizations that promote the interest of neoliberalist state (in fact, I feel that neoliberalism to be inseparable from its cynicism)...

For example, it was RAINN and other anti-rape groups that promoted the Genetic Fingerprint Act portion of VAWA in its current edition, which basically made it easier for the state to create a database of DNA information anyone of detained—and not necessarily indicted or convicted—by the police. Of course, the end result would be a huge database of mostly Black or Latino/a youth and young adults who are for the most part innocent of any crimes. I find that approach—and the fact none of the anti-DV groups made it an issue when they emailed me urging to call the Congress in support of VAWA renewal—cynical.

- ek

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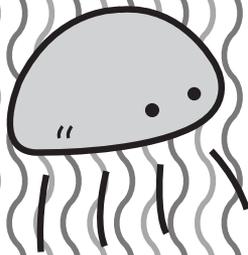
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