



07 January 2024

QUEER THEORY AND NFWI MANDATES PERTAINING TO CHILD ABUSE

This is the second in a series of essays about the problematic nature of the National Federation of Women's Institutes allowing trans-identifying men to join, rather than following the single sex provisions contained in the Equality Act 2010.

In this essay I will address the founding texts of Queer Theory and the 'queering of childhood' in relation to WI mandates. In the previous essay I briefly explained Queer theory as one form of gender identity ideology and how it seeks to disrupt societal norms.

I am not insinuating that people with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment or all those who believe in Queer theory are paedophiles, or their apologists. But it is important to understand the underlying parts of a theory the NFWI accepts and promotes, and how this is diametrically opposed to what the Women's Institute stands (or used to stand) for. Predatory men (men are responsible for the vast majority of sex crimes^[1]) are manipulative and dangerous and will exploit any cracks in the system. Safeguarding only works if it applies to everyone, and the NFWI's connection to Queer theory, in the form of allowing trans-identifying males into the organisation, and promoting organisations that align with it needs interrogating.

It came to light on 3 January 2024 that the WI were promoting an [event](#)^[2] where a woman called Nettie Pollard was due to be part of a round table discussion. An individual, called Nettie Pollard, was a prominent member of the Paedophile Information Exchange and had written an essay defending sex between adults and children in the 1990s. The NFWI were informed via [Twitter/X](#)^[3] users (not the organisers, which appears to be London South Bank University) and Nettie Pollard has been removed from the list of participants. The organisation hosting the event had either not carried out proper background checks on invited and named participants, or had and did not see these views as contentious. The NFWI needs to ensure the Women's Institute does not become tainted by association with these organisations and their poor judgement, and, by doing so, breach the WI's own safeguarding policy. There was a lot of outrage on Twitter/X that the NFWI would align itself with an organisation promoting such views.

I do not think that the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL now Liberty) understood the implications of the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) infiltrating their movement in the 1970s and 1980s. But this happened, and if women such as Harriet Harman can be duped, it shows how manipulative predators are, and how they hide in plain sight. Please read the links provided in Further Information about the history of PIE and NCCL which explains some of the scandal.

The cultural landscape is full of men who have abused children. [Roman Polanski](#)^[4], [Eric Gill](#)^[5], and [Woody Allen](#)^[6] are to name a few. Their so-called genius is often used as an excuse to continue to

celebrate their work. The reality is society often ignores the victims and survivors, and papers over the devastation these men cause. In the worst cases institutions (such as the Catholic church, and the BBC) ignore victims and suppress investigations to protect the institution's reputation, and women who speak out are vilified, such as Sinnéad O'Connor.

QUEER THEORY

Queer in this context queer is not a synonym for gay, but for existing outside societal norms, which are deemed to be heterosexual and accepting the reality of sexed bodies. Queer theorists often view both sexuality and sex as both fluid or as a spectrum and reject heteronormativity. Queer theory is a field of post-structuralist critical theory. In simple terms post structuralist philosophy believes that words create reality rather than describe it. It has no scientific basis and comes from philosophical arguments. [Queer theory](#) questions "the perception that cisgender and heterosexual identities are in any sense "standard"^[7]." It is a recent field of study and the first Queer theory conference was in 1990.

Queer theory seeks to dismantle "social norms" and blur boundaries, it critiques what was labelled as "normal". This is not limited to accepting that homosexual people deserve the same rights as heterosexual people, but that **all** societal norms require dismantling, including paedophilia (which is reframed as intergenerational or cross generational sex) and incest.

Queer theory prioritises the individual's construct of gender, rather than the material reality of the sexed body, it delinks gender (a social construct), from sex (reality).

Some of queer theory's founding and most prominent theorists are:

Michel Foucault

Widely seen as the godfather of Queer theory, [Michel Foucault](#)^[8] argued that identity was a form of subjugation and a way of exercising power over people, preventing them from moving outside fixed boundaries. Foucault theorised that power was not dictated from above and unilateral, but relational and ubiquitous. Power and prohibition is moveable and pervasive and constructed through discourse. Using Foucault's critique privileged women are able to oppress trans-identifying males by not allowing them access to women-only spaces. The reality is that it is fundamental to a woman's human rights to peacefully self-assemble with other women, and exclude males, however they identify. Women's rights depend on women being able to set boundaries that exclude men.

In a chapter from her PhD thesis prominent socialist feminist [Jane Clare Jones](#) analyses Foucault's *History of Sexualities*. She discusses how Foucault wrote about a "little girl" who was sexually assaulted by a farm hand. Foucault reverses the victim offender order, obscures the sexual assault by using the passive voice, and calls the reporting of the offence "pettiness". Later when Foucault's lectures were published more information was given about the offence, and he reassures the listener the offender "very decently gives four *sous* to the little girl."^[9]

In 1977 Foucault petitioned the French Government to reduce the age of consent to as low as six years old. In 1978 made the same claims in a radio broadcast, and likened laws protecting children from sexual abuse as similar to Jim Crow laws in the United States^[10].

Gayle Rubin - Thinking Sex

Widely seen as the founding text of Queer theory, in her 1984 essay 'Thinking Sex', American [Gayle Rubin](#)^[11] spoke about the hierarchy of sexual acts, she included "same generation" sex acts as being within a "Charmed Circle". She wrote:

"The Supreme Court has also rules that it is a constitutional right to possess obscene material for personal use, some child pornography laws prohibit even the private possession of any sexual material involving minors"^[12]

Rubin calls someone who took photographs of a seven year old boy masturbating a victim of the child pornography laws, this is child abuse. She argues for sympathy with "actual boy lovers" saying "boy lovers are so stigmatized that it is difficult to find defenders for their civil liberties"^[13].

In the UK it is [illegal for those under 18](#)^[14] to share nudes or semi-nudes of themselves with a peer under the age of 18, if they are shared with an adult over the age of 18, this falls under child sexual abuse laws. According to Rubin, this would be part of a moral panic over the sexualisation of children.

Rubin claims those who are not in the Charmed Circle are oppressed, as per Foucault's relational power structures, and "the lowliest of all, those whose eroticism transgresses generational boundaries"^[15], she argues against this "stigmatisation".

Rubin does not use the words child abuse, nor paedophilia, which she undoubtedly argues for, but euphemistic terms such as cross generational sex and child pornography (images of child sex abuse). This is in part to normalise and desensitise the reader to what are shocking ideas. She promotes [Kinsey](#)^[16], who falsified research to legitimise child sexual abuse. She also decries incest laws. You can access Rubin's essay on the [International Paedophile and Child Emancipation](#) (IPCE)^[17] website.

Pat Califia - The Culture of Radical Sex

[Pat Califia](#)^[18] is another writer feted by queer theorists, she is a trans-identifying female. She has described parents as "policing the sex lives of their children" stating that "children are celibate because their parents prevent them from playing with other little kids or adults". There is worse contained in the essay The Culture of Radical Sex (published in 1994) again I was able to access this essay from the [International Paedophile and Child Emancipation](#)^[19] website. Califia also references Kinsey.

The IPCE website does not contain any images, and "promotes do no harm", however, its contents may be distressing, especially to survivors of child sexual abuse, and do not make for pleasant reading.

Judith Butler - Gender Trouble, Competing Universalities and Sexual Consent

From the 1990s onwards [Judith Butler](#)^[20] built on existing queer theory with her theory of gender as a performance, Butler is now widely seen as the modern queer theory guru.

Judith Butler uses the term “intergenerational sex” as a euphemism for child sexual abuse and also writes that incest should be made socially acceptable. She wrote in Gender Trouble

“The incest taboo is the juridical law that is said both to prohibit incestuous desires and to construct certain gendered subjectivities through the mechanism of compulsory identification. But, what is to guarantee the universality or necessity of this law?”^[21]

Laws against incest are to protect children against interfamilial sexual abuse, frequently child sexual abuse is “committed by close relatives or those known to the victim^[22].” To blur the edges these arguments are often sandwiched in amongst other reasonable ones such as increased testing and research into HIV/AIDS. This makes it harder to fight the other arguments such as public zones of sexual exchange and intergenerational sex.

In 2011 she also wrote in general terms that consent was problematic, writing “they have consented, but do not like that they have^[23].” In the context of children this misunderstands the dynamics behind grooming, and that children lack the capacity to understand the implications of their abuse. This has echoes of the child sex abuse scandals where West Yorkshire Police and social services ignored young teenage girls being abused by gangs of men^[24], as the girls did not entirely recognise the abuse they were suffering.

In the context of adults it promotes transgressing sexual boundaries, this is rape culture under a different name.

Gendered Intelligence and the WI

MyWI contains links to Gendered Intelligence in the [“Let’s Talk About” Celebrating LGBT History month](#)^[25]. Gendered Intelligence promotes a Butler/Queer theory form of gender identity ideology by stating “gender is not something that you are, or have, but is something that you do”^[26]. It runs [swimming sessions](#)^[27] for groups aged between 8 to 25 which are “trans only”, this is a safeguarding red flag. Organisations should not allow groups with such large age gaps to freely mix. Gendered Intelligence is also signposted on the NFWI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. The NFWI should not be aligning itself, or promoting, such organisations, by doing so it may be in breach of its own Safeguarding and Ethical Policies.

THE WI MANDATES AFFECTED BY THIS - taken from [NFWI Mandates from 1918 to date](#)^[28]

By leaning into Queer theory, the NFWI could be in danger of undermining the following mandates, these are all pertain to child abuse, age of consent, rape, which Queer theory seeks to normalise.

Child Abuse

That as the sentences in cases of even the grossest cruelty to children are not of a severe enough nature, representation be made by the NFWI to the Home Secretary asking him to issue a circular to Justices urging that adequate sentences be passed against persons found guilty of serious offences against children. Westmill WI – Hertfordshire Federation May 1923

That this meeting is of the opinion that the punishment imposed in cases of cruelty to children, and especially with regard to criminal assault, is far from adequate. Brentwood WI Centre – Essex Federation May 1930

That this meeting voices its concern at the number of cases of cruelty to, and neglect of, children and urges the Home Secretary, Local Authorities and those responsible for the administration of justice to consider speedier and more adequate means of investigation and dealing with such offences. The meeting reminds Women's Institute members of the necessity of reporting any cases of ill-treatment or neglect before it is too late. Alphington WI – Devon Federation May 1952

This meeting urges that all WI members remain alert to an increasing incidence of child abuse and to their responsibility to report any such incident, which may come to their notice, to the appropriate agency. Longhoughton WI – Northumberland Federation June 1984

This meeting urges the judiciary of this country to impose stiffer penalties on those convicted of offences against children especially those involving sexual abuse. Rock and South Charlton WI – Northumberland Federation June 1986

Age of consent

That this Annual Meeting of the NFWI records its satisfaction that the Government has introduced a Criminal Law Amendment Bill and now begs that the necessary time may be granted in order that this Bill may pass through all its stages and become law this session. This meeting specially urges the importance of Clause 2, as the defence at present allowed, that the defendant had reasonable cause to believe that a girl was over the age specified by law for her protection, has led to innumerable miscarriages of justice. Staffordshire Federation May 1922

This meeting urges that the age of consent for heterosexual intercourse remains at sixteen. Shipton under Wychwood – Oxfordshire Federation (Urgency Resolution) June 1975

Violence against Women

The NFWI supports the Sexual Offences (Amendment) bill asking for changes in the law as it relates to rape. Farnham WI – Essex Federation (Urgency Resolution) June 1975

This meeting views with great concern the increasing incidence of rape and urges the Lord Chief Justice to ensure that the sentences passed adequately reflect the extremely serious nature of the offence. Sefton WI – Lancashire Federation June 1988

Trafficking of women and children

In view of the constantly increasing trafficking of human beings, particularly women and children, for sexual exploitation and forced labour, this meeting urges HM Government to put into place legislation to combat trafficking and support victims, and urges all WI members to raise public awareness of this issue. West Yorkshire Federation 2004

CONCLUSION

The harm caused to children by adult sexual contact is not dependent on the social context, it is not wrong because it is illegal, it is illegal because it is intrinsically wrong and damaging to children. Queer theory denies this, and promotes that children can consent to sexual contact with adults, and even family members. This comes from a Kinsey based approach, that sex is the most important good, this trumps consent, and is evidenced by Pat Califia and Gayle Rubin directly

referencing him, and Judith Butler follows this pattern. It is abhorrent that these theorists have sought to normalise and de-stigmatise child sex abuse.

The NFWI should be concerned about an ideology that attempts to systematically dismantle societal norms, especially those surrounding the sexual boundaries of children and adults. Queer theory undermines at least 10 of the mandates, as demonstrated by the above. The NFWI should not align itself with it, nor with any organisation influenced by it.

The NFWI will claim that it does not promote Queer theory, the evidence points otherwise. CEO Melissa Green stated the mantra “transgender women are women” in the context of trans-identified males joining the WI. She echoes the belief that individual gender identities are more important than women’s material reality, “being part of the WI is about the experience of being a woman, and that is a combination of both biology and lived experience^[29]”. When I questioned her about this comment, no answer was given, it was ignored.

The NFWI has included sex as a protected characteristic in its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy, but only as a passing comment, when it should rely on it if it wants to claim it uses its exemption as it does on page 6 of the policy. There is no definition of a woman in the EDI policy, because to include the legal definition^[30] would stop men with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment from joining.

The NFWI has had to take action due to partnering with organisations that are accepting of Queer theory, but continues to promote Gendered Intelligence.

Again, I do not accuse those with transgender identities of being either paedophiles, nor their apologists. But it must be recognised that no prominent proponent of Queer theory has condemned paedophilia, but rather have sought to “queer childhood”. It beggars belief that the NFWI does not understand the context of Queer theory and aligns itself to it. Finally, how long before the NFWI does unwittingly share or platform someone of the ilk of Nettie Pollard, and destroys the reputation of the Women’s Institute. The NFWI must take stock of the organisations that it partners with and ensure that any aspects of this pernicious theory are rooted out.

References

1. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/sexualoffencesprevalenceandtrendsenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2022>
2. <https://twitter.com/WomensInstitute/status/1742151042437960039>
3. <https://twitter.com/E8Emma/status/1742474469073973438>
4. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Polanski_sexual_abuse_case
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/apr/09/eric-gill-the-body-ditchling-exhibition-rachel-cooke>
6. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woody_Allen_sexual_abuse_allegation
7. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queer_theory
8. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michel_Foucault
9. <https://janeclarejones.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/queerfoucault-feminismrape.pdf>
10. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michel_Foucault#Views_on_underage_sex
11. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gayle_Rubin
12. Gayle Rubin, *Thinking Sex: The Gay and Lesbian Reader* Routledge 1993 page 7
13. Gayle Rubin, *Thinking Sex: The Gay and Lesbian Reader* Routledge 1993 page 8
14. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>
15. Gayle Rubin, *Thinking Sex: The Gay and Lesbian Reader* Routledge 1993 page 12
16. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Kinsey
17. https://www.ipce.info/library_3/files/rubin/rubin_frame.htm
18. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Califia
19. https://www.ipce.info/ipceweb/Library/califa_aoc_frame.htm
20. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judith_Butler
21. J. Butler, *Gender Trouble* (London, Routledge, 2000), p. 96
22. <https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2017/07/Its-a-lonely-journey-REA-on-Intrafamilial-child-sexual-abuse.pdf>
23. J. Butler, 'Sexual Consent: Some Thoughts on Psychoanalysis and Law', *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*, Volume 21, Number 2 (2011), abstract.
24. <https://www.switalskis.com/investigations-into-child-sexual-abuse-in-west-yorkshire/>
25. <https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/running-your-wi/lets-talk-about-educational-resources/lgbt-celebrating-lgbt-history-month>
26. <https://genderedintelligence.co.uk/about-us/our-aims>
27. <https://genderedintelligence.co.uk/swimming>
28. https://www.thewi.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/558819/NFWI-Mandates-from-1918-to-date-2021.pdf
29. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/apr/18/womens-institute-to-continue-to-celebrate-trans-gender-women-amid-inclusivity-row>
30. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/212?view=plain>

Further Information

How the Paedophile Information Exchange infiltrated the National Council for Civil Liberties.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-26352378>

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/mar/02/how-paedophiles-infiltrated-the-left-harriet-harm-an-patricia-hewitt>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3448932/Paedophile-campaigner-called-sex-children-legalised-joined-Labour-party-Party-figures-said-horrified-criminal-slipped-call-kicked-out.html>

Dorset Humanists hosted Dr Sarah Goode, her talk “Hidden Knowledge: What We Ought to Know about Paedophiles” is very interesting, and highlights Queer theory in universities at the end.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjicTDr4rZE&t=4219s&ab_channel=DorsetHumanists

Uncommon Ground Media Dr Em writes extensively about Queer Theory being a trojan horse for men’s sexual appetites.

<https://uncommongroundmedia.com/the-trojan-unicorn-queer-theory-and-paedophilia-part-i-dr-em/>

Malcolm Clark on X about Nettie Pollard

<https://twitter.com/TwisterFilm/status/1541857198799785986>