

# **PEDOPHILIA, AN ECONOMIC EPIPHENOMENON?**

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In nineteenth century society, pedophilia was not only a crime, it was a scary taboo. But often a taboo is nothing more than an instrument of suppression, hiding unresolved social and relational issues. In his piece, "The Master Builder", Henrik Ibsen touches with demure delicacy and Victorian guilt on this social, and possibly personal, conflict. Today, the taboo is still there, evermore inflated by media hype, but the ambivalence of our society towards minors cannot escape an unbiased regard. On the one hand, children have gained the status of a spoilt protected species whose life should be shielded from any potential stress, physical and psychic. On the other hand, they are abused by this very complaisance as much as by a concealed exploitation not devoid of paedophilic nuances. In analyzing this puzzling anomaly, economics can be a better tool than psychology. Children, in fact, attract the attention of ethics as much as the greed of the market. It is an asymmetrical competition where the homo ethicus fights with witch hunts and declarations, while the homo economicus plays with money, because children are powerful objects of consumerism and consumers themselves.

Hordes of adults are there, in the market, trying to seduce these innocent consumers of toys, sports, videos, TV and much more. No means are spared, from sexy dolls to violent video games and cartoons. And, not yet in secondary school, they are brought into the sinful adult world of designers, brands and fashion. And here we are, kids as objects for the satisfaction of adult needs, economic and else. Aren't we getting closer and closer to the undefined land of pedophilia? And, is not playing with kids' fashion reminiscent of Lewis Carroll's (Charles Dodgson) ambiguous photographs? Perhaps, consumeristic pedophilia is part of the providential plan that the invisible hand of the market is providing for our good or, rather, this is only a sign that our civilization is eventually overcoming this ancestral taboo. Economics, or psychosocial sciences, one day, will tell us. In the meantime, a European elderly prime minister, not at all embarrassed by his habit of frequenting underage minors, is addressing the issue from a novel perspective: politics.

