

Subjectivity Under Erasure: History, Adolescent Masculinity, and Teacher-Student Sex

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In recent years there has been a spate, some say even an "epidemic" in the West, of criminal cases involving female teachers in sexual relationships with underage male students. In the US alone there have been over fifty such recent cases, the most famous being that of **Mary Kay Letournea**, a 34-year-old elementary school teacher who had an affair with a 12-year-old pupil, **Vili Fualaau**. Letournea spent seven and a half years in prison for statutory, or child, rape and gave birth to two children fathered by Fualaau. After her release the pair, now aged 43 and 22 respectively, are apparently happily married and living in a million dollar sea-side home in Seattle. While occupying the extreme end of the spectrum of recent cases, the Letournea-Vila example, and others like it, nonetheless signal a profound cultural and historical shift in the ways in which many societies are identifying, making sense of, and managing such intergenerational relationships. This paper is concerned with examining this cultural and historical shift not for what it might be telling us about the apparent rise in 'predatory' sexual behaviour of female teachers, but rather, for what it might be telling us about adolescent sexuality and subjectivity.

The paper asks **why it has been difficult to find a place for the study, and articulation, of adolescent subjectivity, and what are the effects of this scenario?** Rather than address these questions through a history of adolescent subjectivity, I will instead perform (something of) a micro-history of the present. Reading a recent Australian teacher-student sex scandal, I examine **how an erasure of adolescent subjectivity, and intersubjective dynamics, is being used to further a particular set of historical, political, and ideological forces, and how this provides the foundations for misreadings of history.**

Date: 8 November 2006 (Wed)

Time: 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**Venue: Room 122,
 Chen Kou Bun Building
 (enter through Sino
 Building),
 Chung Chi College, CUHK**

*** Please feel free to bring your lunch box
 or sandwiches to eat during the seminar.**

*** All interested are welcome!**

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