**I have a few issues with some things written by Margo Kaplan in her N.Y. Times article about pedophilia.**

***A second misconception is that pedophilia is a choice.***

**Margo, what evidence do you offer to support your assertion that pedophilia is not a choice?**

***Recent research, while often limited to sex offenders — because of the stigma of pedophilia — suggests that the disorder may have neurological origins.***

**Margo, even if researchers can prove that pedophilia does have neurological origins, you would still be a long way from being able to prove that those people do not have a choice.**

***Pedophilia could result from a failure in the brain to identify which environmental stimuli should provoke a sexual response.***

**Margo, nice supposition. But again, even if true, that's a long way from denying them the power of choice.**

***M.R.I.s of sex offenders with pedophilia show fewer of the neural pathways known as white matter in their brains.***

**Margo, that is also true of victims of multiple sclerosis, and other neurodegenerative diseases as well. So what?**

**You have only provided a correlation, and as was just pointed out, not one that is specific to pedophilia. To support your assertion, you need to provide a link to causation. What evidence do you have linking pedophilia to reduced white matter?**

***Men with pedophilia are three times more likely to be left-handed or ambidextrous, a finding that strongly suggests a neurological cause.***

**Margo, change the word "cause" to "factor" and I'm onboard.**

**When left-handed parents have children, only a quarter of the offspring will be left-handed. So it is not a "cause" but a "factor."**

***Some findings also suggest that disturbances in neurodevelopment in utero or early childhood increase the risk of pedophilia. Studies have also shown that men with pedophilia have, on average, lower scores on tests of visual-spatial ability and verbal memory.***

**Margo, many people have lower scores on those tests, yet they are not pedophiles. You made the same mistake as you did earlier: you are data-mining correlations and then assuming causation.**

***While treatment cannot eliminate a pedophile’s sexual interests, a combination of cognitive-behavioral therapy and medication can help him to manage urges and avoid committing crimes.***

**Margo, if the pedophile has no choice, as you claimed earlier, then how can therapy and medication change his behavior?**

**The only way they could do that is**

**1) if they magically gave him the power to choose, or**

**2) they removed his power of choice and forcibly stopped him**

 **from acting on his urges.**

***A pedophile should be held responsible for his conduct — but not for the underlying attraction.***

**Margo, that is true for everything. Thought crimes have been a mainstay of religions, for example: execution for blasphemy; which has been practiced by Judaism and Christianity in the past, and is still occurring in Islam today.**

**But if you take the position that actions are not a choice, as many prominent Atheists do (like Sam Harris), then on what grounds can you justify punishing anyone who commits any criminal act?**

**You couldn't Margo ... civilization would return to the Stone Age.**