



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 2, 2023

## In Balenciaga's Wake, ANOTHER Fashion House Sexualizes Children

On the heels of a condemned and canceled advertising effort by Spanish designer Balenciaga that featured little children in [bondage gear](#), fashion house Benetton somehow fancied it a good idea to release an ad showing young girls posing inappropriately in underwear. The picture created an uproar, with one actress critic saying that it amounted to “sexualizing little kids.” But while many observers are shocked by such images, is it really shocking that society has reached this point given our long-standing cultural trajectory?



*Newsweek* [reports](#) on the Benetton story:

Actress Busy Philipps slammed Italian casual-wear brand Benetton for “sexualizing” children, and the company has since removed the offending posts.

Philipps took to her Instagram stories on the morning of Christmas Eve to express her outrage at the Instagram photos that showed children posing in underwear while “looking like adults.”

The photos showed two child models which Philipps believed to be near the ages of her own kids, Birdie, 14, and Cricket, nine.

The younger child posed in a cotton bra and underwear set with a zip-up hoodie draped down her arms, while the older girl wore a robe and teddy bear T-shirt that was partly tucked into her underwear.

Below is the picture in question, with parts of the children's bodies blurred out for propriety's sake.

Providing more detail, *Newsweek* continues:

Philipps, best-known for her television roles in series such as *Freaks and Geeks*, *Dawson's Creek* and *Cougar Town*, told her followers it was so “f\*\*\*\*\* up” and that she never normally comments on “businesses' Instagrams.”

“I just saw this f\*\*\*\*\* Benetton ad. Holy s\*\*\*, what is wrong with everybody? Having these is very stupid, it's sexualizing little kids. What is happening?” she stated.

“For the record, I don't think like all pictures of kids, wearing bathing suits, or even underwear would be sexualizing.”

Philipps then cited other campaigns done by brands such as Gap, which she describes as



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“appropriate and cute.”

“I don’t know where the disconnect is with people and they’re like, ‘well, if you see that [sexualization], then that’s your problem’. You’re having children pose like adults whilst wearing underwear? Maybe I’m just hyper aware of that now. Obviously, my kids are the same age and it freaks me out.”

Other observers reacted similarly, though, thankfully, while resisting any temptation toward vulgarity.

Yet other respondents, such as those below, added more perspective.

Anything for money and worldly success? Of course, though, given the numerous parents today who facilitate their children’s pretensions to switching sexes, this behavior is not surprising.

Other critics on social media pointed out that such ads aren’t unprecedented for Benetton, providing the example below.

(Hat tip for the tweets: [TRTWorld](#).)

Yet all these, the 1991 ad included, have yet other precedents. For in reality, these cultural cancers are like actual ones: By the time most people notice the symptoms, they’re already somewhat advanced; meaning, there were *earlier stages* — including ones many cultural diagnosticians simply won’t recognize as disease.

We can start with bug expert-turned-sex “researcher” Alfred Kinsey, who claimed that children are “sexual from birth.” Kinsey helped jump start the Sexual Devolution with his (in)famous books *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953), through which he purported to demonstrate that perversion was actually common in America.

Unbeknownst to most even today, however, Kinsey was a scientific fraud who peddled invalid data. Worse still, his team was actually a pedophile operation that used “science” as a cover, the proof being its presentation of its “Table 34,” on which it recorded *children’s* sexual responses. You can use your imagination as to how such “data” was “collected,” but that information and more are presented in my 2009 essay “[According to Kinsey, Deviancy Is the New Normal](#).”

Ever since Kinsey’s time, increasing child sexualization has been a reality. Most of it was (and still is) considered innocent TV fare, too.

Consider that in pre-1950s films and shows, you wouldn’t even see dating portrayed when at issue were minors. This changed a bit in the ’50s, with older teens such as *Leave It to Beaver’s* Wally Cleaver portrayed as dating (though nothing sexual was ever shown); nonetheless, it was still unthinkable to thus present preteens or even young teens.

This changed beginning mainly in the ’80s, and since then it has been common to portray dating among actual children. Note here that “dating” isn’t “courting,” which is now considered passé, like morality in general, and is more formal (and for which the kids in question are also too young); dating implicitly involves sexual activity — whether that’s “first base” or something more. The point is that this is *the placing of children in adult scenarios*.



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A most egregious example is the 1998 film *Great Expectations*, which [portrays](#) 12-year-olds French kissing. What is the point? If it's that the lad and lass are smitten with each other, a semi-skilled writer can relate this message without inappropriate content. But given [Hollywood's pedophilia problem](#), perhaps the point is plain.

Since readers now already know why I've said I'm like *Mayberry Meets the Middle Ages* (I'm right, though), I'll address one more matter: Philipps' profanity use while condemning Benetton also reflects the problem. Will it yield virtue when you engage in vice while combating vice? It contributes to a sinful environment and, well, polluting the water hurts all the fish — including the little fry you'd like to keep pure.



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