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‘Monster, give me my child’: How the myth of the paedophile as a monstrous stranger took shape in emerging discourses on child sexual abuse in late nineteenth-century Britain

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Abstract: In the late-nineteenth century the origins of the modern concept of child sexual abuse (CSA) started to emerge in a set of intersecting medical and legal theories concerning the notion of sexual harm to children, especially in the new science of sexology. The concept was also shaped in sensational journalism and popular fiction which dramatically exploited the medico-legal theories in works that reached a wide audience. Within this set of overlapping discourses, this article identifies the developing characterisation of the abuser, or 'paedophile', as an outsider or stranger in order to provide distance from the uncomfortable reality that CSA is typically perpetrated by family members or others well known to the victims. The article also argues that much writing about sexual harm to children, including the factual treatments, often drew on the dark metaphors of gothic writing to avoid addressing this difficult subject explicitly. In this way the figure of the monster came to stand in for the perpetrator of sexual crimes against children, with the result that the paedophile was portrayed not just as a social outsider, but as a monstrous stranger – creating a persistent, detrimental myth which kept social attention away from the most common types of abuse.

Key Words: child sexual abuse, paedophile, sexology, journalism, popular fiction, gothic

Introduction

In the late-nineteenth century, a set of intersecting medical and legal theories concerning the notion of sexual harm to children coalesced to produce what would become the modern concept of child sexual abuse (CSA). Although current understandings of CSA as a public health issue did not crystallise until considerably later, this was the period which witnessed their initial formulation, especially in the new science of sexology. Here theories of pathological sexual attraction to children began to be developed, with an 1894 medico-legal textbook making the shocking claim that the '[r]ape of children is the most frequent form of [all] sexual crime' (Chaddock 1894, 543). The concept of CSA was additionally shaped by two adjacent bodies of work which tended to reach to wider audiences: sensational journalism on violent crime, in which W.T. Stead's infamous 1885 'Maiden Tribute' exposé of child prostitution looms large, and a related strand of popular fiction which used metaphor to hint at the possibility of sexual harm to children.¹ Most research in this area to date focuses on the ways in which sexual harm to children became formulated as a discrete social problem,² or on the ways in which the abused child was understood, because, as Victoria Bates argues, '[t]he moral panic ... of the late-nineteenth century ... focused on defining and constructing the "victim" rather than the perpetrator or the crime' (2016, 12).³ However, the perpetrator of sexual harm to children – or 'paedophile' in current popular parlance – was not absent from nineteenth-century discussion of the subject and is worthy of more detailed scrutiny. This article focuses on the characterisation of this reviled figure in the set of overlapping discourses which shaped the emerging concept of CSA, revealing how the perpetrator was typically portrayed as an outsider or stranger, someone external to the family circle and even to humanity itself. Contemporary research shows that most CSA is perpetrated by family members or others well known to the victims (Kenny 2018), and the historical record suggests this was also the case in the nineteenth century (Jackson 2000, 43).

However, although domestic cases were quietly and steadily reported on in the press, far more coverage was afforded to sensational cases of stranger-committed abduction and ‘lust-murder’. Here, I demonstrate that the origins of the myth of the stranger as perpetrator can be traced to the paradoxical Victorian need to acknowledge what was increasingly being recognised as a social problem while at the same time avoiding the unthinkable reality that children could be abused by ‘respectable’ members of society in middle-class homes.

Because prevailing nineteenth-century moral codes meant that sexuality was a taboo subject, it was difficult to discuss sexual harm to children even in scientific textbooks and newspaper articles, and impossible to represent it directly in cultural works like novels. As the influential English sexologist Havelock Ellis put it of the English ‘reticence’ on the subject of sexuality, it ‘was never spoken of openly, save in veiled or poetic language’ (1897, vii). This accords with Michel Foucault’s observation of the strict ‘rhetoric of allusion and metaphor’ applied to sexuality in the nineteenth century, despite the ‘proliferation of discourses concerned with sex’ ([1976] 1990, 17-18). Therefore, as this article reveals, much writing about sexual harm to children, including the scholarly factual treatments, tended to address it obliquely using the dark metaphors of the literary tradition of gothic writing. In this way the supernatural figure of the monster could be used to stand in for the perpetrator of sexual crimes against children, with the result that the paedophile came to be portrayed not just as a social outsider, but as one who stood outside humanity altogether. Surprisingly little attention has been paid to this phenomenon in accounts of the development of nineteenth-century understandings of sexuality, with attention fixed on the articulation of the identity categories of homosexuality and subsequently heterosexuality following Foucault’s influential work.⁴ Here, I intervene to demonstrate for the first time that even as nineteenth-century medico-legal discourse played a vital role in articulating the problem of sexual harm to children as a discrete social issue, it also combined with sensational popular discourse to

produce an enduring, detrimental myth, which continues to distort public understandings of CSA.⁵ This genealogy of the myth's origins is enabled by comparative analysis of three sets of cross-pollinating sources, which have not been read together in this context before, to identify a homology between medical and criminological accounts of the perpetrator and the tropes of the New Journalism and late nineteenth-century gothic fiction. The sources comprise key sexological texts, such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing's ground-breaking medico-legal textbook *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886-1903); sensational newspaper reportage, including that on a number of shocking child sexual murders in the 1890s; and a body of late nineteenth-century popular gothic tales which depict monsters preying on children, including Bram Stoker's bestselling *Dracula* (1897). Emerging from these sources, the myth of the perpetrator as a monstrous stranger played a powerful role in distracting attention from the most common types of abuse and exculpating wider society by displacing blame onto the aberrant individual, and despite shifts in understandings of CSA subsequently, its legacy persists.

Defining Childhood and Abuse

Discussing CSA in a nineteenth-century context immediately raises issues of definition concerning what constituted a child – a cultural construction in flux over time (Hennegan 2012, 268; Bates 2016, 8-11) – and also concerning what constituted abuse (Bourke 2007, 8-10), with marked differences as well as similarities between current and Victorian conceptions. From this perspective, I will open by briefly considering scholarly understandings of what both terms signified to Victorian society, and how a specific category of abuse involving sexual harm to children emerged based on viewing age as a key determinant of appropriate sexual relations. From there the article will proceed to shed new

light on the ways in which individuals deemed to be acting in a sexually abusive manner towards children were characterised in the discourses of sexology and criminology, sensational journalism and popular fiction.⁶

As is well established, the Romantic conception of childhood as a perfect, innocent state requiring special protection gained wide cultural currency during the nineteenth century – a view abundantly realised in the 1846 portrait of the radiant royal children shown in Figure 1. This idealisation remained in tension with earlier puritanical understandings of the child as inherently sinful (Benziman 2012, 1-4), and with the harsh realities arising from extensive child poverty – exemplified by the illustration of the child scavenger or ‘mud-lark’ from an 1851 social reform treatise (Figure 2). The resulting ambivalence tinges the mud-lark illustration – its subject is not just pitiable, but also knowing and slightly threatening – and can be traced partially to social inequalities. As Eric Hopkins has shown, childhood was in many senses a middle-class luxury unavailable to or prematurely terminated for the major population demographic constituted by working-class children (1994, 1-8).⁷ They were deemed to have lost their innocence too early due to overcrowded domestic conditions (which implied corrupting exposure to adult sexual activity), and necessary participation in adult working life, which included the booming illegal sex industry (Hughes 2017, 360; Bartley 2000, 85-8). As the crusading journalist Stead later put it of ‘slum’ children: ‘Born in the fetid atmosphere of a crowded cellar, suckled on gin, and cradled in the gutter, they never have a chance’ (1883, 1). Thanks to the voluble condemnation of these circumstances by Stead and other prominent middle-class social reform campaigners, the realities of child neglect, exploitation, and physical and sexual abuse were well known, despite the widespread idealisation of the (middle-class) child.

Ambivalent Victorian conceptions of childhood and abusive behaviour are also evident in the legislative sphere. In terms of legal competence, for most of the nineteenth

century persons under seven years of age were considered incapable of committing a felony; between seven and fourteen this presumption held, but was contestable; while boys under fourteen were deemed incapable of committing rape. As James Kincaid argues, this reveals that childhood was implicitly defined sexually in terms of pre-pubescence (1992, 68-70). Child abuse, or 'cruelty' as it was referred to, obtained legal definition in the 1889 Prevention of Cruelty to, and Protection of, Children Act, advocated for by the newly-established National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Flegel 2009, 21-2). The act defined a child as 'a boy under the age of fourteen years, or ... a girl under the age of sixteen years', while cruelty was understood as wilful ill-treatment, neglect, abandonment, or exposure of the child to 'unnecessary suffering, or injury to ... health'. Evolving legislation also encoded what was considered inappropriate sexual behaviour towards female children: under the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act, unlawful carnal knowledge of a girl under 10 was a felony, and of a girl under 12 a misdemeanour. In 1875 these age limits were raised to 12 and 13 respectively (Offences Against the Person Act), and in 1885 to 13 and 16 (Criminal Law Amendment Act). Another set of laws dealt with indecent assault and implicitly included homosexual acts with boys. Collectively these laws, though inconsistent and incomplete, indicate that the Victorian legal system had some concept of what is now referred to as CSA. However, despite the ongoing efforts of vigilance associations and women's groups, specific legislation against incest was not passed until 1908 (Bartley 2000, 182).

Louise Jackson, author of a key study of CSA in the nineteenth century, argues that it was the disjunction between the real and the ideal child that allowed the concept of abuse to develop, and that by the century's end it extended to the notion of 'inappropriate sexual attention' towards children (2000, 2-4). Indeed Kincaid has influentially theorised that the very attribution of idealised innocence to children had the converse effect of eroticising them

and fuelling their covert fetishization within Victorian culture, making “the child”... available to desire in a way not previously possible... by... making it different’ (1992, 198).⁸ Building on Kincaid, Marah Gubar explores what she refers to as the Victorian ‘cult of the child’, evident in a cohort of texts which ‘borrow[ed] the language of mature romantic love to describe encounters with children’ (2009, 178). This projection of adult desire onto the idealised, eroticised child facilitated a Victorian marriage market in which it was considered acceptable for young girls to marry much older men (Showalter 1992, 42), while prominent Victorians such as John Ruskin and Lewis Carroll were openly devoted to pre-pubescent girls (Dickinson 2009, 33-50). At the same time, the transgressive potential of such relationships was distanced from respectable society by what Jackson describes as a journalistic and juridical framing of CSA as a lower-class issue of public morality, associated with stereotypes of poverty, slums, prostitution, substance abuse and poor hygiene, which facilitated a marked silence about the much less palatable fact of intra-familial and domestic sexual abuse among the middle and upper classes (2000, 7-8, 16).⁹ Writing on the construction of (largely) lower-class girl victims, Bates similarly argues that expert medical court testimony tended to emphasise their precocity and complicity to preserve middle-class notions of ‘social order, morality and the family’ (2016, 12, 170). In the following sections, I focus instead on the characterisation of the perpetrator of sexual crimes against children as a monstrous stranger in these discourses, and especially in the crucial discourse of sexology (in which CSA was most fully formulated), as well as indirectly in popular fiction. As I will show, this proved an equally powerful strategy for distancing CSA from respectable society, and one with a more enduring legacy.

‘Horrible Perversions’: Krafft-Ebing and the medico-legal definition of ‘paedophilia’

Commenting on legal understandings of ‘child molestation’, Philip Jenkins argues that ‘before the nineteenth century, crimes [against children] involving sex were a commonplace part of the work of the justice system, but there was no sense of the [child-oriented] sex criminal as a distinct or particularly menacing type of malefactor’, or of CSA as a particular category of crime (1998, 26).¹⁰ The emergence of these concepts by the century’s end was influenced by developments in late nineteenth-century medicine in which legal understandings of sexual harm to children were given a scientific basis. The key term paedophilia (‘*paedophilia erotica*’), ‘a constitutional or pathological desire for children or adolescents [under fourteen]’ (Oosterhuis 2000, 50), was coined in 1896 by the renowned German psychiatrist Krafft-Ebing,¹¹ and included in the tenth (German) edition of his very successful textbook *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) in 1898; it appeared first in English in the translation of this edition in 1899 (Janssen 2015, 587). In *Psychopathia Sexualis*, Krafft-Ebing extensively categorised all forms of sexual ‘perversion’ as he understood it, defining paedophilia as a ‘morbid disposition’ or ‘*psycho-sexual perversion*’, in which ‘the subject is drawn only to the sexually quite immature’ (1899, 525, 528, original emphasis).¹² Though written for professionals, this seminal text of early sexology reached a considerably wider audience, as disapprovingly noted in the preface of its first English edition in 1892:

[T]he appearance of seven editions ... could not be accounted for were its circulation confined to scientific readers. Therefore, it cannot be denied that a pornographic interest on the part of the public is accountable for a part of the wide circulation of the book. (Chaddock 1892, vii)

Ellis confirmed its continuing popularity in 1897 in the snide comment that *Psychopathia Sexualis* ‘has ... had a very wide and unrestricted sale’ – implicitly critiquing its availability

to a general rather than solely professional readership (1897, 153-4). Harry Oosterhuis, who emphasises the importance of Krafft-Ebing's work in shaping 'the modern [Western] notion of sexuality', states that *Psychopathia Sexualis* numbered at least thirty-five British and American editions between 1892 and 1899 (Oosterhuis 2012, 133, 136; Hauser, n.d.). Other scholars observe that the 1899 English edition – which contained the definition of paedophilia – was likely to have circulated extensively (Bauer 2009, 35), although unfavourably received by Britain's medical profession (Bristow 1998, 87-88).

Krafft-Ebing's category of paedophilia pertained only to those he deemed constitutionally attracted to children, as distinguished from opportunistic abusers. Both were treated in a general section on the '[v]iolation of individuals under the age of fourteen', which opened with the assertion that these 'horrible perversions ... are only possible to a man who is a slave to lust and morally weak' (1899, 521), and which indicates how Krafft-Ebing understood these perpetrators. The constitutionally 'paedophilic' group¹³ comprised five hereditarily 'tainted' male abusers whose relationship to victims was unspecified but implied to be distant, and two 'tainted' females who targeted known children (1899, 525-9). The opportunistic violators included two servants who abused known children, and four implied stranger perpetrators including an 'imbecile' priest and a 'deformed' labourer (1899, 522-4). In the 1903 extended twelfth edition of *Psychopathia Sexualis*, Krafft-Ebing proffered a provisional typology of abusers comprising debauched older men; impotent young men (including brothers); an intermediary category including 'lascivious tutors', 'lewd servant girls, governesses and nursemaids, not to speak of female relatives'; and constitutionally paedophilic individuals (553-5). While the 1903 edition allowed for some forms of intra-familial abuse, both editions produced the overall impression that most abusers were deeply defective male outsiders.¹⁴ Ultimately, despite his effort to medicalise those who sexually harmed children, Krafft-Ebing could not overcome the seeming paradox that sane individuals

could commit such abhorrent acts, his clinical detachment slipping as he branded them ‘debauchees’.¹⁵ The English translator of this edition, F. J. Rebman, took this one step further, resorting to the term ‘monsters’ to describe them:

It is psychologically incomprehensible that an adult of full virility and mentally sound should indulge in sexual abuses with children... The finer feelings of man revolt at the thought of counting [these] monsters among the psychically normal members of human society. (1903, 552-4)

Thus in the translation of this seminal medical definition into English, sexual abusers of children were distanced from normal society and only rendered legible through the gothic figure of the monster.¹⁶ And while Krafft-Ebing’s definition of paedophilia was relatively limited, the connotation of monstrosity has carried through to the capacious current category of the modern paedophile.¹⁷

This metaphorical gesture recurred periodically in contemporary medical and factual discourse, as experts seemed driven to the use of gothic terminology when ordinary language failed to capture the full significance of abusive acts against children. The gothic can be understood as a versatile aesthetic mode characterised by a preoccupation with the adverse side of human experience, often expressed in supernatural terms, which recurred across the nineteenth century (and beyond) and affected many categories of writing perceived as unrelated (Bulfin 2018, 13). Elucidating the gothic’s power to convey violent non-normative experience is David Punter’s seminal argument that life’s ‘mysterious, or terrifying, or violent’ aspects cannot be adequately expressed by realism, but rather ‘can only be captured through the disruptive power of extensive metaphor and symbolism’ (1996, 186, 188). Such metaphor disrupted *Psychopathia Sexualis*’s lengthy sections on sadism and ‘Lust-Murder’,

which included several horrific sexual crimes against children, some entailing cannibalistic acts evocative of popular fictional accounts of vampirism.¹⁸ These included one of the most notorious English child-murders of the nineteenth century – that of eight-year-old Fanny Adams, who was ‘lure[d] into a thicket’ in 1867 by a solicitor’s clerk and later found ‘cut into pieces’. About her missing genitalia, Krafft-Ebing concluded: ‘[i]n such cases it may even happen that appetite for the flesh of the murdered victim arises, and, in consequence of this perverse coloring of the idea, parts of the body may be eaten’ (1899, 84).¹⁹ More extreme still was the case of serial murderer Vincenz Verzeni, who abducted, mutilated and partially consumed fourteen-year-old Johanna Motta, and experienced a ‘most intense lustful pleasure’ from sucking her blood (1899, 88).²⁰ Bearing out Punter’s contention about ordinary language failing to capture the extremes of human experience, Krafft-Ebing eventually resorted to the term ‘modern vampire’ to convey the obscenity of Verzeni’s predilections, despite his attempts to document Verzeni’s mental condition in purely clinical terms (1899, 89).²¹ While Krafft-Ebing was willing to describe extreme physical violence explicitly, he regularly switched to Latin to conceal the sexual details of the crimes from general readers,²² though not sufficiently for an English reviewer who wished the entire text had been ‘veiled in the decent obscurity of a dead language’ (Review of *Psychopathia Sexualis* 1893). Cumulatively, the double veiling provided by Latin and metaphor worked to distance such crimes from ordinary society and reinforce the sense that their perpetrators were supernaturally evil, existing completely outside normal human society. This type of evasion was unproductive in medical discourse which sought to comprehensively articulate the condition being documented.

Intensifying the focus on extremes, Krafft-Ebing added cases of necrophilia, including that practiced on children’s corpses, to the 1903 edition. These were derived from a 1901 French text entitled *Vampirisme: Nécrophilie, Nécrosadisme, Nécrophagie*, which

sensationally exploited the vampirism metaphor to organise the phenomenon of corpse ‘profanation’ (Épaulard 1901, 2).²³ Another French medico-legal textbook, which was published in English in 1911 and drew heavily on Krafft-Ebing’s work, made even more extravagant use of the gothic to delineate lust murder in terms of ‘tortures’, ‘horror’ and ‘monsters’ (Thoinot 1911, 420-1). Given that the dominant register of these texts was decidedly clinical, the eruption of the gothic at these key moments is deeply significant; especially because, as Robert Mighall points out, the project of nineteenth-century sexology was not to sensationalise, but to medicalise traditional beliefs by turning ‘the supernatural into the pathological, and monsters into perverts’ (Mighall 1998, 63). Counter to Mighall’s contention that the sexological case-study ‘impose[d] ... scientific order ... on the monstrous’ (1998, 65-6), the gothic imagery clearly demonstrates a fundamental difficulty in objectively comprehending serious sexual crimes even on the part of the medical profession. This meant that despite efforts to create a modern medical framework capable of classifying individuals who engaged in sexual harm to children in terms of (largely) mental pathology, the emerging scientific definitions of abusers could not be fully articulated without recourse to atavistic conceptions of monstrosity, producing a category of experience which, due to its moral nature, resisted medicalisation.

While Krafft-Ebing’s fullest explication of paedophilia was not set out until 1903, Diederik Janssen shows that the medical theories out of which it arose had been developing from the 1880s. He describes an ‘alignment around 1896’ of ‘definitions of morbid age of attraction, age of consent and mean or modal age of “puberty”’ which produced the category of paedophilia (2015, 578). For example, Sigmund Freud had also proffered a typology of abusers in 1896 of ‘adults who were strangers’; carers, including ‘nurse-maids, governesses, tutors, and... close relative[s]’; and thirdly other children, mostly siblings, with parents being notably absent (Freud 1896, 191-221, 208). However, Freud’s theory was unfavourably

received in Austria and did not circulate widely at this point (King 1999, xxiii-xlii). The popular 1892 English translation of *Psychopathia Sexualis*, which was re-issued in England several times in the 1890s, already contained a section on the ‘violation of children’ and used the term ‘sexual abuses’ in relation to children (Krafft-Ebing 1892, xiv, 402). The American psychiatrist who translated this edition, Charles Chaddock, also contributed a chapter on the ‘Sexual Assault of Children’ to a ‘widely-read’ 1894 medico-legal text book, issued in London in 1895 (Jenkins 1998, 28-9. It was here he made the extreme claim that the ‘[r]ape of children is the most frequent form of sexual crime’ and theorised that it is sometimes attributable to ‘sexual perversion [... causing] an unnatural preference for children’ (Chaddock 1894, 543-4). Despite Chaddock’s clinical tone, he also deployed the familiar adjective ‘monstrous’ to describe the worst category of sexual crime – the ‘lust-murder’ – listing several horrific cases involving anthropophagy committed upon child victims (1894, 561). Similarly, Bates shows that although medical experts largely avoided pathologising perpetrators and downplayed the sexual aspects of CSA-type crimes in forensic courtroom testimony (to avoid an implicit threat to middle-class family values), the label ‘monster’ was applied to perpetrators of more extreme crimes (2016, 170-1).

Although the work of the major English sexologist Ellis did not specifically engage with the concept of sexual harm to children, his seminal textbook on homosexuality, *Sexual Inversion* (1897), explicitly argued for the legal protection of boys from sexual relations with adult men and the instatement of an age of consent for boys (1897, 154-5).²⁴ In the related field of criminology, Ellis’s very successful textbook, *The Criminal* (1890), indirectly helped to articulate ideas about sexual harm to children, documenting some violent sexual crimes against children (305), and helping to circulate in England the theories of the influential Italian criminal anthropologist Cesare Lombroso about the innate and atavistic nature of criminality (Davie 2010). Though Lombroso’s early work did not have any concept of the

sexual offender who targets children, Lombroso was Krafft-Ebing's source for the Verzeni case and for cases of child rape and incest (1899, 500, 581). Indicative of the tendency to represent criminality as a monstrous state beyond the bounds of ordinary human behaviour, Lombroso later wrote that Verzeni helped him to understand the criminal as:

an atavistic being who reproduces... the ferocious instincts of primitive humanity and the inferior animals. Thus were explained the ... love of orgies, and the irresistible craving for evil for its own sake, the desire not only to extinguish life in the victim, but to mutilate the corpse, tear its flesh, and drink its blood. (Lombroso 1911, xv)

Ellis's rendering of Lombroso's typology of the sexual criminal confirmed this innate monstrosity: 'In those guilty of sexual offences Lombroso finds the eyes nearly always bright; the voice either rough or cracked; the face generally delicate, except in the development of the jaws, and the lips and eyelids swollen; occasionally they are humpbacked or otherwise deformed' (1890, 83). By the late-1890s Lombroso was developing 'a new theory of sexual psychopathy', largely based on Krafft-Ebing's work, which reciprocally lent credence to the concept of paedophilia (Lombroso Ferrero 1911, 290). Although the term paedophile did not gain widespread currency until later in the twentieth century, collectively these early works of sexology and criminology helped to provide a new, modern formulation of the idea of sexual harm to children which included the central tenet that those who abused children were outsiders not just to the family circle but to humanity itself. The employment of the gothic in sexological discourse facilitated the cross-pollination of this language and imagery within popular discourse on CSA, to the extent that it would come to overshadow more sociological and medical explanations and gear public attention towards the stranger, as opposed to known and familial perpetrators.

**‘[D]iabolical crime[s]... of bestial brutality’: Sensational journalism and the lust
murder**

Despite shying away from intra-familial abuse and resorting to gothic terminology in the face of extremes, medico-legal discourse was much more realistic and measured than late-nineteenth century journalism, which helped to transmit the concept of sexual harm to children to a burgeoning general readership in emotive and unnuanced ways. In a dynamic, competitive marketplace, popular papers provided a sensational outlet for disseminating social concerns about inappropriate sexual behaviour towards children, and capitalised on the reporting of horrific crimes (Flegel 2009, 20; O’Ceallaigh Ritschel 2017, 10). As Daniel Grey observes, newspaper reportage forms an important source for understanding developing nineteenth-century attitudes to sexual harm to children, and its tropes were likely to have influenced attitudes within the courtroom (Grey 2020, 194, 196). A key example is Stead’s aforementioned 1885 ‘Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon’ series, which documented the violent sexual exploitation of young impoverished girls in the London sex trade under sensational by-lines such as ‘The Violation of Virgins’, and ‘How Girls are Bought and Ruined’.²⁵ Here I will briefly highlight relevant aspects of this much-analysed series, starting with the fact that Stead was quite clear that his concern was ‘sexual criminality’ against ‘*children*’ as opposed to the lesser ‘sexual immorality’ of adult prostitution: ‘these virgins ... are mostly of tender age, being too young in fact to understand the nature of the crime of which they are the unwilling victims’, their ages ranging from ten to fifteen (1885a, 2, 3; my italics). Despite Stead’s ostensibly documentary style and willingness to detail the violence perpetrated upon victims, his reports – like Krafft-Ebing’s later case histories – skirted the sexual aspects of the crimes, approaching them largely through metaphor. Stead’s central rhetorical strategy involved repurposing the classical Cretan myth of virgin sacrifice (‘maiden

tribute’) to produce the figure of ‘the London Minotaur’ as a monstrous embodiment of the collective depravity of the sexual trade in children (1885a, 2). He also used the term ‘modern Minotaur’ to denote London’s most notorious individual abuser, a ‘monster who may be said to be an absolute incarnation of brutal lust’ stalking the city’s ‘subterranean realm’, in gothic terminology that seems to anticipate both Krafft-Ebing’s ‘debauchee’ and Rebman’s ‘monster’ (1885b, 5).²⁶ While Stead’s key premise was that the trade thrived on the secret depravity of many outwardly respectable ‘gentlemen’, his Minotaur perpetrator, mostly likely a fictional device on which to concentrate outrage (Robinson 2012, 72), actually worked against this by making the abusers into lurking monsters. Judith Walkowitz has influentially argued that Stead’s focus on overblown individual malefactors diverted attention from systemic causes of child prostitution (1992, 93), while Jackson similarly concludes that the furore over working-class prostitution deflected attention from middle-class abuses (2000, 16). What the analysis here reveals is that the ‘Maiden Tribute’ reportage also helped to establish the myth that became the key discursive mechanism underpinning the enduring social disavowal of intra-familial CSA – that of the CSA perpetrator as a monstrous stranger stalking the city streets for prey.

While the ‘Maiden Tribute’ case is well-researched, a group of child sexual murders from the 1890s have been almost entirely overlooked, and were even at the time overshadowed by the notorious Whitechapel murders of adult women in 1888–91. During this period the ‘Police’ and ‘Court’ sections of the newspapers maintained a steady low-key coverage of sexual crimes against young girls, typically described in euphemistic codes as ‘outrages’ or ‘indecent assaults’ and involving domestic incidents.²⁷ Only the most extreme cases received widespread coverage, beginning with the ‘West Ham Murder’ of 1890, in which fifteen-year-old Amelia Jeffs, ‘a kind tender-hearted child’, was abducted, violently raped and murdered, and concealed in the cupboard of a vacant house (“Horrible Crime at

West Ham” 1890, 2). Adjudging it a ‘diabolical crime... of bestial brutality’, reports conceived of the assailant as a ‘monster’ and a man of ‘diabolic appearance’ although there was, in fact, no firm suspect (Untitled, *Illustrated Police News* 1890, 2; “Horrible Crime at West Ham” 1890, 2). Sensational unsubstantiated links were also made to two other young girls who had ‘mysteriously disappeared’ in the area previously (“Outrage and Murder at West Ham” 1890, 7). Equally tragic was the ‘Barnet Murder’ of 1895, in which Lydia Hills, a ‘little girl’ of eight, suffered a similar fate, the coverage again emphasising the purported assailant’s attempts to lure other children away (“Barnet Murder” 1895, 9; “Outrage at Barnet” 1895, 6). And covered extensively in 1893 was the ‘Double Murder in Oxfordshire’ of two little girls aged seven and five, one of whom was sexually assaulted and mutilated. The more sensational newspapers claimed the accused was ‘much affected by the Whitechapel murders’ and ‘hoped to be a Jack the Ripper’ (“Double Murder and Mutilation in Oxfordshire” 1893, 2), and even a sober court report adjudged the crime an ‘inhuman murder’, ‘so wicked and so terrible’ that an ordinary man could not have committed it (“Oxfordshire Autumn Assizes” 1893, 6). The reportage demonstrates that the journalists, like the medical professionals, struggled to find suitable terminology to convey the brutality of the acts and resorted to the familiar gothic clichés of monstrosity. These were also deployed extensively during the forerunning Ripper panic, and in both instances this tactic was also driven by commercial motives (Smith 2004, chap. 3). Unlike contemporary accounts of the mid-century Fanny Adams case, which, as Kathryn Hughes has shown, avoided the possibility of sexual violation (2017, 310), the 1890s murders were reported as sexual crimes despite pertaining to child victims. In other words, although their sexual aspects were treated euphemistically, they were understood as lust-murders of the type documented by Krafft-Ebing, thus linking the gothic imaginary more firmly with this type of crime.

All three sets of crimes merited dramatic front-page illustrations in the notoriously sensationalist *Illustrated Police News*, which reported on each ‘week’s most dramatic crimes’ (Smalley 2016, 56). Those reprinted here focus on two key moments: the abduction of the child (‘The child is lured away’ (Figure 3) and ‘A man seen dragging a girl along’ (Figure 4)); and the finding of the body (‘The father finds the body of his child’ (Figure 3) and ‘Finding the little victim’ (Figure 4)). These succinct images foreground the victims’ vulnerability and reveal the strong emotional charge to the newspaper accounts of sexual harm to children, which was largely absent from the perpetrator-focused medico-legal discourse. The emphasis on the victims’ innocence, replicated in the accompanying text, also marks a clear difference from the negative representation of the Ripper victims observed by Walkowitz (1992, 198-99). The use of shading in both illustrations creates a shared gothic aesthetic, especially evident in the repeated image of the dark perpetrator looming over the radiant child victim. As discussed subsequently, these powerful visual tropes were redeployed in literary form in contemporary popular gothic tales (and continue to circulate in the modern horror and crime genres).²⁸

As well as demonising the alleged perpetrators, the coverage of the 1890s child murders attempted to distance them socially, diverging from the sexological approach which typically articulated difference in terms of purported mental (or physical) defects. This framing followed the habitual middle-class discursive association of criminality with the economically marginalised, which Jackson shows led in practice to considerably higher conviction rates for lower-class defendants accused of sexual crimes against children (2000, 131). In the Barnet case, reports described the accused as ‘rough-looking’ (“Outrage At Barnet” 1895, 6), a ‘labourer... without fixed abode’ (“Barnet Murder” 1895, 9), even following the public clarification that he was ‘a man of superior education [from] a very respectable family’ but of ‘weak intellect’ (“Cruel Murder at Barnet” 1895, 7).²⁹ This bias is

manifest in Figure 3, in which the Barnet suspect, who was eventually acquitted, was rendered as unkempt and disreputable, while the victim and her father appear highly respectable despite their low socio-economic status.³⁰ In the Oxfordshire case, the accused was characterised as a heavy-drinking, irregularly employed labourer recently dismissed from respectable employment ‘on account of his eccentricities’, including the aforementioned desire to emulate the ‘Ripper’ (“Double Murder at Little Faringdon” 1893, 7). Despite the damning nature of this coverage, he too was acquitted, and in a manner which further demonstrates the explanatory power of the stranger myth. The defence lawyer’s successful strategy involved countering the journalistic othering of the accused, arguing (incorrectly) that his status as an ordinary local man known to the children meant he could not be the requisite ‘inhuman’ monster capable of such ‘unparalleled’ ‘barbarities’ (“Oxfordshire Autumn Assizes” 1893, 6). In the West Ham case suspicion was aired against the builder of the vacant terrace in which Jeff’s body was found, but there was insufficient evidence for a charge (Bondeson 2016, 261-5). Perhaps reflecting this, the illustration (Figure 4) presented the putative assailant as well-to-do, although the accompanying article also managed to shed suspicion upon ‘half-a-dozen gangs’ of local ‘roughs’ (“Horrible Crime at West Ham” 1890, 2). In each case, in the absence of a convincing suspect, the journalistic coverage made extensive use of a class-inflected version of the stranger myth to impose a comprehensible narrative upon the horrific sequence of events, contributing to the myth’s circulation in the process. Grey, like Bates, argues that perpetrators were not typically demonised, with more mundane cases being downplayed, especially if the perpetrator was deemed respectable (Grey 2020, 200; Bates 2016, 170-1). However, this overlooks the building in of the ‘monster’ characteristic to the concept of the paedophile as a distancing strategy in the reports on the extreme cases that were given the most prominence.

‘Lured away’: CSA in Popular Gothic Fiction

As well as in sensational reportage, the stranger myth, and the evolving medical concept of paedophilia, may have been given further impetus in the literary field of popular fiction, which grew explosively in the late-nineteenth century as several scholars document (Keating 1989; Law and Patten 2009, 144–71). As Heike Bauer puts it, nineteenth-century sexual knowledge was ‘shaped as much by literary contributions as ... by the more familiar scientific and political contributions’ (2009, 8), and hence it is important to consider the potential role of literary texts in the transmission of ideas about sexual harm to children. Given that what was considered to be normative sexuality could not be openly depicted in nineteenth-century literature, there seems little potential for the representation of non-normative, much less transgressive encounters. However, it is possible to suggest that the stranger myth received oblique expression within the burgeoning popular genre of gothic fiction through the prevalent trope of the villain or monster who preys on children.³¹ Widely understood as a genre which explored contemporary social anxieties (Hurley 1996; Smith and Hughes 2012; Warwick 2007), late-nineteenth century gothic fiction was well-suited to broaching taboo topics because it could represent the unspeakable indirectly via metaphor (Kosofsky Sedgwick 1980, 14-20; Bienstock Anolik 2007). Thus the familiar metaphors of monstrosity could be adapted to hint at the horrific nature of CSA. In some senses, this mirrored the evasive use of the gothic in factual reportage and medico-legal discourse, but it also afforded the constrained medium of fiction the opportunity to address an important topic it could not otherwise engage with.

While some critics have observed this metaphorical possibility in individual gothic texts which depict threatened children, it has not yet been observed that this was actually a notable trope of the late-nineteenth century gothic genre, prominent in many of its key texts. For instance, Robert Louis Stevenson’s best-selling *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

(1886) opens with a disturbing nocturnal encounter on a London street between the monstrous Mr Hyde and an unaccompanied little girl ‘of maybe eight or ten’, in which Hyde knocked the child to the ground, ‘trampled calmly over [her] body and left her screaming on the ground’ (7). Several critics have interpreted this incident as a coded reference to child prostitution, coming just months after the ‘Maiden Tribute’ scandal (Walkowitz 1992, 131; Luckhurst 2006, xxiii-xxv; Robson 2001, 155);³² W. Sydney Robinson even suggests that Hyde was inspired by Stead’s Minotaur figure (2012, 71). Sexual abuse has also been read as underlying the unease generated by the relationship between the spectral figures of the governess and the valet and the vulnerable orphan children in Henry James’s *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) (Scofield 2003, 98-9; Armit 2010, 17), and certainly these intermediary care-giver types feature in Krafft-Ebing’s (and Freud’s) abuser typology. However, several other less well-known tales also offer strongly gothicised accounts of harm to children, which are amenable to a sexual abuse reading. A notable example is Bram Stoker’s ‘The Dualitists’ (1886), an obscenely cruel tale in which two older boys abduct and ritually murder their infant twin neighbours, as narrated in an arch-gothic language of concealed erotic ‘pleasure’ (1886, 20). Arthur Machen’s gothic tales are similarly full of erotically-charged, ritualistic harm to children, who feature notably as the victims of unscrupulous occult experimentation. In ‘The Great God Pan’ (1894), it is strongly hinted that the antagonist Helen Vaughan is not a supernatural demi-god created during Dr Raymond’s experiment, but the product of Raymond’s incestuous relationship with his young female ‘ward’, whose life he views as ‘mine, to use as I see fit’ (64). In keeping with nineteenth-century misconceptions about abuse causing permanent and even inheritable damage, these tainted origins may then be read as the true explanation for Helen’s iniquity. In Machen’s ‘The Black Seal’ (1895), a young disabled boy, born of pagan sexual violence, is groomed with ‘ghastly pleasure’ by Professor Gregg and then cloistered with Gregg for overnight observation in his locked study, while the

narrator ‘trembled to think of what might be passing within’ (22-3). In each case, middle-class professional male characters have taken vulnerable lower-class children from their original surroundings for their own detrimental purposes in a manner reminiscent of the hypocritical abusers Stead indicts.

Another set of gothic tales features child-harming antagonists who are delineated in strongly sexually charged terms. These include Arthur Conan Doyle’s ‘Uncle Jeremy’s Household’ (1887), in which a ‘lithe’, ‘beautiful governess’ ritually sacrifices a young child in an English country garden (section III); Florence Marryat’s *The Blood of the Vampire* (1897), in which the unrestrained affections of the ‘lissom’, ‘sensual’ female antagonist unintentionally cause an infant’s death (3, 139); and L. T. Meade’s ‘With the Eternal Fires’ (1895), in which the ‘strikingly handsome’ female villain abducts a young boy from his boarding school and subjects him to unnamed ‘queer’ experiences which leave him traumatised (380, 389). Unlike the medical textbooks and popular reportage, these latter gothic texts feature a striking number of female perpetrators, perhaps attributable to the fact that – despite its focus on male perpetrators – sexology was quite willing to countenance women as abusers too.³³ While this prevalent fin-de-siècle gothic trope of the female monster who preyed on children has frequently been read as a monstrous inversion of motherhood pertaining to contemporary anxieties about changing gender roles (Craft 1984, 120; Senf 2018, 117), these examples show that it may also be productively interpreted through the lens of mounting concern about adult-child sexual relations.

One of the most influential late-Victorian gothic tales, Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897), provides more sustained indications of this transgressive undercurrent. While the vampirism in *Dracula* has often been interpreted as violently sexual (Spencer 1992, 215-6; Mulvey Roberts 2016, chap. 3), the fact that most of the novel’s victims are children has been almost entirely overlooked in critical readings and opens these vampire-victim encounters up to

being interpreted as metaphorically suggestive of CSA. Playing on fears of stranger abduction, the atmospheric opening scenes in Transylvania hint that local peasant children are being repeatedly snatched for vampiric consumption by the powerful, erotically charged Count Dracula character, whose ‘fluid, unrestrained ... sexuality’ is foregrounded across a major strand of critical approaches to the text (Aldana Reyes 2018, 131). Read through the lens of sexology, the Count’s physical appearance – his ‘bright eyes’, ‘harsh, metallic’ voice, and the red lips and ‘swollen ... bloated’ eyelids he develops after feeding – makes him highly reminiscent of Lombroso’s sexual offenders (Stoker [1897] 2003, 16, 54, 59). In a crucial early scene designed to establish his depravity, he is shown returning to his castle with a ‘dreadful bag’ containing a ‘half-smothered-child’, who is typically overlooked in critical accounts of this scene, and who is thrown to the Count’s three ‘voluptuous’ female vampire companions to be fed upon (47). That the adjective ‘voluptuous’, the key Victorian code word for signalling pornographic content (Pikula 2012, 292-8), is repeatedly assigned to these child-consuming female vampires strongly implies that the threat that they pose to children is sexual. This suggestion is reinforced by the Count’s own use of the erotic terms ‘love’ and ‘kiss’ to refer to the violent act of vampirism, so that his own subsequent re-appearance with the ‘terrible bag’ followed by the sound from his room of ‘a sharp wail quickly suppressed’ implies that he too has ‘loved’ a child victim (46, 52, 53). When the victim’s mother appears at the castle gates in ‘violences of extravagant emotion’, her ringing, accusatory cry, ‘Monster, give me my child!’, can thus be read as a fictional expression of the emerging understanding of those who engaged in sexual harm to children as monsters (53). The novel’s concluding scenes reiterate this pattern, as Lucy Westenra, a young, upper-class woman who has been converted by Dracula into a ‘snarl[ing]’, ‘voluptuous’ vampire, is shown ‘lur[ing] away’ local children on London’s Hampstead Heath at night to prey violently upon them (225, 226, 190). Lesley Minot connects this episode to the ‘Maiden Tribute’ scandal, pointing

to the novel's long gestation and Stoker's personal friendship with Stead, and reading Lucy as representative of the female villains of Stead's exposé – the brothel 'procuresses' who entrapped children into the trade of prostitution (2004, 209-11). However, the term 'lure' also matches the language used in several of Krafft-Ebing's case studies and in the 1890s child sexual murder reportage to describe perpetrator tactics, emphasising the specific vulnerabilities of child victims who are susceptible to such approaches. Overall, the vampire-child victim encounters in *Dracula* bear notable similarities to the 1890s reportage in the recurrent staging of child abduction and the emphasis on the inhuman brutality of the perpetrators.

The above analysis is directed not at suggesting that Stoker intentionally created a covert narrative of sexual harm to children; but rather that when *Dracula* is read side-by-side with other similar gothic tales, Stead's articles, the 1890s child sexual murder reportage, and the stranger-focused concept of paedophilia emerging in medico-legal discourse, it is possible to see a cross-fertilization of ideas. To borrow Catherine Robson's articulation of the connection between *Jekyll and Hyde* and late nineteenth-century homosexual panic, *Dracula's* troubling account of the vampire-child encounter 'can justifiably be seen as a literary emanation of the same historical and cultural conditions that produced', in this case, the stranger paedophile concept (2001, 156). Certainly Stoker was familiar with Lombroso's criminological work, from which Krafft-Ebing drew many cases, famously referencing Lombroso in *Dracula* when classifying the Count as a 'criminal type' (363). Both Diane Long Hoeveler and Mighall point out the proximity between *Dracula* and Krafft-Ebing's work generally, even bearing in mind that we cannot be sure that Stoker was directly familiar with it (2006; 1998, 67).³⁴ Bauer, who reads *Dracula* specifically in conjunction with sexological constructions of heterosexuality, concludes that the fictional text helped to reveal certain gaps and silences in nineteenth-century discourses about sexuality' (2018, 83); as the

analysis here discloses, key amongst these was the troubling idea of adult sexual predation on children. By enacting sensational scenes in which highly sexualised monsters preyed on children, *Dracula*, and the strand of similar popular gothic tales, implicitly reinforced the myth of the abuser as a monstrous stranger then coalescing in factual discourse and helped to circulate it to a wide audience of fiction readers. The recurrence of this trope in late-nineteenth century gothic texts has been widely overlooked in critical readings of the genre and serves to suggest the corresponding growth of social anxieties regarding child sexual safety, anxieties which came to be socially prominent in the later-twentieth century.

Conclusion: the birth of the ‘stranger-monster’

As this consideration of medico-legal discourse, journalism and popular fiction indicates, many of the problematic behaviours that currently fall under the heading of CSA were acknowledged social issues in the late-nineteenth century and received a considerable amount of attention in the public sphere. Sexual relations between adults and children were increasingly viewed not merely as immoral, but as criminal acts committed by individuals with an underlying pathological attraction to children. However, the notion of sexual harm to children was not easy to address head on and even in factual treatments of the subject, it tended to be dissociated from ‘respectable’ society and referred to indirectly. Public attention was directed towards extreme crimes of abduction and sadism, and suspicion frequently displaced onto social outsiders who were distanced in terms of class and mental health. Although the violent elements of these crimes could be documented in prurient detail, the specifically sexual aspects could not and were either elided, disguised using Latin, or, very frequently, addressed indirectly through gothic metaphors of vampirism and monstrosity. Thus, we can see in the deflective discursive strategies used to represent those who sexually

harmed children, the emerging conceptualisation of the CSA perpetrator as what may be termed the ‘stranger-monster’.

Within the fraught treatment of sexual harm to children, abuse committed within the home or by family members was the most taboo form and rarely ever mentioned in relation to middle or upper-class families. When the newspapers did report on domestic and intra-familial abuse, the cases seldom received the extensive coverage of the lust-murders, and the phenomenon was typically attributed to overcrowding and immorality in poor areas.³⁵ Krafft-Ebing devoted a mere three of his six-hundred pages to ‘incest’, affording greater space to individual lust-murder cases, and rehashing the simplistic association between incest and lower-class living conditions (1903, 612-4). Similarly, Stead’s ‘Maiden Tribute’ series all but ignored incest, observing only in passing that ‘many children... are ruined before they are thirteen; but the crime is one phase of the incest which... is inseparable from overcrowding’ (1885b, 1). However, taken together, the steady, if low-key, stream of newspaper coverage of domestic and intra-familial abuse cases, the numbers of these cases actually taken to court (and this crime was very likely to have been under-reported (Jackson 2000, 43; Bates 2016, 181)), and the campaigns for incest legislation (“Vigilance Association” 1896, 3), signal that this too was a known problem in late-Victorian society. The medical journal of Albert Wilson, physician for the Essex County Asylum in Walthamstow in the early 1890s, for example, paints a clear (though still class-inflected) picture of the much more mundane if equally brutal reality underlying the sensational accounts of stranger-monsters in public discourse. His case notes on ‘feeble-minded and/or delinquent girl’ inmates contain roughly eight cases of serious CSA out of eighty-four entries, all pertaining to girls of lower-class backgrounds between the ages of eight and fourteen (1891-4). Though one ‘abduction’ is listed, the cases typically involve girls being abused and pushed into prostitution by criminal parents. Representative cases were Alice Branson, aged fourteen: ‘the child had been violated

previous to admission probably with the father's consent. The father lived in brothels and lived on her beggings' (33-4); and Jane Russell, aged twelve, 'outraged by her stepfather', 'a drunken vicious blackguard' (274). Here is the ordinary grinding reality of abuse committed or facilitated by parents, with no inhuman fiends or stalking minotaurs to take the blame. While the stranger-committed child sex-crimes fixated on by sexology and the newspapers were almost certainly far fewer in number than these mundane cases of domestic and intra-familial abuse, late-Victorian society preferred to keep this reality at bay by pushing the blame onto a set of undesirable others, for whom the gothic construct of the stranger-monster came to stand in as a powerful explanatory concept.

The social impact of a concept like the stranger-monster is suggested in cultural-historical theories that discourses of abuse have ramifications for the societies that produce them. As Ian Hacking's foundational study of the cultural construction of 'child abuse' in the late-twentieth century postulates, evolving social theories about abusers and victims affect those they describe, creating new kinds of identities and 'new kinds of action' (1991, 254-5).³⁶ Joanna Bourke agrees that these discourses 'produce the subjects they claim to describe' and further argues that rape myths, as 'commonplace or unquestioned ways of looking at the world', work to justify the actions of abusers and maintain unequal social power structures (2007, 146, 48-9). Following this, it can be argued that the effect of the late-nineteenth century concept of the stranger-monster was to deflect social attention away from the most common but taboo forms of abuse. Thus by the time the term 'paedophile' entered the English lexicon with its current meaning of child molester – when Krafft-Ebing's collaborator Albert Moll's *The Sexual life of the Child* (1908) was translated into English in 1912 – its identification with the stranger-monster was copper-fastened.³⁷ Moll's treatise (though ground-breaking on child sexuality) included a section on adult sexual harm to children which ignored incest, alternated the medical term paedophile with the far more

gothic term ‘child depraver’ (225), and included the following sinister, but now familiar, line of admonition:

The depraver of children gains his opportunities by appeals to the child’s peculiar weaknesses. He will, for instance, tempt the child by the offer of sweets, and ... often gain his ends. Many such persons hang about in the neighbourhood of a school or a children’s playground, simply with this end in view (223).

In Moll’s misdirected alarmism plainly lies the rhetorical origins of the equally distracting late-twentieth century panic over ‘stranger danger’, showing the long history of a fear that has typically been considered a quintessential product of that later period.³⁸ There have been many shifts in understandings of and misconceptions about CSA and its perpetrators since Moll’s treatise appeared (Jenkins 1998; Thomson 2013). However, the social distancing of perpetrators still pervades twenty-first century media discourse (Lonne and Parton 2014; Long Weatherred 2017) and fictional representation (Bulfin 2021),³⁹ with the stranger-monster construct persisting (in lightly updated guise) as a detrimental contemporary CSA myth.

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¹ Though there were parallel developments internationally, this article focuses on late-nineteenth century British discourse to retain a manageable remit.

² On the formulation of the concept of CSA see Hacking (1991), Jenkins (1998) and Thomson (2013, ch. 6). While Jenkins examines the construction of the perpetrator, his remit is America and largely the twentieth century. Likewise, while Thomson explores British ideas about sexual danger outside the home, his focus is primarily twentieth-century and he does not explore the origins of the stranger myth in this set of late-nineteenth century discourses.

³ Other key studies foregrounding the construction of the child include Kincaid (1992) and Jackson (2000).

⁴ On the development of nineteenth-century understandings of sexuality, see Foucault ([1976] 1990), Weeks (2016) and Bristow (1997). On Foucault's troubling views on adult-child sexual relations and his lack of engagement with the category of the paedophile, see Harkins (2012).

⁵ On the detrimental effects of current CSA myths, see DeMarni Cromer and Goldsmith (2010) and Kitzinger (2008).

⁶ Pornography provides further scope for investigating Victorian conceptions of age-appropriate sex, but, given its titillating intent, did not contribute significantly to producing the category of abuse.

⁷ Hopkins observes that in nineteenth-century Britain, those aged under fourteen constituted almost forty percent of the population (1994, 161). On class demographics, see Steinbach (2012, 116-8).

⁸ Although Kincaid's entrenched scepticism towards CSA is at odds with my approach, this proposition is nonetheless convincingly articulated.

⁹ Cohen's argument that the increasingly private middle-class home was better defended against the investigative apparatus of the state and quasi-public voluntary organisations like the NSPCC may also explain the preponderance of working-class defendants in CSA cases (2013, 7-8).

¹⁰ On the parallel emergence of the modern understanding of the rapist as an identity category in this period, see Bourke (2007, 11).

¹¹ Krafft-Ebing first used the term in the following German medical article: 'Ueber Unzucht mit Kindern und Paedophilia erotica', *Friedreich's Blätter f. ger. Medicin* (1896), see Fuchs (1902).

¹² Krafft-Ebing's extensive definition of perversion included anything outside of heterosexual intercourse within marriage for the purposes of procreation.

¹³ Krafft-Ebing did not use the term 'paedophile'.

¹⁴ The emphasis on defectiveness was informed by the prevalent nineteenth-century pseudo-science of degeneration.

¹⁵ The German edition uses the term 'Wüstlinge' (lechers/debauchees), Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis Mit Besonderer Berücksichtigung Der Conträren Sexualempfindung*, 12th edn (Stuttgart: Enke, 1903), 392.

¹⁶ Bauer observes that Rebman's translation inflected *Psychopathia Sexualis* with British cultural concerns (2009, 41-2).

¹⁷ On the gothicisation of the paedophile in twentieth-century culture, see Armitt (2010, 15-47).

¹⁸ Krafft-Ebing did not distinguish 'sadistic' sexual crimes against children from those against adults, nor link them with his category of paedophilia; nor did he connect paedophilia with incest. Thus no single nineteenth-century concept covered the range of behaviours referred to currently as CSA.

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- ¹⁹ Krafft-Ebing drew the same conclusion about the ‘psycho-sexual monster’ behind the Whitechapel murders (1899, 86).
- ²⁰ Verzeni’s other victims were adult women.
- ²¹ Direct translation of Krafft-Ebing’s original German ‘modernen Vampyr’, *Psychopathia Sexualis Mit Besonderer*, 63.
- ²² This tactic was also implicitly gendered, as female readers were less likely to be educated in Latin.
- ²³ Épaulard’s notorious ‘vampire de Muy’ case is cited in Krafft-Ebing (1903, 103-4).
- ²⁴ The first English edition of Ellis’s text did not circulate widely as it was quickly banned, see Dixon (2009).
- ²⁵ Stead concentrated almost exclusively on female victims and the ‘Maiden Tribute’ series contributed to raising the age of consent for girls in 1885; Stead was briefly jailed for his hands-on investigative methods, see Robinson (2012).
- ²⁶ Judith Walkowitz observes that Stead also incorporated stock characters from Victorian melodrama, like the ‘violated maid’ and the ‘vicious aristocrat’ – also strongly associated with the gothic tradition (1992, 85-6, 93-102). A Stead-inspired 1893 American exposé of child prostitution similarly referred to brothel recruiters as ‘fiends’ and ‘demons in human shape’, see Edholm (1899, 10, 4).
- ²⁷ This assessment of the types of case covered is based on keyword searching the *British Library Newspapers* and *Times Digital Archive* databases from 1890-1900 for the various euphemisms. On the difficulties of tracing this material in the archives given the prevalent use of euphemism, see Bingham *et al* (2016).
- ²⁸ This is a prevalent trope in contemporary film posters – for example, the blockbuster stranger abduction narrative *The Lovely Bones* (2009), which shows a dark male figure looming over a radiant young girl (*IMDb*, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0380510/>).
- ²⁹ This unreliable report only made the clarification in its final paragraph after initially repeating the ‘rough’ stereotype.
- ³⁰ The father’s situation was given variously as an ailing ‘coal dealer’ or ‘lamp-lighter’.
- ³¹ Jarlath Killeen identifies a related gothic tendency in nineteenth-century realism in which the widespread discursive ascription of ‘innocence and vulnerability’ to the child led to ‘society itself [being] configured as the male villain out to get her’ (2009, 61).
- ³² Walkowitz documents that Stevenson was sent three instalments of the ‘Maiden Tribute’ in July 1885 (1992, 131 and 283n).
- ³³ Each version of *Psychopathia Sexualis*’ ‘Violation of individuals under the age of fourteen’ section included female abusers.
- ³⁴ Mighall reads the erotic charge of the vampire-victim relationship quite differently.
- ³⁵ See, for example, “No Room to Live” (1899, 7) and “Shocking Depravity in Essex” (1895, 8).
- ³⁶ Hacking, however, considerably underestimates the longevity of paedophilia as a medical concept (1991, 265, 287).
- ³⁷ Though Moll’s work was overshadowed in the Anglophone world by Freud’s, Oosterhuis describes it as equally foundational upon modern understandings of sexuality (2012, 140).
- ³⁸ Kincaid (1992) refers to this distancing tactic in twentieth-century discourse as ‘monster talk’ (3), but does not recognise its much earlier origins and argues that it functions mainly to distract from ‘our culturally-scripted desire for children’ (356) rather than domestic forms of abuse.
- ³⁹ This is particularly evident in the hugely popular crime and horror genres, e.g.: the Stead-esque 2017 thriller *You Were Never Really Here* (dir. Lynne Ramsay) depicts a thirteen-year-old girl abducted and trafficked into a brothel by prominent politicians; and the 2018 Netflix series *The Alienist* (based on Caleb Carr’s 1994 novel) pits a psychiatrist, who studies Krafft-Ebing, against a monstrous serial murderer of boy prostitutes in 1890s New York.