



The short-form journal of the Association for Sociopolitical Heterodoxy

[the iconoclast]

www.iconoclast.jp



The Predatory Impulse:

Why some adults target children and how society responds to them

Gavan Patrick Gray, Department of Policy Studies, Tsuda University <gray@tsuda.ac.jp>

I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection.

Sigmund Freud

You may not agree completely with Freud; perhaps you might argue that the need for a mother's love must be at least a contender for equal billing. Nonetheless, whenever I hear people speak of toxic masculinity my immediate thoughts always go to what is, for me personally, the core nature of what it means to be a man: the desire to protect, and thereafter provide for, his family. Certainly there are ways that masculinity can manifest in more aggressive forms, whether violent clashes over family honour or the lure of the military to young men, but it takes its purest form in the desire to protect children, an urge so strong that for most men it goes far beyond his own blood, and often his own species. Any man that can stand idly by when seeing a puppy or kitten being abused is lacking something so fundamental in his character that he should be forever disqualified from parenthood.

Nevertheless, within our societies there are significant threats that do specifically target young children and which understandably generate

visceral anger among the vast majority of people. During the 1980s allegations that an organised group of paedophiles was operating at the highest levels of British politics,^{1 2} were met by such ineffectual government response that allegations of a cover-up soon followed.³ Although it is unclear whether there was ever an 'organised ring', several high-ranking politicians were found to have been guilty of individual crimes,⁴ and the failure of the government and of the police in dealing with their crimes was clear.^{5 6} More recently, a high-ranking former UK MP was arrested on child pornography charges,⁷ a further reminder that crimes against children can remain undetected for extended period even when the perpetrators enjoy high levels of public scrutiny. The danger in cases such as these lies not just in the actions of the individual perpetrators but in the failure of government institutions to safeguard the vulnerable through the application of reliably stringent standards of justice. Such cases are far more common than they should be and yet addressing them in a coordinated manner seems to be something governments have, as yet, failed to successfully achieve. One reason perhaps is that public understanding of the nature of the problem remains confused and inexact.

¹ McCoy, T. 2014. A big political cover of of 1980s pedophile ring in UK parliament. *Washington Post*, 7 July. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/07/07/a-big-political-cover-up-of-1980s-pedophile-ring-in-u-k-parliament/>

² White, M. 2015. The Westminster child abuse 'coverup': how much did MPs know? *The Guardian*, 17 March. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/mar/17/westminster-child-abuse-paedophile-ring-failure>

³ Swinfrod, S. 2015. How Leon Brittan's final years were tarnished by lost paedophile dossier. *The Telegraph*, 22 January. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/conservative/11363027/How-Leon-Brittans-final-years-were-tarnished-by-lost-paedophile-dossier.html>

⁴ Evans, M. 2020. Cyril Smith, the serial paedophile to whom the establishment turned a blind eye. *The Telegraph*, 18 February. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/02/18/cyril-smith-serial-paedophile-establishment-turned-blind-eye/>

⁵ Bowcott, O. Police and politicians 'turned blind eye' to Westminster child abuse claims. *The Guardian*, 25 February. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/feb/25/police-and-politicians-turned-blind-eye-to-westminster-child-abuse-claims-report>

⁶ Keeling, N. 2015. Cop who 'found Cyril Smith in sex beast's home with teen boys told to forget what he saw'. *The Mirror*, 15 March. <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/cop-who-found-cyril-smith-5360557>

⁷ Roach, A. 2020. Former Labour MP Eric Joyce pleads guilty to making indecent photograph of child. *Evening Standard*, 7 July. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/eric-joyce-guilty-indecent-photograph-child-former-mp-a4490921.html>

In 2001 the British comedy television series *Brass Eye* released a special episode called 'Paedogeddon', in which a horde of paedophiles swarmed the country.⁸ The episode was a satirical response to a media campaign that had exploited the emotional aftershock of a several high profile child abduction cases. While these cases were serious crimes, the media made every effort to convince parents that their children would be in danger should they be left unattended for even a moment. *Brass Eye* punched a hole in the overblown atmosphere of fear and paranoia that the media was attempting to foster, just as its creator Chris Morris would later do to the subject of terrorism with movies such as *Four Lions* and *The Day Shall Come*. To say that a problem was exaggerated by the media is not to suggest the problem is trivial. *Brass Eye's* target was the unscrupulous and irresponsible marketing tactics of the media but it also offered commentary on how easily the public fall victim to such manipulation.

The subject of paedophilia, and other forms of child predation, provoke a kneejerk reaction in many audiences that can push aside a more careful analysis of the problems that exist and the manner in which they might be addressed.⁹ One way this occurs is that the issue is often seen as morally indefensible to the extent that any response to the subject other than "castrate and/or kill the bastards" can be viewed as implicit support for the perpetrators. Another, perhaps underlying, issue is that the varied forms of predation are typically seen as a single, vaguely cohesive offence rather than a disparate set of problems that need require specific solutions. Last year, the high profile case of Jeffrey Epstein brought references to "paedophiles" and "child abusers" onto front pages across the world but the attention was only fleeting, lasting only as long as it could tap into the broader public's sense of shock and titillation. It has risen again recently with the arrest of Ghislaine Maxwell but it remains to be seen whether any significant change in attitudes will result from whatever revelations her trial brings. For those honestly interested in addressing such crimes, it's important to be clear about the nature of the problem.

I should note before continuing, that I will speak primarily of 'men' and 'girls', however, male victims and female perpetrator, though less numerous, are still all too frequently found.

The Disordered

WHILE Epstein has been referred to as a paedophile, others have pointed out that technically he is what is referred to as an Ephebophile (those attracted to young people in late adolescence, typically aged 15-19), and possibly also a Hebophile (attracted to those in early adolescence, typically 11-14). This is in contrast to the clinical definition of a paedophile, which is those attracted to prepubescent children, i.e. typically 10 years old and younger. Some will understandably say that this is mere semantics and that the offence is broadly the same regardless of minor differences in age. In response to this there are two important counters. The first is that the age most certainly matters. For many people, someone 19 years of age would not be considered a victim of a paedophile, though they would still fall within the range of Ephebophilia. Depending on where you live in the USA, the age of consent can vary from 16 to 18 years. In parts of Europe, such as France and Sweden, it is only 15, while in Italy it drops as low as 14. Clearly, cultural factors have a strong influence on the question of whether or not late stage adolescents are mentally and emotionally equipped to deal with consensual sex. Furthermore, basic human biology shows that it can be perfectly natural for men to be sexually attracted to adolescent girls.¹⁰ This by no means excuses them from acting on such impulses but it does suggest that the problem does not lie in attraction itself, but rather, when it becomes a paraphilia (a sexual deviation from the norm) where such attraction is predominant or exclusive, and a moral and legal issue when men act upon it. With early stage adolescents there seems to be far more of a consensus that they are not fully developed emotionally and mentally and their exploitation in this manner is typically punished harshly across the globe.

However, there is still an importance to be found in distinguishing between types. Paedophilia appears as a disorder in the *Diagnostic and*

⁸ Sims, D. 2016. The Prescience of *Brass Eye*, 15 Years Later. *The Atlantic*, 28 July. <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2016/07/brass-eye-chris-morris/493454/>

⁹ Henley, J. 2013. Paedophilia: bringing dark desires to light. *The Guardian*, 3 January. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/jan/03/paedophilia-bringing-dark-desires-light>

¹⁰ Frances, J.A. 2011. DSM 5 Needs to Reject Hebephilia Now. *Psychology Today*, 15 June. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/dsm5-in-distress/201106/dsm-5-needs-reject-hebephilia-now>

Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) used as the basis for many psychological assessments, while the other two forms do not. The reason for this is that some psychologists and researchers consider the former to be a hard-wired problem which develops at an early age as the brain is still forming, possibly as an incorrect linking between the receptors for nurturing instincts and those for sexual arousal, and as such its connections are a more permanent form that cannot be 'cured', i.e. it is a life-long affliction.¹¹

Neither this, nor any other comments made here should be taken to suggest that paedophilia should become accepted as simply some alternate sexual identity, or that those afflicted are no different to those exhibiting gerontophilia (attraction to the elderly) or maiesiophilia (attraction to pregnant women). Neither of the latter cases involve vulnerable minors and paedophilia is far more akin to someone with an inbuilt disposition to psychosexual sadism. People with a predisposition to engage in an activity that is inimically harmful to others are a potential danger and need special consideration. Just as it would be unwise to let a known sadist become a dentist or anaesthetist, so too would it be the height of negligence to leave a paedophile in a position of close contact with young children.

Recently, an increasing number of people, such as Mirjam Heine,¹² have called for paedophilia to be accepted in the same way as heterosexuality and homosexuality, and for paedophiles to be treated with the same respect as anyone else. While it is unfortunate that people are stigmatised for things that may be beyond their control, the safeguarding of children should always take precedence (this also includes ensuring that *excessive* stigmatising of offenders does not harm such efforts). In particular, anyone who would admit to being a paedophile without displaying any inherent sense of shame or concern over the danger they pose, is precisely the type that needs greater attention.

The Paraphiliacs

THE other forms of sexual attraction are, at least according to the above view, developed at a later stage and thus not as immutable in nature. While both paedo-, hebo-, and ephebo- are

all paraphilias, only the first is recognised as a clinical disorder. The question then becomes how and why do the latter develop?

One area of my own academic research is the problem of violence against women and children in Japanese society, one element of which has been an examination of why the sex industry in that country has such an overt focus on juvenile females, i.e. schoolgirl age and younger. Some Japanese writers, such as Takeo Doi,¹³ have offered the opinion that it is a result of specific aspects of Japanese culture, the extreme focus on commitment to achieving high grades in youth, and to devoting yourself to work as an adult that left many adult men without the social skills, or opportunities, necessary to interact successfully with mature adult women, or, when such occasions occurred, without the confidence to deal with such mature women on an equal footing. The result of such development patterns is a view of women within which some men can only accommodate mother-figures who will take care of them or 'juniors' who will treat them with respect and obedience. While there is more to it than this brief, over-simplified explanation, perhaps this helps show how a person's psychological growth in their own adolescence and early adulthood can give rise to such fetishisation of the young, attracted to them not simply sexually, but also psychologically, due to their status as a non-threatening or submissive potential partner.

And yet, such attraction is not limited to adolescents. Japan again offers ample evidence that those displaying such tendencies can focus on even younger figures precisely because they are even less threatening, even more submissive. While some researchers argue that paedophilia is a 'hardwired' disorder, I would disagree that this is the only form it can take and would suggest that it can also develop through the path of later psychological fixation. So, perhaps Epstein, and those like him, targeted young girls because they represented women who would be easier to control and manipulate, more easy to impress, and less likely to challenge him or his ego. In other words a psychological drive to have their vanity and self-image, possibly even their belief in their own virility, boosted and reinforced, may have been as important to them as sexual gratification.

¹¹ BBC. 2015. Are paedophiles' brains wired differently? *BBC News*, 24 November. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-34858350>

¹² Uploaded as 'TEDx says "Pedophilia is an Unchangeable Orientation"' to Good Hope Youtube channel on 27 July, 20-18. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmUxnAkO054>

¹³ Doi, T. 1973. *The Anatomy of Dependence*. Kodansha International.

It may seem a narrow distinction but, again, specificity is important and understanding the difference in the root causes, drives and mindsets of those involved will have a significant impact on how the problem can be identified and dealt with.

The Desperate

NOW we move away from primarily psychological drives to those that are purely physiological. Adults are frequently driven, obviously depending upon the person, to extreme lengths in seeking to fulfil their biological imperative to reproduce.¹⁴ The same sexual urges that lead nominally straight men in prison to engage in homosexual acts can also be expected to drive some men to target young children, not because they are especially attracted to them, but simply because they represent an opportunity to indulge desires that cannot be satisfied elsewhere. These might be men who realise such actions are wrong yet find their urges beyond the ability of a weak moral code to control. It might also be otherwise sexually 'normal' individuals who are regularly surrounded by minors, such as teachers or social workers, and who find themselves with opportunities to indulge desires they might not have otherwise pursued, or, individuals such as priests who are rule-bound to remain celibate and who target minors because they believe their actions have less chance of being revealed. The distinction here is that while their actions, and harm inflicted might be the same, the drivers of those actions are significantly different.

The Sociopaths

WHEN you consider an offender who is aware that their actions are wrong, feels shame for what they have done, and express remorse, you are dealing with a very different offender than someone who displays absolutely no awareness of, or concern for, the well-being of their victims. A truly sociopathic individual will indulge their desires at any time and in any place where they believe they can escape negative repercussions for doing so.¹⁵ This can include manipulating or forcing young children to engage

in sex or exploiting the willingness of vulnerable minors to do the same. While the term 'sociopath' is an informal one, covering a variety of more specific conditions such as the DSM recognised Antisocial Personality Disorder, they are typically tied to a weak capacity for empathy or remorse that makes responding to their actions, whether through punishment or treatment, as well as attempting to prevent similar incidents, a challenge of a different sort.

The Extremists

POTENTIALLY these may be a variation of any of the other kinds. What sets them apart is their use of extreme ideological views, frequently religious, to justify their exploitation or abuse of children. In India alone there are any estimated 15 million child brides, many of which occur before the age of 15. In Islam, fundamentalist readings of the Koran have been abused in many areas to justify the rape of both women and children taken as slaves in conflict. ISIS exhorted the use of the practice against prisoners in an issue of their magazine *Dabiq*, while recently the same message was espoused by Professor Saud Saleh, a female Islamic scholar at Cairo's Al-Azhar University.¹⁶

Even in the USA, despite the Convention on the Rights of the Child setting a minimum age for marriage of 18 years, there are over 200,000 child brides.¹⁷ The justification for such couplings is typically that religion or tradition have normalised it within communities, a factor which has no bearing on whether the children involved are exploited or harmed by adults. In other places, poverty will lead families to sell children as brides to older men who, because the family has agreed or because money has changed hands, act as though what they do to the child is somehow more acceptable.

The Ideologues

YOU might imagine that groups who advocate for acceptance of underage sex and/or the sexualization of children would be composed of

¹⁴ Diamond, S.A. 2014. The Psychology of Sexuality. *Psychology Today*, 10 May. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/evil-deeds/201405/the-psychology-sexuality>

¹⁵ Mayo Clinic overview of Antisocial personality Disorder. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/antisocial-personality-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20353928>

¹⁶ Memri TV. 2014. Al-Azhar Professor Suad Saleh: In a Legitimate War, Muslims Can Capture Slavegirls and Have Sex with Them. *Memri TV*, 12 September. <https://www.memri.org/tv/al-azhar-professor-suad-saleh-legitimate-war-muslims-can-capture-slavegirls-and-have-sex-them>

¹⁷ Baynes, C. 2018. More than 200,000 children married in US over the last 15 years. *The Independent*, 28 August. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/200000-children-married-us-15-years-child-marriage-child-brides-new-jersey-christie-a7830266.html>

solely the above types of people. Wikipedia lists over 40 different organisations that have existed with the primary purpose of promoting this agenda; the most well known being Nambla (the North American Man-Boy Love Association, which somehow still exists).¹⁸ In recent years many have gone underground and formed online groups, many on the dark web but others in open sight, that continue to actively and deviously campaign for acceptance of their proclivities.^{19 20} Yet, not all who support their message are themselves intent on engaging in such actions but rather, like the aforementioned Mirjam Heine, they see it as somehow 'progressive' and 'inclusive'.²¹ In some cases, even academics are supporting their efforts to rebrand themselves from 'paedophile' to 'minor-attracted person'.²² It can be argued that these are well-intentioned gestures driven by a belief that all people should be treated equally, yet it is hard to imagine that the same argument would be made for a person with homicidal or violently sadistic tendencies. Unfortunately, some people suffer from disorders that pose a danger to the general public and, in such cases, it becomes an unavoidable question of whose rights should take precedence. Ideally, they can be monitored without compromising their quality of life, however, to suggest an equivalency with homosexuality or other sexual orientations is to overlook the fact that the targets of such attention are not mature, independent adults.

In the past, the overt sexualization of children, such as through child beauty pageants, was widely viewed as tacky if not harmfully exploitative. Yet, a recent wave of 'child drag queens' such as Nemis Quinn Mélançon-Golden and Desmond Napoles have received greater support from some who claim it is an element of LGBT culture, as though

that should somehow inure it from criticism.^{23 24} Sexual exploitation of children, whether done to live out a parental fantasy or to promote a sociopolitical agenda, should not be accepted regardless of whether those involved are the child's guardians or hide behind a banner of minority rights.

Then you have the legal reformers who argue that laws or procedures used to safeguard children violate the rights of the offenders, such as this shockingly one-sided article from the New York Times.²⁵ While it touches on potentially valid concerns regarding entrapment and the ethics of 'to catch a predator' style sting operations it undoes this with arguments that men arrested after soliciting sex with underage children were less guilty because it was a one-off thing rather than serial predation. It's akin to saying that someone who said they were going to kill someone and then showed up on that person's doorstep shouldn't be punished because they had never killed before. It isn't that more nuanced discussion of these issues is impossible, but any appearance of placing the interests of offenders above those of their potential victims is simply going to lead, at least one hopes, the majority of people to question your priorities.

The Sadists

CLEARLY, there are extremes involved in child endangerment, from the insidious undermining of traditional safeguards and normalisation of harmful behaviour at one end, through to the other end of the spectrum where we find the sadists.²⁶ Though its use has become more varied, 'sadism' is recognised as a psychosexual disorder in which a thrill is derived from the suffering, physical or emotional of the

¹⁸ At <https://www.nambla.org/>

¹⁹ Dodds, L. 2020. Twitter accused of aiding child abuse by allowing 'explosion' of online paedophile communities. *The Telegraph*, 9 January. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2020/01/09/twitter-accused-aiding-child-abuse-allowing-explosion-online/>

²⁰ Denkinson, K. 2020. Outrage as paedophiles rebrand themselves as 'minor-attracted persons' in chilling online propaganda drive. *Daily Mail*, 27 June. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8466899/Paedophiles-rebrand-minor-attracted-persons-chilling-online-propaganda-drive.html>

²¹ Gilligan, A. 2014. 'Paedophilia is natural and normal for males'. *The Telegraph*, 5 July. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/10948796/Paedophilia-is-natural-and-normal-for-males.html>

²² Parr, J. and Pearson, D. 2019. Non-Offending Minor-Attracted Persons: Professional Practitioners' Views on the Barriers to Seeking and Receiving Their Help. *Journal of Child Sex Abuse*, 28(8). <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10538712.2019.1663970>

²³ Prestigia, A. 2019. 10-Year-Old Boy 'Drag Kid' Photographed With Naked Adult Drag Queen. *Daily Wire*, 12 January. <https://www.dailywire.com/news/10-year-old-boy-dressed-drag-pictured-naked-amanda-prestigiaco>

²⁴ Kearns, M. 2019. 'Desmond Is Amazing' Needs Saving. *National Review*, 11 June. <https://www.nationalreview.com/2019/06/desmond-napoles-gender-identity-ideology/>

²⁵ Winerip, M. 2020. Convicted of Sex Crimes, but With No Victims. *New York Times*, 26 August. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/26/magazine/sex-offender-operation-net-nanny.html>

²⁶ Psychology Today overview of Sexual Sadism Disorder. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/conditions/sexual-sadism-disorder>

victim. Some child predators are not driven by a desire to engage in sex but rather the desire to inflict pain, and sadists who specifically target children are perhaps the worst examples of humanity that can be found, both in a moral and an evolutionary sense. These include well known men such as Albert Fish and Andrei Chikatilo, however, the many examples of female child killers that exists, women such as Miyuki Ishikawa, Myra Hindley, Beverley Allitt, and Dagmar Overbye, should serve as a reminder that these crimes are not perpetrated by men alone.

The Narcissists

A subtle, but again significant, variation on the above is the narcissist. Like Sadists these are a form of sociopathic disorder but also specific enough to warrant mention. In this case their gratification is ego driven. These are individuals who like to use power to abuse people as a means of expressing to themselves how 'special' they are. Some have suggested that Jimmy Savile,²⁷ the infamous British celebrity predator was driven more by a bizarre desire to express his untouchable status than pure sexual interest in his victims. It may also be a factor in the motivations of people such as Keith Raniere, the leader of the NXIVM cult and who was also convicted on child pornography charges.²⁸ Raniere attempted to brainwash his victims and force them to obedience with instructions such as, "You should be a hungry dog for your master."

Narcissists are less clearly understood as it can be hard to identify their motivations and thus label them as something other than the previous types. Yet, when you hear of cases of abuse involving high level political figures such as those described by British MP John Mann,²⁹ or the highly suspicious handling of the case of Marc Dutroux by the Belgian government,³⁰ it makes you wonder whether there is perhaps a link between abuse involving high ranking figures and the narcissistic

disorder. Given the extreme risk that that revelation of such abuse poses, not just to their own careers, but to their very governments, do such individuals engage in the activities precisely because they are taboo, a risk that only the most powerful can indulge without fear of exposure? We have ample evidence that political cover-ups do occur but the extent of the problem posed by this specific type remains hard to quantify. However, any time you see a case, like the recent 'Operation Darkroom' in Norway, supposedly the nation's most serious incident of organised child sex abuse,³¹ that receives an unfathomable lack of media attention, its probably reasonable to have concerns over whether some form of information suppression may have occurred.

The Exploiters

MORE easily identified are people who make a lucrative profit from exploitation and abuse. This includes pimps and brothel owners who might profit from crimes they are not directly involved in, or procurers for high-level abusers. However, it also includes people acting within the bounds of the law. Depending upon the country, certain forms of child exploitation can be perfectly legal. The aforementioned child beauty pageants are a \$5 billion industry in the USA, involving 200,000 children and the countless adults who profit from them. In one case a mother, rightfully, had her child removed from her custody after announcing she gave the eight-year-old regular shots of Botox.³²

In Japan, a subset of software pornography known as *Chaku Ero* involves models posing in skimpy and suggestive clothing. Despite a lack of nudity it is clearly designed to be sexually stimulating and in many cases the models used are very young children. Japan has only recently made possession of child pornography illegal but books and DVDs of this kind are widely available, even on such major sites as Amazon. A BBC documentary

²⁷ Reading Post. 2014. NHS report reveals sickening details of Jimmy Savile's sex crimes at hospitals including Broadmoor. *Reading Post*, 27 June. <https://www.getreading.co.uk/news/local-news/sickening-extent-jimmy-saviles-sex-7337595>

²⁸ Li, D.K. 2019. NXIVM sex cult leader Keith Raniere guilty of trafficking, child porn offenses. *NBC News*, 20 June. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/sex-cult-leader-keith-raniere-guilty-trafficking-child-porn-nxivm-n1019276>

²⁹ BBC. 2015. John Mann MP says scale of historical child abuse claims 'too many for state'. *BBC News*, 1 January. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-30647646>

³⁰ Castle, S. 2004. Marc Dutroux's crimes shocked the world and left Belgium reeling. *The Independent*, 18 February. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/marc-dutrouxs-crimes-shocked-the-world-and-left-belgium-reeling-amid-accusations-of-a-state-cover-up-8813529.html>

³¹ The Nordic Page. 2016. Pedophile Abuse Network Operation "Darkroom" Shakes Norway. *The Nordic Page*, 23 November. <https://www.tnp.no/norway/panorama/5403-pedophile-abuse-network-operation-darkroom-shakes-norway>

³² Sher, L. 2011. Mom Who Said She Injected Her 8-Year-Old Daughter With Botox Fights to Keep Her Daughter. *ABC News*, 20 May. <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/botox-mom-injected-year-entire-story-fake-bid/story?id=13645562>

interviewed one director of such videos and he explained that he was only in it for the money but that if his own daughter was subjected to the same exploitation he would want to kill himself.³³ It is important to remember that not all those involved in harming children do so directly, in fact, without punishing, or imposing sanctions, on those indirectly involved, it may be impossible to properly address the wider problem.

The Manipulators

THE final group leads us back to Epstein, who may have already filled many of the above classifications. The use of prostitutes as a means of blackmailing political targets is a long-standing tradition among both criminal and intelligence organisations. That some have made use of children should hardly be shocking given that neither have been known to let moral scruples interfere with success. In the USA, Lewis Rosenstiel, was a businessman who came from a line of prohibition-era bootleggers and who boasted ties to both forms of such shadowy organisations.³⁴ His wife, Susan Kaufman, claimed under oath that he would organise parties in which boy prostitutes would be supplied to members of his circle and the encounters recorded for the purpose of blackmail.

Similar allegations were made during the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry in the UK, that MI5 had used evidence of child abuse as a tool for blackmailing politicians.³⁵ It goes without saying that throughout the Cold War the CIA and KGB were also seeking such leverage over potential assets and when considering the impact of alleged paedophilia among British politicians the head of MI5 wrote that, "At the present stage ... the risks of political embarrassment to the government is rather greater than the security danger."³⁶ In other words, the actual crimes against children themselves were not even an afterthought and many politicians in extremely influential positions were essentially exempted from investigation for reasons of political expediency.

Whether or not such intelligence services, or those they employ, actively procure or

accommodate the direct abuse of children is irrelevant, if they attempt to use knowledge of it as a political resource, the abuser then becomes valuable to them and such agencies will protect them and cover up their crimes as long as they continue providing 'value'. In the recent Epstein case, his surprising rise to wealth and high station, long list of influential guests to his private island, and the utterly predictable manner of his death, all suggest his operation was far more than the indulgence of personal vices. Anyone who may have been involved will likely now simply restart their operations elsewhere with the one difference being that they are unlikely to let them become as high profile as Epstein's were.

The Appropriate Response

AS can be seen above, it is overly simple, dangerously so, to classify child predators only as 'paedophiles' and expect a standardised response to deal with the issue. There are a variety of abusers and the ten classifications above are certainly not exhaustive. Rather than an attempt to draft a taxonomy, this has been an effort to show the real complexity involved in the issue of safeguarding children from abuse and exploitation.

There are some who have an understandable, knee-jerk reaction to the subject of paedophiles and reject any response that does not involve the harshest punishments and most extreme social ostracism. However, blanket punishments will simply push perpetrators further underground, preventing monitoring and counselling, and removing the communal support structures that might prevent them acting on their impulses. I say 'might' deliberately as I don't believe people suffering from this condition should be allowed hold positions where they have any potential to inflict harm on a child. An alcoholic might not indulge themselves if made the manager of a bar, but that hardly means it's a good idea. Certainly, you wouldn't leave them with the keys if every bottle in the bar was a priceless, unique vintage. The paedophile condition itself, especially if it is based on deep-rooted, neurological problems, poses an inherent danger to children. In other words, it is not that paedophiles need to be

³³ BBC. 2017. Stacey Dooley Investigates: Young Sex For Sale In Japan. *BBC*. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/proginfo/2017/09/stacey-dooley-japan>

³⁴ Webb, W. 2019. Hidden in Plain Sight: The Shocking Origins of the Jeffrey Epstein Case. *Mint Press News*, 18 July. <https://www.mintpressnews.com/shocking-origins-jeffrey-epstein-blackmail-roy-cohn/260621/>

³⁵ MxDonald, H. 2016. Child abuse inquiry turns to Kincora home and claims of MI5 blackmail. *The Guardian*, 30 May. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/may/30/n-ireland-child-abuse-inquiry-turns-to-kincora-home-and-claims-of-mi5-blackmail>

³⁶ Quinn, B. and Halliday, J. 2015. Leon Brittan among senior Westminster figures named in new child abuse files. *The Guardian*, 23 July. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/jul/22/leon-brittan-westminster-child-abuse-files>

punished, not all may be bad people, but rather, that children must be protected.

It has to be recognised that, while paedophiles are a latent, potential problem, the active predators and exploiters are, in reality, the far more serious and pervasive threat. They may include paedophiles among their number, but they can also be sadists, pornographers, exploitative parents, and adults who use religious excuses to target children not because they are young, but because they are vulnerable, easy targets. When you have such a wide variety of potential threats you need a variety of responses (legislative, legal, medical, therapeutic, educational, etc.) and multiple agencies involved in their implementation. Coordinating a comprehensive response to such dangers is not something generally engaged in by the governments whose ultimate responsibility it should be. Instead, individual branches of government or public sector agencies will respond to specific issues such as parental child abuse, or sex offences. For a more robust and authoritative response to occur the agencies involved need to have broad authority to tackle systemic abuse wherever it is found, with the ability to investigate, prosecute and punish individuals at any level, whether they might be members of religious orders, media companies, law enforcement or the government itself. Without a remit to address the problems at the highest level, any response will remain hopelessly compromised. The key concern raised by the Epstein case is that there still seems to be certain segments of society that can indulge in deliberate and systemic exploitation of minors and remain relatively free from fear of public identification and punishment. While we might often cynically accept that the rich and elite of society flaunt the law with abandon, it is also said that societies can be judged by how well they safeguard their most vulnerable members and innocent children being exploited by the unscrupulous for sexual or financial gain has to

sit at the top of such a metric. There has to be a limit to what we accept as being a fringe benefit of elite social status.

The recent movie *Spotlight* deservedly won the Academy Award for Best Picture for its portrayal of the investigation into historic child abuse by the Catholic Church. This was a problem that took years to come to light due to the power and influence of those involved being used to actively suppress investigation. In the UK other instances of institutional abuse such as the Kincora Boys Home and Haut de la Garenne have been criticised by many for being investigated in a poor, if not deliberately negligent, manner.^{37 38} The post-mortem revelations surrounding arch-predator Jimmy Saville, led British police to launch Operation Yewtree in an attempt to remedy decades of inaction but its abundantly clear by now that there has been protracted periods of official complacency, indifference, or active cover-up that have allowed organised gangs of abusers to act with impunity. In Rotherham alone more than 1,400 young girls have been estimated as being victimised over three decades.³⁹ Other cases have been uncovered in Derby, Huddersfield, Manchester, Newcastle, and Oxford with police, in some cases, apologising for their failure to carry out initial investigations in a thorough fashion.

Each year the US Department of State releases an annual Trafficking in Persons Report that assess the efforts of countries to deal with the issue of human trafficking.⁴⁰ It ranks countries into various levels that can create serious negative publicity for those with poor results and puts a premium on the introduction of new laws, their strict enforcement, and the conviction rate of perpetrators. A similar system focusing on international standards of child protection would not be amiss. We have various national level investigations and reports into institutional abuse,^{41 42} and international studies of general child rights,^{43 44} however, a broader

³⁷ McNeilly, C. 2017. We know what happened in Kincora boys' home and we want the files open, insists victim. *Belfast Telegraph*, 17 September. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/we-know-what-happened-in-kincora-boys-home-and-we-want-the-files-open-insists-victim-38503653.html>

³⁸ Morris, S. 2017. How 'house of horror' investigation brought Jersey abuse to light. *The Guardian*, 3 July. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jul/03/haut-de-la-garenne-house-of-horror-investigation-brought-jersey-abuse-to-light>

³⁹ BBC. 2014. Rotherham child abuse scandal: 1,400 children exploited, report finds. *BBC News*, 26 August. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-28939089>

⁴⁰ US State Department, Trafficking in Persons Report available at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>

⁴¹ Wright, K., Swain, S. and McPhillips, K. 2017. The Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 74. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213417303678>

⁴² IICSA. 2015. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse: The Basic Facts. https://www.leighday.co.uk/LeighDay/media/LeighDay/documents/Abuse/IICSA-Factsheet_The-Basics-November-2015.pdf

⁴³ Kids Rights. 2020. Kids Rights index 2020. <https://kidsrights.org/research/kidsrights-index/>

⁴⁴ Save the Children. 2019. Global Childhood Report 2019. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-childhood-report-2019>

comparative assessment of government standards, responses and failures would certainly help keep attention on this issue and the level of effort being made to deal with it. Given the billion-dollar funding, overwhelming media attention, and commitments to reform given to causes like Black Lives Matter, it doesn't seem an unreasonable request, especially when you consider that compared to the 1000 deaths from police violence in 2019 over 50,000 children are abused every year in the US alone, and another 65,000 girls between the age of 12 and 17 are victims of rape or sexual assault.⁴⁵

The idea that a lone child predator might pose a threat to your child is justifiably frightening for any parent, or any person with a semblance of concern for the innocent. Yet, when police fail to investigate,⁴⁶ the media fail to report on,⁴⁷ and government officials act to cover up the actions of such individuals,⁴⁸ the harm they can cause is amplified by an order of magnitude. Protection of children has to begin by ensuring that the systems we have created to protect us act at maximum efficiency and with full transparency when it comes to safeguarding minors. The attention given to the Epstein and Maxwell cases, more so in social media than in the mainstream press, shows that there is a growing awareness of the systemic failures in addressing this type of crime, and yet, the recent lax sentencing of a wealthy US businessman, who received just 62 days in jail plus time served, for having thousands of files featuring infant and child rape,⁴⁹ shows that such failures persist. Addressing the problem of child predation and exploitation is not simply about identifying and punishing the perpetrators, it must also include identifying and dealing with the weaknesses in the systems tasked with protecting the victims. Where such vulnerabilities are systematic, reform must occur, and where they are human, whether through laziness, apathy, incompetence, or corruption, individuals must be identified and removed from any positions where they are clearly unsuited to the safeguarding of the innocent.

⁴⁵ RAINN. Victims of Sexual Violence Statistics. Available at <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/victims-sexual-violence>

⁴⁶ Bunyan, N. 2015. No officers to be charged over Rochdale child abuse failure, say police. *The Guardian*, 13 March. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/mar/13/no-officers-charged-over-rochdale-child-abuse-failure-greater-manchester-police>

⁴⁷ Folkenflik, D. 2019. ABC News Defends Its Epstein Coverage After Leaked Video Of Anchor. NPR, 5 November. <https://www.npr.org/2019/11/05/776482189/abc-news-defends-its-epstein-coverage-after-leaked-video-of-anchor>

⁴⁸ White, M. 2015. The Westminster child abuse 'coverup': how much did MPs know? *The Guardian*, 17 March. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/mar/17/westminster-child-abuse-paedophile-ring-failure>

⁴⁹ Forgie, A. 2020. Utah CEO gets 210 days in jail for having 13K files of infant & child rape, bestiality. KUTV, 15 May. <https://kutv.com/news/local/utah-ceo-gets-210-days-in-jail-for-having-13k-files-of-infant-child-rape-bestiality>