From *Libidines nefandæ* to sexual perversions

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**Abstract**

A conceptual evolution is traceable from early modern classifications of *libido nefanda* (execrable lust) to early nineteenth-century allusions to 'perversion of the sexual instinct', via pluralizing notions of *coitus nefandus/sodomiticus* in Martin Schurig's work, and of *sodomia impropria* in seventeenth- through late eighteenth-century legal medicine. Johann Valentin Müller's early breakdown of various unnatural penchants seemingly inspired similar lists in works by Johann Christoph Fahner and Johann Josef Bernt, and ultimately Heinrich Kaan. This allows an ante-dating of the 'specification of the perverted' (Foucault) often located in the late nineteenth century, and appreciation of pygmalionism and necrophilia as instances of 'perverted sexual instinct'. In this light, Kaan’s early *psychopathia sexualis* was less innovative and more ambivalent than previously thought.

**Keywords**

Agalmatophilia, homosexuality, necrophilia, paraphilia, pygmalionism, sexual perversion, sodomy

In his well-known late seventeenth-century manuscript *De Daemonialitate et incubis et succubis* (unearthed in 1872; abstracted in Sinistrari, 1700: 251, 273–7), Italian Franciscan priest Ludovico Maria Sinistrari elaborately argued for the distinction between bestiality and 'demoniality' (sexual congress with demons), arguing that 'each has its peculiar and distinct disgrace, repugnant to chastity and human generation' (p. 274). This extended an already longstanding classification debate, with terminological distinctions, for example between *sodomia bestialis*, *sod. diabolica*, *sod. eiusdem sexus* and *sod. diversi sexus* (Polman, 1659: 370). Mid-sixteenth-century law tracts had already distinguished three kinds of sodomitical crime: venereal abuse of one’s own body, with another body either of the same or opposite sex, or with animals (de Damhouder, 1554: 351ff). Here, sex with the dead (*congressus cum mortua*) was ‘practically’ (*pene*) sodomitical, sex with infidels ‘somewhat’ (*quadantenus*) sodomitical.

As illustrated here, what Michel Foucault famously called ‘that utterly confused category’ (1976: 134), sodomy, invited perennial exercises in disambiguation and subclassification. A century after
Sinistrari, moreover, the theological-legal interest in pertinent distinctions had begun to give way to a medical-forensic interest in sexual nosology answering to the emergent notion of the ‘sex instinct’. For Brière de Boismont, commenting in 1849 on ‘perversion de l’instinct génésique’, early seventeenth-century descriptions of sex with demons (he quotes one) had become a historical curiosity, but various sex crimes now also animated urgent psychiatric questions regarding nosology, aetiology, forensic assessment and treatment.

For over a century the term ‘perversion’ had commonly been used in connection with the various humors, faculties, appetites and instincts, including the reproductive instinct. In pertinent suggestions by Francis Hutchison and Denis Diderot, for instance, it was vicious habits that ‘perverted’ the natural, conjugal instinct. Contemporary tracts on German ethics suggested that both mind and body were corrupted by ‘counter-purposive’ acts (pflichtwidrige Handlungen), or ‘unnatural sins of lechery’ (unnatürliche Sünden der Geilheit), that satisfied the sex instinct in an abnormal way (Schelle, 1785: 278). The direction of these perversions or corruptions had a mostly legal pertinence. Much of eighteenth-century sexology was implicitly or explicitly driven by quantitative, humoral and natural-law concepts of desire pinpointing its diminishment, immoderation and satiation. Early modern notions of amor insanus (e.g. Sennert, 1629: 430–41) articulated a sense of emotional overdrive or moral intemperance (it was appropriately paraphrased melancholia ex amore immoderato) rather than unnatural (sodomitical) orientation. Eighteenth-century popular understandings of ‘perverted instincts’ declared sodomy (venus aversa/postica/prepostera) ‘luxurious’ (lecherous), though medically they were barely connected to venereal overindulgence or appetite (venus nimia/immodica/inordinata; salacitas nimia; libido nimia – a condition often linked with premature indulgence: venus prematura). Sodomy was sporadically equated with venus vaga (indiscriminate sex held typical of animals), but this was mostly rhetorical, and lacked theoretical, let alone empirical, backing. In Meibom’s well-known 1639 treatise on flogging, flagellants were only loosely called ‘victims of a detested appetite’ (libidinisque abominandae victimas). But this ‘perverse and frenzical appetite’ (Meibom, 1639: 45, 46) was still largely a problem of the ‘reciprocal communication of vice’ answering, at the bodily level, to a quantitative model of heat and humoral (sanguineous) excess. Although there was, then, a distinction between ‘perverse’ and appropriate uses of flagellation (Boileau, 1700), a formal psychiatric reification of Flagellantenthum, or Flagellantismus, in terms of masochistic needs, ideations and dreams (Flagellationsbedürfniss, Flagellationsgedanken, Flagellationsträumen), did not occur until two-and-a-half centuries later, namely with the fifth edition of Krafft-Ebing’s Psychopathia sexualis (1890: 62–5).

Late seventeenth-century forensic examination asked the following leading questions of the sodomite: ‘What had moved him, or driven him, to do it? Did he learn it from anyone, or did he see it done by others?’ (Otto, 1696: 386). In contrast, the eighteenth century saw various extended exercises in natural law debating the nature, purpose and direction of human and animal instincts. Gradually, the idea of the sinner ‘perverting’ divine natural purpose by committing the sin gave way to a conception of the sinner ‘suffering from a perversion’ of the developing sex instinct, and indeed from ‘specific perversions’ rather than indiscriminate libertine frenzy. The development of profane natural law in Germany around 1700 highlighted a range of pivotal questions related to natural (instinctual) differences and relations between sociability, love, lust and pleasure, specifically in terms of concomitant instincts’ putative end-goals (Endzwecke), and what seemed to be main goals (Hauptzwecke) or subsidiary goals (Nebenzwecke) (e.g. Scholz, 1755: 197–201, 220–3; for context, see Vollhardt, 2001). Various eighteenth-century efforts in the natural law doctrine of duties (naturetrechtliche Pflichtenlehre), doctrine of virtues (Tugendlehre) and scientia moralis (Sittenlehre) thus richly anticipated the scientia sexualis of the nineteenth century, which revolved around a working distinction between ‘perversity’ and ‘perversion’. The former scientific genres
already highlighted a conception of ‘instinctual orientation’: instinct was God-given and purposive, yet its direction (Richtung) ultimately depended on virtue (e.g. Wolle, 1752). Thus, this emergent topicalization of sexual inclination and disinclination invited reasoned accounts of the scope of God’s design and man’s patterned disregard for it. Man (men, especially) now had a ‘duty’ (Pflicht, Verpflichtung) to honour the sexual instinct’s natural timing, natural goal (Natur-Zweck) and innate destination (Bestimmung einer Naturanlage): to prevent precocious ‘development’ (Entwicklung or in new spelling Entwicklung), not ‘to instil impulses through a corrupted imagination, which nature has not implanted’, and to ensure that natural goals were clearly and universally acknowledged (Bauer, 1791: 89–90; Meister, 1809: 406). In sum, man now had an inner-sexuality to properly orient and keep from degeneration (Ausartung), for the greater good of the ‘character of the nation’ (Pescheck, 1790: 186).

‘Pygmalionism’

Extending across and beyond the nineteenth century, this emergent pedagogical-nationalist concern for degenerate sexual orientations sponsored debate between authorities in legal medicine, moral philosophers, clinicians, philologists and ethnographers concerning the perennial theological rubrics of sodomia/paiderastia, fornicatio, pollutio and onania. This expanding medicalization was shown by the progressive reification of sexual interests or acts involving inanimate objects: objects and acts only ambiguously declared contra naturam under Christianity. As Funke and Grove (2019: 28–9) noted, ‘defilement of statues’ is recorded in late nineteenth-century sexual psychopathology as one of a number of staple examples of perverted sexual objectification. Cited authors note that the erotic nature of inanimate objects, specifically sculpture, makes for a rich cultural-historical topos stretching back to antiquity. Its history and standing as a psycho-medical entity has long been considered puzzling, however. Heinrich Kaan’s mention of statue-defilement in his 1844 Psychopathia sexualis struck the editor of its belated translation with ‘luminous strangeness’ (Kahan, 2016: 23), and Funke and Grove (2019) offer little substantive on its nosology. Rich with ancient mythic connotations (Pygmalion), the putative condition was variously named pygmalionisme (a term coined in a French novel by Huysmans, 1891: 258, and introduced into the German language by Eulenburg, 1895: 105–7), Statuenfetischismus (Bloch, 1904: 164), Venus statuaria or Statuenliebe (Bloch, 1907: 704), Statuenliebhaberei (Sadger, 1910: 63, 132), Statuophilie (Wulffen, 1910: 498), and finally it became known by the classicist’s neologism agalmatophilia (Coleman, 1971: 468 n. 3; agalmatofilia is seemingly attested earliest in Italian philology, from 1930). One finds it topicalized in the early nosology-centric exercises in psychosexual pathology by Kaan (1844), and much later by Moreau (1880: 182–3), Clerc (1885: 250–1), Tarnowsky (1886: 59–60), Reuss (1886: 147), and Krafft-Ebing (1886: 53–4). The concept notably led to an early nosological divergence. In Moreau (and Clerc, and Tarnowsky), the concept of love for inanimate objects (amour des êtres inanimés), including statues, is named a feature of érotomanie. This echoed Esquirol (1838: 347). Krafft-Ebing, drawing on Moreau, aligned it with corpse-violation, though also, more generally, with hypersexuality. Binet’s (1887) discussion of fetishism provided a new nosological framework. Statue-love, Binet proposed, was common in youth, a familiar literary trope (p. 161). The unacknowledged cue for this seems to have been Julien Chevalier’s (1885: 12) earlier notion of azoophilie, defined as ‘love for some inanimate object, of insensate nature, a statue, for example’. Bloch (1904: 164–5) drew on two historical anecdotes of ‘statue fetishism’, both in Paris but a century apart (1710 and 1810). He later elaborated that Parisian tableaux vivants with prostitutes dressed up as Greek goddesses catered to a ‘light form’ of the affliction (Bloch, 1907: 405 n.16), which would align it with ‘voyeurism’ (Voyeurtum, as the German literature began to call it, about this time).
What explains this scientific canonization, on the basis of very few anecdotes? Extending medical onomasiology and nosological history back in time helps to answer the broader question of the emergence of the superordinate rubric of ‘sexual perversions’, which is briefly attempted below. Promising early nineteenth-century conceptual developments were already numerous, ranging from phrenology to alienism. There have been substantive discussions with particular reference to the French literature, classically by Lantéri-Laura (1979), and more recently by Mazaleiguelabaste (2014). Below I elaborate on these efforts by tracing a development in early modern medico-legal categorization culminating in Kaan’s *Psychopathia sexualis* (1844). Hence, I try to determine how innovative this classic work and its author were.

**Libidines nefandæ**

Basel physician Theodor Zwinger the Elder’s (1533–88) early encyclopaedia *Theatrum humanae vitae* already included adjacent mentions of necrophilic object choice and statue-loving, in a list of forms of *libido nefanda* (wicked/wretched desire/lust/pleasure; Zwinger, 1565: 519–20; 1571: 481–2). The 1586 edition includes an expanded list under the revised heading of *impudicitia venerea primaria respectu personarum* (primary sexual immodesty/impurity with respect to persons; Zwinger, 1586: 2298–2303). An essentially similar section, acknowledging both headings, is included in the three editions of *Magnum theatrum vitae humanae* (Beyerlinck, 1631/1656: 179–188; 1707: 963–72).

Lifted from ancient literature are anecdotes of copulations with animals, demons, trees (*cum arboribus*), corpses and sculptures/images (including Pygmalion). The section in Zwinger (1586) starts with *Amor suiipsius* (self-love, *philautia*; one example is Diogenes masturbating in public), and continues with *Libido bruta* (brute animals), *Libido daemoniata* (demons; e.g. Menippus of Lycia falling in love with an *empousa* or female demon, after Philostatus), *Libido cum meteori* (with clouds, as in the myth of Ixion), *Libido cum vegetabilibus* (trees, referring to Xerxes’ infatuation with a plane tree, after Herodotus and Aelian), *Libido cum mortuis* (corpses), *Libido mechanica, cum statuis & simulacris* (statues and images: Pygmalion, among others), *Libido mascula* (men with men, featuring *agentes* [tops] and *patientes* [bottoms]: Alexander the Great, Plato, etc.), *Tribades* (women with women), *Libido/incestus religiosa* (with/between religious officials; renamed *libido irreligiosa* in seventeenth-century editions), *Incestus*, *Adulteria*, and so on. Beyerlinck’s (1631/1656) versions elaborated little on pertinent discussions, but now incorporated them in an expanded chapter (‘Libido’) that more formally defined the eponymous term. The section also more clearly separates the *libidines* from various other forms of sexual objectification/victimization, ‘infamous’ libidinousness attributed to various historical notables, and purported good or bad corollaries of libidinal excesses.

Various earlier collections of aphorisms (*sententiae*), anthropological factoids (*anthropologia*), and moral *exempla* were already grouping some of Zwinger’s anecdotes together, outside legal and medico-legal frameworks, under such headings as *intemperantia* (e.g. Sabellico, 1507: lviii–lix), *lascivia* (wantonness), *luxuriae* (vices of excess in venereal pleasure) and *delitiae/deliciae* (pleasures; Zwinger [1565] cited *Fulgoso = Fregoso*, 1509: n.p. [lib. IX]; indeed, Zwinger here copied a philological mistake by Fregoso that he corrected in 1571). In contrast, Zwinger specified the somewhat broader late-ancient theological notion of *libido* (see Wu, 2007) to types of sexual deviance. Zwinger’s 1565 list shows some overlap with contemporaneous lists of types of intercourse with partners proscribed by human law, and lists of ‘unnatural sins’. ‘Luxury’ had provided the governing framework for homosexuality in medieval Europe, informed by apparent Stoic influences on Augustine and Aquinas (Anagnostou-Laoutides, 2015). Aquinas recognized four unnatural forms of lust (*luxuria/vitium/peccatum contra naturam*) among a wider list of luxuries:
bestialitas, sodomia, (coitus) cum muliere extra naturam and mollities (later called peccatum onaniticum). Many later tracts observed a trichotomous schema of sexual excess within the bounds of nature (luxuria natura), ‘second nature’ sins (lux. secundum naturum: fornicatio, stuprum, raptus, adulterium, incestus, sacrilegium), and unnatural excesses (lux. innaturalis, or contra naturam), covering mollities (onanism), sodomia imperfecta (non-reproductive heterosexuality), sodomia perfecta (homosexuality) and bestialitas.

Some conceptual reorganization is evidenced in the sixteenth-century versions of Theatrum. In 1565, types of incest (identifying the kinfolk involved) were included but separated from libidines mentioned in a section called ‘various kinds of lust’ (Libidinis variae species), but by 1586 libidines and various crimines, including incest, were subsumed under the revised heading of ‘impurity’, mentioned above. Cited mythic or otherwise ancient infatuations typically led to hubris, illicit solicitations or seductions, sometimes with divine retribution or otherwise infaust consequences (such as the begetting of minotaurs). Zwinger’s rubric libido nefandum was clearly divorced from the quantitative notions of lack (libido impotens, abolitio libidinis, anaphrodisia) and excess (libido inexplebilis). It explicitly diversified (‘cum diverso genere commiscere’) and psychologized the singular rubric of crimen nefandum/nefanda Venus (abominable crime/sex act, meaning sodomy) of earlier parlance. The consistently large section on Libido mascula, furthermore, fully honoured the ancient scope of paiderastia (boy-love), rather than the early Christian denigrating concept of paidophthora (boy-violation) alias peccatum non nominandum/mutum.

Despite these encyclopaedic exercises, libidines nefandae (or libidines vagae, or vesanæ libidines) were of little early modern ‘psychiatric’ interest. Illustratively, the term libido mechanica may not be attested in any primary text beyond the cited encyclopaedias. Sixteenth-century legal rubrics such as peccatum contra naturam (de Damhouder, 1554: 351ff.), venus contra naturam, venus/concubitus monstrosa or venus prodigiosa (Matthaeus, 1672: 414, 419–20), and commixtio prodigiosa (Van Leeuwen, 1678: 541) did cover a whole field of sex crimes beyond incest and adultery. Venus monstrosa, for instance, covered crimes committed by ‘paedicones, pathici, tribades, mastupratores, felatores [oral sex, sucking], irrumatores [oral sex, thrusting], & qui nefandam libidinem cum brutis exercent [and those satisfying their abominable lust with animals]’ (Matthaeus, 1672: 419). But listings reminiscent of Zwinger’s, adopting his terminology at least in part, are found in only a few sources, and centuries apart (Dupleix, 1610: 843–5; Romano, 1760: 377–8, 391–4; more arguably, Corazza, 1735: 305–23). Dupleix briefly insinuated that hot (African) climates might explain indiscriminate loves between species. Ferrand’s De la maladie d’amour, ou Melancholie erotique (1623) contained a similarly short chapter on ‘The different kinds of love-melancholy’ with only passing mention of those who ‘place their love on inanimate and senseless things’ (trees, statues) or ‘on their own picture’ (Narcissus), and those who have ‘basely lusted after their fathers, mothers, brothers, or brute beasts’ (pp. 70–1).

The physician Schurig (1720: 225–6, 253–7, 297–8) discussed coitus brutorum, coitus cum mortuis/cadaveribus and flagrorum usus as venerem, separately, in a meandering chapter on coitus. A decade later, however, he offered an extended chapter entitled De Coitu nefando seu Sodomitico (Schurig, 1730: 368–418, 39–40), dedicated to ‘completely perverted, wicked and sodomitical forms of intercourse, carried out by some, more brutal people of either sex, at the prompting of Satan’. In this ‘physico-medico-forensic’ overview of gynaecology, he covered a wider range of coitus with various animals (asses, cows, bears, goats, dogs, horses, fish), with the dead, demons, statues, women-with-women (fricatrices), and more. For Schurig, coitus nefandus was clearly distinct from mere coitus illicitus, such as adultery and incest (which he barely discusses); for the former, the wilful deviation from God’s natural design rather matched that of abortus nefandus (Schurig, 1732: 376–83). Schurig’s effort was encyclopaedic but substantively original: he does
not cite any instalment of the *Theatrum humanae vitae*, although he does cite *Theatrum praxeos medicae* (1710) by Theodor Zwinger II (a work, incidentally, with little pertinent to offer). Schurig’s explicit discussions passed well beyond most contemporaneous commentary on human sexuality. Christian (von) Wolff (1721: 17), for instance, had rated it ‘not necessary to describe every kind of salacity [alle Arten der Geilheit], as it is best not to know the vice but recognize it’ when one encounters it. To know the sin already predisposes to it; moreover, to name all inadmissible vices would take up too much space. Though Schurig clearly did not, many eighteenth-century authors agreed on this point of discretion. By 1747, Wolff himself elaborately discussed sex crimes in his Latin tract on natural law, including sex with female corpses (Wolff, 1747: 220). But eighteenth-century nosologists such as François Boissier de Sauvages considered *morbi sexuum*, including satyriasis and nymphomania, to be afflications of the reproductive organs, and passed over the quagmire of *libidines*. Some classificatory development regarding sexual aberrations (*mollities, erotomania, satyriasis*) is seen between the second and third editions of Melchior Adam Weikard’s *Der philosophische Arzt* (1787: 133–44; 1799: 161–83); but even in 1799 he did not include *libidines*. Most occasional early nineteenth-century systematic allusions to functional sexual aberrations (per the quadripartite schema of *excès, diminution, perte, depravation*) still referred, however awkwardly, to the sex organs and their reproductive function. In occasional eighteenth-century psychiatric evaluations of sodomy cases, the critical issue was, for example, the likelihood of an alienated state in which a man ‘incriminated himself’ with bestiality, not the bestiality per se (this extensive case is found in Alberti, 1740: 758–75).

Given this slow movement of early modern classifications of unnatural desires and sins, from encyclopaedic and theological to medical-historical tracts, what may be said of the invention of the medico-legal heading of ‘sexual perversions’? Famously according to Foucault, Kaan’s *Psychopathia sexualis* (1844) would mark the ‘date of birth, or in any case the emergence, of sexuality and sexual aberrations in the psychiatric field’ (Foucault, 1999: 266). This requires considerable qualification: the groundwork for this emergence is found in late eighteenth-century legal medicine tracts, which gravitated towards a classificatory sensibility regarding unnatural (sodomitical) forms of lust. This literature already pointed to a diffraction of early notions of ‘perversion of the sexual instinct’ into a range of specific ‘perversions’, and indeed well before they were called ‘erotic monomanias’. Here, Zwinger’s *libidines* entered the medico-forensic view, and already informed a medical forensics of the ‘sex instinct’.

**Sodomia impropria: from perversion to perversions**

As briefly suggested above, the conceptual shift from self-centred sexual ‘excesses’ or habits (in German variably called üble Gewohnheiten, Gewohnheitsünden, Unarten, Laster) to orientation-defined psychosexuality, took a long time, and remained variably implicit in works on the human sexual instinct (*Geschlechtstrieb*) and its development (*Entwicklung*) during the second half of the eighteenth century. Leading medical-forensic specialist Christian Friedrich Ludwig Wildberg followed pioneering social hygienists like Johann Peter Frank in programmatic calls for the proper direction of the sex instinct. This referred primarily to the law, to duties as laid down in natural law discussions, and thus to public decency, venereal disease, illegitimacy, divorce, prostitution, and so on (e.g. Wildberg, 1804: 118–22). So the fight against perversion and ‘corruption’ (*Ausartung*) was more of an issue for the *medicinische Polizei* (*politia medica*) than *gerichtliche Medicin* (*medicina forensis*). Coeval exercises in legal medicine still worked within categories of illegality (*Gesetzwidrigkeit*): *sodomia, paederastia, stuprum violentium, adulterium, incestus, conjunctio cum bestiis, defloratio*, and so on (e.g. Bene, 1811; Loder, 1800; Masius, 1810; Schmidtmüller, 1804). The organizing concept here was ‘unlawful intercourse’ (*gesetzwidriger Beyschlaf*). The
increasingly recognized subset of ‘unnatural intercourse’ (unnatürlicher Beyschlaf), or ‘intercourse violating natural law’ (Schmidtmüller: naturgesetzwidriger Beyschlaf), connected pederasty (with boys or youths) and sodomy (with animals), but these were long classed as forms of ‘immorality and neglected culture of the human mind’ (Metzger, 1799: 334) or ‘vile vice’ (Henke, 1812: 105; Schmidtmüller, 1804: 205) rather than types of perversion. Occasionally discussed under the heading of monstrosa venus (Renazzi, 1773: 209; 1786: 129–35), they were not yet libidines and, even less, types differentiated by a distinct aetiology. Illustratively, Ludwig Julius Caspar Mende considered an abnormal sexual interest in boys, and in young people generally, as well as a weakened interest in adult women, as a corollary of satiation or lacking self-esteem in senium (Mende, 1826: 405, 506; see also Friedreich, 1843: 179–80). Regarding Päderastie, the boy, youth or child takes the role or place of the originally preferred woman, but with a still poorly elaborated role for ‘depraved imagination’ (verdorbene Einbildungskraft). Comparably, it was observed by 1838 that, apart from excess or diminution, ‘The sex drive may also be alienated [alienirt], as is the case with pederasty, lesbian love and sodomy. Exhaustion of sexual pleasure in a natural way, perverted [verkehrte] fantasy, and loneliness cause these, Man-violating, physical and moral anomalies’ (Stark, 1838: 1288; 1845: 641).

The Code Napoléon (1804) decriminalized sodomie per se, but in the German-speaking parts of Europe its legal, and thus its medico-legal, scope remained actively debated throughout the nineteenth century. In the mid-eighteenth century, Sodomiterey included sex with the same sex, animals and corpses. Pertinent demarcations are late echoes of early modern renegotiations (early seventeenth century and onwards) of the fire-death penalty for ‘properly’ sodomitical acts stipulated in the Constitutio Criminalis Carolina of 1532 (§116): ‘unnatural acts’ not properly sodomitical were generally considered to warrant lesser punishments. What followed were early seventeenth-century distinctions between sodomia propria (or proprie dicta) and sodomia impropria. What was subsumed under the latter heading varied; in any case, extensive lists were compiled and reasoned lines drawn by the late eighteenth century. For instance, Von Reider (1784: 63–71; cf. e.g. Polman, 1659: 370) classified sodomia ratione generis (bestiality), sodomia ratione sexus (penetrative homosexuality) and sodomia ordinis naturae (violation of female corpses and female minors); however, violation of statues (‘specially made for this purpose’) was mere masturbation. This last opinion simply recited seventeenth- through early nineteenth-century moral theological and legal consensus, which denied that sex with inanimate/defunct objects should have the status of ‘real’ fornication, except, perhaps, ‘affective’ fornication (e.g. de la Bassée, 1659: 354; Sánchez, 1614: 337). Late eighteenth-century legal opinion relegated these crimes to the categories of mollities or sodomia impropria (e.g. Von Feuerbach, 1801: 504n).

The Allgemeines Landrecht für die preußischen Staaten (1794, §1064) included a classificatory reference – now unworkably cryptic – to ‘sodomy [Sodomiterei] and other such unnatural sins, which cannot be named here because of their abomination’. This naming, however, was by then increasingly called for in German legal medicine (and illustratively rendered explicit by Nicolai, 1841: 167; Von Strampff, 1844: 325–6). By the end of the century, definitions increasingly alluded to the implied plurality of ‘sodomitical’ interests behind the crimes. For Johann Christian von Quistorp (1770: 557–8; 1783: 952–3), sodomy betrayed a plurality of unnatural, ‘impure inclinations and desires’ (1770: unreinen Begierden; 1783: unreinen Neigungen und Begierden) such as informing ‘various sodomitic sins as well as lechery carried out with a dead body’ (1783: 851), to be reflected in the proper demarcation and subdivision of the rubric. This announced a new legal sensibility consolidated in various subsequent authoritative medico-legal tracts (e.g. Müller, 1796: 131–2). In a prize-winning essay, Hans Ernst von Globig and Johann Georg Huster (1783: 245) advanced a legal-revisionist and aetiological consideration of sodomy as ‘extravagance of prurience (Ausschweifung der Geilheit) which baffles even Nature, and which one would rather wrap up
in eternal silence than punish. It arises either from a saturation of the natural impulse, or from a delimitation of the same.’ Its status of ‘irregular lust’ (unregelmäßige Wollust) set sodomy apart from other sex crimes such as adultery and prostitution. Reflecting this development, by the 1790s, one of the cardinal, properly sodomitical inclinations had become, proprie dictu, a mental disturbance. Müller had already suggested in 1789 (57–8; see also 1796: 134) that Knabenliebe was a perverse or inverse taste (verkehrte Geschmack) and, as such, a morbidity of the soul (Krankheit der Seele), apart from being a criminal love (verbrecherische Liebe). By extension, even if sodomy was in ultimo a crime, it was by now also a class of libidines nefandae: unnatural desires. This emergent classificatory ambiguity resonated with occasional coeval reports on boy-love (Knabenliebe) as a seemingly inborn ‘love-appetite’ or ‘unnatural inclination of men to their own sex [Geschmack in der Liebe . . . unnatürliche Neigung der Männer zu ihrem eigenen Geschlecht]’ (Anon., 1789: 337, 344, 347); it was essentially a developmental disorder expressed in the sex drive but deeply connected to the sense of self, offering a perfect analogy of heterosexual love. Emergent here was a developmental and aetiological sense of sexual orientation, of specific interest to the psychologist (Psycholog), and inviting a different mining of the classics, and an appreciation of ancient erotology which differed from that offered by Zwinger and Schurig.

An early defence of forensic-medical attention to ‘unhealthy ways . . . to satisfy the sexual instinct . . . whether from morbid irritability or from seduction’ was that of Johann Christoph Fahner (1800: 181). Attention was paid to masturbation, same-sex practices (Knabenschande), corpse-violation (Schändung der Leichname), bestiality, statue-violation (Befriedigung der Wollust an Statuen) and ‘using a long [elongated] clitoris’. This line-up and its order, except for the last item, clearly echoed Müller and was in turn reproduced (invariably unattributed and with variable nuances) in subsequent medico-forensic textbooks (e.g. Bernt, 1813: 68; Eble, 1833: 379; Ruland, 1806: 278–80; Schmalz, 1840: 40–3) and early nosology-bound exercises in ‘sexual psychopathology’ (Kaan, 1844: 43; Michéa, 1849: 339). Bernt, like Fahner (1800: 182) and later Müller, suggestively connected female same-sex clitoral play to the ancient Sapphic Liebe der Tribaden or lesbische Liebe, but none developed this conceptual framework. It is only in the second edition of Bernt’s Handbuch that he refers, in a footnote, to the pertinent section of Fahner (Bernt: 1817: 93 n.). Kaan (1844) cited a pertinent passage from the fourth, 1834, edition of Bernt’s book, which was seemingly his nosological inspiration. Kaan’s Latin conveyed Bernt’s German, although by now the nuance more audaciously shifted from aberrant ways of satisfying the sexual drive to ‘types of aberration of the sexual drive’ (species aberrationum nisus sexualis; p. 46). Like Fahner, Wildberg (1823: 39–41; 1824: 75) still defined Schändung inclusively as all forms of ‘satisfaction of sex drive against nature’, and recognized the wider sense of sodomy (sodomia sensu latiori, or sodomia sensu lato). This was in turn repeated widely, for example in Volume 2 of Siebenhaar’s Enzyklopädisches Handbuch der gesammten Staatsarzeikunde (1840: 562–3), an encyclopaedia on legal medicine with entries on Knabenschändung, Leichenschändung, Selbstbefleckung, Sodomie and Thierschändung. The broadened medico-legal sense of violation covered all forms of Sodomie/Schändung on the Müller/Fahner list, except statue-love. However, these categories were still those of ‘carnal crimes’ (Wildberg, 1826: 109–10), and Wildberg still made no mention of aetiology, diagnosis or therapy.

In contrast, Fahner (1800) had already outlined not only a nosology based on unnatural satisfaction of the sex drive but also a concomitant general medical-forensic approach to sex crimes. In general, writes Fahner (p. 184), the dispositional cause of the irritability should be located, and a causal approach towards a cure should be undertaken. Until he is cured, the patient should be separated and monitored to prevent seduction of others. The object of sexual interest should be closely examined, too. Furthermore, the possibility of genuine madness (Wahnsinn) in the form of satyriasis or nymphomania should be investigated.
Loder (1800: 588) was much more ambiguous in mentioning masturbation, hypersexuality and tribadism (‘fornication of women among themselves’) in his discussion of ‘unnatural intercourse’. Notably, he qualified the idea of hypersexuality as a corollary of morbidity: ‘in a sense, excessive lust in both sexes (satyriasis and nymphomania) belongs here, which can give rise to divorce. Often the cause lies in real illness, more often in previous debauchery’ (p. 588). Apart from Fahner, none of the cited authors before Kaan mentions cases in pertinent nosological passages, raising the question of whether they actually had such cases to reflect upon, rather than the mythological and otherwise ancient record available to Zwinger. Illustratively, the short passage on sex crimes in Bernt (1813) was still unelaborated in the posthumous fifth, 1846, edition of his work (this edition does not cite Kaan, 1844), from which it may be assumed that Bernt (1770–1842) may not have seen any clinical examples of perverts.

One rare case blended same-sex and statue-love. In 1804 dermatologist Jean-Louis Marie Alibert (1768–1837) described an art student’s ‘vague and bizarre passion’ of erotic arousal on admiring male, and not female, physical forms (Alibert, 1804). This ‘perversion of the venereal appetite’ (perversion de l’appétit vénérien; p. 617) was to be understood as ‘a singular aberration which deprives [men] of the faculty of generating’, in other words, rendering them impotent with women. In the case described, the affliction ‘had nothing to do with the likings of sodomites [les goûts des sodomistes]... it could not be provoked by the appearance of any living man’. Rather, the man ‘had reached [age] thirty, and his senses had never been moved by the sight of a woman; they were only provoked by vain images, and ghosts, which were created by his wild imagination’. Pygmalion now was a psychiatric patient plagued by vain images and wild imagination, craving appropriate therapy. Medicine could provide such: drawing female figures ultimately allowed the man to ‘renounce the Apollo Belvedere, for the Venus de’ Medici’ (p. 618).

German medical textbooks, like Kaan’s work, followed Fahner in enumerating multiple unnatural ways to satisfy the sexual instinct, increasingly dovetailing with early allusions, such as Alibert’s, to an aetiological conception of the perversion of the sexual instinct. But the little theorizing at this (early nineteenth-century) point only now began to extend mostly to homosexuality. Throughout the eighteenth century, masculine women (viragines) were considered to have little or no inclination, or even an aversion, to marriage, but until the mid-nineteenth-century (in works by Johann Ludwig Casper and eventually Karl Heinrich Ulrichs) they were only rarely directly accused of a propensity for lesbische Liebe (e.g. Rust, 1833: 41). Fahner considered unnatural sexual irritability as a general category to be accompanied by some ‘morbid disposition in the body itself’ (Fahner, 1800: 184), which only ambiguously refers to the brain. It was around this time that Franz Joseph Gall began widely propagating his cerebellar theory of the organe de l’instinct de l’accouplement. However, phrenology never resolved a core problem already apparent in the organ’s many synonyms and, in English, neologisms (amativeness, conjugality): was this instinct normally oriented towards love, or sexual intercourse, or the other sex, or pleasure, or procreation, or matrimonial companionship? Gall’s organologie made much of nymphomania and satyriasis (as would evidence cerebellar-occipital hypertrophy); Gall in fact refrained from considering the sex instinct a specific ‘organ’ until he, famously, encountered a nymphomaniac with a hot neck. But cerebellar hypertrophy/hypotrophy could hardly explain specific perversions, other than by recourse to an eighteenth-century framework of indiscriminate hypersexuality and libertinage. Cerebellar irritation explained states of sexual exaltation (manie érotique; Gall, 1823: 316–33), not perversion. Jean Baptiste Toussaint Serrurier (1840: 68) asked: ‘What is that part of the cerebellum which, far from bringing the man towards the woman, removes him from her with horror, to bring him closer to his own sex, and to commit with predilection, fury and passion, the crime of pederasty?’ Phrenologists could not say. Similarly, well after the middle of the century one finds ‘cases of morbid erotic impulses which spend themselves on unnatural objects’, such as corpses, still listed under the header (Marc’s) of
aidoiomania, that is, ‘unbridled excitement’ in men or women (Wharton, 1855: 163–4). Julien Le Rousseau (1812–91) illustratively invoked an early embryological account of mental hermaphroditism in an otherwise phrenological tract, to explain gender and sexual orientation:

There is, now, a difference in volume in the cerebellum of both sexes. That of man is usually more robust than that of woman. We notice the same thing in animals . . . In the human species, when this general law is reversed, the conduct of the sexes in love naturally tends to be reversed, and this may explain, to a certain point, the bold and adventurous steps of a few women. It is also claimed, and it will seem obvious to thoughtful minds who have grasped the principles of science well, that erotic tendencies between persons of the same sex are due to a particular encephalic conformation, to an inversion in the measures of the affections [intervention dans les doses des affections] that constitute men or women. (Le Rousseau, 1847: 321)

This explained homosexuality, but not the other libidines. Here, homosexuality was already being split off from the perversions in such terms as geistige Zwitterbildung (Casper), conträre Sexualempfindung (Westphal), gynomania (transgenderism/transvestitism) (see Janssen, 2020) and ‘inversion of the sexual instinct’ (Tamassia, 1878).

Various hints at ‘perversion of the sex drive’ in 1849 apropos the case of a notorious nécrophile (especially Brière de Boismont, 1849; Michéa, 1849) did much to consolidate this taxonomical sense in France – independently of Kaan and at a distance from phrenology. In his psychiatric classification, Monneret (1857: 526; see also 1864: 97) speaks of trouble de l’instinct génésique ou des appétits vénériens, combining the now familiar line-up of perversions and hypo/hypersexuality (notably as distinct from monomanie érotique; 1857: 525). Various nosological nuances were discussed by Delasiauve (1866). In the German literature by the 1830s, a commonly used, pluralizing term was Verirrungen des Geschlechtstriebes (anomalies of the sexual instinct); but despite early calls, including Müller (1796), it was not until the 1860s that the expression became a common nosological one, including Paederasterie, lesbische Liebe and Sodomiterei as ‘mental disturbances’ (Seelenstörungen; Hartmann, 1861: 483). The English literature by the mid-1860s included a similar nosological rubrication of ‘perversion’, next to ‘exaltation’, of the sex instinct (e.g. McIntosh, 1866: 525). The schema ‘inordinate exaltation/perversion/abolition’ was preliminarily advanced, incidentally, in a book review (Anon., 1852). Here ‘perversion’ remarkably extended to ‘masturbation, sodomy, congress with impubescent youth, senile pruriencty’ (p. 463).

Increasingly awkward alternatives, by comparison, were the French terms sadisme and libertinage, and, as discussed, the German medico-legal rubric of Schändung: these notions failed to articulate an early psychopathia sexualis. Schändung (violation, defilement, defacement) could cover the entire range of sexual corruptions (Selbstschändung, Leichenschändung, Tierschändung, Knabenschändung/Geschlechtsschändung, Weiberschändung, Statuenschändung, and so on), but the practical focus here was invariably on the evidentiary properties of the victim’s body and on the criminal act, not on the particular orientation of the offender’s sex drive. Marc (1840) applied the term sadisme (seemingly not used before 1835) specifically to French cases of piqueurs (girl-stabbers): ‘Allow me this expression, which will be understood by those who know about de Sade’s cynical works’ (p. 423n). But the notion of the linking of something like ‘lust to inflict pain’ and sexual arousal was only sporadically discussed at mid-century. German authors did occasionally consider the notion of geile Blutgier (Spielmann, 1855: 404–5; also, bordering on plagiarism, Schilling, 1866: 298–9). However, it was not until 1880s exposés on urban, especially Parisian, vice that sadisme came to be used to capture a range of sexual deviants spotted by the police des mœurs in urban public spaces (Coffignon, 1888: 9ff.; Taxil, 1884: 132). Taxil considered sadisme as ‘une folie se portant sur le sens génésique’, and categorized flagellants as members of ‘une secte
How innovative was Kaan’s *Psychopathia sexualis*?

As shown, Kaan’s line-up of psychosexual disorders was well established by 1844. Criminal psychologists had long agreed that ‘The instincts of lust in particular, which are so violent and excessive in imbecility [Blödsinn], make for the most varied and lowest degenerations’, especially among the elderly (Großmann, 1825: 370). But as argued, case studies remained rare, so there were few occasions to theorize beyond criminal profiling. One illustrative case was that of a teenager deriving sexual satisfaction from ripping up women’s clothes, which was unsatisfactorily attributed to heightened irritability of the sexual system (Diez, 1831: 223–9). Among Kaan’s arguable innovations (see Kahan, 2016: 18) was a speculative aetiology centralizing the role of sexual imagination. However, the corrupting effects of the *Einbildungskraft* had already been a major focus of late eighteenth-century medical hygienic tracts. Kaan saw onanism as the work of the sexual instinct (*nisus sexualis*) but, at the same time, answering to curiosity and morbid imagination (*phantasia morbosa*), and moreover, most importantly, as opening up a space for libidinal derailment. These, again, had been the subjects of sustained deliberation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the influential pedagogical work of Johann Friedrich Oest, among others, *Einbildungskraft* emerged as the critical human factor in sexual restraint. It was imagination that ‘awakens impulses in him [the onanist] which are not the need of frugal nature, but anticipate nature and carry it away with a kind of violence to debauchery, which is dangerous precisely because it is unnatural’ (Oest, 1787: 18). Other authors identified imagination as the psychological mechanism behind sexual aberration, but located it less in the developing, than in the developed, mind. Philosopher Franz Anton Nüßlein (1776–1832) observed in 1821 that ‘the developed sexual instinct is for the most part nourished by the powers of the soul in whose bosom it either becomes feral or is spiritualized [verwildert oder vergeistiget]. The influence which the feeling, the imagination, life-style [Lebensart] and so on, has on the sex drive is known’ (Nüßlein, 1821: 218).

Important, Kaan (1844) failed to specify how heightened arousal leads to specific perversions, other than by implying, unsatisfactorily and unoriginally, that curiosity breeds variety. Not onanism but masturbatory fantasy (*onania psychica*, as opposed to *onania somatica* or *physica*) presented a core mechanism for psychosexual maldevelopment. Surely this meant ‘abnormally directed’ fantasy, but Kaan never explained how fantasy got misdirected. His work transformed sodomy into ‘a disease of the imagination’ only by seeing its varieties, properly and improperly speaking, as the pluriiform outcomes of its exaltation through masturbation. Pathology proceeds from a heightened or ‘diseased imagination that creates a premature sexual desire [*praemature desideria*] and seeks means and paths for consummating the sexual drive’, and a progressive habit-fetish formation ensues: ‘the imagination is becoming overly strong in a fixed direction’ (p. 47). Kaan in fact alluded to the overall fetishistic nature of desire, as reflecting ‘the unique constitution of each soul (ιδιωτικας συνκρασιας)’ at least ‘among adults’ (p. 48). If we took this restriction seriously, we could not regard Kaan’s concept of sexual perversion as having anticipated the specifically developmental connection of fetishism and love, as later formulated by Binet in 1887 – even though it clearly anticipated Binet’s pertinent concepts: ‘The imagination’s delusions are astounding. A beautiful foot holds for some the stimulus to pleasure, for others a hand, others breasts, still others teeth; indeed, even clothing and belts may act on a man in a peculiar way’ (p. 48n.).

Kaan was not the first to portray perversions as developmental disorders. In 1843, Berlin physician Heinrich Sigismund Sinogowitz (1796–1879) presented an elaborate neurologically informed
nosology of sex-themed ‘mental disorders during the development of the sexual life’ (Sinogowitz, 1843: 436–66). Although this was a year before Kaan’s book, Kaan apparently never cited Sinogowitz. These disorders included the mostly neologistic entities of *vesania erotica* (‘mental alienation of an erotic nature’), *erotomania virginum, daemonomania erotica* and *melancholia erotica*. For Sinogowitz, pubertal development brought about a natural predominance of the cerebellospinal nervous system in the male, and of the sympathetic nervous system in the female: ‘In the male the heart is under the power of the brain, in the female the brain is under the power of the heart’ (p. 437). This would ensure a natural complementarity in youth – the ‘tendency of the sexes to each other is due to the differential prevalence of their nervous systems’ (p. 437) – but would also explain sex differences in causation and symptomatology of sexual disorders. An ‘early cerebral exertion’ in boys, for instance, would bring about a premature predominance of the cerebral nervous system; in this case ‘the spinal development recedes’ (p. 437). In general,

with the development of the sexual phenomena of life, . . . we must recognize again and again the same law of life, the same relation between nerve, blood, force, and matter in their polar relation to each other, if we reduce the various differences of its pathological states to their primitive type, and want to visualize them in their natural simplicity. (p. 440)

Onanism and sexual fantasy both played a role in this purported delicate balancing of nervous system components, then, although neither assumed the aetiological or nosological significance seen a year later in Kaan (1844).

What is genuinely novel in Kaan’s aetiological framework is the intermediate role of the sexual imagination alongside his distinction between two, physical and mental, elements of temperament; he suggests that the latter embraces every faculty of thinking and understanding. Temperament’s *elementum immateriale psychicum* is figured as a balancing act between cognitive (mnestic and imaginitive) and intellectual faculties (*facultas cogitandi, facultas intelligendi*). A preponderance of the former creates a ‘sanguine’ temperament, affecting one’s susceptibility to *psychopathia sexualis*; this outcome, in turn, alters one’s psycho-physical temperament. This discussion renders psychosexual development, mental development and temperamental development separate yet intricately and directly, in gender-specific ways, interrelated spheres of influence. This may be regarded an interesting innovative concept, inviting a look at how temperament figured in early psychiatry, and more precisely how temperament was developmentally related to imagination. Temperament certainly seems integral specifically to Kaan’s ‘developmental’ theory: not all temperaments (such as the melancholic) occur in childhood, for instance. The ones that, on occasion, do (phlegmatic temperament, at least ‘in relation to the mind’) would help to explain early onanism.

Kaan, indeed, explained onanism, not psychosexual pathology. He only ambivalently regarded his morbidities as *libidines*, and saw them more consistently and regressively as ill habits. What Kaan considered to be a behavioural habit (masturbation), he also named as the quintessential ‘sexual psychopathy’, and he restricted essentially all discussion to this. Although Kaan suggestively recognized *paederastia* (male same-sex ‘paedophilia’, arguably, or more consistently ‘sodomy’6) and non-penetrative homosexuality as *amores*, he conventionally discussed these and all other rubrics (*violatio cavedarum, coitus cum animalibus*) as the legally and canonically forbidden acts (vices) that they had been for centuries, and continued to be in German legal terms. The ‘manner of consummating the sexual instinct’ (p. 43), to Kaan, was seemingly still the aberration. *Amor puerorum* took ‘immature boys’ as ‘objects’, but not yet as developing homosexual subjects; *amor les-bicus* similarly entailed non-penetrative same-sex acts ‘whether between men or between women’ (p. 44). The former quasi-diagnosis is intriguing, as elsewhere Kaan, conforming to
eighteenth-century tracts, blames servants for sexual psychopathy: ‘the disease itself [i.e. sexuality’s fire . . . stoked prematurely] is imparted by these attendants’ (p. 88). The diagnosis (*amor puerorum*) is not explicitly tied to this seduction, however; servants were often accused (following Tissot) of ‘premature exaltation of the sex drive’ through masturbation of infants or heterosexual coitus with boys – but not *Päderastie*.

More problematically, Kaan does nothing actually to prove, or even illustrate, what would be the developmental intricacies of any particular ‘psychopathy’ beyond onanism. For instance, he fails to account for the seventeenth-century ethnographic observation he offered in relation to his ‘psychopathy’ of sex with animals: that in Madagascar, ‘Boys exercise their sexual appetites with animals’. Kaan also disregarded the philological rubric of Greek *Knabenliebe* (whence Kaan’s term *paederastia*), the socio-cultural origins of which had been subject of lively discussion before 1844. If he was acquainted with this literature and regarded it as irrelevant, this would be curious, insofar as he also still focused on cultivated ‘acts’, not vagaries and corollaries of the ‘imagination’ and desire. Many pre-1844 sources regarded only the ‘Asian’ type of *Knabenliebe* as unchaste (*unrein*), the other types being typified as the idealized and ceremonial varieties. The Greek ‘national custom’ (*Nationalsitte, Gewohnheit des Volks*) had hitherto been widely connected to nude bodies in the gymnasia (Plutarch’s hypothesis) or lack of opportunity for social engagement with women. These philological theories clearly conflicted with Kaan’s, indeed with any, psycho-pathology: Greek *paiderastia* (certainly its lofty side, which German classicists called *Pädophilie*) was not *sodomia*, and insofar as it led to unchasteness, it had no established connection to masturbation such as Kaan was insinuating. Moreover, Kaan did not cite any of the various eighteenth-century authors alluding to a seduction-based aetiology of *Knabenliebe* among schoolboys. He did mention classmate seduction to onanism but granted it a general aetiological, not a developmental, significance: ‘The inclinations of children in institutions and schools ought to be scrutinized. . . . above all else, the morals of the age-mates are worth diligently examining’ (p. 88). Here we are still in the epidemiological realm of contagious habits, not morbid imagination.

Kaan’s intervention was theory conflicting with his own few observations, which appear in anecdotal footnotes. In the case of one adult male, whom Kaan had known ‘since his most tender infancy’, masturbation had started either ‘in the gymnasium or later in the military institution’ though ‘already as a boy he presented clear symptoms of Psychopathia sexualis’—which would include ‘premature puberty’. Yet ‘He was always healthy, up to the sixteenth year of life’, and thus hardly presents a clear clue to childhood aetiology, or to onanism’s progression to, or nosological kinship with, male perversions.

Finally, did Kaan ever actually diagnose or treat sexual psychopaths? In a belated and little-known 1861 article, he defined *psychopathia sexualis* as:

any morbid anomaly of the sex instinct which gives the imagination a preponderance over the mind and will. Imagination and sex drive thus interact. The morbidly heated imagination constantly produces images to satisfy the sex drive in an anomalous manner, and on the other hand, the sex instinct itself rejects any normal sexual satisfaction and involuntarily robs the patient of his willpower. (1861: 87)

Here he detailed the case of a man suffering from pollutions; another from pederastic interactions with ‘boys’; a third from *incontinentia urinae*, orchidodynia and pollutions. The boy-abuser (*mutua masturbatione cum puerris delectatur*) would appear one of the earliest case descriptions of what Krafft-Ebing (1896), with reference to heterosexual cases, would call *Pädophilie erotica*, but Kaan did not stress the psychic nature of the problem. In 1861, he notably supplemented his 1844 male-centric line-up of *psychopathia sexualis* with its female variants, further demonstrating his deference to pre-existing classifications of sexual psychopathology: ‘Hysteria, erotomania
(chaste love-delusion), nymphomania, puerperal mania, melancholy, [that is, focusing] more on pathological processes in the sexual sphere or of high nervousness, than on unnatural sexual satisfaction’ (1861: 93–4). This reneged his earlier allowance of the female variant of amor lesbicus (ope tribadum et frictionum). Kaan offered three female cases: a woman with spastic attacks whom he regarded as suffering from ‘a kind of larvated nymphomania’; a teenage sufferer of chorea electrica which Kaan managed to diagnose as symptomatic of erotomania (‘bad education, perhaps augmented by theatres and balls, caused excitation of the sexual sphere through the heating of the imagination’); and finally, a woman confining herself to her bed (‘in southern Tyrol, where, as a result of bad education, exaggerated reading of ascetic works, there is no shortage of such individuals’), and out of which she was eventually bullied (under threat of re-using the coercive measure of strapping her to the bed). In addition, there were two less clearly relevant cases of melancholia religiosa. Onanism is mentioned in none of these cases. In all three male cases, the core feature of psychic therapy (psychische Cur) was capitalizing on patients’ fear: for consumption of the back, for the law (pederasty under Austrian law), and for the madhouse and public embarrassment, respectively. These tactics are those of mid-eighteenth-century onanism tracts.

Summary

The progression from peccata to psychopathiae only gradually animated early nineteenth-century psychiatry. Kaan’s 1844 Psychopathia sexualis was a suggestive, theoretical nod in the direction of an aetiological-therapeutic approach but, considering his brief 1861 return to the topic, did not deliver on either clinical front in a substantively innovative way. Kaan’s spectrum of sexual aberrations was not new; it unwittingly recites a list of nefarious lusts drafted at least three centuries earlier. This spectrum had already been given prominent medico-legal attention around 1800, for example by Müller and Fahner; here an implicit and equally incomplete shift from legal to psychiatric classification is already discernible. The conceptual frames of the imaginative faculty and the sex instinct held promise in discovering and explaining outlying, ‘unnatural’ forms of sexual appetite. Kaan’s work was a most ambivalent theoretical exercise at this point; moreover, it was only one of a number of such exercises, and one that still heavily depended on a range of eighteenth-century sexological intuitions and hang-ups concerning masturbation and sexual precocity.

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Notes

1. This and all other translations are by the present author.
2. Under the heading of fornicatio, Giulio Claro (1568: n.p.) and other Italian jurists listed under damnatus coitus a wide range of punishable partners: concubine, maiden, girl under age 12, boy, married woman, widow, relative, nun, priest, slave with domina, master with subordinate (subdita), teacher with pupil, guard with prisoner, Christian with Jew or infidel, animal, corpse, as well as women among themselves. Federico Scotti (1572), also listed pollutio cum pictura vel statua (as unnatural sin; p. 304), as did subsequent authorities including Tomás Sánchez de Ávila and Johannes Georgius Simon.
3. Schurig (1730) was well-reviewed in contemporary publications, with brief mention of the pertinent contents appearing in the Acta eruditorum (pp. 171–2), Manget’s (1731) Bibliotheca scriptorum medicorum, veterum et recentiorum (Vol. 2, Part 2: 236), and Novelle della repubblica delle lettere (1733: 279–80).
4. Gall followed on from eighteenth-century notions of the sexual drive, variously called Sexualtrieb (Blumenbach’s instinctus sexualis), Zeugungstrieb, Fortpflanzungstrieb, or Begattungstrieb. German by birth, Gall uses the last two interchangeably in his 1806 work. As suggested by Louis-François Lélot in
the 1830s, Gall’s organology was preceded, but seemingly not influenced, by comparable classificatory choices by leaders of the Scottish Enlightenment, Francis Hutcheson, Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart; to which one must add David Hume, Adam Smith and Henry Home.

5. One 1809 medical-hygienic tract already proposed the following line-up of unnatural proclivities (cf. Kaan): ‘physical and mental onanism, pederasty, tribadism, unnatural intercourse between both sexes [i.e. coitus interruptus or condomatosus], coitus with animals, works of art [Kunstwerken, i.e. pictorial erotica], and the like’ (Anon., 1809: 86). Intercourse with prepubescents would be one form of Onanie (i.e. incapable of resulting in procreation; p. 103). Coitus with a prepubescent girl had earlier been considered a form of sodomy, on similar grounds of unnaturalness (Schröter, 1786: 462–3; Schweser, 1768: 551; Von Quistorp, 1770: 558; Von Reider, 1784: 71) though this remained a contested opinion conflicting with legal classification under (statutory) rape and sexual assault (stuprum).

6. ‘The civil code of all nations severely punishes this vice either with incarceration, permanent exile, or death (among the English)’ (Kaun 1844: 44), which would suggest that Kaan indeed meant sodomy, and that he, uncontroversially at this time, considered the low age of the victim to be implied by the term. In any case he was wrong: in 1844 France and Holland did not criminalize sodomy per se (unlike any involvement of minors), which helps explain why medicalized apologias of homosexuality (Urningthum) in reference to consenting adults arose not here but in mid-nineteenth-century Germany.

7. The reference here is an early ethnographic account of childhood sexual exuberance, by French governor of Madagascar, Étienne de Flacourt (1607–60). He writes: ‘La crainte de Dieu n’est aucunement connuë de cette nation [Madagascar] qui ne vit que selon la loy naturelle & bestialle. Les petits garçons & les petites filles, se joient en presence de leurs parens qui s’en rient & qui mesme les incitent à cela. Quelques-fois les petits garçons commettent certaines dissolutions avec des veaux & cabrits [young goats] en presence de leur parens sans en avoir honte’ (de Flacourt, 1658: 86).

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