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### **Managing the ‘Monstrous’ : Punishing Paedophilic Subjects**

This paper will employ the films *Mysterious Skin* (2004) and *The Woodsman* (2004) in order to examine representations of child sexual abuse and the paedophile. While sharing an interest in representing the consequences of such abuse, the films’ divergent emphases juxtapose narratives in which we are encouraged to empathise with both child victims and a released offender. These films undermine a reading of paedophilia as, necessarily, the sexual predator’s intervention into and destruction of childhood innocence, while remaining attuned to the consequences of such interactions. We witness both the failure of the law to protect children from sexual abuse, and the prolonged intervention of the state into the lives of individuals convicted of child sex offending.

My main concern here is with the paedophile as punished subject. What does he do, and how does it come to define him? I employ Georg Simmel’s figure of the *stranger* and Giorgio Agamben’s *homo sacer* in order to explore how the films represent the changing conceptualisation of the paedophile as he becomes an object of punishment. How is he a subject under surveillance? What rights does he have? How does his management challenge traditional justifications of punishment? And, what is specific to his crime to invoke the collective response that underpins his prolonged management?