

MICHEL FOUCAULT'S HISTORIES OF SEXUALITY

Didier Eribon

Translated by Michael Lucey

Translator's Foreword

Didier Eribon is one of the preeminent intellectual historians in France. Best known around the world for his landmark biography *Michel Foucault* (1989; English, 1991), which has been translated into seventeen languages, he has also published books of conversations with Georges Dumézil, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Ernst Gombrich. He followed up his biography of Foucault with a more specialized study, *Michel Foucault et ses contemporains* (1994).

In recent years Eribon has become one of France's most vocal public intellectuals working on gay and lesbian issues, in particular civil rights for gays and lesbians. Some of his writings and interviews on these questions have been published as *Papiers d'identité: Interventions sur la question gay* (2000). He has been active, too, in encouraging the development of lesbian and gay studies in France. He organized an international conference on that subject at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris in June 1997 and edited the collection of papers that resulted from it: *Les études gay et lesbiennes* (1998). Currently, in collaboration with the sociologist Françoise Gaspard, he conducts a seminar called "Sociologie des homosexualités" at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris.

In 1999 Eribon published *Réflexions sur la question gay*, which quickly became a French best-seller. Duke University Press will publish the complete English translation in the near future. It is a good example of a kind of writing—perhaps more common in France than in the United States—that is simultaneously accessible to a general reading public and accountable to standards of rigor typical of the most demanding academic discourses. Eribon is an exacting historian. In the third and final section of *Réflexions*—devoted to Michel Foucault, and

GLQ 7:1

pp. 31–86

Copyright © 2001 by Duke University Press

part of which *GLQ* publishes here—Eribon shows how a detailed knowledge of the intellectual context in which ideas are elaborated enables deeply productive reflection on those ideas. Often Americans read Foucault as a disembodied theorist. Eribon's reinsertion of Foucault not only into French intellectual history but also into the queer history of twentieth-century France, and his arguments about how doing so might inflect our image of and use of Foucault as a queer theorist, are startling and have immense potential import for American audiences.

The three sections of *Réflexions* (which concludes with a short and very smart afterword on the uses of Hannah Arendt for LGBTQ studies) are clearly interlocking, yet they are distinct enough to justify the independent appearance of this excerpt. The first section of the book is an analysis of “insult” as the founding social event of gay identity. The second section traces the history of a developing discourse, from Symonds and Pater to Wilde to Gide to Proust (along with many other figures at the margins), in which modern gay identity could be addressed and potentially legitimated. The third section opens with the claim that Foucault can profitably be read as someone in the Symonds-Pater-Wilde-Gide-Proust tradition.

Together, the second and third sections of Eribon's book contribute to an effort to challenge something of a received idea in LGBTQ studies, learned from Foucault: that LGBTQ people inevitably have to construct a “counter” or “reverse” discourse out of a pathologizing discourse provided about and to them by the dominant culture. Throughout the book Eribon makes clear the pertinence of Foucault's concept of reverse discourses, yet he challenges its adequacy for understanding the whole of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century discourse on male homosexuality. He points out, for instance, that people in the circles of Symonds and Pater invented a culture and a discourse about it that preexisted psychiatry's inquiry into and pathologization of homosexuality. He speaks of “two discourses that were invented separately and concurrently, producing a sort of ‘conflict of the faculties,’ where literature and philosophy challenged medicine, psychology, and psychiatry as to who had the right to speak on this subject.” He demonstrates that in fact the pathologizing psychiatric discourse was parasitic on the literary and philosophical discourses affirming homosexuality.

Having challenged a Foucauldian dogma in the second section of the book, Eribon goes on in the third section to give a brilliantly nuanced reading of the interrelation between Foucault's own identity as gay—the particular shape of the gay culture and gay history in and through which Foucault lived—and his work on sexuality. At times Eribon, to encourage a more serious cultural contextualization of Foucault's thought, is intentionally provocative; for instance, he insists that Foucault's primary and formative experience of gay culture was closer to Arcadie than

to the Homosexual Front for Revolutionary Action (FHAR) and that this experience remained a dominant part of his sensibility and intellectual profile. (The FHAR is the French equivalent of the Gay Liberation Front, and Arcadie, an important organization from the mid-1950s to the end of the 1970s, is the equivalent of an older, more closeted, nonactivist form of “homophile” association.) Yet Eribon’s insistence on recontextualizing Foucault as someone whose baseline cultural formation lay in what we might think of as “pre-Stonewall” kinds of gay identity is not part of a project of discrediting Foucault’s potentially “queer” thought. Rather, Eribon wants to trace a conflicting set of motivations discoverable in work spanning Foucault’s entire career and to show that a certain pre-Stonewall mentality is legible in the work even when it seems most “queer,” most forward-looking to American eyes.

Eribon also does a major service to English-speaking readers interested in Foucault’s thinking about sexuality by bringing to their attention a passage on homosexuality from Foucault’s 1961 *Histoire de la folie* [*Madness and Civilization*]. The passage in question has never been translated into English; the published English translation represents a drastically abridged version of the French text. It is an important passage because, as Eribon shows, it seems to contradict a number of very famous assertions from the first volume of Foucault’s *History of Sexuality*, in particular the statement that only in the nineteenth century did the homosexual become “a personage, a case history.” Eribon’s detailed juxtaposition of Foucault’s thought in 1961 with his thought from the mid-1970s—his careful unraveling of the reasons for, the extent of, and the consequences of the divergence between the work of these two moments—will be fascinating reading for anyone who has found inspiration in the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*.—ML

Homosexuality and Unreason

Would it be possible to read Foucault’s *Madness and Civilization* as a history of homosexuality that dared not speak its name? Might we imagine that this book took the place of a work on homosexuality at a moment when it was impossible to choose that subject for a dissertation in the French university system? Is “madness” a metaphor or a “code” meant to express an underground meaning, one hidden by the text of the book yet containing its secret and authentic truth?

Such questions are hard to avoid, and perhaps even harder to respond to. For to respond to them would be to interpret Foucault’s texts in terms of a problematic of “truth,” whereas those texts set out to thwart any such project. It would be to read Foucault’s texts in a confessional mode, a practice they intended to chal-

lenge. It would be to read them in terms of a “psychological interpretation,” something Foucault detested.¹

It would be, above all, to limit the scope of our interpretation. For when, in *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault seeks to reconstruct the kinds of experience that shaped the appearance of madness in this or that historical moment, or when, in *The History of Sexuality*, volume 1, he sets out his “analytics of power,” he is making an effort to allow his specific analyses to have as wide a field of application as possible, to allow them to be useful in the widest range of disciplines. At the very least they should be able to serve as a heuristic grid for other investigations. To tie them down to a single meaning, even a hidden one, would be to impoverish their theoretical power, perhaps even to negate their project.

We also know that Foucault was quite literally obsessed by the theoretical and historical question of madness and of “mental illness.” Whatever links there might have been for Foucault between his fascination for madness and his painful experience of homosexuality, it simply is the case that he set out to study the ways in which the social exclusion of the “insane” came into being, the ways in which the “mentally incompetent” were reduced to “silence.” It was in the “lightning flashes” of Artaud, Nerval, Nietzsche, or Hölderlin, in the “transfigurations” of Goya, in all those works that gave voice to the “cries” of madness, that Foucault sought, throughout his work in the 1950s, to ground the possibility of “total contestation” and of a counterattack against psychiatric discourse.² He celebrated the idea of the “mad philosopher,”³ just as he never ceased, throughout the 1960s, to wonder about the links between madness and literature.⁴ And when he speaks of the “fundamental experience” of humanity that must be recovered from the oblivion ushered in by the reign of psychology, he invites us to return to the fundamental dialogue between Reason and Madness (notably by way of literary and artistic experiences).⁵

§ Yet it is necessary to insist that when he speaks of madness, Foucault speaks simultaneously of other exclusions, notably those related to sexuality. Further, his analysis of madness is presented as the first part—a central, but not a unique, part—of a group of analyses yet to be written. In the preface to the 1961 edition of *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault announces that “it will *also* be necessary to tell the stories of other divisions,” in particular to “write the history—and not only in the terms of ethnology—of sexual interdictions: to speak of the constantly shifting, continually obstinate forms of repression within our own culture” (*DE*, 1:161; my emphasis). He thus clearly indicates the necessity of writing a history of sexuality as an obligatory sequel to *Madness and Civilization* [*Histoire de la folie*], a continuation without which the earlier work could not be

considered complete. The study of madness and the analysis of sexuality form, in Foucault's vision, two fragments of the same inquiry.⁶

For the project of *Madness and Civilization*, as it is given in the 1961 preface (which Foucault removed from the 1972 republication), was to inaugurate the vast future work of a "history of limits," of gestures that establish borders, "gestures that are obscure and necessarily forgotten once performed, whereby a culture refuses something that will come to function as its Outside" (*DE*, 1:161).⁷

§ Doubtless it would be foolish, and not particularly useful, to try to determine which was the primary, founding interest of Foucault's research, sexuality or madness, madness or sexuality. In fact, it seems that Foucault's intellectual interests always revolved around the same objects—that basically, from the very outset, a set of theoretical problems had presented themselves to him, and he would return to them in all of his future work: madness, sexuality, the penal system, and therefore psychiatry, psychoanalysis, psychology, criminology, and so on.

The question of sexuality had already begun to surface in the introduction Foucault wrote to Ludwig Binswanger's *Le rêve et l'existence* [*Dream and Existence*], published in 1954, at a time when Foucault was interested in lived experiences of madness viewed through the framework of "existential analysis" as it had been elaborated by Binswanger, a Swiss German psychiatrist.⁸ And during both semesters of the academic year 1956–57, while he was teaching at Uppsala University (that is to say, when he began working on *Madness and Civilization*), he gave a course called "The Conception of Love in French Literature from the Marquis de Sade to Jean Genet."⁹ For a long time Foucault was fascinated by Sade's work and greatly admired Genet's writings.¹⁰

There is another example of Foucault's long-standing interest in the themes that he would turn to in his later books. In 1961, just after the publication of *Madness and Civilization*, the question came up of the republication of his 1954 book, *Mental Illness and Personality*. Foucault expressed some reluctance to Jean Lacroix, the series editor, about republishing what was, in his view, an outdated work. He suggested instead a new study that would have to do with "crime," "penal justice," and "criminology."¹¹ In the end he agreed to the republication of the book, but he replaced the second part—too grounded in his Marxism of the early 1950s—with a summary of the theses developed in *Madness and Civilization*. The book would also henceforth be titled *Mental Illness and Psychology*.¹²

Later, in the 1970s, when he was working on *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault devoted a number of courses at the Collège de France to themes that prefigured his *History of Sexuality*, such as "The Christian Technology of Government and of Individuals." During the same years he became interested in the discourse

of medicolegal expertise, and he combined his interests in psychiatry and in the penal system in the seminar that dealt with a case of parricide in the nineteenth century. That seminar resulted in the 1973 publication of *I, Pierre Rivière*.¹³ And when *Discipline and Punish* was published in 1975, Foucault's course at the Collège de France had as its subject "The Abnormals."¹⁴

We might even say that the topic of "abnormality," of the historical construction of the "abnormal" individual, was the central theme around which all of Foucault's work was organized. It was part and parcel of the more general theme of the production of the individual and individuality in Western society (and also of the question of the boundaries being instituted between "normal" and "abnormal" individuals). To put it another way, his guiding concern was the production of "subjects" and "subjectivities" as subject to "norms" and as socially distributed through division and exclusion by those norms.¹⁵

§ In any case, from 1956, when Foucault began work on a history of madness in the Carolina Rediviva Library in Uppsala, through his final books in 1984, the question of sexuality (and of homosexuality) was part of his intellectual perspective. It is certainly one of the axes around which his research was structured, an omnipresent theoretical theme—even if sometimes only silently present. It sheds light on much of his work. This is not to suggest, however, that Foucault's work should be understood retrospectively, as if his thought happened to have revealed itself slowly over time as an intellectual project or a personal quest that would fully realize itself only in his final books.

Instead, one could simply think that in the mid-1970s, when the political context not only authorized him but, more important, impelled him to do so, Foucault came to confront directly a theoretical object that had never been absent from his intellectual preoccupations and had indeed been a focal point from the beginning (as well as part of the biographical background).

§ Yet to establish the link between *Madness and Civilization* and *The History of Sexuality* (and therefore the history of homosexuality), isn't it sufficient to notice that the book from 1961 contains a chapter—central to its argument—on the concomitant invention, in the seventeenth century, of the "personages" of someone who is "mad" and of the "homosexual"? We should not forget that Foucault's dissertation originally had the title *Madness and Unreason* [*Folie et déraison*].¹⁶ Indeed, the entire historical demonstration of the work is established in the interrelation of the two notions, that is to say, in the articulation of madness with the "sins" linked to sexuality.

In the pages composed in 1962 for *Mental Illness and Psychology*, Foucault summarizes quite clearly the problem he intended to set forth. After men-

tioning the Renaissance, during which madness was “allowed free rein . . . , formed part of the background and language of everyday life . . . , [and] was for everyone an everyday experience that one sought more to celebrate than to control,” he writes:

About the middle of the seventeenth century, a sudden change took place: the world of madness was to become the world of exclusion. Throughout Europe, great internment houses were created with the intention of receiving not simply the mad, but a whole series of individuals who were highly different from one another, at least according to our criteria of perception—the poor and disabled, the elderly poor, beggars, the work-shy, those with venereal diseases, libertines of all kinds, people whom their families or the king wished to spare public punishment, spendthrift fathers, defrocked priests; in short, all those who, in relation to the order of reason, morality, and society, showed signs of “derangement.” (67; translation modified)

What links all these “deranged people” is that somehow they can be assigned to the category of the “unproductive.” At this moment Foucault is still deeply marked by the Marxism of the 1950s, and his analyses often refer to explanations of an economic order.¹⁷ Internment plays a double role: to reduce unemployment and to lower production costs by exploiting the labor power assembled in these “forced-labor shops” (*MC*, 54).

But the relation between internment and work is not “entirely defined by economic conditions.” It is also the product of a “new sensibility,” a “new morality”: “A moral perception sustains and animates it” (*MC*, 58). If an entire population of “shiftless” and “useless” people is to be put to forced labor, a population unable “to participate in the production, circulation, or accumulation of wealth” (*MIP*, 68), it is also in order to exercise “moral control.” Those who do not respect the “frontiers of the bourgeois order,” the “limits” of its work ethic and of social utility, will find themselves interned behind the walls of the Hôpital Général (*MC*, 58) during the process that *Madness and Civilization* designates “The Great Confinement” (the title of the second chapter of that book [38–64]).

The mad and all the other outlaws confined with them belong to a single category that Foucault designates “Unreason.” (He often capitalized the word.) It groups together all those who “no longer could or should belong to society” (*MIP*, 68). Three realms of experience blend into one in this “uniform universe of unreason.” They concern either “sexuality in relation to family structure,” “profanation in relation to new conceptions of the sacred,” or “libertinage.” These three realms

“together with madness make up, within the space of internment, a homogeneous world in which mental illness will take on the meaning that we recognize in it” (*HF*, 97). Its proximity to “vice” will give madness its new meaning: “Madness forged a relationship with moral and social guilt that it is still perhaps not ready to break” (*MIP*, 67). Consequently, “internment played not only a negative role of exclusion but also a positive role of organization. . . . It brought together into a unified field kinds of people and values between which preceding cultures had perceived no resemblance” (*HF*, 96).

The entire argument of *Madness and Civilization* is contained in these few lines. Madness is not a natural reality that had been waiting around for that happy day in the middle of the nineteenth century when psychiatry would come along, the fruit of a long history of scientific progress, to assign it its truth in “mental illness.” Rather, it is only because madness was constructed as a pathological phenomenon at a given historical moment, only because it was excluded or “exteriorized” from society, that psychiatry was able to come into existence—once its object had been delimited by internment and its consequences.

For 150 years people suffering from “venereal diseases,” along with other “debauched” folk, would have been confined elbow to elbow with “crazed” people “within the space of the same enclosure.” This cohabitation would have inscribed on the character of the mad person a sign that would determine how the perception of madness would henceforth be organized (*HF*, 100). Far from being “archaic,” such a relation was established only “at the threshold of the modern world.” It was produced by “the Age of Reason”:

By inventing, in its imaginary moral geometry, the space of internment, the Age of Reason had stumbled upon both a fatherland and a place of redemption that could be shared both by sins of the flesh and by crimes against reason. Madness became the neighbor of sin. Perhaps it is here that the kinship between unreason and guilt, experienced by the insane person of our time as an unavoidable fate, discovered by doctors as a truth of nature, first takes shape. In this artificial space, cut from whole cloth right in the middle of the seventeenth century, obscure alliances were constructed that more than a hundred years of so-called positivist psychiatry have not been able to undo, alliances that in fact were only formed for the first time ever so recently, in the Age of Reason. (*HF*, 100)

But if madness was defined in the seventeenth century by its proximity with moral “vice” and sexual debauchery, by being a “neighbor of sin,” inevitably

the reverse is also true: areas of experience that were called “sinful” would henceforth be defined and perceived through their relation to madness. Because mad persons were confined alongside those who were “guilty,” they would come to be thought of as essentially related to guilt. In turn, due to their topographical assimilation to those who were mad, the debauched, libertines, and those with venereal diseases would be seen as lacking reason and prone to mental disorder.

Given that “homosexuals” figure among these “sinners” of the flesh who suffer banishment from the social realm, who have been relegated to mental “homes,” it is easy to perceive that for Foucault the conceptualization of homosexuality that psychiatry will produce is in no way scientific. It too arises out of the “perception of unreason in the Age of Reason” and out of the movement of expulsion of which imprisonment is only a visible symptom. That movement itself arises more profoundly from the coming into being of a particular morality. Psychiatry and psychoanalysis, in their analyses of homosexuality, will be nothing more than the heirs of this “bourgeois morality,” which came to prominence in the seventeenth century, the offspring of the moral and social exclusion of homosexuals.

§ In the chapter of *Histoire de la folie* titled “The Correctional World” (93–123), Foucault can be said to propose a short history of homosexuality.¹⁸ He tells how in 1726, in Paris, a person was condemned to be burned alive at the Place de la Grève for the crime of sodomy. The execution took place the same day. “This was one of the last executions for sodomy in France,” Foucault specifies, for “contemporary feeling was already sufficiently offended by the severity of the penalty that Voltaire would remember it and refer to it when he wrote the article on ‘Socratic Love’ for the *Dictionnaire philosophique*.” At that later moment, in the majority of cases, “the penalty, when it isn’t banishment to the provinces, is internment at the Hôpital or in a house of detention” (101–2).

But if the penalties are much less severe at the beginning of the eighteenth century, if it is no longer a question of being burned alive but of being banished or interned, this is because the social and cultural perception of homosexuality underwent a profound transformation during the seventeenth century: “The new indulgence toward sodomy finds its particular significance both in the moral condemnation and in the sanctions provided by scandal that begin to punish social and literary expressions of homosexuality.” Thus Foucault can write, “The period in which sodomites are being burned for the last time is also the period in which a lyrical expression of homosexuality, perfectly tolerated by Renaissance culture, is disappearing—as is erudite libertinage” (*HF*, 102). One therefore has the impression that

sodomy, formerly condemned under the same rubric as magic and heresy, in the context of religious profanation, is now only condemned for reasons of morality, alongside homosexuality. Homosexuality itself becomes the main focus of the condemnation—added on to sodomitical practices. And at the same time homosexual feelings and desire begin to provoke a new sense of outrage. Two different experiences, previously separate, become confused: the prohibitions on sodomy and the dubious loves of homosexuality [*les équivoques amoureuses de l'homosexualité*]. A single form of condemnation will now envelope both of them and will *draw an entirely new line of division in the world of feelings. A new moral ensemble* is thus formed: it is no longer burdened with older forms of punishment; it has been equalized through internment; it already closely resembles modern forms of guilt. Homosexuality, to which the Renaissance had granted freedom of expression, will from now on *pass into silence and cross into the realm of prohibition*, heir to the age-old condemnations of a now desacralized sodomy. (102–3; my emphasis)

Consequently, if “love had, throughout the trajectory of Platonic culture, been distributed across a hierarchy of sublimity which related it either to a blind corporeal madness or to a magnificent intoxication of the soul,” then in the modern era, “from the Age of Reason onward,” a different choice will be offered: between “a love that is within reason” and “a love that is part of unreason.” Homosexuality clearly falls into the latter category. Thus little by little “it *comes to occupy a place within the stratifications of madness*. It becomes part of the unreason of the modern era, fixing at the heart of every sexuality an unavoidable choice through which our era incessantly reiterates its verdict” (103; my emphasis).

Bourgeois morality is thus not merely a work ethic; it is also a morality of the family, dictating henceforth what society should be and who does or does not fully belong to it: “Family structure works simultaneously as a social rule and as a norm of reason. . . . A new sensibility is substituted for the old forms of love in the Western world: a sensibility born of and in the family, a sensibility that excludes as part of unreason anything that fails to conform to its order or its interests” (*HF*, 104–5). Further, “we see in this historical moment the confiscation of sexual ethics by family morality” (100). Society is henceforth ruled by “the great bourgeois, and soon republican, idea that virtue too is an affair of state” and that “decrees can be published to make it flourish” (*MC*, 61).¹⁹

§ “New kinds of people,” “new personages,” thus appear, thanks to a

twofold process: on the one hand, the movement to exclude, to relegate an entire "multicolored population" to the far side of a frontier symbolized by the walls of an asylum, with the assistance, on the other hand, of the process of integrating all these disparate individuals under the enormous umbrella of "unreason." Among these disparate individuals, the characteristics of one group have a contaminating effect on the definition of other groups. The mad person, by being marked by "guilt," and the "homosexual," by coming to be considered "insane," become hitherto unknown human types:

From the seventeenth century onward unreason is no longer the world's obsession. Further, it ceases to be the natural dimension in which reason exercises itself. It takes on the appearance of a human fact, of a spontaneously produced variation in the topography of social species. What was formerly an unavoidable peril for humankind's objects and language, its reason and its territory, now takes on the form of a certain kind of person. Or of certain kinds of persons: the people of unreason whom society recognizes and quarantines; the debauched, the spendthrift, the homosexual, the magician, the person with suicidal tendencies, the libertine. Unreason comes to be measured in relation to a certain divergence from the social norm. . . . From the seventeenth century on, an unreasonable person is a concrete type, drawn from a social world, judged and condemned by the society to which that person belongs. (*HF*, 117–18)

Thus do the "abnormals" make their appearance: those defined by the norms that reject them. The social personage of the homosexual is born. Psychiatry will have this personage in its clutches once internment has "circumscribed the area of a *certain objectification*," by delimiting "a region *already colored by the negative values of exile*" (119; my emphasis).

It is at this point, where madness and sexuality join up within the perception of unreason, that Foucault launches into an attack on psychoanalysis:

In the light of its own naïveté, psychoanalysis was able to see that all madness is rooted in some kind of troubled sexuality; but this makes sense only to the extent that our culture, in a demonstration of the principles of its Enlightenment, places sexuality on the border between reason and unreason. Sexuality has in every period, and probably in every culture, functioned within a system of constraints; but it is only in our culture, and at a relatively recent date, that it has been divided so rigorously between

reason and *unreason*, and thence reductively transformed into a distinction between *sickness* and *health* and between *normal* and *abnormal*. (HF, 103; my emphasis)

Madness and Civilization thus proposes a radical historicization not only of madness, or of “mental illness,” but also of homosexuality. The personage of the homosexual is not a fixed figure that can be found in any century or any society. Just as madness is perceived and thus produced differently in each age, so homosexuality will not have the same reality in Plato’s Greece and in the Europe of the Age of Reason. What psychiatry will call “homosexuality” is the specific creation of the Age of Reason.

Thus a new species has appeared during the unfolding of the Great Confinement as a result of the new morality and the various norms that confinement set in place: it is the homosexual, a new kind of being formed in the social and moral spaces of the Age of Reason, shaped by its logic of exclusion. The medical gaze, the psychiatric gaze, and finally the gaze of psychoanalysis will all come to rest on this new species.

And so, just as Foucault says that “psychology only became possible in our world when madness had been mastered” (MIP, 87), we could say, following the implications of *Madness and Civilization*, that psychiatry and psychoanalysis only became possible when homosexuality had been banished and excluded from the realm of reason and had been perceived as a social pathology—which would lead, two centuries later, to its perception as a mental pathology or a perversion of desire or of the sexual instinct. For it is clearly as much about homosexuality as about madness that Foucault is speaking when he asks, “Is it not centrally important for our culture that *unreason* could become an object for knowledge only to the extent that it had already been the object of an excommunication?” (HF, 119).

The Birth of Perversion

La volonté de savoir [*The Will to Knowledge*] was published in 1976 as a general introduction to the larger project of *The History of Sexuality*.²⁰ Foucault indicated that five volumes would follow.²¹ Yet he quickly found himself revising his project. None of the announced volumes would appear, and this programmatic introduction would have to wait eight years for a sequel. For while he had indicated his intention to study “a good three centuries” in this project (HSI, 72), that is, to go back as far as the seventeenth century and to the thematization of the “techniques of the self” established during the Counter Reformation, Foucault found himself drawn

by his researches farther and farther back into the long history of Christian discourse, right back to the earliest days of Christianity. He thus began working on a book titled *Les aveux de la chair* [*The Confessions of the Flesh*]. The logic of his thinking then led him to become interested in what had taken place before the imposition of Christian morality. He turned to the doctrines of pagan antiquity and thus came to write *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*, dedicated to “practices of the self” as they are expounded in Greek and Roman thought. These two volumes were published a few days before his death in June 1984.²²

§ *La volonté de savoir* is clearly a book linked to events current at the time of its writing. Foucault says as much in his conversations with Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow in 1983: “My current work is tied to our present moment [*actualité*] and to my personal experience, just as in the case of the prison, the clinic, etc. Of course, it is not the same kind of experience. . . . The book on sexuality is linked . . . with the fact that you could see, in the liberation movements of the 1970s, first of all, people who were looking for a theoretical justification in psychoanalysis or in some theory of desire. Secondly, they were also looking, in a more or less explicit manner, for a new ethics.”²³

There is no question that the strategic intention of *La volonté de savoir*—and thus of the whole project of *The History of Sexuality* as Foucault conceived of it when he set to work on it—is deeply embedded in the theoretical and political space defined by the irruption in the 1970s of the “sexual liberation” movements, and also by the inflation of psychoanalytic discourse in French intellectual life at that time. To put it concisely, Foucault’s political target is Freudo-Marxism and the works of Herbert Marcuse and Wilhelm Reich, who had become the major theoretical references of the liberation movements. His theoretical target was psychoanalysis.

In just a few years after 1968, in the wake of the huge success of Marcuse’s books *Eros and Civilization* and *One-Dimensional Man*, Reich’s writings (which had already enjoyed a certain vogue in the 1930s) were translated into French and became the bibles of subversion of the French far Left: *The Sexual Revolution*, *The Invasion of Compulsory Sex-Morality*, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*.²⁴ Beyond Freudo-Marxism and theories of the liberation of “desire,” Foucault wanted to call psychoanalysis itself, the theoretical ground of the politicosexual discourses he wanted to contest, radically into question. Further, he wanted to pursue the project of critical reflection on the human sciences that he had begun in *Madness and Civilization*.

§ From the first pages of *La volonté de savoir* Foucault places himself in direct opposition to the theoretical schemas of Freudo-Marxism. In those schemas,

bourgeois society represses sexuality in order to channel sexual energies (the libido) into labor power. According to such a historical perspective, it would be sufficient to outsmart the processes of “repression,” to transgress taboos, to multiply sexual discourses, in order to liberate people from their shackles and shake the capitalist order to its roots. Sexual liberation would thus be a political gesture subversive of the entire social order. For Foucault, by contrast, modern Western society, far from imposing silence on sexuality, encouraged constant talk about it. This encouragement could be seen in the very existence of a group of specialists—psychoanalysts—who were paid to listen to people talk to them about their dreams, their secrets, their drives. Of course, the institution of psychoanalysis represents only one of the aspects of the demand that one speak. Yet it is around this particular institution that a certain double bind is most clearly articulated: the order that you speak of yourself and your sexuality—more particularly of your sexuality as the locus of truth about yourself—while letting it be believed that it is forbidden to speak of any such thing and that to express yourself you will have to work to overcome the forces of “repression” (both individual and social).

In this book from 1976, then, Foucault tells us that the social incitement to speech dates back to the Counter Reformation. The governing principle of Christian pastoral work as it was established at that time was that “everything had to be told” to one’s spiritual director—everything one had done, of course, but also everything one had thought, felt, dreamed, and so on: “A twofold evolution tended to make the flesh into the root of all evil, shifting the most important moment of transgression from the act itself to the stirrings—so difficult to perceive and formulate—of desire” (*HSI*, 19–20). This was perhaps the moment when a particular “injunction, so peculiar to the West, was laid down for the first time, in the form of a general constraint” (20). It was not “the obligation to admit to violations of the laws of sex, as required by traditional penance,” but “the nearly infinite task of telling—telling oneself and another, as often as possible, everything that might concern the interplay of innumerable pleasures, sensations, and thoughts which, throughout the body and soul, had some affinity with sex.” If this “scheme for transforming sex into discourse had been devised long before in an ascetic and monastic setting,” the seventeenth century “made it into a rule for everyone” (20).

For Foucault, then, the task is to understand both why and how—through what historical mechanisms—such an internal transformation in Christian pastoral work was “diffused,” as he puts it, throughout society. Indeed, this confessional “technique” could have “remained tied to the destiny of Christian spirituality or to the sphere of individual pleasures if it had not been supported and relayed by other mechanisms. In the first place, by a ‘public interest.’” It is not a

question of “a collective curiosity or sensibility; not a new mentality,” but rather a question of “power mechanisms to whose functioning the sexual discourse became essential” (*HSI*, 23; translation modified).

Throughout his book Foucault works to show precisely which power mechanisms made both this discursive hold on “sex” and the production of what would from then on be called “sexuality” so necessary, so “essential.” In the final section of the book he takes on this question directly. He means to show how a shift in forms of power took place: from a form based on exercising power over the life or death of an individual to a form based on managing life and administering populations.²⁵ He writes, for example:

The old power of death that symbolized sovereign power was now carefully supplanted by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life. During the classical period, there was a rapid development of various disciplines—universities, secondary schools, barracks, workshops; there was also the emergence, in the field of political practices and economic observation, of the problems of birthrate, longevity, public health, housing, and migration. Hence there was an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjectivation of bodies and the control of populations. (*HSI*, 139–40; translation modified)

One pole of this historical transformation “centered on the body as a machine.” Foucault here again sets out the analyses of *Discipline and Punish*, which had appeared a year earlier, and describes an “anatomy-politics” consisting of procedures of power that in this later book he designates “disciplines”: training bodies, optimizing their capacities, extorting their strength, rendering them simultaneously more docile and more useful, and so on (139). The other pole was centered on the “species body,” “imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity.” In this instance we see the setting up of a system of “regulatory controls,” defined by Foucault as “a bio-politics of the population” (139).

Sex becomes a key issue in the exercise of power precisely because it is situated at the pivot point of “anatomy-politics” and “bio-politics,” of body training and population management: “At the juncture of the ‘body’ and the ‘population,’ sex became a crucial target of a power organized around the management of life rather than the menace of death” (*HSI*, 147). Sex is “a means of access both to the life of the body and the life of the species. Disciplines were

molded in response to it; regulations were written with it in mind" (146; translation modified).

§ Foucault's proposition is to write the history of sexuality in terms of sexuality's "production," its incitation, and no longer in terms of its repression and prohibition. This proposition is best understood in terms of his analysis of the transformations Western society passed through from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, from "a *symbolics of blood* to an *analytics of sexuality*" (HSI, 148; Foucault's emphasis). He does not, of course, deny that certain forms of sexuality are repressed. But he asserts that notions of repression and prohibition will not be useful for thinking about these phenomena within a historical frame. For to speak of repression is to imagine that whatever reality is repressed—be it this or that sexuality, or sexuality in general—would have preexisted whatever discourse seized on it in order to pick away at it or to prohibit it. The "permanent examination" of "peripheral" sexualities, the "infinitesimal surveillances" to which they are subjected (145), cannot be dissociated from the production and multiplication of "perversions," from the creation of categories for them. Nineteenth-century psychiatry contains a veritable "discursive explosion" (38) that produces this *Scientia sexualis*, this science of sex, whose gaze and functioning depend on the demand that people be induced to speak (to tell their symptoms, to recount their memories, to make free associations) and also on the subsequent "interpretation." For if a subject is required to make these confessions, it is because the "truth" they express cannot be known by the subject. Only the person who is granted the expertise to decipher "the truth of this obscure truth" can do that. It is the listener who is "the master of truth," who holds the "hermeneutic" function (65–67).

Thus "sexuality" does not preexist this science of sex. It is produced by it. It is nothing but its "correlative": "For one hundred and fifty years a complicated apparatus [*dispositif*] has been in place for producing true discourses on sex: an apparatus joining two different historical moments in that it connects the ancient injunction of confession to clinical listening methods. Thanks to the workings of this apparatus, it has been possible for something called 'sexuality' to seem to be the truth of sex and its pleasures" (HSI, 68; translation modified).

It is in the very process of attempting to control that psychiatric discourse has divided, subdivided, and resubdivided "perversions," setting up elaborate taxonomies, giving "strange baptismal names" to those who fall outside the "norm": exhibitionists, fetishists, zoophiles and zoerasts, automonosexualists, mixoscopophiles, gynecomasts, presbyophiles, sexoesthetic inverts, dyspareunist women, and so on. This explains why, after providing a sample of these "fine names for heresies," Foucault comments: "The machinery of power that set out in

pursuit of this odd lot would intend to do away with it only as it also provided it with an analytical reality that was visible and permanent: it was implanted in bodies, slipped into modes of conduct, made into a principle of classification and intelligibility, established as a *raison d'être* and as the natural order of disorder." Then Foucault asks: "Was it a question of excluding these thousand aberrant sexualities? Hardly. Rather, it was a question of their specification, the regional solidification of each of them. It was a matter, through dissemination, of scattering them throughout reality and incorporating them into specific individuals" (*HSI*, 43–44; translation modified).

The power of control and surveillance thus operated by "implantation," by the "incorporation of perversions," and by the "new specifying of individuals." The hunt, the pursuit of "heretical sexualities" on which nineteenth-century medicine embarked, consisted of acts of naming and of placing individuals in the new species defined by these nominations. But it also consisted of making these new categories part of reality, of giving existence to an entirely new garden of species.

And so the homosexual would be born.

§ Indeed, among the many new species invented by psychiatric medicine in the nineteenth century, Foucault mentions one in particular that will have an important future. What I cite here again is, of course, one of the best-known passages in *La volonté de savoir*:

The sodomy of the old civil and canonical codes was a category of forbidden acts; their author was nothing more than the juridical subject of them. The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage: a past, a case history and a childhood, a character-type, a form of life; also a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology. Nothing of that person's total being escapes from sexuality. Everywhere it is present: it underlies every action because it is its insidious and indefinitely active principle. It is shamelessly inscribed on the face and the body, because it is a secret that always gives itself away. It is consubstantial with the person, less as a habitual sin than as a singular nature. We must not forget that the psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was characterized—Westphal's famous article of 1870 on "contrary sexual sensation" can stand as its birth certificate—less by a type of sexual relations than by a certain quality of sexual sensibility, a certain way of inverting the masculine and the feminine in oneself. Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy into a kind of

interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a relapsed heretic; the homosexual was now a species. (*HSI*, 43; translation modified)

§ Modern homosexuality thus appears at the moment when psychiatrists begin to describe in terms of “sexual orientation” what had previously been considered as “practices” or “acts.” (Thus, as one sees in Westphal’s article, acts themselves are no longer necessary to define the orientation—now understood as a pathology—no longer a particular perversity that implies a penchant for this “vice” but a “perversion” that presupposes mental or physiological problems.)²⁶

In this light, it is easy to understand why—given that this “perversion” is defined by the “inversion” of one’s gender, by a “hermaphroditism of the soul” (a way of looking at things that Proust will take up)—Foucault will now be particularly interested in the question of hermaphroditism in the context of his work on the history of sexuality.²⁷ Indeed, in a 1978 interview he declares: “Once homosexuality became a medicopsychiatric category in the second half of the nineteenth century, it is striking to me that it was immediately analyzed and rendered intelligible in terms of hermaphroditism. That is how a homosexual, or that is the form in which the homosexual, enters into psychiatric medicine: the form of the hermaphrodite.”²⁸

The Third Sex

Thus at the heart of two of Foucault’s works, fifteen years apart, lies the question of the “birth” of “homosexuality” and of the “personage” of the “homosexual.” Yet in those two works Foucault proposes two different dates: the seventeenth century in *Madness and Civilization*, the nineteenth in *La volonté de savoir*.

More than the periodization changed between the two works. A process reversed itself. *Madness and Civilization* argued that psychology and psychiatry became possible only when their objects (the mad person and the homosexual) had been shaped for them by the internment process and, more deeply, by a new “moral sensibility” that saw the light of day during the “Age of Reason.” It was only because the personages of the mad person and the homosexual had been created through these historical processes—both moral and institutional—that psychiatry was able to lay hold of them. Psychiatry thereby produced the illusion that it represented the scientific endpoint of some progress in knowledge, an endpoint at which the truth about what it took to be certain invariable and natural realities was finally revealed. In *La volonté de savoir*, not only is it two centuries later that

the homosexual becomes a personage, but, more important, it is psychiatry that invents this new set of conceptual divisions and works to make it part of reality. Psychiatry produces what it was produced by, or at least what it—in *Madness and Civilization*—came after.

§ One does, of course, find in *La volonté de savoir* analyses that are quite close to those of the 1961 volume. For the very project of a *History of Sexuality*, like the project of a *History of Madness*, as the (French) titles indicate, consists precisely of reinscribing in history certain notions and realities that various discourses with “scientific pretensions” (psychiatry or psychoanalysis) had taken as “natural” or as transhistorical. This is why Foucault can claim that his *History of Sexuality* can serve as an “archaeology of psychoanalysis” (*HSI*, 130). By that he means that he intends, on the one hand, to reinscribe the practice of the psychoanalytic session within the historical sequence that includes the Christian practice of confession but also, on the other hand, and more important, to show how the “subject of desire” that psychoanalysis is concerned with was born. Psychoanalysis, in its preoccupation with this subject, imagines that it gains access to the deep structures of individuality, whereas all it in fact does is ratify and reproduce the manner in which this individuality was created, at a given historical moment and by means of technologies of power and subjectivation.²⁹

We also find in *La volonté de savoir* one of the central threads of *Madness and Civilization*: the effort to analyze the way in which a system of power whose procedures rely above all on the norm and on “normalization” (*HSI*, 89) was put into place: “From that point on, the technology of sex was essentially ordered in relation to the medical institution, the exigency of normality” (117).³⁰ Moreover, Foucault insists on the fact that homosexuals, who previously had only been considered “libertines” or “delinquents,” would now be perceived as having “a global kinship with the insane,” as “suffering from a sickness of the sexual instinct.”³¹

A final similarity: one of the great themes running through *Madness and Civilization*, that “normality” relies on the “family” and the “family unit” to advance itself, is taken up once again in *La volonté de savoir*: “What has taken place since the seventeenth century can be interpreted in the following manner: the apparatus [*dispositif*] of sexuality which first developed on the fringes of familial institutions . . . gradually became focused on the family” (*HSI*, 110; translation modified).³²

§ Still, the differences between the two books should not be minimized. Even if we find at the origin of both *Madness and Civilization* and *La volonté de savoir* the desire to historicize what psychiatric and psychoanalytic thought tends

to naturalize, even if the two works share a theoretical focus in studying the development of a power of the norm and of normality, they are sharply distinguished from each other by the fact that, in the latter book, psychiatry defines the “heretical sexualities” (*HSI*, 49) and brings them into existence as pathological realities arising from a discourse of health and sickness: “The learned discourse on sex that was pronounced in the nineteenth century was imbued with age-old delusions, but also with systematic blindnesses: a refusal to see and to understand; but—and this is clearly the crucial point—a refusal concerning *the very thing that the discourse was causing to appear and whose formulation it was urgently seeking*” (55; my emphasis; translation modified. See also 53–54). We see here a performative productivity of psychiatric discourse. Foucault himself says as much: “The history of sexuality—that is, the history of what functioned in the nineteenth century as a specific field of truth—*must first be written from the viewpoint of a history of discourses*” (69; my emphasis).

§ We are now in a position to notice certain difficulties. If it is psychiatry that causes perverse sexualities to proliferate—by making ever more minute conceptual distinctions between them or by subjecting them to interrogation, by inventorying them in order to build up an illustrated guidebook, by creating a whole new gallery of personages individuated by their sexual desires and practices—then one might wonder how these categories forged by a medical discourse gained access to the bodies and minds of the persons concerned. After all, these psychiatric writings were published in journals or anthologies read only by a few dozen specialists, although a few works, such as Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis*, were read widely outside medical circles.

Foucault does not, of course, attribute to psychiatry any such performative efficaciousness. On the contrary, he underscores the fact that “confessional discourse,” as it is produced by the different technologies that collectively create the demand that one speak—and notably by psychiatry—cannot be imposed from above. “By virtue of the very power structure immanent in it,” it can come only “from below, as an obligatory act of speech which, under some imperious compulsion, breaks the bonds of discretion or forgetfulness” (*HSI*, 62). The productive force of the injunction to produce discourse is not simply a result of the way in which the injunction pushes one toward speech; this force also resides in the belief, produced by the injunction, that it is necessary to speak.

Consequently, if psychiatric discourse proceeds by way of incitation and injunction, it causes a certain speech to be born in response, be it via acquiescence or opposition, submission or revolt. It is at this point of contact—this “strategic” meeting place between, on the one hand, a way of getting a conceptual

hold on things and, on the other hand, the reactions of those gotten hold of—that “multiple sexualities,” circumscribed by psychiatry, enter into reality.

We are dealing, says Foucault, with a mechanism that has “a double impetus: pleasure and power.” The two terms of the mechanism circulate within a field of power and resistance:

The pleasure that comes of exercising a power that questions, monitors, watches, spies, searches out, palpates, brings to light; and on the other hand, the pleasure that kindles at having to evade this power, flee from it, fool it, or travesty it. The power that lets itself be invaded by the pleasure it is pursuing; and opposite it, power asserting itself in the pleasure of showing off, scandalizing, or resisting.

Thus “confrontation and mutual reinforcement” take place simultaneously (*HSI*, 45).

I will come back later to this theorization of power in terms of a “relational” analysis. This is what is most centrally “at issue” [*enjeu*] in the book.³³ It is in fact in terms of this “analytics of power” that one can best understand Foucault’s relation to the homosexual movement: the historical importance he accords to it and the need (one he dwells on) to move beyond and transform its intellectual and political presuppositions. The crucial point here is to note that the mechanism of implantation, of incorporating perversion into subjects, functions by means of a process in which those individuals appropriate for themselves the categories to which they have been assigned, whether they do so to submit to norms, to take pleasure in speaking about what they are, or to resist the “policing of sex.”

§ But is it possible to entertain the idea that no one would have thought of themselves as possessing a particular sexual “nature” if psychiatry had not come along and put together its whole conceptual apparatus? Is it possible to entertain the idea that it was only in reaction to these scientific discourses that individuals who had heretofore only practiced “homosexual acts” began to consider themselves “homosexual persons” and came to see the totality of their being as shaped by their sexual desires, thus acquiring all at once a “past,” a “history,” and a “childhood” (*HSI*, 43)? Is it possible to believe that what had until then been nothing but a habitual sin turned into a secret nature? And could that be because individuals designated in this new way turned around the weapon that psychiatry had forged against them? Foucault says as much in several interviews published shortly after the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*: “You have only to see that the notion of homosexuality [appears] in 1870 and . . . to remark that the great

debate around homosexuality . . . gets under way in the next twenty years to understand that we have here *an absolutely correlative phenomenon*. The idea was to capture people within this notion of homosexuality. Naturally, people turned the weapon to their own ends. People like Gide, Oscar Wilde, Magnus Hirschfeld, etc.”³⁴

It is, of course, impossible to ignore that psychiatry exercised a profound influence on homosexuals of both sexes, if only because it inspired representations that were spread by militant movements and certain literary works. One might mention the way in which, in France, Armand Dubarry used psychiatric literature to write a series of novels, *Les déséquilibrés de l'amour* [*Loves out of Balance*], including the 1896 volume *Les invertis (Le vice allemand)* [*Inverts—The German Vice*].³⁵ The most influential literary works came quite a bit later: Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* only began to appear in 1913, whereas what one could define as a “gay culture” (whatever name one gives it) existed long before that. And if Radclyffe Hall's novel *The Well of Loneliness*, which uses the categories of psychiatric medicine to describe its protagonist (that is to say, as an example of “sexual inversion”), had enormous repercussions for the self-representation of lesbians, it was published only in 1928, at which point lesbian modes of life had been well developed for quite a while.³⁶

Indeed, it seems strange that in *La volonté de savoir* Foucault takes an interest only in elite culture, as if the transformations affecting homosexuality in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were limited to a space circumscribed by psychiatrists and writers. Of course, certain themes ceaselessly circulated between psychiatric discourse and literature, and literature fixed, froze, and disseminated psychiatric representations in the social world. But popular culture—its ways of life, its forms of sociability—played without a doubt an even more considerable role in the elaboration of a “self-awareness” or “collective self-awareness.” George Chauncey demonstrates this fact admirably. It is within the framework of a dynamic specific to the “gay world,” in the interactions between individuals (inside and outside this world), that identities are formed and transformed. The “invert” and the “normal man” were “popular discursive categories” before they were “elite discursive categories.”³⁷ And evolutions happen in different ways in different social classes, as Chauncey shows in reference to a shift that happened a few decades earlier in the middle classes than in popular classes: the idea of a homosexual considered as an invert seeking normal men giving way to a model of “homosexuality” (in which both partners are thought of as homosexual). Or not totally giving way, since in both groups of classes the category of the invert or the “fairy” survives to this day, “uneasy, contested, and disruptive” (27). According to Chauncey's analysis, the modern model of homosexuality managed to impose itself

in a general fashion only in the second half of the twentieth century.³⁸ But what is the case for New York is most likely not the case for European cities, where the model of homosexuality had established itself much earlier. In France, for example, the idea of homosexuality began to spread as early as 1907, in the aftermath of the Eulenburg trials, accounts of which filled the German press. It was to perpetuate the model of inversion against the newer model that Proust put forward his theory of the man-woman (which was the theory of Ulrichs and Hirschfeld as much as of any psychiatrist)—although he also talked endlessly about homosexuality and homosexuals in ways that totally contradicted his own theory.³⁹

Chauncey sets for himself the task of demonstrating how the “gay world” created itself and how, within that world, the different discursive categories through which sexual relations between men could be thought about and spoken about were produced and modified. *Gay New York* can thus be read as putting into question the idea that medical discourse produced these representations and that gays did nothing other than take them on for their own ends. Chauncey works instead to reinscribe the medical discourse within the general context of the evolution and transformation of social practices and of the ways in which gays perceived themselves and were perceived by others in the context of urban life.⁴⁰

Indeed, how is it possible to imagine that all those who frequented the cabarets, the “molly houses,” the balls, the restaurants, and the like throughout the eighteenth or the nineteenth century never thought of themselves as possessing a certain identity? Perhaps it was not a homosexual identity according to our contemporary usage, but surely it was an identity all the same.⁴¹

§ Similarly, it seems impossible to maintain that there can be found no trace of identities in literary and scholarly discourse before psychiatry came on the scene. Symonds, Pater, Wilde, and Gide are all cases to the contrary, even if it is clear that their ways of conceiving of homosexuality or of perceiving themselves correspond neither to what we today call homosexuality nor to what the psychiatrists called sexual inversion. Symonds and Gide, for example, defended the “virile” idea of a “pederastic” friendship that had no room for either inversion or homosexuality, even if their own sexual desires and practices might differ enormously from the conceptions they put forth in an effort at legitimation.

There is no doubt that Symonds considered himself a different kind of person from other people, not because of acts he committed, since for a long time he did not commit any, or because of his “sins,” which were only imaginary. Rather, it was because of the feeling he had about his “sexual orientation” and the fact that this orientation completely shaped his being, as it had shaped his childhood, his past, his history.

The same is true for many other people who had a clear sense of themselves as different from other people from childhood onward and a clear sense that their particularity colored their entire personality and psychology. Krafft-Ebing, after the publication of his *Psychopathia Sexualis*, received numerous letters from people who told him of having recognized themselves in his descriptions and analyses, who offered him accounts of their lives, introspective narrations of their feelings, and even, on occasion, detailed accounts of their sexual practices. Even if we decide that psychiatric discourse set in motion this epistolary wave of autobiographical writing, it remains clear that the way in which these individuals perceived themselves, the way in which they thought of themselves as defined by their sexual orientation, had preexisted the establishment of the categories of inversion and homosexuality that medical discourse performed.⁴²

§ Moreover, Foucault seems to overlook the fact that when Hirschfeld spoke of the “third sex,” he was not referring only to the categories of psychiatric medicine. For one of the earliest theorizations of sexual inversion—even the invention of the word *homosexuality*—was the work not of psychiatrists hostile to homosexuals and out to cure or intern them, to “medicalize” or “pathologize” them, but of jurists and men of letters (Ulrichs, Kertbeny) who wanted to legitimate loves between persons of the same sex. For Hirschfeld, it was not enough to turn the psychiatric discourse “strategically” back on itself in order to found a homosexual discourse and a homosexual movement. Hirschfeld explicitly claimed to be a follower of Ulrichs, to whom he often paid homage as a pioneer in the struggle to which Hirschfeld too was dedicating his life.⁴³

Indeed, when Ulrichs invented the model of “hermaphroditism of the soul” at the beginning of the 1860s, when he described “uranists” as individuals with “a woman’s soul in a man’s body,” his aim was the decriminalization of homosexuality. For Ulrichs, “uranists” really did make up a third sex, a particular category of persons with inborn sexual inclinations. Having emphasized this point, and thus also the fact that “love between men” was a natural phenomenon, Ulrichs concluded that each person should be able to live his or her own life without being “struck by the sword of injustice,” as “heretics, Jews, and witches” had been.⁴⁴ As early as 1865 he had sketched out a charter for a “uranist organization” whose goal was to break down the isolation in which individuals condemned to silence (and blackmail) lived and to create real “solidarity” between them, to struggle for the abolition of repressive laws, and to further the development of a “uranist literature.”⁴⁵ In 1869 Ulrichs put the final touches on the first (and only) issue of what had been announced as a monthly publication, one that he had dreamed of since 1866 and that finally appeared in January 1870: *Uranus*.⁴⁶

The medicalization of inversion took Ulrichs's theory as a point of departure and as something to work against.⁴⁷ Referring to Ulrichs, all the while sharply distinguishing himself from him, Westphal wrote in 1869 that the "perverse inclinations" that drew individuals to persons of the same sex belonged to the field of medicine.⁴⁸ Westphal accepted the idea that sexual inversion was innate and thus thought it regrettable that it was subject to legal repression. He nonetheless deduced that inversion was a sickness, a "pathological phenomenon," a fact of which, he added, individuals afflicted by it were perfectly conscious. It seemed to Westphal that an invert such as Ulrichs, who refused to admit the pathological character of his condition, was even more seriously ill than those who did admit it. Ulrichs was pleased by this "scientific" point of view, of which he saw only the desire for homosexuality to be decriminalized. He went on categorically rejecting the idea that uranism belonged to the field of mental illness.

Even Krafft-Ebing elaborated his theory to a great extent by reference to and in opposition to Ulrichs's theory. In fact, Ulrichs, always on the lookout for support in the scientific world, had sent Krafft-Ebing a number of his brochures during the 1860s, and Krafft-Ebing wrote to him much later that they had led him to take a close interest in sexual inversion. One might imagine Ulrichs's subsequent regret at ever having mailed them.⁴⁹

As for the word *homosexuality* itself, it was coined in 1869 by Karl Maria Kertbeny, an Austro-Hungarian man of letters who was also struggling for the repeal of laws penalizing homosexual acts with imprisonment. In letters to Ulrichs he opposed to any notion of effeminacy and inversion a "virile" vision of love between men. Even though he always denied it, Kertbeny was probably homosexual himself.⁵⁰ In any case, he worked for what we would call the "gay cause." Thus the word *homosexual* was invented with an aim favorable to gay people, before Krafft-Ebing made use of it in the second edition of *Psychopathia Sexualis*, in 1887.⁵¹

Producing Subjects

From the very first pages of *La volonté de savoir* we find Foucault ironizing about the Freudo-Marxist ideology of sexual liberation and about the psychoanalytically inspired leftist boilerplate that held up shimmering images of the happiness that tomorrow had in store for us, promising that "tomorrow sex will be good again." But he does not take the trouble to specify who his adversaries are; he relies on circumlocutions such as "they tell us" or "the story goes" or "it would seem" or "we are informed." There was no particular reason to be more specific: anyone

reading at the time would have understood of whom and of what he was speaking. These discourses could be found everywhere. Toward the end of the book Foucault mentions Wilhelm Reich (*HSI*, 131)—respectfully, we might add. But at the outset he attacks those contemporary discourses, a generalized Reichianism in fact, that colored the political vision of the far Left.⁵²

Still, it is hard to shake off the strange impression that the entire critique Foucault undertakes in these celebrated pages is nothing but a critique of, well, Foucault. However sarcastic his intent may be, every sentence seems aimed at something that he himself has written earlier. In the second paragraph on the first page he says: “At the beginning of the seventeenth century, *so they tell us*, a certain frankness was still common. Sexual practices had little need of secrecy; words were said without undue reticence, and things were done without too much concealment; one had a tolerant familiarity with the illicit” (*HSI*, 3; my emphasis; translation modified). On the next page: “These are the characteristic features attributed to repression, which serve to distinguish it from the prohibitions maintained by penal law: repression operated as . . . *an injunction to silence, an affirmation of nonexistence*” (4; my emphasis). Or, a little farther along:

This discourse on modern sexual repression holds up well, owing no doubt to how easy it is to uphold. A solemn historical and political guarantee protects it. By placing the advent of the age of repression in the seventeenth century, after hundreds of years of open spaces and free expression, one adjusts it to coincide with the development of capitalism: it becomes an integral part of the bourgeois order. (5)

What are we to think upon noticing that the very “they” whose discourse Foucault ironically re-creates for us are said to inform us that “if repression has indeed been the fundamental link between power, knowledge, and sexuality since the classical age, it stands to reason that we will not be able to free ourselves from it except at a considerable cost: nothing less than a transgression of laws, a lifting of prohibitions, an irruption of speech” (5)?

In this theatrical preamble, which establishes a distance between the author and a group of indeterminate speakers whose discourse is so well known that it needs no specific attribution—in this series of sentences that seem to describe the state of a theoretical field that needs to be left behind, it is striking that each proposition we are meant to oppose or leave behind might as well be drawn from *Madness and Civilization*. The thematic focus is identical: it can be characterized as the large opposition between, on the one hand, repression

and imposed silence and, on the other, speaking for oneself and transgressing prohibitions.

This problematic that animated the analyses of *Madness and Civilization* (and that we might call the “repressive hypothesis”) was one that Foucault kept in place long after that book—right through the beginning of the 1970s. It is true that, when he defines his historical and theoretical work in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* in 1969, he emphasizes that his goal is to treat discourses “as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak.”⁵³ That seems a precise announcement of the project that he will develop a few years later in *La volonté de savoir*. Yet toward the end of the 1960s Foucault was still thinking in terms of a limitation and a “scarcity” of discourses. Indeed, that is one of the major avenues he follows in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, in which he sets out to respond to some of the objections raised in response to *The Order of Things*.⁵⁴

Foucault places at the heart of his analyses the system that defines, in a given epoch, what is thinkable and sayable and the rules of formulation and circulation that govern discourses. So when he evokes, yet again, the possibility of a history of sexuality, he clearly imagines it as an analysis of discourses and not of the object of those discourses:

Instead of studying the sexual behavior of men at a given period . . . , instead of describing what men thought of sexuality . . . , one would ask oneself whether, in this behavior, as in these representations, a whole discursive practice is not at work; whether sexuality . . . is not a group of objects that can be talked about (or that it is forbidden to talk about), a field of possible enunciations . . . , a group of concepts. (*Archaeology*, 193)

Yet Foucault anchors this archaeology of discourses in the framework of an investigation into systems of “prohibitions and values” (193).

In 1970, in his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, Foucault is still asking himself about the “anxiety” provoked by discourses when they are “manifested materially, as a written or spoken object.” He wonders: “What is so perilous, then, in the fact that people speak, and that their speech proliferates? Where is the danger in that?” (*Archaeology*, 216). To respond to that question, he puts forward a “hypothesis” that will help establish, he says, the “terrain” or the “provisional theatre” of the research he plans to undertake: “I am supposing that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is

to avert its powers and its dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality” (216).

First Foucault distinguishes three “great systems of exclusion”: “prohibited words, the division of madness and the will to truth” (219). After analyzing these external “procedures” of limitation on discourses, he turns to “internal procedures,” meaning cases “where discourse exercises its own control” (220). He mentions the “author function” in literature and the sciences (221–22).

Throughout this lecture, which lays out and defines his research projects for the coming years, Foucault is thinking in terms of a theory of “scarcity.” Working together, the “excluding” principles that reject certain forms of discourse, and the “figures” that organize forms of discourse from the inside (author, scientific discipline, etc.), determine a “negative activity of the cutting-out and rarefaction of discourse” (229). Moreover, when Foucault announces here that he intends to work on a history of sexuality, it is hardly surprising to find him once again describing it as a study of the “taboos” [*interdits*] that weigh on it (233):

We could attempt an investigation of a system of linguistic prohibition bearing on sexuality from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. In doing this, we would *not* be concerned with the manner in which this system has progressively—and fortunately—disappeared, but rather with the way it has shifted and rearranged itself, from the practice of confession, in which forbidden behaviors were identified, categorized, and ranked in explicit detail, to the belated, initially hesitant appearance of the topic of sexuality in nineteenth-century psychiatry and medicine. (232; translation modified)

If all regions of discourse are subject to constraint, it is in the cases of “sexuality and politics” that the “web is most tightly woven,” and it is in these places that “danger spots are most numerous” (216).

So, in this text from 1970 the “order of discourse” is essentially linked to a principle of rarefaction both of possible enunciations and of possible modes of enunciation, and even of possible speaking subjects.⁵⁵ And the historical filiation between Christian confession and nineteenth-century psychiatry, which Foucault begins to emphasize at this moment, is presented as a perpetuation of linguistic prohibitions.

§ One can only be astonished, then, by what Foucault writes at the beginning of *La volonté de savoir* as he defines what he means to accomplish through the analysis of discourse he will undertake in his *History of Sexuality*: “In short, I

would like to disengage my analysis from the privileges generally accorded the economy of scarcity and the principles of rarefaction" (*HSI*, 12). The question seems unavoidable: For what reason did Foucault move, in such a short time—only a few years—from a thematics of “rarefaction” to one of “proliferation,” from a theory of the prohibitions on language to a theory of the incitement to speech? Such an evolution seems all the more remarkable given Foucault’s insistence that those who think in terms of prohibition and transgression are trapped in ways of thinking that have been put in place by technologies of power: “One has to be completely taken in by this internal ruse of confession in order to attribute a fundamental role to censorship, to taboos regarding speaking and thinking” (60).

One could propose explanations for Foucault’s shift on many levels. The first has to do with the political situation in France at the beginning of the 1970s, with Foucault’s own commitments, and with the new way in which his work was being received. As I have already mentioned, his book from 1961, *Folie et déraison*, was republished in 1972 with the title *Histoire de la folie* [*Madness and Civilization*]. Between those dates, that work had acquired an increasingly direct political meaning: it had been swept up in the currents of the antipsychiatric movement, becoming a sort of breviary in the struggle against “repression.”⁵⁶ In the new edition Foucault replaced the original preface with a much shorter one that explained that it is not up to the author to dictate the reception of a book. He knew perfectly well that his book had been assigned meanings he had never thought of. Yet he did not set out to challenge them, first, because a book belongs to those who read it, and second, because the political content retrospectively read into those pages by post-May 1968 movements might already have been there, as unperceived potential. The book was already political in the sense that it proposed a critical discourse on subjectivation by the norm and normality. These themes were central to post-May 1968 struggles. In fact, one might say that the book bore within it preoccupations that had not been constituted as political when Foucault wrote it but that became so in later years. In a 1974 interview Foucault was asked, “Is *Madness and Civilization* political?” He responded, “Yes, but only now.” Then he clarified himself:

The frontier of the political has shifted, and so now subjects such as psychiatry, internment, or the medicalization of a given population have become political problems. After all that has happened in the last ten years, certain groups have been obliged to include these areas in their activities, and thus we have come into contact, they and I—not so much because I have changed, but because in this case I can say that politics

came to me, or rather it has colonized areas that had been almost political yet not recognized as such.⁵⁷

In any case, his 1961 book had found itself, at the beginning of the 1970s, at the center of the “antirepressive” ideology that Foucault himself tried to call into question in his 1976 book. This explains why the later book, in a certain way, disturbed his readers and has often been misread or disliked. When questioned in 1978 about *La volonté de savoir*’s mostly unfavorable reception, Foucault explained:

That it surprised so many people has perhaps to do with the simplistic quality of my previous positions, and with the fact that I was easily associated with an enthusiastic and wide-eyed conception of the struggle against all forms of repression, whenever and wherever they were. I think that there was a kind of a sense of a “shift,” if you will, in relation to positions that people believed to be mine or that were those of this or that other person.⁵⁸

§ Here is a second level of explanation for Foucault’s shift: if he comes to feel it necessary to call into question the use that political movements make of *Madness and Civilization*, it is because he is, in the 1970s, working to elaborate his thoughts about power. In his courses at the Collège de France and in *Discipline and Punish*, he is inquiring into the production of “subjects and individuals.” He sets out this theme quite clearly in his courses for 1975–76, when he begins the analyses that will be elaborated in *La volonté de savoir*. (Foucault’s courses at the Collège de France often served as the testing ground for his books.) He distinguishes two “large hypotheses” behind most analyses of power. The first, which “I will call, for the sake of convenience, Reich’s hypothesis,” holds that “the mechanism of power is repression.” The second, which, again for the sake of convenience, he calls “Nietzsche’s hypothesis,” asserts that “the basis of a relation of power is the bellicose confrontation of forces” (*Il faut*, 17). These two systems are not, of course, irreconcilable, but it is the second that Foucault will spend the entire year of 1976 exploring. And it is the opposition between “Nietzsche’s hypothesis” and “Reich’s hypothesis” (or, more exactly, the way in which “Nietzsche’s hypothesis” reworks “Reich’s”) that will be the guiding thread of the book Foucault will publish several months later.

Foucault sets out to show that the idea that a power mechanism proceeds via repression is part and parcel of “a deciphering of power in terms of ‘sovereignty.’” There will be on one side an instance of sovereignty (the State, the Law,

the Dominant Class, etc.) and on the other side subjects on whom power is imposed, whereas Foucault's analyses of the "operators of domination," notably those found in *Discipline and Punish*, led him to believe that subjects do not pre-exist power. It is not a question of having individuals on one side and power on the other. Rather, it is a question of a relation of domination that "determines the elements involved in it" (*Il faut*, 38). Subjects and individuals exist, then, only in and through subjectivation. That is to say, they are the historical products of effective, concrete, and multiple relations of domination.⁵⁹

It is thus perfectly clear that Foucault is trying to understand how individuals are produced by power. The individual is not an autonomous and preexisting reality on whom power is exercised through repression. Quite the contrary: "If a body, its gestures, its discourses, its desires come to be identified and considered as individual, that very fact is one of the first effects of power" (*Il faut*, 27). Power does not repress; it produces.

§ There is yet another level of explanation to consider. Foucault wants to decouple the analysis of power from economic analysis.⁶⁰ Given the historical context, this decoupling implied important political consequences. It implied working, against all the current Marxist discourses, to establish that a certain number of struggles could be undertaken and a certain number of results achieved without necessarily staging a revolution or a social change, without addressing politics in its most general form. Given that relations of domination are multiple and concrete, both theoretical critique and action are partial and local. It is not necessary to imagine what a future society might be in order to work, for example, to throw off models to which sexuality is subjected.

In the specific domain of the sexual, there is power, and there is resistance. It must be possible to think this resistance without imagining that it will topple capitalism or bourgeois society.⁶¹

Philosophy in the Closet

If we want to understand why Foucault shifted from an analysis in terms of repression and "rarefaction of discourses" to an analysis in terms of production and the incitement to speech, doubtless we must also consider his "personal experience." In the 1950s and 1960s his desire to write a history of sexuality was strongly tied to the actual situation of homosexuality and homosexuals, obliged to live in shame, silence, and secrecy. When he evoked this theme, he always used a group of words that referred to "banishment." He spoke of prohibitions, of taboos, of "dark corners" in the system of discourses. It is hardly surprising, then, that the project of a

history of sexuality was conceived—in the preface to *Madness and Civilization* and in later texts through the beginning of the 1970s—as an archaeology of the “gestures” through which boundaries and exclusions were established.

But when Foucault finally settles down to do the theoretical and historical work for this project, the situation is entirely different. Homosexuality is no longer denied access to speech, reduced to a silence that can be transgressed only by a few brilliant bolts of lightning (such as Genet). The homosexual cause is no longer limited to a few organizations that offer a forum for a certain “gay culture,” all the while preaching “respectability” and “discretion and dignity” to gain “social acceptance.”⁶²

By the mid-1970s everything was different: here and there throughout the world, in the wake of the revolts of 1968, the feminist struggle, and the post-Stonewall appearance of the Gay Liberation Front in the United States, gay speech had burst onto the public scene.⁶³ In France, 1971 saw the creation of the FHAR, one of whose first spectacular actions was to interrupt a radio broadcast concerning “the painful problem of homosexuality.” Subsequently, the FHAR would make a point of participating in the May Day parade of French unions. Guy Hocquenghem, one of the FHAR’s organizers, wrote an article for a major French newsweekly in 1972 and in the same year also published a groundbreaking book, *Homosexual Desire*, largely inspired by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus*.⁶⁴

Did Foucault feel that he was about to be deprived of a project that had been close to his heart for so long? At the very least it was clear to him that such a project could no longer claim to be audacious. Above all, there could be no doubt for him that, whatever impulse had been pushing him so strongly toward this project, it was now wrongly oriented: he had intended to denounce certain prohibitions, to break a certain silence, yet the situation had changed to such an extent that people were speaking for themselves everywhere, including in news-magazines. Hadn’t Hocquenghem written in *Le Nouvel Observateur*: “We are all somehow deformed in an area of our lives we all know to be crucial, the area known as sexual desire or love. We must begin to uncover these desires that we have been forced to hide. No one else can do it for us?”⁶⁵

§ This is the political and intellectual context in which we must come to understand *La volonté de savoir*. It is astonishing that Foucault never cites Hocquenghem in his book, for it would seem that *Homosexual Desire* helped launch his own thinking. Indeed, in *Homosexual Desire* Hocquenghem had already described the “recent” invention of homosexuality as a category produced by medical discourse:

Capitalist society manufactures homosexuals just as it produces proletarians, constantly defining its own limits: homosexuality is a manufactured product of the normal world. . . . what is manufactured is a psychologically repressive category, "homosexuality": an abstract division of desire which allows even those who escape to be dominated, inscribing within the law what is outside the law. The category under discussion, as well as the term indicating it, is a fairly recent invention. The growing imperialism of a society seeking to attribute a social status to everything, even to the unclassifiable, created this particular form of disequilibrium: up to the end of the eighteenth century, people who denied the existence of God, who could not speak, or who practised sodomy, were locked up in the same prisons. Just as the advent of psychiatry and mental hospitals demonstrates society's ability to invent specific means for classifying the unclassifiable (see Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*), so modern thought creates a new disease, homosexuality. According to Havelock Ellis (*Sexual Inversion*), the word "homosexual" was invented in 1869 by a German doctor. Dividing in order to rule, psychiatry's modern pseudo-scientific thought has turned barbarous intolerance into civilised intolerance. (50–51; translation modified)

Thus Hocquenghem not only refers to the Foucault of *Madness and Civilization* but also presages the Foucault of *La volonté de savoir*. Now Hocquenghem, in adding that "the establishment of homosexuality as a separate category goes hand in hand with its repression" (55), is probably closer to the Foucault of 1961 than to the Foucault of 1976. Nevertheless, there is a striking resemblance between the long passage just cited and the famous page that Foucault consecrates, in *La volonté de savoir*, to the birth of the homosexual.

The major difference is that Hocquenghem imagines there to be, beneath all the "categorizations" of sexuality, a sort of pure desire, an "unbroken and polyvocal flux," of which both homosexual and heterosexual desire are "arbitrarily frozen frames" (50). He certainly does not imagine a return to some originary "bisexuality," although many contemporary leftist discourses inspired by Freud did (even those favored by the FHAR). In Hocquenghem's eyes, to speak of bisexuality was once again to situate oneself in the "oedipal" space of categories (138–39).⁶⁶ For him, what was important was to call norms and normality into question, to challenge the idea that there could be a good sexuality (heterosexuality) and a bad one (homosexuality): "More than anything else, the very idea of normality has oppressed us. . . . Everything that is normal is tied to what

oppresses us. Any kind of normality rubs us the wrong way. . . . We know that the true revolution will banish normality.”⁶⁷

Hocquenghem also refuses to allow the multiple forms of homosexual sexuality and the plural expressions of homosexual desire to be pigeonholed in a unifying category of homosexuality.⁶⁸ This is why he is so careful, at the beginning of his book, to distinguish between “homosexual desire” and “homosexuality.” In their dispersion, their heterogeneity, even their multiplicity, homosexual practices (made up of numerous fleeting encounters, of expressions of sexuality in parks, etc.) call into question a grounding of sexuality in the family or in the “private” realm. Given that homosexuality proceeds by way of simple “connections” (like the meeting of Charlus and Jupien at the beginning of Proust’s *Cities of the Plain*), and given that the homosexual system of “cruising” sexualizes daily life, “homosexual desire” represents for Hocquenghem an encouragement to a generalized political contestation of the social forms of capitalist civilization, of which the family is a pillar. In his eyes, the goal of the “homosexual struggle” is not to gain rights for a minority, or to affirm the pride of an oppressed group,⁶⁹ but to act on the entire social body by way of a “crude sexualisation” of politics and society, by a “sexualisation of the world” that would threaten “patriarchy” and “phallocratism” (144–45).⁷⁰

Hocquenghem thus announces the coming into being of a “desirous social struggle,” and the homosexual movement is assigned a mission of radical destabilization: it challenges both those forms of civilization that are founded on “normal” sexuality and whatever forces of repression guarantee that sexuality’s normality.⁷¹

§ Surely Foucault must have wanted to respond to Hocquenghem’s book when he began to write his *History of Sexuality*. Hocquenghem himself had referred to Foucault’s *Madness and Civilization*, and thus it was Foucault’s own influence that he himself would have to move beyond. In *La volonté de savoir*—how can there be any doubt?—Foucault is inspired by the analyses in *Homosexual Desire* to return, via the elaboration of his “analytics of power” and in a kind of underground way, to this whole question: repression is not the apt notion for thinking about the categories through which power produces “categories”; there is no form of desire in some raw state that is repressed or constrained by way of conceptual divisions. Foucault in fact takes the questions Hocquenghem addressed and redoes his arguments at a deeper level, both rejecting the “naturalism,” or even the “biologism,” that marked the discourse of “sexual liberation” and trying to disengage the resistance to sexual norms from the political struggle against bourgeois society.⁷²

§ The first volume of *The History of Sexuality* was written in reaction to Hocquenghem's book, but of course also as a response to Deleuze and Guattari (and perhaps even more as a response to Guattari's own writings, which clearly evidenced a Reichian point of view) and, more generally, as a response to the diffuse ideology of sexual liberation and the revolution of desire. (In that diffuse ideology one would certainly include the films of Pasolini: *Teorema* from 1968, as well as the trilogy including *The Decameron*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and *The Arabian Nights* from 1971 to 1974.)⁷³

But Foucault also meant to respond to the actions and practices of the new political movements that incarnated these ideologies, notably the FHAR, whose militants, while rejecting the categories of established sexuality, frequently had recourse to a veritable terrorism of their own in demanding that one "avow" what one was. Not only did these proponents of a subversive radicalism virulently reject all previous modes of gay life; they also frequently demanded that all homosexuals openly and publicly declare themselves as such and denounced as "shameful" and "closeted" anyone who did not give in to their demand.

In the eyes of the new activists, an organization such as Arcadie instantiated the horror of "bourgeois homosexuality" as much as it instantiated self-closeting and the interiorization of shame. All the glories of that organization and its publications—"literary" homosexuality, references to Gide, endless articles on ancient Greece, lists of famous homosexuals, and so on—would be swept away as outdated products of repression. They were to be replaced by a more directly sexual discourse that violently rejected any idea of integration or assimilation.

Thanks to the work of historians, it is now possible to revalorize those forms of culture as spaces of freedom, as modes of life whose inventiveness and vitality rival contemporary realities. Chauncey, for example, cautions us not to view the history of homosexuality as a march toward freedom and progress and not to see in past cultural forms merely the first steps toward or the prefigurations of contemporary life. Above all, he insists that "the history of gay resistance must be understood to extend beyond formal political organizing to include the strategies of everyday resistance that men devised in order to claim space for themselves in the midst of a hostile society."⁷⁴

This was certainly not the way in which the militants of the FHAR saw older forms of gay culture. Indeed, in *Homosexual Desire* Hocquenghem denounces the "Proust-Gide-Peyrefitte sequence," which he compares to the "Freud-Adler-France-Dimanche sequence."⁷⁵ The revolutionary movements of the 1970s constructed their discourses in opposition to earlier forms of gay culture (apparently unaware that they did not themselves arise out of nothing, that they could exist

only because an entire culture, a subcultural life, and a whole set of discourses preceded them). They had no intention of doing any historical work of rediscovery and rehabilitation. Instead they wanted to sweep away the stiffer forms of that culture, whose goal of “respectability” and whose relationship to secrecy or discretion seemed unbearable, especially as their goal was now to encourage homosexuals to “stop hiding in the shadows” [*cesser de raser les murs*].⁷⁶

Now it is obvious that Foucault belonged to the pre-Stonewall, pre–May 1968 generation. In historical terms, he was doubtless closer to Arcadie than to the FHAR. Arcadie was founded in 1954, and already in 1955 Foucault was mentioning it in his correspondence with his friend Jean Barraqué, one of the great loves of his life. Even if Foucault never joined the organization, he most likely attended events that it sponsored or at least knew certain of its members. In a 1955 letter written while he was living in Sweden, Foucault tells Barraqué about a discussion of Arcadie that he had had with other French expatriates. Moreover, he was in regular contact with the organization’s president, André Baudry—over a long enough period that in 1979 he would deliver an address at Arcadie’s annual meeting—even if that contact diminished after 1968. As Baudry tells it:

From 1960 to 1968 I saw Michel Foucault on many occasions. He asked me questions about the “Arcadians,” about their lives, their problems. Several times during these years he referred his friends or acquaintances or correspondents to me when they were in need of our assistance. Because of the nature of the events of 1968, we lost sight of each other until later Maurice Pinguet brought us back in touch. So several times I had occasion to have dinner with him on the rue de Sèvres, at Maurice Pinguet’s. Our relations became cordial again, if irregular.⁷⁷

In 1982, when Baudry felt left behind by new forms of gay activism and decided to dissolve his organization, Foucault expressed a desire to write something on the man and the history he was involved in, which obviously interested him—or had interested him—greatly.⁷⁸

The example of Baudry demonstrates how much confusion the eruption of a radical gay movement could create for those who were familiar with the completely different conditions that prevailed prior to 1968. How could such people, who had lived with the idea that speech was not allowed, *not* have been troubled by the arrival of a movement that demolished the very manner in which they had constructed their existences and their personalities, forging conditions for living out their homosexuality in spite of a generalized hostility? They had been obliged to

hide themselves and to silence themselves. Now they were to be subjected to the violent critiques of the new militants, to be reproached for their discretion. It is said that Foucault himself was violently taken to task by the militants of the FHAR at one public meeting. Perhaps we might see in this event one point of departure for the historical critique of “confession” that he would elaborate in *La volonté de savoir*.

If so, we might even go so far as to ask if the thematics of the “production of discourses” by technologies of power that is developed in that book is not somehow traversed by what might be thought of as a “logic of the closet.”⁷⁹ Could it not be that the elaborate production mounted by Foucault to set off the famous page on which he announces, so dogmatically and with so little historical support, that the homosexual did not exist before 1870 and is only an invention of psychiatry—could it not be that this is a result of a desire to transform a profound personal malaise into a theoretical and political response? Such a malaise was felt at the outset of the 1970s, after the eruption of a revolutionary homosexual discourse, whose reshuffling of the politicosexual deck had called into question both his person and his very being. Doubtless Foucault was not displeased to be able to respond to the most radical of these militants, the ones lecturing him about his politics, that they were themselves the dupes of the power they thought they were combating.

When Two Guys Hold Hands

One has only to read the book of conversations between Foucault and Thierry Voeltzel to understand to what extent Foucault's theoretical project during the 1970s was enmeshed in this political (and eminently personal) situation. In these conversations, published in 1978 but recorded in 1976—which is to say, just as he was finishing *La volonté de savoir*—Foucault is questioning a young man, twenty years old, and a portion of the conversations has precisely to do with what changed at the outset of the 1970s regarding possible and actual ways of living out one's homosexuality.⁸⁰ In the questions and comments Foucault provides throughout the book it is clear how deeply the problems taken up in *La volonté de savoir* resonate with the most intimate levels of lived experience, and notably with the experience of moving from one moment to another in the history of homosexuality.

After listening to Voeltzel recount his sexual life, Foucault states:

Basically, you were able to practice homosexuality now and then, when you wanted, episodically, in phases, without ever having to say to yourself: “My

goodness, why, I must be homosexual, given that I'm having homosex." That kind of deduction—that one *used* to have to make, that *was* so telling, that psychologically *used* to be so difficult to accept, whose consequences *used* to be so heavy—well, you never drew that conclusion, felt those consequences, and there was no need for you to do so. The category of homosexuality was only developed quite late. *It didn't use to exist; what existed was sodomy, that's to say, a certain number of sexual practices which were themselves forbidden, but the homosexual individual didn't use to exist.* For me, what is striking, in you and what you say, is the fact that your generation actually recovered the possibility of engaging—even predominantly or exclusively—in homosex without ever having to ask yourselves, "Am I homosexual?" (33–34; my emphasis)

Voeltzel immediately qualifies Foucault's conclusion, emphasizing that this was not the case for everyone. He mentions a boy in his class with whom he had had a sexual experience yet who insisted that it remain secret and that he was in no way homosexual. Voeltzel adds that even for himself things were not quite so simple and that he had sometimes felt guilty after having sex with another boy.

It is also unavoidably clear that Voeltzel knows he is being taped and speaks accordingly. (His discourse does not, in fact, always hold together all that well, although to be fair we should remember that we are speaking of a taped conversation made when he was only twenty years old.) Foucault is quite conscious of the gap between the things Voeltzel says that he knows will be published and what he says when the microphone is switched off. He says as much: "There's something funny here. Once we turn the tape recorder off, you always start saying that of course it's much more complicated than that, that things are difficult, that things are simple only in exceptional cases; then the tape starts running again and suddenly everything becomes . . . [laughter]."81

Yet the eagerness with which Foucault turns the young man's words into near truths or prophecies cannot fail to surprise us. Even setting aside his evident fascination with the young man, one would think that Foucault would be rather likely to distance himself from the kinds of things being said. Voeltzel, for example, does not hide the inspiration he takes from Reich.⁸² He is also steeped in the leftist ideology of an original and universal bisexuality that is to be rediscovered behind all the repressions and prohibitions applied to sexuality.⁸³ This particular fantasy, drawn from Freud's work, is one that Foucault had never subscribed to and had even challenged rather strongly. Indeed, he states:

In all of this literature of the Antinorme type . . . there is a particular theme that has struck me, perhaps because it appears so frequently, but also because it seems outright utopian; it's this idea that what makes homosexuality different, what gives it its specificity, is in reality only the result of certain forms of alienation, sociopolitical constraints, etc., and that a liberated sexuality should be as much homosexual as heterosexual and that consequently there will come the happy day when finally we'll go back to loving women just like everyone else. (28)

A bit later Foucault describes this idea of universal bisexuality as a "purely tactical and political discourse thanks to which one can build alliances with the feminist movement or with liberal heterosexuals." He adds: "So tactically this discourse amounts to saying 'just wait and see, when we are free we too will start to love women' [*laughter*]; this ridiculous and utopian discourse has nonetheless been quite effective, has been one of the conditions for the acceptance of homosexuality within all these political groups."⁸⁴

What Foucault seizes on in Voeltzel's discourse are the elements that allow him to draw a line of transition between a period that he wants to believe is now over—one in which he lived out his twenties—and a period, corresponding to "today," in which his interlocutor will live out his own twenties. We can find something of Foucault's autobiography in this opposition between a then and a now. That he even asks Voeltzel the following question speaks volumes: "Have you ever seen fellows who had what are called problems, that's to say, who seemed to have what psychologists or psychiatrists or psychoanalysts would consider signs of neurosis or depression . . . linked to their sexual lives, or suicidal tendencies?" (43).

§ Voeltzel's stories send Foucault back to his own history. It is his own history that he invokes above when he speaks of "that kind of deduction—that one *used* to have to make, that *was* so telling, that psychologically *used* to be so difficult to accept, whose consequences *used* to be so heavy." The past tenses of the verbs in Foucault's turns of phrase indicate that he is referring to his own experience. A little bit later he says again:

It seemed to me, when I met you, that there was a huge difference between someone from your generation and people from earlier generations. For those from earlier generations, the discovery that you were homosexual was always a solemn moment in life, both a revelation and a rupture; it was a kind of magic, the day you realized that that is what pleasure was, and at

the same time there was the feeling that you were marked, the black sheep, and that that would be the case until the end of our days.

Foucault ends this thought with a question: “Was it like that for you?”⁸⁵

Raising the issue of people’s ages, Foucault states:

It used to be that one of the mechanisms people used to protect themselves from the idea that they were homosexual was the question of age differences. Before age sixteen, whatever you did couldn’t yet be homosexuality, it was just the agitation of puberty. If you played around with a friend of the same age, okay, those were sort of forbidden games, a kind of mutual narcissism, but it still wasn’t homosexuality. Then there was the fact that when you were finally twenty years old, and really began having sex with people leading a homosexual life, the fact of having sex with someone ten, fifteen, or twenty years older, that was quite a difficult step to take, one which brought you into a kind of closed, secret, and slightly damned Freemasonry. (34–35)

The terms Foucault uses (“secret,” “damned” [*maudit*], “Freemasonry”) inevitably call to mind Proustian homosexuality. It is also clear, in reading this conversation, that in the end it is not “sexual liberation” that bothers Foucault, if by that one understands the way of living one’s sexuality after 1968. Far from it. Rather, he seems enchanted by all these transformations, by this new freedom, and specifically by the fact that a multiplicity of feelings no longer need fit into the single model of “love.” “I wonder if the most liberating thing—of course, I’m not very fond of that word, *liberating*—but I wonder if the most liberating thing isn’t that you no longer have only this single label, love, to apply to all these sensations, all these feelings” (48). A few pages later he comments, “The fact that the monotonous signifier, love, has been exploded is very important” (52). At the end of the book Foucault, summarizing the conversations, states: “All of these binary divisions—being one of us, not being one of us; making love, not making love; being in love, not being in love—all of these binaries have to be done away with; they are only part of a system of constraints” (211).

§ Right in the middle of this book, there is a strange passage in which several of Foucault’s preoccupations are brought together and which prefigures what he will be thinking about in the years ahead. He mentions a letter he has read in *Libération*. During these years that newspaper regularly published a wide-open and free-ranging page of letters to the editor in which readers recounted their

experiences and set out their points of view on a whole range of subjects. It was, Foucault says, the best thing about the paper.⁸⁶ In the letter in question, a young heterosexual man tells how he and a group of other young men and women set off on a vacation trip together. Foucault retells the story like this:

They were all camping in a tent. Then one day two other guys showed up to see them and, as things turned out, he [the letter writer] slept one night in the same sleeping bag or the same bed as one of those guys. . . . The next morning they got up and it was clear from the way they behaved that they had made love. Not only that, but they were in love, as they showed throughout the rest of the day, and quickly the others in the group began having reactions of intolerance—even though they were leftist, liberated—guys and girls slept together, there weren't any prohibitions. The negative reactions escalated to the point that they kicked the two guys out. (123–24)

If the letter writer seems to say that the “homosexual act the group refused to admit was the real reason for kicking them out,” Foucault, on the contrary, thinks that

the point that caused the resistance in the others wasn't that they had slept together or, to put things crudely, that one of them had fucked the other, that wasn't what was intolerable; it was that the next morning they held hands, that they kissed each other at breakfast, that they couldn't keep apart; it was a whole series of pleasures having to do with being together, bodily pleasures, pleasures in looking. . . . And that particular economy of pleasures is what is so unbelievably badly accepted. . . . That's what the prohibition is directed at, that's the most insidious form of prohibition, the most widespread, the one that is never spoken yet that ultimately bans a whole series of things from homosexual lives, makes existence a burden, however tolerated the sexual act may be, for I'd say that tolerance for the act does exist today to a certain degree. (124–25)

Voeltzel is reasonably skeptical and responds: “More or less; that's to say that generally homosexuals keep themselves hidden so everything is sort of fine. As you say, it's their way of conducting themselves that bothers people.” Foucault replies, “It's the pleasure that people see, not the pleasure that's hidden” (125).

The thoughts in this exchange seem, of course, to contradict those expressed at the beginning of the conversations, claiming that it is no longer necessary to ask

oneself, if one practices homosexual acts, whether one is or is not homosexual. In the reflections that the letter in *Libération* gives rise to, Foucault says quite clearly that, in his eyes, it's a question not just of homosexual acts but of the whole social perception of homosexuality. Homophobia is directed less at the practices themselves, notably sodomy, than at everything implied in the fact of being together and displaying love. It is not sexuality itself that is targeted but what Foucault calls the "economy of pleasures." These remarks would seem to shed a new light on the call made in *La volonté de savoir* to base the counterattack against the apparatus [*dispositif*] of sexuality on "bodies and pleasures" and not on "sex and desire."

But all this also announces Foucault's reflections in the years to come. Against the discourse of sexual liberation; against Reich, who exalted the "orgasmic function"; against the idea that genital sexuality, once it is disencumbered of mutilating repressions, will be the privileged avenue of individual development, Foucault will repeatedly return, in more or less identical terms, to the figure of two fellows holding hands. From this he will slowly gain conviction in his thoughts about a "gay mode of life" and a "gay culture" based on new forms of relations between individuals. Thus in a 1978 interview he states: "If people see two guys go off together to sleep in the same bed, that's tolerable, but if the next morning the two get up smiling, if they hold hands, that's unforgivable. It's not leaving to go have fun together that's unbearable, it's getting up happy the next morning."⁸⁷ In 1982 he says the same thing, but he has replaced the expressions "being happy together" or "economy of pleasures" with the notion of a "style of life": "I think that what most bothers those who are not gay about gayness is the style of gay life, not sex acts themselves."⁸⁸

From this point on Foucault will thus oppose the trend of "always more sex" and "always more truth in sex" with a movement that consists not of "rediscovering" but of "fabricating other forms of pleasure, of relationships, coexistences, attachments, loves, intensities."⁸⁹ In 1981, when he denounces the "great myth" of the lack of difference between homosexuality and heterosexuality that was propagated in leftist discourse in the 1960s and 1970s, he insists once again that what makes homosexuality "troubling" is "the homosexual mode of life, much more than the sexual act itself." He adds: "To imagine a sexual act that doesn't conform to law or nature is not what disturbs people. But that individuals begin to love one another—there's the problem."⁹⁰ For

one of the concessions one makes to others is not to present homosexuality as anything but a kind of immediate pleasure, of two young men meeting in

the street, seducing each other with a look, grabbing each other's asses and getting each other off in a quarter of an hour. There you have a kind of neat image of homosexuality without any possibility of generating unease, and for two reasons: it responds to a comforting canon of beauty, and it cancels everything that can be troubling in affection, tenderness, friendship, fidelity, camaraderie, and companionship, things that our rather sanitized society can't allow a place for without fearing the formation of new alliances and the tying together of unforeseen lines of force. (136)

Against Hocquenghem, against the discourse of sexual liberation, Foucault affirms that it is not so much in the "sexualization" of society, of cruising, of public sex—not in the multiplication of partners, and so forth—that we should look for the mechanism that destabilizes the established order. Rather, we should look to the invention of new modes of life, to new modes of relations between individuals:

The affirmation that to be a homosexual is for a man to love another man—this search for a way of life runs counter to the ideology of the sexual liberation movements of the sixties. . . . Homosexuality is a historic occasion to reopen affective and relational virtualities, not so much through the intrinsic qualities of the homosexual but because the "slantwise" position of the latter, as it were, the diagonal lines he can lay out in the social fabric allow these virtualities to come to light. (138)

It is to the invention of some such "relational system" (137) that one should look to discover the possibility of reinventing oneself or of escaping from subjectivation at the hands of social norms.

Notes

1. See Michel Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*, trans. Charles Ruas (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1986), 164.
2. On the "lightning flashes" see Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage, 1973), 278; hereafter cited as *MC*. On Goya see *MC*, 279–81. On the "cries" see Michel Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 87–88: "And when, in lightning flashes and cries, [madness] reappears, as in Nerval or Artaud, Nietzsche or Roussel, it is psychology that remains silent, *speechless*, before this language." Hereafter cited as *MIP*. On "contestation" see *MC*, 281.

3. See the dialogue that follows his talk “Nietzsche, Freud, Marx” (1964), in Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits, 1954–1988*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 1:579; hereafter cited as *DE*. [The talk, but not the following dialogue, can be found in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley et al., vol. 2 of *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: New, 1998), 269–78; hereafter cited as *Aesthetics*.—ML] See also “A Preface to Transgression,” in *Aesthetics*, 69–87.
4. See, e.g., “La Folie, l’absence d’oeuvre,” in *DE*, 1:412–20; or “Introduction to Rousseau’s *Dialogues*,” in *Aesthetics*, 21–51. See also *Death and the Labyrinth*.
5. See the preface to the original edition of *Madness and Civilization* (*Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l’âge classique* [Paris: Plon, 1961]), rpt. in *DE*, esp. 1:159, and also the closing sentences of *Madness and Civilization*, which mention Nietzsche, Van Gogh, and Artaud (289). Foucault would rapidly abandon the idea of an “original experience” of madness that could be recovered outside history. For more on this topic see Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault et ses contemporains* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 139–61.
6. “A long inquiry that aims to confront the dialectics of history with the immobile structures of the tragic,” Foucault wrote, from within the same perspective he occupied when he still postulated the idea of an “originary experience of madness” that was to be rediscovered through the historical forms that had captured it (*DE*, 1:162).
7. In *Mental Illness and Psychology* Foucault insists on the construction of mental illness as a “deviancy,” a “departure”: “Mental illness takes its place among the possibilities that serve as a margin to the cultural reality of a social group” (62, 63). To show that such illnesses are not viewed as such in every culture, he gives the example of the *berdaches* of the North American Dakota people: “These homosexuals have a religious status as priests and magicians” (62).
8. Michel Foucault, introduction to Ludwig Binswanger, *Le rêve et l’existence* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1954), rpt. in *DE*, 1:65–115.
9. It was also in 1956 that the publisher Jean-Jacques Pauvert was prosecuted in Paris for republishing Sade’s writings (whose publication the court would refuse to ban). Foucault would return to a more traditional theme for the academic year 1957–58: “The Religious Experience in French Literature from Chateaubriand to Bernanos.”
10. Later Foucault distanced himself from Sade, to the point of calling him a “sexual policeman” in a 1975 interview (“Sade, Sergeant of Sex,” in *Aesthetics*, 223–27). His admiration for Genet did not last, either. Toward the end of his life he could speak quite sarcastically of Genet’s work. When Patrice Chereau put on *The Screens* at the Amandiers Theater in Nanterre in 1983, Foucault attended a performance in the company of Daniel Defert, Mathieu Lindon, Hervé Guibert, and Guibert’s companion, Thierry Junot. Foucault found the production exasperating and repeatedly expressed a desire to leave before it was over. In subsequent days he frequently commented

- harshly on Genet's works. I remember making the objection one evening, when we were having dinner together, that "what you say may be true for the plays, which are really unplayable now, but it certainly isn't true for the novels." Foucault replied, "It's clear you haven't read them for a while. Read them again and you'll see."
11. Foucault wrote to Lacroix: "I had set out to write what was primarily a book for students, to present the state of a certain field of study. But the state of knowledge has changed, and it would seem to me to be taking advantage of readers to republish such outdated stuff. Don't you think we could ask some young psychopathologist to write a slightly more 'up to date' [in English in the original] book? For my part—and only if you are interested, of course—I'll try to write something else for you on a subject I'm more familiar with, on, for example, crime, criminology, penal justice, etc." (1 August [1961]). Foucault did in fact give a course on penal justice, at the University of Clermont-Ferrand. In a later letter to Lacroix, Foucault wrote: "I don't know how to give you an answer as far as the title goes. I'm planning to spend several years giving seminars on the penal system. . . . Could we just use 'criminology' for the time being?" (20 October [1961? 1962?]).
 12. Michel Foucault, *Maladie mentale et psychologie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962). Foucault opposed future republications of even this second edition. It was only ten years after his death that it once again became available (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France [Quadrige], 1995). Strangely, this reprinting bears the copyright date of 1954, whereas the first edition of *Maladie mentale et psychologie* is from 1962. The publication date of *Maladie mentale et personnalité* is 1954.
 13. In introducing that volume, Foucault wrote: "We had in mind a study of the practical aspects of the relations between psychiatry and criminal justice. In the course of our research we came across Pierre Rivière's case" (*I, Pierre Rivière, Having Slaughtered My Mother, My Sister, and My Brother . . . : A Case of Parricide in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Michel Foucault [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978], vii).
 14. Those courses have recently been published: Michel Foucault, *Les anormaux: Cours au Collège de France (1974–1975)*, ed. François Ewald and Alessandro Fontana (Paris: Gallimard-Seuil, 1999).
 15. In a letter written in July 1973, while he was composing *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault describes the book as a study of "the great *techniques of individualization*: clinical medicine, psychiatry, pedagogy, criminology" (quoted in the "Chronologie" of *DE*, 1:44; my emphasis). On the notion of the norm as a focal point of his analyses see Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Gallimard-Tel, 1972), 96. [The passage in question is not available in the English translation, which is an abridged version of the original edition. Much of Eribon's demonstration in the following pages is based on a chapter of *Histoire de la folie* that has never been translated into English. References are necessarily to the French edition and are indicated HF.—ML] See also the "course description" from the Collège de France for the academic

year 1974–75: “Since 1970, the series of courses has dealt with the slow formation of a knowledge and power of *normalization* based on the traditional juridical procedures of punishment” (Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Robert Hurley et al., vol. 1 of *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, ed. Paul Rabinow [New York: New, 1997], 55; my emphasis. Hereafter cited as *Ethics*).

16. [*Déraison*’s wide range of meanings includes lunacy or folly, so the word could be used to characterize behavior (including sexual behavior) perceived as irregular or dissident.—ML]
17. In a 1971 lecture Foucault speaks of the “essentially economic reasons” for the process of internment that marked the seventeenth century (cf. “Madness and Civilization,” delivered at the Club Tahar Haddad, Tunis, 24 March 1971. I have published some excerpts from this lecture in *Michel Foucault et ses contemporains*, 323–24). Yet his argument is already quite clear in *Madness and Civilization*, 49–54, esp. 53–54.
18. [This is one of the chapters missing from the English translation.—ML]
19. See also *HF*, 88, and *MC*, 61, where internment is described as “the underside of the bourgeoisie’s great dream and great preoccupation in the classical age: the laws of the State and the laws of the heart at last identical.” This question will ceaselessly preoccupy Foucault. It leads, starting with *Madness and Civilization*, to the idea of the family as a participant in the operation of power, given that it is often the father, the husband, the wife, and so on, who ask that this or that “deviant” individual be interned (see *HF*, 105). It is one of the principal reasons for Foucault’s renewed interest in the 1970s and 1980s in the lettres de cachet of the Bastille. He wondered how ordinary people addressed the powers that be to ask for their intervention in family conflicts. While the Bastille and the lettres de cachet were generally perceived as the epitome of arbitrary exercises of power, Foucault wanted to show that that arbitrariness depended on a link between power and its object, a link that might just as well be one of complicity as one of resistance. He thereby posed, of course, the question of the participation of dominated people in their own domination. But above all he wanted to demonstrate the entanglements of public and private orders and the insinuation of administrative and political apparatuses into the space of the family. (See his comments in Arlette Farge and Michel Foucault, eds., *Le désordre des familles: Lettres de cachet des Archives de la Bastille* [Paris: Gallimard-Julliard, 1982], 345–48.) Foucault’s study of the lettres de cachet (begun for *Madness and Civilization* and resumed at the beginning of the 1970s, leading up to the publication of *Le désordre des familles*) is probably the starting place for his conception of a power that also comes from “below,” that is to say, from the fact that subjectified individuals give power existence by calling on it. It may have been during this investigation that the idea of power’s capillarity, of its penetration throughout the social body—an idea developed in *Discipline and Punish*—was born. Foucault’s analyses in terms of a “microphysics

- of power” will by that time be specifically directed against the theories of Althusser, as will the formulations in *The History of Sexuality*, volume 1, that declare that all conceptualizations of power as “monarchical” should be discarded—formulations directed as much against Althusser and his “State” as against Lacan and his “Law.”
20. [The French title was not used for the English translation, which is simply known as *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990). Hereafter cited as *HSI*. I will keep the French title in the text.—ML]
 21. The titles were announced as *The Flesh and the Body*; *The Children's Crusade*; *Women, Mothers, and Hysterics*; *Perverts*; and *Populations and Races*. On the general project and its revisions see Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 269–76.
 22. Thus *Les aveux de la chair* was written before *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*. But Foucault wanted to rewrite it based on the work he had done for the volumes on Greece and Rome. He had just begun this rewriting when he died. This final part was left unfinished and remains unpublished. This is regrettable, given that in a certain way, despite being unfinished, it contains the key to the whole undertaking.
 23. Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, “Discussion with Michel Foucault, April 15, 1983,” transcription in Paul Rabinow's personal archive. This passage is not included in the published versions of the conversations with Dreyfus and Rabinow.
 24. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Boston: Beacon, 1966); Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon, 1964); Wilhelm Reich, *The Sexual Revolution: Toward a Self-Regulating Character Structure*, trans. Therese Pol (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974); Reich, *The Invasion of Compulsory Sex-Morality* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971); Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, trans. Vincent R. Carfagno (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970). On Marcuse see Gérard Raulet, *Marcuse: Philosophie de l'émancipation* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992). On Reich see Michel Plon and Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Dictionnaire de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Fayard, 1997), 888–93. On the influence of Reich in France see Elisabeth Roudinesco, *1925–1985*, vol. 2 of *La bataille de cent ans: Histoire de la psychanalyse en France* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 58–61, 64–69, 486–88, and also 501 (on his influence on Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*).
 25. See “Right of Death and Power over Life,” chap. 5 of *HSI*, 135–59. See also the “cours du 17 mars 1976,” in Michel Foucault, “*Il faut défendre la société*”: *Cours du Collège de France, 1975–1976* (Paris: Gallimard-Seuil, 1997), 213–35; hereafter cited as *Il faut*.
 26. David M. Halperin has recently emphasized this point: at least one case on which Westphal founds his theory of “contrary sexual feeling” is a man who never had (or claimed he never had) sexual relations with other men (“How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality,” *GLQ* 6 [2000]: 108).

27. Shortly after *La volonté de savoir* Foucault organized the republication of the memoir of a nineteenth-century hermaphrodite. (See Michel Foucault, ed., *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-Century French Hermaphrodite*, trans. Richard McDougall [New York: Pantheon, 1980].) I have analyzed more fully elsewhere the relation that Foucault established between the question of sexual identity and the history of hermaphroditism (*Michel Foucault et ses contemporains*, 265–87).
28. Michel Foucault, “Le gai savoir: Entretien avec Michel Foucault par Jean Le Bitoux,” *La revue h* 2 (1996): 48–49. Only partial versions of this interview had been published until the version published in *La revue h. Dits et écrits* fails to include any version of the interview.
29. “The truthful confession was inscribed at the heart of the procedures of individualization by power” (*HSI*, 58–59). See also *HSI*, 159 (the final page of the book, an indication of how central the critique of psychoanalysis is to the project of *The History of Sexuality*): “The good genius of Freud had placed [sex] at one of the critical points marked out for it since the eighteenth century by the strategies of knowledge and power; how wonderfully effective he was—worthy of the greatest spiritual fathers and directors of the classical period—in giving a new impetus to the secular injunction to study sex and to bring it into discourse.”
30. It is important to remark that Foucault inscribes the origins of modern racism—of which the twentieth century will see the monstrous result—in the very discourses of the “normal” and the “pathological,” of “health” and “sickness.” One finds a very clear formulation of the link between the “society of normalization,” “social hygiene,” and “state racism” in the “Cours du 17 mars 1976,” in *Il faut*, 225.
31. Michel Foucault, “The End of the Monarchy of Sex,” trans. Dudley M. Marchi, in *Foucault Live (Interviews, 1961–1984)*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext[e], 1996), 218. This interview first appeared in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 12–21 March 1977.
32. For the entire passage see *HSI*, 108–11. Foucault speaks of the “interpenetration of the deployment of alliance and that of sexuality in the form of the family” (108). This explains why the “family” soon ran to “doctors, educators, psychiatrists, priests, and pastors, . . . all the ‘experts’ who would listen to the long complaint of its sexual suffering” (111).
33. The first chapter of the fourth part of *La volonté de savoir* is titled “Enjeu” (*HSI*, 81–91). It is there that Foucault develops the idea of an “analytics of power.”
34. Foucault, “Le gai savoir,” 43.
35. See Vernon A. Rosario, *The Erotic Imagination: French Histories of Perversity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 10–11, 181, 215.
36. Lillian Faderman remarks that “lesbianism as the sexologists viewed the phenomenon was an infrequent theme in American fiction until the publication in the United States

of *The Well of Loneliness*" (*Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* [London: Penguin, 1992], 57). The model of "romantic friendships" was dominant before that. It is true that Faderman wishes to corroborate the model that assumes the invention of homosexuality by psychiatric discourse. But the dates that she provides for this transformation imply the existence of lesbian communities and lesbian ways of life well before the psychiatric model was influential. (George Chauncey contests Faderman's argument in *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* [New York: Basic, 1994], 381 n. 61.) It is worth adding that the model of sexual inversion accepted and popularized by Radclyffe Hall was immediately and vigorously rejected by many lesbians.

37. Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 27.
38. Ibid.; see also George Chauncey, "Genres, identités sexuelles et conscience homosexuelle dans l'Amérique du XXe siècle," trans. Didier Eribon, in *Les études gay et lesbiennes*, ed. Didier Eribon (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1998), 97–107.
39. Cf. Marcel Proust, *The Captive*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff, Terence Kilmartin, and Andreas Mayor, vol. 3 of *Remembrance of Things Past* (New York: Vintage, 1982), e.g., 214–15.
40. See Chauncey, *Gay New York*, esp. 26–27; see also Chauncey's two important articles "From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality: Medicine and the Changing Conceptualization of Female Deviance," *Salmagundi* 58–59 (1982–83): 114–46; and "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War I Era," *Journal of Social History* 19 (1985): 189–211.
41. One need only read samples of the judicial, medical, and police literature dealing with "pederasts" and "queens" that proliferated (well before Westphal) from the outset of the nineteenth (and even the eighteenth) century. It can be seen that the existence of places for social interaction, and the repression that targets those places, gives police agents, magistrates, and doctors the occasion to express their points of view. Their descriptions do not bring into existence what they describe but, just the opposite, derive their existence from it. We might remember that Balzac, in *A Harlot High and Low* (1847), was already speaking about a "third sex" and about "queens" [*tantes*]. The latter word also figured in the work of the police agent Vidocq, *Les voleurs* (1837). See Pierre Hahn, *Nos ancêtres les pervers: La vie des homosexuels sous le Second Empire* (Paris: Orban, 1979), 35.
42. On the ways in which homosexuals turned to medical literature, both to find information and explanations about themselves and to find a certain titillation, see Rosario, *Erotic Imagination*, 10.
43. See Charlotte Wolff, *Magnus Hirschfeld: A Portrait of a Pioneer in Sexology* (London: Quartet, 1986), 102–3.

44. See Hubert Kennedy, *Ulrichs: The Life and Works of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, Pioneer of the Modern Gay Movement* (Boston: Alyson, 1988), 57.
45. *Ibid.*, 87–88, 167. It is important to remember that Symonds began corresponding with Ulrichs in 1889 and visited him in 1891 in Aquila, Italy, Ulrichs's place of retirement since 1880, when, discouraged, he had abandoned his lifelong struggle (216–18). In a letter to Edward Carpenter in 1893 Symonds recalled this meeting and described Ulrichs as “the true origin of the scientific outlook on these questions” (218). In 1909 Hirschfeld would also take a trip to Italy, a kind of pilgrimage, to see the places where Ulrichs had lived and died (in 1895) (see Wolff, *Magnus Hirschfeld*, 102).
46. Kennedy, *Ulrichs*, 167.
47. It would be useful here to be able to reconstruct the entire history of medical discourse on homosexuality in nineteenth-century France and Germany (taking note especially of Casper and Tardieu). Ulrichs himself did not know any of these texts when he began writing.
48. *Ibid.*, 130.
49. See *ibid.*, 71. Ulrichs often complained bitterly that Krafft-Ebing had never publically acknowledged his debt to him, had never cited him in his writings, and thus had claimed for himself ideas borrowed from Ulrichs (222–23).
50. See Manfred Herzer, “Kertbeny and the Nameless Love,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 12 (1985): 1–26.
51. David M. Halperin, “Homosexuality,” in *Gay Histories and Cultures: An Encyclopedia*, ed. George E. Haggerty (New York: Garland, 2000), 451.
52. See also the “Cours du 7 janvier 1976,” in *Il faut*, 3–20. That text gives the clearest description by Foucault himself of the theoretical context for the writing of *La volonté de savoir*, which would appear in November of that year. He writes there of the reference, however “vague and fairly distant, however blurry, to Reich and Marcuse,” that inspired the struggles against “traditional morality and traditional sexual hierarchies” (7).
53. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 49; hereafter cited as *Archaeology*.
54. See *ibid.*, 118: “The analysis of statements and discursive formations . . . sets out to establish a law of scarcity” (translation modified). On the connection between *Madness and Civilization* and *The Order of Things* see the preface to the latter (Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* [New York: Vintage, 1973], xxiv).
55. [The title of this lecture in the English translation is “The Discourse on Language,” but the French title is “L'ordre du discours.”—ML]
56. On the history of the reception of *Madness and Civilization* see Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 116–27.

57. Michel Foucault, "Prisons et asiles dans les mécanismes du pouvoir," in *DE*, 2:524. Foucault often insisted in later years that his work, along with a whole group of movements of political and theoretical critique, had contributed to the expansion and transformation of the definition of the political. (See, e.g., a 1982 interview published posthumously, "Pour en finir avec les mensonges," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 25 June 1984.)
58. Foucault, "Le gai savoir," 42. In a 1977 interview with Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino, Foucault states that he has had "a great deal of difficulty getting rid of" the notion of repression: "When I wrote *Madness and Civilization*, I made use, at least implicitly, of this notion of repression. I believe that I imagined then a kind of madness that was lively, voluble, and anxious, and that mechanisms of power and psychiatry managed to reduce to silence. Whereas it seems to me that in point of fact the notion of repression is perfectly inadequate to account for all that is productive in power" (*DE*, 3:148).
59. "Instead of taking as a point of departure the subject (or even subjects) and the elements that would be prior to the relation and localizable, the point of departure will be the very relation of power, of domination in its effective and factual elements, to see how this relation itself determines the elements involved in it. It is not a question of asking subjects why, by what right, they can accept being subjected, but of showing how the relations of subjectivation produce subjects" (*Il faut*, 38–39). Moreover, "we must grasp the material instance of subjectivation as the constitution of subjects . . . , must study the bodies constituted as subject by the effects of power" (26–27).
60. See *Il faut*, 28, where Foucault provides two examples of what he intends to critique: the idea that mad people were locked up because they were not useful for industrial production (he fails to mention that he himself developed this argument) and the idea (developed by Reich, he says) that infantile sexuality was repressed to direct energies toward work. See also his interview with Fontana and Pasquino (*DE*, 3:146–47).
61. See *Il faut*, 7–8. A few years later, when the political context had again shifted enormously, Foucault would make similar remarks, but in the opposite direction. He would say again that there is no necessary ("analytical" is the word he uses) link between, on the one hand, our daily life, our sexual life, and, on the other, large moral, economic, and social structures. But this time he is not directing his remarks toward "revolutionaries" to tell them that one need not change the whole social order to shift the sexual order. He is speaking to neoconservatives who worry about the danger to the social and political order that may result from changes to the sexual order. In 1983 Foucault would say that we must "get rid of" the idea that "we couldn't change anything, for instance, in our sex life or our family life, without ruining our economy, our democracy, and so on" ("On the Genealogy of Ethics," in *Ethics*, 261).
62. *Respectability and discretion and dignity* were catchwords of Arcadie, whose president, André Baudry, was forever dressing down anyone who failed to exhibit polite behavior.

He denounced “eccentric behaviors,” “swishy walks,” “makeup,” “effeminacy,” and so on. (See a December 1967 document cited in Jacques Girard, *Le mouvement homosexuel en France, 1945–1981* [Paris: Syros, 1981], 53.) The correct program was to request “tolerance” while conforming to established norms, which were, of course, never to be contested. The organization’s discourse was irreconcilably divided between two conflicting conceptions: one that considered the “homophile” (to use the lexicon one finds in the organization’s publication) as “different” from others and, together with his peers, as forming a separate “people” and another discourse that demanded that the “mass of homophiles” live “blended into society” such that “no one could notice any difference” (see *ibid.*, 39–73).

63. In the early hours of 28 June 1969 the clients of a gay bar in New York rebelled against a police raid—a common event, one of the typical dangers of gay life of the period. The clash escalated into three days of rioting. The commemoration of that historic day a year later (a commemoration that gave birth to gay and lesbian pride parades) can certainly be thought of as the starting point of the contemporary gay and lesbian movement. See John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Sexual Minority in the United States, 1940–1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 231ff. See also Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Plume, 1994).
64. Guy Hocquenghem, “La révolution des homosexuels,” *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 10 January 1972; Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, trans. Daniella Dangoor (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983). On the FHAR see Girard, *Mouvement homosexuel*, 81–111; Françoise d’Eaubonne, “Le FHAR, origines et illustrations,” *La revue h 2* (1996): 18–30; and “FHAR, la fin d’un mouvement,” *La revue h 3* (1996–97): 23–36. See also the FHAR documents collected in *Rapport contre la normalité* (Paris: Champ Libre, 1971). On Hocquenghem see Bill Marshall, *Guy Hocquenghem* (London: Pluto, 1996); Jeffrey Weeks, preface to Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, 23–47; and René Schérer, postface to Hocquenghem, *L’amphithéâtre des morts* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 111–47. It is regrettable that there exists no serious general overview of the French gay movement, either of the life of organizations or of the currents of thought, notably from 1968 to the present.
65. See n. 64. See also Guy Hocquenghem, “Pour une conception homosexuelle du monde,” in FHAR, *Rapport contre la normalité*, 76: “Class struggle is also the struggle to express desire, the struggle to communicate, and not merely political and economic struggle.”
66. It was against the utopian idea of a generalized bisexuality that Hocquenghem wrote “Pour une conception homosexuelle du monde,” which in no way defends the idea of a gay identity. Rather, it develops the idea that the specificity of homosexual sexuality

and of the place of homosexuals in society gives them a kind of detachment thanks to which it should be possible to reexamine politics.

67. Hocquenghem, "Pour une conception," 71–77.
68. Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, 148.
69. "It is no longer a matter of justifying, or vindicating, or even attempting a better integration of homosexuality within society. I shall now be discussing the way in which recent gay movements, linked up with left-wing activism, have changed or overturned the commonly acknowledged relation between desire and politics" (ibid., 133).
70. See also Hocquenghem, "Pour une conception," 75: "We want nothing to do with a homosexuality that would be accepted alongside heterosexuality, because in our societies, heterosexuality is the rule, the norm, and the norm cannot coexist with abnormality. The two are necessarily in struggle. We want an end to heterosexuality in the sense in which heterosexuality in the current moment is necessarily a relation of oppression."
71. Obviously, this conception of homosexual desire as the agent of a generalized subversion of the social order is a bit of a fantasy: you do not become revolutionary just by transgressing racial and class boundaries when you are out cruising or by practicing a sexuality that is not couple-based or family-based. As Leo Bersani puts it (in his telling critique of "queer thought," which—strikingly—often reads like nothing so much as a rediscovery of themes advanced by Hocquenghem or other theorists of the 1970s), the same people who practice "subversive" sexuality at night might be racist or fascist during the day or might simply behave, being an employer or a landlord, precisely as any other employer or landlord would. There is no continuity between sexuality and political positioning, and if there is any relation between the two registers, it is evidently too complex to be captured by the idea of social or political subversion ("Is the Rectum a Grave?" *October* 43 [1987]: 197–222). Indeed, Hocquenghem was perfectly conscious of this fact, but his way of conceptualizing homosexual desire did not allow him to think of the effective production of homosexual individuals as subjectified subjects except to imagine that as soon as they failed to conform to his "revolutionary" model, they had to be denounced as servants of the established order and of oedipal structures. Thus he was quickly drawn to denigrate actual homosexuals, their ways of living their lives, and the homosexual movement itself. Within his antinormative rhetoric there lies a profound normativity, consisting of accepting only certain kinds of homosexual lives and denouncing all the others as bourgeois. That is why after his book appeared in 1972, he spent his time deploring—sometimes bitterly, sometimes humorously—everything that had to do with the homosexuality around him; he regarded even his own earlier writings quite severely. In 1974, when he republished some of them, he described "Pour une conception homosexuelle du monde" as "the tight-laced armature of a homosexual thirsty for dignity, at the height of his totalitarian dream"; he also commented, "How fucking stupid to be proud of being one of

- us, which makes you miss the chance literally to get off on the words of a sentence that takes the form of a hard-on" (*L'après-mai des faunes* [Paris: Grasset, 1974], 157, 149). A condensed version of his critiques of homosexuals can be found in his story "Oiseau de nuit" (in Jean-Louis Bory and Guy Hocquenghem, *Comment nous appelez-vous, déjà? Ces hommes que l'on dit homosexuels* [Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1977], 139–200). In the afterword to that text he cites *La volonté de savoir*, noting, probably perfidiously, that "Foucault, like others before him," tells us that the words *homosexual* and *homosexuality* were created at the end of the nineteenth century (203; my emphasis).
72. Still, Foucault never moves truly far away from Hocquenghem, in whom we already find the idea that power is exercised through categories, given that it is through their mediation that the desiring fluxes are divided into sexualities and fixed into identities. One even finds in *Homosexual Desire* a critique of confession (89–92) and an analysis of the "prohibition-transgression" dyad. (Hocquenghem speaks of "perverse integration" and of the focus of desire "on what is supposed to be forbidden, so that anyone who wants to ignore the prohibition can have a taste of the transgression" [143].)
 73. On the way in which Pasolini fits into the sexual liberation movement see Jean Dufлот, *Entretiens avec Pasolini* (Paris: Belfond, 1970). In 1975 Pasolini recanted his work in his "Trilogy of Life" and the ideological position it represented. In his opinion, the politicosexual struggle it was part of had been "overtaken and neutralized by the decision of consumerist power to grant a kind of tolerance as wide as it was fallacious" (see Pier Paolo Pasolini, "Documents de travail," in Fabien S. Gérard, *Pasolini ou le mythe de la barbarie* [Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1981], 123–25). Pasolini's 1975 film, *Salo, the 120 Days of Sodom*, manifests this break. The sexuality hitherto conceived as a form of resistance to capitalism will now be perceived as an obligation and a duty organized by neocapitalist society. Foucault is known to have been enormously interested in Pasolini's films.
 74. Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 5; see, in general, 1–29, esp. 8–9.
 75. Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, 91. See also Gilles Deleuze's preface to *L'après-mai des faunes*: "There are no longer homosexual subjects, but rather homosexual productions of desire and homosexual agencies productive of enunciations that are buzzing around everywhere: SM, transvestism, as much in relations of love as in political struggles. There is no longer any Gide-subject, carried away or divided, nor even any Proust-subject forever guilty" (16). Hocquenghem also attacks *Corydon* and the attempt to "base the form of desire on nature" (*Homosexual Desire*, 62). But in referring to the pages that Deleuze and Guattari devote to Proust in *Anti-Oedipus*, he emphasizes that one finds in *Cities of the Plain* a "language of flowers" whose "biological aspects" particularly interest Proust and open onto a different conception of homosexuality, as a pure connection of desiring machines (*Homosexual Desire*, 90–91; *Anti-Oedipus*, 68–70).
 76. FHAR, *Rapport contre la normalité*, 7.

77. Baudry to the author, 30 May 1994. See Eribon, *Michel Foucault et ses contemporains*, 274–76.
78. Foucault's text on Arcadie and Baudry was published in *Libération* on 12 July 1982. At the last minute he decided that he preferred not to sign it and asked me if I would. The article thus appeared under my initials (D. E.). For the text itself, for further information on the conditions of its publication, and for a fuller discussion of Foucault's relations with Arcadie, see Eribon, *Michel Foucault et ses contemporains*, 265–87.
79. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, from a quite different perspective, has already offered a reading of *La volonté de savoir* as a "drama of the closet" ("Gender Criticism," in *Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformations of English and American Literary Studies*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn [New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1992], 271–302, esp. 278–85).
80. Thierry Voeltzel, *Vingt ans et après* (Paris: Grasset, 1978). Foucault's name does not appear in the book. In the preface Claude Mauriac, who edited the series in which the book appeared and who commissioned it, simply comments: "A quite young man, Thierry, speaks in front of an older friend" (7). On the book see Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 281–82. Voeltzel had participated in the group Antinorme (which had grown out of the FHAR) and in the founding of the journal *Gai pied* in 1979. It was to please Voeltzel that Foucault published an article, "Un plaisir si simple," in the first issue of that journal.
81. Voeltzel, *Vingt ans et après*, 51. See also 37: "I [Foucault] came to understand, according to everything you had told me, that, for you, homosexuality was quite simple. And now you've just told me, while the tape recorder was turned off, that while it had become simple, all the same it was complicated."
82. *Ibid.*, 22. Foucault makes a point of saying that when Reich speaks of homosexuality, "he says ignominious things" (18).
83. *Ibid.*, 29. Voeltzel himself emphasizes, however, that all the discourse about bisexuality had little to do with the sexual practices of the individuals concerned.
84. *Ibid.*, 30. A few years later, in 1981, Foucault came back to this question, speaking in an interview of "the great myth of saying: There will no longer be any difference between homo- and heterosexuality." He opposed to this utopia of undifferentiation the idea of a gay "way of life" and insisted that "this search for a way of life runs counter to the ideology of the sexual liberation movements of the sixties" ("Friendship as a Way of Life," in *Ethics*, 138).
85. See Voeltzel, *Vingt ans et après*, 32. Foucault seems satisfied when Voeltzel tells him not only that he does not "think of himself as homosexual" but that at the same time he thinks that in the future he will be exclusively homosexual in his practices (38–39).
86. Needless to say, as *Libération* followed the process of institutionalization in the 1980s, this space for free speech disappeared, replaced by an "Opinions" page similar to the ones found everywhere else.

86 **GLQ: A JOURNAL OF LESBIAN AND GAY STUDIES**

87. Foucault, "Le gai savoir," 48.
88. Michel Foucault, "Sexual Choice, Sexual Act," in *Ethics*, 153 (originally published in *Salmagundi* 58–59 [1982–83]: 10–24). Translation modified. Leo Bersani uses these remarks as the starting point for the critical discussion of Foucault developed in *Homos* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 77–112, in which he reproaches Foucault for desexualizing both homophobia and the transgressive aspect of homosexuality.
89. Foucault, "The End of the Monarchy of Sex," 218. He offers as a sign of this "anti-sex grumbling" Hervé Guibert's *La mort propagande* (Paris: Deforges, 1977).
90. Foucault, "Friendship as a Way of Life," in *Ethics*, 136–37.