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Method

Hence the objective is to analyze a certain form of knowledge regarding sex, not in terms of repression or law, but in terms of power. But the word *power* is apt to lead to a number of misunderstandings—misunderstandings with respect to its nature, its form, and its unity. By power, I do not mean “Power” as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. By power, I do not mean, either, a mode of subjugation which, in contrast to violence, has the form of the rule. Finally, I do not have in mind a general system of domination exerted by one group over another, a system whose effects, through successive derivations, pervade the entire social body. The analysis, made in terms of power, must not assume that the sovereignty of the state, the form of the law, or the over-all unity of a domination are given at the outset; rather, these are only the terminal forms power takes. It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they

take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies. Power's condition of possibility, or in any case the viewpoint which permits one to understand its exercise, even in its more "peripheral" effects, and which also makes it possible to use its mechanisms as a grid of intelligibility of the social order, must not be sought in the primary existence of a central point, in a unique source of sovereignty from which secondary and descendent forms would emanate; it is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable. The omnipresence of power: not because it has the privilege of consolidating everything under its invincible unity, but because it is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another. Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. And "Power," insofar as it is permanent, repetitious, inert, and self-reproducing, is simply the over-all effect that emerges from all these mobilities, the concatenation that rests on each of them and seeks in turn to arrest their movement. One needs to be nominalistic, no doubt: power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society.

Should we turn the expression around, then, and say that politics is war pursued by other means? If we still wish to maintain a separation between war and politics, perhaps we should postulate rather that this multiplicity of force relations can be coded—in part but never totally—either in the form of "war," or in the form of "politics"; this would imply two different strategies (but the one always liable to switch into the other) for integrating these unbalanced, heterogeneous, unstable, and tense force relations.

Continuing this line of discussion, we can advance a certain number of propositions:

- Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations.
- Relations of power are not in a position of exteriority with respect to other types of relationships (economic processes, knowledge relationships, sexual relations), but are immanent in the latter; they are the immediate effects of the divisions, inequalities, and disequilibriums which occur in the latter, and conversely they are the internal conditions of these differentiations; relations of power are not in superstructural positions, with merely a role of prohibition or accompaniment; they have a directly productive role, wherever they come into play.
- Power comes from below; that is, there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix —no such duality extending from the top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body. One must suppose rather that the manifold relationships of force that take shape and come into play in the machinery of production, in families, limited groups, and institutions, are the basis for wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole. These then form a general line of force that traverses the local oppositions and links them together; to be sure, they also bring about redistributions, realignments, homogenizations, serial arrangements, and convergences of the force relations. Major dominations are the hegemonic effects that are sustained by all these confrontations.
- Power relations are both intentional and nonsubjective. If in fact they are intelligible, this is not because they are the

effect of another instance that “explains” them, but rather because they are imbued, through and through, with calculation: there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject; let us not look for the headquarters that presides over its rationality; neither the caste which governs, nor the groups which control the state apparatus, nor those who make the most important economic decisions direct the entire network of power that functions in a society (and makes *it* function); the rationality of power is characterized by tactics that are often quite explicit at the restricted level where they are inscribed (the local cynicism of power), tactics which, becoming connected to one another, attracting and propagating one another, but finding their base of support and their condition elsewhere, end by forming comprehensive systems: the logic is perfectly clear, the aims decipherable, and yet it is often the case that no one is there to have invented them, and few who can be said to have formulated them: an implicit characteristic of the great anonymous, almost unspoken strategies which coordinate the loquacious tactics whose “inventors” or decisionmakers are often without hypocrisy.

—Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power. Should it be said that one is always “inside” power, there is no “escaping” it, there is no absolute outside where it is concerned, because one is subject to the law in any case? Or that, history being the ruse of reason, power is the ruse of history, always emerging the winner? This would be to misunderstand the strictly relational character of power relationships. Their existence depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is no single

locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial; by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations. But this does not mean that they are only a reaction or rebound, forming with respect to the basic domination an underside that is in the end always passive, doomed to perpetual defeat. Resistances do not derive from a few heterogeneous principles; but neither are they a lure or a promise that is of necessity betrayed. They are the odd term in relations of power; they are inscribed in the latter as an irreducible opposite. Hence they too are distributed in irregular fashion: the points, knots, or focuses of resistance are spread over time and space at varying densities, at times mobilizing groups or individuals in a definitive way, inflaming certain points of the body, certain moments in life, certain types of behavior. Are there no great radical ruptures, massive binary divisions, then? Occasionally, yes. But more often one is dealing with mobile and transitory points of resistance, producing cleavages in a society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals themselves, cutting them up and remolding them, marking off irreducible regions in them, in their bodies and minds. Just as the network of power relations ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them, so too the swarm of points of resistance traverses social stratifications and individual unities. And it is doubtless the strategic codification of these points of resistance that makes a revolution possible, somewhat similar to the way in which the state relies on the institutional integration of power relationships.

It is in this sphere of force relations that we must try to analyze the mechanisms of power. In this way we will escape from the system of Law-and-Sovereign which has captivated political thought for such a long time. And if it is true that Machiavelli was among the few—and this no doubt was the scandal of his “cynicism”—who conceived the power of the Prince in terms of force relationships, perhaps we need to go one step further, do without the persona of the Prince, and decipher power mechanisms on the basis of a strategy that is immanent in force relationships.

To return to sex and the discourses of truth that have taken charge of it, the question that we must address, then, is not: Given a specific state structure, how and why is it that power needs to establish a knowledge of sex? Neither is the question: What over-all domination was served by the concern, evidenced since the eighteenth century, to produce true discourses on sex? Nor is it: What law presided over both the regularity of sexual behavior and the conformity of what was said about it? It is rather: In a specific type of discourse on sex, in a specific form of extortion of truth, appearing historically and in specific places (around the child's body, apropos of women's sex, in connection with practices restricting births, and so on), what were the most immediate, the most local power relations at work? How did they make possible these kinds of discourses, and conversely, how were these discourses used to support power relations? How was the action of these power relations modified by their very exercise, entailing a strengthening of some terms and a weakening of others, with effects of resistance and counterinvestments, so that there has never existed one type of stable subjugation, given once and for all? How were these power relations linked to one another according to the logic of a great strategy, which in retrospect takes on the aspect of a unitary and voluntarist politics of sex? In general terms: rather than referring all the infinitesimal violences that are exerted on sex, all the anxious gazes that are directed at it,

and all the hiding places whose discovery is made into an impossible task, to the unique form of a great Power, we must immerse the expanding production of discourses on sex in the field of multiple and mobile power relations.

Which leads us to advance, in a preliminary way, four rules to follow. But these are not intended as methodological imperatives; at most they are cautionary prescriptions.

1. *Rule of immanence*

One must not suppose that there exists a certain sphere of sexuality that would be the legitimate concern of a free and disinterested scientific inquiry were it not the object of mechanisms of prohibition brought to bear by the economic or ideological requirements of power. If sexuality was constituted as an area of investigation, this was only because relations of power had established it as a possible object; and conversely, if power was able to take it as a target, this was because techniques of knowledge and procedures of discourse were capable of investing it. Between techniques of knowledge and strategies of power, there is no exteriority, even if they have specific roles and are linked together on the basis of their difference. We will start, therefore, from what might be called "local centers" of power-knowledge: for example, the relations that obtain between penitents and confessors, or the faithful and their directors of conscience. Here, guided by the theme of the "flesh" that must be mastered, different forms of discourse—self-examination, questionings, admissions, interpretations, interviews—were the vehicle of a kind of incessant back-and-forth movement of forms of subjugation and schemas of knowledge. Similarly, the body of the child, under surveillance, surrounded in his cradle, his bed, or his room by an entire watch-crew of parents, nurses, servants, educators, and doctors, all attentive to the least manifestations of his sex, has constituted, particularly since the eighteenth century, another "local center" of power-knowledge.

2. Rules of continual variations

We must not look for who has the power in the order of sexuality (men, adults, parents, doctors) and who is deprived of it (women, adolescents, children, patients); nor for who has the right to know and who is forced to remain ignorant. We must seek rather the pattern of the modifications which the relationships of force imply by the very nature of their process. The "distributions of power" and the "appropriations of knowledge" never represent only instantaneous slices taken from processes involving, for example, a cumulative reinforcement of the strongest factor, or a reversal of relationship, or again, a simultaneous increase of two terms. Relations of power-knowledge are not static forms of distribution, they are "matrices of transformations." The nineteenth-century grouping made up of the father, the mother, the educator, and the doctor, around the child and his sex, was subjected to constant modifications, continual shifts. One of the more spectacular results of the latter was a strange reversal: whereas to begin with the child's sexuality had been problematized within the relationship established between doctor and parents (in the form of advice, or recommendations to keep the child under observation, or warnings of future dangers), ultimately it was in the relationship of the psychiatrist to the child that the sexuality of adults themselves was called into question.

3. Rule of double conditioning

No "local center," no "pattern of transformation" could function if, through a series of sequences, it did not eventually enter into an over-all strategy. And inversely, no strategy could achieve comprehensive effects if did not gain support from precise and tenuous relations serving, not as its point of application or final outcome, but as its prop and anchor point. There is no discontinuity between them, as if one were dealing with two different levels (one microscopic and the

other macroscopic); but neither is there homogeneity (as if the one were only the enlarged projection or the miniaturization of the other); rather, one must conceive of the double conditioning of a strategy by the specificity of possible tactics, and of tactics by the strategic envelope that makes them work. Thus the father in the family is not the "representative" of the sovereign or the state; and the latter are not projections of the father on a different scale. The family does not duplicate society, just as society does not imitate the family. But the family organization, precisely to the extent that it was insular and heteromorphous with respect to the other power mechanisms, was used to support the great "maneuvers" employed for the Malthusian control of the birthrate, for the populationist incitements, for the medicalization of sex and the psychiatrization of its nongenital forms.

4. *Rule of the tactical polyvalence of discourses*

What is said about sex must not be analyzed simply as the surface of projection of these power mechanisms. Indeed, it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together. And for this very reason, we must conceive discourse as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable. To be more precise, we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies. It is this distribution that we must reconstruct, with the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden, that it comprises; with the variants and different effects—according to who is speaking, his position of power, the institutional context in which he happens to be situated—that it implies; and with the shifts and reutilizations of identical formulas for contrary objectives that it also includes. Discourses are not once and for all subservient to

power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. In like manner, silence and secrecy are a shelter for power, anchoring its prohibitions; but they also loosen its holds and provide for relatively obscure areas of tolerance. Consider for example the history of what was once "the" great sin against nature. The extreme discretion of the texts dealing with sodomy—that utterly confused category—and the nearly universal reticence in talking about it made possible a twofold operation: on the one hand, there was an extreme severity (punishment by fire was meted out well into the eighteenth century, without there being any substantial protest expressed before the middle of the century), and on the other hand, a tolerance that must have been widespread (which one can deduce indirectly from the infrequency of judicial sentences, and which one glimpses more directly through certain statements concerning societies of men that were thought to exist in the army or in the courts). There is no question that the appearance in nineteenth-century psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature of a whole series of discourses on the species and subspecies of homosexuality, inversion, pederasty, and "psychic hermaphroditism" made possible a strong advance of social controls into this area of "perversity"; but it also made possible the formation of a "reverse" discourse: homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or "naturalness" be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified. There is not, on the one side, a discourse of power, and opposite it, another discourse that runs counter to it. Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force

relations; there can exist different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy; they can, on the contrary, circulate without changing their form from one strategy to another, opposing strategy. We must not expect the discourses on sex to tell us, above all, what strategy they derive from, or what moral divisions they accompany, or what ideology—dominant or dominated—they represent; rather we must question them on the two levels of their tactical productivity (what reciprocal effects of power and knowledge they ensure) and their strategical integration (what conjunction and what force relationship make their utilization necessary in a given episode of the various confrontations that occur).

In short, it is a question of orienting ourselves to a conception of power which replaces the privilege of the law with the viewpoint of the objective, the privilege of prohibition with the viewpoint of tactical efficacy, the privilege of sovereignty with the analysis of a multiple and mobile field of force relations, wherein far-reaching, but never completely stable, effects of domination are produced. The strategical model, rather than the model based on law. And this, not out of a speculative choice or theoretical preference, but because in fact it is one of the essential traits of Western societies that the force relationships which for a long time had found expression in war, in every form of warfare, gradually became invested in the order of political power.

3

Domain

Sexuality must not be described as a stubborn drive, by nature alien and of necessity disobedient to a power which exhausts itself trying to subdue it and often fails to control it entirely. It appears rather as an especially dense transfer point for relations of power: between men and women, young people and old people, parents and offspring, teachers and students, priests and laity, an administration and a population. Sexuality is not the most intractable element in power relations, but rather one of those endowed with the greatest instrumentality: useful for the greatest number of maneuvers and capable of serving as a point of support, as a linchpin, for the most varied strategies.

There is no single, all-encompassing strategy, valid for all of society and uniformly bearing on all the manifestations of sex. For example, the idea that there have been repeated attempts, by various means, to reduce all of sex to its reproductive function, its heterosexual and adult form, and its matrimonial legitimacy fails to take into account the manifold objectives aimed for, the manifold means employed in the different sexual politics concerned with the two sexes, the different age groups and social classes.

In a first approach to the problem, it seems that we can distinguish four great strategic unities which, beginning in the eighteenth century, formed specific mechanisms of knowledge and power centering on sex. These did not come

into being fully developed at that time; but it was then that they took on a consistency and gained an effectiveness in the order of power, as well as a productivity in the order of knowledge, so that it is possible to describe them in their relative autonomy.

1. *A hysterization of women's bodies*: a threefold process whereby the feminine body was analyzed—qualified and disqualified—as being thoroughly saturated with sexuality; whereby it was integrated into the sphere of medical practices, by reason of a pathology intrinsic to it; whereby, finally, it was placed in organic communication with the social body (whose regulated fecundity it was supposed to ensure), the family space (of which it had to be a substantial and functional element), and the life of children (which it produced and had to guarantee, by virtue of a biologico-moral responsibility lasting through the entire period of the children's education); the Mother, with her negative image of “nervous woman,” constituted the most visible form of this hysterization.

2. *A pedagogization of children's sex*: a double assertion that practically all children indulge or are prone to indulge in sexual activity; and that, being unwarranted, at the same time “natural” and “contrary to nature,” this sexual activity posed physical and moral, individual and collective dangers; children were defined as “preliminary” sexual beings, on this side of sex, yet within it, astride a dangerous dividing line. Parents, families, educators, doctors, and eventually psychologists would have to take charge, in a continuous way, of this precious and perilous, dangerous and endangered sexual potential: this pedagogization was especially evident in the war against onanism, which in the West lasted nearly two centuries.

3. *A socialization of procreative behavior*: an economic socialization via all the incitements and restrictions, the “social” and fiscal measures brought to bear on the fertility of

couples; a political socialization achieved through the “responsibilization” of couples with regard to the social body as a whole (which had to be limited or on the contrary reinvigorated), and a medical socialization carried out by attributing a pathogenic value—for the individual and the species—to birth-control practices.

4. *A psychiatrization of perverse pleasure*: the sexual instinct was isolated as a separate biological and psychical instinct; a clinical analysis was made of all the forms of anomalies by which it could be afflicted; it was assigned a role of normalization or pathologization with respect to all behavior; and finally, a corrective technology was sought for these anomalies.

Four figures emerged from this preoccupation with sex, which mounted throughout the nineteenth century—four privileged objects of knowledge, which were also targets and anchorage points for the ventures of knowledge: the hysterical woman, the masturbating child, the Malthusian couple, and the perverse adult. Each of them corresponded to one of these strategies which, each in its own way, invested and made use of the sex of women, children, and men.

What was at issue in these strategies? A struggle against sexuality? Or were they part of an effort to gain control of it? An attempt to regulate it more effectively and mask its more indiscreet, conspicuous, and intractable aspects? A way of formulating only that measure of knowledge about it that was acceptable or useful? In actual fact, what was involved, rather, was the very production of sexuality. Sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover. It is the name that can be given to a historical construct: not a furtive reality that is difficult to grasp, but a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement

to discourse, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power.

It will be granted no doubt that relations of sex gave rise, in every society, to a *deployment of alliance*: a system of marriage, of fixation and development of kinship ties, of transmission of names and possessions. This deployment of alliance, with the mechanisms of constraint that ensured its existence and the complex knowledge it often required, lost some of its importance as economic processes and political structures could no longer rely on it as an adequate instrument or sufficient support. Particularly from the eighteenth century onward, Western societies created and deployed a new apparatus which was superimposed on the previous one, and which, without completely supplanting the latter, helped to reduce its importance. I am speaking of the *deployment of sexuality*: like the *deployment of alliance*, it connects up with the circuit of sexual partners, but in a completely different way. The two systems can be contrasted term by term. The deployment of alliance is built around a system of rules defining the permitted and the forbidden, the licit and the illicit, whereas the deployment of sexuality operates according to mobile, polymorphous, and contingent techniques of power. The deployment of alliance has as one of its chief objectives to reproduce the interplay of relations and maintain the law that governs them; the deployment of sexuality, on the other hand, engenders a continual extension of areas and forms of control. For the first, what is pertinent is the link between partners and definite statutes; the second is concerned with the sensations of the body, the quality of pleasures, and the nature of impressions, however tenuous or imperceptible these may be. Lastly, if the deployment of alliance is firmly tied to the economy due to the role it can play in the transmission or circulation of wealth, the deployment of sexuality is linked to the economy through numer-

ous and subtle relays, the main one of which, however, is the body—the body that produces and consumes. In a word, the deployment of alliance is attuned to a homeostasis of the social body, which it has the function of maintaining; whence its privileged link with the law; whence too the fact that the important phase for it is “reproduction.” The deployment of sexuality has its reason for being, not in reproducing itself, but in proliferating, innovating, annexing, creating, and penetrating bodies in an increasingly detailed way, and in controlling populations in an increasingly comprehensive way. We are compelled, then, to accept three or four hypotheses which run counter to the one on which the theme of a sexuality repressed by the modern forms of society is based: sexuality is tied to recent devices of power; it has been expanding at an increasing rate since the seventeenth century; the arrangement that has sustained it is not governed by reproduction; it has been linked from the outset with an intensification of the body—with its exploitation as an object of knowledge and an element in relations of power.

It is not exact to say that the deployment of sexuality supplanted the deployment of alliance. One can imagine that one day it will have replaced it. But as things stand at present, while it does tend to cover up the deployment of alliance, it has neither obliterated the latter nor rendered it useless. Moreover, historically it was around and on the basis of the deployment of alliance that the deployment of sexuality was constructed. First the practice of penance, then that of the examination of conscience and spiritual direction, was the formative nucleus: as we have seen,¹ what was at issue to begin with at the tribunal of penance was sex insofar as it was the basis of relations; the questions posed had to do with the commerce allowed or forbidden (adultery, extramarital relations, relations with a person prohibited by blood or statute, the legitimate or illegitimate character of the act of sexual

¹ Cf page 37 above.

congress); then, coinciding with the new pastoral and its application in seminaries, secondary schools, and convents, there was a gradual progression away from the problematic of relations toward a problematic of the "flesh," that is, of the body, sensation, the nature of pleasure, the more secret forms of enjoyment or acquiescence. "Sexuality" was taking shape, born of a technology of power that was originally focused on alliance. Since then, it has not ceased to operate in conjunction with a system of alliance on which it has depended for support. The family cell, in the form in which it came to be valued in the course of the eighteenth century, made it possible for the main elements of the deployment of sexuality (the feminine body, infantile precocity, the regulation of births, and to a lesser extent no doubt, the specification of the perverted) to develop along its two primary dimensions: the husband-wife axis and the parents-children axis. The family, in its contemporary form, must not be understood as a social, economic, and political structure of alliance that excludes or at least restrains sexuality, that diminishes it as much as possible, preserving only its useful functions. On the contrary, its role is to anchor sexuality and provide it with a permanent support. It ensures the production of a sexuality that is not homogeneous with the privileges of alliance, while making it possible for the systems of alliance to be imbued with a new tactic of power which they would otherwise be impervious to. The family is the interchange of sexuality and alliance: it conveys the law and the juridical dimension in the deployment of sexuality; and it conveys the economy of pleasure and the intensity of sensations in the regime of alliance.

This interpenetration of the deployment of alliance and that of sexuality in the form of the family allows us to understand a number of facts: that since the eighteenth century the family has become an obligatory locus of affects, feelings, love; that sexuality has its privileged point of development in the family; that for this reason sexuality is "incestuous" from

the start. It may be that in societies where the mechanisms of alliance predominate, prohibition of incest is a functionally indispensable rule. But in a society such as ours, where the family is the most active site of sexuality, and where it is doubtless the exigencies of the latter which maintain and prolong its existence, incest—for different reasons altogether and in a completely different way—occupies a central place; it is constantly being solicited and refused; it is an object of obsession and attraction, a dreadful secret and an indispensable pivot. It is manifested as a thing that is strictly forbidden in the family insofar as the latter functions as a deployment of alliance; but it is also a thing that is continuously demanded in order for the family to be a hotbed of constant sexual incitement. If for more than a century the West has displayed such a strong interest in the prohibition of incest, if more or less by common accord it has been seen as a social universal and one of the points through which every society is obliged to pass on the way to becoming a culture, perhaps this is because it was found to be a means of self-defense, not against an incestuous desire, but against the expansion and the implications of this deployment of sexuality which had been set up, but which, among its many benefits, had the disadvantage of ignoring the laws and juridical forms of alliance. By asserting that all societies without exception, and consequently our own, were subject to this rule of rules, one guaranteed that this deployment of sexuality, whose strange effects were beginning to be felt—among them, the affective intensification of the family space—would not be able to escape from the grand and ancient system of alliance. Thus the law would be secure, even in the new mechanics of power. For this is the paradox of a society which, from the eighteenth century to the present, has created so many technologies of power that are foreign to the concept of law: it fears the effects and proliferations of those technologies and attempts to recode them in forms of law. If one considers the threshold of all culture to be prohibited incest, then sexuality

has been, from the dawn of time, under the sway of law and right. By devoting so much effort to an endless reworking of the transcultural theory of the incest taboo, anthropology has proved worthy of the whole modern deployment of sexuality and the theoretical discourses it generates.

What has taken place since the seventeenth century can be interpreted in the following manner: the deployment of sexuality which first developed on the fringes of familial institutions (in the direction of conscience and pedagogy, for example) gradually became focused on the family: the alien, irreducible, and even perilous effects it held in store for the deployment of alliance (an awareness of this danger was evidenced in the criticism often directed at the indiscretion of the directors, and in the entire controversy, which occurred somewhat later, over the private or public, institutional or familial education of children²) were absorbed by the family, a family that was reorganized, restricted no doubt, and in any case intensified in comparison with the functions it formerly exercised in the deployment of alliance. In the family, parents and relatives became the chief agents of a deployment of sexuality which drew its outside support from doctors, educators, and later psychiatrists, and which began by competing with the relations of alliance but soon "psychologized" or "psychiatrized" the latter. Then these new personages made their appearance: the nervous woman, the frigid wife, the indifferent mother—or worse, the mother beset by murderous obsessions—the impotent, sadistic, perverse husband, the hysterical or neurasthenic girl, the precocious and already exhausted child, and the young homosexual who rejects marriage or neglects his wife. These were the combined figures of an alliance gone bad and an abnormal sexuality; they were the means by which the disturbing factors of the latter were brought into the former;

² Molière's *Tartuffe* and Jakob Michael Lenz's *Tutor*, separated by more than a century, both depict the interference of the deployment of sexuality in the family organization, apropos of spiritual direction in *Tartuffe* and education in *The Tutor*.

and yet they also provided an opportunity for the alliance system to assert its prerogatives in the order of sexuality. Then a pressing demand emanated from the family: a plea for help in reconciling these unfortunate conflicts between sexuality and alliance; and, caught in the grip of this deployment of sexuality which had invested it from without, contributing to its solidification into its modern form, the family broadcast the long complaint of its sexual suffering to doctors, educators, psychiatrists, priests, and pastors, to all the "experts" who would listen. It was as if it had suddenly discovered the dreadful secret of what had always been hinted at and inculcated in it: the family, the keystone of alliance, was the germ of all the misfortunes of sex. And lo and behold, from the mid-nineteenth century onward, the family engaged in searching out the slightest traces of sexuality in its midst, wrenching from itself the most difficult confessions, soliciting an audience with everyone who might know something about the matter, and opening itself unreservedly to endless examination. The family was the crystal in the deployment of sexuality: it seemed to be the source of a sexuality which it actually only reflected and diffracted. By virtue of its permeability, and through that process of reflections to the outside, it became one of the most valuable tactical components of the deployment.

But this development was not without its tensions and problems. Charcot doubtless constituted a central figure in this as well. For many years he was the most noteworthy of all those to whom families, burdened down as they were with this sexuality that saturated them, appealed for mediation and treatment. On receiving parents who brought him their children, husbands their wives, and wives their husbands, from the world over, his first concern was to separate the "patient" from his family, and the better to observe him, he would pay as little attention as possible to what the family

had to say.³ He sought to detach the sphere of sexuality from the system of alliance, in order to deal with it directly through a medical practice whose technicity and autonomy were guaranteed by the neurological model. Medicine thus assumed final responsibility, according to the rules of a specific knowledge, for a sexuality which it had in fact urged families to concern themselves with as an essential task and a major danger. Moreover, Charcot noted on several occasions how difficult it was for families to “yield” the patient whom they nonetheless had brought to the doctor, how they laid siege to the mental hospitals where the subject was being kept out of view, and the ways in which they were constantly interfering with the doctor’s work. Their worry was unwarranted, however: the therapist only intervened in order to return to them individuals who were sexually compatible with the family system; and while this intervention manipulated the sexual body, it did not authorize the latter to define itself in explicit discourse. One must not speak of these “genital causes”: so went the phrase—muttered in a muted voice—which the most famous ears of our time overheard one day in 1886, from the mouth of Charcot.

This was the context in which psychoanalysis set to work; but not without substantially modifying the pattern of anxieties and reassurances. In the beginning it must have given rise to distrust and hostility, for, pushing Charcot’s lesson to the extreme, it undertook to examine the sexuality of individuals outside family control; it brought this sexuality to light without covering it over again with the neurological model; more serious still, it called family relations into question in the analysis it made of them. But despite everything,

³ Jean-Martin Charcot, *Leçons de Mardi*, January 7, 1888: “In order to properly treat a hysterical girl, one must not leave her with her father and mother; she needs to be placed in a mental hospital. . . . Do you know how long well-behaved little girls cry for their mothers after they part company? . . . Let us take the average, if you will; it’s not very long, a half-hour or thereabouts.”

February 21, 1888: “In the case of hysteria of young boys, what one must do is to separate them from their mothers. So long as they are with their mothers, nothing is of any use. . . . The father is sometimes just as unbearable as the mother; it is best, then, to get rid of them both.”

psychoanalysis, whose technical procedure seemed to place the confession of sexuality outside family jurisdiction, rediscovered the law of alliance, the involved workings of marriage and kinship, and incest at the heart of this sexuality, as the principle of its formation and the key to its intelligibility. The guarantee that one would find the parents-children relationship at the root of everyone's sexuality made it possible—even when everything seemed to point to the reverse process—to keep the deployment of sexuality coupled to the system of alliance. There was no risk that sexuality would appear to be, by nature, alien to the law: it was constituted only through the law. Parents, do not be afraid to bring your children to analysis: it will teach them that in any case it is you whom they love. Children, you really shouldn't complain that you are not orphans, that you always rediscover in your innermost selves your Object-Mother or the sovereign sign of your Father: it is through them that you gain access to desire. Whence, after so many reticences, the enormous consumption of analysis in societies where the deployment of alliance and the family system needed strengthening. For this is one of the most significant aspects of this entire history of the deployment of sexuality: it had its beginnings in the technology of the "flesh" in classical Christianity, basing itself on the alliance system and the rules that governed the latter; but today it fills a reverse function in that it tends to prop up the old deployment of alliance. From the direction of conscience to psychoanalysis, the deployments of alliance and sexuality were involved in a slow process that had them turning about one another until, more than three centuries later, their positions were reversed; in the Christian pastoral, the law of alliance codified the flesh which was just being discovered and fitted it into a framework that was still juridical in character; with psychoanalysis, sexuality gave body and life to the rules of alliance by saturating them with desire.

Hence the domain we must analyze in the different studies that will follow the present volume is that deployment of

sexuality: its formation on the basis of the Christian notion of the flesh, and its development through the four great strategies that were deployed in the nineteenth century: the sexualization of children, the hysterization of women, the specification of the perverted, and the regulation of populations—all strategies that went by way of a family which must be viewed, not as a powerful agency of prohibition, but as a major factor of sexualization.

The first phase corresponded to the need to form a “labor force” (hence to avoid any useless “expenditure,” any wasted energy, so that all forces were reduced to labor capacity alone) and to ensure its reproduction (conjugalilty, the regulated fabrication of children). The second phase corresponded to that epoch of *Spätkapitalismus* in which the exploitation of wage labor does not demand the same violent and physical constraints as in the nineteenth century, and where the politics of the body does not require the elision of sex or its restriction solely to the reproductive function; it relies instead on a multiple channeling into the controlled circuits of the economy—on what has been called a hyper-repressive desublimation.

If the politics of sex makes little use of the law of the taboo but brings into play an entire technical machinery, if what is involved is the production of sexuality rather than the repression of sex, then our emphasis has to be placed elsewhere; we must shift our analysis away from the problem of “labor capacity” and doubtless abandon the diffuse energetics that underlies the theme of a sexuality repressed for economic reasons.

4

Periodization

The history of sexuality supposes two ruptures if one tries to center it on mechanisms of repression. The first, occurring in the course of the seventeenth century, was characterized by the advent of the great prohibitions, the exclusive promotion of adult marital sexuality, the imperatives of decency, the obligatory concealment of the body, the reduction to silence and mandatory reticences of language. The second, a twentieth-century phenomenon, was really less a rupture than an inflexion of the curve: this was the moment when the mechanisms of repression were seen as beginning to loosen their grip; one passed from insistent sexual taboos to a relative tolerance with regard to prenuptial or extramarital relations; the disqualification of “perverts” diminished, their condemnation by the law was in part eliminated; a good many of the taboos that weighed on the sexuality of children were lifted.

We must attempt to trace the chronology of these devices: the inventions, the instrumental mutations, and the renovations of previous techniques. But there is also the calendar of their utilization to consider, the chronology of their diffusion and of the effects (of subjugation and resistance) they produced. These multiple datings doubtless will not coincide with the great repressive cycle that is ordinarily situated between the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries.

1. The chronology of the techniques themselves goes back

a long way. Their point of formation must be sought in the penitential practices of medieval Christianity, or rather in the dual series constituted by the obligatory, exhaustive, and periodic confession imposed on all the faithful by the Lateran Council and by the methods of asceticism, spiritual exercise, and mysticism that evolved with special intensity from the sixteenth century on. First the Reformation, then Tridentine Catholicism, mark an important mutation and a schism in what might be called the "traditional technology of the flesh." A division whose depth should not be underestimated; but this did not rule out a certain parallelism in the Catholic and Protestant methods of examination of conscience and pastoral direction: procedures for analyzing "concupiscence" and transforming it into discourse were established in both instances. This was a rich, refined technique which began to take shape in the sixteenth century and went through a long series of theoretical elaborations until, at the end of the eighteenth century, it became fixed in expressions capable of symbolizing the mitigated strictness of Alfonso de' Liguori in the one case and Wesleyan pedagogy in the other.

It was during the same period—the end of the eighteenth century—and for reasons that will have to be determined, that there emerged a completely new technology of sex; new in that for the most part it escaped the ecclesiastical institution without being truly independent of the thematics of sin. Through pedagogy, medicine, and economics, it made sex not only a secular concern but a concern of the state as well; to be more exact, sex became a matter that required the social body as a whole, and virtually all of its individuals, to place themselves under surveillance. New too for the fact that it expanded along three axes: that of pedagogy, having as its objective the specific sexuality of children; that of medicine, whose objective was the sexual physiology peculiar to women; and last, that of demography, whose objective was the spontaneous or concerted regulation of births. Thus the

"sin of youth," "nervous disorders," and "frauds against procreation" (as those "deadly secrets" were later to be called) designate three privileged areas of this new technology. There is no question that in each of these areas, it went back to methods that had already been formed by Christianity, but of course not without modifying them: the sexuality of children was already problematized in the spiritual pedagogy of Christianity (it is interesting to note that *Mollities*, the first treatise on sin, was written in the fifteenth century by an educator and mystic named Gerson, and that the *Onania* collection compiled by Dekker in the eighteenth century repeats word for word examples set forth by the Anglican pastoral); the eighteenth-century medicine of nerves and vapors took up in turn a field of analysis that had already been delimited when the phenomena of possession fomented a grave crisis in the all too indiscreet practices of conscience direction and spiritual examination (nervous illness is certainly not the truth of possession, but the medicine of hysteria is not unrelated to the earlier direction of "obsessed" women); and the campaigns apropos of the birthrate took the place of the control of conjugal relations—in a different form and at another level—which the Christian penance had so persistently sought to establish through its examinations. A visible continuity, therefore, but one that did not prevent a major transformation: from that time on, the technology of sex was ordered in relation to the medical institution, the exigency of normality, and—instead of the question of death and everlasting punishment—the problem of life and illness. The flesh was brought down to the level of the organism.

This mutation took place at the turn of the nineteenth century; it opened the way for many other transformations that derived from it. The first of these set apart the medicine of sex from the medicine of the body; it isolated a sexual "instinct" capable of presenting constitutive anomalies, acquired derivations, infirmities, or pathological processes.

Heinrich Kaan's *Psychopathia Sexualis*, published in 1846, can be used as an indicator: these were the years that saw the correlative appearance of a medicine, an "orthopedics," specific to sex: in a word, the opening up of the great medico-psychological domain of the "perversions," which was destined to take over from the old moral categories of debauchery and excess. In the same period, the analysis of heredity was placing sex (sexual relations, venereal diseases, matrimonial alliances, perversions) in a position of "biological responsibility" with regard to the species: not only could sex be affected by its own diseases, it could also, if it was not controlled, transmit diseases or create others that would afflict future generations. Thus it appeared to be the source of an entire capital for the species to draw from. Whence the medical—but also political—project for organizing a state management of marriages, births, and life expectancies; sex and its fertility had to be administered. The medicine of perversions and the programs of eugenics were the two great innovations in the technology of sex of the second half of the nineteenth century.

Innovations that merged together quite well, for the theory of "degenerescence" made it possible for them to perpetually refer back to one another; it explained how a heredity that was burdened with various maladies (it made little difference whether these were organic, functional, or psychical) ended by producing a sexual pervert (look into the genealogy of an exhibitionist or a homosexual: you will find a hemiplegic ancestor, a phthisic parent, or an uncle afflicted with senile dementia); but it went on to explain how a sexual perversion resulted in the depletion of one's line of descent—rickets in the children, the sterility of future generations. The series composed of perversion-heredity-degenerescence formed the solid nucleus of the new technologies of sex. And let it not be imagined that this was nothing more than a medical theory which was scientifically lacking and improperly moralistic. Its application was widespread and its im-

plantation went deep. Psychiatry, to be sure, but also jurisprudence, legal medicine, agencies of social control, the surveillance of dangerous or endangered children, all functioned for a long time on the basis of "degenerescence" and the heredity-perversion system. An entire social practice, which took the exasperated but coherent form of a state-directed racism, furnished this technology of sex with a formidable power and far-reaching consequences.

And the strange position of psychiatry at the end of the nineteenth century would be hard to comprehend if one did not see the rupture it brought about in the great system of degenerescence: it resumed the project of a medical technology appropriate for dealing with the sexual instinct; but it sought to free it from its ties with heredity, and hence from eugenics and the various racisms. It is very well to look back from our vantage point and remark upon the normalizing impulse in Freud; one can go on to denounce the role played for many years by the psychoanalytic institution; but the fact remains that in the great family of technologies of sex, which goes so far back into the history of the Christian West, of all those institutions that set out in the nineteenth century to medicalize sex, it was the one that, up to the decade of the forties, rigorously opposed the political and institutional effects of the perversion-heredity-degenerescence system.

It is clear that the genealogy of all these techniques, with their mutations, their shifts, their continuities and ruptures, does not coincide with the hypothesis of a great repressive phase that was inaugurated in the course of the classical age and began to slowly decline in the twentieth. There was rather a perpetual inventiveness, a steady growth of methods and procedures, with two especially productive moments in this proliferating history: around the middle of the sixteenth century, the development of procedures of direction and examination of conscience; and at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the advent of medical technologies of sex.

2. But the foregoing is still only a dating of the techniques

themselves. The history of their spread and their point of application is something else again. If one writes the history of sexuality in terms of repression, relating this repression to the utilization of labor capacity, one must suppose that sexual controls were the more intense and meticulous as they were directed at the poorer classes; one has to assume that they followed the path of greatest domination and the most systematic exploitation: the young adult man, possessing nothing more than his life force, had to be the primary target of a subjugation destined to shift the energy available for useless pleasure toward compulsory labor. But this does not appear to be the way things actually happened. On the contrary, the most rigorous techniques were formed and, more particularly, applied first, with the greatest intensity, in the economically privileged and politically dominant classes. The direction of consciences, self-examination, the entire long elaboration of the transgressions of the flesh, and the scrupulous detection of concupiscence were all subtle procedures that could only have been accessible to small groups of people. It is true that the penitential method of Alfonso de' Liguori and the rules recommended to the Methodists by Wesley ensured that these procedures would be more widely disseminated, after a fashion; but this was at the cost of a considerable simplification.

The same can be said of the family as an agency of control and a point of sexual saturation: it was in the "bourgeois" or "aristocratic" family that the sexuality of children and adolescents was first problematized, and feminine sexuality medicalized; it was the first to be alerted to the potential pathology of sex, the urgent need to keep it under close watch and to devise a rational technology of correction. It was this family that first became a locus for the psychiatrization of sex. Surrendering to fears, creating remedies, appealing for rescue by learned techniques, generating countless discourses, it was the first to commit itself to sexual erethism. The bourgeoisie began by considering that its own sex was

something important, a fragile treasure, a secret that had to be discovered at all costs. It is worth remembering that the first figure to be invested by the deployment of sexuality, one of the first to be "sexualized," was the "idle" woman. She inhabited the outer edge of the "world," in which she always had to appear as a value, and of the family, where she was assigned a new destiny charged with conjugal and parental obligations. Thus there emerged the "nervous" woman, the woman afflicted with "vapors"; in this figure, the hysterization of woman found its anchorage point. As for the adolescent wasting his future substance in secret pleasures, the onanistic child who was of such concern to doctors and educators from the end of the eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth, this was not the child of the people, the future worker who had to be taught the disciplines of the body, but rather the schoolboy, the child surrounded by domestic servants, tutors, and governesses, who was in danger of compromising not so much his physical strength as his intellectual capacity, his moral fiber, and the obligation to preserve a healthy line of descent for his family and his social class.

For their part, the working classes managed for a long time to escape the deployment of "sexuality." Of course, they were subjected in specific ways to the deployment of "alliances": the exploitation of legitimate marriage and fertility, the exclusion of consanguine sexual union, prescriptions of social and local endogamy. On the other hand, it is unlikely that the Christian technology of the flesh ever had any importance for them. As for the mechanisms of sexualization, these penetrated them slowly and apparently in three successive stages. The first involved the problems of birth control, when it was discovered, at the end of the eighteenth century, that the art of fooling nature was not the exclusive privilege of city dwellers and libertines, but was known and practiced by those who, being close to nature itself, should have held it to be more repugnant than anyone else did. Next

the organization of the "conventional" family came to be regarded, sometime around the eighteen-thirties, as an indispensable instrument of political control and economic regulation for the subjugation of the urban proletariat: there was a great campaign for the "moralization of the poorer classes." The last stage came at the end of the nineteenth century with the development of the juridical and medical control of perversions, for the sake of a general protection of society and the race. It can be said that this was the moment when the deployment of "sexuality," elaborated in its more complex and intense forms, by and for the privileged classes, spread through the entire social body. But the forms it took were not everywhere the same, and neither were the instruments it employed (the respective roles of medical and judicial authority were not the same in both instances; nor was even the way in which medicine and sexuality functioned).

These chronological reminders—whether we are concerned with the invention of techniques or the calendar of their diffusion—are of some importance. They cast much doubt on the idea of a repressive cycle, with a beginning and an end and forming a curve with its point of inflexion: it appears unlikely that there was an age of sexual restriction. They also make it doubtful that the process was homogeneous at all levels of society and in all social classes: there was no unitary sexual politics. But above all, they make the meaning of the process, and its reasons for being, problematical: it seems that the deployment of sexuality was not established as a principle of limitation of the pleasures of others by what have traditionally been called the "ruling classes." Rather it appears to me that they first tried it on themselves. Was this a new avatar of that bourgeois asceticism described so many times in connection with the Reformation, the new work ethic, and the rise of capitalism? It seems in fact that what was involved was not an asceticism, in any case not a renunciation of pleasure or a disqualification of the flesh, but

on the contrary an intensification of the body, a problematization of health and its operational terms: it was a question of techniques for maximizing life. The primary concern was not repression of the sex of the classes to be exploited, but rather the body, vigor, longevity, progeniture, and descent of the classes that "ruled." This was the purpose for which the deployment of sexuality was first established, as a new distribution of pleasures, discourses, truths, and powers; it has to be seen as the self-affirmation of one class rather than the enslavement of another: a defense, a protection, a strengthening, and an exaltation that were eventually extended to others—at the cost of different transformations—as a means of social control and political subjugation. With this investment of its own sex by a technology of power and knowledge which it had itself invented, the bourgeoisie underscored the high political price of its body, sensations, and pleasures, its well-being and survival. Let us not isolate the restrictions, reticences, evasions, or silences which all these procedures may have manifested, in order to refer them to some constitutive taboo, psychical repression, or death instinct. What was formed was a political ordering of life, not through an enslavement of others, but through an affirmation of self. And this was far from being a matter of the class which in the eighteenth century became hegemonic believing itself obliged to amputate from its body a sex that was useless, expensive, and dangerous as soon as it was no longer given over exclusively to reproduction; we can assert on the contrary that it provided itself with a body to be cared for, protected, cultivated, and preserved from the many dangers and contacts, to be isolated from others so that it would retain its differential value; and this, by equipping itself with—among other resources—a technology of sex.

Sex is not that part of the body which the bourgeoisie was forced to disqualify or nullify in order to put those whom it dominated to work. It is that aspect of itself which troubled and preoccupied it more than any other, begged and obtained

its attention, and which it cultivated with a mixture of fear, curiosity, delight, and excitement. The bourgeoisie made this element identical with its body, or at least subordinated the latter to the former by attributing to it a mysterious and undefined power; it staked its life and its death on sex by making it responsible for its future welfare; it placed its hopes for the future in sex by imagining it to have ineluctable effects on generations to come; it subordinated its soul to sex by conceiving of it as what constituted the soul's most secret and determinant part. Let us not picture the bourgeoisie symbolically castrating itself the better to refuse others the right to have a sex and make use of it as they please. This class must be seen rather as being occupied, from the mid-eighteenth century on, with creating its own sexuality and forming a specific body based on it, a "class" body with its health, hygiene, descent, and race: the autosexualization of its body, the incarnation of sex in its body, the endogamy of sex and the body.

There were doubtless many reasons for this. First of all, there was a transposition into different forms of the methods employed by the nobility for marking and maintaining its caste distinction; for the aristocracy had also asserted the special character of its body, but this was in the form of *blood*, that is, in the form of the antiquity of its ancestry and of the value of its alliances; the bourgeoisie on the contrary looked to its progeny and the health of its organism when it laid claim to a specific body. The bourgeoisie's "blood" was its sex. And this is more than a play on words; many of the themes characteristic of the caste manners of the nobility reappeared in the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie, but in the guise of biological, medical, or eugenic precepts. The concern with genealogy became a preoccupation with heredity; but included in bourgeois marriages were not only economic imperatives and rules of social homogeneity, not only the promises of inheritance, but the menaces of heredity; families wore and concealed a sort of reversed and somber escutcheon

whose defamatory quarters were the diseases or defects of the group of relatives—the grandfather's general paralysis, the mother's neurasthenia, the youngest child's phthisis, the hysterical or erotomaniac aunts, the cousins with bad morals. But there was more to this concern with the sexual body than the bourgeois transposition of themes of the nobility for the purpose of self-affirmation. A different project was also involved: that of the indefinite extension of strength, vigor, health, and life. The emphasis on the body should undoubtedly be linked to the process of growth and establishment of bourgeois hegemony: not, however, because of the market value assumed by labor capacity, but because of what the "cultivation" of its own body could represent politically, economically, and historically for the present and the future of the bourgeoisie. Its dominance was in part dependent on that cultivation; but it was not simply a matter of economy or ideology, it was a "physical" matter as well. The works, published in great numbers at the end of the eighteenth century, on body hygiene, the art of longevity, ways of having healthy children and of keeping them alive as long as possible, and methods for improving the human lineage, bear witness to the fact: they thus attest to the correlation of this concern with the body and sex to a type of "racism." But the latter was very different from that manifested by the nobility and organized for basically conservative ends. It was a dynamic racism, a racism of expansion, even if it was still in a budding state, awaiting the second half of the nineteenth century to bear the fruits that we have tasted.

May I be forgiven by those for whom the bourgeoisie signifies the elision of the body and the repression of sexuality, for whom class struggle implies the fight to eliminate that repression; the "spontaneous philosophy" of the bourgeoisie is perhaps not as idealistic or castrating as is commonly thought. In any event, one of its primary concerns was to provide itself with a body and a sexuality—to ensure the strength, endurance, and secular proliferation of that body

through the organization of a deployment of sexuality. This process, moreover, was linked to the movement by which it asserted its distinctiveness and its hegemony. There is little question that one of the primordial forms of class consciousness is the affirmation of the body; at least, this was the case for the bourgeoisie during the eighteenth century. It converted the blue blood of the nobles into a sound organism and a healthy sexuality. One understands why it took such a long time and was so unwilling to acknowledge that other classes had a body and a sex—precisely those classes it was exploiting. The living conditions that were dealt to the proletariat, particularly in the first half of the nineteenth century, show there was anything but concern for its body and sex:¹ it was of little importance whether *those* people lived or died, since their reproduction was something that took care of itself in any case. Conflicts were necessary (in particular, conflicts over urban space: cohabitation, proximity, contamination, epidemics, such as the cholera outbreak of 1832, or again, prostitution and venereal diseases) in order for the proletariat to be granted a body and a sexuality; economic emergencies had to arise (the development of heavy industry with the need for a stable and competent labor force, the obligation to regulate the population flow and apply demographic controls); lastly, there had to be established a whole technology of control which made it possible to keep that body and sexuality, finally conceded to them, under surveillance (schooling, the politics of housing, public hygiene, institutions of relief and insurance, the general medicalization of the population, in short, an entire administrative and technical machinery made it possible to safely import the deployment of sexuality into the exploited class; the latter no longer risked playing an assertive class role opposite the bourgeoisie; it would remain the instrument of the bourgeoisie's

¹ Cf. Karl Marx, "The Greed for Surplus-Labor," *Capital*, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (New York: International Publishers, 1970), vol. 1, chap. 10, 2, pp. 235–43.

hegemony). Whence no doubt the proletariat's hesitancy to accept this deployment and its tendency to say that this sexuality was the business of the bourgeoisie and did not concern it.

Some think they can denounce two symmetrical hypocrisies at the same time: the primary hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie which denies its own sexuality, and the secondary hypocrisy of the proletariat which in turn rejects its sexuality by accepting the dominant ideology. This is to misunderstand the process whereby on the contrary the bourgeoisie endowed itself, in an arrogant political affirmation, with a garrulous sexuality which the proletariat long refused to accept, since it was foisted on them for the purpose of subjugation. If it is true that sexuality is the set of effects produced in bodies, behaviors, and social relations by a certain deployment deriving from a complex political technology, one has to admit that this deployment does not operate in symmetrical fashion with respect to the social classes, and consequently, that it does not produce the same effects in them. We must return, therefore, to formulations that have long been disparaged; we must say that there is a bourgeois sexuality, and that there are class sexualities. Or rather, that sexuality is originally, historically bourgeois, and that, in its successive shifts and transpositions, it induces specific class effects.

A few more words are in order. As we have noted, the nineteenth century witnessed a generalization of the deployment of sexuality, starting from a hegemonic center. Eventually the entire social body was provided with a "sexual body," although this was accomplished in different ways and using different tools. Must we speak of the universality of sexuality, then? It is at this point that one notes the introduction of a new differentiating element. Somewhat similar to the way in which, at the end of the eighteenth century, the bourgeoisie set its own body and its precious sexuality

against the valorous blood of the nobles, at the end of the nineteenth century it sought to redefine the specific character of its sexuality relative to that of others, subjecting it to a thorough differential review, and tracing a dividing line that would set apart and protect its body. This line was not the same as the one which founded sexuality, but rather a bar running through that sexuality; this was the taboo that constituted the difference, or at least the manner in which the taboo was applied and the rigor with which it was imposed. It was here that the theory of repression—which was gradually expanded to cover the entire deployment of sexuality, so that the latter came to be explained in terms of a generalized taboo—had its point of origin. This theory is bound up historically with the spread of the deployment of sexuality. On the one hand, the theory would justify its authoritarian and constraining influence by postulating that all sexuality must be subject to the law; more precisely, that sexuality owes its very definition to the action of the law: not only will you submit your sexuality to the law, but you will have no sexuality except by subjecting yourself to the law. But on the other hand, the theory of repression would compensate for this general spread of the deployment of sexuality by its analysis of the differential interplay of taboos according to the social classes. The discourse which at the end of the eighteenth century said: “There is a valuable element within us that must be feared and treated with respect; we must exercise extreme care in dealing with it, lest it be the cause of countless evils,” was replaced by a discourse which said: “Our sexuality, unlike that of others, is subjected to a regime of repression so intense as to present a constant danger; not only is sex a formidable secret, as the directors of conscience, moralists, pedagogues, and doctors always said to former generations, not only must we search it out for the truth it conceals, but if it carries with it so many dangers, this is because—whether out of scrupulousness, an overly acute sense of sin, or hypocrisy, no matter—we have too long

reduced it to silence." Henceforth social differentiation would be affirmed, not by the "sexual" quality of the body, but by the intensity of its repression.

Psychoanalysis comes in at this juncture: both a theory of the essential interrelatedness of the law and desire, and a technique for relieving the effects of the taboo where its rigor makes it pathogenic. In its historical emergence, psychoanalysis cannot be dissociated from the generalization of the deployment of sexuality and the secondary mechanisms of differentiation that resulted from it. The problem of incest is still significant in this regard. On one hand, as we have seen, its prohibition was posited as an absolutely universal principle which made it possible to explain both the system of alliance and the regime of sexuality; this taboo, in one form or another, was valid therefore for every society and every individual. But in practice psychoanalysis gave itself the task of alleviating the effects of repression (for those who were in a position to resort to psychoanalysis) that this prohibition was capable of causing; it allowed individuals to express their incestuous desire in discourse. But during the same period, there was a systematic campaign being organized against the kinds of incestuous practices that existed in rural areas or in certain urban quarters inaccessible to psychiatry: an intensive administrative and judicial grid was laid out then to put an end to these practices. An entire politics for the protection of children or the placing of "endangered" minors under guardianship had as its partial objective their withdrawal from families that were suspected—through lack of space, dubious proximity, a history of debauchery, antisocial "primitiveness," or degenerescence—of practicing incest. Whereas the deployment of sexuality had been intensifying affective relations and physical proximity since the eighteenth century, and although there had occurred a perpetual incitement to incest in the bourgeois family, the regime of sexuality applied to the lower classes on the contrary involved the exclusion of incestuous practices or at least their

displacement into another form. At a time when incest was being hunted out as a conduct, psychoanalysis was busy revealing it as a desire and alleviating—for those who suffered from the desire—the severity which repressed it. We must not forget that the discovery of the Oedipus complex was contemporaneous with the juridical organization of loss of parental authority (in France, this was formulated in the laws of 1889 and 1898). At the moment when Freud was uncovering the nature of Dora's desire and allowing it to be put into words, preparations were being made to undo those reprehensible proximities in other social sectors; on the one hand, the father was elevated into an object of compulsory love, but on the other hand, if he was a loved one, he was at the same time a fallen one in the eyes of the law. Psychoanalysis, as a limited therapeutic practice, thus played a differentiating role with respect to other procedures, within a deployment of sexuality that had come into general use. Those who had lost the exclusive privilege of worrying over their sexuality henceforth had the privilege of experiencing more than others the thing that prohibited it and of possessing the method which made it possible to remove the repression.

The history of the deployment of sexuality, as it has evolved since the classical age, can serve as an archaeology of psychoanalysis. We have seen in fact that psychoanalysis plays several roles at once in this deployment: it is a mechanism for attaching sexuality to the system of alliance; it assumes an adversary position with respect to the theory of degenerescence; it functions as a differentiating factor in the general technology of sex. Around it the great requirement of confession that had taken form so long ago assumed the new meaning of an injunction to lift psychical repression. The task of truth was now linked to the challenging of taboos.

This same development, moreover, opened up the possibility of a substantial shift in tactics, consisting in: reinterpret-

ing the deployment of sexuality in terms of a generalized repression; tying this repression to general mechanisms of domination and exploitation; and linking together the processes that make it possible to free oneself both of repression and of domination and exploitation. Thus between the two world wars there was formed, around Reich, the historico-political critique of sexual repression. The importance of this critique and its impact on reality were substantial. But the very possibility of its success was tied to the fact that it always unfolded within the deployment of sexuality, and not outside or against it. The fact that so many things were able to change in the sexual behavior of Western societies without any of the promises or political conditions predicted by Reich being realized is sufficient proof that this whole sexual "revolution," this whole "antirepressive" struggle, represented nothing more, but nothing less—and its importance is undeniable—than a tactical shift and reversal in the great deployment of sexuality. But it is also apparent why one could not expect this critique to be the grid for a history of that very deployment. Nor the basis for a movement to dismantle it.