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The Epistemic Status of the Human Sciences: Critical Reflections on Foucault

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THE EPISTEMIC AUTHORITY OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES: CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON FOUCAULT[*]

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Any reader of Foucault's corpus recognizes fairly quickly that it is animated by an ethical impulse, namely, to liberate individuals from a kind of oppression from which they suffer. This oppression, however, does not involve the familiar tyranny of the Leviathan or the totalitarian state; it exploits instead values that the victim of oppression herself accepts, and which then leads the oppressed agent to be complicit in her subjugation. It also depends, crucially, on a skeptical thesis about the epistemology of the social sciences. It is this conjunction of claims—that individuals oppress themselves in virtue of certain moral and epistemic norms they accept—that marks Foucault's uniquely disturbing contribution to the literature whose diagnostic aim is, with Max Weber, to understand the oppressive character of modernity, and whose moral aim is, with the Frankfurt School, human liberation and human flourishing. I offer here both a reconstruction of Foucault's project and some modestly critical reflections on it.

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For Foucault, the modern era is marked by the emergence of a new kind of power—what he comes to call "bio-power"[1]—that differs from the classical, "juridical" models of power, captured so well by John Austin's (early 19th-century) view of law (and, ergo, state power) as a command of the sovereign backed by a threat of sanction. "We need to cut off the King's head," says Foucault, adding that "in political theory that still has to be done."[2] The agents of power and repression are no longer (or no longer *only*) the agents of the "King" or the state, and so the exclusive questions of political theory should no longer concern the justifications for and limits upon the exercise of centralized power by "the King." Rather, in the era of "bio-power," repression and regulation operate far more insidiously, for now it is the individual himself who is the agent of his or her own "oppression" and discipline.

How are individuals co-opted for their own oppression? According to Foucault, it is through the *epistemic* (and consequent *practical*) authority that accrues to what I will call "judgments of normality," namely, judgments about what constitute *normal* ways of being human: how much to eat, how to care for the body, what kind of sex to have, how to raise children, what constitutes a "healthy" marriage, and on and on. Of course, it appears that all societies, ancient and modern, have been suffused with "judgments of normality," even if the particular norms, and their particular objects, have differed in

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[1] In *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), Foucault says he uses "bio-power" to mark "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations" which began in the 17th-century. *Id*. at 140.

[2] Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), p. 121.

various respects. Any student of Christianity or Islam or Judaism knows, for example, that the ancient and modern communities in each religious tradition are permeated to the core with "judgments of normality" of the kinds just noted.

So what distinguishes "judgments of normality" in the putatively "modern" era of bio-power? It can not be the emphasis on the regulation of the "body" *per se,* since Foucault's own work—especially in the later volumes on *The History of Sexuality*[3]—makes clear how far back these concerns go.[4] Rather, Foucault's work suggests that what marks judgments of normality in the modern era is that their authority derives from "the human sciences," that is, from claims about how one *ought* to be whose authority is, in the first instance, *epistemic* rather than moral or religious.[5]

Even this, however, does not yet suffice to distinguish the era of bio-power, since, for example, orthodox religious traditions typically ground their moral authority in a kind of *epistemic* authority (recall: "the truth will set you free"), such as knowledge of the divine will in one form or another. What really distinguishes the claim of epistemic authority in the era of bio-power is that the human sciences claim a certain distinctively modern version of such authority: for they present themselves as grounded in claims

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[3] See esp. *The Uses of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*, both trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1988-1990).

[4] Foucault certainly thinks, to be sure, that the techniques for regulating and "disciplining" bodies have grown more sophisticated in the modern era. The classic study is, of course, his *Discipline and Punish,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977).

[5] The best, and probably best-known, examples are *Madness and Civilization*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Pantheon, 1965) and *Discipline and Punish*.

about human beings that emerge from inquiries that adhere to the epistemic strictures of the natural sciences, strictures that emerged with the scientific revolution and triumphed (more or less) with the Enlightenment. The epistemic authority of judgments of normality in the era of bio-power derives from their purportedly *scientific* status, not, e.g., their religious status.

The difficulty, in Foucault's view, is that the epistemic pretense of the human sciences is just that: *pretense*. What Foucault says about "a science as 'dubious' as psychiatry" is meant to apply more generally to the human sciences with which he is concerned: "the epistemological profile of psychiatry is a low one and psychiatric practice is linked with a whole range of institutions, economic requirements, and political issues of social regulation."[6] This remark is revealing about Foucault's argumentative strategy, namely, that he does not (as some writers have done[7]), engage in a frontal attack on the epistemic standing of particular human sciences, but rather explores their history to expose the influence of economic, political and, importantly, moral considerations on their development. This does not, strictly speaking, show these sciences to make false claims; but it aims to raise (hopefully) debilitating doubts about the warrant for those claims.[8] For we know from epistemology that beliefs caused the wrong way are

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[6] "Truth and Power," p. 109.

[7] See, e.g., Adolf Grünbaum, *The Foundations of Psychoanalysis: A Philosophical Critique* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Dominic Murphy, *Psychiatry in the Scientific Image* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006).

[8] See Brian Leiter, "The Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Recovering Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud," in *The Future for Philosophy*, ed. B. Leiter (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), pp. 103-105. Alas, Foucault is extremely unclear about the character and

epistemically suspect, even though they can turn out to be true. If I tell you the second

law of thermodynamics, because it came to me in a dream, you don't have a good reason

to believe it is true since its etiology is not a reliable one.   Those thinkers whom Ricoeur

called members of the "school of suspicion"—namely, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud—all

exploit this simple idea, by adducing suspect etiologies of familiar beliefs about, for

example, morality and religion. And we should see Foucault as belonging to this

tradition when he tries to undermine our confidence in the epistemic status of claims in

the human sciences by showing how the development of those sciences was so often

linked not to relevant "evidence" but to moral, political, and economic interests which

are, prima facie, unreliable ways of discovering truths about human beings.

What links the epistemic pretensions of the human sciences, and their

"discoveries" about what "normal" humans are like, to practical imperatives about *how*

one ought to live is never clearly articulated by Foucault, but the structure of practical

reasoning he (plausibly) supposes to be at work seems to be this: first, agents want to

maximize their flourishing (I'll call this the "principle of prudential reason"); second, the

ultimate import of his skepticism about the human sciences.   Often his position echoes

Rudolf Carnap's on "external" and "internal" questions (in his famous paper on

"Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology," in *Semantics and the Philosophy of Language*,

ed. L. Linsky [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1952]), as when Foucault says he is

only interested in "seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses

which in themselves are neither true or false." "Truth and Power," p. 118.   The

"external" question about whether, e.g., psychiatric claims about human beings are true or

false is a misguided, indeed, unintelligible question. Foucault's willingness to exclude

"non-dubious" sciences like physics and chemistry from his critical analysis belies what I

suspect is a rather deep affinity with the "logical positivist" view of the sciences.

human sciences illuminate how (normal) human beings flourish; consequently, and this is the third claim, agents have prudential reasons to adjust their behavior to comport with the results of the human sciences. "Flourish" here should be understood in a suitably broad sense to encompass many different senses of "living well or happily," while the normality at issue in the second claim about what the human sciences reveal to us is not simply descriptive (e.g., *statistical* normality), but fundamentally *normative*, meaning something akin to "agents who flourish": in other words, the human sciences illuminate the "facts" about what human beings do who "live well." The structure of practical reasoning just described captures, then, the truly pernicious aspect of the modern era of "bio-power": as long as the second proposition (namely, that the human sciences reveal how normal human beings flourish) is *taken to be true*, then the third proposition—the claim that agents have reasons to adjust their behavior to comport with the results of the human sciences--necessarily follows given the plausible (and uncontested, at least by Foucault) assumption that the principle of prudential reason operates. Thus, insofar as the human sciences are accorded epistemic authority, individuals will "police" and regulate themselves to conform to its findings and edicts.

Notice that centralized state power (the "juridical" model of power noted earlier) is hardly irrelevant on this story. As Foucault himself documents in *Madness and Civilization, The Birth of the Clinic, Discipline and Punish,* and elsewhere, the state in the modern era is distinguished by its profound and intimate interest in the character of the populations it rules—their health, their reproductive patterns, their productivity, and on and on. As Foucault writes in an essay on "The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth

Century,"[9] this period witnessed, "[T]he emergence of the health and physical well-being of the population in general as one of the essential objectives of political power. [The question becomes] how to raise the level of health of the social body as a whole." In consequence, we see the state undertaking,

> demographic estimates, the calculation of the pyramid of ages, different life
> expectations and levels of mortality, studies of the reciprocal growth of wealth
> and growth of population, various measures of incitement to marriage and
> procreation, the development of forms of education and professional
> training….The biological traits of a population become relevant factors for
> economic management, and it becomes necessary to organize around them an
> apparatus that will ensure not only their subjection but the constant increase of
> their utility.[10]

Indeed, in *Discipline and Punish,* Foucault says he is exploring "the present scientifico-legal complex from which the power to punish derives its bases, justifications, and rules,"[11] meaning that the state (as the force directly behind the "legal" part of the complex) remains a central actor in this story of oppression in the era of bio-power.

Now while the power of the human sciences derives from a claim in the first instance to *epistemic* (not moral) authority, moral or ethical norms are implicated in three ways in Foucault's picture of how persons become agents of their own oppression. Most importantly, the claim to epistemic authority becomes practically effective only in virtue

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[9] *Power/Knowledge*, p. 277.

[10] *Id*. at 278-279.

[11] *Discipline and Punish*, p. 23.

of the scheme of practical reasoning already described, a scheme which depends, fundamentally, upon an ethical imperative to treat the truth as practically decisive in realizing the agent's good; the purported truths of the human sciences, in turn, simply provide the occasion for an instantiation of that imperative. This point is perhaps worth emphasizing, because Foucault is often associated—indeed, often associated himself— with Nietzsche, yet on this important issue his posture is not at all Nietzschean. For Nietzsche argued—perhaps most famously in the Third Essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality,* but really throughout his corpus[12]--that the truth is often "terrible," and that the "overvaluation" of truth is an expression of asceticism (of life-denial), precisely because what is true is often hostile to flourishing. To be sure, Nietzsche is thinking of very particular truths like: human suffering is both inescapable and utterly meaningless; there is no free will or meaningful control we exercise over the contours of our lives; and ours is a world of wills in endless struggle for dominance and mastery. But the conclusion Nietzsche draws from the nature of these terrible truths is that we should *not* treat what is true as decisive in practical reasoning precisely because it *may* be incompatible with human flourishing: sometimes illusions are essential for life. If Foucault had been more of a Nietzschean, he might have argued *not* that the human sciences lack epistemic authority, but instead that even epistemic authorities sometimes do not deserve to play a decisive role in practical reasoning! It is really very striking that this is *not* Foucault's argumentative strategy.

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[12] See the discussion in my *Nietzsche on Morality* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. __-___.

Ethical norms are implicated in two additional ways in Foucault's story. First, the purported truths of the human sciences (about how normal individuals "flourish") are predicated on implicit and explicit moral views about what constitute "normal" ways of being. I take it that at least part of Foucault's aim is to question these conceptions of "normal flourishing." Finally, a consequence of the epistemic authority accorded particular human sciences is that their claims affect moral attitudes about their subject-matters and, in particular, tend to implicate a conception of the self, both its nature and its (morally) proper governance.[13]

To sum up: Foucault wants to criticize and challenge each of these moral claims: he wants to argue against granting the claims of the human sciences practical authority over our lives (though not because he rejects, as Nietzsche does, the authority of *truth*, but because he rejects the idea that the human sciences have the requisite access to the truth); he wants to challenge the implicitly and explicitly moralized views of normality and normal flourishing; and he wants to call attention to and raise questions about the moral attitudes, and the ethical conception of the self in particular, that emerges from the human sciences. The first challenge seems to me the most inchoate in Foucault, though like the other two it depends crucially on the challenge to the *epistemic* authority of the human sciences.

These concerns are perhaps most vividly illustrated in *Madness and Civilization* and volume one of *The History of Sexuality*, but they permeate all Foucault's works that

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[13] These concerns are suggested, for example, by Foucault's remarks in one of the last interviews he gave before his death: "Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations," in *The Foucault Reader*, pp. 386-387.

involve an historical analysis of institutions.[14]   Let us take *Madness and Civilization* as

illustrative of Foucault's critical practice.[15]   He begins by describing the medieval houses

in which lepers were isolated, but his real point is that, "What doubtless remained longer

than leprosy, and would persist when the [leper] houses had been empty for years, were

the values and images attached to the figure of the leper, as well as the meaning of his

exclusion."[16] In other words, the pathological category became an ethical and social one,

marking a purported *kind* of person, not just physiologically, but morally. So too with the

"poor vagabonds, criminals, and 'deranged minds'"[17] to whom Foucault soon turns: they

too have their own "values and images attached" to them and the "meaning" of their

exclusions must be decoded as well. As he puts it later: "The asylum was substituted for

the [leper] house, in the geography of haunted places as in the landscape of the moral

universe."[18] So one aim of Foucault's work is to bring out the *moral* status of those

condemned and excluded on grounds that were not always explicitly moral, or that

blurred the line between the "moral" and "non-moral" considerations.

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[14] Foucault himself says that "the prison was linked from its beginning to
a project for the transformation of individuals," but in this respect it is no
different from any of the other institutions to which he has turned his attention:
"The prison was meant to be an instrument, comparable with—and no less
perfect than—the school, the barracks, or the hospital, acting with precision upon
its individual subjects." "Prison Talk," in *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 39-40.

[15] In assessing the success of Foucault's critique, we will later examine *The
History of Sexuality*.

[16] *Madness and Civilization*, p. 6.

[17] *Id*. at 7.

[18] *Id*. at 57.

For example, the Parisian "Hôpital Général," which Foucault treats as representative of "the great confinement" of the 1660s (when one out of every 100 Parisians was put away!),[19] had at its official mission "preventing 'mendicancy and idleness as the source of all disorders,'"[20] so that the community, in effect, "acquired an ethical power of segregation, which permitted it to eject, as into another world, all forms of social uselessness."[21] Foucault continues:

> [T]he relation between the practice of confinement and the insistence on work is not defined by economic considerations; far from it. A moral perception sustains and animates it…[T]he origin of poverty was [taken to be] neither scarcity nor unemployment, but 'the weakening of discipline and the relaxation of morals.' The edict [creating the Hôpital] was full of moral denunciations….Hence the Hôpital does not have the appearance of a mere refuge for those whom age, infirmity, or sickness keep from working; it will have not only the aspect of a forced labor camp, but also that of a moral institution responsible for punishing, for correcting a certain moral "abeyance"….The Hôpital Général has an ethical status….
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> [I]t is in this context that the obligation to work assumes its meaning as both ethical exercise and moral guarantee…The prisoner who could and who would work would be released, not so much because he was again useful to society, but because he had again subscribed to the great ethical pact of human

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[19] *Id.* at 38, 45.

[20] *Id.* at 47.

[21] *Id.* at 58.

existence….[T]he very requirement of labor was instituted as an exercise in
moral reform and constraint, which reveals, if not the ultimate meaning, at least
the essential justification of the confinement.

An important phenomenon, this invention of a site of constraint where
morality castigates by means of administrative enforcement….[I]n this great
confinement of the classical age, the essential thing—and the new event—is that
men were confined in cities of pure morality….[22]

The subtext of this historical account is that the underlying *moral* rationale for
confinement is, itself, of dubious merit, but what really matters for Foucault is that this
socio-historical phenomenon was merely a prelude to the modern era of "scientific"
psychiatry. In other words, this spectacle of moral policing under the guise of a hospital
(or medical care) was not a peculiarity of this earlier era alone. Even purportedly great
"medical" reformers of the treatment of mental illness in the late 18th-century like Pinel of
France were still writing: "How necessary it is, in order to forestall hypochondria,
melancholia, or mania, to follow the immutable laws of morality!"[23] As Foucault
explains, "[T]he asylum becomes, in Pinel's hands, an instrument of moral uniformity
and of social denunciation," in which to "guarantee bourgeois morality a universality of
fact and permit it to be imposed as a law upon all forms of insanity." [24] Foucault
continues:

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[22] *Id*. at 58-60.

[23] *Id*. at 197.

[24] *Id*. at 259.

[W]hile Pinel…strongly asserted that his moral action was not necessarily linked to any scientific competence [unlike later practitioners of psychiatry], it was thought, and by the patient first of all, that it was in the esotericism of knowledge, that the doctor had found the power to unravel insanity; and increasingly the patient…would alienate himself in the physician, accepting entirely and in advance all his prestige, submitting from the very first to a will he experienced as magic, and to a science he regarded as prescience and divination…If we wanted to analyze the profound structures of objectivity in the knowledge and practice of nineteenth-century psychiatry from Pinel to Freud, we should have to show in fact that such objectivity was from the start a reification of a magical nature, which could only be accomplished with the complicity of the patient himself, and beginning from a transparent and clear moral practice, gradually forgotten as positivism imposed its myths of scientific objectivity; a practice forgotten in its origins and its meaning, but always used and always present. What we call psychiatric practice is a certain moral tactic contemporary with the end of the eighteenth century, preserved in the rites of asylum life, and overlaid by the myths of positivism.[25]

Only here, towards the end of Foucault's brilliantly evocative history and polemic, do we now see what Foucault has exposed: namely, that moral considerations have driven practices of confinement and regulation throughout the modern era, and they have done so right into the present, but under the guise of an epistemic (more precisely, scientistic [what Foucault means, I take it, by "positivism"]) authority they have not really earned.

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[25] *Id*. at 275-276.

The implicit invitation Foucault presents to the reader is to rethink and resist the conceptions of normality (of sanity and madness, of sexual normalcy and perversion, of criminality and law-abidingness, and so on) that permeate these systems of control.

I began by suggesting that Foucault's work is motivated by its own ethical impulse, namely, to liberate modern individuals from a kind of self-imposed subjugation. At the same time, as we have seen, Foucault wants to indict other ethical norms that he sees playing a role in this subjugation. But the idea of subjugation or oppression is itself a normative one, presupposing that we have a handle on what constitutes wrongful treatment of the individual in virtue of distorting or blocking his flourishing. The conception of *flourishing* that Foucault values, the kind of flourishing that presumably grounds his indignation at the practical authority underwritten by such dubious epistemic credentials, remains, alas, a bit vague. As Michael Walzer, in a highly critical essay, put it: Foucault aims not "for revolution but for local resistance,"[26] i.e., resistance to the conception of "normalcy" put forward by particular human sciences. It is a characterization Foucault effectively endorses:

> The role for theory today seems to me to be just this: not to formulate the global systematic theory which holds everything in place, but to analyse the specificity of mechanisms of power, to locate the connections and extensions, to build little by little strategic knowledge.[27]

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[26] Michael Walzer, "The Politics of Michel Foucault," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. D. Hoy (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p. 55.

[27] "Power and Strategies," in *Power/Knowledge*, p. 145.

"Strategic knowledge" is, in context, clearly knowledge that facilitates "local resistance":

against prisons, psychiatric establishments, the purveyors of sexual norms and

stereotypes—precisely all those whom Foucault, in his actual political practice, resisted.

What "global systematic theory" explains how these all hang together remains somewhat

elusive.

While Foucault lays emphasis on the fact that individuals are complicit in their

own oppression by *accepting* as practically decisive the purported truths of the human

sciences, he certainly does not--despite the rhetoric noted earlier about 'cutting off the

Kind's head' in political theory--absolve centralized state power. For insofar as the

judgments of normality that emerge from the human sciences are given practical authority

over people through institutions—through courts and administrative bodies that deem

people mentally unfit, through psychiatrists that testify in court, and the like—individuals

can be oppressed by those judgments of normality whether or not they, as individuals,

accept the epistemic authority of the human sciences. Despite, then, his skepticism about

juridical and centralized models of power (that he so often associates with Marxism),

Foucault shares with Marxist critics the idea that the flourishing of individuals can be

hostage to ideas and institutions beyond their control.

How seriously should we take Foucault's critique? Foucault himself, it should be

recalled, exempts from his critical gaze non-"dubious" sciences like physics and

chemistry, focusing instead on those human sciences whose "epistemological profile" is

"a low one."[28] But even with respect to the latter, he does not actually argue, as some

have done, for the "lowness" of the epistemological profile, instead calling attention to

the influence of economic, political, and moral considerations on their development. Yet it is now surely a familiar point in post-Kuhnian philosophy of science that the influence of social and historical factors might be compatible with the epistemically special standing of the sciences as long as we can show that epistemically reliable factors are still central to explaining the claims of those sciences.[29] And that possibility is potentially fatal to Foucault's critique.

For recall that central to Foucault's critique is the role that the epistemic pretensions of the sciences play in a structure of practical reasoning which leads agents concerned with their flourishing to become the agents of their own oppression. And the crucial bit of "pretense" is, as we noted earlier, that the human sciences illuminate the truth about how (normal) human beings flourish in virtue of adhering to the epistemic strictures and methodologies of the natural sciences. Recall also that Foucault, unlike Nietzsche, does not contest the practical authority of truth (i.e., the claim of the truth to determine what *ought* to be done); he rather denies that the claims in question are true or have the epistemic warrant that we would expect true claims to have. So the entire Foucauldian project of liberation turns on the epistemic status of the claims of the human sciences. And on this central point, Foucault has, surprisingly, almost nothing to say beyond raising "suspicion". Perhaps *contemporary* medicine and *contemporary* psychiatry have identified *natural kinds*, i.e., real clusters of interconnected pathogenic properties of persons. In that case, Foucault's story is the story of bogus science of the

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[28] "Truth and Power," p. 109.

[29] A classic articulation of this idea is Philip Kitcher, *The Advancement of Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), esp. Ch. 5.

past enlisted on behalf of moral and political objectives, a story whose general outlines have long been familiar, even if Foucault tells striking new aspects of it. On the epistemic standing of the *current* human sciences, all Foucault leaves us with is a suspicion, rather than an argument. Suspicion is, as we have already argued, epistemically important, but it needs to be supplemented with a critique of the truth of the claims at issue.

Even the suspicion is, however, undercut unfortunately by Foucault's sometimes cavalier attitude towards the phenomena in question. Consider the following remarkable passage from *The History of Sexuality* about which Foucault's devoted followers rarely comment:

> One day in 1867, a farm hand from the village of Lapcourt, who was somewhat simple-minded, employed here then there, depending on the season, living hand-to-mouth…was turned in to the authorities. At the border of a field, he had obtained a few caresses from a little girl, just as he had done before and seen done by the village urchins round about him…So he was pointed out by the girl's parents to the mayor of the village, reported by the mayor to the gendarmes, led by the gendarmes to the judge, who indicted him and turned him over first to a doctor, then to two other experts….What is the significant thing about this story? The pettiness of it all; the fact that this everyday occurrence in the life of village sexuality, these inconsequential bucolic pleasures, could become, from a certain time, the object not only of a collective intolerance but of

a judicial action, a medical intervention, a careful clinical examination, and an entire theoretical elaboration.[30]

The same underlying events might, of course, be described rather differently: namely, that up until the time of this incident, pedophilia and child sexual abuse had been routinely tolerated—treated as an "inconsequential bucolic pleasure[]" in Foucault's startling phrase—but gradually people came to realize that "simple-minded" men being masturbated by young girls was not such a good thing (not so "inconsequential"), and thus the modern scientific study of pedophilia, and its harms, commenced. Why we should prefer Foucault's version to the alternative is unclear. Why not say, instead, that in the 19th-century a certain psychological *type* was discovered, namely, the pedophile, and that the harms of pedophilia were also discovered, even if the 19th-century versions of these discoveries have been superseded by a century of investigation? Absent answers to questions like this, Foucault's critical project is in danger.

To be sure, even if Foucault does not himself supply the arguments, the reasons for being skeptical about the epistemic claims of many of the contemporary human sciences have been well-articulated by others.[31] Those who want Foucault's critique to be taken seriously must—perhaps drawing on extant put forward a systematic critique of the *truth* of the conceptions of "normality" at work in the contemporary human sciences, from psychiatry to criminology. Foucault has given us reasons to be suspicious of such claims; now we need to know whether they are true or false.

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[30] *History of Sexuality*, p. 31.

[31] [cite to Rosenberg and Hausman on economics; Murphy again on psychiatry; ____ on criminology]