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FOUCAULT ON SEXUALITY

In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault sets out to attack what, in a celebrated phrase, he calls 'the repressive hypothesis'.[1] According to such a view, modern institutions compel us to pay a price – increasing repression – for the benefits they offer. Civilisation means discipline, and discipline in turn implies control of inner drives, control that to be effective has to be internal. Who says modernity says super-ego. Foucault himself seemed to accept something of a similar view in his earlier writings, seeing modern social life as intrinsically bound up with the rise of 'disciplinary power', characteristic of the prison and the asylum, but also of other organisations, such as business firms, schools or hospitals. Disciplinary power supposedly produced 'docile bodies', controlled and regulated in their activities rather than able spontaneously to act on the promptings of desire.

Power here appeared above all as a constraining force. Yet as Foucault came to appreciate, power is a mobilising phenomenon, not just one which sets limits; and those who are subject to disciplinary power are not at all necessarily docile in their reactions to it. Power, therefore, can be an instrument for the production of pleasure: it does not only stand opposed to it. 'Sexuality' should not be understood only as a drive which social forces have to contain. Rather, it is 'an especially dense transfer point for relations of

power', something which can be harnessed as a focus of social control through the very energy which, infused with power, it generates.

Sex is not driven underground in modern civilisation. On the contrary, it comes to be continually discussed and investigated. It has become part of 'a great sermon', replacing the more ancient tradition of theological preaching. Statements about sexual repression and the sermon of transcendence mutually reinforce one another; the struggle for sexual liberation is part of the self-same apparatus of power that it denounces. Has any other social order, Foucault asks rhetorically, been so persistently and pervasively preoccupied with sex?

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are Foucault's main concern in his encounter with the repressive hypothesis. During this period, sexuality and power became intertwined in several distinct ways. Sexuality was developed *as* a secret, which then had to be endlessly tracked down as well as guarded against. Take the case of masturbation. Whole campaigns were mounted by doctors and educators to lay siege to this dangerous phenomenon and make clear its consequences. So much attention was given to it, however, that we may suspect that the objective was not its elimination; the point was to organise the individual's development, bodily and mentally.

Such was also the case, Foucault continues, with the numerous perversions catalogued by psychiatrists, doctors and others. These diverse forms of aberrant sexuality were both opened to public display and made into principles of classification of individual conduct, personality and self-identity. The effect was not to suppress perversions, but to give them 'an analytical, visible, and permanent reality'; they were 'implanted in bodies, slipped in beneath modes of conduct'. Thus in pre-modern law, sodomy was defined as a prohibited act, but was not a quality or behaviour pattern of an individual. The nineteenth-century homosexual,

however, became 'a personage, a past, a case history' as well as 'a type of life, a life form, a morphology'. 'We must not imagine', in Foucault's words,

> that all these things that were formerly tolerated attracted notice and received a pejorative designation when the time came to give a regulative role to the one type of sexuality that was capable of reproducing labour power and the form of the family . . . It is through the isolation, intensification, and consolidation of peripheral sexualities that the relations of power to sex and pleasure branched out and multiplied, measured the body, and penetrated modes of conduct.[2]

Many traditional cultures and civilisations have fostered arts of erotic sensibility; but only modern Western society has developed a science of sexuality. This has come about, in Foucault's view, through the conjoining of the principle of the confession to the accumulation of knowledge about sex.

Sex becomes in fact the focal point of a modern confessional. The Catholic confessional, Foucault points out, was always a means of regulating the sexual life of believers. It covered far more than only sexual indiscretions, and owning up to such misdemeanours was interpreted by priest and penitent alike in terms of a broad ethical framework. As part of the Counter-Reformation, the Church became more insistent upon regular confession, and the whole process was intensified. Not only acts, but thoughts, reveries and all details concerning sex were to be brought to view and scrutinised. The 'flesh' to which we are heir in Christian doctrine, which comes to include soul and body combined, was the proximate origin of that characteristic modern sexual preoccupation: sexual desire.

Somewhere in the late eighteenth century, confession as penitence became confession as interrogation. It was channelled into diverse discourses – from the case-history and

scientific treatise to scandalous tracts such as the anonymous *My Secret Life*. Sex is a 'secret' created by texts which abjure as well as those which celebrate it. Access to this secret is believed to disclose 'truth': sexuality is fundamental to the 'regime of truth' characteristic of modernity. Confession in its modern sense 'is all those procedures by which the subject is incited to produce a discourse of truth about his sexuality which is capable of having effects on the subject himself'.[3]

Teams of experts, sexologists and assorted specialists thence stand ready to delve into the secret they have helped to create. Sex is endowed with vast causal powers, and seems to have an influence over many diverse actions.[4] The very effort poured into investigation turns sex into something clandestine, ever resistant to easy observation. Like madness, sexuality is not a phenomenon which already exists, awaiting rational analysis and therapeutic correction. Erotic pleasure becomes 'sexuality' as its investigation produces texts, manuals and surveys which distinguish 'normal sexuality' from its pathological domains. The truth and the secret of sex were each established by the pursuit and the making available of such 'findings'.

The study of sex and the creation of discourses about it led in the nineteenth century to the development of various contexts of power-knowledge. One concerned women. Female sexuality was recognised and immediately crushed – treated as the pathological origin of hysteria. Another was to do with children; the 'finding' that children are sexually active was tied to the declaration that the sexuality of children was 'contrary to nature'. A further context concerned marriage and the family. Sex in marriage was to be responsible and self-regulated; not just confined to marriage, but ordered in distinct and specific ways. Contraception was discouraged. Control of family size was supposed to emerge spontaneously from the disciplined pursuit of

pleasure. Finally, a catalogue of perversions was introduced and modes of treatment for them described.

The invention of sexuality, for Foucault, was part of certain distinct processes involved in the formation and consolidation of modern social institutions. Modern states, and modern organisations, depend upon the meticulous control of populations across time and space. Such control was generated by the development of an 'anatamo-politics of the human body' – technologies of bodily management aimed at regulating, but also optimising, the capabilities of the body. 'Anatamo-politics' is in turn one focus of a more broadly based realm of biopower.[5]

The study of sex, Foucault remarks in an interview, is boring. After all, why spin out yet another discourse to add to the multiplicity which already exist? What is interesting is the emergence of an 'apparatus of sexuality', a 'positive economy of the body and pleasure'.[6] Foucault came to concentrate more and more upon this 'apparatus' in relation to the self and his studies of sex in the Classical world help illuminate the issue as he sees it.[7] The Greeks were concerned to foster the 'care of the self', but in a way that was 'diametrically opposed' to the development of the self in the modern social order, which in its extreme guise he sometimes labels the 'Californian cult of the self'. In between these two, again, was the influence of Christianity. In the Ancient world, among the upper class at least, the care of the self was integrated into an ethics of the cultivated, aesthetic existence. To the Greeks, Foucault tells us, food and diet were much more important than sex. Christianity substituted for the Classical view the idea of a self which has to be renounced: the self is something to be deciphered, its truth identified. In the 'Californian cult of the self', 'one is supposed to discover one's true self, to separate it from what might obscure or alienate it, to decipher its truth thanks to psychological or psychoanalytic science'.[8]

Sexuality and institutional change

'Sexuality', as Foucault says, is indeed a term which appears for the first time in the nineteenth century. The word existed in the technical jargon of biology and zoology as early as 1800, but only towards the end of the century did it come to be used widely in something close to the meaning it has for us today – as what the *Oxford English Dictionary* refers to as 'the quality of being sexual or having sex'. The word appears in this sense in a book published in 1889 that was concerned with why women are prone to various illnesses from which men are exempt – something accounted for by women's 'sexuality'.[9] That it was originally connected with attempts to keep feminine sexual activity in check is amply demonstrated in the literature of the era. Sexuality emerged as a source of worry, needing solutions; women who crave sexual pleasure are specifically unnatural. As one medical specialist wrote, 'what is the habitual condition of the man [sexual excitation] is the exception with the woman'.[10]

Sexuality is a social construct, operating within fields of power, not merely a set of biological promptings which either do or do not find direct release. Yet we cannot accept Foucault's thesis that there is more or less a straightforward path of development from a Victorian 'fascination' with sexuality through to more recent times.[11] There are major contrasts between sexuality as disclosed through Victorian medical literature, and effectively marginalised there, and sexuality as an everyday phenomenon of thousands of books, articles and other descriptive sources today. Moreover, the repressions of the Victorian era and after were in some respects all too real, as generations of women above all can attest.[12]

It is difficult, if not impossible, to make sense of these issues if we stay within the overall theoretical position that Foucault developed, in which the only moving forces are

power, discourse and the body. Power moves in mysterious ways in Foucault's writings, and history, as the actively made achievement of human subjects, scarcely exists. Let us therefore accept his arguments about the social origins of sexuality but set them in a different interpretative framework. Foucault puts too much emphasis upon sexuality at the expense of gender. He is silent about the connections of sexuality with romantic love, a phenomenon closely bound up with changes in the family. Moreover, his discussion of the nature of sexuality largely remains at the level of discourse – and rather specific forms of discourse at that. Finally, one must place in question his conception of the self in relation to modernity.

Foucault argues that sexuality in Victorian times was a secret, but an open secret, ceaselessly discussed in different texts and medical sources. The phenomenon of variegated medical debate is important, much for the reasons he gives. Yet it would plainly be a mistake to suppose that sex was widely represented, analysed or surveyed in sources available to the mass of the public. Medical journals and other semi-official publications were accessible only to very few; and until the latter part of the nineteenth century most of the population were not even literate. The confining of sexuality *to* technical arenas of discussion was a mode of *de facto* censorship; this literature was not available to the majority, even of the educated population. Such censorship tangibly affected women more than men. Many women married having virtually no knowledge about sex at all, save that it was to do with the undesirable urges of men, and had to be endured. A mother famously thus says to her daughter, 'After your wedding my dear, unpleasant things will happen to you but take no notice of them, I never did.'[13]

Here is Amber Hollibaugh, a lesbian activist, calling in the 1980s for a 'speak out' for women that will publicly reveal yearnings not yet fully articulated:

> Where are all the women who don't come gently and don't want to; don't know what they like but intend to find out; are the lovers of butch or feminine women; who like fucking men; practise consensual S/M; feel more like faggots than dykes; love dildos, penetration, costumes; like to sweat, talk dirty, see expression of need sweep across their lovers' faces; are confused and need to experiment with their own tentative ideas of passion; think gay male pash is hot?[14]

The fascination with sex that Foucault notes is plainly there in Hollibaugh's ecstatic exhortation; but, on the face of things at least, could anything be more different from the tedious, male-authored medical texts he describes? How have we got from one point to the other over a period of little more than a century?

If we followed Foucault, the answers to these questions would seem rather easy. The Victorian obsession with sex, it could be argued, was eventually brought to a culmination by Freud, who, beginning from a puzzlement about hysterical women, came to see sexuality as the core of all human experience. At about the same juncture, Havelock Ellis and the other sexologists set to work, declaring the pursuit of sexual pleasure on the part of both sexes to be desirable and necessary. From there it is just a few short steps via Kinsey, and Masters and Johnson, to a work such as *Treat Yourself to Sex*, in which the reader is compared sexually to a radio receiver: 'Ask yourself why you have stopped fiddling with the reception. How often have you enjoyed an unexpected programme which you came upon by chance when playing with the knobs?'[15]

Yet things are not so simple. To explain how such changes have come about, we have to move away from an overwhelming emphasis on discourse, and look to factors largely absent from Foucault's analysis. Some concern quite long-term influences, while others are confined to a more recent period.

The long-term trends I shall indicate only briefly, although their overall importance is fundamental since they set the stage for those affecting the later phase. During the nineteenth century, the formation of marriage ties, for most groups in the population, became based on considerations other than judgements of economic value. Notions of romantic love, first of all having their main hold over bourgeois groups, were diffused through much of the social order. 'Romancing' became a synonym for courting, and 'romances' were the first form of literature to reach a mass population. The spread of ideals of romantic love was one factor tending to disentangle the marital bond from wider kinship ties and give it an especial significance. Husbands and wives increasingly became seen as collaborators in a joint emotional enterprise, this having primacy even over their obligations towards their children. The 'home' came into being as a distinct environment set off from work; and, at least in principle, became a place where individuals could expect emotional support, as contrasted with the instrumental character of the work setting. Particularly important for its implications for sexuality, pressures to have large families, characteristic of virtually all pre-modern cultures, gave way to a tendency to limit family size in a rigorous way. Such practice, seemingly an innocent demographic statistic, placed a finger on the historical trigger so far as sexuality was concerned. For the first time, for a mass population of women, sexuality could become separated from a chronic round of pregnancy and childbirth.

The contraction in family size was historically a condition as much as a consequence of the introduction of modern methods of contraception. Birth control, of course, long had its advocates, most of them women, but the family planning movement did not have a widespread influence in most countries until after World War I. A change in official opinion in the UK, until that date often vehemently hostile, was signalled when Lord Dawson, physician to the King,

reluctantly declared in a speech to the Church in 1921: 'Birth control is here to stay. It is an established fact and, for good or evil, has to be accepted . . . No denunciations will abolish it.' His view still upset many. The *Sunday Express* declared in response, 'Lord Dawson must go!'[16]

Effective contraception meant more than an increased capability of limiting pregnancy. In combination with the other influences affecting family size noted above, it signalled a deep transition in personal life. For women – and, in a partly different sense, for men also – sexuality became malleable, open to being shaped in diverse ways, and a potential 'property' of the individual.

Sexuality came into being as part of a progressive differentiation of sex from the exigencies of reproduction. With the further elaboration of reproductive technologies, that differentiation has today become complete. Now that conception can be artificially produced, rather than only artificially inhibited, sexuality is at last fully autonomous. Reproduction can occur in the absence of sexual activity; this is a final 'liberation' for sexuality, which thence can become wholly a quality of individuals and their transactions with one another.

The creation of *plastic sexuality*, severed from its age-old integration with reproduction, kinship and the generations, was the precondition of the sexual revolution of the past several decades. For most women, in most cultures, and throughout most periods of history, sexual pleasure, where possible, was intrinsically bound up with fear – of repetitive pregnancies, and therefore of death, given the substantial proportion of women who perished in childbirth and the very high rates of infant mortality which prevailed. The breaking of these connections was thus a phenomenon with truly radical implications. AIDS, one might say, has reintroduced the connection of sexuality to death, but this is not a reversion to the old situation, because AIDS does not distinguish between the sexes.

The 'sexual revolution' of the past thirty or forty years is not just, or even primarily, a gender-neutral advance in sexual permissiveness. It involves two basic elements. One is a revolution in female sexual autonomy – concentrated in that period, but having antecedents stretching back to the nineteenth century.[17] Its consequences for male sexuality are profound and it is very much of an unfinished revolution. The second element is the flourishing of homosexuality, male and female. Homosexuals of both sexes have staked out new sexual ground well in advance of the more sexually 'orthodox'. Each of these developments has something to do with the sexual libertarianism proclaimed by the social movements of the 1960s, but the contribution of such libertarianism to the emergence of plastic sexuality was neither necessary nor particularly direct. We are dealing here with much more deep-lying, and irreversible, changes than were brought about by such movements, important although they were in facilitating more unfettered discussion of sexuality than previously was possible.

Institutional reflexivity and sexuality

In analysing sexual development, Foucault is surely right to argue that discourse becomes constitutive of the social reality it portrays. Once there is a new terminology for understanding sexuality, ideas, concepts and theories couched in these terms seep into social life itself, and help reorder it. For Foucault, however, this process appears as a fixed and one-way intrusion of 'power-knowledge' into social organisation. Without denying its connectedness to power, we should see the phenomenon rather as one of *institutional reflexivity* and as constantly in motion. It is institutional, because it is a basic structuring element of social activity in modern settings. It is reflexive in the sense

that terms introduced to describe social life routinely enter and transform it – not as a mechanical process, nor necessarily in a controlled way, but because they become part of the frames of action which individuals or groups adopt.

An expansion of institutional reflexivity is a distinctive characteristic of modern societies in the relatively recent period. Increased geographical mobility, the mass media and a host of other factors have undercut elements of tradition in social life which long resisted – or became adapted to – modernity. The continual reflexive incorporation of knowledge not only steps into the breach; it provides precisely a basic impetus to the changes which sweep through personal, as well as global, contexts of action. In the area of sexual discourse, more far-reaching in their effects than the openly propagandist texts advising on the search for sexual pleasure are those reporting on, analysing and commenting about sexuality in practice. The Kinsey Reports, like others following on, aimed to analyse what was going on in a particular region of social activity, as all social research seeks to do. Yet as they disclosed, they also influenced, initiating cycles of debate, reinvestigation and further debate. These debates became part of a wide public domain, but also served to alter lay views of sexual actions and involvements themselves. No doubt the 'scientific' cast of such investigations helps neutralise moral uneasiness about the propriety of particular sexual practices. Far more importantly, however, the rise of such researches signals, and contributes to, an accelerating reflexivity on the level of ordinary, everyday sexual practices.

In my opinion, all this has little to do with the confessional, even in the very general sense of that term used by Foucault. Foucault's discussion of this topic, thought-provoking though it is, simply seems mistaken. Therapy and counselling, including psychoanalysis, we may agree, become increasingly prominent with the maturation of modern societies. Their centrality, though, is not a result of

the fact that, as Foucault puts it, they provide 'regulated procedures for the confession of sex'.[18] Even if we consider only psychoanalysis, comparison with the confessional is too forced to be convincing. In the confessional it is assumed that the individual is readily able to provide the information required. Psychoanalysis, however, supposes that emotional blockages, deriving from the past, inhibit an individual's self-understanding and autonomy of action.[19]

Foucault's interpretation of the development of the self in modern societies should also be placed in question in a rather basic way. Instead of seeing the self as constructed by a specific 'technology', we should recognise that self-identity becomes particularly problematic in modern social life, particularly in the very recent era. Fundamental features of a society of high reflexivity are the 'open' character of self-identity and the reflexive nature of the body. For women struggling to break free from pre-existing gender roles, the question 'Who am I?' – which Betty Frieden labelled 'the problem that has no name'[20] – comes to the surface with particular intensity. Much the same is true for homosexuals, male and female, who contest dominant heterosexual stereotypes. The question is one of sexual identity, but not only this. The self today is for everyone a reflexive project – a more or less continuous interrogation of past, present and future.[21] It is a project carried on amid a profusion of reflexive resources: therapy and self-help manuals of all kinds, television programmes and magazine articles.

Against this backdrop, we can interpret Freud's contribution to modern culture in a different light from Foucault. The importance of Freud was not that he gave the modern preoccupation with sex its most cogent formulation. Rather, Freud disclosed the connections between sexuality and self-identity when they were still entirely obscure and at the same time showed those connections to be problematic. Psychoanalysis has its origins in the medical treatment of

behaviour pathologies, and was seen by Freud as a method of combating neurosis. It is understood in this light by many of its practitioners to this day, as are most other forms of therapy it has helped to inspire. Psychoanalysis may cure neuroses – although its success in this respect is debatable. Its specific significance, however, is that it provides a setting, and a rich fund of theoretical and conceptual resources, for the creation of a reflexively ordered narrative of self. In a therapeutic situation, whether of a classical psychoanalytic type or not, individuals are able (in principle) to bring their past 'into line' with exigencies of the present, consolidating an emotional story-line with which they feel relatively content.

What applies to self applies to body. The body, plainly enough, is in some sense – yet to be determined – the domain of sexuality. Like sexuality, and the self, it is today heavily infused with reflexivity. The body has always been adorned, cosseted and, sometimes, in the pursuit of higher ideals, mutilated or starved. What explains, however, our distinctive concerns with bodily appearance and control today, which differ in certain obvious ways from those more traditional preoccupations? Foucault has an answer, and it is one which brings in sexuality. Modern societies, he says, in specific contrast to the pre-modern world, depend upon the generating of biopower. Yet this is at most a half-truth. The body becomes a focus of administrative power, to be sure. But, more than this, it becomes a visible carrier of self-identity and is increasingly integrated into life-style decisions which an individual makes.

The reflexivity of the body accelerates in a fundamental way with the invention of diet in its modern meaning – different, of course, from the Ancient one – something that, as a mass phenomenon, dates from no earlier than several decades ago. Diet is linked to the introduction of a 'science' of nutrition, and thus to administrative power in Foucault's sense; but it also places responsibility for the development

and appearance of the body squarely in the hands of its possessor. What an individual eats, even among the more materially deprived, becomes a reflexively infused question of dietary selection. *Everyone* today in the developed countries, apart from the very poor, is 'on a diet'. With the increased efficiency of global markets, not only is food abundant, but a diversity of foodstuffs is available for the consumer all year round. In these circumstances, what one eats is a life-style choice, influenced by, and constructed through, vast numbers of cookbooks, popular medical tracts, nutritional guides and so forth. Is it any wonder that eating disorders have replaced hysteria as the pathologies of our age? Is it any wonder that such disorders mostly affect women, particularly young women? For diet connects physical appearance, self-identity and sexuality in the context of social changes with which individuals struggle to cope. Emaciated bodies today no longer bear witness to ecstatic devotion, but to the intensity of this secular battle.

The decline of perversion

What, though, should we make of the decline of 'perversion'? How can it be that sexual actions that once were so severely condemned, and sometimes remain formally illegal, are now very widely practised, and in many circles actively fostered? Once more, it is fairly easy to trace out the surface story. The sexologists, as well as Freud and at least some of his more heterodox followers, largely subverted the moral overtones of the notion of perversion. Freud's much-debated *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, first published in 1905, sought to demonstrate that the sexual traits associated with perversions, far from being restricted to small categories of abnormal people, are qualities common to the sexuality of everyone. Hence, Freud concluded, it is

'inappropriate to use the word perversion as a term of reproach'.[22] Havelock Ellis similarly declared the term unacceptable, substituting for it 'sexual deviation'.

At a subsequent date, it might be argued, interest groups and movements began actively claiming social acceptance and legal legitimacy for homosexuality, contesting even the terminology of deviation. Thus, for example, in the US groups such as the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis were set up as the high tide of McCarthyism receded. The subsequent creation of large gay communities provided for an efflorescence of new groups and associations, many promoting minority sexual tastes. The battle to secure public tolerance for homosexuality led other organisations concerned with promoting sexual pluralism to 'come out'. As Jeffrey Weeks puts it:

> There no longer appears to be a great continent of normality surrounded by small islands of disorder. Instead we can now witness clusters of islands, great and small . . . New categories and erotic minorities have emerged. Older ones have experienced a process of subdivision as specialised tastes, specific aptitudes and needs become the basis for proliferating sexual identities.[23]

Expressed in another way, sexual diversity, although still regarded by many hostile groups as perversion, has moved out of Freud's case-history notebooks into the everyday social world.

Seen in these terms, the decline of perversion can be understood as a partly successful battle over rights of self-expression in the context of the liberal democratic state. Victories have been won, but the confrontations continue, and freedoms that have been achieved could still plausibly be swept away on a reactionary tide. Homosexuals still face deeply entrenched prejudice and, quite commonly, open violence. Their emancipatory struggles

encounter resistances perhaps as deep as those that continue to obstruct women's access to social and economic equality.

There is no reason to doubt such an interpretation. Yet there is again another way of looking at things, which suggests that the incipient replacement of perversion by pluralism is part of a broad-based set of changes integral to the expansion of modernity. Modernity is associated with the socialisation of the natural world – the progressive replacement of structures and events that were external parameters of human activity by socially organised processes. Not only social life itself, but what used to be 'nature' becomes dominated by socially organised systems.[24] Reproduction was once part of nature, and heterosexual activity was inevitably its focal point. Once sexuality has become an 'integral' component of social relations, as a result of changes already discussed, heterosexuality is no longer a standard by which everything else is judged. We have not yet reached a stage in which heterosexuality is accepted as only one taste among others, but such is the implication of the socialisation of reproduction.

This view of the decline of perversion is not inconsistent with the other view, for tolerance always has to be fought for in the public domain. It provides, however, a more structural interpretation of the phenomenon, an interpretation in which the emergence of plastic sexuality has a prime place. I shall have a good deal more to say about plastic sexuality in what follows. But first of all I turn to what Foucault specifically neglects: the nature of love and, in particular, the rise of ideals of romantic love. The transmutation of love is as much a phenomenon of modernity as is the emergence of sexuality; and it connects in an immediate way with issues of reflexivity and self-identity.

NOTES

1 *The History of Sexuality* is in three volumes, of which vol. 1: *An Introduction*, Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1981, is by far the most relevant here.
2 Ibid., pp. 47–8.
3 Michel Foucault: 'The confession of the flesh', in Colin Gordon: *Michel Foucault: Power/Knowledge*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester, 1980, pp. 215–16.
4 Michel Foucault: 'Technologies of the self', in Luther H. Martin et al.: *Technologies of the Self*, London: Tavistock, 1988. 'Unlike other interdictions, sexual interdictions are constantly connected with the obligation to tell the truth about oneself' (p. 16).
5 Foucault: *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, p. 142.
6 Foucault: 'The confession of the flesh'.
7 Michel Foucault: Preface to *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 2: *The Use of Pleasure*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987.
8 Michel Foucault: 'On the genealogy of ethics: an overview of work in progress', in Paul Rabinow: *The Foucault Reader*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986, p. 362. For the best secondary discussion of Foucault and the self, see Lois McNay: *Foucault and Feminism*, Cambridge: Polity, 1992.
9 Stephen Heath: *The Sexual Fix*, London: Macmillan, 1982, pp. 7–16.
10 Quoted in ibid., p. 17.
11 For one version of such a view, see Heath, *The Sexual Fix*.
12 Lawrence Stone: 'Passionate attachments in the West in historical perspective', in William Gaylin and Ethel Person: *Passionate Attachments*, New York: Free Press, 1988. There have been many discussions of the 'repressive hypothesis'. See, for example, Peter Gay: *The Bourgeois Experience*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, vol. 1, 1984; vol. 2, 1986. Cf. also James MaHood and Kristine Wenburg: *The Mosher Survey*, New York: Arno, 1980, which concerns a study of forty-five Victorian women, carried out by Celia Mosher. Thirty-four per cent of her respondents said they 'always' or 'usually' experienced orgasm in sexual relations, a rate which compares favourably with the Kinsey Report on women. The extraordinary work by Ronald Hyam: *Empire and Sexuality*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990, demonstrates

that 'Victorianism' cannot be understood if limited to Britain. 'Repression' at home went along with widespread sexual licence in the imperial domains – on the part of the male colonisers.

13 Quoted in Carol Adams: *Ordinary Lives*, London: Virago, 1982, p. 129.

14 Amber Hollibaugh: 'Desire for the future: radical hope in passion and pleasure', in Carole S. Vance: *Pleasure and Danger. Exploring Female Sexuality*, London: Routledge, 1984, p. 403.

15 Paul Brown and Carolyn Faulder: *Treat Yourself to Sex*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979, p. 35.

16 Quoted in Adams: *Ordinary Lives*, p. 138.

17 This point is developed in some detail in Barbara Ehrenreich et al.: *Re-making Love*, London: Fontana, 1987.

18 Foucault: 'The confession of the flesh'.

19 Jacques-Alain Miller, contribution to Foucault: 'The confession of the flesh'. See also Mark Cousins and Athar Hussain: *Michel Foucault*, London: Macmillan, 1984, pp. 212–15.

20 Betty Frieden: *The Feminine Mystique*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965.

21 Anthony Giddens: *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Cambridge: Polity, 1991.

22 Sigmund Freud: 'The sexual aberrations', in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Standard Edition, London: Hogarth, 1953, p. 160.

23 Jeffrey Weeks: *Sexuality*, London: Tavistock, 1986, ch. 4.

24 Giddens: *Modernity and Self-Identity*.