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It pays to recall that [Foucault] presents [biopower] in the context of a critique of the thematic of sexual repression and liberation. Foucault's aim was to counter a Freudo-Marxist type of discourse, to show how a certain idea of 'the politics of life' rests on misrecognizing the way in which power is exercised over life and its 'liberation'. It is a paradoxical thing to want to invert Foucault's polemical dispositif in order to assert the vitalist rootedness of politics.

--Jacques Rancière¹

Michel Foucault's *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978-1979* supports Rancière's interpretation² but a bridge still needs to be built between the appropriate place of life in Foucault and his critique of Freud. I suggest that this gap in Foucault's theory on bio-power can be closed by tracing the influence of Georges Canguilhem, his dissertation director. According to Foucault, Canguilhem's work is the key to understanding everything from psychoanalysis to Marxism because it examines "the relation between science of life and vitalism."³ Canguilhem's analysis shows how life sciences develop within a culture that subscribes to the notion that the "speaking true" about life is possible.⁴ He, of course, resists this philosophy by asserting that neither physiology nor biology can determine norms about life. That falls within the sphere of politics.⁵ Foucault builds on Canguilhem's ideas and explores, as Rancière notes, how politics produces certain "truths" about life. Foucauldian biopolitics examines how modern systems of government endorse particular truths about life because they work to control and regulate the population.

If the speaking true about life is called into question, then so is the talking cure. The truth will not set you free. It is, rather, a means to control the lives of individuals and the population at large. The focus on the

regulation of life marks Foucault's departure from the two main forms of attack against Freud. One employs the phallogocentric charge, as French feminists from Simone De Beauvoir to Luce Irigaray have done, to criticize psychoanalysis.⁶ While agreeing that Freud's model makes female sexual pleasure a problem, Foucault's critique of Freud does not highlight the privilege of the male so much as the privilege of life that is integral to Foucault's conception of bio-power. Profiles of the frigid wife, the woman with a masculinity complex, and even the normal woman provide examples of male bias as much as Foucault's notion of bio-power. Keeping women in a constant and almost impossible battle for normalcy in their daily lives is a greater display of power than the old model of sovereign power that evinces power through death. The Foucauldian critique of psychoanalysis also differs from the pseudo-science charge—such as the one offered by his mentor, Georges Canguilhem, that psychoanalysis does not meet the rigors of genuine science.⁷ Foucault's work, in contrast, allows us to see what is at stake when people argue about whether psychoanalysis is a science or not. The questions Foucault draws out are: Why is it important to be considered a science in modern society? Why is scientific truth so valuable?⁸ Foucault's answers to these questions are tied to bio-power. The "truth" of science is privileged because it effectively disseminates specific norms about the body, which help to regulate the individual and the population at large. For Foucault, then, science obscures its own creation of norms by making them seem to be natural truths.

Foucault's History of Science: Revisiting Canguilhem

The commentary on Foucault's attitude towards sexual practices—the subject matter at the center of, arguably, his most famous work—tends to focus on his personal biography and ranges from Arnold Davidson who remembers that Foucault thought sex was actually quite boring⁹ to Mark Poster who seems to hint that this interest is in part fueled by a similarity between his own sexual lifestyle and that of the Greeks.¹⁰ Much less attention is paid, however, to the role that science plays within his work. To understand Foucault's reflection on the science of sexuality, it is necessary to return to the influence of his mentor, Georges Canguilhem.¹¹

Foucault's project exhibits the telltale signs of an outgrowth from his teacher's work. As with any good pupil, the influence of his teacher can be seen even as he strives to carve out a place for himself. I will show that Foucault's thesis about bio-power borrows many elements from Canguilhem while reaching an important and different conclusion. Foucault gained a biological history of the normal in contrast with the abnormal and the emergence of the concept "pathological" from Canguilhem. Furthermore, they both argue that the normal is identified with life. While Canguilhem fights for a scientific discourse that defines norms in relation to life, Foucault

suggests that defining norms in relation to life works in conjunction with bio-power.

In the *Normal and the Pathological*, Canguilhem explained that before the discovery of biological error, the normal and the abnormal were thought to be two different states with porous boundaries. Disease was the measuring stick for the healthy.¹² Those who were healthy could only recognize it in contrast to unhealthy states that they saw in others or experienced in themselves. The emergence of the concept of biological error positioned the normal as opposite and wholly other to the pathological. One who is abnormal cannot tolerate disease.¹³ In contrast, the abnormal were defined as essentially defective. Those who are truly diseased are not just in a momentary lapse of illness but have an endemic flaw. They are pathological. Canguilhem could foresee the dangers associated with the latter view. Fearing that the efforts to “help” those with biological errors would devolve into a genetic inquisition, he gave an account that would be echoed by Foucault. Canguilhem states: “At the beginning of this dream we have the generous ambition to spare innocent and impotent living beings the atrocious burden of producing errors of life. At the end there are the gene police, clad in the geneticists’ science.”¹⁴ He mounted a resistance to this nightmare scenario by suggesting that life should set the standards for normalcy, proposing, instead, that normal and healthy should be thought in terms of the ability to adapt to the changing conditions in the environment or, in short, life. He believed that:

[F]or the living being life is not a monotonous deduction, a rectilinear movement, it ignores geometrical rigidity, it is discussion or explanation (what Goldstein calls *Auseinandersetzung*) with an environment where there are leaks, holes, escapes and unexpected resistances.¹⁵

Even if someone does not have, for example, two kidneys¹⁶, this does not mean that she should be considered abnormal. She does have to be more diligent about the health of her remaining kidney than those who have two. However, if she is able to survive within her environment, Canguilhem believes that she should be considered normal so long as her state of health does not prohibit her from adapting to her environment. It is her ability to overcome the conditions that might put her health in danger and still live that make her normal. Furthermore, Canguilhem points out the terrible consequences of trying to eliminate biological error while suggesting that even those who do not have perfect health should be allowed to live.

Foucault develops his premise of bio-power in contrast with the “right to *take* life or *let* live.”¹⁷ Through bio-power, he argues that there has been a shift in how people are subjected to power. The full force of power was once shown by taking someone’s life, but now, power is more effective and forceful by letting people live. In so doing, she could be continually subject

to the power with the help of normalizing structures. As Foucault states in *The Abnormal*, "The unlimited etiological power of sexuality at the level of the body and illness is one of the most constant themes not only in the texts of this new medical ethics but also in the most serious works of pathology."¹⁸ Foucault did not believe, unlike Canguilhem, that the gene police—with their ability to exterminate life—were the ones invested with the most power over life. Life can be more effectively and thoroughly controlled and regulated by norms that were sanctioned by qualified experts with scientific backgrounds. According to Foucault, it is precisely because normalcy is synonymous with sustaining life that police of all stripes are integrated within the state and our everyday lives.¹⁹ While Canguilhem worried about the possible deductive power that would be expressed by not letting the abnormal live, Foucault turned his attention to the ways in which normalizing power relied upon the decree to let live. The normalizing police could be clad as geneticists, biologists, or psychoanalysts—all sorts of scientists.

To Foucault, all these scientists had at least one thing in common. They sought to locate the normal and the pathological. Once that was done, one could be made ever more aware of one's relationship to the normal. Foucault seems to suggest that the gap between the normal and abnormal was no less wide with psychoanalysis than with genetics or biology. What distinguishes Canguilhem from his famous pupil is that he does not think that the normal and the pathological are strictly cultural or scientific categories. Canguilhem makes use of value-orientation (normativité) within his work while Foucault follows his suspicions around the normative to critique human sciences.²⁰ In other words, Canguilhem maintains that there are both cultural and scientific norms. Foucault's theories, on the other hand, assert that norms are dictated by society and those culturally created norms use science to support them. While Canguilhem believed that science could reveal truths divorced from the forces of society, Foucault maintains that these norms can be traced back to instantiations of truth that support particular power structures.

Their different approaches to science become clearer when looking at their particular views of psychoanalysis. Despite being critical of psychoanalysis, Foucault did not reproach it for being less than any other science. Foucault could even be interpreted as suggesting that psychoanalysis worked to make Canguilhem's nightmare less viable and necessary. It seems that Foucault was more willing to give Freud credit for at least suggesting another way to conceptualize the normal and abnormal. Although Freud does not break with normalizing structures, his vision responded to the concept of biological error by giving an alternative means to help the sick than what Canguilhem thought would be proposed. Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg note:

In breaking the link between pathology and heredity, in asserting that the division between the normal and the

abnormal was not biological, and that it ran through each individual, in its conception of the unconscious, which challenged the claim of consciousness to be the essence of our human being, psychoanalysis had a liberating role to play at its inception.²¹

Psychoanalysis did offer another way of thinking and a more palatable method of dealing with the abnormal than what might be suggested by biologists.

Foucault understood how psychoanalysis could be considered a valuable discourse while still finding the need to question the discipline. This attitude falls in line with the notion that all scientific truth carried along with it hidden dangers, whether they came from psychoanalysis or another field of science. I suggest, however, that Canguilhem was a much harsher critic of psychoanalysis because he believed in the possible—not guaranteed—objectivity of science. Nikolas Rose explains that: “Georges Canguilhem ... argued that scientific knowledges may not be true, but they were truthful, veridical, that is to say they were internally organized around a norm of truth and error, and through a constant attention to the issue of error, they subjected themselves to critical correction.”²² In a sense, science for Canguilhem could be objective about itself. The construction of science allowed room for error while building mechanisms to recognize and correct it.

Canguilhem deemed psychoanalysis, on the other hand, to be without methods for determining truth or error because it dealt with unstable material and produced questionable results. I should note that Canguilhem did not see a methodological distinction between areas of psychology. He states that: “In spite of appearances, it is by object rather than its method that psychology is called clinical, psychoanalytic, social, and ethnological. All these adjectives are indicative of a single and same object of study: Man, talkative or taciturn, sociable or unsociable.”²³ Therefore, when he makes remarks against psychology, he does the same for psychoanalysis as part of a group of “knowledges that the French tend to call simply ‘psy’.”²⁴ Canguilhem adds:

In fact, in many works of psychology, one gets the impression that they are a mix of a philosophy without rigor, an ethics without exigency, and a medicine without control; philosophy without rigor, because psychology is eclectic in the pretext of objectivity; an ethics without exigency, because psychology makes an uncritical correspondence between ethnological experiments and the confessor, the educator, the chief, the judge, etc; a medicine without control, since it studies the three most unintelligible and the least curable sorts of illnesses—

illnesses of the skin, of the nerves, and of the mental—the last two have always supplied psychology its observation and hypotheses.²⁵

Canguilhem doubts if psychology and psychoanalysis can be objective about itself or its research. Hence, he doubts their credibility. Because their data come from the most precarious objects for study, he seems unwilling to grant them the same type of merit he is able to grant other scientists. Only those who can maintain high standards of investigation and information gathering will be bestowed with the label of “science.” And he seems to intimate that no field of psychology can pass muster.

Foucault uses a different angle to undermine psychoanalysis. Because he was aware that many in the profession believed that psychiatry could be objective and scientific credible,²⁶ he attacked the grounds of science. In an ambivalent move that could be read as both affirming or denying the merits of psychoanalysis,²⁷ Foucault recognizes how psychoanalysis is made to be level with other sciences. The rise of psychiatric power means that “... the doctor is competent, he knows the diseases and the patients, he possesses a scientific knowledge which is of the same type as that of the chemist or the biologist...”²⁸ This could either mean that it should be given the same status as other sciences or that all sciences were suspect. Of course, the two are not mutually exclusive. Rose names thinkers such as Canguilhem who would reject the equation of psychoanalysis with science, but he also gives justifications for the unfounded inferiority of psychoanalysis among sciences. He suggests that “scientists seek to conjure up in reality—through their observations, measurements, inscriptions and so forth, the things they have already made conjured up in thought—in their concepts, theories and explanatory forms.”²⁹ Scientists of all varieties labor to reaffirm their ideas through their experiments. The ideas come first. Studies are motivated by the scientists’ desire to realize their preconceived ideas. The purpose of the investigations is to prove those ideas right. Freud may diagnose his patients according to his own predetermined philosophy but this is not so different from other scientific theories.

Further evidence that the gulf of objectivity which separates psychiatry from other sciences does not exist, Foucault states:

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.³⁰

Objectivity is nothing more than the patient's willingness to accept that the doctor has more knowledge than the patient and, therefore, knows the right course of action to take. Being placed in the position of authority by the patient gives the doctor and the theories prescribed an appearance of objectivity. I suggest that this is as much the case with other sciences as it is with psychiatry. In many cases, the patient simply takes the medicine that is prescribed by the doctor without questioning what the medication is. More to the point, in doing this, the patient does not question the doctor. The doctor is allowed to assume control over the patient's body. Stated otherwise, a power relationship manifests between doctor and patient.³¹ This partnership, for Foucault, is indicative of how power hinges on life. Patients listen to the advice of doctors because they think their lives depend upon it.

As Milchman and Rosenberg explain, bio-power functions in two main ways. "In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, according to Foucault, bio-power will assume the form of ... a bio-politics of populations, and become the hallmark of the power relations that shape the contemporary world."³² I will now focus on how bio-politics informed not only psychoanalysis but also biology. Foucault describes biopolitics as being "... focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary."³³ In order to argue that life is privileged, Foucault needs to find an emerging pattern; and he does in the sciences. It is as follows. Locate the normal and the pathological. Let the abnormal live and heighten awareness of it. Foucault saw that psychoanalysis executed this plan just as well as biology. So when Freud appeals to anatomical science for support of his own theories, he inevitably finds it because both sciences operate as part of bio-power. They depend on what Dianna Taylor calls "normalizing norms."³⁴

To understand how the conceptual formation of sexuality in psychoanalysis uses biology as a crutch, I will give a summary of the thoughts of the thinker who Foucault targets—Sigmund Freud. Despite Dreyfus and Rabinow's remarks that "Foucault points out that particularly in its early days, whatever its normalizing function later on, psychoanalysis demonstrated a persistent and courageous resistance to all theories of hereditary degeneracy,"³⁵ I argue that Freud still depends upon a normalized body to make his theories of sexuality work. Showing the limitations of dealing with sexual pathology from a biological point of view enables Freud to suggest that psychoanalysis has something to offer in terms of study and treatment. However, he does not dismiss biology as irrelevant. Psychoanalysis presents a different 'solution' to pathology—or means to normalize—but it continues to use anatomy as the starting point of the "problem." Although Freud claims in "Femininity" that anatomical science cannot give us a clear distinction between the two sexes because humans

have both male and female apparatus in varying degrees,³⁶ his understanding of pathologies particular to women is connected to the biologically-determined body. But Freud claims that there is a psychological reaction to anatomy that reveals a difference between the formation of men and women. "The discovery that she is castrated is a turning-point in a girl's growth."³⁷ Freud further explains that "the castration complex is ... started by the sight of genitals of the other sex. They at once notice the difference and, it must be admitted, its significance too."³⁸ When she sees that little boys have penises, the little girl is struck with a sense of inferiority because she is lacking something that is present in another.

Because bio-power is constituted by a network of normalizing structures, psychoanalysis and biology are not only connected to each other. Laying out Freud's foundation for a psychoanalytic diagnosis of women not only has ramifications for biology but also for the family structure.³⁹ Although it is not terribly original to lambaste psychoanalysis "...for giving ... sexuality a particular form and for valorizing in its theory one particular type of domestic arrangement: Daddy, Mummy and baby,"⁴⁰ what I will show later is that Foucault's theories draw a connection between the family and bio-power as well—revealing the expansiveness of the network of power. Freud's use of biology leads to a discussion of the family. Freud first locates family trouble between the daughter and the mother. She blames her mother for having castrated her and placed her in a disadvantageous position.⁴¹ But when she slowly realizes that her mother, too, is without a penis, she begins to have even stronger feelings of hostility towards her mother. Furthermore, this hostile relationship between daughter and mother often continues until the woman is able to produce a penis of her own in the form of a baby boy.⁴² Because women have never been able to overcome their penis-envy, their wish can only be fulfilled when they give birth to a baby boy. The baby boy represents the ability of the woman to not only have but create a penis herself while at the same time opening up a relationship, which was once troubled, with her own mother.

Her abnormal relationship with her father can also be traced back to the lack of a penis. The pre-Oedipal stage (attachment to the mother) that little girls go through on their way to the Oedipus stage (attachment to the parent of the opposite sex, which is the father for the little girl) is a major difference that contributes to the pathological feelings women have towards their fathers.⁴³ This inappropriate intimacy a woman feels toward her father as a result of the Oedipus complex also manifests itself through seduction fantasies. Freud reports:

In the period in which the main interest was directed to discovering infantile sexual traumas, almost all my women patients told me that they had been seduced by their father. I was driven to recognize in the end that these reports were untrue and ... are derived from phantasies and not from real occurrences. It was only later that I was able to recognize in this

phantasy of being seduced by the father the expression of the typical Oedipus complex in women.⁴⁴

The female version of the Oedipus complex translates into a memory of being seduced by her father. As a woman, she realizes that a sexual relationship with her father is taboo but because she has never been able to exit the Oedipus stage, she is not able to move past these imagined scenes lodged in her memory. They are never fully resolved because the woman, lacking a penis, has no impetus to leave the Oedipus stage.

These diagnoses together give a sketch of how easily a little girl can develop tensions with her parents because of her anatomy. Yet Freud does hold out hope that a little girl can turn into a “normal” woman, as difficult as the battle may be. She may still learn how to carve out a space for herself within her own family. While Freud’s logic concludes that the construction of a family stems from an acceptance of her sex, Foucault will argue that these instructions come from a family unit that is constituted through bio-power.

But even after his analysis of the importance of the sexual organs in forming sexuality (both normal and pathological), Freud does consider the inverse possibility. He concedes that children could learn how to choose the correct partner by observing the interaction of their parents. In other words, they could arrive at normalcy by mimicking what happens within their families:

We might suppose in addition that in this [attraction to the opposite sex] the children are following the pointer given them by the sexual preference of their parents. But we are not going to find things so easy; we scarcely know whether we are to believe seriously in the power of which poets talk so much and with such enthusiasm but which cannot be further dissected analytically.⁴⁵

Freud only briefly entertains this claim but it is precisely this inverse argument that Foucault will use to challenge him.

Foucault’s Problematization of Freud’s Female Sexuality

If Freud could be persuaded to entertain the idea that sexuality is influenced not only by biology but also the family unit, perhaps there is a gateway to revealing another, even greater force behind our understanding of sex; one that can encapsulate them all. As Deleuze and Guattari note “... the familial determinations become the applications of the social axiomatic.”⁴⁶ Familial relationships inform other social structures, of which science is one. “Everything is reduced to the father-mother-child triangle...”⁴⁷ And the continued resonance that familial relationships have within society is due to the correlations with bio-power. The proposed

concept of sex goes full circle as it reinforces the ideal of the family—sex is a tool for procreation alone. This type of reasoning works towards propagation, which is central to bio-politics.

Unlike Freud, Foucault does not attach an immediate significance to the little boy's sex, the penis. Our understanding of our sex comes after we learn about sexuality through the family structure. But the steadiness of this family structure did not occur by happenstance. He claims that the traditional family unit is supported because it has the power to shape our concepts of sex and reproduce the family unit. In other words, it is shaped by norms and is part of the matrix of power that perpetuates sexual norms with the aim of regulating both the individual and the population. He sees how generation after generation, the family instills a belief that there is a function of sex from which we should not deviate. Simply put, these norms are not created. They are a given. We are convinced that something greater—biology, Nature, God—has determined the purpose of our sex and the structure that is built around it. In other words, our sexual organs are already laden with purpose. The theory that Foucault challenges is that the family organically arises from the purpose of sex; and therefore, sex functions as the foundation of the traditional family. Foucault, to the contrary, demonstrates that psychoanalysis does not question the formation of the family because to do so would also lead to the unraveling of psychoanalysis. Deleuze and Guattari state that: "This is what Foucault has shown in his very fine analysis: the familialism inherent in psychoanalysis doesn't so much destroy classical psychiatry as shine forth as the latter's crowning achievement."⁴⁸ If the traditional family structure stays intact, so does the foundation of psychoanalysis.

Foucault resisted the notion that sexual organs were the point of departure for the development of sexuality. Instead, he states:

It is precisely this idea of sex *in itself* that we cannot accept without examination. Is 'sex' really the anchorage point that supports the manifestations of sexuality, or is it not rather a complex idea that was formed inside the deployment of sexuality? In any case, one could show how this idea of sex took form in the different strategies of power and the definite role it played therein.⁴⁹

If, for Freud, the knowledge of one's sex is necessary to understand one's sexuality, then Foucault would argue that sex is inscribed within a discourse of sexuality. Rather than accepting that our sexual organs are necessarily attached to their functional value, he asks us to divorce an analysis of sexuality from anatomy, for example. In other words, he wants to challenge the primacy of sexual functions. He anticipated that others would object to his insistence that sex could find meaning from another source besides anatomical purposes. To them, this would be a sexuality that was devoid of

a sex.⁵⁰ Although he understood that most would assign sexuality (that of a man, that of a woman) depending on what sexual organ one had, he believed that the codified sexuality was imposed on sex. Foucault believes that one can have an understanding of not only sexuality but of one's role within the established family unit before having any real knowledge of one's sexual organs or their functions. He further adds that it is the pressure to conform to familial ideals that gives credence to pathologies attributed to women.

Foucault will also attack *sex in itself* as being too simplistic. For him, sex is constructed to have multiple meanings that reinforce strategies of power aimed at reproduction, which reinforces the power of the family unit that, in turn, helps the proliferation of the population. He will argue that any understanding of sex that strays from the aims of the family will be labeled pathological. On the outskirts of this normal concept of sex lies pleasure as a value of sex.⁵¹

Thus, in the process of hysterization of women, 'sex' was defined in three ways; as that which belongs in common to men and women; as that which belongs, *par excellence*, to men, and hence is lacking in women; but at the same time, as that which by itself constitutes woman's body, ordering it wholly in terms of the functions of reproduction and keeping it in constant agitation through the effects of that very function.⁵²

Depending upon which pathology, the label assigned to a woman would change but two things would remain constant. Women are expected to deny pleasure and have procreation as the main function of their sex. This, in turn, reproduces the family unit that had taught them how their sex was supposed to function according to biology. The three definitions of sex given by Foucault correspond with the three possible outcomes for women as analyzed by Freud. I will begin with the latter two examples because the naming of the pathologies is directly related to one or both of the standards set for women. After establishing how both the sexually frigid woman and the woman with a masculinity complex stray from the norm, I will show why Foucault believes that even the normal woman is not free from this process of hysterization. She, too, must constantly be on the watch for signs that her sex will slip into an abnormal one. How could she be allowed to escape it when the fate of the traditional family and the human species hangs in the balance?

Surely, Foucault drew on Freud's description of the frigid woman when he referenced the diagnosis for a woman who feels no pleasure during sexual intercourse. Sexual frigidity corresponds to sex as something that belongs only to men. The frigid wife does not desire sex because it is somehow missing within women. Freud states that "the aim of biology has

been entrusted to the aggressiveness of men and has been made to some extent independent of women's consent."⁵³ I believe it is not out of line with Foucault to interpret this as an argument that attributes sex to men and lacking within women. Women are seen as without sex, in this case, because biology has ensured procreation through the male, not the female. Even if the woman is deficient in regards to sex, nature has sufficiently enabled the continuation of the species by planting sex within man. Freud further states that sexual frigidity of women, although not fully understood, may be a psychological problem and therefore, could be susceptible to positive influence. But it is also possible that this condition is rooted in anatomical factors.⁵⁴ Sexual frigidity may or may not be rooted in her sex but it is clearly not something normal. It is either the pathology of the mind or of the body. Freud seems to suggest that if it is a physical problem, he can offer no aid. But luckily, he does believe that there is possibly another approach. If it is a mental pathology, there could be hope of a resolution with the help of psychoanalysis. Even Foucault recognized that "psychoanalysis was established in opposition to a certain kind of psychiatry, the psychiatry of degeneracy, eugenics and heredity."⁵⁵ If it is an abnormality of the body, it seems that she may have to accept that the desires of the male are normal and ordered by Nature—whether she likes it or not. In other words, she must submit to the procreative act for the good of the species despite not having any urge to do so.

On the other hand, a woman who does experience sexual pleasure also suffers from a sexual pathology. Foucault uses Freud's diagnosis of the masculinity complex to show how woman's sex is tied not to sexual enjoyment but to the function of reproduction that belongs to the truly female sex—the vagina. Because the clitoris is merely an atrophied form of the male penis, the pleasure that is derived from it is not a feminine one. The clitoris is a male apparatus that just happens to appear in women's bodies.⁵⁶ A woman with a masculinity complex refuses to embrace her womanhood and wrongly clings to the pleasure derived from the clitoris. When a girl refuses to face the fact that she will not receive a penis, she takes refuge in her phallic mother or father and increases in clitoral activity, which is ordinarily a male characteristic.⁵⁷ One could read Freud as stating that a woman must relent from pleasuring herself through the clitoris. She must accept that her sex is attached to the vagina, which does not feel pleasure (or at least Freud does not discuss the pleasure associated with the vagina). Her sexual health is tied to the reproduction of the species. In continuing with clitoral activity, she denies her womanhood. The masculinity complex describes a woman who rejects that her sex is defined by and through the vagina as a site to conceive, bear, and deliver a child. For Freud, she who does not wholly accept this definition of the female sex also rejects what it means to be a woman.

Freud's version of normal femininity can be achieved if too much sexual desire is not lost while repressing clitoral activity. She, then, accepts the fact that she will never be given a penis from her father and replaces her desire for a penis with the desire for a baby that she will make with her husband.⁵⁸ This may constitute normalcy for Freud but Foucault still considers this part of the process of the hysterization of women. For those who "would argue that it is entirely possible to have therapy that does not normalize—for example ending in female clients getting married and having a baby,"⁵⁹ Foucault would disagree. Normalizing powers, in this case, are directed towards the end of having a baby. Even though this case allows sex to belong to both men and women, Foucault argues that this proper form of femininity works to link the sex of woman to its reproductive function. Desire for and enjoyment of sex belongs to the man. The woman should desire and enjoy sex only insofar as she seeks to create a child, if she is normal. She should not enjoy the sex act itself because the activity is located in the unfeeling vagina, the true sex of the woman. On the other hand, she can feel excitement about the prospect of producing a baby. In other words, the pleasure is not sexual. A woman is only normal insofar as she accepts that her sex is tied to extending her family through biological methods.

The frigid wife is not pathological in the sense that she does not enjoy sex; she is not *supposed* to enjoy sex. She is pathological because her lack of desire for sex has turned into an aversion that inhibits or surpasses her desire for a baby. There is no liberation from sexual repression. Using Foucault's theories, one can see a woman who is not conforming to standards which dictate that she must use her sex to procreate. Because she is not willing to perform the reproductive act, her sexual pathology comes under the category of frigidity. Likewise for the woman with a masculinity complex; she is pathological because the impetus for sexual activity is tied to the enjoyment of it. Her desire for sex is rooted in pleasure rather than in her desire for the baby-penis. She refuses to let the pleasure from the atrophied penis, the clitoris, subside and be replaced by the pleasures derived from the possibility of producing a baby-penis. One could, however, argue that the diagnosis is attached to the fear that the vagina, which is necessary for reproduction will be ignored. If a woman revels in the pleasures of the clitoris, she may concentrate on the acts that pleasure it rather than the sexual acts that involve the vagina, which is not recognized to feel pleasure. The pathological woman is any woman who enjoys or desires sex beyond the function of reproduction. Therefore, the danger of sexual pathology always surrounds the woman. The normal woman does not gain pleasure from the sex act itself but from the desire to propagate. Every time she derives pleasure from the sex act, there is a question of feminine pathology. Issues of sexual enjoyment keep her in an agitated state. Any moments of sexual pleasure serve as dangerous gateways to female pathologies. And these female pathologies could have a domino effect on traditional family structures that could hurt the greater society and even the species as a

whole. Maintaining the status of a normal woman is as much tied to the issue of reproduction that fuels bio-power as that of the sexually perverse woman.

Conclusion

The conceptual framework of psychoanalysis did not offer any cures but only techniques to reify standards of normalcy. Applied to female sexuality, this means that its techniques are aimed at controlling the individual body as well as the greater population. Psychoanalysis does not offer a cure. It is, in short, a mechanism of bio-power. Where Freud traced the difficulties women had with their family members (mothers, fathers, and later, husbands) to biology, Foucault saw how biology and the traditional family structure were enmeshed within the system of bio-power, which worked to regulate the female body around life. Their different views on 'normal' sexuality turn on the acceptance or questioning of the primacy of science. I interpret Freud as suggesting that anatomy has rendered female normalcy difficult to attain and their biological formation leads to the problems that they experience with their family members. Otherwise stated, biology is the basis for the turbulent female condition. Foucault, on the other hand, believes that biology and the traditional family model are shaped and supported by bio-power.

While Foucault's critique of Freud's discourse on sexuality can lead to resistance of social constructions of woman, he could have also explored another path of feminist resistance via Canguilhem. I suggest that Canguilhem's study of norms problematizes the long-held philosophical connection between woman and nature. If what is normal is that which adapts and responds to the environment—as Canguilhem posits, then what is normal is also natural.⁶⁰ Women cannot, therefore, be at once abnormal and natural. That Foucault focuses on how the social rather than the natural determines norms is only further evidence that he does not believe that politics is not subordinate to a driving force behind life.

¹ Rancière strives to distinguish Foucault's theory from those of Hannah Arendt and Giorgio Agamben. The main point that Rancière is trying to make is that the Foucault believes that politics regulates and determines the value of life while the other two believe that politics depends upon particular notions of life. See Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran (New York: Continuum, 2010), 93.

² It is indeed dedicated to explaining how neo-liberalism—the political theory that dominates modern Western societies—proposes that life could be understood and should be regulated so as to follow the dictates of political economy. See Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*:

Lectures at the Collège de France 1978-1979, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2010).

- ³ Michel Foucault believes this philosophical thread runs through all of Canguilhem's works. See his "Introduction" to Canguilhem's *The Normal and the Pathological*, trans. Carolyn R. Fawcett (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 19.
- ⁴ See Foucault's "Introduction" to *The Normal and the Pathological*, 14.
- ⁵ Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, 260.
- ⁶ See Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage Press,) and Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke (Cornell University Press, 1985).
- ⁷ Canguilhem often contrasts physics, generally considered the most rigorous of sciences with the family of psychological sciences because the latter deals with pathology and, therefore, cannot be objective. (See Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, 226.) I suggest that Foucault questions why science has become synonymous with truth and objectivity. He states, "Nietzsche said that truth was the most profound lie. Canguilhem, who is at once close to and far from Nietzsche, would say perhaps that on the enormous calendar of life, it is the most recent error..." (See Foucault's "Introduction" to *The Normal and the Pathological*, 22). Foucault points out that Canguilhem's history of science relays how error creates new truths. Foucault, who I believe is closer to Nietzsche, sees scientific truth—like any other truth—as a product of a particular system of power. See "Essay Three" in Friedrich Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).
- ⁸ This line of questioning also shows the proximity of Foucault's work to the genealogical tracing of truth and power in the work of Nietzsche. Nietzsche shows how truths are developed from religion, science, philosophy, etc. to support the powers that be. (See Essays One and Three in *On the Genealogy of Morals*.) Following Nietzsche, Foucault suggests that any appeal to truth has inherent dangers as it points to power relations. That Freud claims that science is integral to psychoanalysis while others strive to strip it of scientific credibility only shows the power struggle embodied within science and further supports Foucault's position that truth and power are connected.
- ⁹ Arnold I. Davidson, "Ethics as Ascetics: Foucault, the History of Ethics, and Ancient Thought," in *Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 115.
- ¹⁰ Mark Poster, "Foucault and the Tyranny of Greece," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1986), 209.
- ¹¹ Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, 10.
- ¹² Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, 285.
- ¹³ Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, 286.
- ¹⁴ Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, 280-281.
- ¹⁵ Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, 198.
- ¹⁶ Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, 197. I choose this illustration to follow Canguilhem's example.

- ¹⁷ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Press, 1990), 136. I focus on this text because I want to emphasize how norms and sexuality connect to his greater theories on bio-power and biopolitics. The last chapter in this text, "Right of Death and Power over Life," is where he outlines his projected work on biopower. This work was never completed but this last chapter does give us a hint of how he saw discourse of norms, sexuality, and race coming together to form a network of power.
- ¹⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France 1974-1975*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2006), 327.
- ¹⁹ Foucault, *The Abnormal*, 6.
- ²⁰ Peter Trnka, "Subjectivity and Values in Medicine: the Case of Canguilhem," *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* (August 2003): 428-429.
- ²¹ Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg, "Foucauldian Analysis of Psychoanalysis: A Discipline that 'Disciplines,'" *Academy for the Study of Psychoanalytic Arts* (2002), <http://www.academyanalyticarts.org/milch&rosen.htm>.
- ²² Nikolas Rose, "Power in Therapy: Techne and Ethos," *Academy for the Study of Psychoanalytic Arts* (2000), <http://www.academyanalyticarts.org/rose2.htm>.
- ²³ Canguilhem, "Qu'est-ce que la psychologie?" in *Études d'histoire et de philosophie des Sciences* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1970), 367.
- ²⁴ Rose, *Power in Therapy*.
- ²⁵ Canguilhem, "Qu'est-ce que la psychologie?," 366.
- ²⁶ Foucault cites Pinel's methodology. Pinel believed that objectivity could be reached in psychiatric practices if discipline and order could be established in the asylum. Discipline and order allowed for the kind of observations that would yield objective analysis and medical knowledge. See Michel Foucault, *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the Collège de France 1973-1974*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2003), 2.
- ²⁷ This would not be the sole time that Foucault's ambivalent relationship with Freud is expressed. Jacques Derrida notes that "Sometimes he wants to credit Freud, sometimes discredit him, unless he actually doing both indiscernibly at the same time." See Jacques Derrida, "'To do Justice to Freud': The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis," *Critical Theory* (Winter 1994), 234.
- ²⁸ Foucault, *Psychiatric Power*, 340.
- ²⁹ Rose, *Power in Therapy*.
- ³⁰ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Random House, 1965), 276.
- ³¹ Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom makes this claim in her efforts to disrupt the all too common relationship between doctors and patients. She believes that there is a tendency in Western science, medicine, and philosophy to control and dominate. She suggests that the relationship must be changed to allow the patients to have more of a voice. This is interesting as it contrasts with Foucault's understanding of the doctor/patient paradigm. While Foucault claims that the patients have given authority over their bodies to the doctors and have forgotten, Clifton-Soderstrom with the help of Immanuel Levinas suggests that the patient has never been fully recognized as the other. The doctor has taken control of the

- patients' health; authority has not been granted to the doctor. See Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom, "Levinas and the Patient as Other: The Ethical Foundation of Medicine," *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* (August 2003), 450.
- ³² Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg, "Michel Foucault: Crises and Problematizations," *The Review of Politics* (Spring 2005), 337.
- ³³ Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 139.
- ³⁴ See Dianna Taylor, "Normativity and Normalization," *Foucault Studies* (September 2009), 46-47. Although Taylor uses the phrase "normalizing norms" to counter the argument that norms are needed in ethics and politics specifically, she also believes that tackling the notion that norms—in general—are necessary will lead to the promotion of freedom. When norms and normative practices are thought to be necessary, they become unquestionable. They become, instead, part of the natural order of understanding and action. Introducing the idea that norms and normative practices are not necessary will help us, Taylor suggests, recognize the reach and function of power in modern society.
- ³⁵ Herbert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 172.
- ³⁶ Sigmund Freud, "Femininity" in *The Complete Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XXII, trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1964), 141.
- ³⁷ Freud, "Femininity," 156.
- ³⁸ Freud, "Femininity," 155.
- ³⁹ I limit myself here to showing the connection between the family and bio-power. There are, of course, other ways in which psychoanalysis is linked to normalizing structures of bio-power. The scrutiny around the family unit is also a major theme in Foucault's *Psychiatric Power*.
- ⁴⁰ Rose, *Power in Therapy*. Deleuze and Guattari also make a similar claim throughout *Anti-Oedipus*. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).
- ⁴¹ Freud, "Femininity," 154.
- ⁴² Freud, "Femininity," 159.
- ⁴³ Here we see that Freud faced resistance from those who thought that the Oedipus complex was credible independent from biology. J. Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis believe that Freud's appeal to biology hurt the conceptual formation of the Oedipus complex. Laplanche and Pontalis note that "it is as if 'Freud never managed to articulate the interrelations of Oedipus and infantile sexuality,' the latter referring to a biological reality of development, the former to a psychic fantasy reality. Oedipus is what all but got lost 'for the sake of a biological realism'" originally quoted in Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 54. See also Jean LaPlanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, "Fantasme originaire, fantasmes des origines et origine du fantasme," *Les Temps Modernes* (April 1964).
- ⁴⁴ Freud, "Femininity," 149.
- ⁴⁵ Freud, "Femininity," 148.

- ⁴⁶ Although they express this idea in relation to capitalism, I believe that it can also be applied to the case of Freud. The critique made against capitalism by Deleuze and Guattari is part of the larger concern surrounding modern society, which includes the rise of both capitalism and psychoanalysis. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 264.
- ⁴⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 265.
- ⁴⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 271.
- ⁴⁹ Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 152.
- ⁵⁰ Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 151.
- ⁵¹ This claim is also made by various Feminist philosophers. See Luce Irigaray, "This Sex which Is Not One" in *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, ed. Linda Nicholson (New York: Routledge, 1997), 323-329.
- ⁵² Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 153.
- ⁵³ Freud, "Femininity," 163.
- ⁵⁴ Freud, "Femininity," 163.
- ⁵⁵ Michel Foucault, "Body/Power" in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 60.
- ⁵⁶ Freud, "Femininity," 141.
- ⁵⁷ Freud, "Femininity," 161.
- ⁵⁸ Freud, "Femininity," 159.
- ⁵⁹ Rose, *Power in Therapy*.
- ⁶⁰ Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, 53.