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The history of sexuality

Peter Oborne, Daily TelegraphJasper Griffin, SpectatorHayden White, The Times Literary Supplement MICHEL FOUCAULT was born in Poitiers, France, in 1926. He lecturerd in universities throughout the world; served as director at the Institut Francais in Hamburg, Germany and at the Institut de Philosophi at the Faculte des Lettres in the University of Clermont-Ferrand, France; and wrote frequently for French newspapers and reviews. At the time of his death in 1984, he held a chair at France's most prestigious institutions, the College de France. The Will to Knowledge In Foucault's The Will to Knowledge, he explores how modern definitions of the homosexual and homosexuality came to be. He challenges the long-held belief that the modern era is characterized by "repression" of discussion surrounding sexuality, arguing instead that there has never been more conversation around sex. He analyzes various discourses that have focused on sexuality, including medical, legal, pedagogical, and more, and how they construct and interrogate their subject. He claims that these discourses in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries produced the concept of homosexuality. Through these discourses, institutions exert power over the pleasures of sexuality, attempting to make known, codify, and control them. Main Point 1: Discourse In Volume I of Foucault's History of Sexuality (The Will to Knowledge), Foucault constructs a theoretical framework for an analysis of the history of sexuality based on the ideas of discourse, power, and pleasure. Foucault addresses the issue of power and pleasure extensively in his work, but he never directly defines discourse, despite its importance to his work. Rachel Adams usefully defines discourse in her summary and description of what Foucault's understanding of discourse is: "Foucault adopted the term 'discourse' to denote a historically contingent social system that produces knowledge and meaning. He notes that discourse is distinctly material in effect, producing what he calls 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak'." This definition comes from Adams' reading of Foucault's "Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language," published prior to the History of Sexuality. Within the History of Sexuality, no definitive definition of discourse emerges, but it's likely that Foucault is relying on the same definition he used in his previous work. In the context of the history of sexuality and sex, Foucault notes that there is not one sole discourse, but a "multiplicity of discourses produced by a whole series of mechanisms operating in different institutions" (33). Different discursive fields, such as medical, legal, biological, ethical, and political discourses, developed in the eighteenth century that produced an "incitement to discourse" (34). Foucault uses this "discursive growth" evident in the proliferation of new, emergent fields talking about sex in the eighteenth century to disprove the "Repressive Hypothesis" (34). Foucault understands the Repressive Hypothesis as a widely held belief that the Enlightenment ushered in a massive wave of censorship surrounding the subject of sex (17). However, Foucault argues that, since the eighteenth century, there has never been more discourse around sex and sexuality (34). That discourse has largely been intended to interrogate, regulate, and suppress sexualities that were not the "norm" of heterosexual monogamy (38-39). Main Point 2: Power and Pleasure Pleasure acts as the counter-balance to power, its other half. For Foucault, discourse revolves around a constant attempt for power to domesticate and make known hidden pleasure, which in turn consistently strives to avoid and evade power (45). Power, in this context, may operate differently than how Foucault previously chose to define power. As a force of knowledge, control, and codification, power acts as a "mechanism of attraction; it drew out those peculiarities over which it kept watch. Pleasure spread to the power that harried it; power anchored the pleasure it uncovered." (45) Foucault ironically notes that as power attempts to exercise control over pleasure, it produces its own sense of acute pleasure at the very act of that control. What arises from this, Foucault calls "perpetual spirals of power and pleasure" (45). Through this endless, tactful dance between pleasure and power, the two come to rely on one another: "Pleasure and power do not cancel or turn back against one another; they seek out, overlap, and reinforce one another." (48) Main Point 3: The Homosexual/Homosexuality Foucault revolutionized the field of the history of sexuality with his definition of the homosexual/homosexuality. In The Will to Knowledge, Foucault pointedly notes that a concrete definition of who a homosexual is and what homosexuality is only emerged beginning in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During this period, a proliferation of discourse surrounding the homosexual body began to move past a previous (Christian) focus on same-sex sexual activity as an act toward a ontological restructuring of individuals who experienced same-sex attraction: "The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology" (43). This newly made "homosexual" was innately different, their very being infused with their sexuality. Discourses crafted and defined homosexuality too not based on the act of same-sex sex or attraction, but on the perverse, aberrant nature of the homosexual: "Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphrodism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species" (43). In Foucault's analysis, the invention of the homosexual as a category of humanity was unique to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Before this period, Foucault claims that no society (or at least none of the ones he discusses) had formalized definitions of the homosexual or homosexuality: instead, the practice of same-sex sex was treated as an act, and sexuality was not strictly delineated between straight and gay. Main Point 4: Silence Silence—while not a central theme in Foucault's study—serves as a useful tool for understanding how discourses have historically operated and how modern individuals might understand the insidious nature of modern discourses better. To Foucault, silence is: "the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers—[it] is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies." (27) In this sense, silence surrounding particular subjects related to the history of sexuality serves only to reinforce existing discourses, either by normalizing those subjects or by ignoring them as a subject of interest. In his analysis of the role of heterosexuality in the creation of homosexuality and the normalization of heterosexual coupling and sex, Foucault rightly notes that silence helped to reinforce the legitimacy of heterosexuality. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a "centrifugal movement" displaced heterosexual monogamy as the center of discourse: "Of course, the array of practices and pleasures [related to heterosexual monogamy] continued to be referred to it [sic] as their internal standard; but it was spoken of less and less, or in any case with a growing moderation. Efforts to find out its secrets were abandoned; nothing further was demanded of it than to define itself from day to day. The legitimate couple, with its regular sexuality, had a right to more discretion. It tended to function as a norm, one that was stricter, perhaps, but quieter." (38) As discourse left behind heterosexual monogamy for a more intense scrutiny of homosexuality and other "perverse" sexualities or the sexualities of marginalized groups, heterosexuality became normative. Through silence, discourse reinforces the status quo. definitionDiscourse colloquially describes written or spoken communication between individuals on a particular subject matter. In the field of sociology, discourse takes on additional meaning, describing the processes through which individual actors create knowledge or meaning from reality, creating real objects "imbued" with meaning. In the context of the history of sexuality, Michel Foucault's definition of discourse revolves around concepts of power and knowledge. Foucault relies upon sociological, linguistic, or structuralist definitions of discourse as a network of communication creating meaning around a particular discursive object. However, for Foucault, discourse also defines what can and can't be said about a certain subject, thereby defining who has the power to speak and suppress others in discourse and who has the ability to construct the knowledge around a given object in discourse. by Clementine Pleasure is "the feeling when ones wishes are met" and it is "a particular desire or inclination". Pleasure and desire can become interchangeable in distinct settings. However, they actually refer to two different points in the "feeling" experience: "desire is creative tension, while pleasure is the release of that tension" (from the Stillpoint Magazine) It is the difference between the wanting and the having. In the Symposium, it is hypothesized that Eros (as the god), does not experience pleasure for he is the god of desire. Pleasure is the good humans and gods desire. L.D. Katz does an inclusive dive into different definitions of pleasure:"awareness of processes of fulfilling very diverse needs, systematically accounting for both pleasure's unity and diversity" and "Perhaps pleasure expresses the unimpeded functioning (Aristotle) of our Natural anxiety-free and pain-free State (Epicurus) by which we are able to reach outward from our hedonic core to engage with more representational brain processes – and through these, with love, to all the world" Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Ask the publishers to restore access to 500,000+ books. Four-volume book by Michel Foucault For the history article, see History of human sexuality. For the documentary TV series, see The History of Sex. The History of Sexuality Cover of the first edition of volume 1AuthorMichel FoucaultOriginal titleHistoire de la sexualitéTranslatorRobert HurleyLanguageFrenchSubjectHistory of human sexualityPublisherÉditions GallimardPublication date1976 (vol. 1)1984 (vol. 2)1984 (vol. 3)2018 (vol. 4)Publication placeFrancePublished in English1978 (vol. 1)1985 (vol. 2)1986 (vol. 3)2021 (vol. 4)[1]Media typePrint (Hardcover and Paperback), Audio (Vol 1-3)Pages168 (English ed., vol. 1)293 (English ed., vol. 2) 279 (English ed., vol. 3)416 (English ed., vol. 4)ISBN0-14-012474-8 (vol. 1)0-14-013734-5 (vol. 2)0-14-013735-1 (vol. 3)978-1-52-474803-6 (vol. 4) The History of Sexuality (French: L'Histoire de la sexualité) is a four-volume study of sexuality in the Western world by the French historian and philosopher Michel Foucault, in which the author examines the emergence of "sexuality" as a discursive object and separate sphere of life and argues that the notion that every individual has a sexuality is a relatively recent development in Western societies. The first volume, The Will to Knowledge (La volonté de savoir), was first published in 1976; an English translation appeared in 1978. The Use of Pleasure (L'usage des plaisirs) and The Care of the Self (Le souci de soi) were published in 1984. The fourth volume, Confessions of the Flesh (Les aveux de la chair), was published posthumously in 2018. In Volume 1, Foucault criticizes the "repressive hypothesis": the idea that western society suppressed sexuality from the 17th to the mid-20th century due to the rise of capitalism and bourgeois society. Foucault argues that discourse on sexuality in fact proliferated during this period, during which experts began to examine sexuality in a scientific manner, encouraging people to confess their sexual feelings and actions. According to Foucault, in the 18th and 19th centuries society took an increasing interest in sexualities that did not fit within the marital bond: the "world of perversion" that includes the sexuality of children, the mentally ill, the criminal and the homosexual, while by the 19th century, sexuality was being readily explored both through confession and scientific enquiry. In Volume 2 and Volume 3, Foucault addresses the role of sex in Greek and Roman antiquity. The book received a mixed reception, with some reviewers praising it and others criticizing Foucault's scholarship. In Part One, Foucault discusses the "repressive hypothesis", the widespread belief among late 20th-century westerners that sexuality, and the open discussion of sex, was socially repressed during the late 17th, 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries, a by-product of the rise of capitalism and bourgeois society, before the partial liberation of sexuality in modern times. Arguing that sexuality was never truly repressed, Foucault asks why modern westerners believe the hypothesis, noting that in portraying past sexuality as repressed, it provides a basis for the idea that in rejecting past moral systems, future sexuality can be free and uninhibited, a "garden of earthly delights".[2] The title of the section is inspired by Steven Marcus's book The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England. We must ... abandon the hypothesis that modern industrial societies ushered in an age of increased sexual repression. We have not only witnessed a visible explosion of unorthodox sexualities; but – and this is the important point – a deployment quite different from the law, even if it is locally dependent on procedures of prohibition, has ensured, through a network of interconnecting mechanisms, the proliferation of specific pleasures and the multiplication of disparate sexualities.—Foucault, 1976.[3] In Part Two, Foucault notes that from the 17th century to the 1970s, there had actually been a "veritable discursive explosion" in the discussion of sex, albeit using an "authorized vocabulary" that codified where one could talk about it, when one could talk about it, and with whom. He argues that this desire to talk so enthusiastically about sex in the western world stems from the Counter-Reformation, when the Roman Catholic Church called for its followers to confess their sinful desires as well as their actions. As evidence for the obsession of talking about sex, he highlights the publication of the book My Secret Life, anonymously written in the late 19th century and detailing the sex life of a Victorian gentleman. Indeed, Foucault states that at the start of the 18th century, there was an emergence of "a political, economic, and technical incitement to talk about sex", with self-appointed experts speaking both moralistically and rationally on sex, the latter sort trying to categorize it. He notes that in that century, governments became increasingly aware that they were not merely having to manage "subjects" or "a people" but a "population", and that because of this they had to concern themselves with such topics as birth and death rates, marriage, and contraception, thereby increasing their interest and changing their discourse on sexuality.[4] Foucault argues that prior to the 18th century, discourse on sexuality focuses on the productive role of the married couple, which is monitored by both canonical and civil law. In the 18th and 19th centuries, he argues, society ceases discussing the sex lives of married couples, instead taking an increasing interest in sexualities that did not fit within this union; the "world of perversion" that includes the sexuality of children, the mentally ill, the criminal and the homosexual. He notes that this had three major effects on society. Firstly, there was increasing categorization of these "perverts"; where previously a man who engaged in same-sex activities would be labeled as an individual who succumbed to the sin of sodomy, now they would be categorised into a new "species," that of homosexual. Secondly, Foucault argues that the labeling of perverts conveyed a sense of "pleasure and power" on to both those studying sexuality and the perverts themselves. Thirdly, he argues that bourgeois society exhibited "blatant and fragmented perversion," readily engaging in perversity but regulating where it could take place.[5] In part three, Foucault explores the development of the scientific study of sex, the attempt to unearth the "truth" of sex, a phenomenon which Foucault argues is peculiar to the West. In contrast to the West's sexual science, Foucault introduces the ars erotica, which he states has only existed in Ancient and Eastern societies. Furthermore, he argues that this scientia sexualis has repeatedly been used for political purposes, being utilized in the name of "public hygiene" to support state racism. Returning to the influence of Catholic confession, he looks at the relationship between the one confessing and the authoritarian figure that he confesses to, arguing that as Roman Catholicism was eclipsed in much of Western and Northern Europe following the Reformation, the concept of confession survived and became more widespread, entering into the relationship between parent and child, patient and psychiatrist and student and educator. By the 19th century, he maintains, the "truth" of sexuality was being readily explored both through confession and scientific enquiry. Foucault proceeds to examine how the confession of sexuality then comes to be "constituted in scientific terms," arguing that scientists begin to trace the cause of all aspects of human psychology and society to sexual factors.[6] In part four, Foucault explores the question as to why western society wishes to seek for the "truth" of sex. Foucault argues for the need to develop an "analytics" of power through which to understand sex. Highlighting that power controls sex by laying down rules for others to follow, he discusses how power demands obedience through domination, submission, and subjugation, and also how power masks its true intentions by disguising itself as beneficial. As an example, he highlights the manner in which the feudal absolute monarchies of historical Europe, themselves a form of power, disguised their intentions by claiming that they were necessary to maintain law, order, and peace. As a leftover concept from the days of feudalism, Foucault argues that westerners still view power as emanating from law, but he rejects this, stressing the need to "construct an analytics of power that no longer takes law as a model and a code," and announcing that a different form of power governs sexuality. "We must," Foucault states, "at the same time conceive of sex without the law, and power without the king."[7] Foucault explains that he does not mean power as the domination or subjugation exerted on society by the government or the state. Rather, power should be understood "as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate." In this way, he argues, "Power is everywhere ... because it comes from everywhere," emanating from all social relationships and being imposed throughout society bottom-up rather than top-down. Foucault criticizes Wilhelm Reich, writing that while an important "historico-political" critique of sexual repression formed around Reich, "the very possibility of its success was tied to the fact that it always unfolded within the deployment of sexuality, and not outside or against it." According to Foucault, that sexual behavior in western societies was able to change in many ways "without any of the promises or political conditions predicted by Reich being realized" demonstrates that the "antirepressive" struggle is "a tactical shift and reversal in the great deployment of sexuality."[8] In part five, Foucault asserts that the motivations for power over life and death have changed. As in feudal times the "right to life" was more or less a "right to death" because sovereign powers were able to decide when a person died. This has changed to a "right to live," as sovereign states are more concerned about the power of how people live. Power becomes about how to foster life. For example, a state decides to execute someone as a safe guard to society not as justified, as it once was, as vengeful justice. This new emphasis on power over life is called Biopower and comes in two forms. First, Foucault says it is "centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls."[9] The second form, Foucault argues, emerged later and focuses 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 cause these to vary."[9] Biopower, it is argued, is the source of the rise of capitalism, as states became interested in regulating and normalizing power over life and not as concerned about punishing and condemning actions. In this volume, Foucault discusses "the manner in which sexual activity was problematized by philosophers and doctors in classical Greek culture of the fourth century B. C.".[10] Exploring works of Greek philosophers such as Seneca, Xenophon, Plato, and many more, Foucault explains the aim of this volume to unravel the process of the structuralization of sexuality as an ethical practice in Greek culture.[11] To do so, the book inspects four Greek practices: dietetics to understand the relation of the self with the body, economics as the management of marriage and households, erotics to explore the codes of conduct between men and boys, and finally, the understanding of true love in philosophy. For Foucault, this exploration of Greek practices illustrates an "history of the desiring subject", which is crucial for understanding the modern construction of sexuality.[12] In this volume, Foucault discusses texts such as the Oneirocritica, (The Interpretation of Dreams), of Artemidorus. Other authors whose work is discussed include Galen, Plutarch, and Pseudo-Lucian. Foucault describes the Oneirocritica as a "point of reference" for his work, one that exemplifies a common way of thinking.[13] In this draft version of the fourth volume, published and translated after his death, Foucault traces the adoption and adaptation by early Christian societies of earlier pre-Christian ideas of pleasure. He discusses Saint Augustine of Hippo. Three volumes of The History of Sexuality were published before Foucault's death in 1984. The first volume, The Will to Knowledge (previously known as An Introduction in English—Histoire de la sexualité, 1: la volonté de savoir in French) was published in France in 1976, and translated in 1977, focusing primarily on the last two centuries, and the functioning of sexuality as an analytics of power related to the emergence of a science of sexuality, and the emergence of biopower in the West. The work was a further development of the account of the "interaction of knowledge" and power Foucault provided in Discipline and Punish (1975).[14] According to Arnold Davidson, the back cover of the first volume announced that there would be five forthcoming volumes: Volume 2, The Flesh and the Body, would "concern the prehistory of our modern experience of sexuality, concentrating on the problematization of sex in early Christianity"; Volume 3, The Children's Crusade, would discuss "the sexuality of children, especially the problem of childhood masturbation"; Volume 4, Woman, Mother, Hysteric, would discuss "the specific ways in which sexuality had been invested in the female body"; Volume 5, Perverts, was "planned to investigate exactly what the title named"; and Volume 6, Population and Races, was to examine "the way in which treatises, both theoretical and practical, on the topics of population and race were linked to the history" of "biopolitics." Foucault subsequently abandoned this plan, with only the second volume of this original plan emerging as posthumous volume four.[15] The second two volumes, The Use of Pleasure (Histoire de la sexualité, II: l'usage des plaisirs) and The Care of the Self (Histoire de la sexualité, III: le souci de soi) dealt with the role of sex in Greek and Roman antiquity. The latter volume deals considerably with the ancient technological development of the hypomnema which was used to establish a permanent relationship to oneself. Both were published in 1984, the year of Foucault's death, the second volume being translated in 1985, and the third in 1986. The fourth volume, Confessions of the Flesh was published posthumously in 2018. Emerging from the planned second volume of his original scheme for the Histoire, the theme of the book were developed in his lecture series from 1979 to 1980 where Foucault extended his analysis of government and biopolitics to its "wider sense of techniques and procedures designed to direct the behaviour of men", which involved a new consideration of the "examination of conscience" and confession in early Christian literature. These themes of early Christian literature seemed to dominate Foucault's work, alongside his study of Greek and Roman literature, until the end of his life. The planned fourth volume of The History of Sexuality was accordingly entitled Confessions of the Flesh (Les aveux de la chair), addressing Christianity. Foucault's death in 1984 left the work incomplete, and the publication was delayed due to the restrictions of Foucault's estate.[16] The volume was almost finished at the time of his death, and a copy was held in the Foucault archive. The work first became available to researchers when both handwritten and typed manuscripts of Confessions of the Flesh were sold by Daniel Defert, Foucault's partner, to the National Library of France in 2013 as part of the Foucault archive. Foucault's family decided that as the material was already partially accessible, it should be published for everyone to read.[17] It was edited and finally published in February 2018,[18] despite Foucault explicitly disallowing posthumous publication of his works,[19] and was published in English for the first time by Penguin in Feb 2021, translated by Robert Hurley who had translated Penguin's earlier volumes in the series, and was released straight into their Penguin Classics imprint. The reception of The History of Sexuality among scholars and academics has been mixed. The cultural anthropologist and sociologist Stephen O. Murray wrote in the Archives of Sexual Behavior that a passage of The History of Sexuality in which Foucault discussed how European medical discourse of the late 19th century had classified homosexuals had "clouded the minds" of many social historical theorists and researchers, who had produced a "voluminous discourse" that ignored how homosexuals had been classified before the late 19th century or non-European cultures.[20] The philosopher Alan Soble wrote in the Journal of Sex Research that The History of Sexuality "caused a thunderstorm among philosophers, historians, and other theorists of sex". He credited Foucault with inspiring "genealogical" studies "informed by the heuristic idea that not only are patterns of sexual desire and behavior socially engineered ... but also that the concepts of our sexual discourse are equally socially constructed" and with influencing "gender studies, feminism, Queer Theory, and the debate about the resemblance and continuity, or lack of it, between ancient and contemporary homoeroticism". He credited Simone de Beauvoir with anticipating Foucault's view that patterns of sexual desire and behavior are socially determined.[21] The historian Jane Caplan called The History of Sexuality "certainly the most ambitious and interesting recent attempt to analyse the relations between the production of concepts and the history of society in the field of sexuality", but criticized Foucault for using an "undifferentiated concept" of speech and an imprecise notion of "power".[22] The gay rights activist Dennis Altman described Foucault's work as representative of the position that homosexuals emerged as a social category in 18th and 19th century western Europe in The Homosexualization of America (1982).[23] The feminist Germaine Greer wrote that Foucault rightly argues that, "what we have all along taken as the breaking-through of a silence and the long delayed giving of due attention to human sexuality was in fact the promotion of human sexuality, indeed, the creation of an internal focus for the individual's preoccupations."[24] The historian Peter Gay wrote that Foucault is right to raise questions about the "repressive hypothesis", but that "his procedure is anecdotal and almost wholly unencumbered by facts; using his accustomed technique (reminiscent of the principle underlying Oscar Wilde's humor) of turning accepted ideas upside down, he turns out to be right in part for his private reasons."[25] The philosopher José Guilherme Merquior suggested in Foucault (1985) that Foucault's views about sexual repression are preferable to those of Reich, Herbert Marcuse, and their followers in that they have provided more accurate descriptions and that Foucault is supported by "the latest historiographic research on bourgeois sex". Merquior considered the second two volumes of The History of Sexuality to be of higher scholarly quality than the first, and found Foucault to be "original and insightful" in his discussion of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius and other Stoics in The Care of the Self. However, he found the details of Foucault's views open to question, and suggested that Foucault's discussion of Greek pederasty is less illuminating than that of Kenneth Dover, despite Foucault's references to Dover's Greek Homosexuality (1978).[26] The philosopher Roger Scruton rejected Foucault's claim that sexual morality is culturally relative in Sexual Desire (1986). He also criticized Foucault for assuming that there could be societies in which a "problematisation" of the sexual did not occur. Scruton concluded that, "No history of thought could show the 'problematisation' of sexual experience to be peculiar to certain specific social formations: it is characteristic of personal experience generally, and therefore of every genuine social order."[27] The philosopher Peter Dews argued in Logics of Disintegration that Foucault's rejection of the repressive hypothesis is more apparent than real, and that the hypothesis is not "abolished, but simply displaced" in The History of Sexuality, as shown for example by Foucault's persistent references to "the body and its pleasures" and to ars erotica.[28] The classicist Page duBois called The Use of Pleasure "one of the most exciting new books" in classical studies and "an important contribution to the history of sexuality", but added that Foucault "takes for granted, and thus 'authorizes,' exactly what needs to be explained: the philosophical establishment of the autonomous male subject".[29] The historian Patricia O'Brien wrote that Foucault was "without expertise" in dealing with antiquity, and that The History of Sexuality lacks the "methodological rigor" of Foucault's earlier works, especially Discipline and Punish.[30] The philosopher Judith Butler argued in Gender Trouble (1990) that the theory of power Foucault expounds in the first volume of The History of Sexuality is to some extent contradicted by Foucault's subsequent discussion of the journals of Herculine Barbin, a 19th-century French intersex person: whereas in the former work Foucault asserts that sexuality is coextensive with power, in Herculine Barbin he "fails to recognize the concrete relations of power that both construct and condemn Herculine's sexuality", instead romanticizing Barbin's world of pleasure as the "happy limbo of a non-identity", and expressing views akin to those of Marcuse. Butler further argued that this conflict is evident within The History of Sexuality, noting that Foucault refers there to "bucolic" and "innocent" sexual pleasures that exist prior to the imposition of "regulative strategies".[31] The classicist David M. Halperin claimed in One Hundred Years of Homosexuality (1990) that the appearance of the English translation of the first volume of Foucault's work in 1978, together with the publication of Dover's Greek Homosexuality the same year, marked the beginning of a "new era in the study of the history of sexuality".[32] He suggested that The History of Sexuality may be "the most important contribution to the history of Western morality" since Friedrich Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morality (1887).[33] The critic Camille Paglia rejected Halperin's views, calling The History of Sexuality a "disaster". Paglia wrote that much of The History of Sexuality is "fantasy, unsupported by the ancient or modern historical record", and that it "is acknowledged even by Foucault's admirers to be his weakest work".[34] The economist Richard Posner described The History of Sexuality as, "a remarkable fusion of philosophy and intellectual history" in Sex and Reason (1992), adding that the book is lucidly written.[35] Diana Hamer wrote in the anthology The Sexual Imagination From Acker to Zola (1993) that The History of Sexuality is Foucault's best-known work on sexuality.[36] The historian Michael Mason wrote that in The History of Sexuality, Foucault presents what amounts to an argument "against the possibility of making historical connections between beliefs about sex and sexual practices", but that the argument is only acceptable if one accepts the need to shift attention from "sexuality" to "sex" in thinking about the sexual culture of the last three centuries, and that Foucault does not make a case for such a need.[37] The critic Alexander Welsh criticized Foucault for failing to place Sigmund Freud in the context of 19th century thought and culture.[38] The classicist Walter Burkert called Foucault's work the leading example of the position that sexuality takes different forms in different civilizations and is therefore a cultural construct.[39] The historian Roy Porter called The History of Sexuality, "a brilliant enterprise, astonishingly bold, shocking even, in its subversion of conventional explanatory frameworks, chronologies, and evaluations, and in its proposed alternatives." Porter credited Foucault with discrediting the view, proposed for example by Marcuse in Eros and Civilization (1955), that "industrialization demanded erotic austerity."[40] The philosopher Martha Nussbaum wrote that the claim that homosexuality is a cultural construction is associated more with Foucault's The History of Sexuality than with any other work.[41] The classicist Bruce Thornton wrote that The Use of Pleasure was, "usually quite readable, surveying the ancient evidence to make some good observations about the various techniques developed to control passion", but faulted Foucault for limiting his scope to "fourth-century medical and philosophical works".[42] The philosopher Arnold Davidson wrote that while "Foucault's interpretation of the culture of the self in late antiquity is sometimes too narrow and therefore misleading", this is a defect of "interpretation" rather than of "conceptualization." Davidson argued that "Foucault's conceptualization of ethics as the self's relationship to itself provides us with a framework of enormous depth and subtlety" and "allows us to grasp aspects of ancient thought that would otherwise remain occluded."[43] The psychoanalyst Joel Whitebook argued that while Foucault proposes that "bodies and pleasures" should be the rallying point against "the deployment of sexuality", "bodies and pleasures", like other Foucauldian terms, is a notion with "little content." Whitebook, who endorsed Dews's assessment of Foucault's work, found Foucault's views to be comparable to those of Marcuse and suggested that Foucault was indebted to Marcuse.[44] In 2005, Scruton dismissed The History of Sexuality as "mendacious", and called his book Sexual Desire (1986) an answer to Foucault's work.[45] Romana Byrne criticized Foucault's argument that the scientia sexualis belongs to modern Western culture while the ars erotica belongs only to Eastern and Ancient societies, arguing that a form of ars erotica has been evident in Western society since at least the eighteenth century.[46] Scruton wrote in 2015 that, contrary to Foucault's claims, the ancient texts Foucault examines in The Use of Pleasure are not primarily about sexual pleasure. Nevertheless, he found the second two volumes of The History of Sexuality more scholarly than Foucault's previous work. Scruton concluded, of the work in general, that it creates an impression of a "normalized" Foucault: "His command of the French language, his fascination with ancient texts and the by-ways of history, his flamboyant imagination and beautiful style – all have been put, at last, to a proper use, in order to describe the human condition respectfully, and to cease to look for the secret 'structures' beneath its smile."[47] Foucauldian discourse analysis Greek love Postsexualism ^ "Confessions of the Flesh by Michel Foucault". Penguin Random House. Retrieved 27 February 2021. ^ Foucault 1976. pp. 1–14. ^ Foucault 1976. p. 49. ^ Foucault 1976. pp. 15–36. ^ Foucault 1976. pp. 37–49. ^ Foucault 1976. pp. 53–73. ^ Foucault 1976. p. 77–91. ^ Foucault 1976. pp. 92–102, 131. ^ a b Foucault 1976. p. 12. ^ Foucault, Michel (1988–1990). The history of sexuality. Robert Hurley (Vintage books ed.). New York. p. 245. ISBN 0-679-72469-9. 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