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"So Powerful a Form": Rethinking Girls' Sexuality

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“So Powerful a Form”: Rethinking Girls’ Sexuality

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M.A. The Ohio State University, 2008
B.A. Transylvania University, 2006

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An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of
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Abstract

"So Powerful a Form": Rethinking Girls' Sexuality

By: Kelly H. Ball

Contemporary debates in feminist psychology situate girls' sexuality as a point of both vulnerability and empowerment. This project uses queer and feminist theory to examine the concepts of girls' sexuality that drive feminist psychologies of girlhood and the multi-disciplinary field of girls' studies. Focusing on the girl as a liminal figure, my analysis revolves around what I refer to as the paradox of girlhood: in Western modernity, girlhood is imagined as being a pre-sexual developmental age of innocence that needs to be protected and, at the same time, a period of intense sexual desire that needs to be expressed. My dissertation contests this overly reductive picture of girlhood as a split between freedom and constraint, agency and victimization. In doing so, it complicates accepted understandings of girlhood across disciplines and within queer and feminist theories specifically, and reveals previously unrecognized assumptions about the relationship between sexuality and subjectivity more broadly. My dissertation explores the epistemic power the paradox of girlhood generates and the limits of the binarisms it exposes by examining how this paradox informs feminist scholarship on girls, and more generally, feminist and queer theories of sexuality. To accomplish this, I employ philosophical research methods, combined with secondary source analysis of scientific literature, to examine the overlapping histories of childhood, sexuality, and psychology. "So Powerful a Form" thus investigates the figure of the girl, locating her at the beginnings of developmental psychology and the proliferation of sexological categories during the late 19th century. My dissertation establishes a queer-feminist analytic lens to problematize cultural citations of sexuality as a source of girlhood empowerment. As I contend, the figure of the girl resists a simple teleological reading as always already on the way to womanhood and the concomitant promise of becoming a stable, psychosexual subject. Moreover, building upon the insights of queer theory, I read the girl as a figure whose precarious position as no longer a child *and* not yet a woman opens new possibilities for theorizing the relationships among subjectivity, sexuality, and girlhood.

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Introduction

Contemporary debates in feminist psychology situate girls' sexuality as a point of both vulnerability and empowerment. This project uses queer and feminist theory to examine the concepts of girls' sexuality that drive girls' studies and feminist psychology. In doing so, it hopes not only to complicate understandings of girlhood but also, more broadly, to reveal previously unrecognized assumptions about the relationship between sexuality and subjectivity. Focusing on the girl as a liminal figure, my analysis revolves around what I refer to as the paradox of girlhood: in Western modernity, girlhood is imagined as being a pre-sexual developmental age of innocence that needs to be protected and, at the same time, a period of intense sexual desire that needs to be expressed. I take my title, "so powerful a form," from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's description of girls' sexuality in her essay "Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl" (Sedgwick 1993a). This phrase serves as a symbol for the emergence of the girl at the nexus of queer and feminist theory, and grounds my queer-feminist perspective.

The paradox of girls' sexuality operates in the multidisciplinary field of girls' studies and the more disciplinarily focused field of feminist psychology of girls, having emerged from a scholarly history that understands girls first as gendered victims (circa 1970- present) and then as sexual agents (circa 1990-present). Symptomatically, recent trends within girls' studies and feminist psychology theorize away from a conception of the girl as sexually vulnerable and toward a conception of the girl as a sexual subject who is empowered and agential. Within that historical frame, my dissertation explores the nuances of the paradox of

girlhood and the limits of the binarisms it exposes by examining how the paradox informs scholarship on girls, and more generally, feminist and queer theories of sexuality. I do so by analyzing the nuances of the girl's liminal status in a developmental timeline where she is no longer a child but not yet an adult. Specifically, I hypothesize that such an analysis can reveal new ways of understanding girlhood no longer framed by the victim/agent opposition that has defined the last twenty years of scholarship on girls. In doing so, I follow Sedgwick in her consistent challenge to dualistic modes of thinking.

As a conception of liminal subjectivity, the girl is a figure that both breaks with standard conceptions of the liberal subject and complicates feminist conceptions of sexual agency and constraint. In psychology, developmental theories assume that girlhood is a process that should lead to the formation of a stable, agential subject. Within this model, girlhood itself is an unstable, transitional period of a not-yet subjectivity. Correspondingly, psychologists have long defined girlhood as a turbulent period (Hall, G. Stanley 1904). Recent feminist psychologies of girlhood continue to theorize girlhood as an intense period of sexual development where issues of desire and objectification are negotiated (Gilligan 1996). Most contemporary feminist psychologists have argued for understanding girls as agential sexual subjects rather than objects or victims within a heteronormative frame (Deborah L. Tolman 2002). These research trends parallel how girls' studies scholars conceptualize girls simultaneously as vulnerable to sexual violence and as empowered agents who negotiate their emerging sexuality within and against social expectations.

My dissertation thus historicizes the figure of the girl, locating her at the beginnings of developmental psychology and the proliferation of sexological categories during the late 19th century. Complementing this historical frame, the project establishes a queer-feminist analytic lens to problematize cultural citations of sexuality as a source of girlhood empowerment. As I contend, the figure of the girl resists a simple teleological reading as always already on the way to womanhood and the concomitant promise of becoming a stable, psychosexual subject. Moreover, building upon the insights of queer theory, I read the girl as a figure whose precarious position as no longer a child but not yet a woman opens new possibilities for theorizing the relationships among subjectivity, sexuality, and girlhood.

In what follows, I provide brief overviews of the fields my dissertation engages. First, I discuss the research trends in girls' studies in order to highlight how girls' studies depends upon the paradox of girls' sexuality. Next, I survey feminist psychological studies on girls in order to suggest how the paradox of girls' sexuality both structures and regenerates itself within the field of feminist psychology. Finally, I present the feminist and queer perspectives that inform my theoretical approach. These fields form the scholarly terrain of my project as both the discursive spaces I engage and the objects of my analysis. Although these overlapping fields are not commensurate objects of analysis, I am separating them for heuristic reasons to clarify the stakes of my project. Following these overviews, I offer a short summary of the four chapters that comprise this dissertation.

I. Girls' Studies

Girls' studies is a multidisciplinary field that emerged in the 1990s as a subfield of women's studies. While earlier studies of girls--from Margaret Mead's

anthropological investigations in the 1920s to the psychological studies by Angela McRobbie and Carol Gilligan in the 1970s--are now recognized as part of the canon of girls' studies, it was not until the 1990s that girls' studies established itself as a distinct field (Mead, Margaret 1928; McRobbie 2000; Gilligan 1996). Distinguishing itself from general feminist inquiries into girlhood as it relates to womanhood, girls' studies concerns itself with scholarship related to girls as a distinct demographic group (Kearney 2009, 18). As such, girls' studies analyzes multiple axes of social difference such as gender, race, sexuality, economic class, nationality, and age, among others. Feminist scholars began analyzing girls and girlhood from within disciplines such as history, psychology, and education (Odem 1995; Odem 1995; L. M. Brown and Gilligan 1992; Fine 1988). As girlhood became a critical site of feminist inquiry, feminist scholars continued to examine girls and girlhood from interdisciplinary fields such as criminology, cultural studies, and human geography (J. Miller 2008; J. Miller 2008; Driscoll 2002; Thomas 2011). Despite its multiple sites of origin, girls' studies now flourishes as a subfield of women's studies due to its commitment to a politicized analysis of gender. Substantiating girls' studies as a field of feminist inquiry, girls' studies has inspired many conferences and much academic publishing, including a journal of its own, *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, launched in 2008.

In spite of girls' studies being a distinct field, its practitioners have difficulty agreeing on a definition of girlhood. These definitional difficulties are related to girls' liminal status. In attempting to define 'the girl' in the introduction to her 2002 book, *Girls: Feminine Adolescence in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory,* Catherine

Driscoll avoids using numerical age to define girlhood, suggesting instead that a girl is something "every woman has been… and every female child is" (2002, 2). Driscoll offers this definition reluctantly as she wades through a variety of other scholars' attempts to define girlhood. In responding explicitly to philosopher Simone de Beauvoir's discussion of girlhood, Driscoll argues that the format of *The Second Sex,* published in 1949, "excludes girls from the situation of woman—they are only the process of woman's formation" (de Beauvoir 1989, 128). This leaves Driscoll to argue that while girls, like women, are positioned against the centralized, stable, transcendental subject, they are, unlike women, positioned as always in the process of becoming a sexualized, gendered subject. The girl is thus figured on a temporal threshold: "no longer" a child but "not yet" a woman. Reading Beauvoir and Driscoll together, we can infer that the definition of the girl, as well as the studies that are conducted in her name, circle around questions regarding what it means to become a sexual and gendered subject. Where girls' studies bemoans its lack of a definition of girlhood, my project will dwell in the ambiguity of girlhood as potentially generative of new ways of thinking about girlhood, subjectivity, and sexuality.

As a multidisciplinary field, girls' studies includes the work of feminist historians such as Mary Odem, Susan Cahn, and Christa DeLuzio who have explored how cultural expectations about sexuality have been used to interpret, respond to, and regulate girls' sexuality. Such historical scholarship on girls is one of the strongest and most consistent subfields of girls' studies. Moreover, feminist historians' accounts of girlhood will be central to the historical framing of my project as I examine how the study of girlhood, and the paradox it produces,

emerged over time. Mary Odem's 1995 book, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920,* offers a paradigmatic frame for my analysis of the tensions generated by the positions of agency and victimization. Odem explores the historical manifestation of girls' portrayal as both sexual innocents and sexual agents in their own right. Odem details how moral reformers used the figure of the innocent and sexually vulnerable girl for political campaigns to establish a legal age of consent. Odem complements this analysis with an examination of the resulting court cases that documented the majority of girls involved in statutory rape cases to be consenting to sex and using sex as a means of expressing desire, escaping parental control and household duties, and exploring newfound freedom while working in cities. The crux of Odem's argument is that even though age of consent campaigns were intended to protect girls from sexual violence by older men, the resulting laws and girls' reformatories served primarily to regulate girls' sexuality and inhibit their sexual freedom.

While Odem's book stages the paradox of agency and victimization, Susan Cahn's work reminds us that anxiety about girls' sexuality is nothing new. In her 2007 book, *Sexual Reckonings: Southern Girls in a Troubling Age,* Cahn describes girlhood as an early twentieth- century sexual category that produced society's attraction to and apprehension of girls' sexuality (2007, 7–10). Cahn's book weaves together two threads: public controversies surrounding various instantiations of 'the girl problem' (an event always defined by girls' sexuality) and the lives of ordinary Southern girls (2007, 14). Cahn argues that the Southern 'girl problem' began during the agricultural crisis and economic downturn of the 1920s which

forced many rural girls to move into cities to find work. The subsequent development of 1920s and 30s youth culture led to girls' embrace of sexuality and the advent of modern dating practices. The sexuality of these "(white) bold daughters" threatened ideals of Southern morality (2007, 26). This marks an important moment in the discursive alignment of girls and sexuality. Indeed, Cahn argues that girls' sexuality was the primary ground for the South's attempt to work through racial tensions. She writes, "In a society that justified its racial caste system on the grounds that segregation protected white womanhood, recognition that sexual desire was common to all teenage girls might hasten the collapse of racialized distinctions between white virtue and Black vice" (2007, 44). Cahn's analysis hinges on girls' sexuality as the site of both a sexualized racial vulnerability (to the extent that girls, Black and white, were considered vulnerable to consensual and non-consensual interracial sex) and a sexualized racial empowerment (to the extent that girls remained sexually loyal to their race).

Finally, within the category of historical approaches to girls' studies, Christa DeLuzio's analysis of girls in psychology both frames a bridge to the next section on feminist psychology of girls, and documents a more complex picture of girlhood than those that emerge in the 1990s. In her 2007 book, *Female Adolescence in American Scientific Thought, 1830-1930,* DeLuzio argues that G. Stanley Hall's 1904 publication of the two-volume book *Adolescence* occurred against a backdrop of adolescent delinquency and the attempts of child guidance manuals and newly invented juvenile courts to guide and protect adolescent girls during sexual development (2007, 7). DeLuzio illustrates how the scientific invention of

adolescence helped to establish a twentieth- century sciences of child development. DeLuzio's historical analysis details how the new sciences of psychology perceived girls as being caught in a transitive period during which sexuality and gender identity were not yet organized or integrated. Moreover, Hall suggested that girls were at an increased risk for sexual and gender identity confusion because the girl was "more likely to assimilate boys' ways during her youth than vice versa" due to girls' "discontent with the requirements of womanhood" (2007, 117). According to G. Stanley Hall's description of the objective of adolescence, girlhood is a predetermined failure to develop autonomy, since it is not defined by a rubric of cultural achievement and independence. "The child…whose growth is distorted or unduly accelerated will not become mature. He will lack momentum, and he will fail to be prepared to perform the essential task of the adolescent, which is to advance beyond the highest level yet reached by the race, and to live for a time creatively, mapping out new vistas for the race, producing new culture forms, having new experiences which in time will become embodied in the true inheritance of the succeeding generations" ("G. Stanley Hall," 313).[1] Such historical analyses document psychology's role in the discursive construction of girlhood and the interface of psychological explanations with social expectations in the United States. These discursive constructions of girlhood render the girl as a figure who is sexually vulnerable precisely because her sexuality is not-yet formed. While Odem's, Cahn's, and DeLuzio's texts pivot on the idea that girls' sexuality is simultaneously a site of

[1] "The young girl is naturally passive…This is a basic fact… "A fundamental difference between the erotic evolution of the girl and the boy is the comparative complexity, the circuitous road of the evolutionary process in the case of the girl" (Hesnard, A. 1933, 209).

girls' vulnerability and agency, none of them actually examines the conceptual ground where girlhood is made possible.

The absence of a richer exchange between historians of girlhood and feminist psychology has produced some misconceptions about the history of girlhood. Primarily, the history of girlhood does not center around gender. While gender is surely important to any account of girlhood, girlhood first appears in concert with the rise of developmental psychology and its preoccupation with race, sexuality, and the promise that white girls will become civilized adults who contribute to the moral progress of their race (DeLuzio 2007; Hall, G. Stanley 1904). My dissertation directly addresses this gap by focusing on the historical emergence of the victim/agent epistemological frame that is used to understand the girl's liminal status.

II: Feminist Psychology of Girls

Beginning in the late 19th century, psychology was established as a scientific field that developed rapidly over the course of the 20th century. Focusing on the mental life of the individual, psychology has consistently turned to childhood and adolescence as key formative and developmental periods that enable understandings of (adult) behaviors and desires. The historical invention of adolescence generally, and girlhood more specifically, were concomitant with the rise of psychology. Works such as Hall's 1904 volumes on adolescence and Freud's insistence on the importance of sexuality during childhood, defined adolescence as a transitive life stage oriented toward the assumed developmental end-point achieved with adulthood. To this end, scientific accounts of the psyche have both embraced and needed girlhood as an object of analysis. Since Freud's writings on Dora and

Hall's analysis of the turbulence of girlhood, qualitative approaches to developmental psychology have used the figure of the girl to make some of its most well-known claims concerning theories of sexuality and development. However, it was not until the 1970s that American feminist psychologists took an expressed interest in girls and girlhood.

A review of feminist psychology of girls in the United States shows that from its very beginnings in the 1970s, feminist psychology has located girlhood as a critical site of analysis for understanding gender and sexuality. A latent thread within this literature is feminists' concern for the sexualization of girls. My project focuses on this latent strand in order to bring out its implications for framing girls as victims or agents. st Nancy Chodorow's 1974 essay, "Being and Doing: A Cross-Cultural Examination of the Socialization of Males and Females," provides a feminist psychoanalytic theory of women's psychological development by analyzing the gendering effects of parenting. Chodorow argues that femininity results from girls' identification with and attachment to their mothers. Thus, while masculinity is learned through an oppositional relation to the mother, femininity is learned through an empathetic relation to her (Chodorow, Nancy 1974). Chodorow's essay is not often mentioned in feminist psychology as a text specifically concerning girls' sexuality. Yet, a careful reading of her work suggests important relations between the development of gender and the process of sexualization as they relate to girlhood.

Along similar lines, Carol Gilligan in her 1982 book, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development,* details how women develop

psychologically out of girlhood. Gilligan was the first to argue that women's moral development depends upon patriarchal social structures. Critically, Gilligan's insight relies on a framework in which women's (and thus girls') psychosexual development occurs within a teleological frame in which an adult, heteronormative relationship is assumed to be the endpoint. Gilligan's emphasis on psychosexual development locates the figure of the girl as a site of woman's becoming. While Gilligan's work, like Chodorow's, is seldom read as a study of girls' sexuality, her careful attention to relationality and girls' liminality warrants a rereading that brings sexuality to the fore. Chodorow and Gilligan are representative here of a larger trend in the feminist psychology of girls before the 1990s. The majority of this work focuses on the development of gender and emphasizes the role of relationality in gender development (particularly with the figure of the mother and changing heterosexual relationships). Notably, Chodorow and Gilligan have been influential feminist theorists who have shaped the field of women's, gender, and sexuality studies. Shifting our focus to examine the role of sexuality in that configuration offers surprising new frames for understanding contemporary scholarship on girls.

As part of the new growth of girls' studies in the 1990s, feminist psychology's engagement of girlhood and sexuality grew considerably. Following the trends of girls' studies, feminist psychologists newly turned to girls as individuals rather than to girls' relations to others; correspondingly, they turned to girls' sexual agency and desire rather than to their vulnerability to abuse. In 1991, Gilligan along with Annie G. Rogers and Deborah L. Tolman published the anthology *Women, Girls and Psychotherapy: Reframing Resistance.* This text continues to have clinical and

theoretical significance and marks the first collection in which feminist psychologists centralized the psychosexual experiences of girls. Also in 1991, Tolman published the first of many articles on girls' sexuality, "Adolescent Girls, Women and Sexuality." In this essay, Tolman breaks with Gilligan's foundational work on girlhood in order to claim that girls are primarily struggling to develop sexual subjectivity. Tolman charges that cultural discourses discourage girls from exploring their sexuality. She argues that three discursive trends have dominated discussions about girlhood over the last century: "the discourse of victimization, that girls are taken advantage of by boys; the discourse of disease, that girls need to avoid being infected by sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS; and the discourse of morality, that girls need to behave in a moral fashion that does not include sexual activity" (Deborah L. Tolman 1991). Having detailed the harms these discourses have produced, Tolman seeks to establish another discourse about girls' sexuality in order to empower girls in relation to their sexuality. This is what she calls the "dilemma of desire," a phrase which alludes to Michelle Fine's 1988 essay on girlhood and sex education, "The Missing Discourse of Desire."

Centralizing the dilemma of desire, the early 1990s mark a proliferation of feminist psychological studies of girls' sexuality and their psychological development in the United States. In their 1992 text, *Meeting at the Crossroads*, feminist psychologists Carol Gilligan and Lyn Mikel Brown argue that girls' psychosexual development hinges on changes in their relationships with others. Gilligan and Brown claim that, paradoxically, girls must "[give] up relationships for the sake of 'Relationships'" (L. M. Brown and Gilligan 1992, 7). Gilligan's analysis of

girls' relationships shows how girls must become an object in order to sustain their practices of relating. In other words, just as girls are developing into sexual subjects, they must substantively remove themselves as subjects from their relationships. Girls' relationships thus depend on their ability to self-objectify. In subsequent research, the status of relation is overlooked as feminist psychologists turn to theorizing girls' sexuality as a component of identity and self-esteem. Corroborating Gilligan and Brown, feminist psychologist Mary Pipher describes in her 1994 book, *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls,* that girls' position as subject or object constitutes one of the 'sexual issues' that girls face as part of normal female adolescence. "One [issue] is an old issue of coming to terms with their own sexuality, defining a sexual self, making sexual choices and learning to enjoy sex. The other issue concerns the dangers girls face of being sexually assaulted" (Pipher 1994, 205). Here, Pipher characterizes the two possible positions of girlhood: either a girl is a subject negotiating her sexuality or she is an object of sexualization[2] and possible sexual violence. What is important here is not that a girl is forced into the position of object to the exclusion of developing into a sexual subject. Rather, to be a girl requires that one be both a sexual subject and a sexual object. Girlhood is thus an impossible time; it threatens the tidiness of the subject/object dichotomy precisely as it demands girls be simultaneously both subject and object. This is one

[2] Deviating from 'healthy' expressions of sexuality, "Sexualization occurs when: a person's value comes only from his or her sexual appeal or behavior, to the exclusion of other characteristics; a person is held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness (narrowly defined) with being sexy; a person is sexually objectified- that is, made into a thing for others' sexual use, rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making; and/or sexuality is inappropriately imposed upon another person" (American Psychological Association Task Force 2007).

cause of the cultural anxiety surrounding girls' sexuality: how can girls exist as both sexual subject and sexual object?

The overwhelming contemporary response to this question from feminist psychologists is that girls must become sexual subjects in order to achieve and maintain psychological health. Indeed, feminist psychologists often position themselves as responding to questions about how girls' expressions of sexual desire may be fostered as a healthy, normative and necessary component of an emerging sexual selfhood. Pipher argues that "Girls need to be encouraged to be the sexual subjects of their own lives, not the objects of others" (1994, 210). Tolman adds, in her 2005 book, *Dilemmas of Desire: Teenage Girls Talk about Sexuality,* that "girls and women are entitled to have sexual subjectivity, rather than simply be sexual subjects…Making sexual desire a fundamental aspect of girl's sense of self offers a way to think about adolescent sexuality" (19, 20). By insisting that girls' empowerment and agency depend upon their being sexual subjects, feminist psychology revivifies the paradox central to girlhood: that girls are both sexually innocent and sexually empowered.

Clearly, the sexualization of girls is no longer a latent thread in feminist psychology. The American Psychological Association's Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls documents this most clearly. In its 2007 report, the APA's Task Force Report defines sexualization as a phenomenon that occurs when "sexuality is inappropriately imposed upon another person" (American Psychological Association Task Force 2007). The Task Force report focuses on the imposition of sexuality on girls as a cultural problem with psychological effects. To make this

claim, the Task Force must understand girls to not be fully developed sexual subjects. As such, the Task Force locates girls as especially vulnerable to sexual forms of violence including rape, sexual assault, and general sexualization. While it is clear that the Task Force documents one-half of the paradox of girlhood, that girls are sexually vulnerable, the Task Force also documents girls as sexual subjects who must be seen as desiring sexual agents. Tolman, an appointed member of the Task Force, argues forcefully that girls' experiences of sexual desire are repressed through patriarchal and heteronormative social norms. These norms, she argues, inhibit girls from developing empowered sexual subjectivities.

In its quest to empower girls, feminist psychology has become one of the most authoritative sources on girls' sexuality. This trend reflects what Michel Foucault describes as the general psycho-sexual construction of the Western subject. Feminist psychologies of girls' sexuality thus emerge as an especially salient site of inquiry for queer-feminist theory since this discourse, in its status as science, authorizes both the anxiety over girls' sexuality and the discourse of desire aimed to relieve this anxiety. Within that context, I will use a queer-feminist theoretical framework to investigate how recent feminist psychologies of girlhood in the United States both depend upon and contribute to the paradox of girls' sexuality. Moreover, I will also argue that girls' sexuality, as an epistemic problem, predates the psychological frame that contours it.

Part III: Feminist and Queer Theory

The emerging canon of feminist theory includes several critical examinations of girlhood. Offering one of the few sustained philosophical engagements with the figure of the girl, Simone de Beauvoir's 1949 analysis of girls' sexuality in *The Second*

Sex offers unique theoretical concepts that subsequent feminist theorists have not thoroughly considered. Specifically, Beauvoir's phenomenological reflections on girlhood point toward the ambiguities that sustain girlhood's liminal status. Such ambiguity is prevalent in Beauvoir's analysis of a girl's reflection on her formation of self, whether or not she is a self, and her status in relation to becoming-woman. According to Beauvoir, a girl's experience of becoming-woman is rife with a violent anxiety that threatens her subjectivity and ultimately compels her to become an object. Beauvoir consistently directs attention not to the girl as a stable referent of her analysis, but as a pained figure whose contradictory existence suggests no simple or heroic resolution. Indeed, it is the figure of the girl in Beauvoir's text that yields one of the most nuanced insights into Beauvoir's complicated analysis of immanence and transcendence. Far from arguing that girls work toward transcendence as a way out of the problem of gender and sexuality, an attentive reading of Beauvoir demonstrates how experience always returns us to the ambiguity of the subject. Beauvoir's analysis thus insists on conceptualizing girlhood as an ambiguous time during which the girl is uniquely aware of the conditioning of her experience by gender and sexuality. Theoretically, Beauvoir's analysis of the asymmetrical binarism of immanence and transcendence offers yet another framework from which to think about the paradox of girlhood.

Another feminist theorist with untapped potential for thinking about the paradox of girlhood is Luce Irigaray. Examining girls' sexuality from a poststructuralist perspective in *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974) and *This Sex Which Is Not One* (1977), Irigaray builds on Beauvoir's phenomenological approach,

critiquing the predominant Freudian psychoanalytic paradigm as a means of understanding girls' desire. In doing so, Irigaray adds clarity to Sedgwick, who will later formulate the girl as the constitutive exclusion of sexual knowledge. Offering a feminist deconstructive response to the Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic frameworks, Irigaray both exposes those frameworks as patriarchal and heteronormative while at the same time engaging the complexities of psychosexual subjectivity. Irigaray's deconstructive critique of psychosexuality demonstrates how psychosexuality regenerates itself in the figure of the girl. This account of psychosexuality infuses my reading of the figure of girls' sexuality within girls' studies and feminist psychology.

In addition to Beauvoir and Irigaray's analyses, the figure of the girl is scattered across the landscape of feminist theory but seldom is she the explicit focus of conceptual attention. When feminist theorists do engage girlhood, they most often use girlhood as a metaphor to discuss a conceptual problem. In what follows, I trace four notable examples of how feminist theorists have used the figure of the girl to understand conceptual problems. For example, in her book, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987), Gloria Anzaldúa employs girlhood to reflect on the ambiguity and liminality of *mestiza* consciousness. Likewise, in her book, *Dislocating Cultures* (1997), Uma Narayan reflects on her own girlhood in order to theorize feminist philosophical questions of ethics, metaphysics and epistemology from a transnational perspective. In *Throwing Like a Girl* (1990), Iris Marion Young uses the metaphor of girlhood to explain women's phenomenological experiences of being not-enough. In her book, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (1991) feminist legal

scholar Patricia J. Williams provides several lengthy meditations on how girls' sexuality complicates important legal questions about ownership, rights, and the relationship among visibility, violence and empowerment. For example, Williams analyzes the media attention surrounding the rape and beating of Tawana Brawley, a poor, African-American girl. Brawley's status as a girl raises questions for Williams about Brawley's sexual vulnerability prior to her rape and the status of her empowerment in the aftermath of media attention to the case.

Unlike feminist theory, queer theory has had remarkably little to say about adolescence generally and even less to say about girls specifically. What has been said largely includes queer theorists' critiques of the coming out narrative, a narration often located in the liminal time of not-yet-adulthood. At the early end of the developmental spectrum, recent queer theory scholarship has included significant analyses of childhood as evidenced by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's essays, "How to Bring Your Kids up Gay: The War on Effeminate Boys" (1993) and "Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl" (1991), Steven Bruhm and Natasha Hurley's anthology *Curiouser: On the Queerness of Children*(2004), Michael Moon's *A Small Boy and Others: Imitation and Initiation in American Culture from Henry James to Andy Warhol* (1998), Steven Angelides' essay "Feminism, Child Sexual Abuse, and the Erasure of Child Sexuality" (2004), Lee Edelman's *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (2007), and, most recently, Kathryn Bond Stockton's book *The Queer Child: Or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century* (2009). Each of these texts centralizes questions related to childhood and adolescence vis-à-vis major theoretical concerns within queer theory such as temporality, critiques of

psychological models, and sexual knowledge and expression. Yet, in none of these works is girlhood a sustained topic for reflection.

Notably, Edelman theorizes the figure of the child as an anti-queer symbol of innocence and reproductive futurity. Edelman's analysis clearly ignores how girls are figured as not only innocent symbols of reproductive futurity, but as sexual subjects who claim agency. By ignoring the sexual paradox central to girlhood, Edelman's queer theoretical approach to the child is void of a rigorous analysis of the specifically gendered and sexualized predicament of girls' sexuality.

Similarly, in the introduction to their anthology, *Curiouser: On the Queerness of Children,* Steven Bruhm and Natasha Hurley argue that the child opposes the queer adult, and that this opposition is grounded in the development of psychological discourses. They claim that "the modern-day queer is unthinkable without the modern child" (Hurley 2004, xiv). While this insight is pivotal to research on the figure of the girl as a sexual subject, Bruhm and Hurley do not aim to extend their insights about the sexualized and gendered implications of childhood much further.

In his book, *A Small Boy and Others,* Michael Moon investigates how processes of iteration occur through the queer practices of imitation and initiation. Moon is primarily concerned with boyhood and gay male culture, opening questions about cultural reproduction within sexualized communities. More recently, Moon has written about the form of the girl in essays on Henry Darger and his review, with Colin Talley, of the film *Winter's Bone*. Moon's analysis of Henry Darger's repeated drawings and watercolors of girls with masculinized genitals who perform

violent acts offers a welcome picture of queer girls, but his analytic focus is the figure of Henry Darger, who, as a mentally disturbed artist, we (as Darger's audience) must imagine having endured childhood violence in order to produce such disturbing scenery. Moon does not accept simple explanations for the reception (scholarly and general) of Darger's art or its use of the figure of the girl. Instead, Moon encourages us to see the figure of the girl as a resistance to knowing or having certainty concerning Henry Darger's childhood experiences and psychosexual development. Similarly, in his essay on "Life in the Shatter Zone," Moon and co-author Colin Talley argue that the figure of the girl speaks to the "shatter zone," an ambiguous space and time fraught with uncertainty and danger. Akin to Sedgwick's analysis of girlhood, Moon's way of reading girls does not repeat the received paradigm, and instead offers new ways of thinking about the figure of the girl in relation to sexuality.

To date, the only highly visible queer theoretical analyses of girls' sexuality is in the queer-feminist work of Stockton's chapters on the girl as a queer literary figure and Sedgwick's essay on the figure of the girl-masturbator. Building on the work of Freud, a foundational figure within queer theory, and Phillipe Ariès, a foundational historian of childhood, Stockton crafts a taxonomic framework for identifying and examining the queer child. By delineating four types of queer children (the ghostly gay child, the grown homosexual who *was* a gay child, the child queered by Freud, and the child queered by innocence), Stockton quickly perverts each—blurring the boundaries of the categories she creates and calling attention to the ways in

which these typologies interweave and contradict one another. Stockton's conceptual play is useful for thinking about child sexuality in ways that do not limit analysis to rigid categorical standards. By parodying psychiatry and psychology's use of taxonomic characterizations of abnormal behavior, Stockton motivates readers to find queer children everywhere. Stockton argues for a queer child who, instead of "growing up" in the normative developmental sense of the phrase, grows sideways. Thus, the queer child, in his tangled relations to sexuality, further complicates himself as the disruptive sexuality that must always interrupt adult sexual desire (precisely because it involves the sexuality of a 'not-yet' sexual subject).

The figure of the queer girl, however, grows in particular ways for Stockton. Instead of haunting the queer subject (as the gender-neutral queer child does), the queer girl oscillates between adult sexuality (which Stockton's readers are left to understand as fully-formed) and child sexuality (which readers are left to assume is a proto-sexuality) without resting. When the girl sparks desire within an adult subject (i.e., in Stockton's reading of the film *Lolita*), she just as quickly is visually marked by her inability to sustain a feminine sexuality. For example, in her analysis of the film *Lolita,* Stockton argues that whenever the girl appears sexually desirable (i.e. laying in a field while wearing a wet, sheer dress), the following frame desexualizes Lolita by depicting her with a wide smile that reveals her braces. The presence of the braces ostensibly disrupts the possibility of viewing Lolita as a sexual figure. In this way, the girl is marked by her repeated failure at being woman, that is, her

repeated failure at being sexual, and this failure is captured by the innocence and vulnerability of her not-fully-formed sexuality. My project will build upon Stockton's theorization of queer girlhood as a temporal paradox (no longer a child, not yet a woman) of sexuality. In doing so, I will question how girls' sexuality might be rethought using a non-teleological frame informed by queer theory.

Finally, I want to focus more extensively on Sedgwick's critical essay. Published in 1991 during the emergence of queer theory, "Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl" marks queer theory's first theorization of girls' sexuality. In this seminal essay Sedgwick writes,

> [W]hen so many confident jeremiads are spontaneously launched at [the masturbating girl's] explicit invocation, it seems that the power of the masturbator to guarantee a Truth from which she is herself excluded has not lessened in two centuries. To have so powerful a form of sexuality run so fully athwart the precious and embattled sexual identities whose meaning and outlines we always insist on thinking we know, is only part of the revelatory power of the Muse of masturbation (Sedgwick 1993a, 113).

Sedgwick elucidates the paradox of girls' sexuality as an epistemological problem of modernity. Critically, Sedgwick makes it possible to think of the paradox of girls' sexuality as a paradox that depends on an underpinning relation between sexuality and subjectivity. By revealing how girls' sexuality is both necessary (because to be a subject is to be sexual) and impossible (girls are not fully developed subjects and are vulnerable to sexual injunctions), Sedgwick theorizes the figure of the girl as teaching us something about knowledge itself. "[S]o powerful a form" as the girl, Sedgwick writes, both stands at the center of the truth-making machine through which modern knowledge is always sexual knowledge and, at the same time, constitutes the

excluded other that runs "so fully athwart" that machine. Sedgwick's identification of the girl as the constitutive exclusion through which modern sexuality articulates itself offers a frame through which to contest the binarism that frames girls as sexual agents or sexual victims. In this way, Sedgwick's girl might be seen as inhabiting the unstable nexus of sexuality and knowledge that Sedgwick identifies as defining modern Western epistemologies. Drawing on Foucault's critique of the repressive hypothesis, Sedgwick complicates the binarisms of victimization and agency, repression and liberation. In contesting these binarisms, Sedgwick's essay suggests a way to contest the idea of girls' studies as the scholarship built upon the idea that the girl is a sexual object to be known and a sexual subjectivity to be embraced. My dissertation follows Sedgwick's logic, using a Foucauldian frame to analyze the figure of the girl and destabilize thinking about sexuality.

Chapter Overview

The first chapter, "Conceptual Problems in the Field of Girls' Studies: Girls, Sexuality, and Agency," investigates the difficulty of defining girlhood. Drawing on the work of Simone De Beauvoir, this chapter offers a conceptual frame for thinking of girlhood as an interstitial space of being no longer a child but not yet a woman. This frame is generative for theorizing girls' subjectivity, and subjectivity more broadly, as a set of transitions and shifts, rather than a developmental stage. Critically, since most feminist scholarship on girlhood addresses agency, this chapter locates theories of agency as fundamental to the framing of girls as being either sexual victims or sexual agents. To accomplish this, I yoke my analysis of Beauvoir to insights in feminist science studies that qualify how we frame questions

about the asymmetrical relations between culture and nature, masculinity and femininity, and agency and victimization The first chapter thus invites new analyses of girls' sexuality, which appear in chapters three and four.

The second chapter, "The Development of the Psychological Sciences," traces the historical emergence and imbrication of the psy-sciences and modern sexuality. Focusing on the early decades of the psycho-scientific inquiry, I borrow Nikolas Rose's term "psy-sciences" to refer to the cluster of sciences and practices that locate the human psyche as their object of inquiry (Rose, Nikolas 1996). The broad referential capacity of the term "psy-sciences" allows me to bracket the differences among fields such as psychoanalysis, psychology, and psychiatry in order to focus more pointedly on the emergence of sexuality. By explicating Foucault's account of how inquiries into the psyche became a domain of scientific knowledge, I argue that the concept of girlhood is a sexualized concept that is inseparable from the epistemological frame of the psy-sciences. In doing so, I explicate how the psy-sciences anchor their truth claims in the figure of the child through processes of naturalization, generalization and individualization. As these truth claims work through sexuality (and sexuality works itself through truth claims), the child appears as the quintessential figure who anchors sexuality and truth through the psychological discourses of development.

Building on the work of both chapters one and two, the third chapter, "The Sexualization and (Sexual) Empowerment of Girls: Contemporary Feminist Debates," argues that sexualization and empowerment are two sides of the same coin. The chapter assesses the current trends in feminist psychologies of girls'

development in the United States, particularly as it relates to sexuality and sexual empowerment. Central to this chapter is the assumption that development is a sexualizing process. I take this assumption to task by examining how feminist psychologists mobilize concepts of sexualization, empowerment and development to make sense of girls' sexuality. My analysis leads me to argue that the mooring of sexualization and empowerment are both iterations of the system of sexuality. Accordingly, claims to sexual empowerment only energize and rejuvenate the same sexual economies they seek to control.

The final chapter, "From Instinct to Agency: Foucault, Causality, and Feminist Critiques of Sexual Violence," delineates the historical relation between the invention of instinct and contemporary iterations of agency within the psy-sciences. To do so, the chapter presents a fresh analysis of the Jouy-Adam case of sexual violence that Foucault references in *History of Sexuality: Volume One* and in his lectures, *Abnormal.* I locate the case as part of the growth of the modern system of sexuality and the beginnings of the psychological sciences. By turning back to a case study from 1867, and the contemporary debates of the last 30 years, my analysis raises epistemological questions about the role of causality. To be sure, both instinct and agency are concepts that circulate in the psy-sciences. Instinct dates itself to many of the early writings on the possible cause of psychopathologies. Marking the contemporary bookend to the concept of "instinct" as it circulated in the late 1800s, discourses of agency circulate in studies of girls' sexuality particularly in an effort to improve girls' capacity to make intentional choices in their sexual behaviors. The Jouy-Adam case troubles the possibility of either instinct or agency to account for

the sexual acts that took place between Jouy and Adam. In demonstrating this, I argue towards the need to understand sexual violence as a concept whose full gravity can only be understood within modern sexuality.

Together, these chapters challenge the figure of the girl as a given object of analysis for feminist and queer theories, feminist psychologists, and girls' studies scholars. In offering this challenge, the dissertation rethinks what is at stake in theorizing girlhood. The stakes of this dissertation are ultimately conceptual. The dissertation insists that a queer-feminist reading of concepts such as agency, empowerment, sexuality, sexualization, and development are central to what it means to account for girlhood as a temporal phase and to engage the figure of the girl as an object of inquiry.

Chapter One:

Conceptual Problems in the Field of Girls' Studies:
Girls, Sexuality, and Agency

> "From infancy to puberty the girl has growth: day after day her body was always a present fact, definite, complete: but now she is 'developing.' The very word seems horrifying…in the development of her breasts the girl senses the ambiguity of the word living. She is neither gold nor diamond, but a strange form of matter, ever changing, indefinite, deep within which unclean alchemies are in course of elaboration"
> (*The Second Sex* 307).

Girls' studies centers around a problem of definition. The interdisciplinary field of girls' studies contains conceptual assumptions about what it means to be a girl and to use girlhood as a lens of analysis. These assumptions have enabled girls' studies to flourish. Yet, there remains no clear consensus of what a girl is. In the absence of an agreed upon definition, girls' studies scholarship implicitly relies on the following premises: girls are agential subjects who provide a relatively stable category of analysis and that girlhood is a transitory phase of psychosexual development culminating in womanhood (Bettie 2003)(Bettie)(Bettie 2003; R. N. Brown 2009; D. R. Egan 2013; Gilligan, Rogers, and Tolman 1991; Gonick 2003; Greene 2003; Kearney 2006; Kenny 2000; J. Miller 2008; Thomas 2011). These premises centralize discussions of agency and sexuality, making both constitutive of what it means to be a girl. Against the backdrop of these premises, debates continue over how girls experience the entanglements of sexuality and agency during the psychological stage of adolescence when both sexuality and agency are understood to come to fruition (Dalsimer 1986; Fine 1988; Gonick 2003; McRobbie 2000). This

chapter does not account for girls' lived experiences of agentic sexuality. Instead, I focus on girlhood's epistemic frames in order to analyze how sexual agency has become a rubric for knowing girlhood.

Persistent contradictions in the definition of girlhood mark an enduring debate in the field of girls' studies. The persistence of this debate is significant as it documents the resistance that the figure of the girl poses to tidy onto-epistemological concepts. Notably, girls' studies rarely utilizes feminist philosophical discussions of girlhood to add insight to theories of what girlhood is, what it means to be a girl, and who counts as a girl. I argue that these contradictions are not a failure of girls' studies, even as girls' studies scholars continue to debate the status of girlhood in order to substantiate the field. Instead, I suggest that the conceptual slipperiness of girlhood is generative for thinking about gender and sexuality. Indeed, as a specifically feminine figure, the girl resists understanding. Akin to Irigaray's answer to the question, "What is a woman?" the girl follows the suit of femininity. As Irigaray responds, "The question 'what is…?' is the question—the metaphysical question—to which the feminine does not allow itself to submit" (Irigaray 1985, 122). Irigaray's playfulness with epistemologies of the body and of difference distances her from either postulating biological essentialism or moving swiftly to concede to social constructionism. Similarly, in *The Second Sex,* Beauvoir offers an account of the girl that marks the figure of the girl's resistance to clear definition with ambivalence and contradiction. Beauvoir writes, "[the mentality of the little girl] is much less rational…for it does not envisage clear-cut categories and it *is not disturbed by contradiction"* (emphasis mine, de Beauvoir 276). The capacity

for the figure of the girl to contain contradictions in definition reflects her complex relation to feminist theories of agency, sexuality, and development specifically as they infuse gender.

Situated in tenuous relation to girls' studies, this chapter works through the conceptual frameworks underpinning the interdisciplinary field of girls' studies. Unilaterally, girls' studies scholars foreground questions of girls' negotiations of agency in their research. For example, one camp of girls' studies scholarship supports the need for a conceptual analysis of girlhood because their research points them to conclude that girls have complicated relations to agency and that girlhood is difficult—if not impossible—to define in comprehensive or exhaustive terms (See especially, Bettie, Gonick, Renold, Ringrose, Wanzo, and Ward and Benjamin). In distinction to this camp of scholarship, another camp of girls' studies scholarship contradicts the significance of an analysis of agency as this literature assumes forthrightly that agency is a thing girls can possess as a facet of being autonomous individuals (See especially, Brown, Currie, Fine Harris, Kearney, McClelland, McRobbie, and Tolman). This camp of scholarship theorizes agency as something that girls possess and that enables girls to define themselves. Finally, the theoretical work of Irigaray and Beauvoir on girlhood centers the conceptual difficulties of sex, gender, and sexuality in relation to girlhood. In addition to differences in how all of these bodies of scholarship theorize girlhood, what differs among these scholarly approaches is the methods they employ and the kind of data that source their analyses. At its best, girls' studies interrogates basic feminist concepts such as agency and empowerment through challenging the status of

subjectivity upon which agency and empowerment depend (Thomas 2011). In doing so, girls' studies scholarship has the potential to provide timely analytical tools for thinking about questions of agency and power as they relate to girls' specific negotiations of race, class, sexuality, and gender.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze how agency might be theorized differently for a more robust account of how girlhood functions conceptually. To accomplish this, I delve into the ontological questions of what girlhood is and the epistemological frames that enable the figure of the girl to be known. I contend that the tendency for the majority of girls' studies scholarship to rely on theorizing girls' agency as an access point to girlhood reveals the nuances that produce girlhood and situate the girl as an object to be known. This chapter makes two arguments. First, I argue that girlhood is a form of subjectivity structured by the frame of being no longer a child but not yet a woman. To support this argument, I turn to Simone de Beauvoir's philosophical analysis of girlhood in *The Second Sex.* Even though *The Second Sex* is considered a staple text in feminist theory, girls' studies tends to bypass Beauvoir's complex account of girlhood with few exceptions. This chapter returns to Beauvoir's analysis of girls' socialization into the asymmetrical relations between masculinity and femininity. Second, I argue that girls' agency—as the feminist anchor for writing about girlhood—emerges as a product of a broader feminist theoretical debate about nature and culture. To support this argument, I turn to feminist revivifications of questions concerning the distinction between nature and culture and the theoretical consequences of this distinction for conceptualizing agency. Building on the alignment of the asymmetrical relation

between femininity/masculinity and nature/culture, I highlight Beauvoir's insistence that girlhood is a period of transitions and shifts, rather than a developmental achievement over the body. In doing so, I tease out how claims to girls' agency surface out of a feminist impulse to align girls' sexuality with achievement.

By turning to the philosophical work of Beauvoir on girlhood, my goal is not to increase the capacity of the figure of the girl to be known as an object of inquiry. Girls' studies scholarship that takes the girl as its proper object of inquiry ultimately centralizes the girl as its impetus at the expense of the analytical frames of gender and age. In pushing aside gender and age as lenses of analysis, girls' studies situates a static concept of the girl as an object of study while simultaneously animating and endowing her with the agency she has ostensibly been denied. Working against this trend, this chapter distances itself from girls' studies by returning to Beauvoir's work on girlhood in order to create theoretical traction around the girl as a conceptual problem. [3]

In making these claims, I trace how Beauvoir skirts the bio-psychological language of human development as a corollary philosophical move to her resistance to giving a reductive account of becoming-woman that limits the girl to a future of feminine passivity. Specifically, in framing the girl as neither child nor woman, I argue that the figure of the girl in *The Second Sex* offers a nuanced account of how

[3] Judith Butler's essay, "Against Proper Objects" interrogates the ability for fields of inquiry to stake their claims through categories of analysis such as gender and sexuality. In following Butler's argument that categories of analysis do not belong to specific fields of study, this chapter makes the claim that the proper object of inquiry for girls' studies is not "the girl," rather it is the conceptual frames we use to understand girlhood. In this regard, I am taking up gender and age not as static categories of analysis, but as dynamic lenses of analysis that cast a particular shadow on the figure of the girl. (Weed and Schor 1997)

concepts of girls' agency emerge within a framework that understands agency as a masculinized achievement over the body (Chodorow, Nancy 1974). This reading of Beauvoir has important implications for girls' studies, as it provides perspective and traction for analyzing what constitutes girlhood and the role agency takes in girlhood. The theoretical scaffolding I articulate here is necessary for understanding my analysis in Chapter 3. Far from arguing that girls work toward achieving transcendence over the body as a way out of the immanent problem of feminine gender and passive sexuality, an attentive reading of girlhood in *The Second Sex* elucidates Beauvoir's focus on women's and girls' liberation from an asymmetrical structure of difference that repeatedly casts the feminine as deficient and demands the feminine subject alienate herself from herself in the process of becoming-woman. This line of thinking resonates with Jennifer Eisenhauer's important efforts to question the definition of girlhood by asking what it would mean "if the girl were not understood as a place from which women come, and not as a moment that [feminists] need to protect in order to protect the future of 'women'" (Eisenhauer 87). In what follows, I frame alternative ways of thinking about the underpinning philosophical concerns central to girls' studies, specifically girls' agency, and offer a way to think alongside the temporal frame of no longer/not yet that structures girlhood.

Part I: No Longer/ Not Yet

> "Society [is] a house with rooms and corridors in which passage from one to another is dangerous. Danger lies in transitional states, simply because transition is neither one state nor the next, it is undefinable. The person who must pass from one to another is [herself] in danger and emanates danger to others."
> (Douglas 2005)

With very few exceptions, girls' studies scholars do not turn to Beauvoir's work on girlhood, even though their arguments often hinge on claims for girls' empowerment and autonomy. If we read Beauvoir's insights on girlhood through a framework that does not limit understandings of femininity to the question of Woman (Driscoll 2002), then Beauvoir's insights about girlhood as a transformative experience emerge more clearly. Despite the elaborate theoretical framework Beauvoir crafts to articulate a phenomenological account of girlhood, feminist studies of girls' experiences since the 1970s (including girls' studies beginning in the 1990s) have overwhelmingly bypassed Beauvoir's philosophical work on girlhood.[4] Such oversight is especially troubling given that alienation and alterity, concepts Beauvoir addresses at length, circulate as implicit themes in girls' studies.

In order to make sense of Beauvoir's analysis of girlhood, it is necessary to explicate the philosophical framework of gendered asymmetry she develops in *The Second Sex* to understand the persistent difference between masculine and feminine subject positions. While Beauvoir engages fields such as the biological sciences, psychoanalysis, literature, and philosophy to craft her argument, much of Beauvoir's analysis relies on the phenomenological experiences of women in order to argue that women's situation differs substantially from men's (see especially the chapters

[4] One striking example is the overlap between the conclusions Beauvoir and Carol Gilligan make about girlhood, given that Beauvoir and Gilligan's research is differentiated by decades, national contexts, and methods. As Beauvoir notes, "It has often been remarked that after puberty the girl loses ground in the intellectual and artistic domains"(de Beauvoir 1989, 333). Feminist psychologist Carol Gilligan echoes Beauvoir's philosophical analysis. "For over a century the edge of adolescence has been identified as a time of heightened psychological risk for girls. Girls at this time have been observed to lose their vitality, their resilience, their immunity to depression, their sense of themselves and their character…This crisis in women's development has been variously attributed to biology or culture"(L. M. Brown and Gilligan 1992, 2).

"Childhood" and "The Young Girl," pages 267-370). The problem of gender lies not in the existence of difference *as* difference. Rather, the problem of this particular difference lies in the asymmetrical distribution and maintenance of power relations between the figures of man and woman.

For Beauvoir, difference surfaces through the repeated process of calibrating sex and gender. Beauvoir clearly nuances the assumed alignment of sex and gender within the linear development narrative of an individual's movement from having sex to acquiring gender. As Beauvoir differentiates, gender is the social experience of being a subject socialized as masculine or feminine, and thus being understood socially as a woman or man, whereas sex refers to the biological experience of being female or male. This distinction has been helpful for feminist theory in identifying the focus of feminist criticism and political action (i.e. campaigns for equal pay for equal work regardless of the sex of the worker, and campaigns for state support of domestic violence shelters in order to attend to gendered experiences of violence). Yet, the sex/gender distinction, already aligned with nature/culture, relies upon the conceptual assumption that one's sex will normatively align with one's gender. Moreover, girls' studies' use of *The Second Sex* often suggests that sex, in its assumed status as innate and immutable, is the starting point from which individuals develop and are socialized as masculine or feminine. To bolster this claim, the handful of girls' studies scholars who reference Beauvoir cite the famous sentence, "One is not born, but rather one becomes, a woman," which Beauvoir uses to introduce her chapters on "The Formative Years" and to gloss the developmental arc (de Beauvoir 1989, 267). Critically, Beauvoir offers a less famous but more detailed version of this

thesis in “The Introduction” where she writes “every female human being is not necessarily a woman; to be so considered she must share in that mysterious and threatened reality known as femininity” (1989, xiv). Here, Beauvoir clearly problematizes the assumed alignment of sex and gender while also linking the status of woman to a collective experience of uncertain vulnerability.

Beauvoir casts the figures of man and woman to refer to individuals who have been gendered as masculine or feminine, respectively. It is not enough for Beauvoir to accept any female or male body as experiencing the world according to an ascribed alignment of masculinity with males and femininity with females. Repeatedly, Beauvoir works through examples of non-linear processes that produce feminine subject positions.[5] In doing so, she emphasizes girlhood as a churning and tumultuous period of becoming—a process of becoming-woman that is necessarily also a process of what Beauvoir refers to as becoming Other (de Beauvoir 1989, 336). Her explanation of such non-teleological processes are more complex than most girls’ studies scholars credit her and points toward a concept of girlhood, sexuality, and development that simultaneously grounds and unsettles theories of girlhood.

Beauvoir uses this frame to theorize both the structural inequalities of gender and the more subtle, patterned ways in which women and men relate intersubjectively. This framework is worth delineating here since Beauvoir’s theorization of girlhood complicates and builds upon this framework. In the table

[5] "With puberty, the future not only approaches: it takes residence in her body; it assumes the most concrete reality. While the adolescent boy makes his way actively toward adulthood, the young girl awaits the opening of this new, unforeseeable period... Her youth is consumed in waiting" (de Beauvoir 1989, 328).

below, I chart the asymmetrical relation Beauvoir uses to theorize the subject position of woman. I leave the initial presentation of this table simple; in what follows, I add terms that will be familiar to readers of Beauvoir in addition to charting how Beauvoir's articulation of girlhood maps onto this well-known template.

Positive/Neutral	**Negative**
Man/Masculine	Woman/Feminine
Culture	Nature
Transcendence	Immanence

Table 1.

One of Beauvoir's most significant arguments in *The Second Sex* is that women and men are not each other's opposites, as the binary of man/woman would suggest. Occupying the positive and neutral position, the figure of man "designate[s] human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity"(de Beauvoir 1989, xxi) . This asymmetrical structure demonstrates that there is a distinct and calcifying imbalance of ascribed power between the figures of man and woman. Asymmetry, as a concept in itself, does not portend the oppressive relations that manifest between the figures of woman and man. Yet, the historical persistence of asymmetrical power relations between women and men leads Beauvoir to theorize the toxicity of this particular asymmetrical pattern. As the table indicates, a shorthand for the conceptual core of Beauvoir's model for gender asymmetry is evident in the relational frame of Positive/Neutral vs. Negative.

As the second sex, the negative sex, Beauvoir argues that women experience the world through conditions of alterity (de Beauvoir 1989, 140–141). In her account of how women *become* women, Beauvoir uses adolescent girls' reflections

on their initiation into femininity as evidence for the processes of gender socialization that renders women as passive subjects who depend on men's activity. She writes, "[The little girl] sees that it is not women but the men who control the world. It is this revelation- much more than the discovery of the penis- that irresistibly alters her conception of herself" (1989, 286). Here, Beauvoir responds to the psychoanalytic narrative that girlhood is a time of loss recognition structured by the girl's realization that her body lacks a penis. Beauvoir argues that penis envy has little to do with the material presence of the organ and more to do with the girl's awareness that much social power is ascribed to masculinity.

Beauvoir suggests that it is girls' experiences of masculinity and masculine privilege that ultimately produce an awareness of the subjugated position of the feminine in the 20th century. Beauvoir uses girls' experiences as evidence of the feminizing process that culminates in womanhood. For Beauvoir, this process is problematic partially because it creates an obstacle between women and the possibility of transcendence- wherein a subject realizes his truth as subject by transcending the socio-historical conditions of his life. Beauvoir sees the feminine as both being unable to have a transcendent relation to truth and, at the same time, as capable of something other than a transcendent relation to truth. In her capacity to theorize the feminine as something other, the primary problem for Beauvoir is no longer transcendence, but the relation between truth and the subject that transcendence promises. The possibilities Beauvoir envisions for the feminine

subject's relation to truth depend on a clear understanding of the processes through which femininity, as an experience of persistent negation, occurs.[6]

Beauvoir argues at length that to become a woman, to be cast out of the neutral position of childhood (that is, to become *no longer* a child) and into the negative position of femininity (that is, to become *not yet* a woman), is a transformative process the girl undergoes.[7] Unlike the neutral experience of childhood, boyhood is an active experience defined by *doing.* Girlhood, alternately, marks the onset of a passive experience limited to *being*.[8] Expanding her rubric of the asymmetrical relation between the figures of woman and man, Beauvoir theorizes the figure of the girl through the process of her developing an asymmetrical relation to boyhood. This is an insight Nancy Chodorow explicates at length in her 1974 essay, "Being and Doing: A Cross-Cultural Examination of the Socialization of Males and Females." In this essay, Chodorow provides an explanation of women's psychological development by analyzing the gendered effects of parenting. Chodorow argues that femininity results from girls' identification with and attachment to their mothers. Thus, while masculinity is learned through an oppositional relation to the mother, femininity is learned through an empathetic relation to the mother. Chodorow's essay is rarely mentioned in girls' studies as a text specifically concerning girls' development. Yet, a

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[6] While my focus in this chapter is not the girl's relation to truth, it is important to note that theories of girls' agency emerge as a by-product of girls' incapacity to access truth through a masculinized process of transcendence.

[7] As feminist psychologists Brown and Gilligan describe, "The crossroads between girls and women is marked by a series of disconnections or dissociations which leave girls psychologically at risk and involved in a relational struggle" (L. M. Brown and Gilligan 1992, 6).

[8] This is the oppressive framework that girls' studies argues against when it makes claims to girls' agency.

careful reading of her work suggests important relations between the development of gender and the process of feminization as they condition girlhood.

Similarly for Beauvoir, the active figure of the boy, unlike the passive figure of the girl, realizes himself as a subject through his activities and projects (de Beauvoir 1989, 280). "It is by *doing* that [the figure of the boy] creates his existence, both in one and the same action" (1989, 280). Boyhood cannot be attained through passivity; Beauvoir belabors the point that boyhood, like manhood, is a form of subjectivity that constantly must be achieved. To this end, the figure of the boy is socialized to "assert his subjective freedom" and to realize himself and his relation to truth through his projects.[9] Alternately, the figure of the girl is riddled with "a conflict between her autonomous existence and her objective self, her being-the-other" (1989, 280). Beauvoir uses her argument about the asymmetrical relation between boys and girls to advance her analysis about the process of alienation that facilitates the development of the girl toward alterity, the process of becoming-the-other, as a state of passivity. The boy, as he leaves childhood behind in his achievement of masculinity, is not left waiting, like the girl, for a future of becoming-the-other. Instead, the boy distances himself from any alignment with passivity during adolescence (Polmear, Caroline 2004, 265). As the figure of the boy distinguishes himself through increasing autonomy, the figure of the girl paradoxically transforms toward a state of passivity, which requires a circuitous

[9] "[H]e himself remains at the center of this activity (sex), being, on the whole, the subject as opposed to the objects that he perceives and instruments that he manipulates" (de Beauvoir 1989, 328)

process of becoming other.[10] It is worth returning to the chart briefly, in order to illustrate this conceptual confusion that girlhood poses.

Positive/Neutral	**Negative**
Doing	Being
Autonomy	Relation
Realizing Self	Becoming-other
Active project/Achievement	Inanimate matter/Reception
Culture	Nature
Gender	Sex
Boy masculinized	Girl femininized
Boy remains aligned with neutrality	

Table 2

The period of girlhood places girls in the impossible position of having their status as neutral-child (a position they once shared with boys) erased as they transition toward their becoming-the-other. The process of becoming-the-other, of alterity, occurs through a process Beauvoir terms alienation. Alienation explains the anticipated outcome of adolescence, where adolescence produces "the emergence in boys of 'sexual entitlement' and in girls of 'sexual accommodation' which leads to a lack of clarity for females about their own desire" (Deborah L. Tolman 1991). While I offer an extended discussion of adolescence as a product of developmental psychology in Chapter 2, here I want to emphasize the centrality of alienation as a process that marks girlhood.

Beauvoir's theory of alienation is an account of a feminized process of becoming-woman and becoming-the-other. Alienation is the process that defines the

girls' status as being *no longer* a child and *not yet* a woman. Beauvoir writes, "What is happening in this time of unrest is that the child's body is becoming the body of a woman and is being made flesh," (1989, 306). Beauvoir describes feminization as an unclean alchemy of turning one form of matter into another, more static, form of matter. This process of feminization, this deadening "time of unrest," occurs through the girls' experience of alienation. The girl, through repeated experiences of encountering others, no longer manifests herself spontaneously in relation to others. Instead, she learns to alienate herself within the asymmetrical frame of gender. Beginning with Carol Gilligan, feminist psychologists of girlhood write at length about their observations of girls' repressions of self, much akin to what Beauvoir describes as alienation, that intensify at adolescence.[11] In a sense, and as feminist psychologist Carol Gilligan confirms in empirical studies she began 30 years after the publication of *The Second Sex,* the girl must give up herself as a subject in order to maintain relations with other subjects and to survive the violence (what Beauvoir refers to as mutilation) of becoming-woman.[12]

Alienation is the process that thrusts the girl into the double negative time of being *no longer* a child, but *not yet* a woman. Through her theory of alienation as a

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[11] As I elaborate in Chapter 3, feminist psychologists such as Brown and Gilligan use the term dissociation instead of alienation to describe girls' experiences of losing themselves in relationships, "Girls enacted this disconnection through various forms of dissociation: separating themselves or their psyches from their bodies so as not to know what they were feeling, dissociating their voice from their feelings and thought so that others would not know what they were experiencing, taking themselves out of relationship so that they could better approximate what others want and desire" (L. M. Brown and Gilligan 1992, 217–218).

[12] "Taking of oneself out of relationship in order to protect oneself and have relationships forces an inner division or chasm and creates a profound psychological shift. We heard this shift as a change in girls' voices as they reached adolescence. In essence, we were witnessing girls enacting and narrating dissociation" (L. M. Brown and Gilligan 1992, 216).

process of the fading neutrality of childhood and the coming negativity of womanhood, Beauvoir gives us the conceptual tools necessary to understand girlhood as a time of vacating the position of the sexually-void and gender-neutral child but prior to being a sexually mature and properly gendered woman. Beauvoir explains, “In the sense in which the psychoanalysts understand the term, ‘to identify oneself’ with the mother or the father is to *alienate oneself* in a model, it is to prefer a foreign image to the spontaneous manifestation of one’s own existence, it is to play at being” (de Beauvoir 1989, 51). In this way, the girl, through repeated experiences of encountering others, no longer manifests herself spontaneously. Instead, she learns to alienate herself within the asymmetrical frame of gender. "It is a strange experience for an individual who feels himself to be an autonomous and transcendent subject, an absolute, to discover inferiority in himself as fixed and preordained essence: it is a strange experience for whoever regards himself as the One to be revealed to himself as otherness, alterity. This is what happens to the little girl" (de Beauvoir 1989, 297). Critically the repeated process of alienation is a fundamental step in the girl’s transition from child to woman.

This framework of no longer/not yet is the engine of girlhood alienation. Subsequently, it is in this space that Beauvoir contends the future lodges itself in girlhood, taking “residence in her body” (de Beauvoir 1989, 328). This future is riddled by the girls’ youth, which is “consumed in waiting,” just as her future—represented by the specter of womanhood—will endlessly repeat the passive position of waiting (de Beauvoir 1989, 328). The feminized future of the girl is painful because it speaks to the fading of childhood and anticipates the repeated

negation via alienation necessary to sustain womanhood. Part of the pain of the future is that, for the girl, her ambivalence toward becoming-Woman further settles her into a pattern of anxious indecision: "Oscillating between desire and disgust, between hope and fear, declining what she calls for, she lingers in suspense between the time of childish independence and that of womanly submission" (1989, 336). Here, Beauvoir offers a thick description of girlhood as an experience of pained suspense. The pained experience generated by the exclusion of being neither child nor woman is a pain sedimented by concepts of sexed, gendered, and sexualized development. And it is that sterile word *development* that continues to pin down the girl into the space of the *no longer/not yet* through the biologically infused logic of psychological development.

As Beauvoir makes clear, girls' oscillations cannot be read as a pull between the feminized submission that is expected of them and the lure of masculinized transcendence that is denied them. Far from arguing that girls work toward achieving transcendence as a way out of the immanent problem of feminine gender and passive sexuality, an attentive reading of "The Formative Years" in *The Second Sex* elucidates Beauvoir's focus on women and girls' liberation from an asymmetrical structure of difference that repeatedly casts the feminine as deficient and demands that the feminine subject alienate herself from herself in the process of becoming-woman. In this way, alienation circumvents the possibility of the feminine subject achieving truth through the masculinized activity of transcendence. Many have understood Beauvoir to be arguing that transcendence is limited to an incarnation (i.e. through a project, practice) of the phallus, and that, with enough

creativity, girls may discover projects that provide a substitute for transcendence such as having children. Yet, Beauvoir argues more powerfully albeit more implicitly, that women must look toward other forms of power and desire. Beauvoir is clear that, while transcendence has been the mainstay of masculine power and self-actualization, there is little benefit in continuing to play at transcendence, especially when playing from the feminized figure of woman. Instead, she seeks women's emancipation, where "To emancipate woman is to refuse to confine her to the [asymmetrical] relations she bears to man" (de Beauvoir 1989, 731). In this way, Beauvoir argues that the figure of woman gains her liberation from the frame of asymmetry by resisting alienation and tying herself to the future through projects that neither seek transcendence nor prompt alienation. To do so would differ from transcendence in that the figures of the girl and woman would not be compelled to alienate themselves (yet again) through a phallocentric project of self-edification. Following Beauvoir's argument that recourse from sex/gender asymmetry cannot be amended by new projects, I now turn to sketch out girls' agency as a primary conceptual trend that fuels contemporary girls' studies. Doing so clarifies how Beauvoir's 1949 analysis of girlhood in *The Second Sex* continues to offer under-theorized feminist insights into girlhood as a form of subjectivity.

Part II: Girls' Agency and the New Blindspot of Interactionism

The conceptual consequences of theorizing sex and gender differences in relation to nature and culture have been a formative concern within feminist theory. Feminist concerns for theorizing embodiment and experience has informed the terrain of girls' studies—privileging which lines of inquiry, methods, and modes of

analysis yield insight into the complexities of girlhood. Locating girlhood as an interactive condition of being born female and socialized as feminine has led girls' studies scholars to theorize girlhood as an interactive by-product of biology and culture. Debates concerning whether nature, culture, or an interaction of both, is the primary formative cause of sex and gender differences generate many questions related to girls' development (Greene 2003; P. H. Miller 2011)(P. H. Miller 2011)(P. H. Miller). For example, within developmental psychology, the dichotomous framework of nature/culture has dominated research and led to the production of theories accounting for the cause of a given difference's occurrence to either nature or culture. Within this rubric, nature is defined by neural pathways, genetics, hormones and other physiological factors, while culture is defined by family, schooling, labor practices, media, etc. More recently, scholars revised this simplistic dichotomy by suggesting that neither entirely nature nor entirely culture can be responsible for the occurrence of a given difference. Instead, developmental psychologists proposed an "interactionist" framework that resolved the nature/culture divide by positing difference as an interactive product of both nature and culture in varying amounts (DeLamater and Hyde 1998; Greene 2003; Heyes 1997; K. A. Martin 1996; P. H. Miller 2011; Siegler, DeLoache, and Eisenberg 2011; D.L. Tolman 2002).

Spanning well beyond the field of psychology, much girls' studies scholarship tasks itself with analyzing how girls negotiate embodied forms of biological difference as they negotiate social practices of identification(Bettie 2003; Diamond 2000; Gonick 2003; Harris 2004a; Thomas 2011; J. Miller 2008). This rubric renders

a new term for the same interactionist problem: girls' agency. What were once debates about the formative influences of nature and culture on girlhood now resolve in an interactionist model wherein girls' studies scholars read girls' choices as evidence of girls' agency.

Feminist claims to girls' agency are understandable given how girls have been repeatedly framed as fundamentally vulnerable and in need of protection.[13] Yet, the desire to understand girls as self-determining agents reflects feminists' politicized concerns about the repeated alignment of the female body with nature and the need to access women's liberation by producing cultural change. For example, in her 1972 article, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" Sherry Ortner emblematizes the contemporary beginnings of feminist theory's conversations over the status of the natural body. If girlhood is a process of feminization, then claims to girls' agency surface as attempts to rescue girls from an anticipated alignment with nature and its ascribed qualities of passivity and staticity. Ortner's essay succinctly consolidates feminist political concerns that femininity is analogically aligned with nature, and argues that cultural change must occur in order to revalue femininity. Conceding that biological facts and sexual difference may be relevant to feminist theories that explain why women are culturally subordinate to men, Ortner argues that "these facts and [biological] differences only take on significance of superior/inferior within the framework of culturally defined value systems" (Ortner, Sherry B. 1972, 9) . Ortner's comments

[13] Historical studies of girlhood complicate this position by suggesting that girls, at different historical moments and in different ways, do not have a clear alignment with either sexual vulnerability or sexual agency (Jacobs Brumberg 1997; Odem 1995; Cahn 2007).

conclude a paragraph that opens by asking how feminists ought to explain women's universal oppression via men. By framing her concern with biological bodies as a search for a universal explanation of women's oppression, Ortner concludes her essay by stating that feminist scholars must work to align women with the project of culture, given that women "cannot change their bodies"(1972, 28). In leaving the privileged status of culture un-interrogated, Ortner implicitly reifies the natural body as something separate from and devalued in relation to culture. Accordingly, much scholarship on girls' agency and empowerment explores how the variable socioeconomic conditions of girls' lives affect their understanding of themselves as agential subjects. However, in focusing on the subject as the *object* of analysis, these lines of inquiry neglect to examine the power relations that condition girls' experiences of agency.

Girls' agency, often referred to as girl-power in popular culture, has become a new scholarly catch-phrase that alludes to an unacknowledged interactionist framework of nature and culture. Agency circulates as a central theme in girls' studies scholarship, particularly since girls are assumed to not have agency (in distinction to boys, who are assumed to have an uncomplicated relationship to agency). Like theories of girlhood, theories of agency are intimately tied to the theoretical frame of nature/culture. Specifically, this connection manifests through the alignment of agency with the activity of culture and the assumption that nature is a passive, non-agential form of matter upon which agency acts. Theorizing agency through the lens of nature/culture has yielded critical insight into girls' experiences of agency. For example, in her book *Between Femininities: Ambivalence, Identity, and*

the Education of Girls, Marnina Gonick defines girlhood subjectivity as the "struggle to negotiate a constantly changing field of ambivalent identifications" (2003, 10). For Gonick, this definition of girlhood surfaces at the intersection of the biological field (that is, *being* a girl) and the cultural field (that is, negotiating femininity) through ambivalent identificatory processes.

In theorizing and celebrating girls' agency as achievement (which, significantly, is an achievement over *being* since girls are now understood in a possessive relation to agency), girls' studies scholars implicitly reify the alignment of the girl as a passive other and agency as the active vehicle of social engagement. Ward and Benjamin argue that early publications in girls' studies "center on the individual girl as the site of change" (18) which effects an understanding of the girl as an agent, whose actions are analytically distinct from her environment. By articulating the girl as an individual who can make choices independent or detached from context, girls' studies reinforces the myth of the autonomous subject and renders a concept of the girl as self-agential. More nuanced accounts of girls' agency claim that girls have ambivalent (Gonick 2003), strained (Bettie 2003), and jeopardized (Harris 2004b) relations to agency. Despite the strengths of this scholarship in theorizing girls' relations to agency as ambivalent, strained, and jeopardized, it remains necessary to work through the complexities of the concepts of girlhood and agency. Recent feminist formulations of agency heighten the need to reconceptualize girls' agency in order to provide a more nuanced account of how asymmetrical gender relations pattern girls' experiences of agency.

The tendency to emphasize girls' agency appears as a response to post-structuralist accounts of subjectivity and their destabilizing agency as a quality of the subject. In her essay, "Coalescing," which reviews research trends in girls' studies, Mary Celeste Kearney writes, "[T]he broad influence of poststructuralist theory has encouraged most contemporary Girls' Studies scholars to follow Barbara Hudson's (1984) lead, approaching girlhood as a fluid discursive construct which female youth variously negotiate alongside a range of other socially produced subjectivities, *rather than* as a fixed identity that is biologically determined" (emphasis mine, 19). Here, girlhood is defined as an achievement of navigating socially constructed identities over biological determinants. In this way, the achievement of girlhood is one imbued with agency, granted by the ability of girls to negotiate discursive constructs.

In addition to the post-structuralist context Kearney offers, I want to highlight Irigaray's play with the alleged division between nature and culture that leads her to formulate a much different account of girlhood. In offering a complex deconstructive analysis of sexual difference in her book, *Speculum of the Other Woman,* Irigaray unravels the concepts of sexual difference as they have proliferated in Western thought. Irigaray challenges the assumption that nature is passive and static matter that waits to be acted upon. Irigaray's persistence in using the psychoanalytic and philosophical language of the body not only mimics and disturbs the canon from which she cites, but also aligns her with other French feminist theorists who similarly deconstruct the bifurcation of the naturalized sexed body from socialized gendered language (Cixous, Hélène 1976). Irigaray continues, "It is…

unrealizable to *describe the being* of woman. As for how 'a woman develops out of a child with a bisexual disposition,' one might begin by being surprised, being suspicious that it should be necessary to *become* a woman" (1985, 21–22). Irigaray consistently challenges the assumed status of the sexed body and its psychosexual, teleological development from girlhood to womanhood. In doing so, Irigaray contests the assumed developmental progression of femininity. By taking psychoanalytic readings of sexual difference as her object of analysis, Irigaray disarticulates assumptions about the natural body as fixed and immobile, especially as the feminine body becomes marked as the repudiated ground of philosophy. This calls her to extensively theorize girlhood in relation to the feminine. Building on the insights of Beauvoir, Irigaray theorizes how the feminine became the ground—the matter—that made it possible for masculinity to achieve itself as a privileged form of subjectivity.

Against the backdrop of sex/gender and nature/culture, agency and sexuality emerge as kindred concepts in scholarship on girlhood. Articulations of girlhood hinge on the premise of the girl as an agential and sexual subject who manages *social* identity while enduring the *biological* changes of puberty. Both agency and sexuality have, and are products of, an account of nature and culture as being separate yet interactive forces. For all the complexities they entail, agency and sexuality offer a surprisingly simple logical problem. The relation between agency and sexuality is one of *kind.* Akin to the logical relation between squares and rectangles, where a square is a particular kind of rectangle, sexuality is a particular kind of agency for girls. Yet, given the collapse of agency and sexuality into one

another within girls' studies, it is important to articulate clearly the conceptual relationship that connects these terms within this context. In what follows, I turn to feminist science studies to argue that agency and sexuality emerge as interactionist products against the scholarly terrain of nature/culture and sex/gender. I return to the problematic of agency and sexuality again in Chapter 3.

There are important implications for rethinking girls' agency and girls' sexuality outside of the framework of girls' studies. Following a theoretical trajectory of feminist science studies, I trace how a complex account of agency yields new insights into sexuality that are a resource for theorizing girls' sexuality outside an interactive developmental model of nature/culture, sex/gender. I return to girlhood, sexuality, and the function of the psy-sciences as fundamentally interactionist sciences, where nature and culture come together to form the individual in Chapter 2.

Over the last several decades, feminist science scholars have challenged the now axiomatic interactionist framework by interrogating and re-theorizing the premise that what is natural and what is cultural are conceptually separable (Barad 2007; Hekman 2010; Potter 2006; Wilson 2004). In her book, *Meeting the Universe Halfway,* feminist quantum physicist Karen Barad formulates agency as a quality among events, rather than a substance one can possess (2007, 178). Theorizing what she terms agential-realism, Barad writes, "agency is a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has. It cannot be designated as an attribute of subjects or objects" (2007, 178). In this rubric of agential realism, agency reveals critical insight into theories of empowerment that

assume the existence of a self-contained, agential subject. So often without direction, empowerment programs that encourage one to “get empowered” suggest an image of accruing a surplus of empowerment. For example, feminist scholars write about the need for girls to be empowered in order to prepare for and endure the difficult challenges of puberty (R. N. Brown 2009; L. M. Brown 1999; Kenny 2000; Kearney 2006; D.L. Tolman and Brown 2001). Such claims leave the sense that if girls can squirrel away enough agency, they will be able to thrive during their adolescence with little to no psychological difficulty.

Kearney repeatedly references girls’ agency as something a girl can amass and scholars can assess. She writes, "Girls today have more agency than those of previous generations, but even the most privileged contemporary female youth remain disenfranchised because of their age...For many girls, such disempowerment is exponentially multiplied as a result of their race, ethnicity, class, ability, sexuality, religion, and/or nationality" (2009, 21). This image of an empowerment reservoir is a problematic trend in both popular psychology and academic writing on girls. The trend is disturbing precisely because it assumes and encourages that girls do the conceptually impossible. Such calls for girls to increase their stores of agency rely on a liberal humanist model wherein the individual can reserve or deploy his agency at will. If agency is a quality of intra-actions, as Barad so powerfully argues, then girls can no more amass agency for the future than they can warehouse sunshine for a rainy day. Indicative of this trend, even the grammatical structure of the term “girls’ agency” illustrates the assumed possessive relation between girls and agency as a thing they can wield. Left untheorized, “girls’ agency” thus operates as a sort of fairy

tale that references an impossible reality of girls equipping themselves with agency. Complicating the problem of possession, scholarship on girls' agency is often left without direction or purpose (R. N. Brown 2009). While much scholarship exists on ways to improve girls' levels of empowerment, rarely do empowerment programs for girls state why girls might need such power or how such empowerment will benefit them. Indeed, girls' studies scholars have addressed how girls' agency becomes commercialized in a process that constitutes a neoliberal girl subject (Harris 2004b).

Patterned on the frame of *no longer/not yet,* girlhood marks the space between nature and culture. By incorporating the insights of feminist science studies into the concepts underpinning girls' studies, it becomes clear how theories of girls' agency and sexuality can be reevaluated within feminist scholarship. Like agency, empowerment is not a quantity one can possess. Empowerment is better conceptualized as a location within a field of power relations. In this way, an empowered subject position is *any* subject position. For example, a girl experiences empowerment as she resists discrimination in her classroom. Or, less heroically, a girl also experiences empowerment as she ignores discrimination in her classroom. Both of these experiences of empowerment illustrate how empowerment, as the qualitative experience that is agency, does not have pre-determined allegiances to morality. To be empowered is simply to be located within power, within a field of always possible intra-actions. Thus, like any subject or object, a girl cannot possess empowerment as a quality of her being. Nor could she definitively "become empowered" by participating in a social service program or reading feminist blogs

for teens, as a cluster of girls' studies research suggests (Kearney 2006; Currie 1999; Gateward and Pomerance 2002; Lamb and Peterson 2012). While the effects of social services, educational programs, popular culture, and social media, and are certainly important to analyze, these initiatives cannot be conceptualized as offering doses of empowerment that inoculate girls against systems of oppression.

In other words, if the impetus for girls' agency is never named, girls' studies scholarship leaves its readers confused as to what girls ought to be agential *in relation to*. This absence occurs ostensibly so that girls' agency can function more capaciously and be more generally applicable. The problem here is not to locate or determine a referent for girls' empowerment. The generalizing potential of an empty term like agency is alluring, especially in the face of girls' perceived vulnerability to a mass bombardment of negative cultural messages. Rather, the problem remains conceptual. Barad's articulation of agency is clear: agency is a quality among intra-actions. A reader of Barad will note that such encounters do not respect the limits of the subject that we assign. The intra-actions that enable Barad to theorize agential realism clarify how agential encounters happen across and within fictive boundaries. Barad qualifies her thoughts on agency by explicating how other theorists have relegated agency to the domain of the liberal human subject. She writes, "for both Butler and Foucault, agency belongs only to the human domain, and neither addresses the nature of technoscientific practices and their profoundly productive effects on human bodies, as well as the ways in which these practices are deeply implicated in what constitutes the human, and more generally the workings

of power" (Barad 2007, 145–146).[14] Here, Barad criticizes the centralization of the figure of the individual in theorizations of power.[15] Given Barad's argument that agency qualifies not just human matter but all forms of matter, her emphasis on agency as a form of relation becomes sharper. By emphasizing the role of relation, her theory of agential realism yields significant implications for reconceptualizing girls' agency in the deadening of relationships that marks girlhood (Gilligan 1996; Taylor, Gilligan, and Sullivan 1995; Gilligan, Rogers, and Tolman 1991; L. M. Brown and Gilligan 1992).

Evaluating and seeking to improve girls' levels of agency and empowerment remains a significant theoretical pattern that is apparent in feminist writing on girls and girlhood. By noting this pattern, I do not mean to disparage feminist scholars' attempts to advocate and improve the lived experiences of girls. Rather, I hope to complicate the existing work on girls' agency by connecting this research to recent shifts in feminist thinking on agency in other fields. Certainly, the tendency to emphasize individual agency persists within much scholarship on human experience and is not isolated to girls' studies, or feminist scholarship more generally. Still, feminist scholars belabor agency with clear reason. To this end, it is critical to acknowledge the feminist academic spirit out of which concerns for girls'

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[14] While Barad's larger point holds, it is important to note that Foucault invites a variety of readings suggesting how power works among non-human domains. See especially, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences.*

[15] Recent scholarship on girlhood decenters the individual as the object of analysis—turning instead to group identity practices, for example—and has incorporated intersectional analyses of girls' experiences, thereby challenging the initial figure of the girl as a subject unmarked by race or class dimensions. Examples of recent scholarship that exemplifies this decentering include: Jessica Taft's *Rebel Girls* (See especially the chapters: "We Are Not the Future" and "We Are Not Ophelia") and Mary Thomas' *Mutlicultural Girlhood*.

agency emerge. Indeed, one can sense the politicized concern for girls that motivates many feminist theorists to devote their scholarship to girlhood.

This chapter's critique of agency follows a broader theoretical shift into how feminist theorists, girls' studies scholars included, conceptualize what it means to be a gendered subject and to have agency. This revaluation of agency comes with its own effects. Indeed, if girls' studies scholars no longer hinge an account of agency on the figure of girls' subjectivity alone, questions about the material, historical, phenomenological, and structural relations between girlhood and power open to another register of analysis. This opening enables me to disarticulate the shared conceptual foundations of the figure of the girl and agency in order to theorize girlhood within a queer-feminist frame. As this section demonstrates, feminist theories of girlhood generate from the premise of the girl as a subject who negotiates *social* identity while managing the *biological* changes of puberty. At the heart of this premise is an assumption that a girl is an agential subject who regularly makes choices that lead to her achievement. This implicit concept of the agential subject emerges through rubrics of both humanism and psychology. I return to this thread in depth in Chapter Two, through an analysis of how the rise of the psy-sciences defines childhood and adolescence as a period of biological and social development.

Scholarship that focuses on girls' agency reflects the figure of the girl as being situated between childhood and adulthood. A standard and uncomplicated narrative about the relation among sex, gender, and sexuality is that individuals are first sexed at birth (or just before), then gendered during childhood, and sexualized

through the course of adolescence. Of course, much feminist scholarship reflects this reductive linear model for thinking about sex, gender, and sexuality. Feminist and queer complications of this narrative argue that the work of these processes are inherently messy and that the work of becoming a sexed, gendered, and sexualized subject can never be fully achieved (Butler 1993; Butler 1999; Fausto-Sterling, Anne 2000; Bartky 1990). Even within theoretical criticisms of the assumed linear development of sex, gender, and sexuality, there continues to be a trend to think about sex as a biological (albeit not essentialized), gender as something that is socialized (and necessarily discursive), and sexuality as an interactive product of one's particular circumstances of being sexed and gendered. Such a model continues to align sex with nature and gender with culture. This conceptual model locates sexuality as the happy interactionist product of an imagined play between nature and culture, sex and gender. One way of articulating sexuality within such an interactionist framework is to say this: *Sexuality is knowing what to do with what one has*. This sentence locates sexuality as a product of what is assumed to be the passive biological body (what one has) and the active cultural behavior (what to do). Moreover, this formulation references sexuality as related to a structure or knowledge, of knowing what to do with what one has.

Conclusion

At every turn of *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir emphasizes the non-linear, messy, what she terms "unclean" processes which create masculine and feminine subject positions. I highlight Beauvoir's insistence that girlhood is a period of transitions and shifts, rather than a developmental achievement over the body or a simplistic

becoming-woman that limits the girl to a future of negation and passivity. Beauvoir's insistence on the ambiguity of the feminine subject returns her, through phenomenological analyses, to the ambiguity of the subject. Her phenomenological account of girlhood enables her to conceptualize girlhood as an ambiguous time during which the girl is uniquely aware of the condition of her shifting relations to gender, sex, and sexuality.

Beauvoir's refusal to theorize girlhood as an opportunity for triumphant transcendence or steady development concerns contemporary girls' studies scholars. Kearney, echoing the mainstream sentiments of girls' studies scholars, criticizes Beauvoir for limiting her analysis to a teleological frame in which girls are only interesting philosophically in as much as they elucidate "what [Beauvoir] saw as her larger and more important project: the social construction of women" (2009, 11). As this chapter demonstrates, Kearney's assessment is an inaccurate evaluation of Beauvoir's attention to girlhood. To be sure, Beauvoir does theorize the girl in her relation to the figure of woman. Yet the social construction of woman is by no means Beauvoir's "more important project" at the expense of girlhood (2009, 11). Instead, the critical thrust of *The Second Sex* is not the figure of woman with the end game of women's transcendence. Rather, the conceptual significance *The Second Sex* offers is its analysis of the status of femininity as being trapped in an asymmetrical relation to masculinity. This is what captivates Beauvoir and motivates her discussion of women's liberation.

Pulling out the thread of girlhood within *The Second Sex,* my analysis in this chapter has not sought to author a working definition of girlhood. Instead, by

turning to the framework Beauvoir outlines, I show how the theoretical framework of no longer/not yet is implicit to girlhood. The *no longer/not yet* framework has important repercussions for situating girlhood as an object of inquiry. The framework shuttles scholars between two possibilities that are necessarily impossible for the girl. Forced into the space of the double negative, the girl achieves an awkward existence. Her capacity to be both *no longer* and *not yet* situates her as a subject who holds a precarious position in relation to development.

Distinct from the language of development, which assumes and anticipates psychological and physiological growth that the body achieves over time, Beauvoir's descriptions of girlhood as a period of sloppy shifts—rife with painful and recursive transitions—provides conceptual distance from theorizing girlhood as a project of subject-driven transcendence over the body and over time. Beauvoir's methodological coupling of phenomenological experience with philosophical analysis returns her to the ambiguity of the subject. Beauvoir's analysis thus insists on conceptualizing girlhood as an ambiguous time during which the figure of the girl maintains a unique awareness of the conditions of her shifting relations to sex, gender, and sexuality.

By reading the figure of the girl as more complex than a struggle between subject and object, how might we account for the proper object of girls' studies? This question revivifies what I see as a central question for girls' studies: How has empowerment become so tightly linked to what it means to be a girl? In this chapter, I have explored possible answers to this question by returning to

Beauvoir's theorization of the asymmetrical pattern of theorizing nature and culture in order to reframe the concepts upon which girls' studies depends.

Given the girl's figural status as a passage to becoming woman and her fraught relation to agency, it becomes clear that discourses of empowerment operate through relatively unacknowledged concepts of the feminine subject and agency. Girls' studies deploys theories of subjectivity and agency; these theories share conceptual foundations that can be disarticulated only through situating these premises within an account of the growth of psychosexual knowledge. In the following chapter, I analyze the epistemological functions of generalization, naturalization, and individualization, that secured the psy-sciences' knowledge of the subject.

Chapter 2:
The Development of the Psychological Sciences and Girlhood

This chapter historicizes the girl and the psy-sciences as products of a scientific sexuality and argues that girlhood reflects the early epistemic shifts of sexuality and emerging sciences of the psyche. This chapter argues that the concept of girlhood, as a sexual figure, is inseparable from the epistemological frame of psy-sciences. Historically, the demand for scientific knowledge about sexuality coincides with the rise of the psy-sciences.

The historical view of this chapter uses Foucault to theorize how the psy-sciences became the sciences of sexuality, and more critically, the truth of individuals and how this truth secured itself within the figure of the child. This chapter surveys the major mechanisms of generalizing, naturalizing, and universalizing, that enable it to claim its status as truth. Indeed, the tightness of these truth claims and the difficulty in challenging the assumptions of developmental psychology has led the vast majority of feminist psychologists to abandon developmental psychology for the more amenable fields of social psychology, neuropsychology, and clinical psychology, among others.

Focusing on the early decades of the psycho-scientific inquiry, I borrow Nikolas Rose's term "psy-sciences" to refer to the cluster of sciences and practices that locate the human psyche as their object of analysis (Rose, Nikolas 1996). This capacious term includes the broad categories such as psychoanalysis, psychology, and psychiatry. Each of these fields of inquiry has its own complex histories that include differing theoretical approaches, objectives, methods, and subfields. The

proliferation of subfields within psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and psychology over the course of the 20th century forms the context in which the figure of the girl appears as a product of the psy-sciences. This chapter thus simultaneously historicizes how the girl acts as a catalyst for new psychological insights and the continued proliferation of psychosexual knowledge.[16]

In doing so, this chapter offers a sort of genealogy of girlhood as a product and catalyst of psychosexual knowledge. Foucault's method of genealogy, as a "history of the present," offers a history of how present conditions emerged from disparate, multiple, and strange factors that are both known and unknown. As a method, genealogy creates movement around the object of genealogical inquiry. Foucault describes genealogy as a method that "disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined as consistent with itself" (Foucault 2000, 2:139). Genealogy thus has a transformative effect on its object. This chapter shifts contemporary understandings of girlhood by locating the figure of the girl as a psychosexual figure. By focusing on the figure of the girl in its relation to psychosexual knowledge, I demonstrate how the co-constitutive histories of the psy-sciences and sexuality define girlhood as an ahistorical and universal period of psychosexual development that shuttles female children to womanhood. Contra this definition of girlhood, a genealogical reading of the figure of the girl via the discourses of the psy-sciences broadly, and early developmental psychologies of adolescence specifically, transforms how we understand the girl in contemporary

[16] I refer to the imbrication of psychology, sexuality, and knowledge as psychosexual knowledge.

psychology, as I demonstrate in Chapter 3. This transformative effect yields a figure of a girl who carries the ideological residue of early psychological theories.

In his lectures *Abnormal,* Foucault's outlines how the psychological sciences became the quintessential sciences of sexuality. Foucault argues that abnormality, normalization, naturalization, generalization, and individualization are formative techniques for establishing the psy-sciences as a primary site of sexuality. Much scholarship influenced by Foucault assesses the figure of the abnormal individual and the technologies of normalization that target the individual (O'Grady 2005; Bell 1993; Butler 1993; Downing and Husband 2005; D. R. Egan 2013). Specifically, such scholarship includes research that employs Foucault's theories of disciplinary power and biopower. These studies elucidate how abnormality is produced around figures of sexual deviance, such as the pedophile, and how processes of normalization, specifically in their disciplinary and biopolitical dimensions, function in relation to power. Studies of specific demographics of girls regularly turn to scholarship on abnormality and technologies of normalization such as criminology, schooling, sex education, and public health, to make their claims (J. Miller 2008; Bettie 2003; Thomas 2011; Fine and McClelland 2007). Against this scholarly backdrop, the majority of this chapter focuses on the remaining three factors Foucault suggests constitute how sexuality came into the domain of the psy-sciences. These factors are naturalization, generalization, and individualization. In order to build my argument about psychosexual knowledge and the girl, I limit my analysis to: naturalization in relation to the psychological concept of the development of the sexual instinct; generalization in relation to the figure of the

child; and individualization in relation to present trends in contemporary psychological scholarship on girlhood.

Before addressing how the psy-sciences became the privileged sciences of sexuality, it is necessary to trace the more subtle movement of the psy-sciences and sexuality into a shared domain of knowledge. The psy-sciences and sexuality share an epistemological history. In tracing this history, I clarify that psychological knowledge is a sexualized knowledge and that sexuality is a deployment of knowledge that cannot be disarticulated from the psychological frame. This overview enables me to move toward theorizing how the figure of the girl became a sexualized product of the psy-sciences.

Part 1: Sexuality as Science

Before the emergence of psychosexual knowledge, modern sexuality had to become an object of scientific inquiry. Reflecting on the sciences of sexual deviance in 1950, two physicians working in the United States describe the scientific turn, "The enigma of sex has challenged man's intellectual curiosity for ages. Only within the past century has there been a scientific recognition of sex as a major factor in life" (1950, xiii). Indeed, Foucault suggests that the years 1844 and 1845 mark the beginning of the psy-sciences, organized around drives and instincts (Foucault 2003, 282). Taking up the question of science and sexuality in *History of Sexuality: Volume One,* Foucault describes in detail the ways in which sexuality became a domain of science.

The production of scientific knowledge about sexuality relies on several technologies to gain the epistemological traction necessary to make claims about a

pattern as nuanced as sexuality. Foucault charts five technologies through which the sciences came to produce knowledge about sexuality. In this section, I provide a brief overview of these five technologies that secure the relationship between scientific knowledge and sexuality. I follow this with an extended discussion of how the sciences of sexuality necessarily became sciences of the psyche. This necessity is due to the importance of an individual's interiority—of having psychological depth—in order for sexuality to nest within the subject's interiority, develop outward, and make itself a thing to be known.

In *History of Sexuality, Volume One,* Foucault lists five technologies that secure the sciences' grip on modern sexuality, and sexuality's grip on modern sciences. First, the "clinical inducement to speak" references how the provocation to speak about sexuality became contained within the clinical setting (1978, 65). In order to gain the authority of sciences, inquiries into sexuality became located in a clinical encounter. In this sterile exchange, the medical expert examined the sexual subject by inciting the subject to speak about himself. Behind the curtain of the clinical encounter, sexuality and the sciences entangled.[17] The second means by which sexuality became a scientific domain is through the theoretical approaches to sexuality that "postulat[e] a general and diffuse causality" (1978, 65). At the conceptual level, science made sexuality a sustainable resource for knowledge by endowing it with an "inexhaustible and polymorphous causal power" (1978, 65). With no clear cause to anchor it, sexuality collapsed into scientific uncertainty;

[17] The Charcot effect evidences how neither science nor sexuality maintains dominance; the relation of science and sexuality hinges on multiple, known and unknown, entanglements. For an extended discussion of the Charcot effect, see the final lecture in Foucault's lectures, *Psychiatric Power.*

sexuality thus became an open epistemological problem that invited scientific inquiry to explain itself to itself. Still, the "inexhaustible and polymorphous" terrain of sexuality's cause remained contingent on the roles of the generalization and diffusion of causality. Both generalization and diffusion obfuscated the locations of sexuality's cause. This obfuscation invested an already rampant causality with unique dimensions of power precisely since the cause of sexuality could no longer be known through sciences of particularity. The problem of causality made science's role clear: in the face of general and diffuse causality, science set parameters for the possibilities of cause. For sexuality, these parameters became the limits of the subject; these parameters would find their expanse within the growing figure of the child. The relation between childhood and sexuality thus very quietly became an onto-epistemological problem. As an onto-epistemological problem, childhood sexuality allowed for gross generalizations about adult sexuality given the endless source of references to childhood. In Part II of this chapter, I return to generalization and childhood sexuality in my analysis of how the psy-sciences anchors its leverage on sexuality within childhood, allowing itself to make generalizations about populations as well as to create explanations for sexual deviations when there is no apparent cause.

Related to the function of general and diffuse causality, scientific knowledge and sexuality came together through the "principle of sexual latency" and the method of interpretation (Foucault 1978, 66). In making sexuality a latent phenomenon that ought to emerge from within the subject, the psy-sciences posited interiority within the subject that did not exist before. Foucault theorizes that the

"*causal* power of sex" was "partly clandestine" within the subject, hidden within the subject's psychological interiority (1978, 66). Here, what is important is not the formation of the psychological subject as such. Rather, it is important to note the looming causal power of a secret interiority within the subject that could not be fully accessed by the subject. This interiority becomes the domain of the clinical encounter. The principle of sexual latency, predicated on this interiority, suggests that sexuality is obscure and elusive (1978, 66); it is something that always holds something back. Through sexuality's tendency to have an obscure and elusive quality through the function of psychological interiority, sexuality became a phenomenon that the psy-sciences could mine endlessly for new knowledge. Moreover, the principle of sexual latency paved the way for the psy-sciences' theorizing of sexual development as the flourishing of an innate, yet latent, sexuality. The fourth means by which sexuality becomes an object of scientific inquiry is by deploying the "method of interpretation" (1978, 66–67). This technology demands that the sexual confession be recorded and assessed in order to secure its alignment with scientific objectivity. The method of interpretation is related to the first technology concerning the clinical setting. Expanding within the clinical setting, there is now something *to do*—a procedure for making knowledge claims about sexuality and thus ascertaining the truth of the subject through sexuality. Psychoanalysis, as one branch of the psy-sciences, is built around this interpretive method. In making the confession of sexual acts a sign and symptom of an interior sexuality, psychoanalysis provided itself with the *cause* to investigate the depths of the psyche, as a new frontier of knowledge.

Finally, sexuality falls into the domain of the sciences through the "medicalization of the effects of confession" (Foucault 1978, 67). Related to the method of interpretation, medicalization occurs as an evaluation of the material that interpretation yields. Through medicalization, sexuality begins to derive meaning and necessity from medical registers of truth. Behavior that now is understood as sexually charged first took its meaning from the framework of medicine that incited a confession within a clinical context, interpreted the latent sexuality in that confession, and thereby medicalized the sexual subject.[18] The truth yielded by the medicalized confession had transformative, and thus therapeutic, value. In short, the truth of sex healed. Through the act of confessing one's sexual behavior to a doctor, the doctor could treat the subject not only through examinations, but also by refracting sexuality back upon the subject. It is important to distinguish that, for Foucault, the confession itself is not medicalized[19]. Rather, the *effects* of the confession are the ground of medicalization. Accordingly, Foucault argues in his analysis of confession in *Volume One,* that one of the effects of confession is that it transforms the confessing subject. As a technology of sexuality, confession transforms the subject into one who is both sexual and *able to be known*. The ability for a sexuality to be known at the level of the individual subject set the stage for the psychological sciences.

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[18] Foucault argues that "medicine and sexuality were brought together into contact through the family…The family itself became an agent of the medicalization of sexuality within its own space"(Foucault 2003, 253). In this way, the family becomes "a relay or transmission belt between the child's body and the doctor's technique" (2003, 252). Medicalization and the family surround the child's body in the space of the bed, where sexuality comes to lie with the child.

[19] Moreover, before the advent of medicalizing the confession, the truth of the confession was divined in a religious context. The new technique of medicalization marks a secularizing and scientific turn in claiming the truth of the subject.

Part II: Psychology as the Science of Sexuality

The remainder of the chapter uses a Foucauldian frame to trace how the psy-sciences became the privileged scientific domain of sexuality. Five functions situate the psy-sciences as the privileged sciences of sexuality. I glean these functions from *Abnormal;* they include the recognition of abnormality, normalization, naturalization, generalization, and individualization. I gloss the first two functions—the recognition of abnormality and normalization—because, as I state earlier, there is already much scholarship that uses these functions as theoretical frameworks. Following a brief overview of abnormality and normalization, I move more slowly through the remaining three functions: naturalization, generalization, and individualization. I complement my analysis of how these three functions facilitate psychological knowledge with citations from early psychological texts that illustrate Foucault's insights. This analysis allows me to argue that the figure of the girl is produced by, as much as she catalyzes, the psychological sciences. Central to this broader argument is the specific claim the psy-sciences authorize themselves through their claims to know the truth of the subject, in a system where truth is already collapsed with sexuality. The psy-sciences thus generate themselves as functions that project the truth of sexuality (Foucault 2003, 6).

1. Recognition of Abnormals

Foucault argues that sometime between 1845 and 1850, a novel interest in sexual abnormality became the domain of proto-psychological inquiry, which enabled sexuality to become a central problem of scientific inquiry. The psy-sciences authorize themselves as sciences through their study of the abnormal individual.

Foucault identifies three categories of abnormal figures, each of which manifests sexual abnormality. First is the figure of the monster, which is defined as an aberration of law, nature, and society. Foucault cites the Rouen hermaphrodite as an example of a figure who transgresses the boundaries of law and nature through the expression of a biological sex that resists categorization. Second, the figure of the incorrigible individual marks an aberration of the nature and law. The abnormal valence of the incorrigible individual is evident through the inability to offer evidence of his incorrigibility(2003, 58). Finally, the figure of the masturbator emerges as a particularly dangerous aberration that—more so than the monstrous or the incorrigible figures—consolidated fears about particularly sexual forms abnormality. These three figures remained distinct abnormalities throughout the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. By the middle of the 19th century, ways of knowing and studying human sexual abnormality began to appear alongside a network of knowledge and power that brought these three figures together into the psychological field of sexual abnormality (2003, 61).

Over the latter half of the 19th century, figures of abnormal sexuality became more than mere aberrations. Foucault writes, “Sexual abnormality initially appears as a series of particular cases of abnormality…around 1880-1890 it emerges as the root, foundation, and general etiological principle of most other forms of abnormality” (2003, 168). In this way, the sexual aberrations that came into the purview of the psy-sciences formed the sciences for understanding sexual abnormality. Foucault notes, “The need for a scientific discourse on sexuality and its anatomical organization appears, and is theorized, with the case of the Rouen

hermaphrodite" (2003, 71). The Rouen hermaphrodite—as the first abnormal figure of sexual sciences—elicited scientific study while simultaneously laying the groundwork for the nascent psy-sciences to form.

Psychological inquiry arranged and applied scientific principles to figures of abnormality in order to provide a new range of possible answers for human behavior. In 1840, Heinrich Kaan wrote the first psychological study of abnormal sexual behaviors, which he termed *psychopathia sexualis* (2003, 233). Significantly, Kaan's treatise was both the first and the last psychological treatise written in the Classical scientific language of Latin. In 1844, Krafft-Ebing published *Psychopathia Sexualis* in the colloquial language of German (2003, 259). By publishing in German, French, and other vernacular languages, the psy-sciences followed broader scientific trends that established themselves as Modern sciences accessible by a broader audience. During the latter half of the 19th century, Stekel, Hirschfeld, Charcot, Breuer, Freud, Moll, Bloch, Raffalovitch, and Ellis continued to establish the psy-sciences as a field of scientific inquiry, complete with scientific methods for describing and treating sexual abnormality. The psy-sciences hold on sexuality formed through theorizing both abnormal and normal sexuality at the level of the individual subject. The turn to studying sexual normality was made possible by theories that center the significance of the sexual instinct (Freud 2000) and sexual impulse (Moll 1921) as the cause of sexual behavior that exceeded the reproductive imperative. The capacity for the sexual instinct to become the cause of a now normal and regulatory psychosexual subjectivity marks its tightened relation to power-knowledge.

2. Normalization.

Psychological inquiry into sexuality centers around the sciences of norms. During the 19th century, normalization emerged as a regulatory form of productive power within the domain of sexuality.[20] As a function of modernity more broadly, normalization is not limited to the psychological sciences. As Foucault argues, "the emergence of the power of normalization, the way in which it has been formed, the way in which it has established itself without ever resting on a single institution but by establishing interactions between different institutions" highlights the fundamental role of normalization on organizing modern life (2003, 26). Normalization includes a variety of technologies that discipline, regulate, examine, survey, and modify normality at both the level of the individual and the population. The fundamental normalizing technologies of the psychological sciences include categorizing and describing sexual abnormalities in order to explain and treat these abnormalities, which allows the psychological sciences to conceptualize normal sexuality (2003, 50). The psy-sciences thus task themselves with the taxonomic project of defining and ordering sexual disorders (2003, 278). In fulfilling this task, a ground swell of treatises and taxonomies on sexual psychopathology were published between 1840 and 1930s (Hirschfeld, Kaan, Krafft-Ebbing, Moll, Stekel, Raffalovitch, etc.).[21]

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[20] Before the system of sexuality, there was a negative power of exclusion, of casting out, which manifested in the Great Confinement. The negative power of exclusion is aligned with the feminine (Irigaray 1992). Concomitant with the rise of the deployment of sexuality, the normalizing force of science emerges as a productive power of inclusion that is masculinized in its will to know.

[21] The contemporary iteration of these catalogs of sexual abnormality are contained by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, which monitors and reviews the comprehensive scope of psychopathologies. The DSM arranges and describes all mental illness and revises itself according to socio-scientific changes. Over the last fifty years, several significant changes to the DSM have concerned disorders

The taxonomic practice of the psychological sciences makes positive knowledge claims by indexing, arranging, and describing sexual aberrations. Some of the earliest psychosexual aberrations include masturbation, pederasty, "lesbian love" (which—not limited to females—applied to any person desiring someone of their sex), necrophilia, and bestiality, among others. The categories of these aberrations not only described behavioral manifestations. Rather, the process of categorization extended to include theorizing the cause of sexual abnormality. In doing so, conceptual questions about sexual abnormality laid the ground for the psychological sciences to theorize normal sexuality. More significantly, this led to theorizing sexual development during puberty as a hallmark of normal and natural sexual development.

3. Naturalization and the Sexual Instinct

Co-extensive with normalization, the psy-sciences naturalize sexuality as a constitutive part of the normal individual. The psy-sciences achieve this by defining the sexual instinct as a latent force, which is both biologically driven and environmentally sensitive. In this view, sexuality's grip comes from an innate force that is initially latent and begins to manifest during childhood and adolescence within the contingent conditions of the child and adolescent's primary environment—the family.

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related to sexuality either at the level of cause or at the level of abnormal behavior. One of the most celebrated examples includes the removal of homosexuality from the DSM in 1973, even though it was immediately supplanted by Sexual Orientation Disorders. There is a significant body of scholarship that reviews how the history of psychological disorders overlaps with historical changes in how gender, race, sex, and other forms of social difference are understood (Chesler, Gilligan, Metzl, J. B. Miller etc.)

The theorization of sexual instinct (also referred to as drive, tendency, or impulse) naturalizes sexuality as a process that unfolds from inside the individual. As the psychological sciences' field of inquiry and intervention expanded across the individual's life span, the psy-sciences became confronted with a new task: The psy-sciences could no longer perform their generalizing, scientific function unless they could organize themselves around a unified field of sexuality anchored by regulatory fictions such as the development of sexual instinct (2003, 276). Under this weight, the concept of sexual instinct becomes capable of explaining sexuality. By the end of the 19th century, the problem for the psy-sciences is no longer to determine what causes sexuality. Instead, the psy-sciences become focused on theorizing an instinct-based sexuality (2003, 277). While sexuality operates as the epistemological ground of the psy-sciences, naturalizing theories of individual sexual instinct ensure the psy-sciences' epistemological authority and thus authorize its ability to make knowledge claims about the psychosexual subject.

Theorizations of instinct-based sexuality begin with what Freud referred to as the awakening of the sexual instinct. Foucault notes that within the domain of "medical knowledge-power there is an element whose concept is being worked out at this time: This is the notion of a sexual 'tendency' or 'instinct'…destined to escape the heterosexual and exogamous norm" (2003, 275). Thus, in securing its status as scientific, the psy-sciences are able—in theory—to relate the development of the sexual instinct to the formation of every mental illness and every psychological behavioral disorder. In this way, the psy-sciences procure "methods of analysis,

concepts, and theories such that within psychology, and without going outside it, it is possible to pass from infantile amnesia to murder…" (2003, 276).

The psy-sciences endow the development of the sexual instinct not only with the capacity to become abnormal, but also with the task of reproduction as a formal and normalizing cause of sexuality. While the psychological sciences confer the task of reproduction as a normative outcome of the sexual instinct, the sexual instinct remains fragile because it is "too early, precocious, and wide," thus it is susceptible to abnormalities and it is easily impressionable and vulnerable to deviations that would thwart the reproductive imperative (Foucault 2003, 279).[22]

In what follows, I belabor how the psy-sciences, predominantly following Freud, located the cause of sexuality in the development of the sexual instinct. As I elaborate, the psy-sciences anchor the beginning of sexual development in childhood. While the psy-sciences conceptualized sexual instinct as a fundamental and natural component of sexuality, it was not until a theory of *how* sexuality came forth in the individual that sexuality became naturalized. Theories of sexual awakening riveted early psychological scientists precisely because these theories offered an elusive and measurable context against which adult sexual normality and abnormality could be understood. These theories are the first attempts to define sexual development. The awakening of the sexual instinct paved the way for the psychological sciences to elaborate theories of sexual development that—beyond sexuality—incorporate the subject's understanding of herself as sexed, gendered, and sexualized over the course of developmental stages. In this way, theories of

[22] In his work on sexual psychopathology, Heinrich Kaan argues that sexual abnormalities are a natural effect of the development of sexuality.

sexual development—contingent on, but not determined by, sex and gender—became the bedrock for theorizing abnormality, especially in psychological hindsight. Now, the psy-sciences could ask new questions: What went wrong in a given individual's developmental history? When, how, and through what processes does sexuality form? The psy-sciences continues to study these questions from both biological and environmental perspectives.

Freud's theory of sexual awakening in his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* gives necessary traction in order to problematize the early theoretical history of sexual development. While other psychologists theorized sexuality (Ellis, Havelock 1927; Hirschfeld, Magnus 1940) and sexologists theorized development (Moll 1921), Freud is distinct in his articulation of a psychological account of sexuality that begins to develop during childhood. Indeed, *Three Essays* both consolidated contemporaneous insights and served as a touchstone for future psychological and sexological theories of sexual development. Freud acknowledged the importance of his work on the "awakening" of the sexual instinct during childhood. He writes, "So far as I know, not a single author has clearly recognized the regular existence of a sexual instinct [*Sexualtriebes]* in childhood" (Freud 2000, 108). Affirming the significance of Freud's claim, psy-sciences continued to refer to Freud's *Three Essays* as aggregating disciplinary questions around the development of sexuality. In their 1950 book, *Sexual Deviations,* United States psychiatrists London and Caprio write, "Only the psychoanalysts have truly sought, in the train of Freud, to understand the psychogenesis of homosexuality" (London, Louis and Caprio, Frank S. 1950, 20). Freud centered his research on the ways in which

abnormal sexuality could be traced to developmental aberrations of the sexual instinct. Gesturing toward the sexual instinct, Freud writes, "The importance of all early sexual manifestations is increased by a psychical factor of unknown origin, which at the moment, it must be admitted can only be brought forward as a provisional psychological concept" (2000, 108).

Reading Freud's account of the sexual instinct through the Foucauldian frame of this chapter necessitates that I read for *how* a psychologized theory of innate sexual instinct, awakened by external factors, increased the scientific authority of the psy-sciences. As I detail following my analysis of sexual instinct in Freud, the psy-sciences continued to gain scientific esteem through processes of generalization, which include theories of sexual development as they unfold during childhood, and individualization, which involves a distinctive tethering of sexuality to the individual as a psychosexual subject.

Freud's theories toward understanding the awakening of sexuality mark what Biddy Martin calls the naturalization of sexuality and the sexualization of the subject (B. Martin 1988, 8). Freud writes,

> One feature of the popular view of the sexual instinct [Geschlectstrieb] is that it is absent in childhood and only awakens in the period of life described as puberty…A thorough study of the sexual manifestations of childhood would probably reveal the essential characters of the sexual instinct and would show us the course of its development and the way it is put together from various sources (2000, 39).

Against the popular view that the sexual instinct presents itself during adolescence, Freud argues that it is present and active in childhood. While Foucault and Freud are both concerned with the status of cause in relation to a scientific

account of sexuality, they offer distinct insights. Taking a broader perspective, Foucault speaks to the ways in which the psy-sciences naturalize a purported cause of sexuality. Freud, taking a narrower scope, naturalizes the development of the sexual instinct by dislocating the cause of sexual development from the assumed effect of external factors. Indeed, Freud directly addresses the question of the cause of sexuality in the penultimate sentence of the conclusion to the *Three Essays* (2000, 109). Freud's location of cause as an antecedent to childhood has important implications for understanding the naturalization of the sexual instinct within an organismic theory of child development. The sexual instinct becomes ever more natural as it is now a force that is independent of the presence of particular external forces. In this way, the sexual instinct is not only naturalized, but also generalized in its ubiquity.

Early writings emerging from the psy-sciences, particularly those emblematized by Freud, shifted the relationship between sexuality and knowledge. These shifts naturalized the sexual instinct through a scientific frame. In doing so, knowledge about sexuality shifted from a familiar form of knowledge to a scientific knowledge of sexuality. Specifically, Freud theorized sexuality through the German verb *kennen* ("to know"), a verb that defines knowing not as scientific but as experiential, intimate, and familiar. This verb choice elicits a shift from previous knowledge claims about sexuality through the lexical use of w*issen* ("to know"), another German verb that defines knowing as a detached and objective form of

scientific knowing.[23] Similarly, Foucault's use of the verbs *savoir* and *connaître* (both French verbs meaning "to know") in *Volume One,* denotes the epistemic shifts in sexuality. Foucault predominantly uses *savoir* (as the French equivalent of *wissen)* to argue that the deployment of sexuality is inextricable from modern forms of scientific knowing. Accordingly, Foucault uses the verb *savoir* throughout *Volume One* to highlight that this particular knowledge relation of *Scientia Sexualis* is distant, objective, and clinical. Accordingly, Foucault switches between *savoir* and *connaître* in his discussion of the historical changes in the emergence of modern sexuality. Surprisingly, the more familiar and intimate verb *connaître* sneaks into the last section of *Volume One.* It is significant that Foucault does not conclude *Volume One* with *savoir*. Instead, Foucault's last use of a verb for "to know" is *connaître*. In doing so, he turns us back to another time, a time that textures our present familiarity with sex while simultaneously cautioning us that this familiarity is filtered through the scientific discourses of modern sexuality.

The naturalization of sexuality, specifically through psychological theories of sexual development, located childhood as the first possible scene of sexuality. Paula Fass, a historian noted for theorizing the child as a modern concept, argues that Freud, writing against the backdrop of Enlightenment theories of childhood, disturbs the possibility of an adult having immediate and unfiltered access to his childhood memories.[24] Fass argues that Freud's thesis of a relative inaccessibility to

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[23] I return to the familiarization of knowledge about sexuality, via Foucault's emphasis on the family as a switchpoint between system of alliance and the deployment of sexuality later in this chapter and again in Chapter 4.

[24] Fass cites Freud as laying the foundation for a modern suspicion of childhood memories. Drawing on the Enlightenment and its theories of memory and childhood via Locke and Rousseau, Fass argues

childhood memory, compared to the immediate access suggested by Enlightenment thinkers, leads to contemporary suspicions of childhood memories and to a suspicion of children's memories of their immediate experiences (Fass, Paula 2010). Fass presents us with two figures of childhood: an adult who remembers going to a park as a child 40 years ago and the child who remembers what happened on the playground yesterday. I want to emphasize how in each of Fass's examples, the child (both the adult who remembers herself 40 years ago and the child who remembers herself yesterday) is rendered as naturally impressionable. Being impressionable keeps both forms of children from claiming a status as knower in modern context. In this way, Fass argues that Freud throws into question not only debates about childhood memory, but also the status of children as having knowledge about their experiences.

4. Generalization.

Psychological inquiry acquires scientific leverage by generalizing theories of sexuality. A fundamental way the psy-sciences generalize is by anchoring sexuality in the childhood. As queer theorists Steven Bruhm and Natasha Hurley note, "The modern-day queer is unthinkable without the modern child" (Hurley 2004, xiv). In returning repeatedly to Freud, queer theory finds a dense articulation of the psychogenesis of adult sexuality in the generalized sexuality of the child (2004, xix). In what follows, I move beyond Freud and childhood in order to account for psychological theories of sexual development as constitutive of adolescence. While the previous section historicizes the naturalization of the sexual instinct within

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that philosophical questions about the relationship between memory and childhood predate Freud's conceptualization of infantile amnesia (Fass, Paula 2010).

childhood, this section focuses on how psychosexual theories of development generalize sexuality as a natural component of childhood and adolescence. In this section, I briefly discuss the figure of the child, before turning to adolescence. While the psy-sciences locate the sexual instinct as latent and first recognizable during childhood, the psy-sciences more generally align the development of normative sexuality with adolescence.

The psy-sciences must be able to generalize their claims in order to move from analyzing one individual to another, and in order to move to the level of the norms of the population more broadly. As I demonstrate in the previous section, Kaan's work on sexual psychopathology and Freud's theory of sexual latency naturalize human sexuality through their insistence on sexual instinct. Taken in a broader context, the conceptual purchase of naturalization is an effect of generalization (2003, 278). Together, the naturalization and generalization of sexuality within childhood and adolescence make the psy-sciences possible to account for development.

Through generalization, sexuality is constituted not by one cause, but through an indefinite set of causal relations (1978, 68; Siegler, DeLoache, and Eisenberg 2011). Freud argues that "infantile amnesia, which turns everyone's childhood into something like a prehistoric epoch and conceals from him the beginnings of his own sexual life, is responsible for the fact that in general no importance is attached to childhood in the development of sexual life" (2000, 42). Similarly, G. Stanley Hall argued that "[Sexuality] is a plastic force, out of which many interests and achievements may be created. It stands at puberty at the parting

of the ways, where it may be attached merely to the selfish pleasure life of the child or may be converted to the motivation of the interests of the altruistic life of the adult" ("G. Stanley Hall," 316). At the level of the child and adolescent, Freud and Hall theorize sexuality as an impressionable force that cannot be known because it is concealed.

The psy-sciences frame the growth of an individual's sexuality through theories of sexual development that map the child's understanding of gender, sexuality and sexual identity. As stages defined by heteronormative frames, sexual development begins during early childhood when the child becomes aware of an alignment between biological sex and social expectations of gender. During childhood, the sexual instinct appears, but it does not begin to fully present until the onset of puberty, when the young adolescent becomes aware of sexuality. As Steven Angelides succinctly states, "'Childhood' is paired with gender identity formation; 'adolescence' with puberty, sexual fantasy, and emerging erotic identity; and 'adulthood' with fixed sexual identity" (Angelides 2004, 163). In this view, sex is ascribed at birth, gender is acquired during childhood, sexuality is explored during adolescence, and adulthood marks the sedimentation of the three stages that proceed it with a fixed sexual identity.

Writing about the sexuality of children, specifically the cultural imperative for adolescents to actively explore their sexuality, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that it is against an array of dangers that "the essentialist and biologizing understandings of sexual identity accrue a certain gravity" (1993b, 163). The process of essentializing and biologizing is a process that falls within generalization

in the psychosexual regime of truth. The essential, and thus naturalized, characteristic of sexuality is what protects psychological sciences of child and adolescent sexuality from criticism. Since sexuality is a natural experience that is ostensibly at the level of the population, it is scientifically inevitable that children and adolescence will experience sexual desire.

Since the early psychoanalytic writings of Charcot, Janet, and Freud, feminine adolescence has been clinically and discursively constructed as a time of intense and competing sexual desires. Sexual development produces a linear framework to contain and normalize girls' sexuality. Linear frameworks of sexual development chart a clear course for normal development that adheres to the adjustment of sex and birth, gender and childhood, and sexuality and adolescence. This linear rubric enables the psychological sciences to locate girls' sexuality through concepts of puberty and adolescence. Puberty, as a physiological stage of growth is marked by sex and gender and defined by the development of sexual capacities of the body (Deutsch 1947, 256). Adolescence, as a psychological stage of development that runs parallel to puberty, includes the development of sexuality at the level of the subject. While the primary psychological task of adolescence pivots around sexuality, the work of understanding one's gender begins to finally congeal. "A range of developmental tasks emerges in adolescence involving a sense of identity and worth, the capacity for friendship, and psychological intimacy, as well as a more conscious integration of a gender identity" (Worell and Goodheart 2006, 17–18). The figure of the girl catalyzes these stages of sexual development through the physiological onset of menstruation as an indicator of the development of sexual

reproductive capacities in addition to secondary sex characteristics that ostensibly serve as markers of the girl's completed formation as a sexual subject.

In her two volume text *Psychology of Women,* Helene Deutsch, a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who worked with Freud, outlines the stages of feminine adolescence: prepuberty, early puberty, and the final stage of puberty and adolescence. Deutsch writes, "The lines separating [the developmental phases of girlhood] are fluid. The transition…takes place gradually through organic and psychic development" (1947, 19–20). In her book *Female Adolescence in American Scientific Thought, 1830-1930,* Crista DeLuzio assesses early psychological theories about girlhood that enables her to document a complex account of girlhood as a kind of sexual development. Specifically, DeLuzio provides an historical analysis of how "scientists and intellectuals in the U.S. contributed to initial meanings of the concepts of adolescence in general and female adolescence in particular" (2007, 6). For example, DeLuzio argues that G. Stanley Hall's 1904 publication of his two-volume book *Adolescence* occurred against a backdrop of adolescent delinquency and the attempts of child guidance manuals and newly invented juvenile courts to lead adolescents through normal development (2007, 7). Quoting Hall, DeLuzio writes, "[The girl] is now the most intricate and baffling problem perhaps that science has ever yet attacked" (2007, 90). DeLuzio goes on to demonstrate Hall's understanding of adolescence as its own life stage during which either the child individuates successfully into a moral and rational adult or remains stunted at the "savage" level of the child (2007, 90). As the psy-sciences conceptualized the development of adolescence, the concept of sexual development helped to establish

a twentieth century science of child development. Hall emphasized that adolescence is a sexually plastic period during which self-concepts of sex and gender identity are not yet organized or integrated within the individual. Moreover, Hall suggests that girls are at an increased risk for gender identity confusion because the girl is "more likely to assimilate boys' ways during her youth than vice versa" due to girls' "discontent with the requirements of womanhood" (2007, 117). Indeed, Hall emphasized the turbulence of girlhood—a turbulence that is caused by girls having to cope with an unsatisfactory social experience of sexuality and gender compared to masculine adolescence. Hall argues "Perfect health for the girl is attainable only as she progresses according to her own nature, through the steps which constitute the great change from the selfish to the altruistic life" ("G. Stanley Hall," 316). Over a century since Hall's publication of *Adolescence,* the psychological sciences continue to theorize girlhood as a particularly vulnerable developmental period. "Unfortunately [the] female gender encompasses a number of perils to healthy development" (Worell and Goodheart 2006, 15).

DeLuzio illustrates how the scientific invention of adolescence helped to establish a 20th century psychological sciences of child and adolescent development. DeLuzio's historical analysis details how the new science of psychology perceived girls as being caught in a transitive period during which sexuality and gender identity were not yet organized or integrated. DeLuzio shows how the girl is discursively constructed as mysterious in Hall's psychological writings. Quoting Hall again, she writes, "'in all the wide domain of psychology perhaps there is no such terra incognita as the heart of the adolescent girl'" (DeLuzio 2007, 131). Such

discursive constructions of adolescent girlhood shift the analytic focus to girlhood as a perplexing condition of gender while leaving girls' sexuality uninterrogated. DeLuzio's historical analysis documents psychology's role in the discursive construction of girlhood and the interface of psychological explanations with social expectations. These discursive constructions of girlhood render the girl as a figure who is sexually vulnerable precisely because her sexuality is not yet formed.

Following Hall, during the 1920s and 30s, American psychologists came to the consensus that female adolescent sexuality is biologically normal. This insight coincides with new terminology of "sex hormones" and new knowledges about hormonal changes during puberty (DeLuzio 2007). During these decades, proto-feminist psychologists began to theorize girls' sexuality. Their debates focused on the following concerns: first, Hollingsworth and Woolley advocated competing theories as to whether girls have a psychological tendency toward sexual restraint or impulsivity. Second, Dummer, drawing on psychoanalytic frameworks, argues that 'good girls' sublimate their sexual desire into work, service, or leisure and that those girls who do engage in sexual activity are motivated by other emotional conflicts instead of being motivated by a latent sexual desire. Third, Blanchard argues, drawing on psychoanalysis and endocrinology, that girls' temperament is better suited to control sexual impulses than boys' temperament. Blanchard makes this argument based on Havelock Ellis's writings on the role of temper and the diffusion of sexual impulse. Finally, Blanchard and Manasses advocate "sex play" for adolescent girls. They define sex play as any sexually pleasurable activity that excludes vaginal intercourse. Blanchard and Manasses argue that sex play is a

psychologically healthy and a developmentally appropriate balance between sexual expression and sexual control (DeLuzio 2007).

The figure of the girl has become a reservoir of meaning for psy-sciences of sexuality and childhood. The figure of the girl has also become a reservoir of meaning for queer theory, specifically in relation to queer critiques of child and adolescent development. In articulating a queer critique of development, Steven Angelides argues, "one can legitimately subscribe to the theory of sequential and distinct stages of sexual development without assuming either a heterosexual or homosexual identity as the normative outcome. Therefore, while [the model of sexual development where gender leads to sexuality, which leads to sexual identity] is indeed normative in its instantiation of sexuality as the dividing line between childhood and adulthood, it is not necessarily heteronormative" (Angelides 2004, 166). Yet, to the extent that normal development hinges on the heterosexual alignment of sex, gender, and sexuality, there is an implicit expectation that normative sexual development is a heterosexual arrangement from the outset. However, if sex and gender could be disarticulated in the course of sexual development, Angelides's argument that normative development does not necessarily imply heteronormative development stands. The critical thrust of Angelides argument in relation to my concern with sexual development, is his elucidation that adulthood is marked developmentally by a *fixed* sexual identity and the end of the fluidity of adolescence. I return to his critique in Chapter 3.

In distinction to Angelides, Kathryn Bond Stockton in her book, *The Queer Child,* addresses how children and teens are differentially categorized as first

developing gender identity, a task associated with childhood, and later, as part of adolescence, develop a sexual identity. Stockton's argument builds upon Angelides' argument by demonstrating that queer youth (who may be labeled as gay, transgender, or as having gender identity disorder) are not referred to in terms of their sexual identity or sexuality. Stockton writes, "Strikingly, decisively, no mention is made of object choice, attraction, or sexuality in reference to these children, not even for the teens" (Stockton 2009, 8). Here, Stockton argues that while mainstream society has come to expect and already allegedly *knows* the object choices, attractions, and sexual identities of heteronormative adolescents, the specific sexual tendencies of queer children remains unknown.

Citing Sedgwick, and almost in anticipation of Stockton's concerns, Angelides notes, "all too often heteronormative framings of sexuality involve the categories of childhood and adolescence to explain how and when such developmental 'errors' or 'deviations' as homosexuality arise. The problem is that in ascribing to adulthood a fixed sexual identity (be it heterosexual or homosexual) and to childhood and adolescence the qualities of capriciousness, mutability, and transitionality, we make it possible to read any childhood or adolescent sexual desires and behaviors as evidence of either developmental deviance or normality" (Angelides 2004).

Stockton contests the heteronormative logic of sex→gender→sexuality→sexual identity as a model of linear development that does not allow for queer readings of what she terms "sideways growth." Stockon argues, "Against the backdrop of crucial arguments made by Lee Edelman, James Kincaid, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, I stake a different kind of claim for growth and for its

intimate relations with queerness. I want to prick (deflate, or just delay) *the vertical, forward-motion metaphor of growing up,* and do so by exploring the many kinds of sideways growth depicted by twentieth-century texts" (Stockton 2009, 11). In distinction to the language of development, Stockton's theory of growing sideways is useful for reconceptualizing the ways in which children's 'development' does not adhere to normative models of psychological growth. Yet, given the theories of girls' development into women, we must ask how theories of girls' growth centralize girls' sexuality and the process of a sexualized becoming-Woman.

The insight of Angelides and Stockton toward growing a queer critique of psychosexual development are complemented by theorizing how the function of the individual contributes to the psychological sciences.

5. Individualization.

The psy-sciences individualized the subject in order to claim knowledge about the psychosexual subject. In her book, *Bodies and Pleasures,* Ladelle McWhorther writes, "Foucault's genealogy of sexuality affirmed the existence of various forms of sexual subjectivity while at the same time acknowledging—in fact demonstrating—that the phenomenon of sexual subjectivity arose within a particular historical context out of disparate administrative projects, institutional and individual preoccupations, scientific disciplines, and social and economic conflicts… [sexual subjectivity] remains a creature of such forces; without them it would cease to exist, and some other way of organizing the social and procreative world would take its place" (McWhorter 1999, 31). The processes of sexual

subjectification that McWhorther outlines here contribute to the scientific project of establishing the psy-sciences as the premiere sciences of the sexual subject.

The individualizing effect of the psychological sciences contributes to psychosexual knowledge by soliciting knowledge claims from the imposition of diffuse and general causes of sexuality into the individual. Through individualization, the psy-sciences make it possible to know an individual. Referencing Foucault's arguments about the psychological sciences, Derek Hook argues that the psychological sciences have the root of their origin in the individual in his book *Foucault, Psychology, and the Analytics of Power* (Hook 2007, 42). More specifically, the abnormal individual, or the individual "to be corrected," emerged as an everyday phenomenon (Foucault 1995, 193). The banality of the abnormal individual makes him difficult to define. This difficulty in definition posits the abnormal individual as someone who "verges precisely on undecidability" and yields infinite possibility for theorizing the cause of abnormality in the individual's history (Foucault 2003, 58). Given the undecidability of the individual and his banality, productive technologies of normalization emerged in order to make the individual knowable. Whereas the reaction to leprosy was a negative reaction of exclusion, the reaction to the plague marked a positive reaction that involved "inclusion, observation, the formation of knowledge, the multiplication of effects of power on the basis of the accumulation of observations and knowledge" (2003, 48).

In regards to what Hook calls the psy-function, "psychology, as an institution, as body of the individual, and as discourse will endlessly control the discursive apparatuses on the one hand, and, on the other, refer back to familial sovereignty as

the authority of truth" (Hook 2007, 43). Foucault presents Duval's analysis of the "Rouen hermaphrodite" as the first clinical approach to the study of sexuality. Foucault asserts that Duval's case study is the "first medical text in which the sexual organization of the human body is not given in its general form but rather in clinical detail and with regard to a particular case" (2003, 69). This marks a shift from the generalizing move of finding sexuality in all individuals to a particularizing movement via the introduction of the case study as a method of analysis. Specifically, the case study becomes the primary method of the psy-sciences and their emphasis, even when they speak of generalities in contemporary studies, is to individualize.

In the movements from the early psy-sciences to the development of contemporary psycho-scientific practice, specifically in the United States, the figure of the individual girl continues to catalyze theoretical insight. Specifically for feminist psychologists, girlhood opened a host of questions related to sex, gender, and sexuality. "Although understanding women's development was one of the original goals of [feminist psychologists' research on girlhood], contemporary girl-centered psychological research has expanded to include girls' self-esteem (a primary, individual focused, topic in the 1990s)...and sexuality" (Kearney 2009, 17). Subjectivity and sexuality bookend the list of topics feminist psychologists research on girlhood.

Conclusion

Stockton's concept of growing sideways marks a useful intervention in theories of development. Even though "growing sideways" addresses the figure of

the queer child who moves laterally in literature and film representations, the concept offers a useful counterbalance to developmental trajectories that have dominated theories of childhood and sexuality.

The need to bring the insights of queer theory to bear on theories of linear, heteronormative, and fixed concepts of sexual development is clear. "Viewing age as an independent axis of analysis might also enhance our ability to expose the often inconsistent, uneven, and contradictory ways that normative age stratifications are applied across the social and discursive field. A queer theory of age stratification would insist not on upholding arbitrary distinctions between linear and chronological stages of individual development but on subjecting these distinctions, and the sociopolitical, legal, and institutional formations that are both their cause and their effect, to much-needed critical scrutiny" (Angelides 2004, 167). Following Angelides' argument, we may craft a more generative queer reading of child and adolescent sexuality by removing the conceptual pressure from gender and sexuality and interrogate the normalizing function of age. By turning to age, queer theory can ask questions about sexual development that may generate new insights about the constellations of sex, gender, and sexuality.

Specifically, these sharpened questions ensure that queer theoretical approaches take feminist theoretical concerns into consideration. For example, a queer critique of sexual development, and thus adolescent girlhood, returns us to the problem of definition that I address in Chapter 1. Angelides takes issue with feminist definitions of the child: "The category of 'child' is only loosely defined in feminist scholarship on sexual violence against children, and a child of five is rarely

distinguished theoretically from a child of fifteen or sixteen" (2004, 149). It is easy to further specify Angelides' claim by narrowing his claim about the child to the girl, while also broadening his scope to scholarship on girlhood, regardless of its focus on sexual violence. Indeed, feminist scholars working on girlhood regularly fail to define the age parameters of the girl who constitutes their object of inquiry. The effect of this is that when feminists write about girls' sexuality, readers are left to assume that the girls have at least experienced the beginning of puberty.

Angelides continues, “This scrutiny would entail a thorough reexamination of concepts such as knowledge, consent, and power as they have been articulated through the linear and sequential logic of age stratification" (2004, 167). In addition to Angelides’ call to reexamine knowledge, consent, and power through a queer analysis, I would add development, sexuality, and empowerment. The focus of such an examination would follow the trends in girls’ studies. In the following chapter, I evaluate a 2012 debate among feminist psychologists, sociologists, and cultural theorists concerning girls’ sexual empowerment.

Chapter 3:

The Sexualization and (Sexual) Empowerment of Girls:
Contemporary Feminist Debates

> "We have to ask whether empowerment is the right concept to be fixing our attention on. In response to the question, 'are girls sexually empowered if they feel that they are empowered?' … the answer would surely have to be 'it depends'; but also, *that it might be beside the point*"
> (Gavey 2012, 719, emphasis mine).

Girls have long been understood as "fundamentally and inherently sexually excessive. Their sexuality captures cultural attention and collects cultural (and feminist) anxieties" (McClelland and Fine 2008, 89). The pervasive understanding of girls as inherently sexually excessive builds on cultural expectations of girls' sexual purity (R. D. Egan and Hawkes 2008, 293). Research addressing contemporary girls' sexuality continues to centralize the problem of girls' sexual vulnerability (to sexual assault and violence, unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and illness, etc.) (Deborah L. Tolman 1991). The vast majority of this scholarship describes how girls can be protected by acknowledging girls as sexual subjects and empowering them with knowledge about their bodies and sexual health.

During the past several decades there has been an overwhelming amount of empirical research on girls' sexuality (D.L. Tolman and Brown 2001, 197). Feminist psychological research has experienced its own shift away from "studying girls as future women and toward analyzing girls as members of a unique demographic group...Girl-specific research has emerged within psychology because of researchers' specific focus on adolescence as a difficult stage of development for female youth" (Kearney 2009, 19). While much of the popular discourse on girls'

sexuality cites the ways in which girls are subject to harm in unprecedented rates, feminist scholars remind us that the moral panic and cultural anxieties about girls and sexuality are the newest installment of a century old discourse on girls' sexuality (Renold, Emma and Ringrose, Jessica 2011). The desire to protect girls' sexuality is one of the few issues that cuts across political allegiances. Indeed, both conservatives and liberals share "fears for the sexually excessive young woman: both sides arguing for laws and policies aimed at restricting the harms that young women face" (McClelland and Fine 2008, 89). This blanketing anxiety about girls' sexuality fuels a wide variety of research, including conservative initiatives to give girls their childhoods back by protecting them from the threat of sexuality. Popular books such as *So Sexy So Soon* feed on these anxieties and offer cautionary reasons to keep girlhood and sexuality separate. Against this silencing of girls' sexuality, feminist researchers have begun their own sets of debate.

Within feminist scholarship, scholars are divided about the problem of girls' sexuality. "On one side of the argument are those who mobilize women's 'choice', 'agency' and 'empowerment' to champion aspects of 'sexualized' culture such as pornography, burlesque…these activities can be defended (or even celebrated) because they are 'empowering.' On the other, empowerment is regarded merely as a cynical rhetoric, wrapping sexual objectification in a shiny, feisty, postfeminist packaging that obscures the continued underlying sexism"(Gill 2009). In many ways, the feminist discourse around girls' sexuality mirrors the sex wars that defined much debate among feminists in the 1980s. While the particular issues differ, the driving questions are all too familiar: *is sex "good" or "bad"? Empowering*

or disempowering? What are the political stakes of "bad" sex for women? What kind of cultural changes are necessary for all sex to be "good" sex for women? These questions form the more recent terrain of debates about girls' sexuality. The primary point of convergence for feminists concerned for girls' sexuality is that girls need to be sexually empowered in order to negotiate a range of possibilities for "good" sex within a culture of "bad" sex. Here, I want to leave the crudely simplistic dichotomy of good/bad sex behind in order to turn to their more nuanced scholarly synonyms: empowerment and sexualization.

Throughout on-going feminist debates (most recently, in the 2013 special issue of *Feminist Theory),* schemas for sexualization and empowerment emerge as reliable measures for the effects of girls' engagement in any kind of sexualizing behavior. The outcome of these debates in feminist scholarship is that the vast majority emerge with the resolution that girls cannot avoid sexualization, but can resist it. This resolutionary framework has led several feminist psychologists to reassert the importance of girls' empowerment, especially in relation to their sexuality. The resolution is a grim response to the reality that culture cannot be easily changed. Egan and Hawkes reflect, "The connection between cause and effect is highlighted in an equation from which there is, apparently, no possibility of escape. Sexualizing objects produce sexual expression" (R. D. Egan and Hawkes 2008, 301).[25] Yet, while these debates situate sexualization and empowerment as tangled circuits of cause and effect, the debates serve to illustrate how intensely

[25] Egan and Hawkes qualify their argument: "To be clear, we are not celebrating thong underwear, bralettes, or any other commodity marketed to children for that matter. Instead, we are raising questions about the over-determined status objects are granted within the sexualization argument" (R. D. Egan and Hawkes 2008, 302–303).

imbricated discourses of empowerment and sexuality actually are at a general level, and more specifically, in feminist theory.[26]

In this chapter, I argue that empowerment and sexualization are two sides of the same coin. In doing so, I argue that the tension generated by girls having a sexuality that needs to be both protected and expressed, is a product of what Foucault called the system of sexuality. (I elaborate on this point in detail in Chapter 4). To say this simply: the system of sexuality produces the need to protect girls' sexuality and the need for girls to express their sexuality. To be sure, the oppositional dance between sexualization and empowerment has been incredibly generative: sexualization and empowerment, as discourses, have driven an entire field of researchers to tackle the problem of how to reconcile that girls are both sexual objects and sexual subjects.

This chapter assesses how key concepts such as sexualization, empowerment, and development are mobilized within feminist psychology to make sense of girls' sexuality. To accomplish this, the chapter focuses primarily on feminist psychological research on girls' sexuality since 2000 and feminist responses to this work from other disciplines. By theorizing the limits of sexualization and empowerment, it becomes clear how development works to contain the co-constitutive unfoldings of both sexualization and empowerment during adolescence. While I view the imbrication of sexuality and power as having a longer historical arc (following Foucault, whose arguments I disucss in detail in

[26] Gill reflects, "I am interested in our general tendency to project concerns about sex onto the young, which often seems to involve a complex displacement of our own unresolved issues around sexuality onto girls…How might it be related to feminism as an unfinished project? (Gill 2008).

Chapters 2 and 4), this chapter focuses on the contemporary moorings of sexualization and empowerment by making the simple argument that both are iterations of sexuality. This chapter thus moves through three parts: sexualization, empowerment, and development.

Part I: Sexualization

Sexualization is defined as a process through which individual empowerment is threatened. Indeed, the American Psychological Association defines sexualization as a set of conditions, wherein the presence of one or more condition constitutes the occurrence of sexualization. The Report states,

> Sexualization occurs when: a person's value comes only from his or her sexual appeal or behavior, to the exclusion of other characteristics; a person is held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness (narrowly defined) with being sexy; a person is sexually objectified—that is, made into a thing for others' sexual use, rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making; and/or sexuality is inappropriately imposed upon another person (American Psychological Association Task Force 2007).

The report qualifies the while girls are most vulnerable to sexualization, "Anyone can be sexualized. But when children are imbued with adult sexuality, it is often imposed upon them rather than chosen by them. Self-motivated sexual exploration, on the other hand, is not sexualization by our definition, nor is age-appropriate exposure to information about sexuality" (American Psychological Association Task Force 2007). Here, it is clear that sexuality is bound up with power—it is something one achieves with age, as evidenced by repeated references to "age appropriate" encounters with sexuality. In this way, to be sexualized is to be imbued with *adult* sexuality. Or, a sexuality which is considered to be improper to the child or adolescent. The Report tacitly acknowledges the existence of child and

adolescent sexuality via "self-motivated sexual exploration" even as children are assumed to be somehow prior to, or outside of, the network of sexuality. In this chapter, I use the term sexualization in accordance with the American Psychological Association definition. However, it is important to note that sexualization—as I argue in Chapter 4—aslo encompasses all the processes the define the subject as sexual within a system of sexuality.

The assumption that children experience the world as outside of, or prior to, sexuality, stems from Victorian ideals of childhood (Ariès 1962). Citing James Kincaid, Egan and Hawkes note, "The visions of 'normative' girlhood that the discourse on sexualization draws on is a highly sentimentalized 19th century conceptualization of the child, which requires protection due to its 'incomplete' and innocent status… [the child has been valorized] as 'free of adult corruptions; not yet burdened with the weight of responsibility, morality, and sexuality; and in so doing it prefigured the child as an empty figure, a coordinate set of have nots'" (R. D. Egan and Hawkes 2010, 304). In developmental psychology, these Victorian views are sedimented by G. Stanley Hall's theory of sexual development (which I discuss in Chapter 2) and its haunting legacy in the field of developmental psychology. This legacy echoes in the Task Force Report, solicited by the American Psychological Association, which Hall established and served as president a century ago. For the American Psychological Association, sexualization then refers to the process whereby a child or adolescent finds herself prematurely or unwantingly thrown into sexuality and is consequently vulnerable to sexualized forms of violence.

Yet, other feminist scholars are quick to point out that the APA's definition of sexualization has rendered itself futile. They note, "Sexualization is a non sequiter causing everything from girls flirting with older men to child sex trafficking. Accorded a juggernaut like status, sexualization is conceived as universal in its reach and damage…Given this level of ambiguity, the explanatory power of sexualization is hindered due to its overarching status" (R. D. Egan and Hawkes 2010, 297). As feminist cultural studies scholars Egan and Hawkes make clear, the politicization of sex has long served feminist movements that cite it as a causal mechanism. Within this, the APA calls for researchers to "explore the relationship between the sexualization of girls and societal issues such as sexual abuse, child pornography, child prostitution and the trafficking of girls" because "research on the potential associations between the sexualization of girls and the sexual exploitation of girls is virtually non-existent, and the need for this line of inquiry if pressing" (American Psychological Association Task Force 2007). The tendency to turn to sexualization as an explanatory mechanism is pervasive and riddled with urgency. When girls are trafficked for sex, sexualization is an available explanatory cause. When girls play with *Barbie* or *Bratz Dolls*, sexualization awaits to answer parents' questions as to why their girls are so invested in having these dolls. Sexualization is not simply a flat background to experience; it is a way of knowing and a form of logic with endless referential potential. Yet, Egan and Hawkes note, the explanatory capacities of sexualization to answer feminist questions are wearing thin from overuse.

Egan and Hawkes offer a useful critique of the APA's framing of sexualization. They call attention to four assumptions implicit in the APA's Report that reflect the

broader discourse on sexualization. First, that, “sexualization is conceptualized as a universal process that is both monolithic and axiomatically damaging thereby ignoring historic, cultural, or individual variation of the term and the process” (R. D. Egan and Hawkes 2010, 293). Accordingly, feminist sociologists argue that sexualization affects girls in profoundly different ways that are contingent on social location, among other variables. Indeed, "Race and class variations in [sexualization] are pronounced, and those structural differences in how women become sexualized by others have significant implications for sexuality in the lives of women and girls (Caraway, 1991; Collins, 1990; Dill, 1988; Thompson, 1995; Wyatt, 1997)" (D.L. Tolman 2002, 198). Second, “The discourse of sexualization promotes a mechanistic and passive construction of the child. As a result, the discourse on sexualization … ignores how children might submit to as well as subvert particular cultural messages as well as forms of fashion and commodification” (R. D. Egan and Hawkes 2010, 293). Following the Enlightenment, the ideological residue of the child being a “blank slate” who awaits moral guidance underpins the discursive effects of sexualization. Third, “The deterministic nature of the discourse on sexualization unwittingly conflates sexual expression in girls with sexualization” (2010, 293). The conflation of sexual expression with sexualization has led to debates in feminist psychology about whether girls’ presentations of self, choices in their relationships, and articulations of sexual desire mark harm or empowerment. Yet again, every iteration of self—whether empowered or sexualized—reveals the location of girls within sexuality. Finally, framing sexualization “as gender specific reproduces historically persistent

patriarchal and moralizing beliefs about the compliant and pathological nature of heterosexual female sexuality—particularly the sexuality of poor and working class women" (2010, 294). Feminist historians Mary Odem's and Susan Cahn's historical analyses of girlhood, race, and economic class address how sexualization is a gendered process that has a variety of effects. These analyses document how gender (for example, feminization), is inextricable from functions of sexuality. Most significantly, feminist histories of girlhood detail how girlhood, particularly white middle-class girlhood, makes sexualization and empowerment possible.[27]

Addressing these assumptions, Egan and Hawkes seek to improve the experiences of real girls growing up in a sexualized culture. Indeed, Egan and Hawkes contend, "the conceptualization of childhood, sexualization, and resistance within the movement [to end sexualization of girls] ultimately misses its mark and fails to achieve its goal of 'empowering girls.' It is our hope that [our research] might begin a dialogue that can move us toward this important goal" (R. D. Egan and Hawkes 2010, 294). Again, girls' empowerment, which is achieved by girls coming to terms with sexualization and embracing themselves as sexual subjects, is invested with feminist hopes of girls transcending sexualization. Notably, several feminists qualify that debates about girls' empowerment miss the mark. Rather, they contend that the problem of sexualization reflects adults' general incapacity to accept girls as sexual subjects. Girls' sexual empowerment thus becomes a remedy for adults who

[27] For example, in her book, *Sexual Reckonings: Southern Girls in a Troubling Age,* Susan Cahn describes girlhood as an early twentieth century sexual category that has produced society's attraction to and apprehension toward girls' sexuality (Cahn 2007, 7–10).

deny girls' sexuality and a discursive touchstone for girls to claim themselves as sexual subjects.

Egan and Hawkes lament that sexualization threatens normative concepts of girlhood development. "Once sexualized, girls fall outside of the parameters of 'normal' girlhood and morph into something else—an ambivalent and ultimately irresolvable category—girl-woman" (R. D. Egan and Hawkes 2010, 305). While it seems that sexualization has a damaging effect on what it means to be a girl, it seems instead that to be 'sexualized' *is precisely* what it means to experience a normal girlhood. Feminist sociologists Renold and Ringrose frame the sexualization of girlhood in a Deleuzian framework. They argue that the sexualization of girls "is where we see sexiness and innocence cohere in a schizoid formation that troubles distinct linear development lines and blurs inter-generational categories" (Renold, Emma and Ringrose, Jessica 2011, 393). Building on this framework, Renold and Ringrose outline their own assessment of the discursive consequences of sexualization. First, they suggest that sexualization "operates as an 'elastic discourse' (Albury and Lumby, 2010) that interprets any sexual expression (e.g. sexual desire) and related concerns (e.g. body image, sexual violence, etc.) as an effect and thus evidence of 'sexualization'" (2011, 391). Weighing in on this subject, Gill argues that "The terms [empowerment, sexualization] are too general; they are difficult to operationalize and therefore to use analytically. More than this, they tend to homogenize, ignoring difference and obscuring the fact that different people are 'sexualized' in different ways and with different meanings" (Gill, 741). This leads Gill to argue to drop the term sexualization altogether, since it is misleading and

meaningless once qualified by social difference (Gill, 742 ; Gavey 2012; R. D. Egan and Hawkes 2008).

Among its many sanctionings, Renold and Ringrose argue that the discourse of sexualization "neglects girls' sexual agency, rights, and pleasure (including how desire can play a role in girls' self-sexual objectification)" and, that sexualization "activates a new binary of active, predatory male sexuality versus passive, non-agentic female sexuality" (Renold, Emma and Ringrose, Jessica 2011, 391). These points fall into line with Egan and Hawke's work as well as Deborah Tolman's extensive work on girls' sexuality. Indeed, Tolman addresses these concerns explicitly, leading her to argue for girls' embracing their sexual subjectivity by claiming a discourse of desire. Renold and Ringrose suggest that the discourse of sexualization, "encourages either/or binary position-taking among stakeholders between sexual empowerment and pleasure versus sexual danger and protectionism" (2011, 391). This oppositional relation of empowerment or vulnerability is the crux of the feminist psychological debate on girls' sexuality. Finally, Renold and Ringrose argue that sexualization "legitimizes a linear developmental trajectory of female sexuality, with an in-built neoliberal achievement ethic of 'healthy' *hetero*sexuality" and that it "operates as a white middle-class moral panic over the desire for and loss of a highly raced and classed sexual innocence, and thus works to reproduce the othering of working-class/racialized hyper-sexuality" (2011, 391). In these final two points, it is important to note that *hetero*sexual development is separated analytically from other forms of social difference such as race and class. This reflects important

bearings for how we understand the development of sexualized identities, racialized identities, and the necessary confluence of both. Feminist cultural theorist Rosalind Gill suggests that this fragmentation is made more intense "by the profoundly classed, racialized and heteronormative framing of the debates themselves, whose privileged object of anxiety and 'concern' has been the White, western, middle class, girl-child. Feminist psychologists Lamb and Peterson recirculate this figure whom they term the 'typical 13 year old girl'" (Gill, 742). Following the lead of Renold, Ringrose, and other scholars, Gill argues theorizing social difference is crucial because, "this construction of the typical 13 year old girl, is *repeatedly mobilized*—in academic, policy, and media reports and comes to constitute or define who is 'at risk' (Harris 2004)" (Gill).[28] The figure of the girl returns as a representation of those real girls who we feminists may do harm to by daring to write about her sexuality. Inquiring specifically about our scholarly relations to the figure of the girl, feminist psychologist Nicola Gavey asks, "How do we imagine the feminine subject that we may hurt? How do we imagine our relationship to 'her'? What kind of political practice do we imagine is taking place? And, what is lost in pulling back from this kind of critical analysis?" (Gavey 2012, 721). Gavey's questions are vital to a critical assessment of girls' studies.

Alongside these unrealized debates concerning how social differences affect experiences of sexualization, feminist psychologists—in congruence with the APA Report—claim that sexualization is an increasing phenomenon. Citing that the

[28] At the same time that she questions empowerment, Gavey asks whether the normative girl who is a sexual subject is, afterall, "a caricature of the complexities of real girls who, as Lamb and Peterson might both agree, could well be more ambivalent than suggested in both the accounts that applaud and abhor these 'hypersexualised' versions of girls' sexuality" (Gavey 2012, 721).

sexualization of women "increased between 1983 and 2003," feminist psychologists Murnen and Smolak claim that increased levels of sexualization has resulted in "making the 'sexy' representation even more pervasive, and alternative forms of sexuality perhaps less evident" (Murnen and Smolak 2012, 727). In addition to Murnen and Smolak's claims, a 2011 feminist sociological study of popular media concludes that, "the ads we reviewed indicated co-optation of the feminist desire for sexual freedom by increasingly portraying women in a sexually exploited manner" (Mager and Helgeson, 250). It is important to note that Mager and Helgeson's study responds directly to the request of the APA Report. In the recommendations for future psychological research, the Task Force report advises psychologists and other researchers in allied fields to conduct studies that, "document the frequency of sexualization, specifically of girls, and examine whether sexualization is increasing" (American Psychological Association Task Force 2007). Yet, if sexualization is such an elastic category (R. D. Egan and Hawkes 2008), and girls have always been sexualized (Renold, Emma and Ringrose, Jessica 2011), what does it mean to claim that sexualization is increasing in prevalence? Beyond concern for girls' sexual well-being, what holds this assertion together? These research trajectories that seek to measure increasing sexualization are clearly part of the same epistemic scaffold that produces sexualization.

Within such claims of increased sexualization, girls continue to be understood as either being empowered through sexuality or oppressed by sexualization. As Mary Pipher argued in her popular book, *Reviving Ophelia,* "Our cultural models for ideal female sexuality reflect our ambivalence about women and

sex…Understandably, girls are confused about exactly how and when they are to be sexy" (Pipher 1994, 206). Affirmed by the Task Force Report, sexualization is a core component of what harms girls once they enter adolescence. The terms themselves reflect this dynamic: Sexuality is something one possesses, sexualization is a condition one experiences and endures, and sexual empowerment is a perceived opportunity to take one's sexuality (and sexualization) into one's own hands.

Sexualization begins with what Nancy Lesko termed, "the hidden curriculum, of girls' bodies" (Lesko 1998). Expanding on this framework of a hidden curriculum, Lyn Mikel Brown and Deborah Tolman note that, "the primary curriculum of girls' bodies is not that they learn they will be or discover that they are menstruating; the most pervasive curriculum…is what feminist philosopher Sandra Bartky calls, 'the disciplinary project of femininity…[that] [w]oman lives her body as seen by another, by an anonymous patriarchal Other' (1990, 72)" (D.L. Tolman and Brown 2001), and that she becomes aware of herself as a corporealization of sexuality.

Another mode of sexualization occurs when girls "sexualize themselves when they think of themselves in objectified terms. Psychologists have identified *self-objectification* as a key process whereby girls learn to think of and treat their own bodies as objects of others' desires" (American Psychological Association Task Force 2007). Part of how scholars explain the damage of girls' self-objectification is by arguing that "Exposure to appearance-oriented media is linked with self-objectification and body dissatisfaction in girls and women" (Murnen and Smolak 2012, 729). In this way, girls become their own, and each other's, worst enemy. In addition to the harmful effects of girls' being aware that they are viewed as sexual

objects, feminist psychologists theorize self-objectification as an effect of sexualization. Psychologists define self-objectification as a process in which "girls internalize an observer's perspective on their physical selves and learn to treat themselves as objects to be looked at and evaluated for their appearance" (American Psychological Association Task Force 2007). To be sure, "Many feminist theorists believe that the societal encouragement of women to see themselves as sexual objects does not promote sexual empowerment" (Murnen and Smolak 2012, 728). Indeed, girls who see themselves as sexual-objects tend to be less assertive in sexual encounters (2012, 731). These studies build on the established premise that self-objectification is "linked directly with diminished sexual health among adolescent girls (e.g., as measured by decreased condom use and diminished sexual assertiveness" (American Psychological Association Task Force 2007). Moreover, "Available data suggest that the gender stereotypic portrayal of sexuality is not empowering to girls and women. For example, the emphasis on the sexual objectification of women has been linked with a number of disempowering consequences, which can be explained by objectification theory" (Frederickson and Roberts 1997; McKinley and Hyde 1996). According to this theory, societal objectification of women can lead women to internalize their objectification leading to self-objectification. In this way, sexualization enjoins girls to participate in their own sexualization and primes them toward sexual objectification.

Feminist psychologists such as Tolman argue that the culture of objectification keeps girls from understanding themselves as sexual subjects. The contradiction between girls' feelings of sexiness as empowering or disempowering

expose how theoretically enmeshed both sexual self-objectification and sexual self-empowerment are. “Girls are actively discouraged from exploring their sexuality, seeking pleasure, or seizing their right to sexual expression and health” (Worell and Goodheart 2006, 193). In fact, “Girls might be taught there are rewards to looking ‘sexy’ such as appearing older, receiving attention for their appearance, and potentially being more popular and/or socially successful. The constant exposure to this message might lead girls to develop a cognitive schema that focuses them on the rewards associated with looking ‘sexy’ and limits their ability to see alternatives” (Murnen and Smolak 2012, 728). Through these social patterns, girls learn what it means to feel ‘sexy.’ Following Tolman, many feminist psychologists argue that a girl’s understanding of herself as ‘sexy,’ leads to a sense of cultural capital that empowers girls rather than harming their self-esteem. The enmeshment between sexual self-objectification and sexual empowerment becomes clear: ‘feeling sexy,’ even if feeling oneself to be a sexy object, is now defined as something girls can choose, thereby invoking a sense of empowerment.

Due to confusing messages about girls’ capacities to assert feelings of ‘sexiness,’ Tolman suggests that it is not easy for a girl to embrace her authentic desires and develop a sense of sexual subjectivity. She reflects, “How is it possible for a girl to know about and respond to her own sexual feelings and still think of herself , and have others think of her, as a good, normal, appropriate girl? Framed in these terms, the dilemma of desire can be understood as securely located in compulsory sexuality, straining and undermining girls’ relationships with themselves, with boyfriends, with peers,” etc. (Deborah L. Tolman 2012, 203).

Switching from the language of a 'dilemma of desire' to that of the 'discourse of desire,' Tolman references the early work of feminist psychologist Michelle Fine, who published a field forming article called, "Sex, Schooling, and the Missing Discourse of Desire." Tolman describes Fine's contributions: "(Fine) outlines a genuine discourse of desire as an invitation for adolescents 'to explore what feels good and bad, desirable and undesirable, grounded in experiences, needs, and limits. Such a discourse would release females from a position of receptivity, enable an analysis of the dialectics of victimization and pleasure, and would pose female adolescents as subjects of sexuality, initiators as well as negotiators'" (Deborah L. Tolman 2012, 207). Tolman's advocacy of Fine's work, combined with Tolman's expansive research on girls' sexual desire, illustrates yet again how neither position of victim nor initiator can address the totalizing logic of sexual empowerment.

Given Tolman's description of the dilemma of desire, having a discourse of girls' sexuality is seen by Tolman and others as a triumph. "Girls' discourse of desire may be subtle, encoded in the constricted ways which the culture makes available for them to speak about an unspeakable topic" (Deborah L. Tolman 1991). Indeed, Renold and Ringose reference the 2006 work of Fine and McClelland to suggest that "Girls' presumed sexual knowing, agency, and desire are represented as 'no longer missing' but 'loudly' and 'caricaturely displayed everywhere'" (Renold, Emma and Ringrose, Jessica 2011, 390). Of course, having a discourse of desire that is characterized as loud, prevalent, and 'no longer missing,' comes with the attending assumption that girls now possess a sexual subjectivity. The discourse of desire, and girls' dilemmas within it, are framed by their being understood as sexual subjects.

Tolman argues that theorizing girls' sexuality through subjectivity is generative, especially for theorizing empowerment. She notes, "Making sexual desire a fundamental aspect of girl's sense of self offers a way to think about adolescent sexuality" (Deborah L. Tolman 2002, 20). Pipher's popular leanings echo this sentiment "Girls need to be encouraged to be the sexual subjects of their own lives, not the objects of others'" (Pipher 1994, 210). Despite Tolman's overlappings with general desires for girls to be understood as sexual subjects in control of their desire and intentional about their behavior, Tolman differentiates her work from other work on girls' sexuality to date by stating: "Girls live and grow up in bodies that are capable of strong sexual feelings, bodies that are connected to minds and hearts that hold meanings through which they make sense of and perceive their bodies. I consider the possibility that teenage girls' sexuality is important and life sustaining…that girls and women are entitled to have sexual subjectivity, rather than simply be sexual objects" (2002, 19). This begs the question: what is the difference between sexual subjectivity and sexual objectification? Certainly, the difference concerns vestiges of power; yet, these figural locations of the sexually empowered girl or the sexually vulnerable girl are possible only through the enmeshment of sexuality, power, and knowledge. I address this enmeshment in detail in Chapter 4.

In addition to Tolman, other feminist psychologists complicate the discourse of desire and sexual subjectivity that is held up as the most empowering form of subjectivity. Writing in the 2011 *Sex Roles* debate on the topic of girls' sexuality, Murnen and Smolak hope to "distinguish between a girl's subjective, internal sense

that she has control over her sexuality and sexual behavior and social forces that might influence her sexual empowerment" (Murnen and Smolak 2012, 725). It is important to remember that Tolman's impetus for theorizing girls' sexuality is part of a larger feminist project concerning voice and the capacity of girls to be more than inanimate sexual beings. This project began with Carol Gilligan's work. Tolman, Gilligan's student and collaborator, continues this research trajectory. Tolman reflects on her qualitative study of interviews with girls regarding their experiences of sexual desire, "I observed a continuum of embodied sexual desire in the narratives told by this group of girls, from 'silent bodies' to being confused about whether they felt desire, to resisting their own desire, to hiding desire from others, to a sense of entitlement to desire within the confines of sanctioned situations (i.e., a 'long-term' relationship), to a politicized claim of entitlement to desire" (D.L. Tolman 2002, 203). This shift toward a politicized sense of entitlement *to desire*, *to want,* is especially significant given Tolman's observation that "Across the studies and inquiries into female adolescent sexuality, girls do not talk about their own sexual desire or pleasure *unless they are specifically asked"* (2002, 202). But even if girls are asked, what kind of information would their responses yield for researchers that would nuance current understandings of sexualization and empowerment? And, regardless of how detailed their comments regarding their sexualities may be, what would such research tell us about the relation between sexualization and empowerment?

Yet, against the weight of the previous silence surrounding girls' sexuality (McClelland and Fine 2008; McClelland and Fine 2008; D.L. Tolman 1994) and the

promise of something other than girls' silence, Tolman's research returns current inquiry to a discourse of desire that ultimately serves to uphold the sexualizing forces it initially sought to undermine. "This missing discourse [of desire] may result in girls' failure to know themselves as subjects of their own sexuality," (Deborah L. Tolman 1991). The discourse of desire promises that girls will know themselves as sexual subjects. But, against the backdrop of power-knowledge-pleasure, the discourse of desire proposes empowerment as an alternative to sexualization.

Part II: Sexual Agency and Empowerment

> "[Empowerment's] pervasive invocation, however, belies just how truncated and superficial considerations of empowerment have become" (Bay-Cheng 2012, 714).

In response to the call to embrace sexual subjectivity, many feminist psychologists have turned to theorizing girls' agency and empowerment in relation to girls' sexuality. "Within the literature a singular framing of sexualization, as an obdurate and unyielding social problem, is naturalized and validated as the only narrative for those concerned about the welfare of 'our girls'" (R. D. Egan and Hawkes 2010, 292). Tolman affirms this turn to sexual agency and empowerment. Citing psychological research, Tolman argues, "A young woman's ability to be conscientious and fully present in her sexual experiences is correlated with her ability to act as an agent. The ability to make responsible and self-affirming sexual decisions is a crucial act of agency" (Welles 2005). While often conflated, agency and empowerment do hold different meanings, particularly in social and developmental psychologies. Where agency—or acting as an agent—reflects the capacity to make

internally based choices, empowerment reflects one's capacity—or perception of their capacity—to be agential.

Clearly feminist scholars understand the problems that sexualization poses for girls, yet Tolman and Egan and Hawkes turn to agency as a remedy for the sexualization of girls. Indeed Egana and Hawkes ask, "Is there any space for agency or resignification as opposed to the only option being outright rejection [of unwanted sexualization]?" Here, Egan and Hawkes set up the longstanding predicament: either/or--- either girls are flattened, sexualized objects or girls are animated agents who navigate an increasingly sexualized culture. Showing the bifurcation of the field even more directly, Renold and Ringrose highlight how "Contemporary debates tend to fix girls as either objectified, innocent passive victims (Coy 2009) or agentic, knowledgeable, savvy negotiators (Lemur and Dworkin, 2009) of a contemporary 'toxic' sexual culture, thus obscuring the messy realities of lived sexual subjectivities and how girls may be positioned in these ways simultaneously" (Renold, Emma and Ringrose, Jessica 2011, 391–392). But neither of these polarized options are logical realities. As I demonstrate in Chapter 1, agency is much more complex than something one can acquire and wield at her leisure. When girls experience sexual objectification, this experience does not pin them down to a permanent status of object. Likewise, when girls act on or express their sexual desires, their actions do not license them as sexual agents. Both positions are reductive of the complex entanglements that adolescence, sexuality, gender, and agential realism bring to bear on theories of girlhood.

Feminist psychologist Nicola Gavey's contributions to the debate in *Sex Roles* marks a welcome shift in thinking about the conceptual issues sexualization and empowerment pose. Gavey advocates a nuanced account of sexual practices—stripped of the discourse of empowerment—where sexuality "can be seen as political without (most likely) having a political intentionality and as agentic without *therefore* being empowering" (Gavey 2012, 720). As such, sexualization cannot be theorized without a simultaneous account of empowerment. My work in this section is to both show the state of research on themes of sexualization and empowerment, and to insist that, as fatiguing as these debates have become, they illustrate that even generic claims to "girl power" are products of what Foucault called the system of sexuality.

In what follows, I consider feminist psychologists' arguments of girls' sexual agency and empowerment. Instead of using empowerment as a general term, Bay-Cheng offers the most robust articulation of empowerment and empowerment theory by returning us to a three-pronged definition. "According to its original formulation (see Lee 2001; Rappaport 1987), empowerment was theorized to consist of three components: the intrapersonal (e.g. self-efficacy); the interpersonal (i.e., coming together with similar others to analyze critically power blocks and imbalances); and the behavioral (i.e., taking action to eradicate identified power blocks and imbalances)" (Bay-Cheng 2012, 714).[29] Following this trajectory to support the sexual well-being of girls, empowerment anchors feminist psychologists

[29] Bay-Cheng offers this return to empowerment theory, "not only as a warning about how far empowerment theory [has drifted from] social justice, but also because I believe returning to all of the core components of empowerment…can help inform, clarify, and revitalize efforts to support young women's well-being" (2012, 714).

Lamb and Peterson's leading article in the *Sex Roles* 2012 debate concerning girls' sexuality. As Gavey recounts in her response, "Lamb is wary of reading empowerment on the sole basis of girls' self-reported pleasure, desire, choice, and so on; while Peterson wants to see any claims to 'a subjective sense of empowerment' *as* 'legitimate empowerment'" (Gavey 2012, 719). At the same time, "Peterson seeks to get around this problem [of whether a girl is ever 'really empowered'] by conceptualizing empowerment as multi-dimensional; so that it is possible for a girl to 'simultaneously experience empowerment on one level and disempowerment on another level' (this issue)" (Gavey 2012, 719).[30] Returning to empowerment from a multi-dimensional systems perspective has its benefits. "As Rappaport (1987) has argued, empowerment's multilevel systems perspective is what distinguishes it from person-centered approaches to building competence and strengths. When stripped of critical consciousness and social action to correct system injustices, empowerment is quickly distorted into a self-improvement discourse that instructs individuals: to identify themselves, rather than surrounding social conditions, as the problem to be fixed" (Bay-Cheng 2012, 714). Here, Bay-Cheng asserts the need to maintain a distinction between empowerment and self-improvement discourses and programming.

Given feminists' destabilization of the term empowerment, what, if anything, remains compelling about the concept of girls' sexual empowerment? "The term

[30] Yet, Gavey wonders if empowerment, stripped of its relation to more substantive political projects, actually retains any leverage. She reflects, "It is difficult to see how the notion of empowerment is useful if it doesn't retain some deeper political analysis that takes seriously the sociocultural terrain in which individuals are crafting their lives as well as the psychosocial complexities of individual subjectivities" (Gavey 2012, 719). And this is precisely the point: empowerment can only become itself through sexuality.

'sexual empowerment' is clearly freighted with multiple contradictory meanings, making its use analytically a fraught and difficult project" (Gill, 743). Because sexual empowerment relies on the frame of individualization and its attending discourses, this mode of generalization has its own range of knowledge producing effects that are part of the generalizing function of feminist psychology and the psy-sciences more broadly. One of the problems with empowerment is its tendency to focus on the individual as a locus of control. "Curiously, empowerment seems to be cast as an individualized phenomenon which, though clearly connected to gender and age, is not related analytically to issues of power, inequality, or oppression. The wider context in which sexual empowerment might take place seems conspicuous by its absence" (Gill, 741). This wider context is undeniably a heteronormative one that Tolman suggests is largely invisible in its function. "The effect of this [heteronormative] invisible system of social control is that we all, adults and adolescents alike, construe the 'problem' of girls' sexuality as an individual rather than a social one" (2002, 18).

But even moving away from the individual as a site of politicization casts its own set of troubles. As Gavey cautions, "[Empowerment] is prone to being coopted and depoliticized within neoliberal postfeminist discourse leading it in my view to be too conceptually flabby to be useful in anchoring feminist debates" (Gavey 2012, 719). In other words, empowerment is too loose to retain meaning in critical analyses of girls' sexuality. Ignoring Gavey's warning that the concept of empowerment relies on neo-liberal accounts of possession and property, Bay-Cheng's research suggests that this flabbiness is instead due to girls' lack of cultural

power more generally.[31] Bay-Cheng discusses research she published in 2011 that includes interviews about the sexual experiences of girls' living in the foster care system. Despite the clear descriptions about what these girls wanted and did not want within sexual interactions, "it was not a lack of agency—sexual or otherwise—that was their downfall: it was that their agency was not enough to trump their lack of leverage with male (and often older) partners, their depleted social and familial networks (leaving them with few models, sounding boards, and supports), and the inaccessibility of resources (information, services, and even simply money for bus fare home)" (Bay-Cheng 2012, 716). In her research, Bay-Cheng found that programs designed to increase girls' empowerment "presuppose that girls know what they want and that [what they want] is a singular thing" (2012, 716). And, more dangerously, such generic empowerment programs assume "that what puts girls at risk is their own inability or deficiency and that being assertive is sufficient to protect oneself" (2012, 716).[32] Crucially, Bay-Cheng acknowledges that while it is important for girls to assert themselves in relation to their sexual interests and needs, the overwhelming focus on girls' agency distracts scholars from the larger question: when girls do assert themselves, do their assertions *matter*? Bay-Cheng suggests that what girls need more than empowerment programming and

[31] Gill adds, "Another reason 'empowerment' is so problematic…is because the notion has become commodified—used to sell everything from washing powder to cosmetic surgery" (Gill, 743).
[32] Bay-Cheng's argument here echoes Ruth Nicole Brown's critique of empowerment programming for girls. Brown argues that empowerment programs lose sight of the workings of power in girls' lives (R. N. Brown 2009).

information about sexuality is "the material and social capital to back up their words and to compel others to listen" (2012, 716). [33]

Feminist psychologists' critiques of empowerment clearly show the limits of empowerment as a discursive political project that has measurable effects. The predominant alternative to the empowerment rubric is to shift the focus off of the individual. "Psychologists tend to focus on the individual and her health rather than on [social] systems. Thus, they tend to call for programs like media literacy that aim to teach individual girls to resist media messages. But we argue that media literacy will be of limited value (as has been found in the body image literature)…It is culture that must change, not just individual girls"(Murnen and Smolak 2012, 731).[34] Gavey offers a bit more incisive account by asserting, "A persistent dilemma seems to be how to regard and respond to articulations of empowerment as an individual state of being when it arises in relation to cultural norms and practices that have problematic implications for girls and women collectively" (Gavey 2012,

[33] Remarkably, Tolman's earlier research supports Bay-Cheng's thesis. In a 1994 study of girls' sexual empowerment, Tolman observes that "in practice, [girls'] trying to take control and resist a passive model of female sexuality did not suffice for effective sexual empowerment; a recognition and challenge to *male power* was also required to enable girls to exert control and choice in their sexual experiences… They specifically identified 'femininity' as 'an unsafe sexual strategy'" (D.L. Tolman 2002, 205).

[34] The APA Report suggests that one alternative to individualized empowerment is media literacy training, since "the media are important sources of sexualizing images, the development and implementation of school-based media literacy training programs could be key in combating the influence of sexualization" (American Psychological Association Task Force 2007). Yet, having a critical perspective does not remove the effects of sexualization—in children or in adults. Gill challenges the impulse to promote media literacy among girls as a solution to the problem of sexualization for one simple reason: it "misunderstands the complexity of young people's (indeed all people's) relations to media, with its implications that being critical will automatically displace other kinds of affective responses including shame, hatred, or desire" (Gill, 737). Indeed, "The girls [in forthcoming study by Gill and Jackson] did not seem to feel 'better' or more 'empowered' by dint of their knowledge of media practices and techniques" (Gill, 740).

721). Both these articulations carry the awareness that, without the individual, feminist psychology loses its analytic leverage.

In a section of her article aptly titled, "Empowerment Fatigue?" Gill argues, "When [empowerment] is allied to a developmental discourse, the notion of empowerment seems problematic, suggesting as it does a trajectory that moves towards greater empowerment across the lifecourse, even if not—as Lamb and Peterson note—tied to age in any simple way… clearly the journey to empowerment cannot be a linear process" (Gill, 743). The move away from either/or thinking and toward a more nuanced approach seems fruitful, especially when there is a hint that linear processes—especially those tied to a notion of accruing agency—might need to be reconsidered. "Casting empowerment as a process in which one engages rather than as a state to be achieved circumvents the fractious potential of measuring who is and who is not truly empowered" (Bay-Cheng 2012, 714). Development theory is invested by the tasks of sexualization and empowerment; a capacity to navigate both are now part of healthy growth.

Part III: Development

> "A girl never becomes a woman in any univocal or unidirectional senses. Feminine adolescence is not a transition from one state to another but a contingent and in some senses reversible movement" (Driscoll 2002, 198).

Psychologists widely agree that, "sexuality is an integral component of psychological health" (Worell and Goodheart 2006, 192). However, how sexuality develops at the level of the individual has been the site of much research and scholarly debate ever since G. Stanley Hall defined adolescence in 1904. For girls especially, "'healthy' sexuality is often positioned as no sexuality" (D.L. Tolman

2002, 206). Contouring the difficulty for girls, "Feminist theorists such as Lamb and Tolman have noted that gender influences all of the factors that affect the development of sexuality" (Murnen and Smolak 2012, 731). Tolman historicizes these accounts by tracing how "The major developmental theories since Freud have not only left out girls' experience (Gilligan, 1999, 1982), they have also muted sexual desire as a central dynamic in adolescent development, moving development out of the body, first into society, and then into the mind" (Deborah L. Tolman 1991).[35] Tolman's overview highlights vestiges of the predominant mechanistic, organismic, and contextualist developmental approaches as they relate to sexual development.

Sexualization scholars reference theories of sexuality contained within developmental frameworks. These developmental theories generally rely upon a "construction of childhood as processural or incomplete until its full maturation in adulthood (Jenks 2005; James et al. 1998; Gittins 1998)" (R. D. Egan and Hawkes 2010, 299). Likewise, feminist psychologist Sharon Lamb's 2010 research argues "that it is unreasonable to expect adolescent girls to find or develop empowered forms of sexuality when adult women struggle with this task" (Murnen and Smolak 2012, 731). Both Egan and Hawkes and Lamb's contribution to developmental

[35] "While sexual feelings are likely normative among adolescent girls, girls rarely get the message that such feelings are normal, to be expected and respected. Very few girls hear from anyone that they should be concerned when they do not feel sexual desire or pleasure" (2002, 206). Girls' development has always been considered hard to know how to respond to. "[Stories of sexual discomfort and confusion about sexual desire], which, if told by an adult woman, would be interpreted as one of sexual problems, when told by an adolescent girl is in some ways normative—that is, it is not an uncommon story about sexuality for a girl to tell. Female adolescent sexual dysfunction is an oxymoron" because girls are not considered to have a functioning sexuality, while adult women are. (D.L. Tolman 2002, 197). Tolman goes on to suggest that "Adolescent girls' descriptions of how they experience and negotiate their sexuality demands consideration of a developmental framework for how to understand adult female sexuality" (Tolman, FAS 2001, 207). Tolman's article concludes with this call for a framework to account for how development plays into girls' sexuality.

theory suggests that sexual empowerment is not something that one permanently attains. This contribution forms part of a new discourse that claims to explain the previous inability to comprehensively account for girls' sexual development.

Against the absence of feminist theories of girls' sexual development, feminist psychologists caution: "We urgently need developmental research that identifies when and how [sexual empowerment] develops" (Murnen and Smolak 2012, 731). The pressing need to account for girls' sexual development (i.e. sexual empowerment) is summarized in the APA Report, where healthy sexual development is viewed as the strongest prophylactic against a culture of sexualization (American Psychological Association Task Force 2007).[36] Such a framework would justify the political urgency for a theory of girls' sexual development and how empowerment fits into developmental theory. Moreover, such a framework promises a robust theory of sexual development that can be used to circumvent the development of unhealthy responses to sexualization.

Recent feminist psychological research has led to the creation of "research paradigms that look at adolescent sexuality development as a normative process which can have positive qualities and consequences (Tolman and McClelland 2011)" (Murnen and Smolak 2012, 732). For instance, there is a new method of assessment for measuring the "sexual self-concept for early adolescent girls (O'Sullivan et al. 2006) and the Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory (FSSI) which measures sexual body esteem, sexual desire and pleasure, and sexual self-reflection as aspects of

[36] Given that "Sexual well-being is an important part of healthy development and overall well-being, yet evidence suggests that the sexualization of girls has negative consequences in terms of girls' ability to develop healthy sexuality" (APA Task Force).

healthy sexual development in girls" (Murnen and Smolak 2012, 732; Horne and Zimmer-Gembeck 2006). These research methods provide data concerning the cultural contexts and individual differences among girls that shape girls' sexual development and well-being. Within these feminist measures of girls' sexual development, the standardization of girls' sexual experiences becomes possible. "While sexual feelings are likely normative among adolescent girls, girls rarely get the message that such feelings are normal, to be expected and respected. Very few girls hear from anyone that they should be concerned when they do not feel sexual desire or pleasure" (2002, 206). Much of this relies on how girls are socialized to understand themselves within a framework of compulsory heterosexuality where they are considered passive in relation to their own desires, and responses in relation to the desires of their ostensibly male partners (Tiefer 1995; D.L. Tolman 2005). As historian Jessica Nathanson summarizes, "The ideology of the innocent girl…has been supplanted by a recognition of her sexual interests, although that recognition has yet to be integrated into any coherent ideological alternative: Young women's sexuality is recognized but [still] not affirmed" (Nathanson 1991, 209).

Gill questions the potential benefit of affirming girls' sexuality at the risk of edifying an idealized understanding of girls' experiences. She cautions, "We know enough about adult sexual health and experience to want to avoid the idealization of [sexuality], as though adulthood represented the pinnacle of empowered sexuality (Lamb 2010). Adolescents do not have the monopoly on unsafe, non-consensual, painful, or unsatisfying sex!" (Gill, 743). Gill's insight and quip is a poignant

reminder that discourses affirming girls' sexuality are an extension of the same discourses of sexualization.

In discussions of healthy sexual development, psychologists depend on assessment methods to chart sexual development and make generalizations about girls' sexuality. But, at any given point in childhood or adolescence, events and feelings may occur that would seem to either thwart or run athwart of healthy development. In this way theories of development are hard to measure—because measuring any given point in time forecloses the broad processural scope of achievement that defines development. Following this, it is critical to note that healthy sexual development does not necessarily lead to healthy adult sexuality (regardless of how either of those terms are defined by future scholarship). Using the same logic, unhealthy sexual development during adolescence may lead to healthy sexuality as an adult. To measure sexual development without concurrently measuring other vectors of psychological well-being yields, at best, an incredibly limited perspective on healthy sexuality and/or sexual development. Also, one of the operating premises in teleological theories of healthy sexual development is that sexual development comes to an end point marked by adulthood. This is not a necessary premise: even linear theories of sexual development are capable of containing a logic of on-going sexual development that are not teleological driven. This latter option certainly is more generative to feminist-queer theorizing. Yet, what might be most radical to our thinking about sexual development is that it doesn't follow a linear path. I return to this point in the conclusion of the chapter.

Adding another perspective on how sexualization has become theorized within development, Egan and Hawkes contend that, "Sexualization has been constructed as an intractable obstacle to proper development. Any evidence of resistance and reinscription by the young person is axiomatically evidence for the truth of this claim" (R. D. Egan and Hawkes 2010, 300). Yet, this formulation seems to be at odds with a view of sexualization as being at the very crux of current theories of development. In other words, sexualization is not an "intractable obstacle to proper development," rather, it is the definitive course of girls' development.

Indeed, sexualization and the dangers that it poses frame the anxiety over girls' growing up and the impulse to protect girls, especially during adolescence. Since growing up is defined by becoming sexual, girls' growth poses risk. "Risk to normative development is a foundational tenet of the sexualization argument and justifies the call for social intervention and its concomitant strategies of protection. This threat is deployed in two ways: first, sexualizing images in the media violate age appropriate standards for tween-aged girls and second, sexualization hampers normal cognitive, physical and emotive progress by diverting attention away from more age appropriate milestones. It is within this context that the APA Task Force's postulation that sexualization inappropriately imposes sexuality upon a person with images that violate 'age appropriate exposure' should be read. Within this model, [sexualizing] images have a catalytic quality that impede normative maturation: they impair the 'mental functions and cognitive processes necessary' for healthy sexual relationships" (R. D. Egan and Hawkes 2010, 299).

Other scholars, such as Steven Angelides, contend that childhood already contains sexuality that must be acknowledged and affirmed within comprehensive research. He writes, "A child's sexual desires and experiences of power and pleasure must be acknowledged and normalized" (Angelides, 160). Angelides maintains that the potential risk of refusing to acknowledge children's sexuality has profound effects on concerns regarding children's agency. "This [sexual developmental] understanding of childhood absents the possibility of children as active agents in their own lives thus intensifying the level of danger inherent in sexualization. The nullification of agency is underlined and legitimated by the assignation of incompleteness within the discourse of development. Within this framework, children are subjugated to adults in a hierarchy of cognition" (R. D. Egan and Hawkes 2010, 299). Angelides corroborates the claims of Egan and Hawkes. He warns against reductive readings of children's sexuality by arguing that, "The more we mystify and pathologize children's relation to sexuality, evacuate childhood of the stain of sexuality, and reify simplistic notions of child powerlessness, the more we disempower children and foster their uninformed curiosity, desire, risk taking, and psychological maladjustment to emerging erotic orientations" (2004, 162). As such, "We must not shy away from theorizing the constitution of children's subjectivity through dynamics routinely encapsulated under the rubric of adult 'sexuality,' such as desire," (2004, 163). While Angelides offers a welcome focus on childhood sexuality, his attention to empowerment and disempowerment reflects the broader problem that any theory of development will present: as long as

empowerment and sexuality are markers of development, we remain stuck in a developmentally-driven epistemological framework.

In other words: The ideal of healthy development becomes a container for developing a sense of sexual subjectivity in a culture of sexualization. To the extent that the girl can recognize herself as possessing her own sexual desires and to do so absent a relation to a sex partner, feminist psychologists argue the girl will have a stronger sense of self and individuate more successfully from parents. Here, there is a critical connection between girls' acknowledging their sexual desire and understanding themselves as (sexual) subjects. Critically, if the girl were to not have developed a sense of herself as sexual, or if she is out of touch with her sexual desire, this is viewed as severely impacting the development of the girl as a proper subject. Thus, to be a healthy subject is to be a sexual subject. Indeed, Lamb responds to "feminist ideals for a healthy female adolescent sexuality," by arguing that markers such as desire and pleasure "set up an overly idealistic version of sexual subjectivity, that it unnecessarily (and unrealistically) reifies active over more passive forms of sexuality, and that it problematically implies that pleasure equates with good and ethical sex" (Gavey 2012, 718). Lamb's nuanced response does much of the heavy-lifting for feminist theories of development, even as Lamb holds onto the promise of girls as sexual subjects.

Complicating theories of girls' development using insights from critical theory, Renold and Ringrose delineate a "concept of 'becoming' to foreground the transitional space of young femininity as always in-movement, where transitions are experienced as multiple, liminal and reversible, rather than one progressive

state to another" (2011, 392). Renold and Ringrose extend Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'schizoid subjectivities" in order to outline how such subjectivities "are experienced and negotiated by girls as a complex process of 'anti-linear becoming' (2011, 392). Renold and Ringrose write against a model of development that insists on linear forms of growth. In doing so, they outline a Deleuzian framework that interrogates the "wished for linear developmental transition between girl to woman in relation to post-feminist discourses and moral panics over girls, sexuality and sexualization. Central to us is subjecting the sexualization discourse to a critical sociological gaze; to scrutinize how it over-simplifies and obfuscates related concerns around girls, bodies, sex and sexuality in ways that flatten out social and cultural differences" (2011, 391). The concept of becoming is central to Renold and Ringrose's argument as they draw extensively from Deleuze. Renold and Ringrose explain that in a Deleuzian frame, becoming "tries to capture the movement and doing of subjectivity as always in process, and specifically operates against the idea of a teleological moving toward developmental subject (2011, 394).[37] What remains unclear is how Deleuze and Guattari address girlhood as something more than a metaphor for beoming that appears free of the weight of developmental discourses.

[37] In their book, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari write, "Once again, we turn to children," (257). What is it about theorizing *being* that propels Deleuze and Guattari to turn to children? More specifically, what is it about girls specifically that welcomes new ways of theorizing becoming? To answer this, Deleuze and Guattari propose a relation between girlhood and becoming, notably without engaging Beauvoir's extensive work on girlhood and becoming. For Deleuze and Guattari, girls seem to defy categorical logic; girls are 'chancy formations' who 'slip in everywhere.' Girls, who embody Deleuze and Guattari's theory of becoming-woman, are different than other figural subjects. Afterall, "girls do not belong to an age group, sex, order, or kingdom: they slip in everywhere, between orders and acts, ages, sexes" (277). If girls defy categorical logic by 'slipping in everywhere,' then the girl offers endless points of becoming and endless opportunities for conceptualizing rhizomatic growth. In this way, girls are much less a subject than they are a refrain, "a bit of code, repeated" (311).

Perhaps one of the most promising avenues for theorizing girlhood and development is one that has been prematurely cast off as essentialist and naïve. Carol Gilligan's work is repeatedly held up as an example of second wave feminist scholarship that assumes sexual difference carries *a priori* meaning. Unlike some of her critics suggest, Gilligan does not refer to gender, sexuality, or sex as static. The distracting and deadening narrative that her research is essentialist has pushed her work to the outskirts of contemporary feminist theorizing (Heyes 1997). At the same time, her work yields resources for theorizing the incapacities of psychological development to account for girls' and women's experiences and the resistance these experiences conjure. In her overview of feminist responses to patriarchal and heterosexist account of development, Sheila Greene emphasizes the novel significance of Gilligan's research (Greene 2003). In addition to her groundbreaking work on girlhood from a feminist perspective, Gilligan often opens and closes her psychological research with poetic writing about girls' phenomenological experiences. Gilligan's poetic approach destabilizes the typical routes to making knowledge claims in the psy-sciences while simultaneously politicizing the content of her analysis. In a non-poetic voice, Gilligan focuses on girls' political resistance, writing, "The tendency for healthy resistance to turn political and for a political resistance to turn into a psychological resistance becomes central to our understanding of the difficulties of psychological suffering that many of these privileged or fortunate girls experience. At adolescence, we saw women's psychological development becoming inescapably political" (L. M. Brown and Gilligan 1992, 16). For Gilligan, the politicization of girls' development is not heroic,

entitled, or empowering. Instead, this politicization is the inevitable outcome of growing up in a feminizing and sexualizing culture. And, as Beauvoir, Gilligan, and others remind us, hitting the 'wall of patriarchy' transforms girls, often in adverse ways.[38]

Gilligan's decentering of the individual girl enables a shift toward theorizing the political effects of girls' sexualization, rather than the promise of sexual subjectivities that claim to enable girls to rescue themselves. Accordingly, Bay-Cheng reminds us that "*Sexual* resources are not the only ones that bear on sexual life and relationships" (Bay-Cheng 2012, 715). In other words, sexuality is not our only resource for thinking about development, or the difference between childhood and adulthood. Instead, Gilligan asks us not to turn inward, but to focus on the work that happens across relationships. She argues that one mode that thwarts the insistent hum of sexualizing culture is girls' relationships. In these spaces, girls "revise the story of their childhood" and "draw attention to a relational crises… this relational struggle tends to stir when the subject turns to knowing and not knowing" (Gilligan, Rogers, and Tolman 1991, 7). The most striking contemporary concepts of development take seriously the confusion of girls' sexualization via relation. Bay-Cheng notes, "The messiness and ambiguity are, in many ways, the point. They represent a refusal of both the one-dimensional gendered sexual roles offered to girls and women…and the segregation of sexuality from the contexts—personal,

[38] For example, in clinical settings, girls' resistance has gained a reputation where girls are "known as difficult to treat precisely because of the strength of their resistance" (Women, Girls, and Psychotherapy, 1991, 1).

relational, social, political, material—in which it is embedded" (Bay-Cheng 2012, 715).

The notion that messiness and ambiguity *are* the point is a refreshing answer to Gavey's declaration (quoted in the epigraph to this chapter), that empowerment may be beside the point. Instead of empowerment, messiness and ambiguity bring us back to Beauvoir's work on girlhood and the need to avoid reductive accounts of development. Rather, sexual growth moves through temporal compressions, expansions, stagnations, and eruptions. Feminist developmental psychologist Sheila Greene offers a clear account of what she calls "anti-developmental developmental" psychology would look like in her 2003 book, *The Psychological Development of Girls and Women: Rethinking Change in Time.* Greene offers a brilliant overview of why feminist psychologists have turned away from development, viewing it as an inhospitable environment for feminist research. At the same time, there are recent calls, most notably from the APA, that a feminist account of development is needed urgently. Following the lead of Greene, an anti-developmental developmental theory—what might be better termed developmental systems theory—would offer a much needed opportunity for theorizing growth instead of development. As such, cross-readings of Greene with the work of other feminist developmental psychologists such as Susan Oyama would offer a more nuanced account of growth that avoids the trap of nature/culture (as I discuss in Chapter 1), and would be more amenable to the insights of feminist-queer critiques of temporality and sexuality (Freeman 2010; Stockton 2009).

Chapter 4

From Instinct to Agency:
Foucault, Causality, and Feminist Critiques of Sexual Violence

> "Causality in the subject, the unconscious of the subject, the truth of the subject in the other who knows, the knowledge he holds unbeknown to him, all this found an opportunity to deploy itself in the discourse of sex" (Foucault 1978, 70).

> "It is not uncommon for the young girl's first experience to be a real rape and for the man to act in an odiously brutal manner; in the country and wherever manners are rough, it often happens that—half consenting, half revolted—the young peasant girl loses her virginity in some ditch, in shame and fear...by an egoistic lover who is primarily interested in his own pleasure" (de Beauvoir 1989, 383).

This chapter turns its attention to a case from 1867 that has been an epicenter of feminist debate over the last 30 years. Instead of concluding the dissertation by building on the insights of the previous chapters to craft a new schema for theorizing girls' sexual agency, this chapter revisits the central concepts of the dissertation as they surface in one particular location in France in 1867, and as they resurface through Foucault's archival study and a range of feminist responses to Foucault's various deployments of the case. The case of Charles Jouy and Sophie Adam is critical given its illumination of how cause crystallizes under the pressure of power-knowledge-pleasure. At the same time, by reading this case with the insights of the previous three chapters in mind, one can also witness the status of cause fading behind the shadow of the emerging psy-sciences. In other words, the expansion of the system of sexuality locates cause in the psy-sciences and, consequently, invests cause within the individual subject. Reading the case critically,

I problematize theories of causality and look instead to how the emergence of psychosexual knowledge made this case a notable event in the history of abnormality and became a central reference point for feminists theorists concerned with sexuality, agency, and girlhood. To this end, my following analysis of the case offers an example of how we might read girlhood, sexuality, agency, and development, through a different rubric.

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Most feminist readers of Foucault are familiar with the case of the 'simple farmhand,' Charles Jouy, whom Foucault briefly mentions in *History of Sexuality*, *Volume One (Sexuality One).* The case of Charles Jouy and Sophie Adam (the relatively unknown name of the "little girl" from whom Jouy "obtained a few caresses") is instructive for Foucault; for him it illustrates both the epistemic shifts and changing technologies of power—specifically the emergence of sexuality—during the late 19th century (Foucault 1978, 31). By the time Foucault published *Sexuality One* in 1976 (translated and published in English in 1978), he had already spent considerable time analyzing the Jouy-Adam case. In his 1974-75 lectures at the Collège de France, *Les Anormaux,* Foucault delivers an extended analysis of the case resulting from archival research he undertook at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. The infamously brief 1978 appearance of the case in *Sexuality One,* then, is only a distilled version of the case that references Foucault's earlier argument in *Les*

Anormaux about the expansion of sexuality[39] as a productive technology of power-knowledge-pleasure.

Much of the feminist response to Foucault's use of the Jouy-Adam case in *Sexuality One* is bound up with obstacles of time and translation. While *Sexuality One* was published in English in 1978, Foucault's 1974-75 lectures, *Les Anormaux,* were not published in French until 1999, and the English translation, *Abnormal,* only appeared in 2003. Clearly, this translation and publishing timeline complicates the reception of Foucault's thinking about the production and regulation of sexuality for many American readers. The relatively late appearance of *Abnormal* has limited Anglophone feminist theorists' ability to engage Foucault's theories about sexuality and violence more extensively.

With few exceptions, feminists have been overwhelmingly critical of what they view as Foucault's reductive presentation of the Jouy-Adam case and his blindness to sexual violence in *Sexuality One*.[40] Linda Martín Alcoff's 1996 essay, "Dangerous Pleasures: The Politics of Pedophilia" is representative of this trend. The feminist concerns Alcoff raises regarding Foucault and the Jouy-Adam case both

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[39] As Foucault problematizes, the deployment of sexuality necessitates both broad and narrow understandings of what he often refers to as "le sexe" to denote the complex constellation of gender, sexuality, physiological sex. In the last chapter of *Sexuality One* he writes, "All along the great lines which the development of the deployment of sexuality has followed since the 19th century, one sees the elaboration of this idea that there exists something other than bodies, organs, somatic localizations, functions, anatomo-physiological systems, sensations, and pleasures; something else and something more, with intrinsic properties and laws of its own: 'sex'" (Foucault 1990, 152-152).

[40] The other tendency is for feminists to turn to Foucault's argument for the decriminalization of rape as a sex crime. Both Monique Plaza's 1981 essay, "Our Damages and their Compensation," and Laura Hengehold's 1994 essay, "An Immodest Proposal: Foucault, Hysterization, and the 'Second Rape,'" offer incisive feminist analyses about the gendered registers of sexual violence among adults. Each of these texts raises critical points about the limit of Foucault's theories of sexuality and power that are worth exploring at length. Akin to the arguments posed by Plaza and Hengehold, feminist theorists have criticized Foucault for his lack of sensitivity to gender, and the gendered experience of rape, in light of his attention to systems of power.

precede her essay and persist in more recent feminist analyses. Still, the essay remains symptomatic of how feminist theorists have responded generally to Foucault's comments on sexual violence and specifically to his comments regarding the desexualization of rape. Aside from Alcoff's essay's focus on adult-child sexual relations, the essay marks a mid-point between Teresa de Lauretis' criticism in her 1984 book *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* that Foucault collapses sexual violence against children as a "bit of theatre" and Adrian Howe's 2008 book, *Sex, Violence and Crime: Foucault and the 'Man' Question* throughout which Howe reiterates the now rote feminist argument that Foucault fails to comprehend gendered experiences of sexual violence (de Lauretis 1984, 94 and Howe 2008). In her essay, Alcoff buttresses her critique of Foucault's presentation of the Jouy-Adam case in *Sexuality One* by referring to comments on children, sexual violence, and pedophilia in a collective interview with Foucault, Jean Danet, and Guy Hocquenghem, "Sexual Morality and the Law" (Alcoff 1996, 102-106). Foucault's comments in the interview do not offer much with which Alcoff can develop her argument. Alcoff highlights Foucault's concern that "sexuality will become a threat in all social relations" (Alcoff 1996, 104) in order to discuss children as a vulnerable population and pedophiles as dangerous individuals. It is critical to note that Foucault is concerned with the violences done to each. The only other comment Foucault makes in the interview that Alcoff includes in her essay is Foucault's statement that we must "'listen to children'" (Alcoff 1996, 105). With these being Foucault's only comments on children and sex, Alcoff turns to Danet and Hocqueghem to problematize their argument.

Alcoff's critique in "Dangerous Pleasures" centers on preserving a feminist capacity to determine what counts as violence and make judgments accordingly. The fact that this discussion has endured for over 30 years (beginning with Monique Plaza's 1981 response to *Sexuality One*) speaks to the persistence of sexual violence against women and children as a feminist concern. Perhaps it goes without saying that feminist theoretical concerns for Foucault's thinking about the relations among sexuality, violence, and knowledge persist well beyond Alcoff's 1996 essay. More recent texts include Jana Sawicki's engagement with the Jouy-Adam case in her 2005 review of *Abnormal.* Sawicki maintains skepticism in her appraisal of Foucault's *Abnormal* analysis of the case, asking, "Were these sexual exchanges really inconsequential, petty, let alone pleasurable for the young girl in the story? Might we as feminists not applaud the effort to begin to regulate such pleasures, to explore their enmeshment with domination?" (Sawicki 2005). Sawicki's clarity about the expanding regulation of sexuality (one of the core arguments Foucault uses the Jouy-Adam case to illustrate) and the potential for feminist applause at the prospect of such regulation, aligns theoretically with other recent feminist responses to Foucault's *Abnormal* analysis of the case. For example, in a dialogue-essay between Cressida Heyes and Chloë Taylor, Taylor offers a brief commentary on the *Abnormal* version of the Jouy-Adam case-- arguing that Foucault's use of the case was to call attention to the invention of the sexological category of the pedophile (Heyes and Taylor 2010, 193-194). Taylor's attention to the emergence of sexology is permeated by the understanding of one of Foucault's main arguments: that one of the ways sexuality is regulated is through the emergence of sexological categories

such as pedophilia. And, in her 2010 book, *Mad for Foucault: Rethinking the Foundations of Queer Theory,* Lynne Huffer offers an analysis of the fraught relationship feminists often have with the *Sexuality One* version of the case. Significantly, in an endnote to her analysis of *Sexuality One* version, Huffer briefly summarizes the *Abnormal* version of the case and insists, "Even in this more detailed narrative about the Jouy story, the problem of gender asymmetries that frame questions of consent and sexual violence remain disturbingly undertheorized and unresolved. Foucault's own uncertainty regarding feminist questions is reflected in his description of an 'almost' happening whose almost victim was 'more or less raped'" (Huffer 2010, 298, endnote 57). Huffer's emphasis on Foucault's uncertainty, and Sawicki and Taylor's attention to the expanding regulation of sexuality differ from the thread of feminist analysis that depends on a causal understanding of both sexuality and violence. This argument is formulated most clearly and carefully in Alcoff's 1996 essay, "Dangerous Pleasures: The Politics of Pedophilia." Yet it is critical to note that this line of argumentation both precedes Alcoff's essay and persists in recent feminist analyses; the general argument about Foucault impeding feminist opportunities for making definitive knowledge claims about sexual violence remains. That concern is somewhat at odds with Foucault's conception of sexuality as a productive mode of modern biopower.

Reading athwart Alcoff and the feminist tradition she represents, I argue here that the practice of making judgments about sexual violence relies upon a concept of causality that is an extension of the modern framework of power-knowledge-pleasure. I do so by focusing on Foucault's more detailed account of the

Jouy-Adam case in *Abnormal.* Indeed, reading *Abnormal* alongside *Sexuality One* provides an extensive account of Foucault's thesis on the emergence of sexuality as a regulatory system. An attentive reading of both these texts elucidates that Foucault does *not* "[want] to defamiliarize his readers to this alignment between sexual practices and the will to truth," as Alcoff claims (Alcoff 1996, 107). Instead, I will show how Foucault's analysis of the Jouy-Adam case in both *Sexuality One* and *Abnormal* insists upon a rigorous comprehension of the expanding system of sexuality. The iteration of the case in *Abnormal*, especially, opens new questions about Foucault's conception of sexual violence within the framework of power-knowledge-pleasure. Specifically, the case raises crucial epistemological questions about the role of causality and the 19th century invention of instinct as the primary cause of sexual behavior as they relate to contemporary feminist condemnations of sexual violence.

It is significant for understanding Foucault's conceptualization of the relation between causality and sexual violence that he returns so many times to work through the complexities of the Jouy-Adam case. He tells the story at least four times in the last lecture of *Abnormal*. He tells it again in *Sexuality One.* The story is clearly recognizable as the Jouy-Adam case in each narration. Yet, the words shift, the evidence shifts, the truth of the case shifts. Foucault keeps truth, cause, and judgment suspended through this series of iterations. Indeed, and perhaps most critically, the only truth Foucault asserts is that something happened, the only cause Foucault offers is chance, and the only judgment Foucault lodges without hesitation is that which legal psychiatry defined and declared as its own (Foucault 2003, 292).

Absent from the circularity of legal psychiatric examinations and their resulting judgments is an understanding of the coming together of pleasure and knowledge, Jouy and Adam. Foucault uses the case to challenge us to think differently about how the expansion of sexuality radically altered forms of power, knowledge, and pleasure. In the wake of legal psychiatry (and, now again, in the very midst of it) we cannot completely know the truth of the Jouy-Adam case. And Foucault seems to be suggesting it really doesn't matter, where matter can be traced through Aristotle's *hypokeimene hyle,* as, what lies beneath. Again, Foucault pushes us away from foundations, leaving us only to trace the effects of an overreaction: legal psychiatry's hyper-production of evidence in order to substantiate the absence of cause haunting its truth claims.

The obfuscation of cause in the Jouy-Adam case helps to explain why many of Foucault's feminist readers understand him as indifferent to gendered and sexual violence. Alcoff uses Foucault's interpretation of the Jouy-Adam case to caution that feminists must be able to make judgments about violence and domination. "A feminist Foucauldian," Alcoff writes, "cannot afford to repeat Foucault's own disenabling ambivalence. If we are persuaded by his (and others') account of domination in 'everyday life,' we must risk putting forward our judgments about when and where it occurs" (Alcoff 1996, 111). Alcoff's concerns are understandable and are consistent with many feminists' concerns about sexual violence. However, what Alcoff characterizes as Foucault's "disenabling ambivalence" suggests a reductive reading of Foucault's argument about the expansion of the system of sexuality and the complex violences of its accompanying practices. One of the

practices Foucault examines at length in *Sexuality One* is the practice of the confession as it relates to sex and the status of truth. In order to make the kinds of judgments about sexual violence Alcoff demands we preserve, one would have to rely upon the confessional practice of "reconstructing [the sexual act], in and around the act, the thoughts that recapitulated it, the obsessions that accompanied it, the images, desires, modulations, and quality of the pleasure that animated it" (Foucault 1990, 63). Alcoff expects that the evidence produced by such confessions will enable feminists to move past ambivalence and make judgments about instances of sexual violence. While Alcoff is certainly correct that Foucault maintains an ambivalent position toward the Jouy-Adam case, she makes a major leap to assume that his ambivalence about the case is a prescription for inattention and nonchalance to sexual violence. Far from inattention or nonchalance, Foucault's repeated discussion of the Jouy-Adam case insists that we think more rigorously about the claims we make about sexual violence given that these claims are necessarily imbricated in the system of sexuality. Because of this, Foucault's theories of sexuality and violence are seemingly impossible to merge with those feminist theories that employ causal frameworks. Foucault's resistance to taking recourse in causality marks his attention to the very ambivalence that sexual violence generates regarding questions of power-knowledge-pleasure.

Central to the problem of causality within the system of sexuality is the deployment of instinct as the quintessential cause of sexual behavior. Before exploring the insights about the role of instinct that Foucault's rendering of the Jouy-Adam case in *Abnormal* makes possible, it is useful to return briefly to his

mention of the case in *Sexuality One,* as this is the source for Alcoff and the majority of other feminist responses to Foucault's thinking about sexual violence. In *Sexuality One*, the Jouy-Adam case serves as evidence for Foucault's thesis on the production of sexuality and the emergence of legal psychiatric frameworks to explain sexual behavior. Foucault begins Jouy's story by framing the event as reminiscent of a Grimm fairy tale. "One day in 1867, a farmhand from the village of Lapcourt…" (Foucault 1990, 31). Foucault's use of a simple narrative structure performs the work of a fairy tale: it suspends the story's complexity in order to trace a series of seemingly causally related events. Using the form of fairy tales, Foucault weaves in the specificity of the particular case. It is not once upon a time, it is one day in 1867. And it is not any village, but the village of Lapcourt. Foucault's attention to specificity is a double gesture: it marks Foucault's commitment to caring for particularities while it simultaneously mocks the method of positivist knowledge production that relies on the ordering of those particularities. Indeed, Foucault cautions us to attend to what is important in this particular telling of the Jouy-Adam case, "The thing to note is that they went so far as to…" (31). In what follows this ellipsis, Foucault presents the series of unfolding responses to the event of Jouy's sexual interaction with Adam. Foucault describes the ostensibly causal chain reaction that the Jouy-Adam case sets into motion, beginning with Adam's parents' reporting to the mayor and ending with the publishing of an assessment of Jouy's mental state. Of course, these are neither the beginnings nor endings of this story's relays of power. As Foucault expands upon the details of the case in *Abnormal,* we learn that before the parents' report, the parents had to discover the girl's soiled

underwear while washing her clothes (Foucault 2003, 295). After the publishing of the report, Jouy had to be locked up in an asylum, his case becoming an instructive "detailed analysis" for a medical science to live on, happily ever after (Foucault 1990, 32). Yet, in breaking the frame of a fairy tale, Foucault's presentation of the Jouy-Adam case in *Sexuality One* offers no moral to the story of Jouy and Adam. In lieu of a moral, Foucault delineates the emerging technologies of power.

Foucault argues through his repeated telling of the Jouy-Adam case that the case itself offers a window into the transition to the system of sexuality and the concomitant emergence of a new apparatus of power-knowledge. This apparatus is "assembled around these timeless gestures, these barely furtive pleasures between simple-minded adults and alert children, a whole machinery for speechifying, analyzing, and investigating" the sexualized individual (Foucault 1990, 32). Foucault highlights the banality of the pastoral events of the Jouy-Adam case that called forth an elaborate machinery of systematized sexuality. Foucault frames the Jouy-Adam case as containing "a quite commonplace accused and a quite everyday offense" (Foucault 2003, 291). This iteration of the case in *Abnormal* illustrates the zipping together of once banal events alongside new legal psychiatric technologies. Foucault's emphasis on the prior ordinariness of the case is central to his argument about the expansion of the regime of sexuality via legal psychiatry. To make this clear, Foucault references the case of Henriette Cornier, a servant and a "lost girl" who had been abandoned by her husband/lover before she abandoned her children and moved into town to find work (293). Cornier's case became an object of legal and psychiatric analysis after she decapitated a girl while working as a servant.

Foucault references the Cornier case (a case he analyzes in several lectures in *Abnormal)* in the lecture devoted to the Jouy-Adam case because Cornier's case documents legal psychiatry's earlier interest in the role of instinct as an innate and unalterable quality of persons. The concept of instinct had to be produced in order for the legal psychiatric system to understand the cause behind Cornier's murdering the girl. "[Instinct]," Foucault argues, becomes "a kind of cog that enables two mechanisms to mesh: the penal mechanism and the psychiatric mechanism" (138). Thus, instinct is not simply part of an index of possible causes for understanding Cornier's committing murder—instinct is the legal psychiatric cause *par excellence*. As Foucault makes clear, instinct was not only a cited cause for human behavior, it was also determined to be the enabling cause behind the entanglement of the penal system and psychiatry. In other words, the 19th century invention of instinct *as cause* effected the emergence and operation of legal psychiatry.[41] As a sort of homage to the instinct that called them into being, both legal and psychological discourses continue to cite possible causes as the rationale legitimating their involvement in people's lives. Even now, in the 21st century, legal psychiatry continues to generate new practices for evaluating the relationship between the subject and possible causes of perversion or pathology.

Unlike most confessions of the late 19th century, the confession of Charles Jouy represents a problem for legal psychiatry because it obfuscates instinct as a cause. Jouy's confession—what becomes his case history—necessitates a production of possible causes in addition to instinct as a rubric for understanding sexual

[41] See Foucault's *History of Madness* for an extended discussion of the overlapping histories of systems of confinement and the rise of the psychological sciences.

deviance and violence. This productive grasping toward a technique for determining cause illustrates legal psychiatry's response to the lack of knowing the cause of a given individual's actions. Although Jouy is questioned about his childhood, birth family, education, and work experiences, the apparatus of legal psychiatry cannot pin down an instinctual cause in Jouy's case history as it did in Cornier's, where her case history produced an account of the origins of her murderous instinct. In the case of Jouy, he occupies a distinct and known role in the village economy (taking on whatever odd jobs he may find), his origins are unknown. Jouy's "floating, unsettled character" represents an obfuscation of cause that temporarily unsettled the framework of legal psychiatry (Foucault 2003, 294). "What the psychiatrists look for in order to demonstrate that they are dealing with someone who can be psychiatrized, what they identify in order to claim Jouy's conduct for their competence," in the absence of recourse to instinct, is a set of structural, physiologically legible, signs of Jouy's psychiatric illness (297). Foucault cites the doctors' finding of irregular measurements in Jouy's body, particularly in his face and skull. Yet, Foucault notes, "none of these [measurements] given by the examination constitutes either a cause or even a principle for triggering illness" (298). Jouy's unknown origins provide a problem for legal psychiatry: there is no account of an instinctual cause that would motivate Jouy's actions. In order to make Jouy's actions intelligible, legal psychiatry turns to exploring markers of physical abnormality as a cause of deviance.

It is necessary to underscore that this production occurs in the absence of an instinct-driven cause. Thus, Foucault addresses that it is in the absence of cause that

legal psychiatric evidence is produced. Foucault highlights this production in both *Sexuality One* and *Abnormal.* Foucault elaborates on the shift from legal psychiatry's explanatory framework of instinct to that of abnormality as legible in the body's measurements.

> In the case of Charles Jouy, however, the signs that are put together constitute the condition that allows the act to be psychiatrized reveal a very different configuration in which it is not excess and exaggeration of an instinct that suddenly wells up that is fundamental and takes precedence. What is primary, fundamental and the very core of the condition in question is deficiency, lack and arrested development. That is to say, [the doctors'] description of Jouy does not look for an intrinsic exaggeration as the origin of his conduct but rather a sort of functional imbalance (Foucault 2003, 299).

This functional imbalance becomes the thing the medical examiners try to document in their extensive measurements of Jouy's face and cranium. Not surprisingly, the doctors find markers of imbecility: Jouy's "mouth is too wide," "the forehead recedes…makes the head into a sugarloaf" (Foucault 2003, 298). Yet, more saliently for Foucault, the medical examiners determine Jouy to have an arrested development—infantilizing him as incapable of moral decision-making and thus not fully culpable. This infantilization of Jouy is what leads him to be confined to a hospital in Maréville for the remainder of his life (Foucault 1990, 32). Infantilization is also what enables legal psychiatry to secure its claim to truth and generalize itself as a science. As in the case of Henriette Cornier, pathological instincts are rooted during childhood. Psychiatry thus takes childhood as its point of reference and the guarantor of its truth claims. Foucault uses Jouy's position in the case to delineate how psychiatry hinges on the ability to "[establish] a continuity with childhood" (Foucault 2003, 301). In doing so, Foucault articulates how psychiatry developed itself as a science that took childhood as its primary source of knowledge and the

cause of adults' behaviors. In the case of Jouy, where Jouy's memory of his childhood is unknown to him, legal psychiatry describes Jouy as an infantile adult—thereby securing its explanatory power.

Both Adam and Jouy's alignment with childhood and their problematized relations to cause (via contradictory desires, in the case of Adam, and lack of instinct, in the case of Jouy) disturb the process of divining truth within the modern framework of power-knowledge. Even though Sophie Adam is a child, and cited often as the obvious victim of this case, Foucault questions Adam's complicity in her sexual interactions with Jouy. Alcoff cautions that Foucault cannot know how Adam actually felt during these events (Alcoff 1996, 108). In fact, we know very little about Adam from *Sexuality One.* It is not until *Abnormal* that we learn that the girl is not just an otherwise forgotten child as *Sexuality One* suggests. She has a name, Sophie Adam—a peasant girl who lived in the same village as Jouy and later was confined to a house of correction until she became an adult. We know very little else about Sophie Adam. What we do know is limited to what remains about her in the archive. We know that her parents first called attention to her dirty laundry, that other villagers "keenly desired" her confinement, and that Jouy mentioned her during his confession (Foucault 2003, 295-296). Yet we do not know how Adam felt about the entirety of events that transpired. We do not know if her confinement was to punish her for her own deviance or to protect her from future precocious behavior and/or all-too-eager villagers. This leaves an asymmetrical relation between the murmurings of Jouy and other villagers and the silence of Sophie Adam.

The archival silence of Sophie Adam, coupled with Foucault's inability to know Adam's feelings about her interactions with Jouy, heighten Alcoff's feminist concerns for judging the case through a rubric of consent. Alcoff appeals to, what she calls, "authentic desires" as a necessary condition for giving consent—the causal factor that will ensure non-violent sex (Alcoff 1996, 121). In order to make a judgment about a case of sexual violence, Alcoff argues, "what we need to know is not whether there was stated consent, but whether the actions performed represented the authentic desires of each participant" (121). The evaluative framework used to gauge "authentic desire" returns us to the language of the legal psychiatric subject. Yet, as any student of the psy-sciences knows, the premise of connecting authenticity to desire quickly becomes a fool's game. What does the subject authentically want? How could one know whether a particular desire was more authentically felt than another? And what happens when two or more simultaneous and contradictory desires are judged to be authentic? In the absence of knowing how Adam felt, Foucault questions Adam's status as an innocent victim and makes us rethink our own prior judgments about the erotic and economic lives of children. Lest we forget, Adam boasts about her interaction with Jouy, she refuses to share the masturbation of Jouy with her friend, and she receives four *sous* for her labor (Foucault 2003, 294). The combination of these factors and Adam's status as child complicates the possibility of authentic desire beyond recognition. Alcoff's use of authentic desire for the justification of what she later terms "authentic consent," as a causal factor for non-violent sex, parallels the use of instinct, as it relates to the alleged perpetrator, as the justification for sexual violence (Alcoff 1996, 121). The

concepts of instinct and authentic desire offer explanations of cause that are rooted in legal psychiatric discourse. Instinct, as an initial iteration of cause within the system of sexuality, is characterized by its capacity to determine the subject. Alcoff's use of the term 'authentic desire" is a contemporary iteration of the causal framework generalized through the continued growth of the system of sexuality.[42]

Legal psychiatry's production of new terms, practices, and methods to determine causality, as is legible in the Jouy-Adam case, demonstrates the system of sexuality's expansion beyond the bourgeoisie to include the working class. The expansion of legal psychiatry as a technique of the system of sexuality is crucial for understanding the class-based dimensions of Foucault's analysis of sexuality and is one of the most important aspects, unremarked by feminists, of the Jouy-Adam case. Prior to the system of sexuality, a system of alliance structured people's lives. Foucault describes the system of alliance as a fixation on marriage and kinship ties, while the system of sexuality extends itself through scientific practices in order to determine truth at the level of the individual, and to ensure the future welfare of a population. Foucault writes, "The deployment of alliance is built around a system of rules defining the permitted and the forbidden whereas the deployment of sexuality operates according to mobile, polymorphous, and contingent techniques of power" (Foucault 1990, 106). In the system of alliance, causality was not yet a scientific or sexualized phenomena, as it becomes in the system of sexuality. As the system of sexuality began to extend itself from the bourgeoisie, it incorporated the working-

[42] Unfortunately, Alcoff's elaborations of authentic desire and authentic consent get us about as far theoretically as United States House Representative Todd Akin's comments on "legitimate rape" in September, 2012. Both terms depend upon a concept of justifiable cause, as determined by one's authentic desires and true motives in order to register as either consensual sex or intentional rape.

classes and the poor through its new technologies of examination, diagnosis, statistical analysis, and medical treatment, among others. Far from the circles of the "economically privileged and politically dominant classes," the events between Jouy and Adam transpired on the side of the road, in a ditch outside of the more populated areas of the village (120). Indeed, a significant detail about the Jouy-Adam case that is often overlooked is that it occurred in 1867 in a small, rural French village. Neither Jouy nor Adam was economically privileged: Jouy was an itinerant worker who lacked knowledge of his familial origins. Adam was the daughter of peasants and used her earned *sous* to buy roasted almonds. Given that the deployment of sexuality emerged first within the upper-classes, the geographic and economic location of the case marks the shift toward the system of sexuality outside the parameters of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, the Jouy-Adam case marks pleasure and knowledge coming together in a "calm violence" against the fading bucolic scene of alliance (Foucault 1994, 377).[43]

For Foucault, the presence of the peasant family in the Jouy-Adam case further illustrates the transition between systems. He notes, "The family is the interchange of sexuality and alliance: it conveys the lay and juridical dimension in the deployment of sexuality, and it conveys the economies of pleasure and the intensity of sensations in the regime of alliance" (Foucault 1990, 108). Foucault stresses the Jouy-Adam case precisely because it does not take place in the tightly controlled space of the bourgeois child's bed, where the child of the late 19th century

[43] In his chapter "The Human Sciences" in *The Order of Things*, Foucault describes the "calm violence of a particular relationship" within the Western *ratio*. Although his discussion here pertains to ethnology and psychoanalysis as sciences of the human, his description of that "calm violence" situates it as the space in which deployments of power-knowledge take place (Foucault 1994, 377).

bourgeois family slept alone and under the close surveillance of trusted servants. Instead, the Jouy-Adam case happens outside the home, outside the jurisdiction of the family, and without reaction from the peasant to whom Adam boasts (and who would have been obligated to report such an incident if she were working for a bourgeois family). What happened between Jouy and Adam occurred outside the domesticized space of the family; it happened on the side of the road, in a ditch, during the daytime, somewhere on the village's outskirts. The role of Adam's family in the case further evidences a shift between the system of alliance, which would have been marked by Adam being slapped by her parents for masturbating Jouy, and the expansion of sexuality, which was marked first by her parents' "famous inspection of dirty linen" and then through their reporting to the mayor a concern for sexual deviance (Foucault 2003, 295-296). The case delineates the expansion of sexuality beyond the bourgeois family, into the home of the peasant family, and then (back) into the hands of the legal and medical examiners. In this way, the Jouy-Adam case offers a window into the active expansion of the grid of sexuality. Adam's soiled clothing is no longer simply dirty laundry. Her clothing is something that merits her parent's attention and immediate action. As Foucault argues, Adam's parents, as the "chief agents of a deployment of sexuality," called upon the non-familial support of the new expert class of doctors, lawyers, and other professionals (Foucault 1990. 110). And, as we know, once Adam's parents discovered that something happened, they reported to the mayor what had now become evidence in a sex crime. All this is to say, throughout the shift from a system of alliance to one of sexuality, that violence persists, that abuses of power persist, and that human suffering continues

to warrant attention. Foucault's commitment to the infamous lives otherwise lost in the archives of history confirms that he is aware of complex relations among past violences and their persistence in the present.

In *Mad for Foucault,* Huffer argues this point forcefully: "Foucault's erotic attention to the archival other is at once fiercely concerned with the subjugation of the present and with the othering violences of the past. The great space of murmurings in [*History of Madness]* is the space of that othering in our historical present" (Huffer, 2010, 274). While Huffer's argument focuses on the archival murmurings in *History of Madness,* Foucault references such murmurings throughout most of his texts—ranging from texts as topically diverse as *The Order of Things, History of Madness, Discipline and Punish* and his lectures, among others. One of the lessons of the Jouy-Adam case in *Abnormal* is that evidence has a history, knowledge has a history, what counts as violence has a history, and that, as any reader of *Sexuality One* already knows, sexuality has a history. Lest we forget, the complete title of *Sexuality One* is *History of Sexuality, Volume One: The Will to Knowledge*—a title that highlights the tightening of the link between sexuality and knowledge. And, like *History of Madness* (*Histoire de la folie*), as Lynne Huffer reminds us, Foucault is deliberate to not include the definite, singular articles "le, la, l'" in his titles. Thus, *Sexuality One* is not a definitive history; it is not *the* history of sexuality. It is one story of sexuality and knowledge.

These infamous lives offer unusual evidence to point us toward thinking more deliberately about the sexualization of knowledge. In an unlikely evidential register, and as a footnote to Jouy's appearance in *Sexuality One*, Foucault

acknowledges the etymological coincidence of Jouy's name. Foucault finds humor in Jouy's name, since the name alone indicates, prior to any other archival documentation, Jouy's connection to sexual pleasure. As the footnote tells us, the French verb *jouir* translates into English as "to experience pleasure," with the colloquial valence of experiencing sexual pleasure, of having an orgasm (Foucault 1990, 32). Alcoff responds to Foucault's attention to Jouy's name by assuming that, "for Foucault, before the intervention of the authorities the principle meaning of this event was pleasure" (Alcoff 1996, 107). It is worth noting, to extend the analysis of names further, that Jouy's first name, Charles, comes from the Old High German word *churl,* which once referred to a free man, but by the 15th century had taken on the connotation of a peasant. Taken together, the name 'Charles Jouy' alludes to a free-floating, working-class pleasure. This allusion might support Alcoff's claim that the principle meaning of the encounter was an untethered experience of sexual pleasure. But, as Foucault makes clear in his analysis of the shift from alliance to sexuality, the principle meaning before the involvement of authorities was not pleasure—not Jouy in himself—but the coming into contact of Jouy and Adam, of pleasure and knowledge.

By applying this etymological thread to the name Sophie Adam, it becomes clear that her name situates her as representative, in conjunction with Jouy, of the emergence of sexualized power-knowledge. Sophie, coming from the Greek word s*ophia,* of course means wisdom. In his *Metaphysics,* Aristotle locates *sophia* as a particular form of knowledge—the knowledge of causes that can explain why things are the way they are. *Sophia* then, is a capacity to know upon which *philos* (love)

produces the discourse and discipline of philosophy as a love of metaphysical wisdom: the love of knowing causes, the love of explanations, and the love of well-ordered evidence. But Foucault's story does not plot causes; it traces the case, it traces chance.[44] Foucault's presentation of the Jouy-Adam case suspends and questions the capacity of the case to produce effective truth claims. Perhaps equally obvious as the name Sophie, Adam comes from the Hebrew *adamah,* meaning the one (man) formed from the ground. Incidentally, the phrase 'adam's apple' derives from the Hebrew *tappuah haadam,* which translates as 'man's swelling.' The allusion here of course is to the story of Adam and Eve, where the forbidden fruit Eve gave to Adam becomes stuck in Adam's throat. As the legend goes, the forbidden fruit represents forbidden knowledge. The swelling of a man's throat, then, comes to symbolize the sexualization of knowledge. Far from using evidence to prove a claim in any straightforward sense, Foucault's focus on the coincidental details of the case leads him to insist on the sexualization of knowledge in his analyses of the emerging psy-sciences and the figure of the figure of the child represented by both Adam, in her position as a girl, and Jouy, as the infantilized adult (Foucault 2003, 303). This insistence on chance marks a critical framework from which Foucault crafts his more general comments on sexual violence and the extension of psychiatric knowledge.

When feminists take issue with Foucault's comments on sexual violence, they have typically neglected to consider how his comments reflect his theory of the sexualization of knowledge. For instance, Alcoff cautions that it would be a "grave

[44] 'Case' and 'chance' share an etymological history. Both words share the Latin base *casus* as their stem.

error" "to believe, along with Foucault… that the issue of sexual violence can be excluded from any theory of the politics of sexuality" (Alcoff 1996, 114). Yet, Foucault performs no such exclusion. Alcoff enacts this exclusion in her reading of Foucault as *only* making a case about the politics of sexuality. In effect, including sexual violence in a theory of sexual politics is *exactly* what Foucault does when he argues for our attention to the ways in which power-knowledge and sexuality share an inextricably reciprocal and productive relation. Foucault's nuanced theory of the role of sexuality in modern systems of power-knowledge necessitates that we think more rigorously about the relationship between sexualized knowledge and patterns of violence, such as the asymmetrically gendered violence of rape. Alcoff recognizes part of the epistemological consequences of Foucault's analysis. Alcoff concedes, "Foucault clearly wants to disrupt any easy assurance that we 'know' the true meaning of this event or the quality of its felt experience for the participants… It hardly need be said that Foucault lacked sufficient evidence to warrant his claims about the girl's participation in or feelings about the event" (107-108). The problem with Alcoff's line of argumentation here is that Foucault never assumes definitive knowledge about either Adam's experience of the events or the status of sexual violence in the Jouy-Adam case. His knowledge claims are always tentative, his language reiterates the suspension of knowing that he traces through the archival citations of the Jouy case. If we can accuse Foucault of anything, it is that he refuses to make a knowledge claim about what probably is a case of sexual violence. But where would such a judgment take us anyway? To be sure, the practice of judgment, as a practice of sexuality, leads us away from understanding the nexus of power that

Foucault's attention to the case calls us to theorize: the entanglement of sex and the desire to know—that will to truth—with violence.

Foucault's suspension of truth highlights the instructive potential the Jouy-Adam case has for theorizing the relationship between sexualized pleasure and knowledge. While Alcoff crafts a generalizing feminist argument about the dangers of sexual violence and the necessity for feminist judgment, Foucault reminds us that violence is always lodged in particularity—that thing we can't swallow. How strange then, that the case Foucault tells and retells casts a young girl, silenced by the archive, as a representation of the knowledge of causes and the sexualization of knowledge within the shift from alliance to sexuality. Could we hear Sophie Adam if the passageway of her throat were clear? If she did not have a lump, that ungainly Adam's apple, lodged in her throat? Through the pastoral scenes of the Jouy-Adam case, could we witness the swelling of the system of sexuality—that coming together of pleasure and knowledge—"without any speaking subject and without an interlocutor, wrapped up in itself, with a lump in its throat" (Foucault 2006, xxxi-xxxii)? Perhaps here in the modern episteme of sexualized power-knowledge, we are only able to hear "more or less" (Foucault 2003, 291). Foucault envelopes the would-be truths of the Jouy-Adam case in these terms. He keeps himself circling around the effects of truth claims while Jouy and Adam are locked up: Jouy in the hospital at Maréville for the rest of his life, being unfit to stand trial, Adam in the local house of corrections until she comes of age. Both locked in modern games of truth.

Foucault challenges us to ask, what knowledge is lodged in (Sophie) Adam's throat? What apparatus of power keeps her from speaking and what compels her confession? Her participation (or was it initiation?) in the pastoral masturbatory game of 'curdled-milk,' her refusal to let her friend take over the masturbation of Jouy, and her boasting of the events to a peasant (Foucault 2003, 292), all complicate (that is, they *enfold*) the familiar storyline of "Jouy raped Adam," "Pleasure raped Knowledge." "Unless," as Foucault suggests in the shadow space of a parenthesis, "(it was Sophie Adam who dragged Charles Jouy) [into the ditch]" (291).

Throughout this chapter, I have sought to understand the complex epistemological relations in Foucault's continual retelling of the Jouy-Adam story, in his differentiating use of evidence and in his problematization of cause. Again, Foucault leaves me troubled. Where Alcoff develops a rubric for feminist judgments in order to advocate against unpunished sexual violence against children, Foucault insists on attending to the complexities of the particular case of Jouy and Adam. When Foucault makes general claims in regard to sexuality, violence, and children, he encourages us to "listen to children" and, as my first epigraph indicates, he articulates a need to distinguish between advocating for the freedom of sexual choice as opposed to a freedom of sexual acts (Alcoff 1996, 105 and Foucault 1997, 143). Alongside these direct claims about sexual violence, one of Foucault's most compelling arguments about the modern episteme of power-knowledge-pleasure suggests that an under-theorized form of sexual violence is the violence we impose on ourselves in expecting our sex, "that little piece of ourselves" to secure our

relationship to truth (Foucault 1990, 77). Addressing this fundamentally modern pressure of gleaning our truth from our sex, Foucault muses, "As if it were essential for us to be able to draw from that little piece of ourselves not only pleasure but knowledge, and a whole subtle interchange from one to the other: a knowledge of pleasure, a pleasure that comes from knowing pleasure, a knowledge-pleasure" (77). By extending our reading of the Jouy-Adam case beyond Foucault's presentation of the case in *Sexuality One,* and then returning to *Sexuality One* to study again Foucault's articulations of the repressive hypothesis, *scientia sexualis,* and the deployment of sexuality, a latent theoretical terrain emerges. Wandering through this terrain, Foucault ignites some of the haphazard and necessary tools for analyzing complex networks of violence, sexuality, and knowledge that move us away from a theory of cause and justified truth claims and toward a theory of the case—of chance—and an attentive approach to all our dangerous pleasures.

My challenge to other feminist theorists is this: Can we leave Sophie Adam as a mess? Can we resist the temptation to rescue her with narratives of (missing) empowerment and sexual innocence? Many feminist theorists have sought to normalize Sophie and her experience of sexual violence. We want to generalize her experience, to naturalize her pain, and to find our truth in her individual complexities. And yet, Sophie Adam's archival traces insist that she refuses to be generalized, naturalized, or individualized. What does it take to leave her alone—epistemologically? Ontologically? Ethically? To resist the need to know her; to refuse to accept her experience as one of kind; to allow her to breathe? She is, like Jouy, abnormal. And she, like Jouy, deserves to be let go.

Conclusion

"Underlying my response [to debates about girls' sexual empowerment] is a sense of fatigue with the very concept of sexual empowerment" (Gavey, 719).

Writing about girlhood is exhausting. Against the scholarly noise surrounding girlhood, and the endlessly growing body of scholarship in her name, something about the girl is lost. She is a figure who has been placed under the microscope of nearly every academic discipline. In critical theory, she has been exploited for her capacity to bend, flex, slip, and disconcert (Deleuze and Guattari, Tiqqun). There, she acts as a sieve—with the water of critical theory poured repeatedly through her. We watch, wait, anticipate what experiences will be caught up by her enmeshment. Yet, instead of surveying what clumps together in the sieve, we theorize what pours through; we call this pouring through her "becoming." I want to turn us back to what is left clumped up against that mesh of girlhood. What does not make it through the filter—that developmental definition—of girlhood? What ways *of being* are stopped in their tracks, dried up, by the becoming of a sexual subject?

When I was about eight, I noticed a practice patter its way into my thinking. At any given time, I have several questions that I carry with me. It generally takes several months or a couple years to feel like I have an answer, some kind of traction on the question. Once I have that traction, the world falls back into its place and I leave the question behind just as a new question emerges to take its place. I have grown accustomed to the rhythms and pace of how I come to understand and forget.

I have been carrying questions of violence and girlhood—what they are—*if they are*—for over two decades. The questions have been in my pocket for so long that they have contoured each other. They stick to each other when it is hot and retract into themselves when it is cold. I am rarely cold; that anxious energy they produce together has kept me sweating and uncertain. I don't know how to ask questions about one without asking about the other. There are graham cracker crumbs stuck to my questions about violence and burning welts swelling my questions about girlhood. Writing about violence tastes like soap; writing about girlhood tastes like iron. These tastes have formed the pallet of my research—making this project feel, at times, too sterile to have meaning or too heavy to complete.

I love little girls who are messes. In their messiness, I can see glimmers of curiosity, of life, of a body somehow after herself by being before her sex. The last time I was comfortable sitting I was on the top of the woodpile in my Kentucky backyard, watching the freight barges pass slowly on the Ohio River. I was eight. It was October. I know because my neck was cold, my hair recently cut. That morning I had fought my mother about brushing it. I would not let my hair be brushed. We agreed to cut it off in the backyard. Afterwards, I collected the clumps of my hair from the grass and took it down to the river to watch it float downstream toward the city: red curls on grey water.

My greatest hope, now that I have spent years attempting to make sense of girlhood, sexuality, violence, and the subject, is that it will open me, and other scholars of girlhood, to forgetting. This project is fundamentally the product of the intellectual labor that prefaces letting go. The dissertation has not been so much focused on the girl—that

figure which emerges through the sieve—but an inquiry into the onto-epistemological history of the sieve of sexual subjectivity that she runs through.

Going back to Kentucky is the hardest thing I do. There, watching the river from my childhood bed, I lose myself remembering all the things I have lost and found in that thick river mud. I continue to find debris that isn't mine: the ghosts of my brother, the plastic arm of a lost doll, my mother's drowned rage, the static love of my father, and another girl's forgotten fear of swimming, which is really just a fear of staying alive and afloat in the unknown. These are some of the other findings of my research. These findings, these clumps caked in mud, need to be hosed off and set to dry in the sun for a few days before I can work with them. Already, as I sense their texture through the muck, they are raising more questions than answers. These questions bring me back to the knots that tangle girlhood, sexuality, and violence. They remind me that while the questions are shifting, it is not yet time to let go of girlhood and violence. Instead, I come back to this academic space with my attention focused on different questions about girlhood, temporality, and growth after violence.

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