Abstract. This article examines a corpus of nineteenth-century French instructional texts offering guidance to bourgeois readers on the training and governance of domestic servants, and focuses on how these texts construct the relationship between servants and children in such a way as to sexualize both. Operating within a broadly Foucauldian paradigm, the article considers how masturbation appears as the ultimate symbol of sexual knowledge in the period. Like much of the contemporaneous medical writing previously examined by Michel Foucault and Thomas Laqueur, the instructional literature understands infantile masturbation as indicative of the contagious spread of sexual knowledge within the bourgeois home, the abject agent of which was often taken to be the servant, whose "bad example" was thought to have a corrupting effect on ignorant infants. Yet the interest of these texts lies in their simultaneous advancement of another, contradictory argument: servants, they suggest, are themselves impressionable, childlike innocents who are corrupted by the example of their degenerate bourgeois employers. In a significant deviation from the more familiar patterns of thought considered by Foucault, then, these texts ultimately elaborate a worldview in which the transmission of sexual knowledge by (bad) example is multi-directional and inescapable, and in which sexual "corruption" – that is, sexuality as such – appears as a fundamental part of the human condition. This in turn is related to an underlying ideological difference between this instructional literature and the better-known medical discourse: while the latter is pointedly secular and positivist, the former is Catholic in outlook, and consequently sceptical as to the value and even the possibility of scientific knowledge. As such, these texts represent an important contribution to our understanding of nineteenth-century ideas on sexuality.

Bad Examples: Children, Servants, and Masturbation in Nineteenth-Century France

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Be it in the interest of Rousseauian frankness or in pursuit of a succès de scandale, André Gide opens his autobiography, Si le grain ne meurt (1926), with a particularly provocative scene of child's play. The year is around 1874, and a five-year-old André and his little friend of the same age are hiding under a table covered with a tablecloth. Their activity is a cause of concern for André's nursemaid:

> 'What are you up to under there?' my nurse would call out.
>
> 'Nothing; we're playing.' And then we would make a great noise with our playthings, which we had taken along for the sake of appearances [pour la frime].[1]

The word-choice of the nursemaid's enquiry, "Qu'est-ce que vous fabriquez là-dessous ?", suggests that the boys may be engaged in some form of pernicious yet purposeful work. André's response, meanwhile, is to assert on the contrary an absence of activity – the boys are doing "nothing" – which is apparently synonymous with play – "we're playing". Yet that play is, we quickly learn, a sham; the toys the boys shake have been brought pour la frime, as a decoy. In truth, of course, the boys are masturbating, or engaging in what André will later learn are called "bad habits" [mauvaises habitudes].[2] This activity is, nevertheless, not entirely unlike play: it is itself a kind of fun ("we amused ourselves otherwise," Gide observes, teasingly),[3] and, as Michael Lucey points out, the boys' "way of noisily shaking their toys is inevitably metonymically associated with their masturbation."[4]

The substitution of auto-eroticism for social play – the boys masturbated, Gide insists, together but separately, "beside each other but not with each other" [l'un près de l'autre, mais non l'un avec l'autre pourtant][5] – is an important part of Gide's self-invention as troubled, different, or indeed, deviant.[6] Yet the particular pertinence of the question of work and play in this scene, however, is indicated above all by the distinctly cipher-like character of André's playmate, that nameless "kid" [bambin] whose identity is determined only by his mother's occupation: he is, and will never be anything more than, "the concierge's son."[7] The encounter under this table, in a smart apartment in the rue de Médicis, is, in this sense, paradigmatic of interactions between masters, servants, and the children of both, and, more particularly, of the long nineteenth century's anxious imaginings of those interactions. Precisely one hundred years before the appearance of Gide's modernist memoir, Pauline Guizot's Éducation domestique (1826), a puericulture manual in the form of an epistolary novel, presented a similar scenario. Mme de Lassay, one of the protagonists, seeks advice from a correspondent regarding the undesirable intimacy that has sprung up between her young son and the children of her gardener: "In general, I am afraid that he might contract a certain vulgarity of manners in the company of these children. My fears go even further. Children are so eager to tell each other, and to learn, what they ought not to know [ce qu'il ne faut pas savoir]!"[8]

One might well suspect that the forbidden knowledge alluded to by Mme de Lassay, and which she considers the gardener's children more likely to possess than her own, is of a sexual nature – though there is necessarily room for doubt, since, as D.A. Miller reminds us, "connotation enjoys, or suffers from, an abiding deniability"; and the sexual here is, at most, connoted.[9] The paradigmatic character of Gide's centennial restaging of this anxiety may thus be said to lie in the simultaneous erasure of that epistemic margin and retention of its defining rhetorical feature: while there can be no confusion as to the boys' occupation under the table,

that is, the phrase "we had what I afterwards learnt are called 'bad habits'" is nevertheless irreducibly an example of the slippery, connotative "rhetoric of allusion and metaphor" that characterized the nineteenth century's discursive handling of sexual matters.[10] If the sexual theme has become more explicit in Gide's text, moreover, a different epistemological problem becomes concomitantly more problematic, namely, the origin of those "mauvaises habitudes": "Which of us two taught them first to the other? I have no idea. Surely a child may sometimes invent them for himself. Personally, I cannot say whether anyone instructed me in the knowledge of pleasure or in what manner I discovered it – I only know that as far back as my recollection goes, I cannot remember a time without it."[11] Here again, indeed, we might argue that Gide only intensifies a question that had been asked for a century; for while Mme de Lassay seems to imply that knowledge of "ce qu'il ne faut pas savoir" is communicated to middle-class children through definite channels, and that those channels may well be found in the offspring of servants, she nevertheless notes her husband's rather more suggestive belief that "they get bad ideas [les mauvaises idées] from who knows where."[12]

In this essay, I want to explore nineteenth-century French understandings (or, perhaps more accurately, imaginings) of the relationship between servants, on the one hand, and sexual knowledge and initiation, especially that of children, on the other, through analysis of a number of instructional texts concerning the management, education and surveillance of servants.[13] Many of the texts I shall consider are practical manuals of domestic economy or savoir-vivre, while a few are monographs with more sociological pretensions; still others are treatises on correct moral comportment. All, however, are explicitly intended for middle-class employers of servants, and all are, broadly speaking, Catholic in outlook; a minority of the works were indeed authored by Catholic clergy, published by Catholic publishing-houses or at the behest of Catholic societies, or reported by Catholic bibliographies.[14] This is not to say

that the texts are in any explicit way devotional, or that they engage in doctrinal discussion; on the contrary, most do no such thing. But all offer their advice within a specifically Catholic social framework, and all are explicit about the necessity of religious observance to good domestic relations. The texts' religious worldview emerges most clearly, indeed, in moments when they discuss the nature of the association between the employers and domestic servants: in 1814, a clerical author insisted on the "religious duties" of the master to the servant, and noted that "the religious sentiment" was "the most powerful link between those who command and those who obey";[15] in 1838, a secular writer denounced the "near-total absence of religious principles" among masters and servants as "the crisis of our age";[16] in 1881, a sententious moralist implored employers to instil religion in their servants, for "where religion lives, vice will never make its home";[17] while in an exemplary nostalgic moment, a household manual of 1884 longed for a return to the social formations of the Ancien Régime, when "the master felt himself responsible for the eternal happiness of his servant," and when masters and servants were "united in the community of religious duty."[18]

A work of 1885, finally, made explicit just what was at stake in cultural political terms in these earlier claims, by insisting that the religious education of servants was essential because: "Try as they might, the school of Independent Morality, the school of Positivism, the school of Utilitarianism will never change the fact that Religion is the supreme beacon which leads mankind through the perils of a life which the dismal dryness of Scepticism or Materialism would render a hundred times worse than death."[19] To be sure, the explicit antisecularism of this last example is an extreme case, reflecting the intensification of the cultural struggle between Catholic and secularist social forces under the Third Republic, a struggle whose defining moments are to be found in the introduction of free, secular state education between 1881 and 1882 (the lois Jules Ferry) and the official secularization of the French state in the law of 9 December 1905.[20] Yet even if one allows for this fin-de-siècle

rhetorical inflation, there is a remarkable consistency of both tone and content across the corpus: while the earliest dates from 1814 and the latest from 1912, and despite the famous political instability of the French nation during that period, the general conception of the relationship between servants, masters, and their children evolves scarcely at all in the prescriptive literature – a fact which is itself indicative of the extreme conservatism of their social outlook.[21]

These rather niche texts, I shall argue, deserve the scrutiny of historians of sexuality by virtue of their tendency to deviate from those well-documented, probably mythical, and certainly grossly exaggerated nineteenth-century narratives of child abuse by servants (though such narratives are certainly present in the texts, and will form an essential part of my argument).[22] For alongside such commonplace ideas, the instructional literature advances a somewhat less familiar, agonized moral discourse in which the servant appears as the symbol of victimhood as much as of predation: in an argument dating back to seventeenth-century homiletic discourse, these authors suggest that the servant's debauchery typically reflects the master's, and is indeed contracted from him. They thus imply that the sexual corruption of children is ultimately attributable to forces that emerge within the bourgeois home itself, not in some threatening outside world. While investigating this argument, I shall hope to show in addition how these texts place domestic service and sexuality in a mutually indicative relationship; how they simultaneously and paradoxically insist on the danger of curiosity and the necessity of surveillance; and how they both acknowledge and deny the troubling difference between ignorance and innocence.

The Contagion of Servants

In considering Gide's professed inability to recall the origin of his "mauvaises habitudes," Lucey argues that "to posit a sui generis arrival of autoeroticism . . . is really not [...] what Gide is attempting here." In Lucey's opinion, Gide is "much more interested, on the one hand, in the possibility that sexual practices are contagious, and, on the other hand, in the difficulty of establishing the moment at which they were caught."[23] It may be observed that if this is indeed where Gide's interest lies, then he shares yet another preoccupation with nineteenth-century thought about the role of servants. For nineteenth-century and pre-nineteenth-century medical writers on masturbation, of course, it was merely banal to observe that servants acted as a vector for this devastating disease, importing it into bourgeois homes where it was presumed not to be endemic. In the French version of his L'Onanisme (1774), that foundational text of autoerotic panic in Europe, Samuel-Auguste Tissot rhetorically invited mothers and fathers to reflect on the case of a young man who was "schooled in the ways of wickedness [instruit au mal] by a servant-girl," and to consider how certain they were of the morality of their own servants.[24] "Vicious servants," notes Thomas Laqueur in his history of masturbation, were thought to have "played with the genitals of their charges to keep them quiet" or "out of simple perversity,"[25] a fear which Foucault describes as a "domestic obsession" [hantise domestique].[26] The stability of these assumptions throughout the nineteenth century was such that in his case-history of "Dora" (1905), Sigmund Freud initially took it for granted that Dora's governess was "the source of all Dora's secret" – which, as always, means "sexual" – "knowledge" (though he would later be forced to amend this view).[27]

These, then, were the assumptions of specialized medical and pseudo-medical writing, and they are assumptions which found their echo in moral instructional literature on domestic service, even where sexual matters were not specifically addressed – a conjunction that may seem even more significant if we consider the divergence in worldview between the

resolutely materialist medical establishment and the Catholicism of the moralists (a divergence to which I shall return later in this article).[28] Despite this signal difference, a medicalized vocabulary of contagion and what we might call a "Pasteurian" vision of moral decay loom large in many didactic writers' discussions of the transmission of undesirable behaviours to children by the servants charged with their care. Guizot's Mme de Lassay, we recall, expressed concern that her son might "contract a certain vulgarity of manners" in the company of the gardener's children. The vices of servants, a monograph of 1862 agreed, were infectious: "Children who grow up in contact with these vices and flaws are exposed, and may contract the same stain [souillure]";[29] servants might also spread an immoral "contagion" between themselves, one writer noted in 1884.[30] Marcelin Bouniceau-Gesmon, juge d'instruction and author of a sensationalist 1896 exposé of servants' wickedness, lamented the breakdown of the "cordon sanitaire" that ought to surround the family, allowing servants to bring into the home "the contamination of the outside world [milieu ambiant]."[31] "It is hard to believe just how fatal daily contact with vicious servants can be for children," he continued, "and just how much corruption is introduced in this manner into the bosom of the family."[32] In 1870, an extraordinarily phantasmatic article from Larousse's Grand Dictionnaire, meanwhile, agonized over the possibility "that the servant-girl might speak with a crude tongue before the child, that she might introduce dishonour from the outside world," fearing that "the family may only notice when there is no longer any remedy for the disease."[33] Less explicitly, the servant was the "intermediary" whereby "vice" and "turpitude" entered the home, a writer of 1844 claimed, while a predecessor in 1814 insisted that "the pleasures of family life" had been "poisoned" by the corrupting presence of servants.[34]

Even where it stopped short of these pathologizing metaphors, the bulk of the instructional literature nevertheless reveals a pervasive anxiety about the moral, intellectual

and linguistic influence of servants upon their young charges. The chronologically earliest text under consideration here, written by the Revolutionary and former Bishop of Blois Henri Grégoire in 1814, noted the "misfortunes inflicted upon children by the depravity of servants"; the latter, he argued, "are only too quick to reinforce the vicious inclinations" of the children in their care.[35] In a handbook for servants of 1828, Mme de Genlis noted that it was "a most essential duty" of the female servant to give children "good examples at all times," before presenting the edifying stories of a number of servants who fail to live up to this responsibility.[36] The question of the "example" raised by Genlis is particularly important for our purposes (we shall see why in the next section); Bouniceau-Gesmon, for instance, laments "the contact of all these impure elements with children, who receive in this school of vice the most deplorable examples."[37] A monograph of 1912 by Marcel Cusenier makes the point in similar terms, summing up a century's handwringing: "Nursemaids give children the most deplorable examples. They teach them improper manners and vulgar expressions that will have to be corrected in later life. Children are, moreover, frequently the witnesses of the private conduct of household servants. This is a spectacle which is not made for their young eyes."[38] Cusenier's argument moreover makes explicit the logic underpinning this anxiety about the example set by servants: "children's adaptation to their social milieu," he insists, "happens by imitation."[39] It is the child's tendency, indeed, <u>compulsion</u> to imitate that poses the problem, since it ensures that the wicked "lessons" taught by servants will penetrate "to the very depths of his impressionable soul."[40] In Cusenier's nightmare vision, children raised by servants, leaving their care at sixteen, are "suddenly surprised to find that they do not resemble their parents at all"; their imitation of the servants' examples leaves them "profoundly different" – essentially servants themselves.[41]

At the furthest extreme of this grim imaginary interplay of example and imitation, I would argue, lay masturbation; and once again, the scene depicted by Gide, in which his

younger self and the concierge's son masturbate "l'un près de l'autre, mais non l'un avec l'autre pourtant" can be seen to encapsulate the obsessions of the preceding century. The boys masturbate not reciprocally, but in parallel: and to the antionanist imagination, sure enough, masturbation is a nonrelational vice acquired by proximity to bad examples ("l'un près de l'autre") and repeated imitatively. This is the model of sexual corruption which haunts the instructional writing considered here, though the texts vary in their treatment of the theme; those intended for women are particularly guarded, where they allude to it at all. Mme Guizot's early and ambiguous reference to "ce qu'il ne faut pas savoir" seems luxuriously suggestive when contrasted with the indication, found in a housewife's manual of 1896, that the nursemaid "will refrain above all from allowing the child to sleep with her, which is forbidden by Religion and even by the law."[42] In fact, this prohibition (which had, sure enough, been enshrined in Canon Law for some time) was intended to prevent sleeping nurses from crushing or smothering their charges; yet its reiteration here, bristling as it is with panicky italics and pointedly silent as to its purpose, seems to invest the shared bedchamber with a greater and more taboo menace.

Monographs written for worldly pères de famille, on the other hand, could afford to be more explicit, though they thundered proportionally louder. François Pérennès's statement of the case in 1844 offers one of the most explicit evocations of actual child abuse by servants: "Must we go through the catalogue of those servant-girls who, sometimes in their ignorance, to calm a child's cries, sometimes with the aim of procuring for themselves a moment's infernal pleasure, corrupt the innocence of the creatures entrusted to their vigilance?".[43] Bouniceau-Gesmon similarly relates a case history in which a father surprises his sickening son's nursemaid "in flagrante delicto," performing "the most odious practices" upon him. And yet the imitative faculty of children means that merely being near promiscuous or vulgar servants can have an equally devastating effect: a young girl, having

repeatedly witnessed her parents' servants engaging in "acts of debauchery unheard of outside of the most pornographic novels," herself becomes addicted to "certain vicious practices," not to mention foul language and obscene gestures, all imitatively acquired.[44] The Grand Dictionnaire explores the same double possibility, in terms that are at once lurid, prurient, and sentimental: "Poor children! Frail and touching creatures! Lust with its shameful caresses [attouchements honteux] and foul suggestions will surround them from the cradle."[45] The privileged space of childhood is, it seems, threatened on all sides by a lasciviousness whose physically abusive "attouchements" are only as dangerous as its more insidious "suggestions" (the corrupting effects of which the Dictionnaire seems to hint at in an apparently unintentional pun – just what are those "touchantes créatures" touching?).

The theme of self-pollution, then, found its place in at least some of the texts which set out to deal with the "servant question." Yet even where masturbation is not alluded to in this literature, it may be said to insist as a kind of absent presence – for a curious counter-effect of the period's fondness for euphemism when referring to autoeroticism is to make it sound as if moral writers are always talking about masturbation, when in fact they may have other or more general moral deficiencies in mind. To put it another way: how confidently do we think we can distinguish between Gide's "bad habits," Bouniceau's "vicious practices" or the Grand Dictionnaire's "foul suggestions" – all fairly unambiguous circumlocutions for masturbation – and the "bad passions," "perverse examples," "vicious suggestions," "dangerous penchants,"[46] "bad directions,"[47] "stains,"[48] "vices," "turpitudes," "ignoble pleasures,"[49] "deviations," "flaws,"[50] "criminal manoeuvres,"[51] "criminal influences," "vulgar appetites," "debauchery,"[52] "bad ideas,"[53] "vicious habits," "incorrect manners,"[54] "crimes,"[55] "perverse habits" and "vicious inclinations"[56] evoked so readily by other writers, with apparently different meanings? The point, of course, is that this ambiguity is entirely symptomatic: for the French middle class, I would argue, masturbation was at once the

extreme instance of domestic corruption, and its most prominent and abiding signifier. The extension of the vocabulary of character weaknesses and minor peccadilloes to provide euphemistic coverture for the evocation of masturbation is thus nearly synonymous with the inverse movement: namely, the wholesale annexation of that vocabulary by the singular fixation of the autoerotic threat.

Corruption by Example

According to one line of argument in these texts, then, the servant, an outsider to the family and one of lower social class at that, seems a logical scapegoat for the appearance of vice, represented most compellingly by autoeroticism, within the bourgeois home. The argument is familiar. Yet the instructional literature on servants immediately presents us with a startling ideological complication, in the form of the conviction, ubiquitous in the selfsame texts, that servants learn corruption by example, and specifically by the example of their masters. This was a view that had been present in Catholic moral discourse since at least the seventeenth century; it figures, notably, in a text by the late seventeenth-century Jesuit sermonist Louis Bourdaloue, whose work was regularly republished throughout the nineteenth century. In a sermon "On the Care of Servants" [Du soin des domestiques], Bourdaloue set the tone for his nineteenth-century imitators, informing his upper-class flock that: "You make yourselves the seducers and the corrupters [of your servants] . . . by making them the accomplices of your disorders; and by the pernicious examples that you give them, which are a fearful temptation for them. . . . In perverting these servants by the opportunities for sin to which your vicious habits expose them, you pervert them by example."[57]

Our instructional texts adhere very closely to the Jesuit author's mimetic moral logic, and insist upon the corrupting effects of the examples set by over-sophisticated employers for their impressionable servants. "The vices of which [servants] are most often accused," wrote Casimir Mittre in 1838, "are often abetted by the very flaws and immorality of their masters," who provide nothing but "bad examples."[58] The Abbé Grégoire, though particularly vituperative towards corrupt servants in the main, simultaneously attributes that corruption to "the bad example set by masters and mistresses":[59] "Good or bad example is the most eloquent preceptor. Very few men cultivate their reason and their hearts, and act according to principle; almost all proceed by imitation, and one will rarely find a virtuous servant in the home of a vicious employer. The servant would leave him, or end up resembling him, and the trivial proverb is generally true: like master, like valet [tel maître, tel valet]."[60] In this moral conception, the servant becomes the master's picture of Dorian Gray, the visible manifestation of the sins he strives to hide from the world, the "sponge," in Pérennès's word, that soaks up all his "errors."[61]

The "trivial proverb" evoked by Grégoire recurs in this context. "The proverbial expression '<u>tel maître, tel valet</u>,'" observes a manual of 1884, "is particularly accurate in the sense that the domestic is always to some extent the unconscious creation [œuvre] of the master he serves."[62] Mme de Genlis, who acknowledges Grégoire in her introduction, seems to demur and concur at once: "<u>Tel maître, tel valet</u>, runs the proverb, which is very often false. Some domestics are so incorrigible that no master on earth could make them what they ought to be. It is nevertheless true that vicious masters almost always have rascals for servants, especially since no virtuous servant would remain in the employ of a master from whom he received only a bad example."[63] Genlis acknowledges that the impressionable valet "imitates perfectly" his corrupt master,[64] while Pérennès concedes more parsimoniously that servants "copy" their employers' manners and mores "more or less well" [tant bien que

mal].[65] Grégoire, moreover, makes explicit that the servant's tendency towards imitation is the same as that of children and that servants are, in this sense, like those "frail and touching creatures" they were elsewhere seen to corrupt: "Can children, can servants hear the language of vice without being corrupted?", he enquires, rhetorically.[66] Other writers deploy the handy proverb to the same purpose, with Bouniceau-Gesmon, for instance, plagiarizing Grégoire: "The principal cause of servants' depravity is the depravity of their masters. There is nothing truer that the trivial proverb: tel maître, tel valet. The servant, like the child, is essentially imitative, and one will rarely find a virtuous servant in the home of a vicious employer."[67] "'Tel maître, tel valet,' claims an old proverb, correctly," chirped a manual of the same year (1896). "Like children, servants are what we make them, and if one looks after them with an almost paternal benevolence, if above all one sets in all respects a good example, one may hope that they will turn out well."[68] A number of writers imagine the perfect master-servant relationship in such condescending, infantilizing terms: "It is the duty of masters to guide their servants paternally," notes Pérennès, while the well-trained servant, in Mlle Dufaux de la Jonchère's opinion, is the one who is "more docile, more submissive than a child."[69]

The effect of this assimilation of servant and child is, it should be emphasized, often sharply contradictory, with familiar denunciations of the pathogenic servant-child relation being suddenly re-applied to that, equally "contagious," between master and servant, often in the same terms and within the same texts.[70] If Bouniceau-Gesmon lamented the "school of vice" in which children raised around servants grew up, he also insisted that, as a result of the "corrupting influence of masters upon their servants," the home in which servants worked had been "transformed into a school of corruption."[71] Children, Cusenier pointed out, were "witnesses of the private conduct of household servants," often an inappropriate "spectacle"; yet servants were, in their turn, corrupted by being "the spectators of those whom they serve," the impressionable "ocular witnesses, assiduous witnesses, perpetual witnesses of what you

do and say."[72] Cusenier's insistence that children raised by servants ended up "profoundly different" from their parents, moreover, is weirdly undermined by his equally strong conviction that servants "soon become accustomed to acting and speaking" in the manner of their corrupt employers – suggesting, apparently unwittingly, that the relationship between parent and child as mediated by the servant might be one of uncanny resemblance rather than irreconcilable difference.[73] Such contradictions were, finally, resolved in spectacular style by the Grand Dictionnaire, which painted an elaborate and disturbing picture of the result of the "bad example" set by the master and the double imitation it provoked:[74] "From the boudoir to the vestibule and from the vestibule to the boudoir, there is a constant back-and-forth of corrupting elements. We corrupt the serving-girl; we debauch the valet; we set the example of misconduct, licence, and moral disorder. They will return a hundredfold the teachings they have received from their superiors. They will transmit the virus, either to the young son as yet free of all taint, or to the young daughter, still innocent and timid."[75] The bourgeois household as imagined here is a perverse eco-system, a sexual food-chain, a cycle which not only reproduces but multiplies erotic knowledge a hundredfold. While the child's innocence persists in the form of ignorance – "their soul will be contaminated before they even know they have one," the dictionary continues – the original source of the "virus" (namely the "shameful caresses" already cited) is now clearly to be found in the masters; the contagion begins as the ignorant servant-girl is herself "initiated into all the secrets of the bedchamber [l'alcôve]."[76] The Abbé Grégoire sums up the accusation: "The masters are the first and the greatest culprits."[77]

Now the idea that servants may have been the victims of sexual exploitation by their employers may well strike us as historically more justifiable than the imaginings of massive, pervasive child abuse discussed so far. Indeed, one history of nineteenth-century domestic service goes so far as to include "sexual compliance," perhaps somewhat glibly, among the

recognized duties of servants – especially, predictably enough, female servants – throughout the period, while another notes that many young women entering prostitution claimed to have been former servants sexually exploited and then dismissed by their masters.[78] It should be noted, however, that while certain writers do acknowledge this problem, the question of exemplarity once again looms much larger; the majority of texts are more concerned to decry the corruption of servants by imitation of, rather than by interaction with, degenerate masters. Such mimetic corruption was inevitable, the Grand Dictionnaire alleged, as soon as ignorant servants were installed "under the domestic roof and near [près] the conjugal bed," that is, in a relation of proximity to, rather than one of participatory contact with, the intimate spaces of the home.[79] Sexual immorality, then, is still being imagined as something that occurs, as Gide would have it, "l'un près de l'autre" rather than "l'un avec l'autre"; though contagious, it remains in some sense autoerotic.

Innocence and Ignorance

This obsession with corruption by proximity demands elucidation. In his 1974-75 lecture series Les Anormaux, Michel Foucault considers the interrogation of "the child's nonrelational, autoerotic sexuality" as the lynch-pin of the formation of the middle-class nuclear family, simultaneously self-contained and under the technocratic suzerainty of medical science, over the course of the nineteenth century.[80] This insight, combined with James R. Kincaid's observation that "our Victorian ancestors managed to make their concept of the erotic depend on the child,"[81] perhaps begins to illuminate the instructional literature's otherwise surprising tendency to regard all sexuality, and not just (if always especially) that of children, as somehow nonrelational: though clearly contagious, sexuality for these writers

is emphatically not an STI. Indeed, one possible line of argument might regard the ideological work of such a discourse as the separation of what we would call "sexuality" as such – that is perhaps, to paraphrase Althusser, "the imaginary representation of the actual conditions of sexual activity" – from "sex," narrowly understood as procreative heterosexual coitus. "Sexual intercourse," Laqueur observes, "was thought to require no 'art,' because 'nature' taught it to each of us when the time came."[82] Certainly, this conception of sexuality, and of the manner of its transmission, tends to situate it at the level of knowledge, as Guizot's mysterious "ce qu'il ne faut pas savoir" or the troubling "secrets" acquired by the Dictionnaire's servant-girl. And as a form of knowledge, sexuality may be assumed to be not only not endemic to the middle class, but also not innate in any individual; it is instead acquired by example, transmitted as a kind of savoir-faire, an ensemble of mechanical techniques. Hence perhaps the emergence of masturbation, a manual gesture to be learned and repeated ad nauseam, as the emblem of sexuality so conceived; hence also, perhaps, the importance of the servant as an intermediary figure, a manual labourer who invariably works alone, and whose task demands the acquisition and endless repetition of simple techniques. Within this moral world, both the servant and the (child) masturbator behave as psychologically incomplete automata, inexorably repeating whatever gestures they have been taught, for good or ill.

It is, then, the transmission and circulation of knowledge within the home, as much as (if not more so than) sexual activity, that must be regulated, and this epistemic regulation demanded heightened parental attentiveness. Masturbation, Foucault argues, became the menace that sanctioned unprecedented scrutiny of children's bodies and constant surveillance of the spaces of the home, an obsessive "getting rid of dark corners" [chasse aux coins obcurs][83] whose fundamental object was itself the acquisition of knowledge: "We see here the establishment of a whole family drama with which we are quite familiar and which is the

great family drama of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: the little theater of the family comedy and tragedy with its beds, its sheets, the night, the lamps, with its stealthy approaches, its odors, and the carefully inspected stains on the sheets; the little drama that brings the adult's curiosity ever closer to the child's body."[84] An 1858 dictionary of household management offers an exemplary injunction to anxious mothers, which alone goes some way to substantiating Foucault's pantomime vision: "As trustworthy as well-chosen domestics may be, you, good mother who love your child, must visit him regularly, sometimes by night at various hours, sometimes by day at a thousand different moments when you are thought to be absent or occupied elsewhere. Do not trust in appearances. Remember that many mothers have been deceived: only by seeing all with your own eyes can you be certain that what is happening around you is good."[85]

While few texts enacted Foucault's "family drama" quite so hammily, the instructional literature I am considering here nevertheless clearly participated in this promotion of surveillance in its most general sense. If Cusenier lamented that children in the care of servants were only subject to "intermittent surveillance,"[86] Dufaux noted that masters had an obligation to "surveiller" their servants' behaviour,[87] while the anonymous author of an 1896 guide noted the necessity of a "very special surveillance" on the part of parents where children and servants were concerned (both separately and together).[88] Guizot's protagonist, meanwhile, accepts that her son will fraternize with the gardener's children, but plans to "establish around them, whenever they are together, a certain surveillance, that is, to surround them in such a way that they can never get out of our sight."[89] Bouniceau-Gesmon similarly insists that mothers have a "strict and sacred duty to provide uninterrupted surveillance of all contact between their children and servants,"[90] the stern conclusion to an extraordinary digression in which the supposed "insouciance," "thoughtlessness" [légèreté] and "blindness" of most middle class mothers is attacked in richly suggestive terms:[91] "What

sorry mothers, in truth, and wholly undeserving of that name, are these women who, in their frenzied pursuit of the sterile and intoxicating pleasures of society parties, come to consider their children a hindrance to the satisfaction of their vain and coquettish instincts, and do not hesitate to immolate duty to pleasure."[92] In these lines, it seems that the mother who, per incuriam, allows her children to be contaminated by servants' vice is herself a metaphorical masturbator: a pursuer of "sterile" pleasures, bent only on the satisfaction of her "instincts," she sacrifices all duties and responsibilities to activities that Bouniceau summarizes as "quite the most selfish" [ce qu'il y a de plus égoïste].[93] Her inattention recalls some of the masturbator's most characteristic symptoms, the "disorders of attention" which were in turn the object of the "compulsive attention" of antionanism discourse.[94] Not coincidentally, of course, she also appears distinctly infantile, seeking only instant gratification and unresigned to the sacrificial logic of adulthood and, a fortiori, parenthood. The inevitable failure of women thus constituted to engage in the necessary surveillance necessarily results in the propagation among their own children of a different but equally solipsistic moral disorder, one which bears a family resemblance to the depraved indifference from which it springs. Such incurious parents are, Bouniceau concludes, "more guilty than unfortunate."[95]

Now the obsessive surveillance demanded by such phantasmatic narratives aligns the moral writers to some extent with the medical discourse examined by Foucault and Laqueur, yet I would argue that consideration of the instructional literature on servants can add significant additional insights to our understanding of the period's approach to autoeroticism. In his analysis of medical writings on infantile masturbation, Foucault detects an erotic undertone to the scrutiny parents were exhorted to direct at their children; such scrutiny, he suggests, constituted a "caressing incest of looks and gestures around the child's body," an "epistemophilic incest."[96] One might expect that only vocationally oppositional texts – Foucauldian history or, perhaps, certain kinds of avant-garde literature – could expose this

erotic investment of the correctional gaze. Yet the unique interest of the instructional genre lies, once again, in the extraordinary prominence of its ideological contradictions, a prominence which renders those contradictions immediately legible even as the texts fail, or appear to fail, to recognize them as such. Compare the insistence, cited above, that mothers should sneak about the house when least expected, "seeing all," with Mme de Genlis's stern warning that "listening to things that aren't meant for you and uncovering secrets that others are trying to hide from you, are truly crimes";[97] or with the following blast, again from Bouniceau-Gesmon, against "curiosity": "This curiosity consists in a manic desire to learn and know at all costs what other people are attempting to hide and to conceal. – It is a systematically indiscreet gaze, a veritable magnifying glass directed at one's neighbour. It is the ear pressed against his wall, in order to penetrate his secrets and his suffering, his ills and his weaknesses."[98] Here, of course, Genlis and Bouniceau are describing the excessive nosiness of servants, a "capital fault" which has, Bouniceau insists, been theirs since time immemorial. Sure enough, the passage evokes a wearily familiar image of servants as "domestic enemies," a cliché with a long literary history in, for example, Molière, Swift (to whom Bouniceau makes frequent reference) and Beaumarchais.[99] Servants, the argument goes, are "our greatest spies,"[100] constantly snooping on their masters with a view to a profit or for simple titillation, and this eagerness to uncover secrets is invariably referred to, as here by Bouniceau, as the servants' curiosité. Cusenier warns his readers that "the events of the masters' lives cannot go by without leaving some traces which are seized upon by servants' curiosity,"[101] while Mlle Dufaux de la Jonchère notes that "at the bottom of this curiosity, there is a certain hostility, ever alert to find out our secrets."[102]

Now one might dismiss this apparent contradiction as a simple reflection of the fact that to a worldview as hierarchical as that advanced by these authors, what is sauce for the goose is seldom sauce for the gander: while the servant's curiosity is corrupt and in need of

repression, the master's is legitimate and necessary for the maintenance of order. Yet this would be to sell short the peculiar ideological trouble evident in such a double standard, and in the manner of its expression in the instructional literature. While Foucault draws attention to the incestuous eroticism of familial surveillance as something which has been repressed (notwithstanding his contempt for the "repressive hypothesis" and, for that matter, psychoanalysis),[103] that repression seems uniquely inefficient in a text such as Bouniceau's, where the absolute homology of servants' and masters' curiosity – fundamentally, its orientation towards the specifically sexual secrets of others – is made constantly visible. And that same guilty curiosity is, of course, characteristic of children as well; as Mme Guizot noted, "children are so eager to tell each other, and to learn, what they ought not to know." Thus where one imitative movement conveyed sexual corruption by example from parent to servant to child, a second demands that parents ape the epistemophilic behaviour of their offspring and employees that caused all the trouble in the first place. The result is an imaginary household in which corruptor and victim, criminal and disciplinarian are almost entirely indistinguishable. And yet it is not enough simply to keep servants and children in the dark; the "inborn ignorance" of poorly educated servants is precisely a "shameful ignorance," one which "produces and maintains most of their vices."[104] Nothing, Mlle Dufaux argues, is more morally dangerous than an "incomplete knowledge" of the ways and rules of the world, while the criminal ignorance of negligent mothers, as we have already seen, is itself closely akin to autoerotic self-absorption.[105] So despite the alignment of sexuality with knowledge, ignorance for these writers is not the same as innocence: it is rather conceived of as a kind of vacuum which inevitably generates curiosity and thus its own undoing. "Desires and ignorance unite," observed one writer, "to plunge us irresistibly into depravity."[106] On this showing, the question of where mauvaises habitudes or idées come from ultimately seems not only unanswerable but also pointless: while the texts, as we have

seen, may appear at a local level to posit a "Pasteurian" theory of corruption by foreign bodies, the broader world they represent is one in which the appearance of autoeroticism is so utterly certain that it might just as well be said to happen by spontaneous generation.

These patterns of thought might, one supposes, just conceivably be related to the Catholic doctrine of original sin; in describing the ignorance of servants, to be sure, Dufaux de la Jonchère casually alludes to "the tree of knowledge of good and evil."[107] This is, however, the only explicit reference to the Fall of Man in the instructional literature. Nevertheless, the inescapable conclusion to be drawn from these texts – that sexual enlightenment is not only inevitable but that it is in a sense always already present – surely suggests at the very least that there is a human tendency towards sin ("that inclination that we have towards evil," to quote Bourdaloue),[108] if not that sin is, independently of any precise doctrinal position, the human condition proper.[109] The interest of such an observation is not in any case principally theological, of course, but rather historical and political, for such a view is not merely divergent from, but may even be seen to offer fairly pointed resistance to, the dominant medical discourse to which the texts seem in other respects rather indebted.[110] The instructional writers' profound lack of confidence in the beneficial character of knowledge arguably prosecutes a nineteenth-century culture war, in that it is doubly hostile to the epistemological assumptions of the secular, rationalist medical establishment: firstly because the knowledge about sexuality which that discourse makes its object is seen as always potentially corrupting once acquired; but secondly and more importantly because the very urge to acquire such knowledge – an urge which must be assumed to characterize doctors and their readers as much as the curious child who is eager to "apprendre ce qu'il ne faut pas savoir" – is now taken to be itself the sign of an already-present epistemophilic eroticism. So if antionanism writings constituted, in Laqueur's phrase, "a literature that generate[d] erotic desire in order to control it" and thus "a vast corpus of incendiary porn,"[111] the instructional

writers' peculiarly Catholic scepticism comes close to making the same point. While the conceptualization of sexuality primarily as knowledge may well, as previously hypothesized, have served to buttress a familiar, rigid separation between "legitimate" heterosexual coitus and the vast realm of perversion, it can nevertheless be seen to have had implications which were in their anticipation of Foucault ideologically much more troubling to the positivism of the age: namely, that there is no such thing as an erotically neutral knowledge about sex.

Coda: sui generis

The text known as Confessions d'un inverti-né, that piece of soi-disant life-writing by an anonymous Italian homosexual, was sent for Émile Zola's learned consideration in around 1889, and published by the doctor Georges Saint-Paul in the journal Archives d'anthropologie in 1895, and again in his treatise on Perversion et perversité in 1896. Early on in his confession, in the section entitled "Childhood," the author recounts a childhood encounter with one of his father's domestics. Before this episode, a young stable-boy has shown the narrator how to masturbate, once again in a strictly proximate manner: "This young man abused himself [se corrompit] several times before me [devant moi]."[112] Yet the standard imitative model appears deficient here; "although I burned to imitate him," the narrator continues, "I couldn't do it when I was alone." This refers, of course, to the narrator's sexual immaturity, but the text constructs the encounter with an adult domestic that follows immediately as almost magically transformative in this regard. The narrator describes his particular attraction to this servant in a narrative which insists at once upon his own role as childish seducer, and (despite the young groom's best efforts) upon his lack of sexual knowledge and initiation.

> By little boyish ruses, I would try to make him talk about dirty things, and he did so with enthusiasm. I liked him very much and I wanted always to have him beside me [à côté de moi]. In the evening he would come with me into my bedroom and stay near me [près de moi] until I was almost asleep. I would make him talk about his mistresses, about the bad places he went to, and this gave me so much pleasure that I would lie for hours afterwards, wide awake and full of desires of which I was barely aware [dont je ne me rendais presque pas compte]. I would have liked for him to lie beside me [auprès de moi], to feel his blond, burnished body . . . . My desires went no further and I never imagined anything else [je ne concevais pas autre chose].[113]

I turn to this episode from the Confessions here, as a kind of coda, because while the topoi it explores are clearly continuous with those of antionanism writing, their use here, as in the instructional texts considered in this article, is divergent in significant ways from their typical deployment in the medical literature, and allows us to think more speculatively about what these divergent discourses might suggest. In this passage, to be sure, the standard narratives of proximity, of corruption and of initiation are both maintained and manipulated by the author: though the child speaks of his wish to have the servant "à côté de moi," keeps the servant "près de moi" in his bedroom, longs for him to lie "auprès de moi" in his bed, the knowledge or corruption which is typically assumed to be communicated in such undesirable adjacency is already present in the child as an instinctual desire, whose authenticity and intensity is supposed to be guaranteed by his professed lack of sexual self-awareness ("désirs dont je ne me rendais presque pas compte," "je ne concevais pas autre chose"). The following paragraphs can be seen to actualize the eroticism that was latent in the two-hundred-year bedroom scene of antionanism literature. Though presented as an etiological case-history under the self-pathologizing rubric "First deviations" [Premières déviations], what follows is not only clearly an episode of intense (auto)erotic significance to the author, but also the only

sexual episode in the Confessions which might lend itself (which seems, indeed, to aspire) to pornographic use – precisely because its pseudo-medical framing permits the author to dispense with the romantic clichés he resorts to elsewhere, in favour of a bluntly constative mode.[114] Persuaded by "little boyish ruses," that is, by the innate deception or "frime" (as Gide put it) which characterizes childish innocence in the moralists' conception, the servant gives in to the narrator's solicitations and allows himself to be masturbated by the boy, albeit briefly. Though the gesture is the same, this episode of non-imitative masturbation is of course structurally different from the variety familiar to contagion models of sexual initiation, which was both acquired and subsequently practised in a purely mechanistic way. Far from imitating a learned behaviour, the narrator of the Confessions is emphatically "impelled by I know not what force, what innate desire."[115] While sexual knowledge may well be acquired by contamination in scenes of proximity such as that with the groom, neither desire nor its physical expression, the narrator insists, requires instruction.

So can autoeroticism appear sui generis? Freud, of course, ostentatiously announced that it could and did, and Gide's suggestion that a child might "invent" mauvaises habitudes from scratch clearly responds to that discovery. Laqueur, meanwhile, notes that some nineteenth-century doctors also acknowledged that children might discover masturbation alone.[116] As Mme Guizot put it: "they get bad ideas from who knows where." Yet in a manner strangely reminiscent of the instructional texts I have considered in this article, the treatment of the beginnings of autoeroticism in Confessions d'un inverti-né can be seen to challenge the logic of this question, and the primacy accorded to it within antionanism discourse. Certainly, the narrator subsequently describes his masturbation in the tones of condemnation habitual to that discourse as "one of the most degrading vices into which we may fall."[117] But the sincerity of the narrator's self-condemnation in Confessions is always difficult to gauge, and one might well find a certain archness at work in the following one-

sentence paragraph: "Although delicate in appearance, I in fact had the strongest of constitutions and felt no ill-effects as a result of what would doubtless have killed anyone else."[118] When one considers the histrionic tenor of nineteenth-century antimasturbation literature – in which self-abuse was alleged to cause a horror-house of substantive physiological ailments and psychological troubles – this breezy expression of constitutional good fortune is almost breathtaking; it is surely possible to find such an assertion discreetly sarcastic even as it pays lip-service to the dire warnings of the medical establishment.

More importantly, however, the account of sexual initiation given in the Confessions seems noteworthy in its reluctance to regard autoeroticism as separable from eroticism more generally. After this initial relational encounter, the narrator's autoerotic efforts will be successful, and will be conducted in recollection of this episode – though this is not to imply that masturbation is dependent upon or a poor substitute for alloerotic encounters. Rather, this scene, and its strangely knowing association of childhood, seduction, ignorance, and the servant, represents the symbolic unpicking of a knot of discursive commonplaces denigrating masturbation by setting it aside: in the Confessions, we might say, masturbation becomes centrally expressive of a complex erotic personality, where in antionanism discourse it was seen as the absence of personality, a strictly mimetic automatism. And this idea, I would argue, is the corollary of the instructional writers' more censorious tendency to see all sexuality as autoerotic: both they and the author of the Confessions refuse the hygienists' view of masturbation as fundamentally distinct from sex and therefore in some sense eminently suppressible. In their very different ways, both arguments almost seem to see masturbation, so famously belittled by Rousseau as a "dangerous supplement," as nothing short of essential to human personality; as, indeed, the very template of adult life.[119] Taken together in all their ideological heterogeneousness, they may even point us towards an alternative sexual epistemology – one that can only be evoked here – of considerable

importance to our understanding both of nineteenth-century French sexuality, and, conceivably, our own.

Notes

The author wishes to thank Michael Lucey and Marco Wan for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this article.

[1] André Gide, If It Die, trans. by Dorothy Bussy (London: Secker & Warburg, 1950), 9.

[2] Gide, 9.

[3] Gide, 9.

[4] Michael Lucey, Gide's Bent: Sexuality, Politics, Writing (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 25.

[5] Gide, 9.

[6] It falls quite outside the purview of this article to appreciate the intrinsic importance of this immensely suggestive episode, both for Gide's autobiographical œuvre and for early twentieth-century French thought about sexuality in general. Michael Lucey's excellent study offers a thorough and, in a sense, definitive analysis of the dynamics of sex in Si le grain ne meurt (21-41) which interested readers should consult.

[7] Gide, 9.

[8] Pauline Guizot, Éducation domestique, ou lettres de famille sur l'éducation, 2 vols. (Paris: A. Leroux et Constant Chantpie, 1826), 2:156-57.

[9] D.A. Miller, "Anal Rope", in Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories, ed. by Diana Fuss (New York: Routledge, 1991), 124.

[10] Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction, trans. by Robert Hurley (New York: Picador, 1990), 17.

[11] Gide, 9.

[12] Guizot, 2:157.

[13] It should be noted that the present essay is intended as an investigation of a discursive phenomenon related to nineteenth-century French conceptions of sexuality, in which the servant appears as a figure. It does not purport to be a contribution to the social history of domestic service in France, which has been well covered by other writers. For more on the day-to-day life of French servants, in the nineteenth century and before, see: Anne Martin-Fugier, La Place des bonnes: la domesticité féminine à Paris en 1900 (Paris: Grasset, 1979); Pierre Guiral and Guy Thullier, La Vie quotidienne des domestiques en France au XIX[e] siècle (Paris: Hachette, 1978); Cissie Fairchilds, Domestic Enemies: Servants and their Masters in Old Regime France (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984); Sarah C. Maza, Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century France: The Uses of Loyalty (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983); Rachel G. Fuchs, Gender and Poverty in Nineteenth-Century Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 118-24; and especially Theresa M. McBride, The Domestic Revolution: The Modernisation of Household Service in England and France, 1820-1920 (London: Croom Helm, 1976).

[14] See for example [Abbé] Henri Grégoire, La Domesticité chez les peuples anciens et modernes (Paris: A. Egron, 1814); Abbé La Bussière de Vaucé, Les Domestiques chrétiens, ou la morale en action (Paris: Librairie Catholique d'Édouard Bricon, 1828); Abbé C.-J. Busson, Instructions et conseils aux filles de service et à tous les domestiques en général (Paris: Gaume Frères, 1842); Abbé Paul Fesch, De l'ouvrier et du respect (Paris: H. Welter, 1888); Encyclopédie catholique: répertoire universel des sciences, des lettres [etc] 18 vols. (Paris: Parent-Desbarres, 1839-48), which contains a long article on "Domesticity" (10:487); Charles de Ribbé, Les Domestiques dans la famille (Aix: Illy, 1862), concerning the award to a servant of a virtue prize by a Catholic charity; and François Pérennès, De la domesticité

avant et depuis 1789, ou discours sur cette question : comparer les rapports actuels des domestiques et des maîtres avec ce qu'ils étaient avant la Révolution... (Paris: Sagnier et Bray, 1844), reported in La Bibliographie Catholique (Paris: no pub., 1842-1889), 4, no. 12 (1845), 571.

[15] Grégoire, 167, 200.

[16] Marius-Henri-Casimir Mittre, Des domestiques en France, dans leurs rapports avec l'économie sociale, le bonheur domestique, les lois civiles, criminelles et de police (Paris: Delaunay et Dentu, 1838), 25-26.

[17] Henry Buguet, Le Guide des maîtres et des domestiques (Paris: Derveaux, 1881), 85.

[18] Mlle E. Dufaux de la Jonchère, Ce que les maîtres et les domestiques doivent savoir (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1884), 25. Cf. Pierson, Manuel d'un jeune ménage, 3rd edn (Nancy: Vagner, 1861; repr. 1876), 135-36: "It is in their intimate contact with the people that the upper classes may see for themselves what damage has been done by the weakening of the religious sentiment. When the master and his servants recited the same prayer, when they knelt together before the holy table, . . . there existed between them an intimate link, a secret sympathy." Similar sentiments may be found in virtually all of the primary documents listed in this article.

[19] Prosper-Georges-Marcelin Bouncieau-Gesmon, Domestiques et maîtres: à propos de quelques crimes récents (Paris: Dentu, 1885), 203-04.

[20] On Church-State tensions in this period, see C.S. Phillips, The Church in France, 1848-1907 (London: Macmillan, 1936); Jean-Marie Mayeur and Madeleine Rebérioux, The Third Republic from its Origins to the Great War, 1871-1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 101-09; and Jacqueline Lalouette, La République anticléricale: XIXe-XXe siècles (Paris: Seuil, 2002).

[21] Of the thirty-two texts considered here, four date from the Restoration (1814-1830); six from the July Monarchy (1830-1848); six from the Second Empire (1852-1870); and sixteen from the Third Republic (1870 onwards). While this uneven distribution no doubt reflects an explosion of prescriptive literature for middle-class readers (especially women) towards the fin de siècle, the texts are otherwise so homogeneous in content as to seem almost divorced from their immediate historical contexts (and, indeed, from reality). While McBride notes various attempts by local or national governments to improve or otherwise regulate the conditions of servants' employment (investigations into their housing occurred under the Second Empire and the Third Republic, 50-54; placement agencies fell increasingly under government control from 1852 onwards, 77-78), the texts themselves generally fail to acknowledge such changes or the reformist discourses from which they emerged, preferring instead to promote the entirely privatized, strictly domestic resolution of social tensions by means of good manners, exemplary behavior, and (above all) sound religious instruction.

[22] In this article, I shall associate these ideas principally with nineteenth-century medical discourse; for the most authoritative and well-known treatments of such themes within the history of sexuality, see Thomas W. Laqueur, Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation (New York: Zone Books, 2003), 226-29; and Michel Foucault, Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-1975, trans. by Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2003), in general. It seems likely that such notions were a subset of bourgeois France's suspicion of the "corrupt" lower and working classes in general, a suspicion famously explored in Louis Chevalier, Classes laborieuses et classes dangereuses à Paris pendant la première moitié du XIXe siècle (Paris: Plon, 1958; repr. Perrin, 2007), especially 451-68.

[23] Lucey, 25.

[24] Samuel-Auguste Tissot, L'Onanisme (Paris: Éditions de la différence, 1991), 64.

[25] Laqueur, Solitary Sex, 227.

[26] Foucault, Abnormal, 244.

[27] Sigmund Freud, Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria, in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, ed. and trans. by James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953-74), 7:36, n. 1.

[28] See Laqueur, Solitary Sex, 189-90, 192, on the materialism (bordering on anticlericalism) of medical studies on masturbation.

[29] Jules-Adrien de Lérue, Maîtres et domestiques (Rouen: Cagniard, 1862), 190.

[30] Dufaux de la Jonchère, 51.

[31] Prosper-Georges-Marcelin Bouniceau-Gesmon, Domestiques et maîtres: question sociale (Paris: Alphonse Lemerre, 1896), xviii, xvii. All subsequent references to "Bouniceau-Gesmon" refer to this work of 1896.

[32] Bouniceau-Gesmon, 372.

[33] Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIX[e] siècle, ed. by Pierre Larousse, 17 vols. (Paris: Larousse, 1866-77), VI (1870) at "Domestique" (1054).

[34] Pérennès, 40; Grégoire, 136.

[35] Grégoire, 137.

[36] Stéphanie de Genlis, Le 'La Bruyère' des domestiques, précédé de considérations sur l'état de la domesticité en général, 2 vols. (Paris: Victor Thiercelin, 1828), 1:99.

[37] Bouniceau-Gesmon, 251.

[38] Marcel Cusenier, Les Domestiques en France (Paris: Arthur Rousseau, 1912), 226-27.

[39] Cusenier, 229.

[40] Bouniceau-Gesmon, 372.

[41] Cusenier, 229.

[42] Les Bons Domestiques: manuel des jeunes ménagères extrait des cahiers de leurs grand'mères (Dax: H. Labèque, [1896]), 36.

[43] Pérennès, 41.

[44] Bouniceau-Gesmon, 373, 379, 378.

[45] Grand Dictionnaire universel, at "Domestique" (1054).

[46] Dufaux de la Jonchère, 46, 67

[47] Louis-Léger Vallée, L'Éducation domestique de l'enfant et de l'adulte, ou l'art de corriger les défauts et les vices et d'exciter les qualités et les vertus (Paris: Hachette, 1858), at "Domestiques" (138).

[48] Lérue, 190.

[49] Pérennès, 40, 54.

[50] Mittre, 109.

[51] Bouniceau-Gesmon, 390.

[52] L. F. Fouin, De l'état des domestiques en France et des moyens propres à les moraliser (Paris: Delaunay, 1837), 35.

[53] Guizot, 2:157.

[54] Cusenier, 184, 226.

[55] Genlis, 1:118.

[56] Grégoire, ii, 137.

[57] Louis Bourdaloue, "Du soin des domestiques," in Œuvres complètes, 16 vols. (Lyon: Guyot, 1846), 5:346-47, 348.

[58] Mittre, 38, 40.

[59] Grégoire, ii.

[60] Grégoire, 166-67.

[61] Pérennès, 31.

[62] Dufaux de la Jonchère, 22.

[63] Genlis, 1:13-14.

[64] Genlis, 1:13.

[65] Pérennès, 54.

[66] Grégoire, 167.

[67] Bouniceau-Gesmon, 244. Bouniceau's "admirable" monograph of 1885 is in turn liberally cited by the Abbé Fesch in his own attempts to describe "this corrupting influence of masters upon their servants"; Fesch, 161-62, 163.

[68] Les Bons Domestiques, 23. For other occurrences of the proverb, which was in very common usage, see: Encyclopédie catholique (1846), at "Domesticité" (10:487); 'Stella', Manuel d'économie domestique et d'instruction (Paris: A. Mame, 1903), 80; Emmeline Raymond, La Civilité non puérile, mais honnête, 8th edn (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1865; repr. 1873), 230; Mme A. La Fère [Gaston Allard], Savoir vivre, savoir parler, savoir écrire: à l'usage des gens du monde, 7th edn (Paris: Nouvelle librairie scientifique, 1884; repr. 1889), 132; Louise d'Alq, Le Mâitre et la maîtresse de maison (Paris: Bureau des causeries familières, 1887), 144. Indeed, Third Republic morality manuals for children often presented this proverb (understood quite literally) as a "maxim" to be committed to memory: see G. Bouhélier, La Morale par l'exemple, maximes et récits (Besançon: Millot frères, 1896); M. Maryan and G. Béal, Le Fond et la forme: le savoir-vivre pour les jeunes filles (Paris: Bloud et Barral, 1896), 152; and A. Bancal, Carnet de morale, 2nd edn. (Paris: Hachette, 1898), 24.

[69] Pérennès, 54; Dufaux de la Jonchère, 20. See also Oscar Edmond Ris-Paquot, Le Livre de la femme d'interieur: table, couture, ménage, hygiène (Paris: Henri Laurens, [1892]), 36-37; and Que faire ? Aimer ! Manuel de la charité pratique destiné aux femmes (Paris: Fischbacher, 1890), 49-52, on the need to treat servants as children.

[70] Cusenier, 19.

[71] Bouniceau-Gesmon, 247.

[72] Cusenier, 181, 185. The second phrase is quoted directly from Bourdaloue's "Du soin des domestiques" (cf. Bourdaloue, 348). That Cusenier, the latest writer considered here, should cite extensive chunks of Bourdaloue's two-hundred-and-fifty year-old sermon is indicative of the unchanging, almost stagnant character of the moral worldview presented in these texts.

[73] Cusenier, 185.

[74] Grand Dictionnaire universel, at "Domestique" (1053).

[75] Grand Dictionnaire universel, at "Domestique" (1054).

[76] Grand Dictionnaire universel, at "Domestique" (1053). Cf. Bouniceau-Gesmon, 247: "Next we have the servant-girl, swiftly initiated into all the secrets of the conjugal life." There are numerous similar episodes of apparent plagiarism in Bouniceau-Gesmon's rambling monograph.

[77] Grégoire, 167.

[78] Guiral and Thullier, 10; McBride, 105-06; Fuchs, 119. Such exploitation was also the object of frequent denunciation and satire in literature; see for example Émile Zola's Pot-Bouille (1883) and Octave Mirbeau's Journal d'une femme de chambre (1900).

[79] Grand Dictionnaire universel, at "Domestique" (1053). Emphasis added.

[80] Foucault, Abnormal, 249.

[81] James R. Kincaid, Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molesting (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 52.

[82] Laqueur, Solitary Sex, 227.

[83] Foucault, Abnormal, 232.

[84] Foucault, Abnormal, 246.

[85] Vallée, at "Domestiques" (138).

[86] Cusenier, 229.

[87] Dufaux de la Jonchère, 67.

[88] Les Bons Domestiques, 35.

[89] Guizot, 2:157-58.

[90] Bouniceau-Gesmon, 385.

[91] Bouniceau-Gesmon, 378.

[92] Bouniceau-Gesmon, 381.

[93] Bouniceau-Gesmon, 385.

[94] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl," in Tendencies (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 119.

[95] Bouniceau-Gesmon, 380.

[96] Foucault, Abnormal, 232.

[97] Genlis, 1:118. Edifying texts addressed to servants themselves invariably made this point in very similar terms. "It is an act of theft to uncover a secret that someone does not wish to confide to you," La Bussière de Vaucé, 109; "In uncovering a secret by curiosity or by ruse, you have acted fraudulently," Busson, 228.

[98] Bouniceau-Gesmon, 157.

[99] See Fairchilds, especially ch. 4 and 5. The idea of enmity between servants and masters, while in some sense indicative of the Old Regime, seems to have persisted as a commonplace, if sometimes seemingly a wry one, throughout the nineteenth century. The Abbé Grégoire in 1814 evokes the bourgeois master "besieged in his own home by men who are his enemies" (Grégoire, 136), while a fin-de-siècle encyclopaedic dictionary observed that "the servant in our society finds himself the natural enemy of those whom he serves." La Grande Encyclopédie: inventaire raisonné des sciences, des lettres et des arts, 31 vols. (Paris: Lamirault, [1886-1902]), at "Domestique" (14:857). A savoir-vivre manual for schoolgirls also warns that "it is with those who come closest to us that we must mind ourselves the most

closely. To allow [servants] to see our weaknesses is to give ourselves away to an enemy who longs to attack us". Théodore Cahu, L'Ami des jeunes filles (Paris: Marpon et Flammarion, 1886), 81.

[100] J.-A. Boymans, Histoires domestiques, ou critique des maîtres et des valets (Brussels: Périchon, 1830), 15.

[101] Cusenier, 181.

[102] Dufaux de la Jonchère, 73; see also Boymans, 15: "They spy on everything we do and say . . . , either to see if they can't turn it to their profit, or simply to satisfy their curiosity."

[103] While Les Anormaux and the first volume of Histoire de la sexualité are closely (indeed, immediately) contemporary, Foucault seems much more willing to accept, at least implicitly, the repressive character of nineteenth-century medical discourses in the former text than in the latter – despite the fact that the repressive hypothesis is formally identified and critiqued in Les Anormaux (39-48) as well as in La Volonté de savoir.

[104] Pérennès, 31, 54. Pérennès, we recall, went so far as to cite ignorance as one of the possible causes of child abuse by servants (who might naïvely employ masturbation as a means of calming crying infants). Pérennès, 41.

[105] Dufaux de la Jonchère, 50.

[106] Fouin, 32.

[107] Dufaux de la Jonchère, 50.

[108] Bourdaloue, 349.

[109] See also Laqueur, 227.

[110] The superficial alignment is nevertheless undeniable, and is at its clearest when Pérennès, in a note, directs his (male) readers to "certain works of physiology" (41); or when Bouniceau-Gesmon explicitly invites anxious fathers to consult the writings of the antionanist physician Ambroise Tardieu (379-80).

[111] Thomas Laqueur, Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 228.

[112] "Confessions d'un inverti-né," suivies de "Confidences et aveux d'un parisien", ed. by Daniel Grojnowski (Paris: José Corti, 2007), 70. Emphasis added.

[113] Confessions, 71.

[114] The passage, as well as several others, was politely translated into Latin in its first publication.

[115] Confessions, 72.

[116] Laqueur, Solitary Sex, 199-200.

[117] Confessions, 75.

[118] Confessions, 76.

[119] See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Émile, ou de l'éducation (Paris: Flammarion, 1966), 437.