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The "Government of Heroic Women": Childhood, Discipline, and the Discourse of Poverty

„Kontrolle durch heroische Frauen": Kindheit, Disziplin und der Armutsdiskurs

This article provides a close reading of case records from Cleveland, Ohio and analyzes the discursive practices of poverty relief in the fifty years prior to 1945. A late 19th-century effort to organize charity and instill work habits was professionalized into an interlocking set of disciplinary institutions. As young people encountered various echo chambers of therapeutic reflexivity, the discursive structure of childhood became part of the assemblage of governmentality.

Dieser Beitrag analysiert, auf der Grundlage von Fallakten aus Cleveland (Ohio), die diskursiven Praktiken im Bereich der Armutsfürsorge in den fünfzig Jahren vor 1945. Seit dem ausgehenden 19. Jahrhundert wurde versucht, das wohltätige Engagement und die Vermittlung einer guten Arbeitsmoral neu zu organisieren und zu professionalisieren, was schließlich zu einer engen Verzahnung von verschiedenen Institutionen führte. Kinder bekamen es mit unterschiedlichen Formen therapeutischer Reflexivität zu tun, die diskursive Struktur von Kindheit war Teil einer neuen Gouvernementalität.

Keywords: discourse, discipline, governmentality, childhood, poverty, Foucault, charity, social work
Schlagworte: Diskurs, Disziplin, Gouvernementalität, Kindheit, Armut, Foucault, Wohltätigkeit, Sozialarbeit

In 1870, women operating an evangelical house of refuge in Cleveland, Ohio (Bethel Union), became the city's first "friendly visitors". They gathered clothing and donations for distribution to poor families at their homes (Cleveland Leader July 23, 1873, 1/8). Three years later, they took out an advertisement in the *Cleveland Leader* explaining their self-consciously utilitarian response to poverty: "If you are called upon by a beggar, and cannot

investigate his case yourself, send him to the Bethel Relief Association, where his case will be *thoroughly investigated*, and if you have anything to give to the poverty stricken, send your donation to the treasurer of the association, Loren Prentiss, Esq., and you can rest assured that your money will be placed 'where it can do the most good' in relieving deserving cases of charity" (ibid.).

By the depression of the 1890s, the Bethel Associated Charities (BAC), a third iteration of the Bethel Union, had developed more sophisticated tools for governing charitable relationships. In return for donations, they distributed cards to cue good Samaritans (Figure 1). The card read: "Instead of giving to unknown persons at the door, please send the person with this card to our office, that the case may at once be investigated, and if desired, report sent to you."

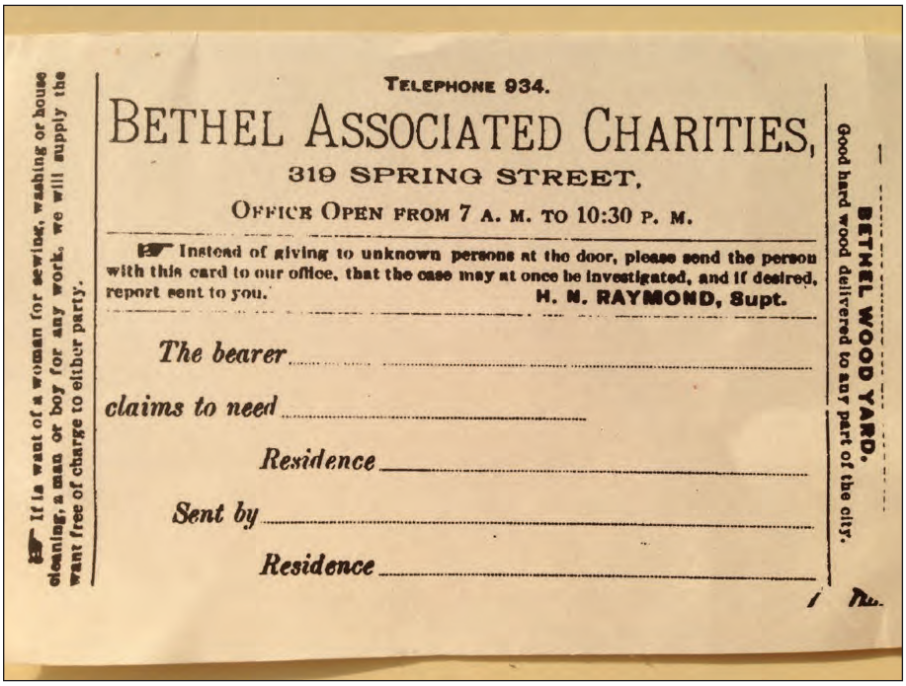
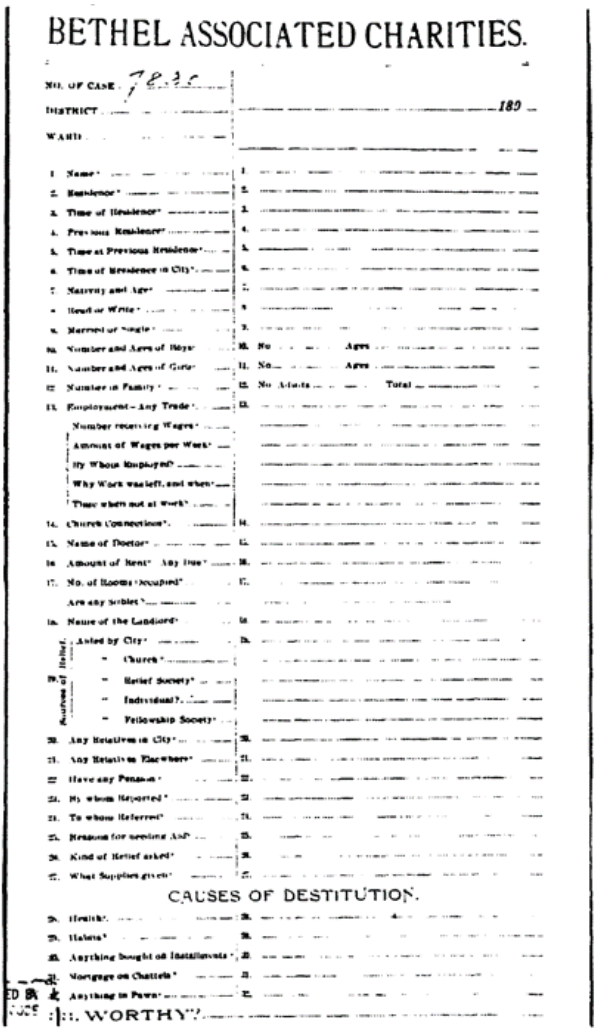


Figure 1: Referral Ticket, Bethel Associated Charities – Late 19C (FSAR MS 3920, box 8-11)

When donors or the poor submitted a referral, or contacted the agency via the emerging telephone network, a "friendly visitor" would be dispatched. The visitors carried large bound books containing hundreds of copies of a singular investigation form (shown in Figure 2). The form began by asking for a profile of the poor families. Demographic categories, household relations, and age structures were recorded. Next, it provided a dozen lines for canvassing household debts and potential income sources. The final five slots were open for a general assessment, concluding with a judgment of their worthiness for relief.



BETHEL ASSOCIATED CHARITIES.

CAUSES OF DESTITUTION.

Figure 2: Investigation Form, Bethel Associated Charities – Late 19C (FSAR MS 3920, box 9)

The referral cards and the investigation sheets discovered in Cleveland's archives were part of a larger effort. Charity organization societies like the BAC introduced rational, uniform assessments to control the distribution of outdoor relief and as a response to the new terms of industrial unemployment that had overwhelmed poorhouses and other forms of incarceration (Boyer 1978; Crowther 1981; Katz 1983; Keyssar 1986). The larger movement not only discouraged casual acts of kindness, it pioneered umbrella organizations (e.g. the United Way) that hoped to exercise quality control over a host of smaller charitable causes and campaigns (Brilliant 1990; Roelofs 2003). In the U.S., this created an environment for public income programs, and the professionalization of social casework with its associated extension of medical and psychological therapies.

Indeed, we can directly relate the appearance of the BAC's referral card and the investigation sheet to these larger trends. Cleveland's philanthropic leaders were inspired by America's first charity organization society in 1877 in nearby Buffalo, New York (Miggins 1988, 150ff.; also see Boyer 1978, 150ff.; Katz 1983, 90-133). Its founder, Stephen Humphreys Gurteen, drew upon English precedents to argue that the "fundamental law" of poverty relief should be "expressed in one word. INVESTIGATE" (as quoted in Boyer 1978, 149ff.). So too, many of Cleveland's benevolent ladies and gentlemen were aware of New York City's charity organization society founder, Josephine Shaw Lowell, and her opposition to uncoordinated almsgiving. Modern society must "refuse to support any except those whom it can control" (Shaw Lowell 1884/1971, 93ff.). According to this line of thought, charitable action in an urban environment would only benefit the poor, if it helped re-establish "the personal intercourse of the wealthier citizens with the poor at their homes" through systematic programs of "friendly visiting". Under "the firm though loving government of heroic women," so reformers like Shaw Lowell claimed, the rootless poor might pursue "self-help, respectability, and multiplying opportunities" of modern urban life (ibid.; Becker 1965, 12; Ryan 1996).

For all its sincerity, the late 19th-century organization of charity contained an uncomfortable mix of assumptions, characterizations, and practices. How might we think about the interplay between Christian ethics, bureaucratic efficiency, and the call to rebuild community and empower people through nascent forms of family investigation and record-keeping? The answers become even more difficult when we consider the looming tide of statistical reasoning, eugenic thought, psycho-analysis, behavioral and developmental psychology. The most common responses have been to explain this mess as part of the difficulty of humanitarian progress, or to locate the ligaments of ideological concealment within it. This essay will pursue a Foucauldian alternative. The cards and the investigation sheets helped constitute a "statement" (in the Foucauldian sense) because they created small repeated disruptions in charitable relationships. Which is to say, it would be inadequate to read them as offshoots of the letters, annual reports, essays, speeches, or public advertisements of charity organization societies. As tiny non-human actors in their own right, documents like these drew together record-keeping, practical examination, human science, disciplinary power, and generational relationships. They helped create the terms of 20th-century social programs, which were *not* prefigured by the logic or language of a charity rationalization, and emerged only through countless transactions, adjustments, and omissions.[1]

If the card and the investigation sheet were instantiations of discourse (texts), they were also disciplinary devices. They created an opportunity for hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and examination. Just as the compositional and propositional structure of any text cannot form without a "mode of existence" (media, usage, circulation, readers), disciplinary effects only operate to the degree that they are practiced and experienced as such. This is true because both discourse and discipline have creative force. Discipline is not a power to prohibit, deny, or injure. It affords, engages, and arranges. In its modern iterations, dis-

1 Michel Foucault called for an alternative to reading by a "formal *a priori*" or an ahistorical, pre-discursive condition of validity. These include Aristotelian forms, the will of God, class interest, and psychological complexes, or the competent agent (reformer, mother, other participant; as imagined in Gordon 1988). We read texts only in terms of the enunciative field (the text-discourse network of language, logic, and practice), which has no grounding external to the vicissitudes of history (Foucault 1972, 142ff.; Dean 2010, 75ff.; Kendall/Wickham 1999; Taylor 2011, 127-186; Ryan 2016).

cipline organizes space, time, and bodies so that a self-perception or self-presentation loop might become a mechanism of governmental power (Foucault 1977).[2]

In many countries, the decades of the early 20th century introduced new practices of juvenile justice, foster care, family counseling, child guidance, child labor restriction, and compulsory schooling. This essay will relate these institutional developments to a shift within the discursive practices of family investigation. It shows that a late-19th-century project to instill work discipline became a much more ambitious foray into children's developmental socialization by the 1930s. Progressive narratives suggest that this was historically significant because it provided equal opportunity for social mobility to many and moved us toward the promises of freedom (Trattner 1970; 1999). Ideological analyses advance the less comforting idea that unfair rules of eligibility and the symbolic violence of dependency theories re-inscribed class, race, and gender hierarchies (Fraser/Gordon 1994; Gordon 1995).

Whatever the merits of these lines of thought, this essay pursues a different inquiry (Taylor 2011, 13-70; Binkley/Capetillo 2010). Early 20th-century poverty discourse was animated by a range of texts, techniques, and institutions that encouraged subjects to take themselves as therapeutic objects; this was an institutionalized incitement to speak. Childhood and youth entered a spiral of self-examining reflexivity without precedent (Rose 1998; Peters et al. 2009; Smith 2014). If Giorgio Agamben is correct and the "originary sovereign bond" has always already possessed bio-political potential, this essay will show how a modern turn in poverty discourse governmentalized childhood and family relations one stitch at a time (Agamben 1995; 2011).

1 Disciplinary Power and Discursive Practice

The rationalization of charity was more than a set of ideas; but even as a set of ideas, it was not greeted by a progressive consensus. One critic in Cleveland, Ohio attempted to drive a wedge between the movement's two key terms: "organization" and "charity". The editor of the city's labor journal and physician, Louis Bryant Tuckerman, responded to a solicitation from the Bethel Associated Charities in the 1890s by writing them a letter.

> I do not believe in the organization of charity. Charity cannot be organized like the Steel Trust, or run by paid clerks … Can you picture Christ organizing love, card-indexing the good and bad as you are doing on your basis of worthiness measured by business standards? Your society with its board of trustees made of steel magnates, coal operators and employers is not really interested in charity. If it were, it would stop the twelve-hour day; it would increase wages and put an end to the cruel killing and maiming of men. It is interested in getting its own wreckage out of sight. It isn't pleasant to see it begging on the streets. You say that by giving to the society I can relieve myself of the burden of investigating cases. But I ought not to be relieved of this burden. The responsibility for poverty should not be taken from me. It were better if it were kept before our eyes. Nor do I like your thriftiness. Your circular tells me that I will receive a certain number of cards in return for my contribution. I may give them to people who apply to me for aid. They in turn present them at your office and an investigator is told off to ascertain whether the applicants are worthy. If they are discovered unworthy, you are elated, and the tickets are returned to me … Christ himself might have been turned over by you to the police department as a "vagrant without visible means of support" (quoted in: Howe 1925, 75ff.).

2 Also see Foucault's Collège de France Lectures: especially *Security, Territory, Population* (1977/78).

This Christian-socialist renunciation of rationalized charity may have been a cogent expression of a widely felt embarrassment. The records do not show a single anonymous donor using the referral cards to report families in need to the BAC. Those needing help requested it themselves about six out of seven times when a referral source was recorded. When the visitors noted that the referral came from outside the family under investigation (only 15% of the total), three-quarters of these referrals came from other organizations, schools, the police, or churches, rather than from the respectable middle-class citizens who were solicited as patrons of the BAC.

If we cannot determine precisely how the circulating cards framed almsgiving relationships, we know that thousands of poor families were investigated in Cleveland during the depression years from 1893 to 1898. Thirty-two books containing 3644 sheets have been preserved (Ryan 1998, 360ff.). Armed with the sheets, visitors assessed capacities and dependencies within poor families. Are these people literate, do they have a trade, and what is their employment history? Who is working, and what are their wages? Could kin, churches, pawning, pensions, subletting rooms be called upon to help? How about previous employers or landlords? What are their debts, mortgages, rents, and how many members need to be fed and clothed? The form also framed inquiries into why aid was needed and what type relief was wanted.

Following a careful household accounting, the form called the visitor to register judgment with capital letters "CAUSES OF DESTITUTION" surrounded with double the white space, cordoning off five questions. These five questions focused the gaze upon health, habits, and debt management. The final line "33. WORTHY?" highlighted the normalizing potential of household investigations as a whole.

As important as the sheets may have been, it would be a mistake to confuse their logical or compositional structure (as printed) with their full textual performance. Take the most interesting query under causes of destitution: "29. Habits." We know that "habit" was usually another word for intemperance. Indeed, the ladies of Cleveland's Bethel Union had joined forces with the Women's Christian Temperance Union to defeat a municipal ordinance that proposed the legalization of liquor sales on Sundays in 1885 (Miggins 1988, 152). In the 1890s, the visitors judged about a third of poor families to be intemperate to some degree. Statistical analysis of the records, however, reveals a weak association between the judgment of intemperance and unworthiness. So too, less than three in one-hundred families were labeled "unworthy," while almost four in ten were affirmed as "worthy". The vast majority received help, and there was no statistically significant association between either temperance or worthiness and the decision to give or deny relief (Ryan 1998, 143ff.).

The prevailing logic of the visitation was not entirely pre-determined by those who invented the form. We have a patterned reluctance to label specific families or persons as unworthy co-existing with the general assumption that poverty was a personal vice. This is unsurprising when one recalls that Christian evangelism demands the double proposition that no human is worthy (in the sense of being able to save themselves), and yet the hope that all can be saved by an unearned grace.

Does this ambiguity mean the investigation forms failed? Hardly. The inability to easily sort the saved from the damned widens the field for discipline. The investigatory event fostered multiple ways to couple almsgiving with observation, normalization, and examination. Nearly every sheet included hand-written notations composed on the non-lined, unformed reverse side. Here we have the traces of heterogenic exchanges, more unpredictable than a

brutal sorting of the worthy from the unworthy. The texts were indeterminate platforms for an event without essence. In fact, they held disciplinary potential precisely because they were only an invitation to an almsgiving game of self-perception and self-presentation.

The backside jottings lack the propositional structure of a theory of poverty. Here the visitors usually explained why and what they had granted in terms of the household survival, while they often avoided explicit judgments about moral worthiness. It was as if the large font, capitalization of "CAUSES OF DESTITUTION" had been usurped in practice by the small, open-ended lines 26 and 27: "kind of relief asked?" and "what supplies given?"

Unlike the lectures, opinions, and letters of a Shaw Lowell or a Tuckerman, the notations read like marginalia secreted from conversations about hardship and loss. Take the German Lutheran family, who had four boys of 23, 18, 16, and 4 years and five girls of 19, 14, 12, 8, and 6 years. To make ends meet, they had mortgaged their small four-room home of nineteen years, but were said to be in good health, have good habits, and worthy of relief when visited on November 16, 1893. Six days later, the visitor noted on the backside: "husband deserted – property mortgaged – Oldest boy and girl married – Boys are home and not working – wants shoes for boys and girls – gave them order. The father was put out by the boys last Spring. Always drunk when he came home."[3]

The dignity of work was a repeated tonal point. Take the unemployed fifty-seven year-old German Catholic laborer with a family of four including a son of twenty-six years and a daughter of twenty-five. They owed a month's rent of eight dollars on five rooms. They told the visitor that they were "not drunkards," and had not received aid before. The visitor judged them worthy and noted, "son gets $16 a month. Works [illegible] frt house. Say if they had coal they could get along. Told them it would be better for father to work for rent."[4]

Poor persons (usually mothers) asked for work, food, fuel, clothing, medical help, and rental or debt assistance in at least sixty percent of the visits, and tangible help was advanced in the vast majority of records. The BAC seems to have been best prepared to give goods in kind. Clothing was granted in almost 70% of cases, while food (53%) and fuel (40%) orders were common. Work was requested by about 12% of the families, and visitors offered it about 40% of the time. Rarely was work refused (perhaps 1 in 12 offerings). The transaction for work was usually completed on the premises (88 of 111 or 79.2%). Direct cash was rarely provided (2 of 41 requests), but cash for work was frequently paid to landlords (18 of 41 requests).

2 Discipline and the Spiral of Reflexivity

If the backside notes offer a less inquisitorial, more transactional face of late 19th-century family investigation, they do not support a romantic image of universal sisterhood transcending class. A mother living near the west bank of the Cuyahoga River in 1893 – who was struggling to care for a sick daughter and a husband suffering from an eye disease – wanted a doctor not "an investigation". They were "more than angry" and "profane".[5] A considerable cultural, linguistic, educational, and economic distance separated the visitor from the poor. The investigated families lived in twenty-seven different wards of the city and were members

3 FSAR, box 8, folder 23, #6123.

4 FSAR, box 9, folder 5, #6749 and box 8, folder 23, #6287.

5 FSAR, box 8, folder 23, #6252.

of eighteen ethnic groups. Thirty different occupational titles were given for fathers, but almost two thirds reported that they were unskilled laborers. Among mothers who listed occupations, almost 9 of 10 were unskilled laborers such as washers, scrubbers, or day workers.[6] These cultural differences may have been exacerbated by the clumsy presence of the sheets and the books. Such devices must have felt odd at a place in time with scant vocabulary for speaking about family life in a professional or medical context. The poor were not yet "clients" of social workers; they were not even "cases". The friendly visitor of the 1890s assigned distinct case numbers and addresses for each visit, but these numbers did not apply to individuals or families. The binding of the sheets into books made it impossible to track records or compile histories. Nothing could be said to "go down on your permanent record." As a result, nine out of ten investigations were either single visits (60%) or visits with one follow-up (30%).

The organizational technology of social work became integrated in the new century. James F. Jackson came to Cleveland to head the Associated Charities in 1900, inaugurated formal training of friendly visitors in 1905, and created the first "Charities Clearing House" to rationalize and compile record-keeping. Jackson, Mayor Newton D. Baker, Martin Marks, and D.A. Warner of Lakeside Hospital set up the School of Applied Social Sciences at the Western Reserve University (WRU) in 1916 (Cramer 1976, 331ff.). WRU began producing a cadre of trained professional social workers as the city's relief agencies began to share and track poor families. By the 1920s, they were typing voluminous weekly notes and compiling "family files", which were typically one to three inches thick. The family files included years of interagency correspondence, medical, psychological, and vocational guidance reports, and even photographs and letters from the clients. During the depression of the 1930s, Ohio law further systematized social work by mandating home investigations prior to relief disbursement, re-application at three-month intervals, and registration at the Ohio State Employment Office were among the nine requirements.[7]

The very phrase "case work" signified the transformation. People could speak of "opening" and "closing" a case. Not only did "case work" extend over years, it drew upon a novel psychiatric and psychological vocabulary. When the Bethel Union became the Bethel Associated Charities in 1884, it penned a new motto, "To reduce vagrancy and pauperism and ascertain its true causes." Yet four out of five times, friendly visitors indicated that the family's problems were caused by a lack of income due to unemployment, desertion, death, or sickness (Ryan 1998, 152, table 5.6). By the 1930s, "unemployment" was hardly stated as an explanation at all and was only assigned a causal role in about 17% of the Associated Charities' case records. When it was invoked, it had to be explained by more "deep-seated" issues. Words such as "paranoia", "neurosis", "anxiety hysteria", "intelligence quotient" "environmental adjustment," framed 20th-century case work. "Drunkenness" became "alcoholism"; "laziness" became an "individual conflict" defined as "overwhelming to him that he is unable to adjust either to an acceptance of his own limitations or to a satisfactory group life" (Vance 1935, 52). The new terms opened up ontological terrain and moved the site of inquiry inward.

As professionals attempted to shape the "feelings of inadequacy [rooted] in culturally created values associated with work and money," they entered an ambiguous domain where it was

6 124 or 65.6% with this information reported unskilled laborers (Ryan 1998, 145, note 14; Hough 1991, 36).

7 FF, 1919-1970 [no manuscript numbers]; Ryan 1998, 148, note 15; Ryan 2011b, 768, note 2.

more difficult to identify success or draw conclusions. Take the case of unemployed Mr. ST, who was diagnosed with an "inferiority complex" by one worker. So, she found employment for him at a hospital under a secret agreement that the agency would pay half his wages. When the job ended, the social worker hurriedly closed the case, so that when he re-applied for aid, he would not find that his case had been open all along and discover her scheme (Tamovitz 1940, 53; Vance 1935, 22ff.). The solution of the 1890s had become the problem of the 1930s.

New tools have a way of finding new projects for improvement. Consider the case of Mrs. L – a trained nurse. In the early 1930s, she separated from her disabled husband, sent their two children to the care of her sister-in-law in Ortonville, and came to Cleveland to look for work. She found no work as a nurse and began housekeeping. The Big Sisters of Ortonville became involved with her children, and they asked the Associated Charities in Cleveland to investigate the fitness of Mrs. L for Aid for Dependent Children in an attempt to reunite the family. Mrs. L was judged fit to look after the children and an application for cash aid was soon prepared, save one small detail. Mrs. L did not want to regain custody of her children. Contact with Mrs. L broke off, and the family reconstitution never materialized (Vance 1935, 29ff.).

The primacy of the reflexive loop becomes more visible when events go awry. Take the 1932 case of Mrs. R. The social worker entered her home with the question "how many illegitimate children do you have?" and concluded her evaluation by telling R to sell her sewing machine and electric clothes washer. R responded with frustration, saying if "you ever need help, go to the Church and not the Associated Charities". This story was documented in a follow-up study of social case work. The student investigating the family investigation of R, concluded they had been hiding income from an illegitimate eldest son. Thus, she "had invented a story which she projected onto the caseworker … This doubtless explains the community antagonism to the Agency which the case history revealed" (Otis 1932, 38). Here we have a social investigation of social investigations written to advance the credentials of a caseworker to do case work. One has to ask, who is the recipient of disciplinary power? The answer is everyone. Disciplinary power is a relationship and it produces helping professionals just as much as their clients.

By 1934, a graduate student in social work at nearby WRU could write a study attempting to identify why clients rejected services or allowed contact to lapse after their immediate needs were met. When the majority of "cases" had been limited to one or two visits in the 1890s, such a question simply could not be posed. The earlier record-keeping techniques produce neither the continuity nor the ability to observe a "lapsed" case. This was only made possible by the professionalization of social work. So too, the continuous advancement of recording systems allowed the social work project to hail forth the poor as authors of their own experiences. We hear one mother explaining in a 1939 interview, "Most workers are young and inexperienced. They were never poor. What do they know about family life? What do they know about poor people?" A father said of the welfare office during the 1930s, "You feel good on the outside. Then you get in and that smell hits you."[8] These words come to us as welcomed amplifications, and not as unintended consequences or ancillary events, of a larger institutionalized incitement to speak.

8 Horwitz 1940, 37f.; FSAR, Container 8, folder 23, #6252; Vance 1935, 18.

3 Disciplinary Techniques and Generational Relations

In other writings, I have situated the discursive landscape of modern childhood in relation to the reflexive spiral of a subject who takes the its "self" as an object (Ryan 2008; 2011a; 2013; 2016). Here, we explore some of the ways that disciplinary institutions approached poor children and youths, and how this framed the overall generational power relations. These were not easy transactions. Take the evangelical Christian students from Hiram College near Cleveland, who attempted to open a settlement house in 1896. They set up their house in the heart of an Irish Catholic neighborhood overlooking a place aptly named "Whiskey Island" and targeted their program directly at children. Catholic clergy opposed the settlement's kindergarten, day nursery, and planned night school. The project collapsed in less than a year and the students moved their settlement to a more amenable neighborhood (Grabowski 1978, 38ff.).

The friendly visitors of the BAC were pioneers too, but they trod more lightly. Between 1893 and 1898, the welfare of the children was unnoted in 228 of 269 or 84.8 percent of sampled families (all of whom had children older than nine). Visitors reserved meddling into child custody for egregious transgressions of cleanliness, industry, sexual norms, and drunkenness. One friendly visitor wrote: "This family is the worst off financially and morally of any I have ever seen in all my investigations -- 8 persons are able to work, but all are idle. Two twin girls aged 15 are on the streets begging and was reported to us by GEC who gave them a 1.00 -- Their house is in a fearful condition no shingles on the roof to keep the rain out and everything very dirty inside & it looks as though they live like hogs -- Neighbors say they are a bad lot & drink all the time -- have made complaint to Humane Agent P. & asked him to see what could be done with the 4 girls 15-15-13-9."[9]

Judgment could be written in the 1890s, but it could not move within a network of diagnostic language, testing practices, and legal interventions required for these words to express normalizing force in the Foucauldian sense. They sat as isolated jottings on the backside of investigation forms in bound notebooks, which could not be compiled, collated, circulated, and maintained as a dynamic system.

In the 1890s, we have one record referring to child custody, whereas a parallel 1934 sample referred to child custody intervention in 12.3% of the records. By the interwar period, Cleveland's county juvenile court (est. 1902) had created a massive foster care system framing the childhoods of thousands of poor youths in the city. A sample of these fostered children suggests that only about 1 in 20 were "full" orphans. The foster care system utilized psychiatric categories to enforce gender norms upon poor families. Most fathers (72%) lost custody of their children due to a failure to provide (economic failure); most mothers (77%) lost custody of their children after being declared "unfit" due to addiction, mental defectiveness, insanity, or a variety of sex and vice crimes (Ryan 1998, 187ff.).

Family reunification occurred for about 2% of interwar foster children, and the case records suggest that professionals kept this figure as low as they could. It was common syntax for the case notes to refer to the children's parents with the abbreviation M and W – Man and Woman – rather than father and mother. Whereas the foster parents were noted as "fos. mo" and "fos. fa" or "fos. pars"[10]. One master of social work student explained that it might take a caseworker several months to bring the "group" (the family) to "recognize that the children

9 FSAR, box 10, folder 7, #10515 and box 9, folder 15, #8445.

10 FF, 1919-1970 [no manuscript numbers] (any file).

would have a much better chance for normal growth elsewhere" (Vance 1935, 48). With careful counseling, this could be accomplished "without a guilt reaction" (ibid., 50).

The point here is not to pronounce that families should or should not have been reunited more often, because this will not help us recognize the shape of the discourse that allowed the question to be posed as a "social issue" in the first place. Take the case of LS, whose mother died when he was an infant and his father when he was twelve. The deaths of his parents would have been construed as a financial catastrophe for the S family in the 1890s. By the 1930s, when he was 20 years old, LS was referred to the county social worker by a settlement house because he was "maladjusted" in his gender orientation. The S children avoided institutionalization and foster care because their eldest brother and LS held the household together. This household adaptation created a problem, according to the social workers, because it required LS to do "the housework and cooking," and he was "so thoroughly accepted in this role that the family expects him to continue it indefinitely." LS could not become a man. In response, the caseworker convinced him to go to the Civilian Conservation Corps camp in May of 1934 where he could learn to do men's work and find adult-male role models. Upon return from the camp, LS reported that he felt better about himself and his case was closed (ibid., 34ff.). Countless interventions like this one could be pulled from the records, but it is easy to read past what is historical significant about them. Today, social personnel and programs are more likely to take it as their mission to support androgynous or transgender identities, but the terrain for contemporary efforts was opened in the early 20th century.

A similar continuity is demonstrated by the history of standardized testing. In spite of the avalanche of scholarly condemnations launched against it since the early 1920s, the psychological and academic testing regime as a whole has never been stronger. During the period of this study, intelligence testing became the technique of normalizing judgment *par excellence* and its practical domain was extended first and most completely to poor children and youths (Ryan 1997; 2007). This power was exercised in the case records of Cleveland's foster children between the wars by the practice of placing two, and only two, notations in large red ink: court custody orders and intelligence quotients. Court orders pronounced where the child belonged on behalf of the state; I.Q. signified an invisible, but unitary, unchanging, measurable quality of brain function. It is hard to imagine another way that two or three key strokes could contain and annul the vast minutia of the caseworker's own notes. I.Q. not only indexed what was inside the child, but also radically simplified the game of predicting who he or she might become (Turmel 2008, 161ff.).

Yet, intelligence quotients were not merely assigned. They were produced in a clinical practice that required the participation of children and youth. This is the key to their disciplinary power. Through vocational guidance clinics in Cleveland alone, thousands of foster children were drawn into the intersection between their participation as a testing subject, and the objective gaze of psychological science. The resulting self-perception or self-presentation dynamic extended far beyond the testing interval into an elaborate series of vocational counseling sessions. Much as their red bold ink captures the eye reading the case records, a remembered I.Q. hovers in the background of the documents through years of informal discussions with social workers, parents, siblings, and others (Ryan 1998, 217ff.).

Psychological assessments were typed in red precisely because they shared with court rulings a capacity to draw a set of distinct institutions, resources, and actors into a common network. The radical simplicity of the I.Q. gave it currency. Analysis demonstrates that test

results helped determine the placements, job opportunities, skill training, and educational support that fostered children were able to access. The mean I.Q. of fostered youths who did not receive any vocational or educational support was 82; the mean I.Q. of those who were institutionalized in a variety of ways was 84; those placed in a job as teenagers averaged an I.Q. of 94. The minority of fostered youths who gained full county support throughout their late teenage years (allowing them to graduate from high school) posted a mean I.Q. of 97. Those whom caseworkers helped enroll in university were assessed at 107 as a group. In sum, higher scores helped youths access more resources and preferred placements. In other writings, I have shown that youths struggled to obtain resources, but they could not alter the terms of the game. Presenting the self as a competent individual agent was the only reliable way to negotiate their situations (Ryan 2007; 2011b).

What happened to foster children in the interwar period was possible because poor children and youths had become the primary targets of public tutelage during this era. For example, when Mr. D became unemployed in 1931, he applied for relief. Mr. D wanted help finding a job, but when the social worker discovered that his two sons (aged 16 and 19) had problems with the police, her attention turned. The social worker wanted to affect a change in his "old country idea of demanding complete obedience and subservience from his children" (Vance 1935, 47f.). As soon as Mr. D found a job, he broke relations with the agency. Friendly visitors sometimes noted cases where youths had been arrested or served time in a reformatory, but they merely recorded that the household missed their income. It was not an affordance to examine or alter child-rearing practices.

In the space of two generations, it became possible to mobilize public resources to intervene when a child had difficulty "playing with other children and shyness in the presence of adults". One family was diagnosed with "over-protection" of their child (Vance 1935, 45f.). The caseworker attempted to enroll the child in clubs and to send him to camps, but his mother rejected the idea that the boy's difficulties stemmed from her faulty mothering. The closest friendly visitors came to parental counseling were the four cases (of 269 randomly sampled) where they told children to stop begging in the streets.[11]

Changes in working-class household economics were conducive to the increasingly intense examination of poor children. In the 1890s, less than 1 in 10 poor families reported parental income (and 1 in 5 children's income) when they were investigated. These were high levels of adult and child unemployment relative to the working poor at this time. Approximately four out of five American working-class households in the bottom income quartile (with children over the age of seven and an employed father) reported that their children earned wages. The share of the children of the working poor earning wages dropped to just above one in two by 1918, and fell to one in three families by 1936. The degree to which the households of the working poor relied on their children's wages also declined over this period. In 1890, families (bottom income quartile) with children between 10-14 years old reported that a little over 25% of their income came from their children. By 1918 that proportion had shrunk to around 7% and was below 1% by 1936 (Ryan 1998, 29ff., 339ff.).

In the context of widespread reliance upon children's wages, friendly visitors treated their earnings like any other family asset. A family of six, headed by a Polish Catholic laborer who, at seventy years of age, was "too old to work," but had a "Boy 17 wants to work for rent in his father's place. Gave Card." Girls were noted as having jobs less often and were less frequently

11 FSAR, box 9, folder 2, #6611.

given work orders than their brothers were, but when they earned wages the notes betray no evidence that it was considered to be a problem. Only once did there appear to be a friendly visitor who questioned parental attitudes toward their children's labor as such. In this case, the visitor criticized a family of musicians for being "too proud" to have their daughters seek employment as maids.[12] More common was the story of the traveling salesman with sons aged twenty-four and twenty, and four daughters aged 16, 14, 12, and 10 years who owed a month's back rent of ten dollars for five rooms. They were worthy even though the man was "Idle since July -- wants Boys to work for rent. He [the father] is not able to shovel on account of lame arm. They are short of coal and food. Boys are able and willing to work. Gave card for work."[13]

By contrast, when a family supplemented the father's income with the teenaged children's earnings in 1930, the investigator described the father as "apathetic to much that goes on" and "took pride in his garden". So too, unemployed Mr. F was a "meek appearing little" man who was "out-talked by his wife in the interview" and had "adjusted comfortably to the role of a child who enjoys being given to". Not only was children's work repositioned, an entire psycho-social vocabulary was erected around household economics. This architecture pathologized practices of generational interdependency which had been valorized only four decades earlier (Zelizer 1985).

4 Disciplinary Institutions and Progressive Aspirations

During the Great Depression, many teenagers sought work and contributed to their own and their family's economic well-being. Federal surveys reported that working poor families with older teenagers (15-19 years) relied upon them for about one-third of their household budgets. This was a high overall proportion considering that only one in four of these families reported teenagers with income. In sum, it was difficult for teenagers to find work, but when poor youths did so, their wages kept their families going. In the 1890s, visitors understood their wages as a household asset in full. By the 1930s, social administrators had set themselves the difficult task of determining what proportion of a youth wages should be included as family income for purposes of determining eligibility. Cleveland's Division of Relief counted between 50% and 75% of the income of older teenagers towards their family's financial income (Horwitz 1940, 83 and Appendix).

Federal programs, such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA), National Youth Administration (NYA), or Civilian Conservation Corps, were organized with a similar understanding that the employment of youth could be used to increase household incomes. Yet, local records suggest a growing sense that even older youths should not be supporting their families. One researcher observed that "older children were often resentful of the limitations and restrictions of relief assigning the blame to their parents". One boy refused to admit that his NYA earnings were in any way part of his family's household budget. Parents like the Ks and Hs whose sons paid them part of their income to balance lost benefits thought these policies unfair because it made youths pay for their parental poverty (ibid., 27).

In Cleveland, households on relief reported their income, the number and ages of members, and received a standardized allotment of cash or stamps for food, clothing, rent, mortgage payments, utilities, transportation, and even shoe repair. The more income they garnered

12 FSAR, box 9, folder 15, #8513.

13 FSAR, box 9, folder 5, #6718 and box 9, folder 2, #6637.

from the children, the less aid they were eligible to receive. This was true for every family member, but unlike other members, young people had access to new alternatives to wage earning: a comprehensive set of institutions from summer camps to high schools. This sharpened existing tensions. For example, when the miner Mr. G became unemployed, the social workers attempted to assign him and his teenage children to federal work programs. The family resisted and explained that the boys were completing their technical high schooling and her daughter was learning bookkeeping and typing. What benefit would it be to them to shorten their schooling without actually increasing the family's income? (ibid., 31ff., 78; Bauman 1947, 22ff.; Weitzel 1940, 31ff.).

In contrast, friendly visitors never invoked the dilemma between children's wage earning and personal development. When they made notes about youth work, they almost always assumed that finding work would immediately bring about a good result for the youths and their families (37 of 42 notations). School attendance was noted in less than 5% of all cases. There was not a single case note found, which implied that laboring youths ought to be in school. In thirty-six of forty-one cases when youth needs were noted, the visitor recommended the virtue of work. The formal goal of charity rationalization had not been to enhance mobility through education, but to conduct the poor away from the ranks of beggars who shirked work.[14] Youth stories that signified success in the 1890s took on a flavor of lost or wasted opportunity by the 1930s. This was the tenor of the notations about a daughter of a WPA carpenter who "had taken a commercial rather than an academic course, knowing that upon graduation she would have to prepare to help the family". The same emotion accompanied the story of Mr. D, a German night watchman who was proud of his "gymnasium education", but blamed the depression for the fact that his bright daughter would have to "work her way through college" (Horwitz 1940, 20ff.; Tamovitz 1940, 46).

Children's income earning for their families declined with a great advancement in compulsory public education. Youth attendance rates at Cleveland public schools grew handsomely during the years of this study. The percentage of 12-year-olds attending was already high (53%) in 1871 and it plateaued around 66-70% for a number of decades after 1891. For teenagers, however, attendance rates expanded between the 1890s and the 1930s. In 1891, only 38% of Cleveland's 14-year-olds attended public schools and by 1925 the figure had almost doubled to 74%. Between 1871 and 1925, the proportion of 16-year-olds attending more than quadrupled from 9% to 41% and the figures for 17-year-olds increased almost five-fold from 5% to 23%. These proportions under-estimate the establishment of secondary education as a normative experience in progressive cities like Cleveland, because they only include public school rosters; private schools increased their capacity over these decades as well.

Increased school attendance for teenagers was not a simple consequence of rising real wages or expanding school capacity. It was produced by these conditions and new policing techniques. The Cleveland Board of Education created a Division of Truancy in 1888. The Division pursued street waifs and sent them to special schools, but this was ineffective until after the turn of the century. In 1902 Cleveland's truancy officers were given authority to issue work certificates to release children from attendance laws. Discretionary powers allowed them to enforce the law more effectively. In 1905, the city opened a Farm School for truants, which expanded the practical ability of officers to encourage attendance. Between 1891 and

14 FSAR, box 9, folder 15, #8415 and box 8, folder 23, #6263.

1906, the number of cases they handled in Cleveland each year increased from 770 to 4752. The mocked "hooky cop" of the 19th century became a social service professional in the 20th century. Subsequent legal reforms between 1911 and 1921 encouraged greater attendance of youths in their middle teenage years. This worked hand in glove with the interwar rise of child guidance clinics, psychological testing, and employment services for youths – especially for county wards (Venkateswarn 1990, 29, 87ff., 127ff.).

The tensions between work, poverty, and schooling existed in the 1890s and the 1930s, but a new language of social development and psychological health came to frame the conversation. In the 1890s, requesting clothing "for the children" was the most common way to ask for that item. And phrases like "shoes for school" added justification to the request. By the 1930s, the shoe-school relationship was no longer merely a matter of foot protection and appropriate footwear. As the eldest girl in the K family, who attended high school, explained, "there are cliques in school". Shoes, clothing, and fashion became a central problem within the disciplinary architecture of public schooling. Family members repeatedly indicated that WPA clothing was insufficiently stylish for youths, and that store-bought clothes were necessary for "what the kids wear" because they needed a "differentiation of style". One mother explained that the "sizes are bad … the whole family feels like they wear a prison uniform … everybody on relief has the same clothes and people can tell right away … I met a woman friend wearing the same dress I wore. It was the first either of us knew the other was on relief" (Horwitz 1940, 24; Tamovitz 1940, 33; Weitzel 1940, 20f.). One mother explained that "relief" clothing meant her children had "no status at school". One mother said her daughter "will not wear clothes which she knows have come from D.C.". Another mother explained, "my girl cries when she gets her 'new' clothes" from the sewing center. Children should never be "standing apart from others by virtue of the obvious relief clothing they wore" (Horwitz 1940, 30ff.; Tamovitz 1940, 19ff.; Weitzel 1940, 31). Notations like these are more evidence of the looping effect (the spiral of reflexivity) that results from heavy doses of discipline in the Foucauldian sense. Institutions such as schools transformed feelings, actions, and interactions ("peer-pressure", "hyper-activity", "bullying") into objects of reflexive analysis, intervention, and therapy.

Psycho-social reasoning about youth, poverty, and popular culture appeared throughout the records of the interwar decades. Parents often said they "skimped in order for the children to have necessities and minor luxuries". Clients told investigators that "children requested items the father felt powerless to give, and while they might be too young in some instances to realize what was happening, they might ask embarrassing questions as they grew older". Without ready cash, families were reduced to "staying at home and listening to the radio … The working boys could go out, but for the children there were no movies, roller-skating, ice cream, few of the desirable things". Others felt that poor youths were educationally disadvantaged because budget policies made no allowance for school movies, art museum trips, or plays (Tamovitz 1940, 23ff.; Horwitz 1940, 22ff.; Weitzel 1940, 44f.). Many of 43 pairs of parents interviewed in 1939 asked why the Cleveland Division of Relief required them to turn in their vehicle license plates as a condition of aid. Mr. V explained that "a car may be a ten-dollar junk to the agency, but to the man who owns it, it's worth a million". The investigator did not criticize him as shiftless, but as a case of arrested development motivated by "youth and natural desire to have some pleasure in life" (Weitzel 1940, 18f.).

As 20th-century youths earned less and more frequently attended school, growing-up working class was resituated within a peer-centered consumer culture. This reversed the flow of

resources and relations between teenagers and their parents in poor families, and is usually understood in progressive terms, or even as a realization of an American dream. For example, the Jewish mother in the 1930s who garnered the esteem of an investigator by saying, "I will scrub floors if my children want to go to college." The comment has become something of a stock phrase in American culture. The underlying idea was present when an African American woman felt cheated by budget policies that required that she cash-in insurance policies taken out to send her eldest boy to college (Tamovitz 1940, 23ff.). Likewise, an immigrant who had not yet established citizenship told an interviewer that "education was the one thing they [were] able to give the children". She expected all her children to obtain high school diplomas (Weitzel 1940, 23ff.; Bauman 1947, 15f.). By the 1950s her hopes had become a majority experience of American youth.

5 Concluding Remarks

Without deriding progressive hopes for generational mobility, it must be observed that they came with the enclosure of young people within a comprehensive set of disciplinary institutions. Each of these institutions requires its own micro-historical study, and my own efforts have included the analyses of leadership camps, high schools, court rulings, juvenile research offices, vocational guidance clinics, and various places of youth incarceration. These places fostered the ability of young people to perform as subjects who take themselves as objects of improvement. Whatever responses we have to that general fact, it cannot be portrayed as freedom from the problems of power, nor does it appear to have reduced children's experience of physical violence (Ryan 2015). We can only say with confidence that modern disciplinary forms produced a confessional culture punctuated by a carceral archipelago.

In this article, we have documented and analyzed a movement from Christian moral reform into professional social work and scientific youth services. Juvenile justice, foster-care, family counseling, and child guidance were coordinated with the prohibition of child labor and the compulsion to attend schools. The initial practices of "friendly visiting" may have been clumsy, but they disrupted older charitable relationships and created new ones. From the 1890s to the 1930s, disciplinary techniques were instituted to engage children and youth in a larger project of examining their own developmental socialization and realizing themselves as competent agents. If Richard H. Tawney was correct more than a century ago when he claimed that "villeinage ceases, where the poor law begins," we might add that the doors of the poorhouses closed, when the government of childhood opened its all-seeing eye (Tawney 1912, 47).

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