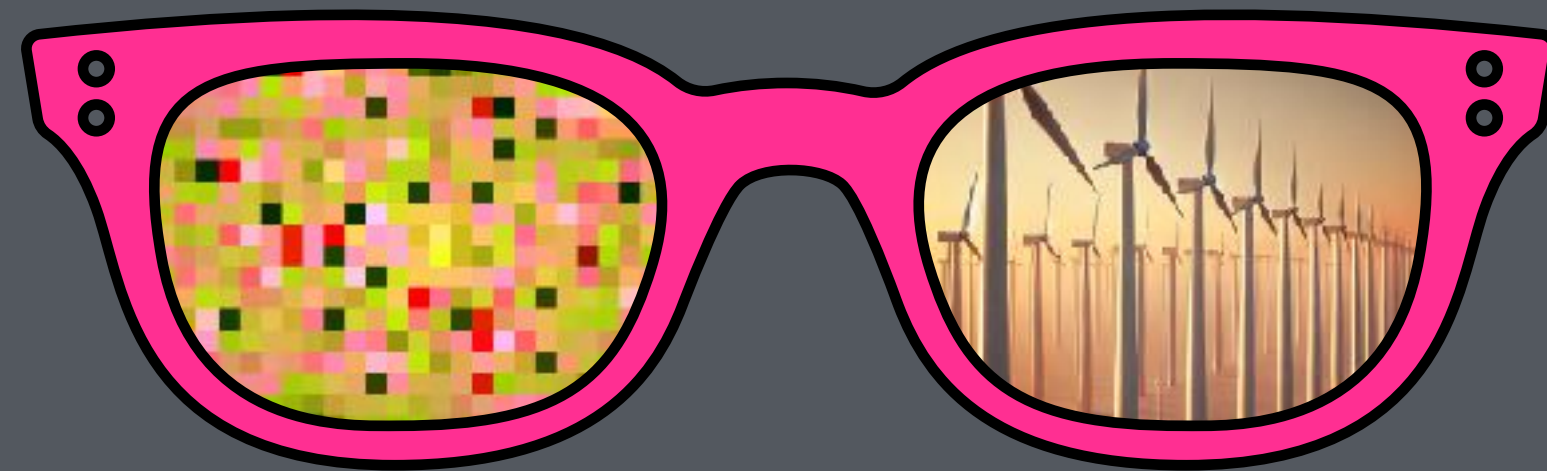# Data and the State

**PUBPOL 2130 / INFO 3130**

"Making up people"
and projects of **unmaking**

Lecture 4, Thursday Jan 30

# Announcements

- Working through waitlist:  Once you receive an email, have 24 hours to respond.  Then once you receive a code, you have 24 hours to use it.

- Need note-taker!  Any interest?

- Look out for poll coming up.

# Politics of what is visible (and enumerable)



PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS

DEFENDING WOMEN FROM GENDER IDEOLOGY EXTREMISM AND RESTORING BIOLOGICAL TRUTH TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

EXECUTIVE ORDER

January 20, 2025

Sec. 2. Policy and Definitions. It is the policy of the United States to recognize two sexes, male and female. These sexes are not changeable and are grounded in fundamental and incontrovertible reality. Under my direction, the Executive Branch will enforce all sex-protective laws to promote this reality, and the following definitions shall govern all Executive interpretation of and application of Federal law and administration policy:

(a) "Sex" shall refer to an individual's immutable biological classification as either male or female. "Sex" is not a synonym for and does not include the concept of "gender identity."

(b) "Women" or "woman" and "girls" or "girl" shall mean adult and juvenile human females, respectively.

(c) "Men" or "man" and "boys" or "boy" shall mean adult and juvenile human males, respectively.

(d) "Female" means a person belonging, at conception, to the sex that produces the large reproductive cell.

(e) "Male" means a person belonging, at conception, to the sex that produces the small reproductive cell.

# "Making up people"

Prime examples:

- ★ Homosexuality
- ★ Autism
- ★ Multiple personality
- ★ Obesity
- ★ Poverty
- ★ Geniuses and prostitutes and etc etc etc

**engines of discovery**

1. Count!
2. Quantify!
3. Create Norms!
4. Correlate!
5. Medicalise!
6. Biologise!
7. Geneticise!

**engine of practice**

8. Normalise!

**engine of administration**

9. Bureacratise!

**engine of resistance**

10. Reclaim our identity!

# "Reification" — making it a thing

- Hacking refers to "making up people" and a "looping effect"

- Making up people:  a classification can "bring into being a new kind of person, *conceived of and experienced as a way to be a person*"

- Looping effect:  classifications interact with the people they classify, as they pass through loops of people, experts, and institutions

- Philosophers say we "reify" a concept when we make it real (e.g., Nietzshe: "unspeakably more depends on what things are called than on what they are")
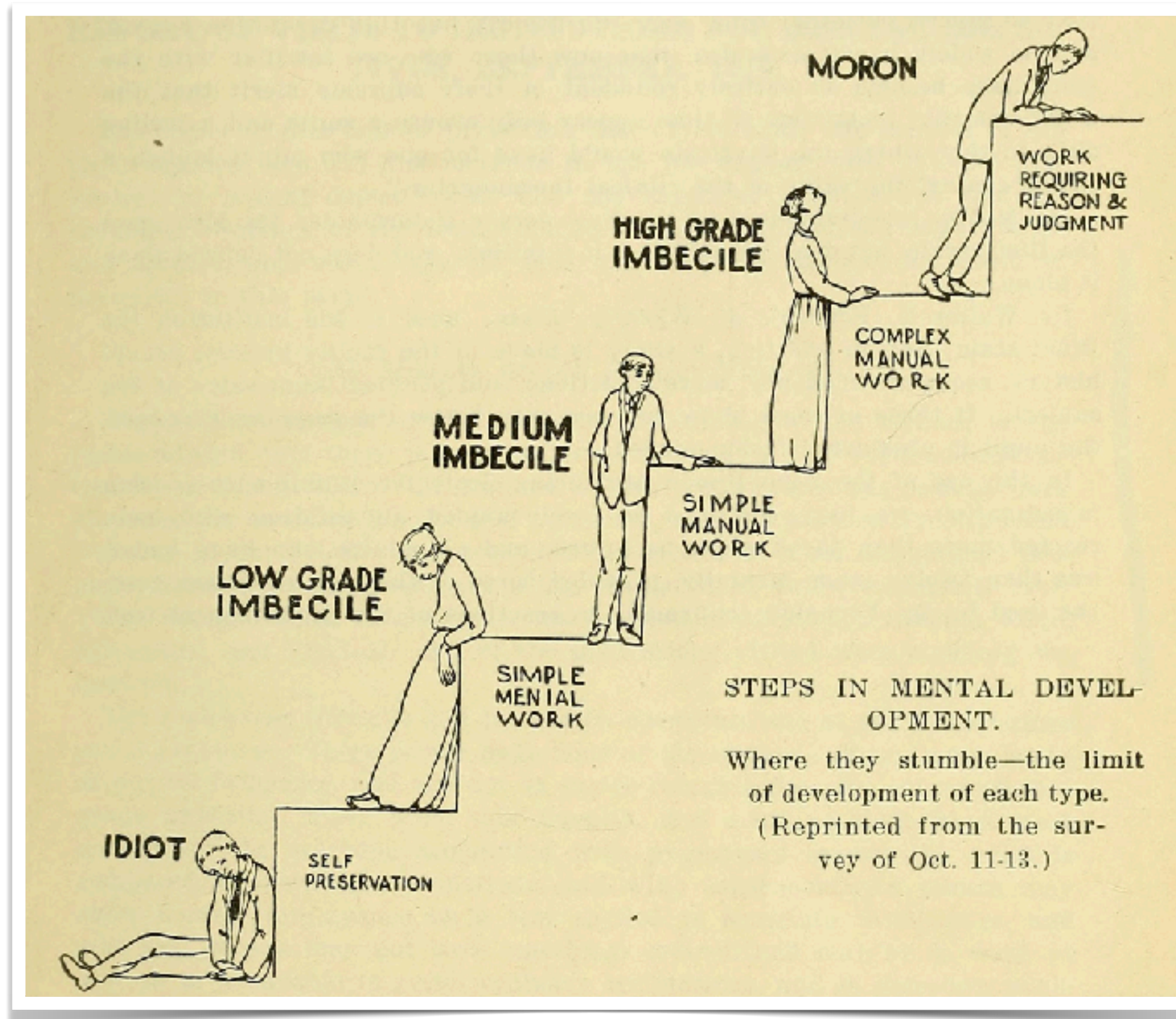
# Multiple personalities

- Around 1970, a few sensational paradigm cases

- "First a person had two or three personalities. Within a decade the mean number was 17."

- "In 1986 I confidently wrote that there could never be split bars, analogous to gay bars.  In 1991 I went to my first split bar."

- "A doctor in Ontario... when a patient arrived announcing she has multiple personality, demanded to be shown her Ontario Health Insurance card (which has a photograph and a name on it).  `*This* is the person I am treating, nobody else.' "

# Looping

- **Counting** — first attempt to count autistic children in London said 4.5 per 10,000

- **Measuring** — what is obese?  only in 1998 did WHO define underweight as BMI<18.5, overweight as BMI>25, obese as BMI>30.  (Marilyn Monroe: 24, Playboy 19 to 16.5)

- **Norming** — normal range is implicit in that scheme

- **Correlating** — four out of 5 autistic children are male.  Attempts to correlate with fetal hormones, finger lengths, vaccines, …..

- **Medicalizing** — "conditions" drift in and out of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

- **Biologizing** — is it physical?  "Overeating attributed to chemical imbalance ceases to be a moral defect."

# Looping

- **Geneticizing** — born this way?  craze in the 1990s to find the gay gene.  "A century ago there was a great push to discover the genetic origins of criminal behavior"

- **Normalizing** — one way to do that is treatment.  Think Ozempic!

- **Bureaucratizing** — creating systems to handle things administratively, creating policy.  Often positive!  Examples; developmental disorders, disability accommodations, child abuse.

- **Resisting** — "take back control from the experts and the institutions" (sometimes with competing experts and institutions).  "The famous case is homosexuality."

MORON

WORK
REQUIRING
REASON &
JUDGMENT

HIGH GRADE
IMBECILE

COMPLEX
MANUAL
WORK

MEDIUM
IMBECILE

SIMPLE
MANUAL
WORK

LOW GRADE
IMBECILE

SIMPLE
MENTAL
WORK

IDIOT

SELF
PRESERVATION

STEPS IN MENTAL DEVEL-
OPMENT.
Where they stumble—the limit
of development of each type.
(Reprinted from the sur-
vey of Oct. 11-13.)

- From 1915 report of Virginia State Board of Charities and Corrections

- Report called *Mental Defectives in Virginia*

- Recommended segregation and sterilization of the "feeble-minded" — part of the dominant **eugenics** regime in the early 20th century

- Clinical standards proposed by psychometricians

- measurement with cutoffs.  idiot: IQ<25, imbecile: IQ 25–50, moron: IQ 50-70

INTERSEX SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

social movement, new experts: won policy adjustments related to surgery on newborns

BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL

reclaiming/reframing

resisting stigma

NORMALIZE FAT Bodies

normalizing through treatment

Elon Musk
@elonmusk

Ozempic Santa

a case of ancillary people-making (the child abuser) with policy consequences

The Shaken Baby Syndrome triad

Retinal hemorrhaging

Brain swelling

Subdural hematoma

ALBERTO CUADRA/

SEX WORK IS WORK!
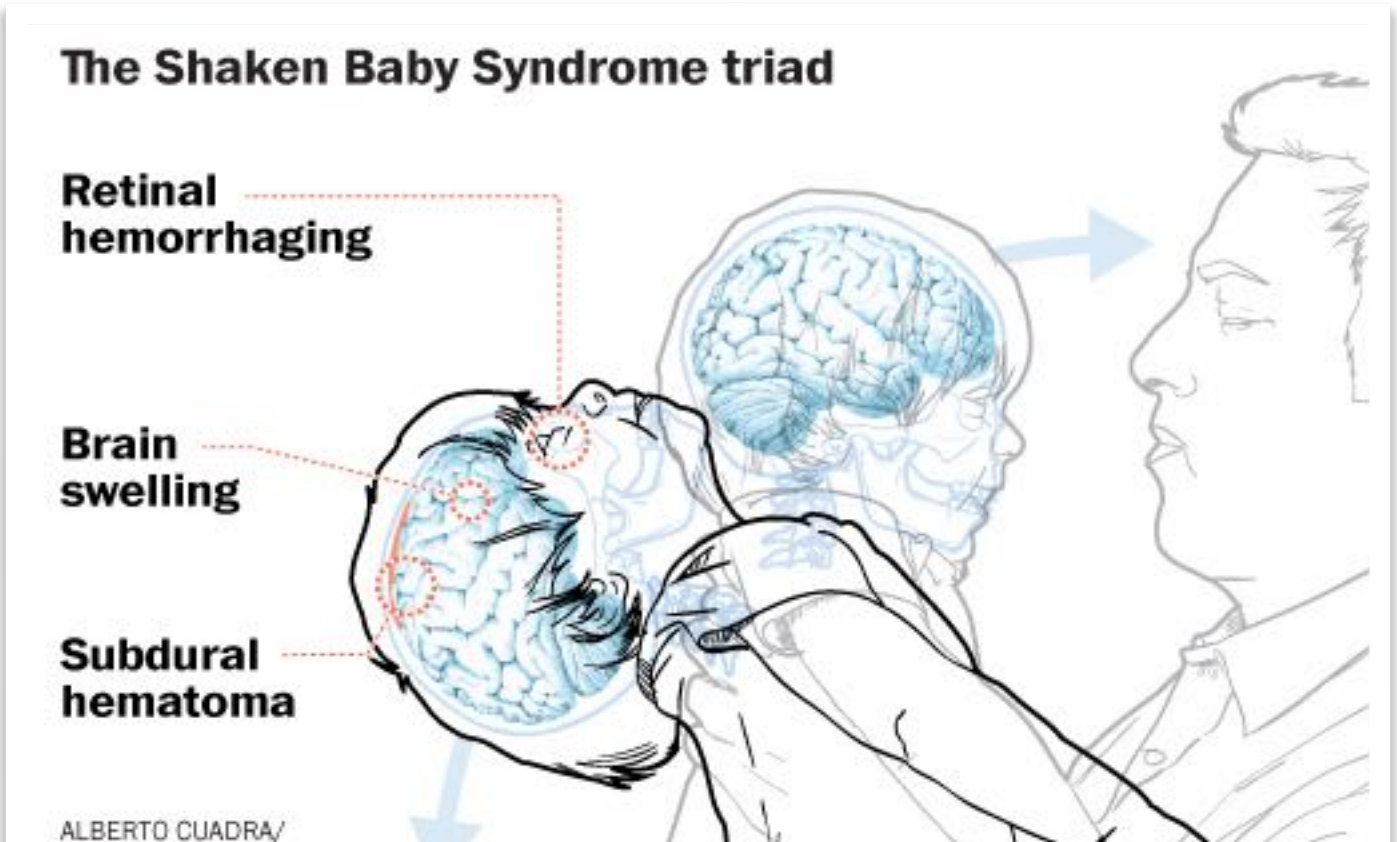
is it an official job? a **variable** in government data? taxed, regulated, protected by police?

gt_60_min_pct
receiving_public_assistance_pct
eng_only_pct
esp_lim_pct
esp_not_lim_pct
other_lang_lim_pct
other_lang_not_lim_pct
non_computer_pct
internet_pct
family_pct
living_alone_pct
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ptmm_occupation_pct
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poverty_ratio_1p85_1p99_pct
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Pct of tot_h_units_acs built between
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Total housing units from 2010 census
Total occupied housing units from 201