

A “Special” Difference: For a Foucauldian/Feminist Genealogy of Freud

Ed Cohen

As far as the differentiation into two sexes is concerned, we can know something certain about only one of the terms of the difference.

[. . .] Out of this difference will be lifted one of the two terms—but determined in relation to what?—and this one will be constituted as ‘origin,’ as that by whose differentiation the other may be engendered and brought to light. The self re-marking itself—more or less—would thus produce the other, whose function in the differentiation would be neglected, forgotten.

—Luce Irigaray

After Luce Irigaray’s definitive dissection of Freud’s ontology of sexual difference in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, who would be so ballsy as to return to the topic?¹ Who would bother to reconsider the way that Freud’s texts recapitulate the foundational phallic economy of Occidental philosophy, which reduces the putative difference between male and female, or between masculine and feminine, to a re-marking of the phallic one, thereby reducing this difference to an indifference? I found myself asking these questions recently while reading *Les aveux de la chair* [Confessions of the Flesh], the fourth volume of Michel Foucault’s *History of Sexuality*.² Not that Foucault addresses Freud’s ontology of sexual difference directly—or even obliquely for that matter—let alone entertains Irigaray’s feminist critique of it. However, in reflecting on what *Les aveux* tries to accomplish, I realized that in addition to continuing Foucault’s genealogy of governmentality, or the “conduct of conduct,” and thereby providing more backstory for his reflections on the pastoral; in addition to elucidating the ways that early Christianity takes up particular Hellenic and Hellenistic “technologies of the self” and turns them to new eschatological ends; in addition to adumbrating the mindfuck (excuse my poor French translation) that early Christian writers undertook in order to transform the classical notion of *aphrodesia* into concupiscence; in *Les aveux*

History of the Present: A Journal of Critical History, Vol. 9, No. 1, Spring 2019
Copyright © 2019 University of Illinois Press

Foucault also provides a critical genealogy of how Augustine appropriates the concept libido to reinscribe the "fallen nature" of sex within the sacred precincts of Christian marriage: "the libido is not an intrinsic aspect of the sexual act which can be tied to it analytically. It is an element that sin, the fall, and the 'reciprocity of disobedience' themselves have synthetically associated [. . .]. It opens a field of analysis and at the same time it designates the possibility of a 'government' of conducts in an entirely other mode which alternates between the abstention and acceptance (more or less voluntarily conceded) of sexual relations."³

Although Foucault never makes the point himself, this Augustinian field of analysis nevertheless clearly prefigures and informs Freud's famous declaration in the first paragraph of *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*: "Everyday language possesses no counterpart to the word 'hunger,' but science makes use of the word 'libido' for that purpose."⁴ Freud here participates in a lineage that traverses Western thought from ancient Greece, as Irigaray intimates. Certainly, a connection between hunger and sexual desire exists in antiquity (as Foucault discusses in the second and third volumes of *The History of Sexuality*). However, Christianity takes up and transforms these earlier technologies of the self in radical ways. In *Les aveux*, Foucault explains that hunger and desire, or gluttony and fornication, are linked as sins of the flesh (versus sins of the soul) that arise from our nature. Yet, in this dynamic, the "spiritual combat" against gluttony has less efficacy in freeing the soul from the flesh because no matter how restrictive the regime one must eat in order to live, whereas one can live without sex. Even if Freud's libidinal appropriation disavows any Christian affiliations and steadfastly proclaims its secular status,⁵ it nonetheless continues to propagate its psychic seeds in the libidinal field that Augustine first plowed, as Freud's very first use of the term libido reveals.⁶ Indeed, we might consider that Freud's entire "repressive hypothesis"—arguably the basis for psychoanalytic thought itself insofar as repression precipitates the unconscious—affirms abstention and acceptance as the antipodes within which the libido always finds itself constrained to wander, just as Augustine did.⁷ Hence—although he doesn't elaborate the implication—Foucault's explication of how Augustine recasts libido (from bit player to star of the show) encompasses psychoanalysis within a "historical ontology of ourselves in our relations to a field of power in which we constitute ourselves as subjects while acting on ourselves."⁸

Needless to say, Foucault's and Irigaray's notions of how to approach an ontology of Freud, or Freud's ontology, differ considerably. While Irigaray's ontological investigations hold sexual (in)difference as the crux of a Western ontotheology that she characterizes as "phallogocentric and logocentric,"⁹ Foucault's critical ontology pursues an "ontology of the present, of present reality, an ontology of modernity, an ontology of ourselves."¹⁰ Yet despite this divergence, we can perhaps use Foucault's work to rethink Irigaray's feminist critique of Freud in a way that doesn't dismiss it, but rather situates its unfolding. For, rather than discerning a phallogocentric continuity across more than two millennia, as Irigaray does, Foucault's readings of early Christian writers, and especially Augustine, seem to describe a point of inflection, or even "an event in thought,"¹¹ wherein the "pragmatics of true discourse" change, channeling the ontology of the ancient Greeks towards new Christian ends.¹² Addressing the ways that Christianity radically transforms elements of Greek and Greco-Roman discourses and practices in three domains: avowal, virginity, and marriage, *Les aveux* helps us notice that the ontological continuities that Irigaray finds relentlessly underwriting Western conceptualizations of the human subject might persist and return only insofar as they always also twist and turn within the historical domains across which they wander.

Foucault's careful consideration of early Christianity's affiliations with—and transvaluations of—Greek and Greco-Roman practices underscores genealogy's capacity to apprehend the seemingly unchanging ground of Western thought as a persistence with (in) change instead. For example, to return to libido—a concept that also exists in earlier Latin texts as a much more general term encompassing humor, will, fancy, inclination, desire, longing, passion for anything, thirst, and pleasure—Foucault explains: "The *libido*, in the sense that Augustine often employs without other qualification, that is to say as the sexual form of desire, is thus the transhistorical tie that links the original sin of which it is the consequence to the presence [*actualité*] of this sin in all men."¹³ Here Foucault indicates how what he calls the "Augustinian schema" forms a "fundamental and indissociable connection between the form of the sexual act and the structure of the subject" by appropriating, resignifying, and transvaluing libido, which Christianity henceforth constitutes as the "sexual form of desire" (not necessarily what it meant for "pagans").¹⁴ In so doing, the Augustinian schema opens a transhistorical portal connecting the fall in Eden to the present moment of all sin

in Christian subjects—or, in all subjects according to Christians.¹⁵ Moreover, the schema locates libido as that which weaves this subject's present moment into an eschatological tapestry, whose warp and woof are composed by the Fall and the Apocalypse.¹⁶ With this conceptual twist, Augustine constitutes the Christian subject as a subject temporally divided within and against itself. In doing this, he thereby invents a form of subjectification that the institutions and practices of Christianity—in part formed (and transformed) by dogmatic and sectarian struggles by (and about) these subjects within (and against) the Church—will work to contain for the next fifteen hundred years or so. Therefore, following Foucault's analysis, we might say that the classical ontological formation that Irigaray locates in Freud makes sense not as a direct filiation with ancient philosophy, or as an essential attribute of Western culture more generally, but rather as a genealogical effect of early Christianity's libidinalization of the sexual act.

How We Became so "Special," or Engendering the Human Species

To get to Freud a bit more expeditiously, let's fast forward across those fifteen hundred years or so during which Christianity hones its strategies for libidinalizing the sexual act in order to consider another possible point of inflection for the ontology of sexual difference that we find in Freud—one closer to his own perspective, the secularization of sexual difference that emerges at the end of the seventeenth century.¹⁷ Needless to say, the topic of secularization is complex and has engendered more critical reflection than can be safely addressed here, so let me narrow the field of consideration. Secularization often refers to the complex processes through which religion's centrality to individual and collective decision making radically diminishes and as a result of which secularity and religion come to be understood as opposed (but also co-constitutive). While not disputing this familiar understanding, I want to return us to another, more etymological sense of the secular, based on its derivation from the Latin *saeculum*, a word whose complex and vital valences the religious/secular binary sometimes obscures.

In Latin, especially in the works of Lucretius, *saeculum* refers to a race, a breed, a generation, of both animals and humans.¹⁸ By transference, like the Greek *genea*, it comes to mean the ordinary human lifetime, a generation, an age; those living at a particular time; the longest a human can live (around one hundred years, from which the French gets *siècle*); and then, subsequent

to the rise of Christianity, “the world” in which this temporally delimited life takes place, hence secular as worldly. As this etymology suggests, another way to characterize the secular in order to emphasize its timeliness might entail contrasting it with the eschatological, as a particular religious way of telling time, rather than with the religious per se. Since Christian eschatology considers human temporality primarily in light of the soul’s essential timelessness, which it calls eternal life, eschatologically speaking human “history is the middle between creation and redemption” and merely represents the passage through which the latter derives from the former.¹⁹ To put this another way, the middling life that humans “naturally” live accrues its Christian value from the other life, the afterlife, the eternal life, that only opens with the resurrection. The eschaton thus posits a promised future event that ends history, and whose foretold significance reaches backward in time, endowing each lived moment with its timeless meaning-value. For Christianity, especially after Augustine, human nature is fallen in the sense that the interlude between birth and death conceals the soul’s eternal life from us; hence, conversely, the time of our life must be overwritten—and overridden—by the soul’s eternal nature for redemption to occur. Secular, on the other hand, refers to the time of this life, to lived time, to lifetimes and to generations, as its most vital matter; it concerns *this* life and not the *other* life. It concerns living now.

In the European context from which Freud’s work derives and within which it arises, the secular nature of sexual difference only begins to matter—or, quite literally, to become matter—once its orientation ceases to be determined by the eschatological horizon that Christianity projects. As Foucault notices in *Security, Territory, Population*, this temporal reorientation occurs in the wake both of European colonial expansion and of the wars of religion during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (including the Thirty Years War), as a result of which Europe becomes a “geographic region of multiple States, without unity and with unevenness between the small and the large, having a relation of utilization, colonization and domination to the rest of the world.”²⁰ Articulated explicitly by the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), this secularizing imperative disrupts the prevailing European assumption/aspiration, incorporated in the Holy Roman Empire, that the eschatological horizon of Christianity would one day establish a universal politico-theological matrix for a new world order. Instead, after Westphalia, European nations find themselves falling into a secular history that, as

Foucault remarks, "is now completely open and not temporally oriented towards a final unity."²¹

This secularization process coincides with the emergence of what Talal Asad designates as "secular homogeneous time," which introduces a new temporal orientation both for individuals and for collectives. As Asad observes: "[H]omogeneous time is a prerequisite for imagining the totality of individual lives that comprise a (national) community in which there are no privileged persons or events, and therefore no mediations."²² Homogeneous time, first as theoretically conceived by Isaac Newton, and then as philosophically interpreted by his friend John Locke, brackets God's salvific timetable, as Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz underscores: "Tis making of *Time* a thing absolute, independent on God."²³ It thereby forecloses the metaphysical hierarchies that underwrite the "great chain of being" on which the absolute monarchies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries depend,²⁴ and instead situates all living individuals (including kings and queens) on the same quasi-natural, temporally-finite playing field.²⁵

Considering these two temporal turns together helps explain why the long and complex process of secularizing historical time also coincides with—and depends upon—the rise in the late-seventeenth century of what C. B. Macpherson calls "possessive individualism," which shifts the constitutive aspect of personhood from having a soul to having a body.²⁶ This new secular perspective crystallizes especially clearly in the realm of modern philosophy, where it limns the logics of liberalism as an at once economic and political possibility. Yet, even as it affirms a principle of legal equality predicated on abstract personhood, liberalism's secular framework contains an essential contradiction within itself: Abstract personhood relies on the premise that all humans are formally equal insofar as we all have bodies which we own as our property—which is the maxim of possessive individualism after all.²⁷ However, possessive individualism also paradoxically introduces the possibility that different kinds of bodies "naturally" determine different kinds of people with different legal, political, and economic statuses (women, slaves, and children). In order to finesse this contradiction, liberalism relies on what Richard Lewontin calls "the ideology of biological determination," a distinctly modern bio-logic that presumes political and legal equality can only bear on social distinctions and not on natural differences.²⁸ This ideology inheres and coheres as an effect of what Bruno Latour names "the Modern constitution," which holds that when it comes to politics, nature

trumps society (because “constitutionally” society cannot alter what nature determines).²⁹ Yet, as many Marxist, feminist, critical race, queer, and disability rights theorists (among others) have noticed, this contradiction also serves to naturalize class, gender, sexual, racial, ethnic, and bodily distinctions as intrinsic or innate differences that contaminate the putative ideality of abstract personhood. In other words, these differences disqualify some kinds of embodiment as not fully human, and hence make them unavailable for inclusion within the abstract domain of human equality.³⁰

At the heart of this paradoxical technology of secular humanization, indeed as what Foucault might call its “instrument-effect,”³¹ lies the recognition—or, perhaps better still, following Latour, the *constitution*—of humans as a species. For once humans begin to be regarded as a species and not just a kind or genre, which happens once Linnaeus denominates us as *homo sapiens* in 1758, the significance of the human can begin to be relocated in a wholly natural, and hence secular, domain.³² As Foucault underscores: “With the emergence of mankind as a species, within a field of the definition of all living species, we can say that man appears in the first form of his integration within biology.”³³ And furthermore: “Western man was gradually learning what it meant to be a living species in a living world, to have a body, conditions of existence, probabilities of life, and individual and collective welfare, forces that could be modified, and a space in which they could be distributed in an optimal manner.”³⁴ Indeed, the rendering of humans as a species living among other species literally secularizes the human insofar as it locates human-ness (and non-human-ness) not in the soul (or the lack thereof) but in the living continuum of individual bodies sexually reproduced from one generation to the next.

This secular definition of species is first offered by Georges Leclerc, Comte de Buffon in the second volume of his monumental *Histoire naturelle* in 1759, the year after Linnaeus made his famous nominal contribution to human history. According to Buffon, a species’ temporal dissemination, its “faculty of producing its fellow creature (*semblable*),” constitutes its “real existence.”³⁵ If in order to be a species at all a species must endure through a multitude of successive iterations, then the generation(s) of new individuals constitutes its vital crux. Hence, Buffon specifies that a species only exists as “the constant succession and the uninterrupted renewal of the individuals who constitute it. . . . The species is thus an abstract and general word for which the thing exists only when we consider Nature in the succession of

time³⁶ From this perspective, sexual reproduction becomes a temporal means of "reproducing the species," rather than simply of engendering offspring.³⁷ Indeed, Buffon posits that: "the species then is nothing other than the constant succession of similar individuals who can reproduce themselves together."³⁸ This reproductive criteria provides a simultaneously inclusive and exclusive notion of species: individuals belong to the same species if and only if they reproduce offspring who can reproduce more offspring—a criteria that essentializes both sexual difference and race as natural categories.³⁹ Once the human species appears both to exist and to insist through generation and generations (i.e., through fleshly iterations that manifest in and through time) our "secular nature" actually comes to make sense to us by making sense of us as living, historical beings.

Not coincidentally, then, the meanings of generation and reproduction are also changing at this same moment.⁴⁰ In fact, reproduction only begins to appear as cognate with generation during this period, as the Mohammad of Methodism, John Wesley, does not fail to notice: "Then [Buffon] substitutes for the plain word *generation* a quaint word of his own, *reproduction*, in order to level man not only with the beasts that perish, but with nettles or onions."⁴¹ No doubt Wesley's disdain for Buffon's "quaint" idiom bespeaks both his concern about the secular implications of Buffon's framework and his defensiveness about the metaphysical leveling effects that it presages. Prior to the eighteenth century, theories of what we now understand as biological reproduction largely rest on the metaphysical (a.k.a. theological) supposition, often couched in Aristotelean/Galenist terms, that individual birth continues and recapitulates the act of divine creation through time. With the works of William Harvey, Anton von Leeuwenhoek, and Rene Descartes, among others, in the seventeenth century, the seeds of something like a materialist theory of reproduction begin to be planted in the European imagination;⁴² however, it will take well into the twentieth century (with the "discovery" of hormones, nuclear DNA, the importance of cytoplasmic inheritance through the maternal egg, etc.) for a biochemical reductionist explanation to come to fruition. (Remember Freud laments the lack of bio-scientific evidence for his claims about sexuality.)⁴³ Needless to say, the secular dynamics of human reproduction are subject to intensive investigation throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, as are the processes of embryogenesis, the specifics of which still resist and impel bioscientific inquiry.

Concomitantly, the specific differences, or indeed the special

differences—“specific” and “special” both being adjectival forms of species—between male and female bodies begin to supersede the metaphysical or humoral distinctions that had characterized earlier explanations based on sexual homologues.⁴⁴ Thomas Laqueur characterizes such homological theories as the “one-sex model,” in which male and female anatomy appear structurally identical, even though men are “outies” and women are “innies” due to the former’s metaphysical superiority and greater humoral heat.⁴⁵ As special differences—sexual differences within the human species that subtend the reproduction of the species—become more essential, female bodies instead take on a secular specificity, as distinct from male bodies, that binds them to the propagation of the species, and hence to the existence and persistence of the species as a species per se.⁴⁶

While the discourse of species certainly flourishes on the fertile grounds of natural history and biology (once the field was denominated as such by Lamarck in 1802), reaching its evolutionary apotheosis almost exactly a century later in Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* (1859), its significance does not confine itself to these scientific domains. Indeed, almost immediately after its publication Buffon’s concept takes on a life of its own. For example, even before scribbling his snarky statement about Buffon’s leveling tendencies, Wesley had already addressed Buffon’s work at length in *A Survey of the Wisdom of God, or a Compendium of Natural Philosophy* (1763). Similarly, Henry Home, Lord Kames, writing from within the Scottish Enlightenment, assumed species and its propagation as the basis for his *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* (1751). But perhaps the most significant contemporary uptake of Buffon’s species concept appears in the work of Kames’s protégé, Adam Smith, whose adoption of species thinking imbues the bio-logic for his *Inquiry into the Nature and the Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776).⁴⁷ In this text, Smith mobilizes species as the basis not only for his assumption that the market functions as a natural prosthetic for the “delicate,” “feeble” and “puny” human body (the market serves nature by other means) but also for his proclamation: “Every species of animals naturally multiplies in proportion to their means of subsistence, and no species can ever multiply beyond it,”⁴⁸ thereby introducing into bourgeois political economy something that will soon be enshrined as the “principle of population.”

As Foucault teaches us, the emergence of population as a figure of governmental concern forms one armature of modern biopolitics, the other being the anatomo-politics of the human body.⁴⁹ Indeed, we might say that

A "Special" Difference

population forms the other face of species (especially since another valence of species means coin).⁵⁰

By the end of the eighteenth century, population and species so implicate each other that they underwrite what Immanuel Kant calls "universal history." In his essay "Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitical View," Kant opens by explaining the basis for his undertaking:

*Human actions are determined, just as every other event natural, according to the universal laws of nature. It is to be hoped that the history which is occupied about the narrative of these phenomena, however deeply concealed their causes may be, when it contemplates the play of the liberty of the human will in the main, will discover a regular course of it; and in such a manner, that that, which is obviously implicated and irregular in single subjects, will be cognized in the whole species, as a continually progressive, though slow, unfolding of its predispositions. Thus marriages, and the births and deaths arising from them, seem, as the free will of men has so great an influence on them, to be subjected to no rule, according to which their number can be previously determined by reckoning; and yet the yearly tables of them in great nations evince that they happen just as much according to constant laws of nature. [...]*⁵¹

Needless to say, Kant is also a reader of Buffon (whom he lauds as "the great author of the system of nature")⁵² and he engages Buffon's species concept on numerous occasions. In this introductory paragraph to "Universal History," Kant explicitly extends Buffon's ideas about species in the direction of population by circumscribing them within the ambit of statistical analysis. While noting that the reproductive consequences of marriage might appear to derive from free will at the level of individuals, Kant argues that the underlying regularities or "rule[s]" that actually determine their number will reveal themselves when "cognized in the whole species." The statistical tables that record this data—and for which individuals serve only as so-called data points—divulge "constant laws of nature" by abstracting from the particularities of individual agents and considering them instead "in the main." The possibility of something like "universal history," then, displaces eschatology's apprehension of history as an intermediary between the fall and the resurrection by construing it as "a continually progressive, though slow, unfolding of [the species's] predispositions."⁵³ Population, as the figure that emerges when the species is figured numerically, universalizes these predispositions and renders them as natural, if not predictable, tendencies that govern the manifestations of individual will, whether we recognize them as such, or not.

The apotheosis of such species/population thinking appears in Thomas Robert Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798), published in the same year as the first English translation of Kant's text. Explicitly taking up Smith's "special" claims, Malthus' famously melancholy polemic undertakes both to counter what he imagines as the overly optimistic works of William Godwin and the Marquis de Condorcet and to lobby against the revision of England's Poor Laws (on which account he succeeds). In the *Essay*, Malthus introduces what comes to be known as his eponymous dilemma, that population increases geometrically and food supplies arithmetically so that unless population is consciously, or indeed "rationally," restricted—through what he calls "preventative checks"—it will be "naturally" reduced (through what he calls "positive checks" including famines, wars, epidemics, and other forms of mass death). While the empirical basis for these claims has never held up, nor has the theoretical basis for comparing these two rates of change, Malthus's theory nonetheless not only inscribes itself within economic, political, and biological thought, but also serves as the basis for representing these as naturally entangled processes.⁵⁴ Furthermore, by taking "food" and "passion between the sexes" as "necessary" to the species (albeit *necessary* in entirely different ways, since you only die for lack of one of them) he can construe them as unalterably "fixed laws of our nature"—unless "that Being who first arranged the system of the universe" intercedes—and thereby affirms them simultaneously as mathematical functions and living processes.⁵⁵ Based on this bio-mathematical equivalence, Malthus situates sex at the heart of what Foucault terms "the political economy of population," which establishes "the analysis of the modes of sexual conduct, their determinations and their effects, at the boundary line of the biological and the economic domains."⁵⁶

In Malthus's view, the crux of the population problem lies in the tension between instinct and reason, which is uniquely volatile in the human species: "Impelled to the increase of his species by an equally powerful instinct, reason interrupts his career and asks him whether he may not bring beings into the world, for whom he cannot provide the means of subsistence."⁵⁷ Clearly aspiring to govern the sexual conduct of lower class men by getting them to keep their pants on, Malthus holds that "the foresight of difficulties attending the rearing of children acts as a preventative check . . . to the natural increase of population."⁵⁸ Or, rather, he believes that it *should* act as such. Here Malthus makes an important double gesture: on the one hand he

equates *homo sapiens* with *homo oeconomicus* and insists that the bio-logic of the latter (should) govern that of the former, especially insofar as its species existence depends on sexual relations. On the other hand, he suggests that if this self-regulation fails to occur, the cause must lie in the conflict between reason and instinct, insofar as the passionate power of the latter overcomes the fiduciary foresight of the former. Needless to say, with this formulation Malthus illustrates why Foucault argues that "[s]ex was a means of access both to the life of the body and the life of the species."⁵⁹ Yet, just as significant for my purposes, in pitting reason and instinct against one another as the forces that inform the field of sexuality, Malthus inscribes a split subject into the psyche of political economy, the very psyche that psychoanalysis will seek to comprehend—if not assuage—a century later. Divided against itself by conflicting bio-economic, or indeed bio-political imperatives, the secular sexual subject that animates Malthus's political economy evokes the special antinomies of possessive individualism, in whose unconscious effects Freud locates the cause of so much suffering.⁶⁰

While Malthus's theory sees sex as the linchpin both between individuals and collectives and between biology and economics, it barely considers sexual difference as part of its remit. To be fair, Malthus does not take much interest in sex per se, or in the passion between the sexes either, except insofar as these engender offspring which a father can or cannot support. Malthus does not implicate women in the economic responsibility for children—in this sense he is patriarchal in the most literal sense. For the most part, Malthus's *Essay* takes as a given—and as a problem—men's desire for women: "The cravings of hunger, the love of liquor, the desire of possessing a beautiful woman, will urge men to actions, of the fatal consequences of which, to the general interests of society, they are perfectly well convinced, even at the very time they commit them."⁶¹ Malthus rarely admits of similar cravings among women and then only to explain why women's desire, insofar as it exists, is much more culpable than men's: "the natural origin of the superior disgrace which attends a breach of chastity in the woman than the man."⁶² The same lack interest cannot be attributed to Charles Darwin, who takes up the baton of population from Malthus and carries it from political economy into evolutionary biology. That Darwin intends to further Malthus's theory is incontestable since Darwin acknowledges his Malthusian debt in the introduction to *On the Origins of Species*: "This is the doctrine of Malthus applied to the whole animal and vegetable species."⁶³ Yet Darwin

goes much farther than Malthus in developing his understanding of sexual difference as an evolutionary force, since it underpins his entire theory of sexual selection. Needless to say, much has been made of sexual selection both pro and con; however, rather than interrogate this debate, I merely want to consider how Darwin appeals to sexual difference as a special difference in concluding *The Descent of Man* in order to clinch his argument that evolution applies to humans as well as all other living beings.

The assumption of sexual difference among humans appears as both the crux and the climax of Darwin's second magnum opus. Indeed, in the outline that appears at the head of the penultimate chapter, "Secondary Sexual Characteristics in Man," the very first words are "[d]ifferences between Man and Woman."⁶⁴ This is hardly coincidental. In *The Descent's* last chapters, devoted to the human species, Darwin both assumes and explains the evolutionary basis of sexual differences between men and women. On the one hand, since the apparent naturalness of the difference of sex corresponds to the prevailing sexual ideology—rooted in the ideology of biological determination—Darwin uses it as a rhetorical lure with which he seeks to draw those who might otherwise object to human evolution into agreement with him. By upholding the difference of sex as self-evident, he hopes to convince readers who accept it as such that if they do then they must also accept that humans evolve in the same ways as other species—which is after all the entire purpose of the book. On the other hand, he realizes that if all attributes of speciation are subject to evolutionary developments, then the difference of the sexes must itself have evolved through time and hence requires explanation. In order to uphold both these positions simultaneously, Darwin undertakes an extended, but ultimately tautological, justification that seeks to demonstrate why the physical distinctions between male and female individuals of the human species must have both motivated, and emerged due to, the combined forces of natural and sexual selection.

Darwin begins this argument by affirming the "parallelism between the sexual differences of man and the *Quadrumana*" in order to locate the sexual differences in the evolutionary landscape of primates.⁶⁵ He then introduces the notion that "in ancient times" the "the law of battle," which spurs males to compete with one another for "the possession of the females," must have inflected the speciation process in ways that not only amplified physical differences between men and women, but also enabled "the strongest and boldest men both in the general struggle for life and in their contest for men"

to leave "a more numerous progeny than their less favored brethren."⁶⁶ Moreover, he avers that strength alone could not have allowed one man to prevail over another or "to defend their females, as well as their young, from enemies of all kinds" without "the aid of the higher mental faculties, namely, observation, reason, invention, or imagination."⁶⁷ Thus, he concludes that "differences in the mental powers between men and women" also bear the traces of both sexual selection and natural selection, and by virtue of this process "man has ultimately become superior to woman," which for Darwin is merely a statement of fact.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, despite his overt male chauvinism, Darwin ultimately realizes the weakness of his bio-logic, since it leaves undetermined the question of why the law of battle governs male behavior—and hence why it should have impelled the development of the difference of sex in the first place—and so he proposes a solution: "looking far enough back in the stream of time, and judging from the social habits of man as he now exists, the most probable view is that he aboriginally lived in small communities, each with a single wife, or several if powerful enough, whom he jealously guarded against all other men."⁶⁹ From this anthropological conjecture, which he treats as biological evidence, he affirms that "the natural and widely prevalent feeling of jealousy, and the desire of each male to possess a female for himself" operate as the catalysts for sexual selection in humans.⁷⁰ In other words, pre-existing, self-evident sexual differences, male jealousy and desire, serve to explain both the aboriginal and the contemporary manifestations of the difference between men and women in humans. Yet, Darwin also notices that this explanation contradicts the claim he has made about sexual selection in the preceding hundreds of pages—especially in the case of his favorite example the peacock—that the right of selection usually belongs to females, so he improvises a historical corrective: "Man is more powerful in body and mind than woman and in the savage state he keeps her in a far more subject state of bondage than does the male of any other animal; therefore it is not surprising that he should have gained the power of selection."⁷¹

Even this cursory summary of Darwin's understanding of the difference of sex indicates that Darwin takes its given-ness as both the cause and effect of human sexual selection.⁷² What he doesn't do is to link this difference to something like sexual instinct. In fact, although Darwin has a theory of instinct, which he first outlines in *Origin* and then utilizes in *Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*,⁷³ and although in *Descent* he mobilizes notions

like “social instincts” (repeatedly)⁷⁴ and “maternal instinct” (intermittently),⁷⁵ he never invokes the concept sexual instinct anywhere in his entire opus.⁷⁶ Nor does he ever mention something like libido. The impulse to sex as an activity or behavior does not concern Darwin, even if the forms of its organization throughout both evolutionary and human history do. For example, his theory of early humans’ patriarchal organization, as rooted in male jealousy and violence cited above—which Freud quotes verbatim in *Totem and Taboo* and which underwrites Freud’s theory of the incest taboo⁷⁷—entirely assumes the imperative nature of sex as the reproductive impulse that drives speciation, so much so that it goes without saying. However, when sexology incorporates Darwin’s theory into its framework, as happens for example in Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis*, sexual instinct and sexual difference collide for the first time:⁷⁸ “It seems of high psychological interest to trace the developmental phases through which, in the course of the evolution of human culture to the morality and civilization of today, the sexual life has passed.”⁷⁹

The opening paragraph of *Psychopathia Sexualis*’s first chapter, “A Fragment of a Psychology of the Sexual Life,” elucidates the special assumptions that underwrite Krafft-Ebing’s medico-forensic project:

The propagation of the human species is not committed to accident or to the caprice of the individual, but made secure by a natural instinct, which with all-conquering force and might demands fulfillment. In the gratification of this natural impulse are found not only the sensual pleasure and sources of physical well-being, but also higher feelings of satisfaction in perpetuating the single, perishable existence by the transmission of mental and physical attributes to a new being. In coarse sensual love, in the lustful impulse to satisfy this natural instinct, man stands on the level with the animal; but it is given to him to raise himself to a height where his natural instinct no longer makes him a slave: higher, nobler feelings are awakened, which, notwithstanding their sensual origin, expand into a world of beauty, sublimity, and morality.⁸⁰

Needless to say, this articulation of sexual instinct offers one of the main examples against which Freud directs his famous revision of sexual instinct in *Three Essays*, which he decomposes into the sexual object and the sexual aim.⁸¹ In Krafft-Ebing’s evolutionary perspective, the seeming omnipotence of sexual instinct as a special imperative serves to override individual vicissitudes in the service of propagating the human species. Yet, despite the insistence of this prime directive, the variable manner in which the “all-conquering” instinct can be gratified introduces a gradient between lust and

sublimation—or, between animal and human. Moreover, these gradations of gratification, which the book famously taxonomizes by presenting example after example after example of sexual "pathologies," open the field of human activity that Krafft-Ebing identifies as sexuality.

In other words, for Krafft-Ebing, sexuality inheres in the tension that exists between higher and lower impulses and names the fluctuations in how the sexual instinct is realized. Therefore, sexuality is how individuals modulate the natural instinct. Indeed, sexuality, which Krafft-Ebing describes as "the most powerful factor in individual and social existence," paradoxically depends upon the ability to "overcome his [sic] natural instinct" to some extent or another, since otherwise "man" [sic] would always be a "slave to his [sic] instinct." Sexuality thus represents the degrees of indetermination (by which is meant freedom) that the animal man can introduce into the natural demand to propagate the species, and with this intervention turn sexual feeling into social feeling—or not. In this regard, Krafft-Ebing's conceptualization of sexuality extrapolates from the opposition that Malthus locates between instinct and reason—and the (supposed) capacity of the latter to regulate the former—as the special difference underlying "the higher, nobler feelings" that accrue from "the evolution of human culture to the morality and civilization of today."

Given this species' specific perspective, Krafft-Ebing's unselfconscious uses of the noun man and the pronoun his might at first seem to refer to the generic human; in fact, that is not entirely the case. For, much like Darwin, Krafft-Ebing underscores that there exists a natural asymmetry in the force of male and female sexualities due to their special differences: "Undoubtedly man has a much more intense sexual appetite than woman,"⁸² and as a result, "[i]n accordance with the nature of this powerful impulse, he is aggressive and violent in his wooing." A woman, on the other hand, "[i]f she is normally developed mentally, and well bred, her sexual desire is small" and "[s]he remains passive."⁸³ Due to this incommensurability between male and female sexualities, in which "the mental inclination of woman is monogamous, while in man it is polygamous," the propensity to "normal love"—"existing between individuals of the opposite sex and capable of sexual intercourse"—remains inherently unstable.⁸⁴ In fact, based on his investment in the special nature of the difference of sex, Krafft-Ebing makes the somewhat surprising claim that monogamous, heterosexual, Christian marriage, which he takes as the apogee of civilized sexuality (in juxtaposition

to the “Mohammedan” or to the Japanese), depends upon fetishism as its glue: “These physiological facts of fetishism explain the individual sympathies between husband and wife; the preference of a certain person to all others of the same sex.”⁸⁵ Conversely, if fetishism fails to fasten members of the opposite sex to one another, all bets are off. Thus, when Krafft-Ebing comes to define homosexuality—a word which makes its first published appearance in the first English translation of *Psychopathia Sexualis*—he defines it as either the negation or imitation of the special feeling whose fetishistic force should naturally insure that sexual relations occur only between a man and a woman: “The Great Diminution or Complete Absence of Sexual Feeling for the Opposite Sex, with Substitution of Sexual Feeling and Instinct for the Same Sex. (Homosexuality or Contrary Sexual Instinct).”⁸⁶

Since the subtitle of *Psychopathia Sexualis* stipulates its “Especial Reference to Contrary Sexual Instinct,” it’s not surprising that homosexuality not only provides the preponderance of cases, but also offers the context in which Krafft-Ebing presents his main theoretical suppositions about sexuality—some of which Freud will adopt and others which he will challenge. For example, in the first sentence of the section on homosexuality, Krafft-Ebing introduces the notion of “sexual personality”: “After the attainment of complete sexual development, among the most constant elements of self-consciousness in the individual, are the knowledge of representing a definite sexual personality and the consciousness of desire, during the periods of physiological activity of the reproductive organs (semen and ova), to perform acts corresponding with that sexual personality—acts, which, consciously or unconsciously, have a procreative purpose.”⁸⁷

The convolutions of Krafft-Ebing’s description underscore the lines of fracture that it attempts to contain: “individual self-consciousness” entails “knowing” that one “represents” a “definite sexual personality” which concomitantly requires “consciousness of desire” to “perform acts corresponding to that personality.” The dilating degrees of (in)determination that unfold in and as acts performed in order to correspond with this sexual personality, which itself personifies sexuality, needless to say introduce more than a few possible detours into which that personality might unwittingly wander. (Freud will call these detours aberrations—from the Latin etymon *erro* to wander.)⁸⁸ Indeed, the most likely lapse, typographically marked with an em-dash—which both distinguishes and unites it to the rest of the sentence—occurs in relation to the “procreative purpose,” whose “special”

force putatively underwrites these sexual acts "either consciously or unconsciously." This procreative intention indeed animates the very notion of sexual opposition that non-homosexual sexual feeling should manifest, and of which homosexuality represents the diminution, complete absence, or substitution. (In which case, are homosexuals less oppositional?) In other words, the special differences that Krafft-Ebing assumes as intrinsic to the sexual instinct—insofar as the sexual instinct motivates the propagation of the human species, and hence its biological and cultural evolution—situate sexuality in a secular narrative of speciation. Not surprisingly, then, while Freud will revise, if not overtly reject, Krafft-Ebing's understanding of sexual instinct, nevertheless his work points Freud both to the sexual secularization of the libido upon which psychoanalysis will rely and to the special bio-logic that will underwrite Freud's ontology of sexual difference.⁸⁹

Freud's Specialty, or The Historical Nature of Sexual Difference

At this point I'd like to return to my epigraph from Irigaray's *Speculum* in a different—or, should I say, special—light? To begin, I want to affirm that Irigaray's impassioned assessment of Freud seems compelling and exposes something important about the twisted, if not paradoxical, bio-logic that subtends Freud's work. Moreover, I appreciate the deep anger and sense of betrayal that are both incorporated in her text and evidenced by the aftermath of its publication, when it so incensed Lacan that he expelled her from his *École*. Indeed, this affective force constitutes one of Irigaray's most important contributions to feminist thought and practice, and underscores why she remains so important to feminist theory as a critic and a practitioner of psychoanalysis. To that extent I'm on team Luce. However . . . I still have a few reservations (as you may have guessed by this point). While Irigaray's discussion of Freud's "Femininity" essay deftly dissects his phallogocentric logic, to my mind her reading misses some of the special basis on which his putatively patriarchal perspective relies. For despite his penchant for Greek myth or his desire to tether his theory to the (supposed) phylogenetic development of the human species proposed by Darwin, Freud's position is not the patriarchy of the Greeks, or of the Old Testament, or even of the primal horde. Rather Freud's version of sexual difference—which Irigaray rightly describes as an "indifference"—derives not in the first instance from invariant forms of Western thought that relentlessly reduce the feminine to

the maternal, or that rely on a sexual opposition that really just reiterates the same, but rather from his special secular libidinalization of sexual relations. This is not to say that Irigaray's attempt to disclose "the blind spot in an old dream of symmetry" (which is the title of *Speculum's* section on Freud) does not in fact reveal an "old dream of symmetry" latent in Freud's text. Yet, as Freud's explanation of dream work suggests, the old dream always and only passes by way of new material.

What I have tried to indicate with my very partial genealogy of the special difference that underwrites Freud's ontology of sexual difference is that Freud's secular appropriation of libido—which itself appropriates a Christian appropriation of an even earlier classical trope—situates itself within a modern form of species thinking that only begins to emerge once Christianity's eschatological horizon can no longer represent itself as a human universal. As a dogmatically secular thinker⁹⁰ Freud incorporates Darwin's data as both biological and anthropological truth—as Darwin himself does. To take just one important example, Freud invokes evolution in order to justify his claims about the diphasic character of human sexual development, which he calls upon to explain his suggestion that infantile sexuality persists into adult life, even after the sexual drive comes under the "sway of the reproductive function," thanks in part to an "incentive bonus"—orgasm—which induces us to forsake "fore-pleasure." Moreover, he holds that the period of latency between the two phases represents not only "a necessary condition of the aptitude of men for developing higher civilization, but also their tendency towards neurosis": "So far as we know nothing analogous is to be found in man's animal relatives. It would seem that the origin of this peculiarity of man must be looked for in the prehistory of the human species."⁹¹ Needless to say, my point is not to elucidate Freud's obvious Darwinian debts, but rather to suggest that Freud's thinking about sexuality proceeds within this special discourse—of which Darwin's writing represents the nineteenth-century apotheosis—that it takes as its secular, temporal horizon.⁹²

No doubt, the egregiousness of Freud's writings on femininity merit Irigaray's excoriating exposition of his ontology of sexual (in)difference. Freud desire for scientific credibility constrains him within an evolutionary discourse that takes species as its *raison d'être*. Unfortunately, by locating sexuality—and its driving avatar libido—within this putatively natural frame, Freud elaborates the special imperative that unfolds across the previous two centuries within political, philosophical, economic, and biological discourses. Indeed, Freud's

A "Special" Difference

greatest theoretical accomplishment may lie in his ability to map the lines of fracture along which bourgeois (possessive) individualism tends to fall apart even as it aspires to affirm the special identity of its component masculine/feminine, active/passive forces. In the context of what I am calling his special bio-logic of sexual difference, Freud's ability to analyze the constituent dynamics that underwrite the libidinalization of sexual relations remains restricted by his assumption that the propagation of the species entails a sexual opposition, whose irreducibility bespeaks its evolutionary imperative. Obviously, Freud appreciates the complication of such oppositional relations as they unfold both in human behavior and in psychic life, as he underscores in the first of the *Three Essays*: "We should rather be inclined to connect the simultaneous presence of these opposites [sadism/masochism] with the opposing masculinity and femininity which are combined in bisexuality a contrast which often has to be replaced in psycho-analysis by that between activity and passivity."⁹³ Nevertheless, there are limits to where Freud's inclinations can take him, as Irigaray emphasizes. My caveat here, which follows from my fondness for Foucault, is that these limits are special limits, i.e., historical limits to the discursive ensemble from which Freud's work arises and within which Freud's thinking about sexual difference remains circumscribed. In other words, for Freud, sexual difference always remains a special difference, and that's as far as he could go.

This essay derives from my seminar "Feminist Genealogies," which serves as the foundational theory course for the Ph.D. in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Rutgers. This course has a dual function: on the one hand it attempts to provide a genealogy for contemporary feminist theory that traces aspects of its "modern" trajectory; on the other hand, it seeks to elucidate the kinds of work "feminist genealogies" themselves might aspire to do. Clearly, both ambitions bespeak my own appreciation for Foucault, and hence the punch line for the semester is always the first volume of Foucault's History of Sexuality, vol. 1. I thank all the students who have endured this course with me over the last 20 years.

Ed Cohen teaches modern thought in the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Rutgers University, New Brunswick. He is the author of *A Body Worth Defending: Immunity, Biopolitics, and the Apotheosis of the Modern Body* (Duke 2009) as well as numerous articles on gender, sexuality, immunology, and bioscience.

Notes

1. Luce Irigaray, "The Blind Spot of an Old Dream of Symmetry," in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian Gill (1985), 13–129. Quote in epigraph, 21.
2. Michel Foucault, *Les aveux de la chair. Histoire de la sexualité, tome 4* (2018).

3. *Ibid.*, 338.
4. Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1962), 1.
5. This was not the case for sexologists—for example, Krafft-Ebing—from whom Freud recruits the term. See Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis with a Special Reference to Contrary Sexual Instinct*, 7th ed, trans. Charles Chaddock (1895). Despite his sympathy for Darwinian terminology (“sexual selection”), in his introduction, Krafft-Ebing proposes the regulation of sex within Christian marriage as the explanation for why “Christendom gained both mental and moral superiority over the polygamous races, especially Islam, through the equalization of woman and man, and by establishing monogamous marriage and securing it by legal, religious and moral ties” (4–5).
6. Freud’s first use of the word “libido” appears in “On the Grounds for Detaching a Particular Syndrome from Neurasthenia Under the Description ‘Anxiety Neurosis’” (1895) where it refers to “psychical desire” or “psychical stimulus.” In this essay Freud situates it in explicitly the Augustinian mode when he defines “intentional abstinence” as an “aetiological factor” for anxiety neurosis. Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. III, trans. James Strachey (1962) 109.
7. The first of Freud’s *Three Essays* concerns sexual “aberrations” which, as the etymology of its root *err* indicates, means “to wander away, stray, get lost, digress, etc.”
8. Michel Foucault, « À propos de la genealogie de l’éthique : un aperçu du travail en cours. » in *Dits et Ecrits*, 1980–1988, Tome 4, eds. Daniel Defert and Francois Ewald (1994), 198. Foucault’s 1983 comments about historical ontology come in direct response to an interviewer’s question about *L’Usage des Plaisirs* and *Les Aveux de la Chair*. The following year, Foucault then deploys these terms (“critical ontology,” “historical otology”) in his essay “What is Enlightenment?” in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (1984), 32–50.
9. Luce Irigaray, *Conversations* (2008), 158: “Perhaps phallogocentrism and logocentrism will remain a necessity for the constitution of the masculine subject until man becomes capable of freeing himself from subjection or confusion with respect to the maternal world.”
10. Michel Foucault, *The Government of the Self and Others. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1982–1983*, trans. Graham Burchell (2011) 21.
11. Michel Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject. Lectures at the Collège de France 1981–1982*, trans. Graham Burchell (2005), 9. On Foucault’s notion of event as thought, see his discussion of “eventualization” (*événementialisation*) in Michel Foucault. *The Politics of Truth*, trans. Lysa Hochroth & Catherine Porter (1995), 59.
12. On the “pragmatics of discourse,” see Michel Foucault, *Direvrai sur soi-même: Conférences prononcées à l’Université de Victoria de Toronto, 1982* (2017), 278.
13. Foucault, *Les aveux*, 348.
14. Baladier, « Libido. » Charles Baladier, “The Libido as the Driving Force of Sex Life,” in Barbara Cassin, ed., *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, trans.

A "Special" Difference

Steven Rendall et al. (2014), 234. The use of the word "pagan"—which originally seems to derive from the Latin *paganus*, of a village, rustic, from the country-side—in contrast to Christian appears to emerge in the fourth century C.E. as a derogatory way that Christians would refer to those they consider heathens. <http://www.oed.com.proxylibraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/135980?redirectedFrom=pagan#eid> (For example, the full title of Augustine's magnum opus reads *De civitate Dei contra paganos: The City of God against the Pagans*).

15. Foucault, *Les aveux*, 347.

16. On the eschatological framework, see Jacob Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, trans. David Ratmoko (2009).

17. This essay was inspired in part by Joan Scott's apprehension that "Euro-American modernity entailed a *new order of women's subordination*. [. . .]" Joan Wallach Scott, *Sex and Secularism* (2018), 3.

18. On the Latin meanings of *saeculum*, see <http://logeion.uchicago.edu/index.html#saeculum>.

19. Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 13.

20. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population. Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–1978*, trans. Graham Burchell (2007), 298.

21. *Ibid.*, 290.

22. Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (2003), 9–10.

23. "Mr. Leibniz's Fifth Paper," in Samuel Clarke, *A Collection of Papers, Which passed between the late Learned Mr. Leibnitz, and Dr. Clarke, In the Years 1715 and 1716* (1717). <http://www.newtonproject.ox.ac.uk/view/texts/normalized/THEM00234>.

24. Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (1964).

25. The advent of homogeneous time increasingly renders the "duplicitous" political-theological technology that Kantorowicz calls "the Kings two bodies" moot. Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (1957).

26. Ed Cohen, "A Body Worth Having, or A System of Natural Governance," *Theory, Culture & Society* 25:3 (2008): 103–129.

27. The most famous statement of this precept appears in Locke's *Second Treatise on Government* [1689] where Locke holds: "Every Man has a Property in his own Person. This no Body has any right to but himself." (II § 27).

28. Richard Lewontin, *Biology as Ideology: The Doctrine of DNA* (1991), 23.

29. The "purification" of the realms denoted as Society/Nature/God—along with the unrecognized proliferation of "hybrids" that combine them—underwrites what Bruno Latour names "the Modern Constitution." Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (1993), 13–48.

30. To take only one excellent example, Joan Scott famously makes this argument with respect to sexual difference when she argues, following Condorcet, that "political equality is a paradoxical concept. [. . .] In this approach, the infinite variety of self/other difference was reduced to a matter of sexual difference." Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (1996), 8.

31. "Instrument-effect" appears in Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. An Introduction. Vol. I*, trans. Robert Hurley (1978), 48.

32. Linnaeus himself does not adopt this secular perspective. The classic comparison of the various additions and emendations of *Systema Natura* from edition to addition appears in T. Bendyshe, "The Anthropology of Linnaeus," *Memoirs Read before the Anthropological Society of London 1863-1864*. Vol. 1 (1865), 421-458.

33. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 75. On species as classification, see Michel Foucault. *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. Alan Sheridan (2002 [1970]), 136-179.

34. Foucault, *History of Sexuality. Vol. 1*, 142.

35. Buffon, Georges-Louis Leclerc Comte de, *Histoire Naturelle Générale et Particulière, avec Description du Cabinet du Roy*, Tome II (1749), 18.

36. Buffon, *Histoire Naturelle Générale et Particulière, avec Description du Cabinet du Roy*, Tome IV (1753), 384.

37. If we consider that this reproductive valence introduces the possibility for conceiving the individual and population as "related" through production and reproduction, then we understand better why Foucault claims that sexuality exists at and as the interface "the anatomo-politics of the human body" and "the biopolitics of populations." Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I*, 139. On the difference between "reproduction" and "having children," see Ludmilla Jordanova. "Interrogating the Concept of Reproduction in the Eighteenth Century," in eds. Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Reiter, *Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction* (1995), 369-386.

38. Buffon, *Histoire Naturelle*, t. IV, 386.

39. On Buffon and race: Nicholas Hudson, "From 'Nation' to 'Race': The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29:3 (1996), 247-264; Phillip R. Sloan, "The Idea of Racial Degeneration in Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle*," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 3 (1973), 293-321; Andrew Curran, "Rethinking Race History: The Role of the Albino in French Enlightenment Life Sciences," *History and Theory* 48:3 (2009), 151-179.

40. Jordanova, "Interrogating"; Jacques Roger. *The Life-Sciences in Eighteenth-Century French Thought*, trans. Robert Ellrich (1997 [1963]).

41. John Wesley. "Remarks on the Count de Buffon's 'Natural History'" [1782] in *The Works of John Wesley. AM*, Vol. 7 (1835), 443.

42. Roger, *Life-Sciences*, 1-366; Roselyne Rey, "Génération et Hérité au 18ème siècle, » In *L'Ordre des Caractères: Aspects de l'hérité dans l'histoire des sciences de l'homme*, ed. Claude Benichou (1989), 7-47.

43. For example, in the 1920 revision of third of his *Three Essays* (81-82), Freud hypothesizes a "chemical theory" that he hopes will be the subject of "further investigation."

44. Hereafter, when I'm emphasizing the species' specific valence of the word special, I will bracket it in quotation marks. I apologize for this diacritical infelicity, but it seems necessary to emphasize the polyvocality of such a familiar word.

A "Special" Difference

45. Thomas Laqueur, "Orgasm, Generation, and the Politics of Reproductive Biology," *Representations* 14 (Spring 1986), 1–14; Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (1990); Laqueur, "Sex in the Flesh," *Isis* 94:2 (2003), 300–306.
46. Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (1993); Ludmilla Jordanova, *Nature Displayed: Gender, Science and Medicine, 1760–1820* (1999); Barbara Duden. *The Woman Beneath the Skin*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (1991). Simone de Beauvoir continues to assume this discourse when she characterizes woman as the "slave of the species" in *The Second Sex* (1949).
47. For an extended analysis of Smith's debt to Buffon, see Ed Cohen, "Human Tendencies." *e-misférica* 10.1 (Winter 2013) (<http://hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/en/e-misférica>).
48. Adam Smith, *Inquiry into the Nature and the Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Vol. 11 (1776), 97.
49. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, 139. Foucault also elaborates the importance of population throughout *Security/Territory/Population*.
50. On the entanglement of species/population, see Cohen, "Human Tendencies."
51. Immanuel Kant, "Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitical View," in *Essays and Treatises on Moral, Political, and Various Philosophical Subjects*, Vol. 1 (1798), 412–413. The essay was first published in the monthly periodical *Berlinische Monatsschrift* in 1784 a month before his famous essay "Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment?" appeared in the same journal.
52. Immanuel Kant, "Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View," in *Anthropology, History, Education*, ed. Gunter Zoller (2007), 326.
53. Philip Sloan has elaborated the impact of Buffon's thinking on Kant. Philip Sloan, "Buffon, German Biology, and the Historical Interpretation of Biological Species," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 12: 2 (1979), 109–153; Philip Sloan, "Pre-forming the Categories: Eighteenth-Century Generation Theory and the Biological Roots of Kant's A Priori," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40: 2 (2002), 229–253.
54. On the objections to Malthus's theory, see Klaus Hofmann, "Beyond the Principle of Population: Malthus's Essay," *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 20:3 (2013), 399–425.
55. Thomas Robert Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, in *Population*, ed. Gertrude Himmelfarb (1960), 8.
56. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, 26.
57. Malthus, *Essay*, 14.
58. *Ibid.*, 26.
59. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, 146.
60. Given Malthus's background as both a mathematician and a clergyman, it's not entirely surprising that his economic framework both assumes the Augustinian schema (which positions libido between abstention and acceptance) and circumscribes sex within a universal (biopolitical) history for a secular schema of species.
61. Malthus, *Essay*, 92.
62. *Ibid.*, 73.

63. Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life* (1859), 5

64. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, Second Edition (1875), 556.

65. *Ibid.*, 559.

66. *Ibid.*, 563.

67. *Ibid.*, 564.

68. *Ibid.*, 565

69. *Ibid.*, 590–591.

70. *Ibid.*, 594. While Darwin makes the same points about jealousy in the first edition, he underscores them and amplifies them in the second edition, suggesting that its implications are even greater than he first realized.

71. *Ibid.*, 597.

72. Darwin's assumption of the special differences between men and women explains why feminists who follow Irigaray, for example Elizabeth Grosz, find proof of her ontological position in his work. Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely* (2004).

73. Darwin, *Origin*, 207–244; Darwin, *Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animal* (1874).

74. In *The Descent of Man* Darwin elaborates his thinking about “social instincts” throughout Chapter IV, “The Comparison of the Mental Powers of Man and the Lower Animals—continued” and Chapter V, “On the Development of the Intellectual and Moral Faculties During Primeval and Civilized Times,” as well as in Chapter XXI, “General Summary and Conclusion.”

75. *Ibid.*, 107, 108, 110, 113, 480, 563.

76. The concept of “sexual instinct” develops gradually and intermittently throughout the nineteenth century. Its first English usage appears to have occurred in the same year that Malthus published his essay in Mary Wollstonecraft, *Posthumous Works of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Vol. 3 (1798): “Men, accustomed only to have their senses moved, seek a selfish gratification in the society of women, and their sexual instinct being neither supported by the understanding nor the heart, must be excited by variety” (183).

77. This passage, which Freud quotes at length in *Totem and Taboo*, forms the basis for Freud's theory of the “primal horde” out of which he derives the incest taboo. Freud will refer to this passage in texts written throughout the rest of his life. Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XIII (1955), 125.

78. Arnold Davidson makes a similar observation about the convergence of sexual instinct and functional disease. Arnold Davidson, “Sex and the Emergence of Sexuality,” in *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (2001), 30–65.

79. Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, 2.

80. *Ibid.*, 1.

A "Special" Difference

81. Freud, *Three Essays*, 1–2.

82. Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, 13.

83. *Ibid.*, 13.

84. *Ibid.*, 14, 12.

85. *Ibid.*, 18.

86. *Ibid.*, 185.

87. *Ibid.*, 185.

88. Freud's insistent use of verbs that turn on the Latin root *verto*, to turn—invert, pervert, revert, convert, etc.—also refer to this "special" errant capacity. Indeed, the very possibility of such errancy might be one aspect of what makes sexuality "sexual" for Freud, although it's never entirely clear what he means by this term. See for example the attempt to clarify Freud's uses of sexuality in Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Donald Nicolson-Smith (1973), 372–376.

89. Freud is not quite forthcoming about his borrowing, since in one instance he says the term comes from Moll in 1898 and in another he says he invented the terms. However, *libido* and *libido sexualis* occur throughout *Psychopathia Sexualis* and Freud definitely read Krafft-Ebing as the first footnote in *Three Essays* confirms. Moreover, the first editions of this book came out in German more than a decade before Moll's or Freud's uses. See Strachey's editorial note on *libido* in Freud Vol. III., 102.

90. Sigmund Freud. *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. VI, trans. James Strachey (1960), 258.

91. Freud, *Three Essays*, 63, 77, 100.

92. On Freud and Darwin, see Lucille Ritvo, *Darwin's Influence on Freud: A Tale of Two Sciences* (1990).

93. Freud, *Three Essays*, 26.