

What is General Perversion?

Sexual Taxonomy and its Discontents

Arthur Bradley

ABSTRACT:

This article is a discussion of Sigmund Freud's note on "The Perversions in General" from the 1905 edition of his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. To summarize its argument, the article proposes that what Freud calls "perversion" is itself to be properly understood as a form of sexual generalization. It goes on to contend that Freudian perversion thus has larger implications for our understanding of the new sciences of sexual generalization (sexology, psychoanalysis, structuralism, genealogy) that are beginning to emerge from the end of the nineteenth century onwards. If perverse sexuality is arguably the defining libidinal object of Krafft-Ebing's sexual taxonomy, for example, the article argues that perversion is already in itself a form of perverse sexual taxonomy. In conclusion, the article argues that Freud's perversion is consequently a form of structural "dis-content" that cannot be contained within the modern sciences of sex which extend from Krafft-Ebing's sexology to Foucault's history of sexuality.

KEY WORDS: Freud, Krafft-Ebing, Foucault, Lacan, perversion

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[In] a certain Chinese encyclopaedia entitled *Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge*...it is written that animals are divided into (a) those that belong to the Emperor, (b) embalmed ones, (c) those that are trained, (d) suckling pigs, (e) mermaids, (f) fabulous ones, (g) stray dogs, (h) those that are included in this classification, (i) those that tremble as if they were mad, (j) innumerable ones, (k) those drawn with a very fine camel's hair brush, (l) others, (m) those that have just broken a flower vase, (n) those that resemble flies from a distance.

-- Jorge Luis Borges, "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins" (1942) ¹

In "The Sexual Aberrations [*Die sexuellen Abirrungen*]," which is the first of his classic *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* [*Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie*] (1905), Sigmund Freud concludes his discussion of various specific perversions with an intriguing note on the possibility of what he calls "*Allgemeines über alle Perversionen*": "The Perversions in General" (Freud 2016: 21-33). To recall the historical context of this note, Freud is seeking here to re-pose the contemporary clinical question of what -- if anything -- such radically different sexual practices as homosexuality (which he names "inversion"), sadism, masochism, and so on have in common that may enable clinicians to collect them, inductively, into a general unifying class or category called "perversion." If Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Albert Moll and other celebrated nineteenth century sexologists had already given one revolutionary answer to this question -- which was that homosexuality et al were essentially nothing more than different variants of the same general psychosexual disease or pathology of the sexual instinct -- Freud's own discussion is, revealingly, rather more sceptical or agnostic about the possible existence of something called "perversion in general": the original German phrase -- "*Allgemeines über alle Perversionen*" -- could, after all, be rendered far less inductively and more neutrally than either James Strachey's original English translation or the more recent edition by Philippe van Haute and Herman Westerkamp allow, as something like "General Information about all Perversions." In this particular note, however, Freud gives a very interesting answer to the question of why we will always struggle to define perversion in general whose implications I

wish to briefly explore here: perversion -- far from being too singular or *sui generis* to be collected into a generic category at all-- is already “general.”

To speak of “perversion in general,” Freud will thus claim that we automatically risk a kind of tautology because what defines perversion in the singular, so to speak, is already a curious gesture of auto-generalization. It is not simply that all sexuality is generally and polymorphously perverse from the very beginning of our lives -- which is another way of saying that there is no such thing as an original sexual norm, instinct or “state of nature” from which the pervert has fallen (Freud 2016: 21) – because his more precise claim is that that the sexual perversions, in the apparently more restricted or symptomatic sense of the term, themselves consist of physical acts of spatial and temporal “generalization.” For Freud, as we will see, what homosexuality, sadism, masochism, fetishism, voyeurism et al have in common is that they are all precisely acts, gestures or rituals that extend, vary, interrupt, temporize, complement, substitute for -- in short generalize -- the allegedly “normal” sexual object or aim. In place of the prevailing sexological orthodoxy of “perversion in general” he inherits from his predecessors, Freud thus proposes not only a generalized but more importantly a *generalizing* theory of perversion which, as we will see, has significant implications for the new sciences of sexual generalization (sexology, psychoanalysis, structuralism, genealogy) which are beginning to emerge from the end of the nineteenth century onwards.

In this short article, I seek to offer a new reading of Freud’s note on “The Perversions in General” from the (both massively overinterpreted, not least by its author, and yet in some ways still curiously under-read) first 1905 edition of the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*.² It will be aim in what follows to position Freud’s note within the context of what for economy’s sake I want to call the emerging contemporary science of “sexual taxonomy” that sought to classify or categorize all sexual practices -- and particularly pathological practices -- into specific groups or lineages. As many scholars have recognized, Krafft-Ebing’s encyclopaedic *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) constitutes something like the beginning of this science, but sexual taxonomy has a long and complex *Rezeptionsgeschichte* which arguably extends from Freud’s psychoanalysis and even up to Foucault’s history of sexuality. To quickly introduce what will be my hypothesis in this essay, I want to contend that what Freud calls “general perversion” is not simply sexual taxonomy’s principal -- indeed arguably defining -- object but is *itself* a species of sexual taxonomy: what begins as a sexual taxonomy of perversion progressively discovers a perverse sexual taxonomy. If Krafft-Ebing’s sexology seeks to identify a species called “perversity” which can then be placed in a genus, family, order, class, phylum and kingdom according to the classic Linnean rules of taxonomy, in other words, what Freud’s note on “The Perversions in General” will reveal is that this so-called

species is already a general class or category that has been taxonomized by the pervert themselves: sexual taxonomy is, perversely, a taxonomy of a sexual taxonomy. In the exhaustive scientific effort to taxonomize the sexual perversions via the principles of nomenclature, identification, characterization, and classification, we end up confronting what we might, in a more literal Anglophone sense than Freud's own famous "*Unbehagen* [uneasiness, *malaise*]," call sexual taxonomy's "dis-content" -- a perverse Borgesian form of knowledge that is not logically contained, or containable, within the "content" of a taxonomic order. What, then, does Freud mean when he speaks of "perversion in general"?

1. Perversion in general

In the verdict of historians of sexuality from Foucault onwards, what we today call "sexual perversion" -- which is very simplistically to say a general pathological condition to be diagnosed and treated by a doctor as opposed to a specific moral or criminal transgression to be judged and punished by the church or the police -- is a relatively modern invention (Foucault 1978). To take Arnold I. Davidson's historical epistemological thesis in *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (2001), nineteenth-century psychiatry's revolutionary invention or discovery of something called the "sexual instinct [*Geschlechtstrieb*]" -- which is taken to be synonymous with a natural and universal drive towards sexual reproduction -- is the paradigm shift that makes it possible to finally posit what (hitherto singular, diverse and irreconcilable) perversities like homosexuality, sadism et al all have in common: they are all merely variations of the same disease or disorder of the functionalist sexual instinct (Davidson 2001). In Krafft-Ebing's famous or notorious *Psychopathia Sexualis*, this theory of sexual perversion as an essential deviation from a natural sexual instinct whose purpose is reproduction of the species is formulated explicitly for the first time: "every expression of [the sexual instinct -- AB]," Krafft-Ebing writes, "that does not correspond with the purpose of nature, -- i.e. propagation [*Der Fortpflanzung*], -- must be regarded as perverse" (Krafft-Ebing 1965: 52-3).

To diagnose a patient as a clinical pervert -- which is to say as a completely different case from that of an otherwise healthy individual, for example, who freely chooses to indulge in specific "perversities" (*Perversitäten*) out of moral weakness or viciousness -- Krafft-Ebing goes on to argue that we must thus first recognize them as the carrier of a general psychopathology called "perversion" that overpowers their free will and comes to infect their entire personality: "one must investigate the whole personality of the individual," he contends, "and the original motive leading to the perverse act" (Krafft-Ebing 1965: 53). If we can thus begin to speak

scientifically of a generic psychosexual personality type called the “pervert” from the late nineteenth century onwards – which is to say a human being who is subjectivated, in Foucaultian terms, as a subject *of* perversion for the first time -- then the individual perversities they perform or exhibit cease to be simply *sui generis* or contingent acts and instead become particular symptoms of this general psychopathology: the pervert is a general psychosexual personality type whose subjectivity manifests itself in specific perverse acts or behaviour. In his own sexual taxonomy, Krafft-Ebing thus proceeds to organize no fewer than 475 different case studies of individual perversions into a mere four general categories of deviance: (a) *paradoxia* (sexual desire at the wrong stage of life, such as in childhood or old age); (b) *anesthesia* (insufficient sexual desire); (c) *hyperesthesia* (excessive sexual desire) and *paraesthesia* (sexual desire for the wrong goal or object such as homosexuality, sadism, masochism, and fetishism.)

In her recent book *Our Dark Side: A History of Perversion* (2009), however, Élisabeth Roudinesco observes a strange feedback loop or recursivity at work in Krafft-Ebing’s vast catalogue of human sexuality from anthropophagy to zoophilia whose implications we will seek to unpack in what follows: the sexual perverts whom Krafft-Ebing seeks to taxonomize are, ironically, themselves sexual taxonomists. To recall her precise argument here, Roudinesco contends that Krafft-Ebing’s perverts – regardless of whether they are homosexuals, fetishists, voyeurs, sadists etc. – consistently mimitize the subject position of the sexologist himself in their assertion of an apparently “professional” expertise or authority upon sexuality that is alone capable of systematically articulating their pathology: the pervert is the one who “knows”, above all, that they are a pervert. It is “impossible not to think that the terrible admissions collected [in *Psychopathia Sexualis* – AB] are describing acts that are as perverse as the discourse that claims to be classifying them,” Roudinesco observes, because “[t]here is little difference between the various catalogues of perversions drawn up by the perverse, who are anxious to assert themselves as a community of the chosen, and the descriptive syntheses of the representatives of mental medicine” (Roudinesco 2009: 61). If Krafft-Ebing seeks to sexually taxonomize what is already a sexual taxonomy, however, then the supposed object or content of that taxonomy – “the pervert” – increasingly disappears into a nominalist regress where apparently positive species like homosexuality, fetishism and so on are revealed to be empty classes that have been generated before the taxonomist arrives on the scene. In seeking to build his sexual taxonomy of perversion, Krafft-Ebing instead discovers a perverse sexual taxonomy and so it is no surprise that, as Roudinesco goes on to argue, his *Psychopathia Sexualis* begins to exhibit a symptomatic perversity of its own: “both the actors and the voyeurs become experts representing a powerful desire to domesticate sexual madness” (Roudinesco 2009: 61).

2. Generalized perversion

In his essay “The Sexual Aberrations,” however, Freud builds a new sexual taxonomy of perversion that breaks decisively with his sexological predecessors. To recall my opening hypothesis, Freud’s essay generalizes perversion so as to cover the whole field of sexuality previously mapped by Krafft-Ebing, Moll and others, but I want to propose that he also explicitly theorizes the strange loop we have just detected in sexual taxonomy whereby perversion itself becomes a labour of generalization *avant la lettre*. If Freud’s essay appears at first blush to be another Linnean exercise in the systematic naming, identification, characterization, and classification of the varieties of human perversity – homosexuality, fetishism, sadism and so on – this new sexual taxonomy again begins to circulate discontentedly around an incomplete, recursive or even absent organizational site: what we call perversion is itself a taxonomy of perversion. In Freud’s essay, we thus proceed from a taxonomy of perversion to a properly perverse taxonomy.

To quickly recapitulate his argument in “The Sexual Aberrations,” Freud famously begins by destroying the principle upon which the prevailing nineteenth century understanding of perversion is based: what we call the sexual instinct or, to use his preferred term, the sexual drive [*Sexualtrieb*]³ has no natural object. It seems that the “genital drive is probably independent of its object,” he surmises, “and its origin is likely not owed to the object’s attractions” (Freud 2016: 11). As a corollary of his claim that the sexual drive has no natural object, Freud thus also necessarily dispenses with the old functionalist theory that this instinct possesses a natural aim or goal: a sexual drive that is not naturally directed towards the opposite sex cannot naturally seek the reproduction of the species as its purpose. If the sexual drive has no natural object or aim, it follows that there must be no normal psycho-sexual type or identity either under whose aegis that object and aim can be gathered and from which the pervert can be said to deviate. In Freud’s verdict, what we call “normal” sexual identity must instead be described as a process of normalization whereby the infant learns (or is compelled, according to later editions of the *Three Essays*, by the Oedipus complex) to repress its polymorphous perversity by localizing its pre-genital partial drives and erogenous zones (the oral, the anal, etc.) under the sovereignty of the genitals.

In the revolutionary opening wager of “The Sexual Aberrations,” Freud thus appears to conclude that there is no such thing as “perversion in general” -- which is to say no clinical category defined by a deviation from an originary sexual instinct to reproduce the species that presents itself symptomatically in a specific personality type like the fetishist, sadist or homosexual -- but rather what we might instead call a state of generalized perversion that effectively becomes synonymous with sexuality itself. “It would appear that there is no healthy

person who does not have any so-called perverse addition to the normal sexual aim,” he famously remarks, “and the universality of this finding is sufficient reason to show how inappropriate it is to use the word ‘perversion’ as a term of reproach” (Freud 2016: 21). To speak of a general theory of perversion in this sense – where it becomes impossible to distinguish the natural aim or object from the deviant, the physiological condition from the pathological symptom, the normal sexual subject or personality type from the pervert -- Freud thus apparently and famously expands what was once the subspecies of a larger libidinal class called “sexuality” to become the class itself: all sex is now perverse. However, as we will now see, Freud also articulates a more complex and concept of perversion in general which has arguably been obscured under more than a century of inevitably normalizing interpretations, not least the author’s own. If Freud’s essay begins by claiming that we cannot define something called clinical perversion because it is generalized across the entire field of sexuality, in other words, he goes on to carve out a more determined, indeed symptomatic definition of perversion within this general field. In the brief subsection of “The Sexual Aberrations” called “The Perversions in General,” Freud progresses from a general theory of perversion to a theory of perversion itself as a specific form of sexual generalization.

3. Perversion as generalization

In “The Perversions in General,” as we have already suggested, Freud goes on to define perversion as a new series of specific sexual acts, which emerge symptomatically in reaction to and against the infant’s progressive normalization of its polymorphous perversity, and which are characterized by a certain common spatio-temporal “generalization”. To recall his specific definition from earlier in the essay, Freud claims “The perversions are either (a) actions of *extending* anatomically beyond the regions of the body designed for genital union; or (b) actions of *lingering* over the intermediate relations to the sexual object normally rapidly traversed on the path toward the final sexual aim” (Freud 2016: 13). If the child’s process of sexual normalization consists in a -- forced but ultimately necessary -- “territorialization” of the free-floating partial drives under the sovereignty of the genitals, the pervert could thus be said to de-territorialize, de-synthesize and re-generalize the drives by returning them to their autotelic origins: perversion has an entirely different sexual object, indeed arguably an entirely different relation to objectivity itself, than its normalized equivalent. In this new definition of perversion as itself a form of sexual generalization, Freud includes, in the spatial category, everything from kissing to fetishism and, in the temporal category, everything from foreplay to sadism (Freud 2016: 12-21).

To define the pervert as a species of sexual generalist in this way, Freud will also begin to theorize the strange taxonomic feedback loop we earlier found inside Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*: perversion is itself a sexual taxonomy of perversion. It is possible, once again, to find this more symptomatic form of general perversity within any sexual act that derogates, even fleetingly, from the territory of strict genital copulation. As Freud himself recognizes, "Everyday experience has shown that most of these extensions," he confirms, "are constituents rarely absent from the sexual life of healthy persons" (Freud 2016: 21). If kissing, gazing and foreplay are perversions that remain on the spectrum of "normal" sexual behaviour, however, Freud goes on to identify a certain qualitative threshold beyond which the "normally" perverse becomes positively pathological. In order to qualify as a pathological symptom, "The Perversions in General" famously concludes that a perverse generalization must also assume the form of a certain spatial or temporal *fixity* that leads it to, not merely supplement, but to wholly supplant and substitute itself for, the normalized sexual activity of heterosexual intercourse:

In the majority of cases, we can discern the pathological character in perversions not in the content [*Inhalt*] of the new sexual aim, but in its relation [*Verhältnis*] to the normal. If a perversion does not appear *alongside* the normal sexual aim and object when circumstances are favorable to the perversion and unfavorable to the normal -- if instead the perversion has, to all intents and purposes, repressed and supplanted the normal -- then the exclusiveness and the fixation of perversion gives us cause to judge it as a pathological symptom (Freud 2016: 22).

In Freud's verdict, the pervert thus exhibits a pathological fixation upon some mysterious general object outside of the "normal" sexual aim or object -- but this claim inevitably begs the question of what kind of object, precisely, they fixate upon. To offer a new answer to this old question, I want to propose that Freud sees perversion as a discontented fixation, not on some specific alternative or substitute object to the "normal" one, but instead upon relationality itself: this is why the pervert is to be understood as a kind of sexual taxonomist. It is thus necessary to go beyond the classic argument that the pervert remains stuck upon some preliminary object or building block in a sexual teleology that should normatively culminate in the act of heterosexual copulation -- such as the stereotypical fetishist who obtains more sexual pleasure from his wife's high heeled shoes than from intercourse with his wife herself - - because they actually possess an entirely different relation to their object: "relation," to put it better, *is* their object. As Freud himself crucially observes here, the pathological nature of a perversion does not lie in in the "content [*Inhalt*]" of the sexual aim but in its "relation [*Verhältnis*]" to the normal -- to which we must immediately add that the so-called "normal" object to which it relates is itself, of course, nothing but a contentless relation, territorialization

or normalization of our original polymorphous perversity. If perversion has any “object” at all, Freud thus seems to suggest that it is neither an object with a positive content of its own like homosexuality, sadism or fetishism nor an object with a negative content derived from a “normal” object like heterosexual intercourse, but is rather the pure and empty possibility of relationality itself -- which is to say of the taxonomic possibility of organizing spatial or temporal relations, extensions, abstractions, classes, lines of flight and so on. In Freud’s perverse taxonomy, what we call “perversion in general” thus perhaps begins to emerge as something like the libidinal equivalent to the modern mathematical idea of the empty or null set that becomes the axiomatic precondition of all possible sets: perversity’s real sexual object is nothing but the bare matrix of possible sexual relations itself -- all the myriad combinations of drives, attachments, and objects -- that could theoretically be counted as its members.

4. Generalization as perversion?

In an early plan for his multi-volume *History of Sexuality* (1976-2018), which was sketched before his decision to abandon the focus on the nineteenth century and return to classical antiquity, Michel Foucault apparently envisaged that the fifth, and ultimately never written, volume in the series would be called *Perverts* (Davidson 2001: 56-7). To ask the Freudian question “what is general perversion?”, as this essay has briefly sought to do, I think it may also become possible to give a new and less obvious answer to the question of why perversion occupies such a defining -- if still curiously undefinable -- position within the history of sexual taxonomy from Krafft-Ebing’s sexology to Foucault’s history of sexuality. If Foucault consistently poses the classic genealogical question of the “relations between experiences (like madness, illness, transgression of laws, sexuality, self-identity), knowledge (like psychiatry, medicine, criminology, sexology, psychology), and power (such as the power which is wielded in psychiatric and penal institutions, and in all other institutions which deal with individual control” (Foucault 1981: 239) throughout his history of sexuality, I want to propose that he perhaps leaves unasked what we might call the question of that question, namely, the question of what exactly makes possible this -- apparently immediate, intuitive and unquestionable -- question of the “relatability” of sexual experience, knowledge and power to one another in the first place. In many ways, I think what Freud calls general perversion -- which if my reading is at correct is itself nothing but the science of the essential “relatability” of sexual experience, knowledge and power -- can be seen as the attempt to answer this unanswered meta-question of sexual taxonomy.

To risk a hypothesis that will obviously be neither verifiable nor falsifiable within the space of a short essay, I thus want to propose that Freud’s general perversion occupies a kind of

excluded middle between positivity and discourse – between genesis and structure or, if you like, between Krafft-Ebing and Foucault -- that simultaneously makes sexual taxonomy (im-) possible: perversion is a structural “discontent” at the heart of the modern science of sex itself. If the discipline of sexual taxonomy has historically oscillated between the poles of realism and nominalism over the last 150 years -- where perversion is taken as everything from a positive biological or libidinal thing-in-itself that absolutely precedes the sexological systems we use to name it (Krafft-Ebing) to an empty name or concept that is invented almost *ex nihilo* by the power/knowledge complex (Foucault) -- what I wish to canvass for here instead is a certain “realism” of the nominal itself. For Arnold Davidson, whose own historical epistemology of sexuality appeals to the philosopher of science Ian Hacking’s concept of dynamical nominalism or dialectical realism – which describes a historically-situated nominalism in which naming and named mutually interact and transform one another in a strange feedback loop – we simply cannot answer the question of whether sexual phenomena precede sexual knowledge systems or vice versa one way or another: really-existing perverts and the abstract science of perversion co-invent each other across history (Davidson 2001: 57). In my reading of Freud’s *Three Essays*, however, I have suggested that we may add another strange loop to this taxonomic circle because, as we have seen, generalized perversion is itself really a question of dynamic or performative *self-nominalization*: perverts are people, who, to borrow Hacking’s famous terminology, make up people called “perverts” (Hacking 1990: 69-88).

In the Introduction to his recent book *Untying Things Together: Philosophy, Literature, and a Life in Theory* (2022), Eric Santner confesses a longstanding desire to write a sequel to Freud’s *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* called *Three Essays on the Sexuality of Theory* (Santner 2022: 1). To draw this essay to a close, I want to propose that Freud’s “The Sexual Aberrations” – and more precisely “The Perversions in General” -- may likewise be called an essay on the *perversity* of theory: what he calls general perversion is not only a theory of perversion, of sexuality, but perhaps even a theory of “theory” itself. It may even – and here is the risky speculation with which I will conclude -- proleptically describe the historical passage from nature to the signifier, from sexuality to structure and, of course, from Freud to Lacan that, for better or worse, will become the future of perversion over the course of the twentieth century. After all, Jacques Lacan’s famous “return to Freud” will seek to taxonomize Freudian perversity as itself nothing more than a subset within a new general set called “structural perversion.”⁴ However, arguably, Lacanian structural perversion -- where a subject can become “perverse” without ever engaging in symptomatically perverse acts like homosexuality – is, once again, nothing but the generalization of a generalization: what Freudianism calls general perversion is the science, not of a sexual object with a positive

content, but of the empty set that precedes the count of positive sexual objects in the first place. For Lacan, whose late Seminar XXIII on the Sinthome (1975-6) briefly returns to Freud's theory of perversion in the *Three Essays* to offer a damning indictment of the "Freudian century," Freud ultimately failed in his mission to invent a new concept of sexuality but, worse still, he even failed to invent any new perversions of the "old" sexuality: "I am questioning the fruitfulness [*fécondité*] of psychoanalysis, Lacan famously claims, "You have heard me more than once saying that psychoanalysis did not even succeed in inventing a new perversion. That is sad. Because, after all, if perversion is the essence of man, what kind of unfruitfulness [*infécondité*] in this practice!" (Lacan 2005: 153, translation mine -- AB). If Lacan is technically correct here to say that Freud's own sexual taxonomy never succeeds in adding anything new to the general set of existing perversions exhaustively catalogued by nineteenth-century sexology – which is to say no new variant upon the old categories of homosexuality, fetishism, sadism et al -- it may, however, be possible to detect a strange blind spot in his lament that, in the last analysis, Freudian psychoanalysis has borne no perverse "fruit." What would a "fruitless" Freudianism be anyway -- which is to say a libidinal activity (even a sublimated one like psychoanalysis) that has no fecundity, which deviates from the normalized drive towards heterosexual copulation, and which contains no universal instinct to reproduce itself such that it may well die out -- if not a textbook case of perversion? In its very fruitlessness, Freud's theory of perversion may finally have succeeded in giving birth to a new perversion: itself.⁵

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¹ In Borges's "John Wilkins' Analytical Language," the early modern English natural philosopher's John Wilkins's dream of one common universal language turns out to be every bit as "arbitrary and conjectural" as this ancient Chinese encyclopaedia because, Borges contends, "there is no universe in the organic, unifying sense inherent in that ambitious word" (Borges 2001: 230).

² To clarify its publication history, Freud's first edition of the *Three Essays*, which appeared in 1905, differs significantly from the later revised editions that were published in 1910, 1915, 1920, and 1924. In Philippe van Haute and Herman Westerink's authoritative account of the genesis of the text, they show that the first edition contains no reference to the Oedipus complex and that the idea of a progressive psychosexual development from infancy to adulthood is also a later addition to the text. See Van Haute and Westerink (2016) for a reconstruction of the editorial history of Freud's work.

³ If James Strachey's original translation of the *Three Essays* notoriously translates both *Sexualtrieb* and *Geschlechtstrieb* as "instinct," I follow standard practice in Freud scholarship by using the word "drive" to translate the German "*Sexualtrieb*" and "instinct" for the German '*Geschlechtstrieb*.' See Kistner (2016) for an account of the translation history of Freud's text.

⁴ See Miller (1996) for a now classic account of the Lacanian theory of structural perversion. In Miller's narrative, Freud is re-imagined as a sort of psychoanalytic Rousseau, whose sexual drive exists in a "raw" libidinal state of nature, whereas Lacan begins to resemble something close to a psychoanalytic Lévi-Strauss, who will arrive on the scene to reveal that the drive is really "cooked" all the way through: "the pre-Oedipal drive is not prelinguistic or raw; the drive is a highly elaborate concept compared to "natural needs." The drive is not primitive and "pre-Oedipal drives" are not prelinguistic. What Lacan called the Other is already there in the drive. Thus the drive is cooked. Not only is it not raw, but all of Lacan's demonstrations regarding the drive show that the drive is, indeed, very sophisticated." (315).

⁵ In recent literature, Freud and Lacan scholars have proposed a certain parallel between perversion and psychoanalysis itself. See, for example, Hoens (2006), Deans (2008) and Bradley (2023).