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Temporal Layering in the Long Conceptual History of Sexual Medicine: Reading Koselleck with Foucault

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Abstract

This paper reflects on the challenges of writing long conceptual histories of sexual medicine, drawing on the approaches of Michel Foucault and of Reinhart Koselleck. Foucault's statements about nineteenth-century rupture considered alongside his later-life emphasis on long conceptual continuities implied something similar to Koselleck's own accommodation of different kinds of historical inheritances expressed as multiple 'temporal layers.' The layering model in the history of concepts may be useful for complicating the historical periodizations commonly invoked by historians of sexuality, overcoming historiographic temptations to reduce complex cultural and intellectual phenomena to a unified *Zeitgeist*. The paper also shows that a haunting reference to 'concepts' among scholars of the long history of sexual medicine indicates the emergence of a de facto methodology of conceptual history, albeit one in need of further refinement. It is proposed that reading Koselleck alongside Foucault provides a useful starting-point for precisely this kind of theoretical development.

Keywords

history of sexual medicine – periodization – Foucault – Koselleck – temporal layers – continuity and discontinuity – historiography of sexuality

This paper reflects on the challenges of writing long conceptual histories of sexual medicine, drawing on lessons from the historical approaches of Michel Foucault and of Reinhart Koselleck. While few medical or sexuality historians

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have actively championed the notion of conceptual history in any deliberate sense, there are nonetheless de facto uses of the term among certain scholars such as Arnold Davidson, Carolyn J. Dean, David Halperin, Angus McLaren, Thomas Laqueur, Peter Cryle, and others,[1] posing the question of how this looser definition of concepts permits us to accommodate historical arguments that would otherwise be difficult to reconcile within the methodologies of cultural or intellectual history defined in a narrow sense. While these casual uses of the term "conceptual history" cannot be conflated with Koselleck's more deliberate methodology, they do indeed indicate a similar urge among sexuality historians to define their objects more precisely than can be accounted for through the terms "cultural history" or "intellectual history." In this paper I consider a corpus of historical writing about sexual medicine over the longue durée where the pressure to accommodate change is most exaggerated, beginning with the work of Michel Foucault. Longue durée is defined here as work traversing the temporal divisions typically observed in modern scholarly norms which refer to ancient, medieval, early modern, late modern, or variations of such epochal definition.[2] Histories of sexual medicine have demonstrated an important model of conceptual historical methodology, either through the assimilation of Foucault's problematization of historical epistemology, or by posing similar kinds of questions about sexual-medical discourses over long time frames. But there are also several areas of scholarship in which debates have become fixated on questions of continuity versus rupture, notably in relation to Foucault's more diffused claims about the relationship between modern sexuality and the ancient Greek past. Similar objections have been made about other histories of sexual medicine entailing long historical observations. This paper proposes that Koselleck's notion of temporal layers in the history of concepts is valuable in permitting different kinds of observations about long historical inheritances in the history of sexual medicine. The first section

1 Arnold Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Carolyn J. Dean, *The Fragility of Empathy After the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); David Halperin, *How to do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Angus McLaren, *Impotence: A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Thomas Laqueur, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (New York: Zone Books, 2004).

2 There are many other important definitions of longue durée which refer to geological time, "deep time", prehistoric time, planetary change, and other such phenomena, but in the consideration of sexual medical texts these are obviously of little relevance. See Daniel Lord Smail, *On Deep History of the Brain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1949); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *The Crises of Civilization: Exploring Global and Planetary Histories* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018).

discusses the overlapping historical concerns and genealogical differences between Koselleck and Foucault. The second section considers Koselleck's understanding of temporal layers and its resemblance to Foucault's historical metaphors. The third section considers how historians of sexual medicine might benefit from a model of temporal layering in accommodating divergent claims about continuity and rupture in the history of sexuality.

Koselleck is not obviously relevant to histories of sexual medicine in the model of Foucault, though both Jason Edwards and Helge Jordheim have also found value in reconciling these two important thinkers' general accounts of historical time and the history of concepts.[3] Koselleck showed only vague scholarly interest in sexual histories as indicated by the remarks he made about a possible history of "procreative practices" as likely to be repetitious.[4] He appears to have grouped sexual relations among the constraining biological and anthropological layers inflecting the history of concepts, considering that desire and reproductive impulses acted upon the possibilities of human expression in a limiting sense, even as he acknowledged variation in how such histories played out.[5] This appears quite contrasting to Foucault's approach which was clearly more generative for the concerted study of past sexuality and which strongly emphasized the pluralistic possibilities of sexual meaning across different historical contexts.

Neither Foucault, nor any other major scholars in the later field of history of sexuality appear to have made any explicit reference to the German *Begriffsgeschichte* current in any published texts, although Foucault does appear to have hinted at his knowledge of the German trend in his recorded lectures at the Collège de France in the 1970s.[6] Their respective intellectual influences were quite different – for Foucault especially George Canguilhem, Gaston Bachelard and to some extent Louis Althusser;[7] for Koselleck especially

3 Jason Edwards, "The Ideological Interpellation of Individuals as Combatants: An Encounter Between Reinhart Koselleck and Michel Foucault," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 12 (2007), 49–66. DOI: 10.1080/13569310601095606; Helge Jordheim, "Does Conceptual History Really Need a Theory of Historical Times?" *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 6 (2011), 21–41. DOI: 10.3167/choc.2011.060202.

4 Reinhart Koselleck, "Concepts of Historical Time and Social History", trans. Adelheis Baker, in Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 115–130 [125].

5 Reinhart Koselleck, "Structures of Repetition in Language and History", trans. Sean Franzel and Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman, in *Sediments of Time: On Possible Histories*, ed. Hent de Vries (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 3195–3475. See also Sean Franzel and Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman "Introduction: Translating Koselleck", in *Sediments of Time*, 51–593 [3193].

6 Franzel and Hoffman, "Introduction", note 34.

7 Stuart Elden, *Foucault's Last Decade* (Cambridge: Polity, 2016).

Carl Schmitt,[8] Karl Löwith, to some extent Hans-Georg Gadamer,[9] and clearly Martin Heidegger.[10] Their respective historical objects were also dissimilar: For Foucault, truth, subjectivity, prisons, madness, monstrosity, crime, sexuality and subjectivity; for Koselleck, statehood, governance, law, revolutions, historical thought and time. But there are reasons to consider that the two contemporaneous thinkers may have been converging on something quite similar at the meta-methodological level, not through direct exchange or obvious shared influence, but in parallel sympathy. As the discourse-analysis scholar Niels Åkerstrøm Andersen remarks, both Foucault and Koselleck were deeply epistemological thinkers whose approaches might be considered "second-order" in their respective observations of sexual discourse, on the one hand, and of historicity on the other.[11] Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman and Sean Franzel remark, in their 2018 translation of Koselleck's work, *Sediments of Time*, that while Koselleck is most often discussed in relation to intellectual history in the Cambridge style, his greatest historical-epistemological congruences are to be found with Foucault.[12] Perhaps it is possible to see these similarities because the two great thinkers were themselves part of an emergent episteme (as Foucault would call it) in which certain kinds of historical observations about the modern conditions of truth were uniquely possible to make for a certain kind of post-war continental philosophical historian, or historical philosopher. For Foucault these observations centered on medical science and subjectivity,

8 See Niklas Olsen, *History in the Plural: An Introduction to the Work of Reinhart Koselleck* (New York: Berghahn 2012); also Timo Pankakoski, "Conflict, Context, Concreteness: Koselleck and Schmitt on Concepts", *Political Theory* 38 (2010), 749–779. DOI: 10.1177/0090591710378572.

9 Jan-Werner Müller, "On Conceptual History" in Darrin M. McMahon and Samuel Moyn (eds.), *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 74–93.

10 See John Zammito, "Koselleck's Philosophy of Historical Time(s)", *History & Theory* 43 (2004), 124–135. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2303.2004.00269.x. Foucault claimed in his final interview that Heidegger had also been a pivotal influence on his thought, though there is scant mention of him elsewhere in Foucault opus. For arguments about Foucault's Heideggerian engagements see especially Stuart Elden, *Mapping the Present: Heidegger, Foucault and project of a spatial history* (London: Continuum, 2001); also Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg (eds.), *Foucault and Heidegger: Critical Encounters* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Timothy Rayner, *Foucault's' Heidegger: Philosophy and Transformative Experience* (London: Bloomsbury. 2007); Babette E. Babich, "A Philosophical Shock: Foucault Reading Nietzsche, Reading Heidegger," in C.G. Prado (ed.), *Foucault's Legacy* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 19–41.

11 Niels Åkerstrøm Andersen, *Discursive Analytic Strategies: Understanding Foucault, Koselleck, Laclau, Luhmann* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2003), 99.

12 Franzel and Hoffman, "Introduction", 352.

for Koselleck they centered on temporality and historicity. In this paper, I show that these two supposedly different forms of observation are in fact convergent in understanding what was new about the nineteenth-century discourses of sexuality relative to the long history of medicine.

Of these two thinkers, Koselleck is the one most often taken to be programmatic for a history of concepts through his reference to *Begriffsgeschichte*. However Foucault also referred to his historical objects as "concepts", elaborating significant epistemological premises for the pursuit of historical inquiries along these lines with reference to his methodologies of both archeology and genealogy.[13] Both scholars rejected conventional forms of historical periodization while also defining specific moments of important conceptual density in European cultures from the end of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century. Foucault's clearest demonstration of the method of a history of sexual concepts – specifically in relation to question of periodization – is in the first volume of the *Histoire de la sexualité* in his description of the shift from the *ars erotica* (erotic artistry) traditions of early-modern empires to the *scientia sexualis* (sexual science) modes of description found in European medical, psychiatric and sexological texts of the long nineteenth century (late eighteenth to early twentieth centuries). Here the element of rupture was the most emphasized. But in the second volume of the series, published six years later, he demonstrated a considerable development of his historical methods with the accommodation of long historical inheritances buried beneath modern sexual concepts.[14] These observations were further nuanced in the introduction he wrote in French for the 1978 English translation of George Canguilhem's *Le Normal et la pathologique* which in turn explains Canguilhem's history of medicine methodology as a specific form of "history of concepts".[15] Here, Foucault

13 Especially in Michel Foucault, "Introduction" in Georges Canguilhem, *On the Normal and the Pathological* (Boston, D. Reidel, 1978), IX–XX. This introduction is also found in Michel Foucault, *Dits Ecrits* tome III texte n°219; and in Michel Foucault, "Was is Aufklärung?" *Dits et écrits*, vol. 4 (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1994), 448–449; See Kevin Thompson, "Historicity and Transcendentality: Foucault, Cavaillès and the Phenomenology of the Concept", *History and Theory* 47 (2008), 1–18. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2303.2008.00432.x. See also Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*, 178–191.

14 Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité 2: L'Usage des plaisirs* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1984).

15 Michel Foucault, "Introduction" in Georges Canguilhem, *On the Normal and the Pathological* (Boston, D. Reidel, 1978), IX–XX. This introduction is also found in Michel Foucault, *Dits Ecrits* tome III texte n°219. This introduction, later translated into English without acknowledgment of the translator, appears in the Zone Books edition of Canguilhem's work published in 1989: Michel Foucault, "Introduction" in Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological* (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 7–24. On the

drew attention to the concept in Canguilhem's historicization of the natural sciences as a kind of "architecture" structuring human perception of the world, but which is constantly being revised through the lived experience of interaction with the living environment in which scientists exist.[16]

Koselleck's observations about the nineteenth century that are relevant to thinking about these questions were less specific to the medical sciences but mediated in a similar way between the structuring properties of concepts and the variability or multiplicity of them. The element of discontinuity now called into question is apparent in the 1990 paper entitled 'Wie neu ist die Neuzeit?' (How new is the new time?) and others in the year 2000 Suhrkamp *Zeitschichten* collection,[17] several of which appear translated into English in the 2002 collection, *The Practice of Conceptual History* and others in the 2018 collection *Sediments of Time*, both published by Stanford University Press.[18]

Both Foucault and Koselleck oscillated in this way between views of historical concepts as subject to rupture and views of them as containing longer inheritances. Both found value early in their thinking from an emphasis on a particular variety of discontinuity present in the structure of concepts located in the human sciences. Koselleck indicated the long-nineteenth-century *Sattelzeit* to represent a unique moment of density of concepts produced by the emergence of a linear historical self-consciousness that made multiple past conceptual layers, or temporalities, present all at once. But this aspect of Koselleck's observations finds parallel too in Foucault's work, albeit not in the *History of Sexuality*, but in the 1966 work *Les Mots et les choses* (The Order of Things) where Foucault described a similar nineteenth-century historicity reshaping the European human sciences.[19] Foucault does not ever appear to have explicitly related this epistemic phenomenon to the elaboration of sexuality as a medico-psychiatric concept, in part because his later work on the

topic of Zone Books publications of French works in English without acknowledgment of the translator, see Alison Moore, "Recovering Difference in the Deleuzian Dichotomy of Masochism-without-Sadism", *Angelaki* 14 (2009), 27–43. DOI:10.1080/09697250903407500.

16 Foucault, "Introduction", IX–XX.

17 Reinhart Koselleck, *Zeitschichten: Studien sur Historik*, mit einem Beitrag von Hans-Georg Gadamer (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2000).

18 Reinhard Koselleck, "Wie neu ist die Neuzeit?" *Zeitschichten*, 225–239; Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing history, spacing concepts*, trans. Todd Presner and others (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002); Reinhard Koselleck, *Sediments of Time*.

19 Michel Foucault, *Les Mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1966). See also Laura Stark, "Out of Their Depths: 'Moral Kinds' and the Interpretation of Evidence in Foucault's Modern Episteme," *History & Theory* 54 (2016), 131–147. DOI: 10.1111/hith.10833.

nineteenth-century in Volume One of the *History of Sexuality* focused on discursive biopower in the genealogical approach compared to his archaeological focus on the conditions of discursive possibilities of truth in *Les Mots et les choses*. However, the nineteenth-century concept of sexuality was indeed a child of the very episteme that Foucault traced in *Les Mots et les choses*, and was enunciated with reference to a pronounced historicity.[20] Considering the manner in which medical and psychiatric ideas about sexuality congealed in nineteenth-century thought, reading Koselleck brings an important nuance to Foucault's observations about the *scientia sexualis* and to theoretical considerations of continuity and discontinuity in writing history of nineteenth-century sexual medicine. The *Sattelzeit* refers not only to a moment of rupture, but to a new concept of time produced through situating oneself in relation to the past and future as part of a linear teleology.

1 Temporal Layers and Longues Durées

In his development of a theory of temporal layers (*Zeitschichten*), Koselleck found the ground for nuancing the *Sattelzeit* observations to accommodate longer historical inheritances. In his first enunciation of the *Sattelzeit* thesis, Koselleck merely hinted at possible *Schichten* that might be identified, though in his later work there was a greater attempt to reconcile the notion of rupture contained in the *Sattelzeit* thesis with the continuity implied in the notion of temporal layers. As Niklas Olsen notes, Koselleck's articulation of *Zeitschriften* emerged in his attempts, from the late 1970s onwards, to reconcile singular events with recurring patterns in history, crystallizing in his 1989 article, "Wie neu is die Neuzeit?" and the essays collected in the 2000 volume *Zeitschichten*.[21] In the 1989 article he used the notion of *Zeitschichten* to emphasize the different speeds of change, the acceleration of newer conceptual layers relative to the older ones. This model allowed Koselleck to continue describing *Neuzeit* moments of rupture or epochal change that featured heavily in his earlier scholarship, with his new articulation of the idea that past concepts

20 See Kate Fisher and Rebecca Langlands (eds.), *Sex, Knowledge and Receptions of the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), and Alison M. Downham Moore, "The Historicity of Sexuality: Knowledge of the Past in the Emergence of Modern Sexual Science", *Modern Intellectual History* 16 (2019). In press.

21 Reinhart Koselleck, "'Neuzeit': Zur Semantik moderner Bewegunsbegriffe", *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main, 1979), 260–277. "Wie neu is die Neuzeit?" *Historische Zeitschrift* 251 (1990), 539–554; Koselleck, *Zeitschichten.* Olsen, *History in the Plural*, 228–229.

continued to exert an influence on the shape of later conceptual formations. In the *Zeitschichten* papers he emphasized these differing layers further, referencing Ferdinand Braudel's view of long historical currents derived from the prehistoric natural world as much as from the recent historical past.[22] Olsen notes that Kosellek and Braudel met during the latter's visit to Heidelberg in the 1960s, and that the French historian was well known to German historians at this time.[23] Braudel's work was, of course, well known also to Foucault who approved of his unconventional borrowings from other disciplines, just as Braudel commended Foucault's abridged *Folie et Déraison* of 1964, though the two scholars do not appear to have recognized any particular overlap or congruence between their respective historical methods.[24] As Edward Craig notes, Foucault's approach did not borrow from Braudel's geological temporality, so much as it worked in a parallel fashion, decentering the human subject of history in favor of longer impersonal influences at the level of knowledge structures.[25] All three historians, Koselleck, Foucault and Braudel were interested in the older temporalities that continued to influence later developments, though in each case, different remnants were emphasized, and different metaphors used for describing the multiple temporalities to which they referred.

Koselleck's temporal layers (*Zeitschichten*) were clearly inspired by a geological metaphor referring to the sedimentary accumulation of soil and rock that allows geologists to reconstruct the planetary past. But the German word is hardly a technical term, nor specific to geology, and is also found in sociological descriptions of population strata. Koselleck most probably had only a cursory understanding of geology, and his use of this metaphor reflected no particular engagement with that scientific discipline. How else might he have been exposed to such an idea? Several German art historians of the 1920s developed methods that similarly sought to accommodate historical inheritances in the layering of time within works of art and architecture. The German nationalist art historian Wilhelm Pinder developed a methodology of what he called cultural multiple "generations" which could be present together in architectural

22 Koselleck, *Zeitschichten*, 214.

23 Olsen, *History in the Plural*, 144.

24 James D. Marshall, *Michel Foucault: Personal Autonomy and Education* (Dortrecht: Springer, 1996); Fernand Braudel, "Trois clefs pour comprendre la folie à l'époque classique [Michel Foucault, *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, Collection 'Civilisations d'hier et d'aujourd'hui']", *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 17 (1962), 761–772. DOI: 10.3406/ahess.1962.420879.

25 Edward Craig, "Foucault, Michel (1926–84)" in *The Shorter Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 282.

structures.[26] The notion of "temporal layers" was evoked too by the German Jewish art historian Erwin Panofsky, who from the 1920s until the 1960s wrote about medieval art, in particular the tableaus of Albrecht Dürer, describing his methodology as a type of *Begriffsgeschichte*.[27] These scholars do not appear to have been part of Koselleck's broad intellectual circle of friends and acquaintances but as Reinhard Laube has shown, Koselleck found much inspiration in Panofsky's methods of reading artworks.[28] Pinder became antisemitic in the 1930s and was co-opted into the National Socialist propaganda machine, representing German nationalist art history abroad throughout the Nazi period.[29] Panofsky had migrated to the US in the 1930s and worked for much of his remaining career at Princeton University. In his subsequent English-language scholarship the word *Begriffsgeschichte* appears subsumed under the new disciplinary title of "iconology". But perhaps these scholars' description of different temporalities observable in art and architectural works served for Koselleck, and for us, as a very helpful metaphor? Artists and architects create with an awareness of existing conventions, transmitting elements of past approaches, revising others, referencing specific known historical works, and creating tableaus and structures that fuse several different temporalities, or conceptual layers. Concepts likewise become layered by virtue of the historical consciousness of those who elaborate them, via their referencing of specific historic examples, or even via their unconscious referencing of themes that have been transmitted through intellectual or discursive inheritances unbeknownst to them.

Koselleck discussed in several essays the notion that historical concepts could be understood in terms of layers of meaning derived from the knowledge of past events. For instance, in discussing French pre-revolutionary predictions about the fate of any likely revolution against the Bourbon monarchy of the late eighteenth century, he noted that thinkers such as Denis Diderot relied on one or another historical layer (*Schicht*) in prognosticating about the

26 Wilhelm Pinder, *Das Problem der Generationen in der Kunstgeschichte Europas* (München: Frankfurter Verlags-Anstalt, 1926).

27 Erwin Panofsky, *Ein Beitrag zur Begriffsgeschichte der älteren Kunstheorie* [1924] (Berlin: Spiess, 1982).

28 Reinhard Laube, "'Perspektivität': Ein wissenschaftssoziologisches Problem zwischen kulturbedingter Entproblematisierung und kulturwissenschaftlicher Reproblematisierung" in Otto Gerhard Oexle (Hrsg.), *Das Problem der Problemgeschichte 1880–1932* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2001), 129–179. See also Carsten Dutt und Reinhard Laube (Hrsg.), *Zwischen Sprache und Geschichte: Zum Werk Reinhart Kosellecks* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2013).

29 Eernst Klee, *Das Kulturlexikon zum Dritten Reich. Wer was war vor und nach 1945* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2007), 544. Helge Jordheim, *Der Staatsroman im Werk Wilands und Jean Pauls* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2007), 360.

likelihood of revolutionary success – on the one hand Diderot was conscious of the contemporaneous Swedish context of Gustav III, but he also had in mind the past context of the Roman civil wars, and drew from Roman sophist historiographic traditions that viewed the return of monarchy as the unavoidable fate of all forms of popular unrest.[30] Koselleck himself alternated between arguments about distinct periods of rupture, and arguments about historical continuity expressed through conceptual layering.[31] Foucault certainly made strong claims to historical rupture too in several of his works focused on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, though the longue durée historical ambitions to which he extended in the second and third volumes of the *History of Sexuality* went far beyond that tendency.

Foucault clearly had very different reasons for considering the questions of past conceptual inheritances in modern ideas, but the methodological results worked in a similar way. As Peter Cryle notes, Foucault too used an archaeological metaphor for his intellectual endeavors, implying that his task was one of digging, to find the buried layers of the past over which our current concepts are built.[32] Digging through the layers of soil, as an archaeologist does, might seem quite compatible with Koselleck's view of temporal layers as analogous to geological strata. There are two different disciplines referenced here, for Foucault archeology, for Koselleck geology, but in both cases, there is a reference to the past as something once buried, hidden but present, embedded in consciousness.

Foucault's multi-volume *History of Sexuality* admitted a greater sense of historical continuity than in any of his other historical projects – The histories of madness and of crime and punishment entailed much shorter time-spans (only 1–200 years, rather than 2000), and like the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, focused largely on medical and juridical domains of power from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. Why did the history of sexuality demand a bigger question about subjectivity that could only be answered through a very long history that encompassed also theological and philosophical concepts? Perhaps this oeuvre admitted a greater sense of historical continuity compared to Foucault's other works because, as Ian Hacking has suggested, "moral codes change very slowly".[33] A Nikolas Rose notes, Foucault developed a unique lan-

30 Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 138–139.

31 See Helge Jordheim, "Against Periodization: Koselleck's Theory of Multiple Temporalities", *History & Theory* 51 (2012), 151–171. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2303.2012.00619.x.

32 Peter Cryle, "Words and Things: The Uncertain Place of Philology in Intellectual History", *Journal of Languages, Literatures and Culture* 65 (2018), 65–80 [71]. DOI: 10.1080/20512856.2018.1499329.

33 Ian Hacking, *Historical Ontology* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 116.

guage differentiating his approach from that of conventional historians, and proposed instead that his methods were a kind of "archaeology of knowledge".[34] Foucault spoke of 'archaeology' in different ways in each of his works but most commonly used it to refer to the space of discourse and the conditions of truth that governed it, while the term "genealogy" referred to relations of power and the norms that applied to them. Stuart Elden notes that the tendency in anglophone studies of Foucault has been to see these terms as representing a distinct periodization in Foucault's intellectual biography, reflecting his youthful structuralism developing into a mature post-structuralism, but in fact he himself insisted that genealogy was not intended as a replacement methodology for archeology, but as an addition to it.[35] In the second volume of the *History of Sexuality*, he referred to his larger project of historical "analysis of desiring Man" as located "at the apex of an archeology of problematization and a genealogy of practices of the self".[36]

Nonetheless, the language Foucault used to describe these different aspects encourages us to see something as more at stake than a mere shift in focus, since archeology appears mechanistic in its reference to buried artefacts, while genealogy appears vitalist in its reference to genetic inheritance. In the introduction to the second volume of the *Histoire de la sexualité: L'Usage des plaisirs*, Foucault clearly elaborated 3 distinct "axes" in which sexuality has been constituted historically: as "a game of truth" (archeology), as "relations of power" (genealogy) and as "forms of relation to oneself and others" (subjectivity).[37] Thomas Flynn notes that these terms were not mere metaphors, but specific "spacial techniques" demanding an axial reading of Foucault's opus according to the domains he emphasized in each of his works.[38] Indeed Foucault referred to these axes as distinct "*domaines de savoir, types de normativité, et formes de subjectivité*" (domains of knowledge, types of normativity and forms of subjectivity), corresponding to the three completed volumes of the *Histoire de le sexualité*.[39] As Maren (Martin) Kusch notes, it is the later genealogical works in Foucault's opus that in fact also provide his clearest elaborations of the

34 Nikolas Rose, "Medicine, History and the Present" in Colin Jones and Roy Porter (eds.), *Reassessing Foucault: Power, Medicine and the Body* (London: Routledge, 1994), 48. Michel Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969).

35 Elden, *Foucault's Last Decade*, 4–6.

36 Foucault, *L'Usage des plaisirs*, 19. All English quotations from Foucault are my own translation from the French original.

37 Foucault, *L'Usage des plaisirs*, 10.

38 Thomas R. Flynn, "Foucault On Experiences and the Historical A Priori: With Husserl in the Rear-View Mirror", *Continental Philosophy Review* 49 (2016), 55–65 [59]. DOI: 10.1007/s11007-015-9357-x.

39 Foucault, *L'Usage des plaisirs*, 10.

philosophical tenets of his archaeological inquiries.[40] Koselleck too considered that various temporalities exist in culture all at once in any given moment, but moving at different velocities, referring to the uneven extent to which certain concepts change.[41] Clearly in the history of medical ideas about sex, there have been some very slow rates of change in certain domains, such as in the persistence of Galenic and Hippocratic views of women's genitals;[42] while at other moments, striking velocities of change have thrown up relatively novel concepts, such as in the proliferation of neologisms to describe sexualities in the late nineteenth century.[43] Surely then it must be possible to admit both kinds of historical observation?

Many of the debates about Foucault's work among historians of sexuality have labored over this territory, contesting Foucault's claims about discontinuity, or criticizing his characterizations of historical contexts of which he was no expert. But as the introduction by Colin Jones and Roy Porter noted in their edited volume *Reassessing Foucault* in relation to the history of medicine, "Foucault highlighted radical discontinuities and sudden ruptures; but he was also fascinated with the existence and preconditions of the long-enduring historical forms".[44] Jones and Porter point to the similarities between Foucault, Braudel and March Bloch in relating early-modern figures of monstrosity to modern medical categories of person. All three historians shared a similar disdain for conventional approaches to temporality in favor of various *longue-durée* views.[45] In Foucault's first volume there is a nominalist insistence, emphasized by Mary Tjiatias and Jean-Pierre Delaporte, and best represented in the statement that we cannot speak of a transhistorical 'pervert' since this term only applied as a description of a type of person since the nineteenth century.[46] But taking all four volumes together, there is clearly also a distinctly

40 Maren Kusch, *Foucault's Strata and Fields: An Investigation Into Archaeological and Genealogical Science Studies*, Synthese Library Studies in Epistemology, Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science 218 (New York: Springer, 1991), xiv.

41 Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 135.

42 Alison M. Moore, "Victorian Medicine Was Not Responsible for Repressing the Clitoris: Rethinking Homology in the Long History of Women's Genital Anatomy", *Signs: The Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 44 (2018), 53–81. DOI: 10.1086/698277.

43 Alison M. Moore, "*L'Amour morbide*: How a Transient Mental Illness Became Defunct", *Intellectual History Review* 29 (2019), 291–312. DOI: 10.1080/17496977.2017.1374078.

44 Colin Jones and Roy Porter, "Introduction" in *Reassessing Foucault: Power, medicine and the body* (London: Routledge, 1994), 7.

45 Jones and Porter, "Introduction", 8.

46 Mary Tjiatias and Jean-Pierre Delaporte, "Foucault's Nominalism of the Sexual", *Philosophy Today* 88 (1988), 118–126. DOI: 10.5840/philtoday198832218; See also Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*, 22.

transcendental dimension that sits in tension with this nominalism: The word 'sexuality' only entered usage in European languages in the nineteenth-century, and yet is the object of Foucault's retrieval of Ancient Greek practices of the self and of medieval Christian confession. In the opening pages of the second volume of the *History of Sexuality* he made clear this tension in referring to the nineteenth-century novelty of sexuality as "a fact that must be neither underestimated nor over-interpreted. It signaled more than a mere rearrangement of vocabulary, but it obviously did not mark the sudden invention of that to which it refers."[47]

2 Historians of Medico-Sexual Concepts

Various historians of sexuality, psychiatry and medicine, particularly those engaged in longue durée projects, have referred to their objects as "concepts" or their methodologies as forms of "conceptual history," sometimes with reference to Foucault, but often without reference to either Foucault or Koselleck. A 2011 review of works by Foucault, Arnold Davidson, David Halperin and Richard Sha written by Kevin Lamb and Patrick Singy is a case in point here, referring to the approach of all these scholars writing about the history of sexual perversions as variously successful or unsuccessful forms of the "history of a concept".[48] Current conceptual historians of sexuality, like Foucault, are often difficult to place within conventional descriptions of historiographic method, and may well object to being lumped into the category of conceptual history also. I ask their forgiveness in advance if assimilating them so here implies any reduction of their complexity (to which I can only gesture in passing). I risk their displeasure because it seems clear that, like the use of the terms 'conceptual' and 'conception' by the intellectual historian David Armitage (whom I discuss later), the de facto invocation of concepts among historians of sexuality indicates an important space that has opened in historiographic methods and which is insufficiently theorized and acknowledged.

Arnold Davidson is most surely the first such historian who must be considered among the conceptual historians of sexual medicine, since his landmark 2001 collection of lectures referred in its title to *The Emergence of Sexuality* as a "formation of concepts".[49] For Davidson, it is apparent that referring to

47 Foucault, *L'Usage des plaisirs*, 10.

48 Kevin Lamb and Patrick Singy, "Perverse Perversions: How to do the History of a Concept", *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 17 (2011), 405–422. DOI:10.1215/10642684-1163490.

49 Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*.

perversion as a "sexual concept" is the most appropriate term for his historical object in the sense that it was produced in the particular context of the emergence of nineteenth-century European psychiatry and relied upon a new "(functional) understanding of disease, a conceptual shift, a shift in reasoning, that made it possible to interpret various types of activity in medico-psychiatric terms."[50] Referring to concepts permits him to locate important historical change at the level of the intellectual expressions of doctors and psychiatrists – in this respect his work looks very much like a form of intellectual history – but his emphasis on "styles of reasoning" indicates that concepts are not simply things that past humans discussed, but refer to the very manner way in which those things are thought about. This is an approach found also in the work of Iain Hacking, who referred to scientific concepts as reflecting certain "styles of reasoning", similarly emphasizing the capacity of such 'styles' to introduce entirely new objects and new criteria for truth claims.[51] For Davidson, the inspiration to consider past concepts in this way no doubt derived, as for Hacking, from the discussion of such themes in the history and philosophy of science, but it also clearly derived from an engagement with the work of Foucault, whom Davidson discusses repeatedly throughout these lectures. The Foucault most amenable to this approach is clearly the author of Volume One of the *History of Sexuality*, which focused on the conditions of possibility for a certain modern way of thinking in nineteenth-century psychiatry, but the focus was present also in *Les Mots et les choses* which similarly traced the emergence of modern scientific forms of claims to truth. But what about the Foucault of volumes 2–4 of the *History of Sexuality* with is far longer-range observations about sexual subjectivity?

Numerous scholars have objected to Foucault's insistence that the modern homosexual is a nineteenth-century construct by pointing to same-sex relations in long historical contexts. Some of these critiques appear almost willfully to miss the point entirely of Foucault's statements about the conceptual novelty of nineteenth-century medico-psychiatric pathologies of instinct; but most cases have simply expressed dissatisfaction with Foucault's cursory dismissal of earlier same-sex communities and practices.[52] David Halperin's work has sought to reconcile these positions, noting that Ancient Greek same-sex practices and early-modern urban communities cannot be considered

50 Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*, 24.

51 Iain Hacking, "'Style' for Historians and Philosophers," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 23 (1992), 1–20. DOI: 10.1016/0039-3681(92)90024-Z.

52 Halperin, *How to do the History of Homosexuality*, 12–18. See Lamb and Singy, "Perverse Perversions," 413.

irrelevant to the later formation of homosexual identity, but nor can they assimilated to the medico-psychiatric descriptions of the nineteenth century. Halperin's position implied that past traces of the meaning of male same-sex relations in societies of the ancient, medieval and early-modern past persisted well beyond the period of their genesis, helping to produce the diversity of ways we can currently think of homosexuality as variously referring to acts, types of individuals, subjects of human rights, varieties of sin, pathologies or self-identities.[53] Something similar had been suggested by Eve Kosowsky-Sedgewick in the 1994 work *Epistemology of the Closet*, which argued against a view of changing sexual periodization in which each discourse is thought to replace the previous one in serial formation. Instead, Kosowsky-Sedgewick suggested, past forms linger into later times and coexist alongside new discursive formations.[54] Halperin grappled with some difficulty in naming his historical objects once he admitted various pre-homosexual precursors, adding "I am not really sure what to call them," offering variously "discourses, practices, categories, patterns, models …".[55] Elsewhere in the book, however, when Halperin was not deliberately trying to think of what to call his objects, he referred to them simply as "concepts".[56]

The Cambridge psychiatry scholar and historian German Berrios similarly referred to his own work historicizing such topics as erotomania, epilepsy, delusions and stupor as a respective examples of "conceptual history", citing not Koselleck, but indeed Foucault in explaining his historiographic approach.[57] Elsewhere he referred to his history of psychopathology in the Foucauldian language of "epistemes", while also complaining about the impact of the "Foucaultian creed" in turning scholars off the study of psychiatric history, clearly associating Foucault with the anti-psychiatry movement.[58] The concept for Berrios appears to refer to a method for historicizing diseases nominally different and antecedent to the modern constructs but which bear a relationship to the later definitions. Berrios' definition of concepts then, differentiates the history of neologisms (which he calls semantic), from the history of behaviors which he takes to precede them, producing what he himself

53 Halperin, *How to do the History of Homosexuality*, 104–137.

54 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994), 85.

55 Halperin, *How to the History of Homosexuality*, 108.

56 Halperin, *How to the History of Homosexuality*, 48, 58, 61,63, 132, 203.

57 G. E. Berrios and N. Kennedy, "Erotomania: A conceptual history," *History of Psychiatry* 13 (2002), 381–400 [382]. DOI: 10.1177/0957154X0201305202; German Berrios, *The History of Mental Symptoms: Descriptive Psychopathology Since the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

58 Berrios, *The History of Mental Symptoms*, 2–7.

describes as "a mild form of social constructionism".[59] Berrios' mediation of constructionism with precursors ends up looking quite similar to the methodological accommodations of Halperin in his absorption of the criticisms of Foucault's nominalism. But both are unsatisfactory in the sense of explaining what relationship such precursors have to the later conceptual formations. Were the medical writers inventing neologistic terms for the newly defined pathologies informed by these past conceptual forms? Or are we simply assuming a biological touchstone that is transhistorical and invariant, lying in wait for modern medicine to discover them? Clearly this would be incompatible with Halperin's approach, though likely acceptable for Berios.

As both Halperin and Sedgewick implied, Foucault's controversial claims to rupture are resolvable with reference to something like a concept of temporal layers. The *scientia sexualis* form of discourse is clearly evident in sexological sources of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which relied upon a new set of conditions of possibility in the development of the medical style of reasoning about sexual instincts (described both by Foucault and by Arnold Davidson). Using this form of conceptual analysis then, it is valid for historians such as Foucault, Davidson, Kevin Lamb and Patrick Singy and others to insist on the nineteenth-century rupture with past expressions of sexual pleasure, crime, magic or sin, resisting their assimilation to later concepts that would flatten-out the nuances of important conceptual change.[60] But this is also only one part of the story. Writers such as Rictor Norton and Julie Peakman, have argued that pre-nineteenth-century erotic depictions of perverse pleasures challenge the Foucaldian claim to modern medico-scientific rupture, while early-modern scholars of sodomy and Molly-houses have claimed that premodern sexual practices confirm the universality of same-sex desire which they take to contradict Foucault's argument by misconstruing it as a form of "social constructionism".[61] Foucault never described his own position in these terms, nor pretended that same-sex relations were what was new in the nineteenth century. What he saw as new was the medico-psychiatric conception associated with the neologism 'homosexual'. Is our only possible response to dismiss these anti-Foucaldian challenges as errors of conflation and reductionism? Davidson's defense of Foucault's claim about the historical novelty of the

59 Berrios, *The History of Mental Symptoms*, 158–9.

60 Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*, 1–29; Lamb and Singy, "Perverse Perversions", 405–422; Peter Cryle and Alison Moore, *Frigidity, An Intellectual History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011).

61 Julie Peakman, *The Pleasure's All Mine: A History of Perverse Sex* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013). Rictor Norton, *The Myth of the Modern Homosexual: Queer History and the Search for Cultural Unity* (London: Cassell, 1997).

nineteenth century homosexual was roughly in these terms without naming any specific targets:

> One will not be able to understand the importance of these new diseases of sexuality if one conflates contrary sexual instinct with sodomy. Sodomy was a legal category, defined in terms of certain specifiable behavior; the sodomite was a judicial subject of the law. Homosexuality was a psychic disease of the instinct, of one's sensibility, not to be reduced to merely behavioral terms.[62]

But again, by considering how past temporal layers may linger, may inform, even contradict later conceptual developments even as they exist alongside each other in specific contexts, it is possible both to admit the significance of erotic, literary and religious expressions relative to modern medical concepts, while also not assimilating these together and ignoring the monumental conceptual shift that ascribed such individuals to a distinct psychiatric type of person only after the 1870s. Such indeed was the elegantly indeterminate approach of the German literary scholar Niklaus Largier to the long history of flagellation in his 2001 monograph *Lob der Peitsche: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Erregung*, appearing in English translation in 2007 as *In Praise of the Whip: A Cultural History of Arousal*.[63] The older temporal layers referring to sexual matters as a kind of erotic art did not disappear at the moment the medico-psychiatric style of reasoning emerged – on the contrary, works of the *ars erotica* type continued to be sold to growing middle-class consumer markets throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[64] In other sources also, the older temporal layer of *ars erotica* merged with modern medical ideas in the works of vulgarized popular description, such as those of the French writer Jean Fauconney and other authors of salacious books about perversions, masturbation, frigidity and virginity produced in the last decades of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth century.[65] Here erotica and sexual science

62 Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*, 22.

63 Niklaus Largier, *Lob der Peitsche: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Erregung* (Munich: Beck, 2001); Niklaus Largier, *In Praise of the Whip: A Cultural History of Arousal*, trans. Graham Harman (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

64 Peter Cryle, "Building a Sexological Concept Through Fictional Narrative: The Case of 'Frigidity' in Late-Nineteenth-Century France", *French Cultural Studies* 19 (2008), 115–140. DOI: 10.1177/0957155808089661; Jamie Stoops, "Class and Gender Dynamics of the Pornography Trade in Late-Nineteenth-Century Britain", *The Historical Journal* 58 (2015), 137–156. DOI: 10.1017/S0018246X14000090.

65 Sylvie Chaperon, *Les Origines de le sexologie* (Paris: Audibert, 2007); Cryle and Moore, *Frigidity, an Intellectual History*, 100–132.

appear fused into an intermediate form. When we ignore these barely respectable generic interstices, it is much easier to pretend that a tidy periodization separated the early modern forms of erotic artistry from the modern concepts of sexual science.

Temporal layering permits a similar accommodation of divergent claims in scholarly debates around the work of the Berkeley historian of medicine Thomas Laqueur, one of the most pivotal figures in the development of late twentieth-century history of sexuality, and an aficionado of longue durée methods. The notion of temporal layers provides a resolution to the disparity found by many early and late-modern historians in relation to Laqueur's thesis of rupture between the one and two-sex models of sexed difference. In his 1990 book *Making Sex from the Greeks to Freud*, Laqueur proposed that from Galen of Pergamon in the second century CE until sometime in the nineteenth century, European anatomists viewed men and women as having homologous genital structures, the "one-sex" model, whereas with the advent of modern scientific biology, Western cultures shifted toward the notion that male and female physiology were incommensurable – the "two-sex" model.[66] There have been a number of valuable historiographic objections to Laqueur's one-sex/two-sex rupture claim from scholars of ancient, medieval, early modern European and Islamicate sexuality history, who have noticed a much greater fluidity between the sexes historically, partly evident in the observation of hermaphrodites and of individuals of ambiguous gender evoked in many texts that Laqueur overlooked. An important counter claim has emerged then that there never was a time when only one sex was imagined, and that the origins of the modern two-sex model lie in a much older historical development of ideas.[67] There were two divergent strands of medical thought about genitalia in the long history of European and Arabic medicine – one, which indeed followed the lines of the Galenic concept so well described by Laqueur, in which only the vagina was recognized as the genital structure of importance in women.[68] But

66 Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Sex from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

67 Helen King, *Hippocrates Woman; Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1998); Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Elizabeth D. Harvey, *Ventriloquized Voices: Feminist Theory and Renaissance Texts*, (London: Routledge, 1992); Fay Bound Alberti, *This Mortal Coil: The Human Body in History and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Ahmed Ragab, "One, Two, or Many Sexes: Sex Differentiation in Medieval Islamicate Medical Thought", *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 24 (2015), 428–54. DOI: 10.7560/JHS24304; Moore, "Victorian Medicine Was Not Responsible", 53–81.

68 Laqueur, *Making Sex*, 25–26; Moore, "Victorian Medicine Was Not Responsible".

another strand of medical thought, repeatedly reiterated an alternative view of women's genitalia that emphasized the importance of the clitoris. These two differing accounts of women's genitalia both appeared in the ancient Hippocratic and Galenic texts and were replicated in the early modern anatomical debates.[69] They can be found again in nineteenth-century differences of opinion among French and British doctors of sexuality. This resulted, at the turn of the twentieth century, both in medical procedures of clitoral excision as a treatment for nymphomania (particularly in Britain and the US), and in the production of works of sexology that insisted on the importance of clitoral pleasure for marital relations.[70] Temporal layering then provides an alternative view of the long history of genitalia and sexed difference, which is not a denial of Laqueur's valuable observations, but a recontextualization of them as constituting one part of a multi-layered history of concepts, in which each layer may appear in clear focus at different moments and in particular texts, while at other times it may recede from the historian's view.

The presence of historical layers which was explicit in Koselleck's ideas and implicit in Foucault's provides and important accommodation of these different kinds of historical inheritances. The model of 'temporal layers' proposed by Koselleck may be useful for complicating the historical periodizations commonly invoked by historians of sexuality, overcoming historiographic temptations to reduce complex cultural and intellectual phenomena to a unified *Zeitgeist*. Proposing periodization in a blockish fashion ignores important divergences that often exists in the formulation of concepts over long time frames. Different sexual concepts do not appear and then disappear completely, nor arise and then become replaced wholesale by subsequent concepts. In the temporal layer model, historical reengagement with concepts can result in their transmission far beyond their original time, contributing to a distinct layer of meaning that can remain embedded in subsequent formulations of that concept, or of others related to it.

69 Sylvie Chaperon, "'Le trône des plaisirs et des voluptés': Anatomie politique du clitoris, de l'antiquité à la fin du XIX^{ième} siècle", *Cahiers d'histoire* 118 (2012), 41–60. HAL ID: halshs-00968033.

70 Sarah Rodriguez, *Female Circumcision and Clitoridectomy in the United States* (Rochester NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2007); Rachel P. Maines, *The Technology of Orgasm: "Hysteria," the Vibrator and Women's Sexual Satisfaction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

3 Concluding Thoughts

Conceptual history is the approach, par excellence, that can elucidate the challenges of writing long histories of sexual medicine on account of the unique formulations of historical time, periodization, rupture and continuity elaborated both by Foucault (implicitly) and by Koselleck (explicitly). Certainly, some forms of intellectual history have also dealt in long historical processes by treating discreet intellectual contexts in serial form with consideration of the mechanisms of transmission connecting them over time.[71] It is noteworthy though that in David Armitage's 2012 article formulating how intellectual history deals with longue durée problems, in spite of explicitly dismissing *Begriffsgeschichte* or conceptual history as too "Heideggerian" (whatever that means), opting instead for the awkward term 'history in ideas', he nonetheless uses the terms 'conceptual', conceptions' and 'concept' to describe his own historical objects no less than twenty times in the same article and the word 'idea' only in the title – which he nonetheless associates with vulgarity – or with rejected forms of method.[72] Here both the de facto abandonment of the 'idea' as the object of intellectual historians' inquiries, and the collapse of any meaningful practical distinction between intellectual and conceptual history, is apparent.

However, few scholars working on the history of sexual medicine over the past thirty years have pursued an evident intellectual history-approach either.[73] This is perhaps surprising given that one of the very first peer-reviewed journal articles published in the genre of history of sexuality was in the form of an intellectual history – Keith Thomas' 1959 article in the *Journal of the History of Ideas* entitled "The Double Standard", which examined the English history of the idea that women's chastity was more morally significant than men's.[74] One reason for the rare engagement of sexuality historians with intellectual history methods may be the kind of historical object that sexual concepts are deemed

71 David Armitage, "What's the Big Idea? Intellectual History and the Longue Durée", *History of European Ideas* 38 (2012), 493–507. DOI: 10.1080/01916599.2012.714635.

72 Armitage, "What's the Big Idea?", 496–497.

73 Notable exceptions are Paul Robinson, *The Modernization of Sex* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976); Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamicate World, 1500–1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Tracie Matysik, *Reforming the Moral Subject: Ethics and Sexuality in Central Europe, 1890–1930* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2008); Cryle and Moore, *Frigidity, and Intellectual History*; and Alison M. Moore, *Sexual Myths of Modernity: Sadism, Masochism and Historical Teleology* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015).

74 Keith Thomas, "The Double Standard", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20 (1959), 195–216. DOI: 10.2307/2707819.

to constitute. Intellectual historians today generally eschew a reified view of ideas as discreet units of timeless relevance such as is associated with the work of Arthur Lovejoy and others in mid-twentieth-century history of ideas;[75] nonetheless, the objects of intellectual history tend also to be concepts that to our current minds appear to have a certain dignity.[76] It is perfectly possible to write an intellectual history of something located in the field of sexuality, as this author can attest, and indeed as Keith Thomas showed in 1959. But there are also valid reasons to consider sexual themes according to a wider array of historical approaches. Ideas about sexual pathology and aberration rarely remain within discreet intellectual contexts, having as one of their properties, a high capacity for cultural contagion. Throughout history they have been expressed in forms of contradictory logic and poorly-evidenced claims tinged with fantasmagoric evocation. Sexual concepts generally have appeared as central themes in genres of representation as varied as theological, philosophical and legal thought, medical, hygienist, criminological and psychiatric texts, political iconography and propaganda, psychoanalysis and sexology, pornography, literature, feminist thought and the texts of sexual subcultures. Sexual concepts may be anything but dignified; they are nonetheless worth historicizing because if we only study those past thoughts that remain respectable and coherent to us now, there is both a great deal about the minds of past people, and about the origins of our own assumptions, that we would fail to appreciate.

Conceptual history generally shares much with intellectual history in that it tends to entail some degree of close reading of texts and tracing of specific textual traditions in which important conceptual sorting often takes place. Consequently, Richard Whatmore's 2016 book *What Is Intellectual History*

75 See Anthony Grafton, "The History of Ideas: Precept and Practice, 1950–2000 and Beyond", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 76 (2006), 1–32. DOI: 10.1353/jhi.2006.0006; also Thomas Bender, "Introduction. Forum: The Present and Future of American Intellectual History", *Modern Intellectual History* 9 (2012), 149–156. DOI: 10.1017/S1479244311000527.

76 To cite just a few recent examples: Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, *The Ideas That Made America: A Brief History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019); Lilian Calles Barger, *The World Come of Age: An Intellectual History of Liberation Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Jonathan P. Eburne, *Outsider Theory: Intellectual Histories of Unorthodox Ideas* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018); Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2017); Gerald Izenberg, *Identity: The necessity of a modern idea* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Jonathan Israel, *An Intellectual History of the French Revolution From the Rights of Man to Robespierre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); James H. Sweet, *Domingos Álvares, African Healing and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

devotes a small section to discussion of the *Begriffsgeschichte* model, as well as a shorter section to the work of Michel Foucault.[77] But Whatmore clearly did not consider sexuality to be one of the likely targets of intellectual historians any more than other works of historiographic survey or historical theory about the practice of intellectual history.[78] Conceptual history might also be taken to have its greatest congruences with cultural history in its capacity to periodize long historical processes traversing different textural genres and different cultural contexts.[79] No doubt many sexual concepts of the past would fit within the description of cultural history that Arnold Davidson cited from one of his colleagues as "the history of bad ideas."[80] But nor can cultural history encompass the history of concepts fully given the importance for conceptual historians of intellectual inheritances. Cultural histories that pay limited attention to textual traditions cannot explain how the work of conceptual sorting takes place within such defined intellectual genealogies, nor what role past concepts have in later formations. The category of 'culture' per se lacks sufficient contour for the elaboration of how sexuality is constituted in specific disciplinary and institutional contexts and lacks grounds for distinguishing the relative salience of particular individuals or the magnitude of local sexual representations viewed over time. In practice though, some works calling themselves 'cultural histories' actually do engage in precisely this kind of conceptual historicization.[81] The point here is not to insist on the delineation of cultural or intellectual from conceptual history, but to identify the conceptual sensibility that has manifested in a variety of stated approaches to sexuality.

The need to locate more precise methodological premises for the history of sexual medicine appears apparent on several fronts: The state of debates about the long history of sexual medicine indicates that many scholars struggle to appreciate how claims to rupture can be accommodated along with an appreciation of older inheritances, awhile Foucault's attempt to do just this has been neglected by most as a methodological model for conceptual history.

77 Richard Whatmore, *What Is Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2016), 30–33 and 34–35.

78 E.g. Pernau and Sachsenmaier (eds.), *Global Conceptual History*. However, another recent collection does contain the excellent sexuality chapter by Tracie Matysik, "Decentering Sex: Reflections on Freud, Foucault and subjectivity in intellectual history" in Darrin M. McMahon and Samuel Moy (eds.), *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 173–192.

79 For a rich elaboration of the importance of Koselleck's work in the German social and cultural sciences, see Ernst Müller und Falko Schmieder, *Begriffsgeschichte und historische Semantik – Ein kritisches Kompendium* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2016).

80 Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*, 30.

81 McLaren, *Impotence*; Laqueur, *Solitary Sex*; Largier, *In Praise of the Whip*.

At the same time, Koselleck's consideration of temporal layers provides both traction in reopening such questions and the potential for a more congenial perspective on divergent scholarly trends. Greater formulation of the character of concepts in the model of Koselleck may then help to define the field of the history of sexual medicine more precisely. Without this form of articulation, we risk being lumped into the amorphous category of 'culture' even if our endeavors are more particular than this. Especially when our projects entail long timeframes traversing vastly different temporal and geographic contexts, we need a language to accommodate the past inheritances that linger in later formations, while also specifying what is unique and unassimilable to each context. While Foucault may not have needed Koselleck to think through such a reconciliation of historical continuity and discontinuity, clearly other longue durée historians of sexual medicine can benefit from reading him.

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