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Suspended Munition: Mereology, Morphology, and the Mammary Biopolitics of Transmission in Simone Leigh's *Trophallaxis*

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Simone Leigh's stated interest in "black women as a kind of material culture" has generated a career-spanning and award-winning meditation on black women as containers of trauma and knowledge.¹ This essay will offer some brief comments on Simone Leigh's *Trophallaxis*. The sculpture recalls not only racializing and imperialist histories of the breast, but also social insects as figured in political philosophy and scientific discourse. It evokes these associations by performing and inciting an investigation of a long-standing practice: the making of societal/organismic analogies, in particular the comparison of human societies to those of social insects such as ants and bees. Feeding behavior has played a key role in this tradition, which relates wholes and parts of various species in nature, generally within a political idiom.² While entomologists' precise interpretations of trophallaxis vary, what they share is the idea that soma is none other than trophic exchange. If the understanding of trophallaxis is the giving of soma to an Other, I ask: what does the history of the breast, with its attendant racializing cleavages of being, do to traditions of comparison? Thinking across the scale of the cell, the breast, and embattled human sociality, this essay shifts black feminist critical attention from the posterior to the breast and suggests that thinking sociogenically troubles utopic interpretations of trophallaxis in the biological sciences and beyond.

While an axiom of contemporary social theory readily acknowledges that our received categories of race are relational and grounded in histories of slavery and empire, it is worth considering how the distribution of soma itself, across demarcations of race, is the outcome of racial reasoning's circuit of comparison and hierarchical division of flesh and mammary labor. I suggest that Leigh's *Trophallaxis* is fruitful for thinking about how black female flesh un/gendered gives flesh both to bodies and to our prevailing categories of species and sex/gender and their systems of notation. Ultimately, *Trophallaxis* suggests the productive and explosively generative potential of intertwining histories of social insects and the mammary politics of transmission for Western origin stories of society and ontologies of the human.

A fusion of fecundity and cataclysm, Leigh's *Trophallaxis* recalls melons, bombs, and an insect egg sac. The sculptural work is at once a singular and collective breast. Composed of black porcelain and terracotta, the individuated breasts have gold and platinum nipples. The placement of antennae on mammary forms suggests conductivity or alternately exploding shrapnel. Hung from the ceiling in a chandelier-

like formation, *Trophallaxis* hangs low enough to reveal a lattice of skin cells as well as tears in the skin, boot marks, and other signs of brutalization and distress. Taken as a whole, its pendulous shape is one fraught with racializing history.

As Jennifer Morgan has shown in “‘Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder’: Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500–1770,” the imagined proof of the African’s incivility and degraded humanity was frequently located in the perceived shape of the breast.³ The key to African females’ purported childbearing and child-rearing practices was thought to be emblemized by the breast. In this context, the breast took on mythic proportions: “European writers turned to black women as evidence of a cultural inferiority that ultimately became encoded as racial difference. Monstrous bodies became enmeshed with savage behavior as the icon of women’s breasts became evidence of tangible barbarism.”⁴ African females’ breasts were depicted as exaggeratingly pendulous, even as bestial additional limbs. The European imaginary equated African females’ purported fecundity and propensity for easy birth and breastfeeding with their projected astonishing capacity for manual labor. Painless, meaningless, and mechanical childbirth, in their estimation, was the measure of the black female sex and of blackness, more generally.⁵

Londa Schiebinger, writing about the starting point of modern zoological nomenclature, reminds us that Linnaeus, the so-called “father of modern taxonomy,” coined the term *Mammalia* in 1758, meaning “of the breast,” a term capacious enough to embrace humans alongside a wide-ranging class of vertebrates.⁶ In the same volume, Linnaeus also introduced the term *Homo sapiens*, “man of wisdom,” to distinguish humans from other primates. For Linnaeus, female mammae become the icon of *Homo sapiens* for reasons, Schiebinger argues, “that have less to do with the uniqueness and universality of the female breast than with eighteenth-century politics of wet-nursing and maternal breastfeeding, population growth, and the contested role of women in both science and society” in an era defined by debates concerning “universality” and “equality.”⁷ As to the matter of adjudication, it was held that if evidence could demonstrate that social hierarchies issued from natural hierarchies, this assumption of “fact” could stem the leveling tide of democracy and abolitionism without moral opprobrium. As Schiebinger notes, it is strikingly odd that Linnaeus would base the name of a class on mammae, considering that they are only typically active in half the group and only for short periods

of time (during lactation) or not at all. Linnaeus not only could have chosen a more sex- and gender-neutral trait (*Aurecaviga*, “the hollow-eared ones,” or even *Lactentia*, “the sucking ones,” for example), he could have also have chosen a term based on the conservative conventions of the day: scientific nomenclature usually conserved suitable terms, and new terms were derived from modifying traditional ones, commonly Aristotelian. *Mammalia* observed neither convention.⁸

This idiosyncrasy can perhaps be explained by the fact that Linnaeus was involved with the struggle against wet-nursing. He joined a vocal group of politicians and physicians who argued that elite European women should end their dependence on peasants and, in overseas colonies, native and Negro women.⁹ The latter emblemized the historic bestial connotations of female nature. Wet-nursing, during the mid and late eighteenth century, became associated with infant mortality and depopulation, and even national depravity and ignoble character were thought to transfer from diseased, unclean, and morally corrupt wet nurses drawn either from lower racial classes or impoverished European economic classes.¹⁰ What is more plausible, Schiebinger notes, is that economic considerations may have pushed some wet nurses to take on more babies than they could adequately nurse. The abolishment of wet-nursing was also instrumental to gynecology’s and obstetricians’ displacement of midwifery. Medicine established its authority over pregnancy and birth, in part, through anti-wet-nursing campaigns.¹¹

Linnaeus’s term *Mammalia*, according to Schiebinger, helped to legitimize the restructuring of European society by emphasizing that nature itself dictated that elite European females suckle and rear their own children. Rather than rendering nature universally comprehensible, Linnaeus’s systematics projected exclusively upper- and middle-class European notions of gender, such as gender-role complementarity, onto nature.¹² As Schiebinger suggests, one could argue that in coining the term *Mammalia*, Linnaeus broke with longstanding traditions that saw the male as the measure of all things. In the Aristotelian tradition, the female was considered an error of nature or a monster. In Linnaeus’s system mammae became the sign and symbol of the “highest class” of animals.¹³ However, I would counter this by saying that assigning a new value to “the female” and elevating women’s reproduction (understood as European and elite) was purchased at the price of transferring and deepening teratological associations of “the female” with the “African female,” which

ultimately racially calcified into the singularity I term *blackfemale*.¹⁴

Both Morgan and Schiebinger have shown that the comparative anatomization of the breast played a crucial role in determining and differentiating both the matter of species and the matter of sex – “hemispherical” and firm breasts were thought to be racial characteristics of European and Asian women.¹⁵ The idealization of the “hemispherical” breast is effectively a version of mapping that implied that the earth and its inhabitants could be divided into two halves and that an essential hierarchical racial division could conveniently be read in the perception and comparison of breast shape. The African female’s purported characteristic pendulous breasts provided evidence that the indeterminate and contested (yet inferior) ontology of the blackfemale with respect to the discourses of species and sex/gender issued from nature itself. In both discourses, the blackfemale, and often the “Hottentot” female specifically, was the incarnation of the matrix for systems of classification.



Leading up to the eighteenth century, within the logics of comparative anatomy, racialized and racializing comparisons of the female sexes were sought to answer the question of the boundary of the species and the means of species reproduction. Additionally, because females were burdened with the idea that they directly shape racial traits and characteristics, such as those compared by phrenologists, this made the blackfemale responsible for black inferiority in general. However, it is important to note that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, scientists and physicians did compare males, almost exclusively, in fields like craniometry and phrenology, which attempted to gauge intelligence and rationality – in short, fitness for civic life and the affairs of politics.¹⁶ This exclusivity stemmed from the view that reason is what qualifies humanity and from the contention that females of all races were irrational and unfit for politics and science. Thus,

while comparisons between males determined rank within the species of humanity, the “African female” was defined as the boundary of the species and thought to shape the inferior characteristics of African-derived people as a class, precisely because of her ontologized positionality as blackfemale.

The discourses of sex/gender and race worked in conjunction, or to put it more precisely, the discourse of sex/gender operating as racial (which is to say as species) discourse depicted blackness and black femaleness, in particular, as limit cases because African females were not so much deemed masculine, as is often claimed, but rather because African females failed to differentiate at the registers of sex and gender according to the emergent modern terms of these discourses, for which they were the foils; they were thought to develop neither feminine temperaments, such as delicacy, purity, chastity, passionlessness, and moral and spiritual virtue, nor feminine sex characteristics, including so-called racial characteristics such as redness of lips, length and style of hair, skin color, and shape of nose and skull – features placed alongside breast shape and assessments of the posterior, pelvis, and pudendum.¹⁷ In sum, ascriptions of racially black femaleness administered and disciplined categories of species, sex, and gender. Mechanistic childbirth and feeding were thought to provide evidence of the underdevelopment of the African female’s gender and sex. The antinomy of the idealized “angel in the household,” “the African female” as a discursive formation materialized in the context of Europe’s need for productivity; in response to this need, mechanistic childbirth and utilitarian breastfeeding would ultimately become forcefully located in the globalizing economies of slavery.

The title of Leigh’s sculpture, *Trophallaxis*, refers to transferring of liquid food between adult social insects or between them and their larvae. The shared contents is sometimes called “crop milk.”¹⁸ In 1918, William Morton Wheeler coined the term “trophallaxis.” Not simply a nutritional fluid exchange, trophallaxis can involve the transfer of pheromones, organisms such as gut endosymbionts, and information to serve as a form of signaling.¹⁹ In a choreography that synchronizes eusociality and the division of labor, trophallaxis enables some ants to stay and look after the nest whilst others forage for food. The sharing behavior is a means of resource distribution, dispersal of chemical messages around the nest, and the creation of a unified colony odor.

Early twentieth century entomologists, imagining humans as social insects, linked trophallaxis to the origin of human society. As

historian of science Charlotte Sleight has shown, feeding behavior in particular, including trophallaxis, was seen as the key to the riddle of the origin of sociality. Though generated to explain a specifically myrmecological phenomenon, trophallaxis from the outset was understood to cover general features of society. Wheeler suggested that mutual feeding relations were the true, necessary cause of social forms of life.²⁰ More precisely, as historian of myrmecology Abigail Lustig asserts, for Wheeler, “the center of the vortex, always remained the relationship between mother and offspring; all the other possible permutations of relationships were somehow extensions or subversions of this primal instinct.”²¹ Trophallaxis did not even have to entail an immediate reciprocation; the important thing was that the exchange had the ultimate function of maintaining society in equilibrium.²² Wheeler posited that the only difference between the two species was that humans, an evolutionary novelty compared to ants, had not had time to incorporate their functional division of labor into their “heritable morphology.”²³

However, per my discussion of Jennifer Morgan’s and Schiebinger’s work, precisely what antiblack discourse suggested was that race divides the female sex into separate black and white female sexes, such that black breasts were divergent at the register of morphological sex and that they were peculiarly suited for slavery and mechanical reproduction. Moreover, the question of heritability was forcefully resolved by the seventeenth-century Virginia slave code known as *partus ventrem sequitur* – “that which is brought forth follows the womb” – effectively catalyzing an emergent discourse of race that would equate morphology with social ontological status.²⁴ Indeed, given its definitional context is parental care, mammalian nursing is sometimes considered trophallaxis.²⁵

Auguste Forel, pioneering entomologist and eugenicist, in his *The Social World of the Ants Compared with that of Man*, has a romantic and utopic reading of trophallaxis. Forel saw its human significance as confirming his optimistic faith in socialism.²⁶ His concept of the “communal stomach” observes that in some ant species individual colony members store food in their crops, or second social stomach, and transfer it to larvae and other community members. In the process of doing so, pheromones travel alongside food, thus demarcating the perimeter of community. Wheeler’s conception of the trophallactic circuit recalls the regulatory function of a membrane dividing and mediating inner and outer worlds.²⁷

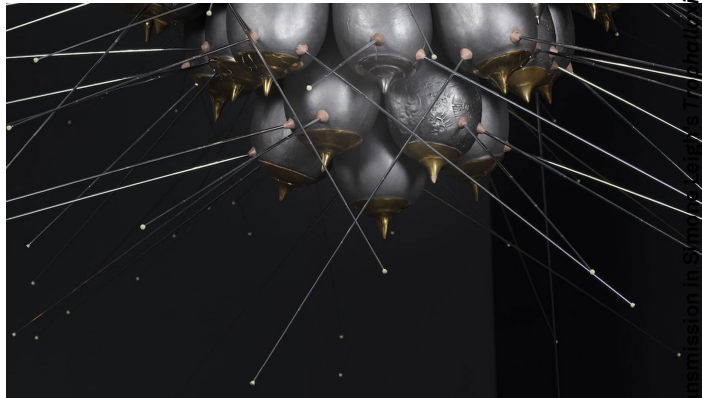
In *Interstices*, Hortense Spillers draws our attention to a singularity legally established

under slavery by telling us that black femaleness in flesh and symbol primarily acts as a regulating function rather than a self-willed agent: She is “the principal point of passage between the human and the non-human world. Her issue became the focus of cunning difference – visually, psychologically, ontologically – as the route by which the dominant modes decided the distinction between humanity and ‘other.’”²⁸ In *Monstrous Intimacies*, Christina Sharpe emphasizes a crucial distinction between the mother’s breast and the wet nurse’s breast under slavery, whereby for the wet nurse “neither blood nor milk ensured familiarity,” nor the rights of maternity nor privileges of womanhood.²⁹ Thinking with Sharpe, I argue that this division of labor does not simply assure the denial of rights of motherhood for the enslaved; it also reinforces racially ontologizing cleavages in the semiotics of sex and gender in the felt and lived experiences of the flesh that passes on sociogenically as mother’s milk.³⁰

According to Forel, trophallaxis sustains the nest as a social entity. However, if we consider the mereological communal violence of the breast on command under slavery, then it troubles Forel’s eutopic conception of trophallaxis and the notion of community that underwrites it. Partial objects are prior to the coalescence of identity, or the sense of a bodily ego one acquires upon entering into the symbolic order (iconography of civilization, history, culture); slavery attempts to effect the privation of a “body” and lock one in a state that is prior to the felt sense of bodily integrity. “Before the ‘body’ there is the ‘flesh,’” Spillers writes.³¹ Here, the *before* has spatial as well as temporal significance, as *before* recalls that the master class gains a sense of proprietary embodiment and sovereign “I” retroactively. Thus, the ekphrastic scenes of enfleshment Spillers describes act as a mirror stage such that the other is spatially before the lash, and her ensuing fragmentation hypostatizes – by that I mean converges literal and figurative meaning – in the abstractions made of flesh. The gold and platinum nipples of Leigh’s sculpture mark the conversion of the nipple and its labor into somatic currency.

At/as the meeting point of *morphe* and *logos*, blackfemale flesh un/gendered functions as the constitutive outside of normative femininity and gendered humanity, more generally, in its normativized genre. From the perspective of dominance, normative – i.e., white bourgeois – femininity is arguably the only womanhood there is. However, in order to protect and uphold this exclusivity, it is necessary to repress the material and symbolic supplementarity of *black female flesh*. For it is a

supplementarity produced along very different gendered and material lines: terms and conditions of enslavement *and scientific discourse* that subtend and rupture corporeal integration, ontological integrity, binarisms of sex and gender, and logics of gender-role complementarity. At the same time, a breast on command or the flesh as a repository of transgressive pleasure rather than bodily integrity differentiate gender and/or recourse to chastity and virtue. Thus, the blackfemale de-essentializes gender and shows the arbitrary relation between flesh and symbol.



In Toni Morrison's 1988 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Beloved*, Schoolteacher "arrived to put things in order."³² A man who "always wore a collar, even in the fields," Schoolteacher was an emblem of both the epistemic powers and abuses of scientific and biblical authority under slavery.³³ In the world-making Schoolteacher produced by letter and lash, it is Sethe who makes the ink. The ink was made of "cherry gum and oak bark," recalling the chokecherry tree on her back.³⁴ She is a figure constitutive to Schoolteacher's transubstanting pedagogy. The ink and the notebook *need* Sethe and her avatars for its alchemy of being and world. The scent of the ink haunts Sethe's memory, recalling the atmosphere of slavery.³⁵ When Sethe overhears her name in one of Schoolteacher's many lectures, he instructs his nephew, who was writing in one of his books, to "put her human characteristics on the left; her animal ones on the right. And don't forget to line them up."³⁶ In doing so, Schoolteacher establishes the measure and metrics of being and world, indeed of being-in-the-world. Sethe's mammary rape soon follows. This is an allegory of world history.

No, this is not a figure to confuse with any commonsensical conception of a queen bee.³⁷ Logician and grammarian Charles Butler, sometimes called the "Father of English Beekeeping," in *The Feminine Monarchie, Or the History of Bees*, saw in bee sociality a

matriarchal thesis synonymous with the moniker: queen bee displacing Aristotle's king bee thesis.³⁸ But as Spillers shows, such monikers, when applied to black women, have historically functioned with pernicious irony: "the black woman" is a term of "overdetermined nominative properties."³⁹ The nominative is a grammatical case of a noun that generally marks the subject of a verb or predicate, as opposed to its object. But "the black woman" is an ironic nominative in that the modifier "black" actually functions to objectify and aims to foreclose the actional agency of the nominative such that the case and its normative deployment would seem to suggest that the putative referent is the causal agent of her objectification, or at the very least introduces confusion into the terms of agency itself. The qualifier "black" not only functions to objectify and confuse the causal relations of agency, but also to un/gender.

Under slavery black female flesh un/gendered is produced by the order as an actant: actants have affect and modify actors, but without the pretense of liberal humanist notions of will or self-directed agency – however attenuated, relative, and relational. Spillers argues that those ascribed as black females are a fleshly metaphor whereby "the human body as a metonymic figure" and "resource for metaphor" is essential for "an entire repertoire of human and social arrangements."⁴⁰ In short, the foreclosure and/or abjection of this figure make possible the transmission of the social as a hierarchy. And as it turns out, the name "queen bee" is a misnomer. Contrary to what the name implies, a queen bee does not reign over or directly control the hive. While she is primary to the reproduction of the community, everything else that is claimed to be known about her is a matter of perception and myth.

In Nancy Leys Stepan's well-known essay "Race and Gender: The Role of Analogy in Science" (1986), she argues that scientific analogies construct the very similarities and difference supposedly "discovered" by scientific methods.⁴¹ So if analogies in science, historically, have functioned due to the imperceptibility of their arbitrariness and through a metaphorical system that structures the experience and understanding of difference such that the entities compared acquire new meanings in their analogical meeting, then we have to ask what are the social conditions of science that naturalize "nature" and generate the reality effects of arbitrary comparisons.⁴²

The analogies that project abject somatic difference onto the blackfemale figure, in the making of this figure, have enabled the metaphor linking white womanhood to blackness even in her seeming absence. Without this chain of

05/08

e-flux journal #105 — december 2019 Zakiyyah Iman Jackson
Suspended Munition: Mereology, Morphology, and the Mammary Biopolitics of Transmission in *Beloved*

metaphors, much of the data on “women’s” bodies

(length of limbs, width of pelvis, shape of skull, weight or structure of brain) would have lost their significance as signs of inferiority and would not have been gathered, recorded, and interpreted in the way they were. In fact, without the analogies concerning the “differences” and similarities among human groups, much of the vast enterprise of anthropology, criminology, and gender science would not have existed. The analogy guided research, generated new hypotheses, and helped disseminate new, usually technical vocabularies.⁴³

While new analogies produce new research questions and scientific “facts” by directing the course of empirical research, they do so in the context of histories that generate change as well as continuity and often assume the literalness of metaphor due to science’s perceived objectivity and veridicality. As discussed here, the consequences of science’s metaphoricity are not simply intellectual but also political and moral. The imbuing of insect/societal analogies with moral weight, Lorraine Datson explains, “were attempts to turn dross into gold, to create value out of the least promising materials,” namely insects – and, I would add, per the gilded nipples of Leigh’s sculpture, African females, differentially and relationally.⁴⁴

During the late seventeenth and eighteenth century, ridicule was heaped on naturalists who devoted time, resources, and passion to what were considered unworthy objects. It was held that such misguided attention would spoil one for polite society and the serious duties of family, church, and state.⁴⁵ In turn, naturalists countered that the intensity and direction of their attention was warranted because what observation revealed was the inner workings of divine handiwork.⁴⁶ Mastery of the disciplines of attentive observation and the texture of description, or what we typically understand as empiricism, increasingly defined who was a naturalist worthy of the name.⁴⁷

Accused of idolatry, naturalists, particularly entomologists, justified their rapt attention in terms of creaturely love, claiming that “divine providence could be discerned in the design of a fly’s wing or the industry of the beehive – in part to defend themselves against the charges of triviality, but also in part to redeem even the most lowly objects as repositories of divine artistry and benevolence.”⁴⁸ What ultimately elevated ants and bees in the scales of value, however, was the perceived (hierarchical)

complexity of their societies: recall “the feminine monarchie.”⁴⁹

In the case of *the* African female, denuded of a civilizational claim and genitrix of the primal horde, moral weight was attached to her, to her nakedness, as an object of study without the ennoblement and sympathy entomology typically extended to ants and bees. When insects are referred to as “queens” in this tradition, it is typically without the mocking irony that the moniker holds in the history of ascriptions of the blackfemale. In other words, unlike ants and bees, the blackfemale’s status as specimen neither led to an elevation of axiological status nor produced subjects of sympathetic identification.

The blackfemale figure has historically been perceived as either exaggeratingly large, or synecdochically. As Susan Stewart notes, enlargement is often deployed as a stratagem to imply menace, and representations of the gigantic often end up synecdochic.⁵⁰ The synecdochic fissuring of the blackfemale may indeed gesture toward the sublime function of this figure: uses too numerous and too vast and too overwhelming to depict in a representationalist image. Mythologized as mammy, the blackfemale figure, with or without the bulk, with or without the headscarf, with or without her apron, domestic busyness, and simple moral correctives but stuffed with this peculiar *mater*(nal) function to the point of fissuring, embodies the threat of rupture. She, Sharpe instructs,

becomes large, superabundant, splits into more of herself. Impossible to contain her in one body, impossible not to see her, she circulates widely but remains invisible nonetheless ... Having no place in the memory of her creators as a creation she becomes a realized figment of collective imagination, an avatar of the collective unconscious. A phantasmatic figure, she is everywhere, in every place.⁵¹

The evocative power of Leigh’s *Trophallaxis* would suggest that abstract artwork is an appropriate vehicle for that which exceeds the representationalist frame and cannot be captured by the mind’s eye. The sculpture’s antennae evoke the reception and transmission of energy. If sexuating antiblackness is imagined as an electromagnetic wave, then it theoretically, potentially amplifies into infinity. However, the munitions suggest this process of absorption and emission could redirect antiblack sexuating energy in such a way that it splits, and its trace and successive fissures might act as a bomb rupturing sex, gender, species, and *the* world.⁵²

06/08

e-flux journal #105 — december 2019 Zakiyyah Iman Jackson
Suspended Munition: Mereology, Morphology, and the Mammary Biopolitics of Transmission in Simone Leigh’s *Trophallaxis*

Viewed from one perspective, this is a baleful unspeakable cataclysm; but from another perspective, such an event provides the leveling conditions that make (possible) a different future.

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All images: Details of Simone Leigh, *trophallaxis*, 2008-2017. Terracotta, porcelain, epoxy, graphite, gold and platinum glazes, and antennas. Dimensions variable. Copyright: Simone Leigh; Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York.

07/08

e-flux journal #105 — december 2019 Zakiyyah Iman Jackson
Suspended Munition: Mereology, Morphology, and the Mammary Biopolitics of Transmission in Simone Leigh's *Trophallaxis*

- 1
Simone Leigh, "Knowledge as Collective Experience," Creative Time Summit 2015 https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=70&v=q31nf3_f3is.
- 2
See Charlotte Sleight, "Brave New Worlds: Trophallaxis and the Origin of Society in the Early Twentieth Century," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 38, no. 2 (2002): 133–56. Entomologists such as Auguste Forel, Adele Fiedle, and William Morton Wheeler alternately drew principles of "social hygiene," slavery, primitivity, blackmail, bribery, internationalism, and pacifism from the life of ants. My observations, in this essay, are perhaps especially true for early entomologists in search of the origin of sociality.
- 3
Jennifer L. Morgan "'Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder': Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500–1770," *William and Mary Quarterly*, no. 54 (1997): 167–92.
- 4
Morgan, "'Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder,'" 191.
- 5
Morgan, "'Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder,'" 186.
- 6
Londa L. Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (Rutgers University Press, 2004), 53. See chapters 2 and 3, in particular, on the comparative anatomization of the breast.
- 7
Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, 4–5.
- 8
Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, 41–42.
- 9
Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, 63.
- 10
Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, 67–68.
- 11
Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, 68–69.
- 12
Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, 74.
- 13
Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, 53.
- 14
Here, in using the conjoint "blackfemale," I am thinking with a previous model, namely Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (i.e., "whitefolks"). In reaching for language we find that the conjoin(ing) noun underscores the specificity of social positioning.
- 15
Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, 64.
- 16
Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, 148.
- 17
Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, 156, 158–59. We can see this kind of thinking even in the work of Darwin. See Darwin's comments on the role of racial characteristics in sex selection in *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871).
- 18
In birds, feeding via regurgitation is sometimes called "crop milk." See the following for an early, if not the earliest, use of the term: Oscar Riddle, Robert W. Bates, and Simon W. Dykshorn, "A New Hormone of the Anterior Pituitary," *Proceedings of the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine* 29, no. 9 (1932): 1211–12.
- 19
Mark E. Suárez and Barbara L. Thorne, "Rate, Amount, and Distribution Pattern of Alimentary Fluid Transfer via Trophallaxis in Three Species of Termites (Isoptera: Rhinotermitidae, Termopsidae)," *Annals of the Entomological Society of America* 93, no. 1 (January 2000): 145–55.
- 20
Sleight, "Brave New Worlds," 133.
- 21
Abigail J. Lustig, "Ants and the Nature of Nature in Auguste Forel, Erich Wasmann, and William Morton Wheeler," in *The Moral Authority of Nature*, eds. Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal (University of Chicago Press, 2003), 302.
- 22
Sleight, "Brave New Worlds," 150.
- 23
William Morton Wheeler, "The Social Insects: Their Origin and Evolution," *Nature*, no. 122 (1928); and Sleight, "Brave New Worlds," 146, 150.
- 24
Indeterminacy and flexibility has been emphasized in scholarship on the question of race in early colonial slavery, but Morgan demonstrates that the process of imagining black women as vectors of racial inheritance and, thus, slave status began several decades before this code was enacted into law. As Morgan argues, it is through the bodies of black women that assumptions about race and status were conferred, formalized, and navigated. The Virginia legislative pronouncement, she argues, only belatedly codified hereditary racial slavery into English colonial law. See Jennifer L. Morgan, "*Partus sequitur ventrem*: Law, Race, and Reproduction in Colonial Slavery," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 22, no. 1 (2018): 1–17.

