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# Individuality and the Division of Labor in the Nineteenth Century

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## Abstract

Session: Individuality and the Division of Labor (Rebolleda-Gomez, Nyhart, Caniglia) In 1826, the French zoologist Henri Milne-Edwards famously mooted a "physiological division of labor" within the individual organism. Over the next sixty years or so, the division of labor concept became deeply entrenched in European biological discourse. Most historians' treatments have focused on the use the division of labor for understanding the hierarchy of complexity in the organic world (as a way of marking out "progress"), or the transformation that Milne-Edwards' idea underwent in Darwin's hands. By contrast, in this paper I stress how the concept was entangled with ideas about the nature of individuality itself, as it played out in discussions of polymorphism, the meaning of sex, the alternation of generations, and yes-evolution, as the context for these discussions changed before and after the publication of *Origin of Species*.

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