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Why Sex Mattered: Science and Visions of Transformation in Modern China

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WHY SEX MATTERED:

SCIENCE AND VISIONS OF TRANSFORMATION IN MODERN CHINA

Howard Hsueh-Hao Chiang

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ABSTRACT

Amidst the disintegration of the Qing Empire (1644-1911), men and women in China began to understand their differences in terms of modern scientific knowledge. *Why Sex Mattered* provides an explanation for the relatively recent emergence of a psycho-biological notion of sex in Chinese culture, focusing in particular on the ways in which the introduction of the Western biomedical sciences had transformed the normative meanings of gender, sexuality, and the body in the twentieth century. This dissertation revises the conventional view that China has "opened up" to the global circulation of sexual ideas and practices only after the economic reforms of the late 1970s. Drawing on scientific publications, medical journals, newspaper clippings, popular magazines, scholarly textbooks, fictional and periodical literatures, oral histories, and other primary sources, this study highlights the 1920s as an earlier, more pivotal turning point in the modern definitions of Chinese sexual identity and desire. The evolving discourse of same-sex desire and the biologization of gender norms constituted two epistemological ruptures that complicated the shifting correlations of sex, gender, and sexuality in the Republican period (1911-1949). The extensive media coverage of sex change in postwar Taiwan epitomized the geocultural legacy of these earlier developments.

Weaving together intellectual developments with social, cultural, and political history, this dissertation aims to accomplish three goals: it argues for the centrality of sexual scientific knowledge in modern China's cultural formation; it highlights the role of the body as a catalyst in the mutual transformations of Chinese national modernity and the social significance of sex; and, grounded in the historical-epistemological analysis of the vocabulary and visual knowledge of sexual science, it establishes a *genealogical* relationship between the demise of eunuchism and the emergence of transsexuality in China. This genealogy, above

all, maps the underexplored history of China's modern "geobody" onto the more focused history of the biomedicalized human body. The isochronal evolution of "China" and sex, two constructs that seemed the most immutable of all, evinced the gradual decentering of the familiar frame of colonial modernity with Sinophone articulations in the course of the twentieth century.

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INTRODUCTION

FROM EUNUCHS TO TRANSSEXUALS

Before the twentieth century, men and women in China rarely considered their social division to spring from immutable natural causation. Although they certainly differed in social standing, common attitudes never located the seat of that difference in human biology.[1] Physicians, who were arguably the most reliable experts on matters pertaining to life, often articulated the relationship between corporeal experience and its (gendered) social implications with indirect—and sometimes confusing—elaborations.[2] In Europe, doctors and philosophers shifted their views of men and women from two versions of a single-sexed body to incommensurable opposites only by the time of the Enlightenment.[3] Western

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[1] My usage of the word "biology" in this dissertation conforms to the definition offered by Michel Foucault, who has referred to the year 1800 more than once to mark the emergence of biology as a formalized scientific discipline and its radical break from natural history in Europe. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973). This convention is slightly different from the one adopted by other Sinologists who tend to apply selective definitional underpinnings of modern biology to a much earlier period in Chinese history. For an example of this somewhat anachronistic approach, see Charlotte Furth, "Androgynous Males and Deficient Females: Biology and Gender Boundaries in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century China," *Late Imperial China* 9, no. 2 (1988): 1-31.

[2] See Charlotte Furth, "Blood, Body, and Gender: Medical Images of the Female Condition in China," *Chinese Science* 7 (1986): 43-66; Furth, "Concepts of Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Infancy in Ch'ing Dynasty China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no.1 (1987): 7-35; Furth, "Androgynous Males and Deficient Females"; Francesca Bray, "A Deathly Disorder: Understanding Women's Health in Late Imperial China," in *Knowledge and Scholarly Medical Traditions*, ed. Don Bates (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 235-250; Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); and Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History, 960-1665* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

[3] Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); Mary Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies: The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). For critiques of Laqueur's thesis, see Katharine Park and Robert A. Nye, "Destiny is Anatomy," *New Republic* 204 (1991): 53-57; Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, "The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature: Sexual Ambiguity in Early Modern France," in *Premodern Sexualities*, ed. Louise Fradenburg and Carla Freccero (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 117-136; Katharine Park, "The Rediscovery of the Clitoris," in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 171-194; Michael Stolberg, "The Anatomy of Sexual Difference in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," *Isis* 94 (2003): 274-299; Karen Harvey, *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Dror Wahrman, "Chang and the Corporeal in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Gender History: Or, Can Cultural History Be Rigorous?" *Gender and History* 20, no. 3 (2008): 584-602.

anatomists developed the first illustrations of the female skeleton, for instance, as late as 1796.[4] Despite the saliency of gender in the patriarchal norms of a Confucian society, or precisely because of it, Chinese physicians until the nineteenth century remained oblivious to demarcating sexual difference on the ground of specific biologic reasoning or anatomical visualization.[5] In the late imperial period, those who promulgated *fuke* (婦科, women's medicine or gynecology) diagnoses often relied on the physical symptoms of bodily process, such as blood depletion, rather than systematic understandings of an isolated organ.[6] In contrast, the establishment of *nanke* (男科, men's medicine) in the 1980s and 1990s clearly defined a set of clinical preoccupations with genital physiology, hormones, and the psychological basis of sexuality.[7] This dissertation offers an explanation for the relatively recent emergence of a psycho-biological notion of sex in Chinese culture, focusing in particular on the ways in which the introduction of the Western biomedical sciences had transformed the normative meanings of gender, sexuality, and the body in the twentieth century.

There is little reason to assume that sex had always been a relevant concept for those who were the most knowledgeable of the natural world in the early modern period. Li Shizhen, the author of *Bencao gangmu* (本草綱目, compendium of *materia medica*), a book that epitomized *meteria medica* in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) but continue to be cited in contemporary Chinese culture as the most authoritative and comprehensive encyclopedia in Chinese medicine, posited a spectrum of human reproductive anomalies with five "non-males" (非男, *feinan*) and five "non-females" (非女, *feinü*).[8] The defective non-males were the

[4] Londa Schiebinger, "Skeletons in the Closet: The First Illustrations of the Female Skeleton in 18th-Century Anatomy," *Representations* 14 (1986): 42-83.
[5] See Chapter 2 of this dissertation.
[6] See Furth, "Blood, Body, and Gender"; Furth, *A Flourishing Yin*.
[7] Everett Yuehong Zhang, "The Birth of *Nanke* (Men's Medicine) in China: The Making of the Subject of Desire," *American Ethnologist* 34, no. 3 (2007): 491-508.
[8] On Li Shizhen and *Bencao gangmu*, see Georges Métailé, "The *Bencao Gangmu* of Li Shizhen: An Innovation

natural eunuch, the bullock, the leaky, the coward, and the changling and could not become fathers; the deficient non-females were incapable of biological mothering and included the corkshrew, the striped, the drum, the horned, and the pulse.[9] Being the most systematic classification of "hermaphroditism" in late imperial China, Li's typological scheme defined the boundaries of sexual normativity in terms of reproductive capabilities alone.[10] Modern biomedical understandings of genital anatomy, endocrine secretions, chromosomes, and sexual psychology—traits that seem so universal for the natural definitions of sex—fell entirely beyond its ordering of knowledge. Although some *fuke* doctors later placed a more liberal emphasis on the womb and the breast in diagnosing female-specific ailments, they rarely held the independent workings of these organs responsible for the unusual development of gender physicality.[11]

Throughout Chinese history, though, one gender-liminal figure stood out as exceptional: the eunuch.[12] According to some medical writers, babies born with ambiguous genitalia would be sent to the palace as "natural eunuchs."[13] More often, a normal boy was transformed into an eunuch through castration surgery at a relatively young age. This group of castrated men, who began their careers as low-ranking servants inside the imperial palace, wielded enormous political power during particular epochs of Chinese history. The eunuchs of the Ming dynasty, next to the Tang, are perhaps the most famous and well-studied

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for Natural History?" in *Innovation in Chinese Medicine*, ed. Elisabeth Hsu (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 221-261; Benjamin Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), chap. 1; and Carla Nappi, *The Monkey and the Inkpot: Natural History and Its Transformations in Early Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

[9] Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu*, juan 52, as cited in Furth, "Androgynous Males and Deficient Females," p. 5.

[10] By putting the word hermaphroditism in quotation marks, I hope to underscore the concept's biomedical connotations and contend that, like "homosexuality," it did not really exist in China before the twentieth century. On hermaphroditism, see Chapters 2 and 4 of this dissertation; on homosexuality, see Chapter 3.

[11] Yi-Li Wu, *Reproducing Women: Medicine, Metaphor, and Childbirth in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), chap. 3; Wu, "Body, Gender, and Disease: The Female Breast in Late Imperial Chinese Medicine," *Late Imperial China* 32, no. 1 (2011): 83-128.

[12] Although I use the phrase "gender-liminal" here, as I will argue later, the perception of eunuchs as "third sex" was the product of an emergent nationalist discourse around the turn of the twentieth century. For a collection of rich ethnographic analyses of gender liminal figures around the world, see Gilbert Herdt, ed., *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

[13] See Chapters 1 and 4 of this dissertation.

example.[14] After the fall of the Ming, Manchu emperors throughout the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) imposed greater constraints on the activities of eunuchs.[15] The Qianlong Emperor at one point even promoted eunuch illiteracy. Court officials, literati, and other cultural elites often attacked the eunuchs' system by stressing the corruptive behaviors and the absence of scholarly credentials of these castrated men. Interestingly, early critiques of castration in Chinese discourses tended to neglect the question of sexual identity altogether.[16]

Around the turn of the twentieth century, the concept of sex slowly entered the Chinese lexicon.[17] Already in the Self-Strengthening Movement (1861-1895), when the urban center of Chinese culture and society relocated from the heartland to the shore, missionary doctors dedicated themselves to translating Western-style medicine, including asylum practices and modern anatomical knowledge.[18] Their works stamped the first sustained effort in redefining Chinese understandings of sexual difference in terms of Western reproductive anatomy. The gradual spread of the Western biomedical epistemology of sex from elite medical circles to vernacular culture reached a crescendo in the 1920s.[19]

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[14] See, for example, Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *The Eunuchs in the Ming Dynasty* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995); David Robinson, *Bandits, Eunuchs and the Son of Heaven: Rebellion and the Economy of Violence in Mid-Ming China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); Wang Shounan (王壽南), *Tangdai de huanguan* (唐代的宦官) [Tang-dynasty eunuchs] (Taipei: Commercial Press, 2004); Shiniankanchai (十年砍柴), *Huangdi, wenchen he taijian: Mingchao zhengju de "sanjiaolian"* (皇帝,文臣和太監: 明朝政局的"三角戀") [The emperor, scholar officials, and eunuchs: The triangular relationship of the political situation in the Ming dynasty] (Nanning: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2007); Wang Jingzhong (汪靖中), *Wugen zhi gen: Zhongguo huanguan shihua* (無根之根: 中國宦官史話) [The roots of the rootless: History of Chinese eunuchs] (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 2009).

[15] Melissa Dale, "With the Cut of a Knife: A Social History of Eunuchs during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) and Republican Periods (1912-1949)" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Georgetown University, 2000).

[16] See, for example, Tsai, *The Eunuchs in the Ming Dynasty*.

[17] Jia Ben-ray, "*Zongguoren xing guan chutan* [A Preliminary Investigation of the Chinese View on Sex]," *Si yu yan* [Thought and Language] 33 (1995): 27-75; Leon Antonio Rocha, "*Xing*: The Discourse of Sex and Human Nature in Modern China," *Gender and History* 22, no. 3 (November 2010): 603-628.

[18] For a study of how China turned "inside-out" in the late nineteenth century, see Meng Yue, *Shanghai and the Edges of Empires* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005). On the translation of Western anatomy and asylum practice, see, for example, Peter Paul Szto, "The Accommodation of Insanity in Canton, China: 1857-1935" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2002); Yi-Li Wu, "God's Uterus: Benjamin Hobson and Missionary "Midwifery" in Nineteenth-Century China" (paper presented at the conference "The Disunity of Chinese Science," University of Chicago, May 10-11, 2002); and Larissa Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images: Translating the Pathological Body between China and the West* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

[19] Frank Dikötter, *Sex, Culture, and Modernity in China: Medical Science and the Construction of Sexual Identities in the Early Republican Period* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995).

Learning from their Euro-American colleagues, Chinese biologists promoted a vision of sex dimorphism, which construed the bodily morphology and function of the two sexes as opposite, complementary, and fundamentally different. Their writings accorded the concept of *xing* (性, sex) an integral feature of visuality by foregrounding epistemic connections between what they called "primary," "secondary," and "tertiary" sexual characteristics. They extended these connections to all life forms across the human/non-human divide, attempting to explain hermaphroditism with Western genetic theories of sex-determination. Over time, the visual evidence of bioscience recast existing boundaries and polarities of gender in a new normative light.[20]

The bioscientific naturalization of gender coincided with the collapse of the Qing imperium, as well as the unprecedented success of the feminist and education reform movements.[21] Against this political backdrop, the demise of eunuchism paralleled certain rhetorical features of the anti-footbinding discourse.[22] Three voices contributed to the making of an "archive" that documented the methods of Chinese castration, a repository that was distinctively absent before the late nineteenth century: that of Western spectators, eunuchs themselves, and members of the last imperial family. An anti-eunuch sentiment arose out of the photographic, textual, and oral records these voices left behind, and as eunuchs' gender identity was evaluated anew in the modern era through the lens of Western biomedicine, China's association with the metaphor of a "castrated civilization" intensified over time. The period between the 1870s and the 1930s thus constituted a transitional phase

[20] In this dissertation, I use "bioscience" as a broader concept than "biology" to refer to scientifically-based knowledge or arguments pertaining to life promulgated by a wide spectrum of social actors, including but not limited to formally trained biologists and medical doctors. As I explained in footnote 1, my preference is to limit the use of "biology" in the Chinese context only when it closely resembles the social and disciplinary formations of American and European biology (after 1800).

[21] Paul Bailey, *Reform the People: Changing Attitudes Towards Popular Education in Early Twentieth Century China* (Edinburg: Edinburgh University Press, 1990); Bailey, *Gender and Education in China: Gender Discourses and Women's Schooling in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2007).

[22] On the anti-footbinding movement, see Dorothy Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 9-68.

when the castrated male body—joining women's bound feet and the leper's crippled body—seemed out of sync with the Chinese body politic at large.[23] Those decades witnessed the development of a growing interest in eunuchs' sexual identity, something also absent in earlier critiques of castration. The hegemony of the Western biomedicine, in other words, cultivated the increasingly common association of eunuchs with the nominal label of "third sex." The demise of eunuchism indexed the birth of the concept of sex itself.

And the meaning of sex soon began to change. At the dawn of the century, the word *xing* (性) carried visual connotations of male and female biology. In scientific and popular formulations, women and men were simply understood, respectively, as human equivalents of *ci* (雌, female) and *xiong* (雄, male) types of lower organisms. Most observers adhered to a biological determinism. In various efforts to delineate different components of sex, they considered reproductive anatomy, morphological characteristics, and sexual chromosomes on different levels of visual representation. But in the aftermath of the New Culture Movement (1915-1919), iconoclastic intellectuals such as Zhang Jingsheng (張競生) and Pan Guangdan (潘光旦) contended that the hidden nature of human erotic preference could also be discovered and known. Sex, they argued, was no longer something only to be seen, but it was something to be desired as well. These May Fourth public intellectuals participated in a new concerted effort, though not without dissent from their interlocutors, to emulate European sexological sciences. Their translation of Western sexological texts, concepts, methodologies, and styles of reasoning provided the crucial historical conditions under which, and the means through which, *sexuality* emerged as an object of empirical knowledge. The disciplinary formation of Chinese sexology in the May Fourth era, therefore, added a new element of carnality to the scientific meaning of sex.

[23] On the global image of the Chinese leper's crippled body in the early twentieth century, see Angela Leung, "The Chinese Leper and the Modern World," in *Leprosy in China: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 132-176. On the parallel image of the bound foot, see Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters*.

By the second third of the century, the vocabulary of sex had expanded to denote an intrinsic property of malleability. The idea of hormones provided Chinese sex researchers, tabloid writers, popular authors, and social commentators a new scientific basis for discussing gender and the human body. Beginning in the mid-1920s, they appropriated from Western endocrinologists the theory of universal bisexuality, which posited that everyone was partly male and partly female. This chemical and quantitative definition of sex was supported by findings coming from selected laboratories in Europe, especially in Vienna, where famous animal sex reversal experiments were conducted and whose intriguing results reached a worldwide community of scientists.[24] In the United States, biologists imagined sex as a "plastic dichotomy," which gave them the liberty to claim the fluidity and rigidity of sexual binarism simultaneously to varying degrees.[25] Psychologists, psychoanalysts, and other sex researchers, too, debated on the validity of the universal bisexual condition as they unpacked the distinctions between homosexuality, bisexuality, and transsexuality.[26] As Chinese scientists began to entertain the possibility of sex transformation based on these foreign ideas and experimental findings, they referred to indigenous examples of reproductive

[24] On the history of bisexual theory in the biochemical sciences, see Nelly Oudshoorn, *Beyond the Natural Body: An Archeology of Sex Hormones* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Adele Clarke, *Disciplining Reproduction: Modernity, American Life Sciences, and "The Problems of Sex"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); and Chandak Sengoopta, *The Most Secret Quintessence of Life: Sex, Glands, and Hormones, 1850-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

[25] On "plastic dichotomy," see Nathan Ha, "Marking Bodies: A History of Genetic Sex in the Twentieth Century" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2011).

[26] See Janice M. Irvine, *Disorders of Desire: Sex and Gender in Modern American Sexology* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990); Vern Bullough, *Science in the Bedroom: A History of Sex Research* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); Bernice Hausman, *Changing Sex: Transsexualism, Technology and the Idea of Gender* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); Simon LeVay, *Queer Science: The Use and Abuse of Research into Homosexuality* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996); Vernon Rosario, ed., *Science and Homosexualities* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Jennifer Terry, *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Steven Angelides, *A History of Bisexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Joanne Meyerowitz, "Sex Research at the Borders of Gender: Transvestites, Transsexuals, and Alfred C. Kinsey," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 75 (2001): 72-90; Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Henry Minton, *Departing from Deviance: A History of Homosexual Rights and Emancipatory Science in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Howard Chiang, "Effecting Science, Affecting Medicine: Homosexuality, the Kinsey Reports, and the Contested Boundaries of Psychopathology in the United States, 1948-1965," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 44, no. 4 (2008): 300-318; Chiang, "Liberating Sex, Knowing Desire: *Scientia Sexualis* and Epistemic Turning Points in the History of Sexuality," *History of the Human Sciences* 23, no. 5 (2010): 42-69.

anomalies—such as human hermaphrodites and eunuchs—as epistemological points of reference, and, most importantly, they re-described these old phenomena in the new language of biological sex. Meanwhile, around the mid-1930s, the explosion of sensational journalism on Yao Jinping (姚錦屏), a lady from Tianjin who allegedly claimed to have turned into a man overnight, greatly amplified people's awareness of the possibility of human sex alteration. The culmination of these epistemological reorientations was eventually evinced in popular fictions in the 1940s.

As scientists and doctors sought to pin down the technical definitions of sex, non-experts took a more serious interest in broadening its social valence. Emerging from the domains of biology, sex psychology, and endocrinology, the multiple interpretations of sex saturated the Chinese cultural agenda in the Republican period. The anti-footbinding movement and the demise of castration had already acquainted the public with images of "natural" male and female bodies.[27] The new idea of romantic love had begun to push people to break from conventional arranged marriages and to form nuclear families.[28] Popular versions of Freud and other sexologists bolstered the recognition of psychosexual development as the cornerstone of individual subjectivity.[29] Narratives of male and female same-sex relations called up complex associations from ideologies of proper and improper

[27] See Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters*; and Chapter 1 of this dissertation.
[28] See Susan L. Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State, 1915-1953* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Haiyan Lee, *Revolution of the Heart: A Genealogy of Love in China, 1900-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).
[29] See Jingyuan Zhang, *Psychoanalysis in China: Literary Transformations, 1919-1949* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Charles Leary, "Sexual Modernism in China: Zhang Jingsheng and 1920s Urban Culture" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, 1994); Frank Dikötter, *Sex, Culture, and Modernity in China*; Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Jing Tsu, *Failure, Nationalism, and Literature: The Making of Modern Chinese Identity, 1895-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); Lee, *Revolution of the Heart*, pp. 186-217; Howard Chiang, "Epistemic Modernity and the Emergence of Homosexuality in China," *Gender and History* 22, no. 3 (2010): 629-657; and Leon A. Rocha, "Zhang Jingsheng (1888-1970): Love, Sex, Aesthetics, Eugenics, Utopia" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2010).

gender orientations.[30] Similarly, stories on prostitutes appeared and reappeared with conflicting messages about decent sexual behavior in the popular press.[31] And the mass media had made sex and its possible transmutation a mainstay of visual culture. In broad outline and narrow, Chinese society had "sexualized" during the first half of the twentieth century.

When the boundaries of sex no longer appeared as impermeable as they once had seemed, the Chinese community met their first transsexual, Xie Jianshun (謝尖順). In 1953, four years after Mao Zedong's political regime took over mainland China and the Republican state was forced to relocate its base, news of the success of native doctors in converting a man into a woman made headlines in Taiwan. Xie was frequently dubbed as the "Chinese Christine," an allusion to the contemporaneous American ex-G.I. transsexual celebrity, Christine Jorgensen, who had travelled to Denmark for her sex reassignment surgery and became a worldwide household name immediately after due to her personality and her glamorous looks.[32] Within a week, the characterization of Xie in the Taiwanese press changed from an average citizen whose ambiguous sex provoked uncertainty and anxiety throughout the nation, to a transsexual cultural icon whose fate would indisputably contribute to the global staging of Taiwan on par with the United States. The saga of Xie Jianshun and other sex change stories illustrate how the Republican government regained sovereignty in postwar Taiwan by inheriting a Western biomedical epistemology of sex from the intellectual complexity of Republican-era scientific globalism—a medical worldview especially

[30] Tze-lan Deborah Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Wenqing Kang, *Obsession: Male Same-Sex Relations in China, 1900-1950* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008); and Fran Martin, *Backward Glances: Contemporary Chinese Culture and the Female Homoerotic Imaginary* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), chap. 1.
[31] Gail Hershatter, *Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
[32] On Christine Jorgensen, see Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*. See also David Serlin, "Christine Jorgensen and the Cold War Closet," *Radical History Review* 62 (Spring 1995): 136-165.

conducive to the prevailing American model of healthcare in the early Cold-War era.[33] In other words, the reciprocal relationship between medical scientific knowledge and the transformation of the body—in terms of both corporeal and geopolitical arrangements—culminated, historically, in the conditions under which transsexuality emerged first and foremost in places like Taiwan across the postcolonial Pacific Rim, which was geographically and culturally located on the margins of both Chineseness and transpacific U.S. cultural hegemony.[34]

From eunuchs to transsexuals, this dissertation revises the conventional view that China has "opened up" to the global circulation of sexual ideas and practices only after the economic reforms of the late 1970s.[35] Taking cue from Frank Dikötter, the bulk of the narrative highlights the 1920s as an earlier, more pivotal turning point in the modern

[33] See Wen-Hua Kuo (郭文華), "Meiyuan xia de weishen zhengce: 1960 niandai Taiwan jiating jihua de tantao" (美援下的衛生政策：一九六○年代臺灣家庭計畫的探討) [Politicizing family planning and medicalizing reproductive bodies: U.S. backed population control in 1960s Taiwan], *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies* (臺灣社會研究季刊) 32 (1998): 39-82, reprinted in *Diguo yu xiandai yixue* (帝國與現代醫學) [Empire and modern medicine], ed. Shang-Jen Li (Taipei: Union, 2008), pp. 325-365; and Tsui-hua Yang (楊翠華), "Meiyuan dui Taiwan de weishen jihua yu yiliao tizhi de xingsu" (美援對台灣的衛生計畫與醫療體制的形塑) [U.S. aid in the formation of health planning and the medical system in Taiwan], *Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica* (中央研究院近代史研究所集刊) 62 (2008): 91-139.

[34] Howard Chiang, "Sinophone Production and Trans Postcoloniality: Sex Change from Major to Minor Transnational China," *English Language Notes* 49, no. 1 (2011): 109-116; Chiang, "The Sinophone (Re)Production of Transsexuality" (paper presented at "The Making of Asia: Health and Gender" conference, University of Hong Kong, March 9-10, 2012).

[35] Harriet Evans, *Women and Sexuality in China: Discourses of Female Sexuality and Gender since 1949* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997); Dennis Altman, *Global Sex* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Judith Farquhar, *Appetites: Food and Sex in Post-Socialist China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); James Farrer, *Opening Up: Youth, Sex Culture, and Market Reform in Shanghai* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Fran Martin, *Situating Sexualities: Queer Representation in Taiwanese Fiction, Film and Public Culture* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003); Yunxian Yan, *Private Life Under Socialism: Love, Intimacy, Family Change in a Chinese Village, 1949-1999* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Everett Zhang, "Rethinking Sexual Repression in Maoist China: Ideology, Structure, and the Ownership of the Body," *Body and Society* 11, no. 3 (2005): 1-25; Lisa Rofel, *Desiring China: Experiments in Neoliberalism, Sexuality, and Public Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Everett Zhang, "Switching between Traditional Chinese Medicine and Viagra: Cosmopolitanism and Medical Pluralism Today," *Medical Anthropology* 26, no. 2 (2007): 53-96; Helen Leung, *Undercurrents: Queer Culture and Postcolonial Hong Kong* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008); Hongwei Bao, "'Queer Comrades': Gay Identity and Politics in Postsocialist China" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Sydney, 2010); Loretta Wing Wah Ho, *Gay and Lesbian Subculture in Urban China* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Petrus Liu, "Why Does Queer Theory Need China?" *positions* 18, no. 2 (2010): 291-320; Hongwei Bao, "'Queer Comrades': Transnational Popular Culture, Queer Sociality, and Socialist Legacy," *English Language Notes* 49, no. 1 (2011): 131-137; Travis Kong, *Chinese Male Homosexualities: Memba, Tongzhi, and Golden Boy* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

definitions of Chinese sexual identity and desire.[36] However, unlike Dikötter, who maintains that modernizing elites of the early Republican period failed to introduce new and foreign ideas of sexual variations but only sexuality qua "heterogenitality," this dissertation with its focus on marginal sexualities provides ample evidence on the contrary.[37] Drawing on scientific publications, medical journals, newspaper clippings, popular magazines, scholarly textbooks, fictional and periodical literatures, oral histories, and other primary materials, this study portrays the decades between empire and communism as a globally significant, rather than catastrophic, interlude in China's modern history.[38] The evolving discourse of same-sex desire and the biologization of gender norms constituted two epistemological ruptures that complicated the shifting correlations of sex, gender, and sexuality in the Republican period.[39] The extensive media attention on sex change in postwar Taiwan marked a culminating episode of these earlier developments. Weaving together intellectual developments with social, cultural, and political history, this dissertation aims to accomplish three goals: it argues for the centrality of sexual scientific knowledge in modern China's cultural formation;[40] it highlights the role of the body as a catalyst in the mutual transformations of Chinese national modernity and the social significance of sex;[41]

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[36] For a similar argument, see Dikötter, *Sex, Culture, and Modernity in China*. For a programmatic overview of Dikötter's thesis regarding the historiographical significance of the Republican period, see Frank Dikötter, *The Age of Openness: China before Mao* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

[37] Dikötter, *Sex, Culture, and Modernity in China*, p. 143.

[38] This study joins recent revisionist efforts to reinterpret the significance of the Republican period through the lens of the history of science, especially the human sciences. See, for example, Yung-chen Chiang, *Social Engineering and the Social Sciences in China, 1919-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Sigrid Schmalzer, *The People's Peking Man: Popular Science and Human Identity in Twentieth-century China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Thomas Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Tong Lam, *A Passion for Facts: Social Surveys and the Construction of the Chinese Nation-State, 1900-1949* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); and the essays in Benjamin Elman and Jing Tsu, eds., *Science in Republican China* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

[39] Howard Chiang, "The Conceptual Contours of Sex in the Chinese Life Sciences: Zhu Xi (1899-1962), Hermaphroditism, and the Biological Discourse of *Ci* and *Xiong*, 1920-1950," *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal* 2, no. 3 (September 2008): 401-430; Chiang, "Epistemic Modernity."

[40] See also, Dikötter, *Sex, Science, and Modernity in China*; Tze-lan Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian*; Chiang, "Epistemic Modernity."

[41] This study, with its focus on the epistemological development of sex, builds on and extends the work of Larissa Heinrich on the politics of translation in the history of the Chinese body. See Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images*.

and, grounded in the historical-epistemological analysis of the vocabulary and visual knowledge of sexual science, it establishes a *genealogical* relationship between the demise of eunuchism and the emergence of transsexuality in China.[42] This genealogy, above all, maps the underexplored history of China's modern "geobody" onto the more focused history of the biomedicalized human body.[43] The isochronal evolution of "China" and sex, two constructs that seemed the most immutable of all, evinced the gradual replacement of the familiar frame of colonial modernity with Sinophone articulations in the course of the twentieth century.[44]

[42] I use "genealogy" in the way that Foucault has employed it in his historical analysis of the discursive formations of knowledge (*savoir*). See, for example, Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977); Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. D. F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 139-164. See also Rudi Visker, *Michel Foucault: Genealogy as Critique* (London: Verso, 1995); Visker, "Michel Foucault, a Philosopher? A Note on Genealogy and Archeology," *PARRHESIA* 5 (2008): 9-18.

[43] The term "geobody" is first proposed by Thongchai Winichakul in *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997). On the historical relationship between China's geobody and the human body as viewed through the lenses of war and military activities, see Jinlin Hwang (黃金麟), *Lishi, shenti, guojia: Jindai zhongguo de shenti xingcheng, 1895-1937* (歷史、身體、國家：近代中國的身體形成，1895-1937) [History, the Body, the Nation: The Formation of the Body of Modern China, 1895-1937] (Taipei: Linking, 2001); Hwang, *Zhanzhen, shenti, xiandaixing: Xiandai Taiwan de junshi zhili yu shenti, 1895-2005* (戰爭、身體、現代性：近代台灣的軍事治理與身體，1895-2005) [War, the body, and modernity: Military governmentality and the body in modern Taiwan, 1895-2005] (Taipei: Linking, 2009).

[44] On Sinophone articulations, see Shu-mei Shih, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

CHAPTER 1

THE DEMISE OF EUNUCHISM

I. Introduction

Although eunuchs had played an important role in the history of imperial China, it is surprising how little attention historians have paid to the actual measures of Chinese castration. Like footbinding, castration stands as one of the most important objects of Sinological criticism today. Both have come to represent powerful symbols of backwardness, oppression, despotism, and national shame in modern Chinese historiography. Starting in the early Republican period, cultural commentators often labeled late imperial China as a "castrated civilization" (被閹割的文明, *beiyange de wenming*), a characterization that perpetuated its more common perception as the "Sick Man of Asia" that emerged in the nineteenth century.[1] Simply put, observers, domestic and abroad alike, invoked the former trope to cast the practice of castration and the institution of palace eunuchs as pitfalls of dynastic China. But unlike the history of footbinding, Sinologists have remained considerably silent on the history of the castration operation itself. This chapter aims to move beyond this historiographical limitation. I approach eunuchism (the bodily state of

[1] Wu Guozhang (吳國璋), *Bei yange de wenming: Zhongguo taijian wenhualun* (被閹割的文明: 中國太監文化論) [Castrated civilization: On the culture of Chinese eunuchs] (Beijing: Zhishi chubanshe, 1999); Chen Cunren (陳存仁), *Bei yange de wenming: Xianhua Zhongguo gudai chanzu yu gongxing* (被閹割的文明: 閒話中國古代纏足與宮刑) [Castrated civilization: On footbinding and castration in ancient China] (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008). On "the Sick Man of Asia," see Larissa N. Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images: Translating the Pathological Body between China and the West* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Michael Keevak, *Becoming Yellow: A Short History of Racial Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); and Carlos Rojas, *The Sick Man of Asia: Diagnosing the Chinese Body Politic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, forthcoming). The "castrated civilization," therefore, must be historically contextualized on par with other relevant images of China in the early twentieth century, such as "Yellow Peril" and "the sleeping lion." See Jing Tsu, *Failure, Nationalism, and Literature: The Making of Chinese Identity, 1895-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 88-96; Yang Ruisong (楊瑞松), *Bingfu, huanghuo yu shuishi: "Xifang" shiye de zhongguo xingxiang yu jindai Zhongguo guozu lunshu xiangxiang* (病夫, 黃禍與睡獅: 「西方」視野的中國形象與近代中國國族論述想像) [Sick man, yellow peril, and sleeping lion: The images of China from the Western perspectives and the discourses and imagination of Chinese national identity] (Taipei: Chengchi University Press, 2010).

castrated men), like other forms of embodiment, as a category of experience that needs to be historicized, rather than foundational or uncontestable in nature.[2]

The distaste for eunuchs and the antipathy for the Chinese imperium became isomorphic during the peak of Western overseas imperial and colonial expansions.[3] In China's tremulous transition to a modern nation state, men and women experienced profound changes in the prevailing norms and social conventions of gender. The civil service examination for men was formally abolished in 1905, but since the mid-nineteenth century, Western missionaries had created an increasing measure of education opportunities for women.[4] As coastal cities like Shanghai turned into global centers of cosmopolitanism, Chinese men and women adopted Western standards of fashion, and more women dressed in a way that would increasingly resemble the French and American "flappers" of the next generation.[5] The 1910s and 1920s were also a period when the cult of *qing* (情, sentiment) incorporated a foreign notion of free love, a kind of modern transformation that hinged on a new nationalist (even revolutionary) "structure of feeling" and reframed the meanings of marriage, the family, and the Chinese state for women.[6] In the decades surrounding May

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[2] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990); Joan Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 773-797; David Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

[3] World historians have designated the period between the mid-nineteenth century and the First World War "the age of high imperialism." See Scott B. Cook, *Colonial Encounters in the Age of High Imperialism* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996).

[4] Jessie Gregory Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges, 1850-1950* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1971).

[5] On the emergence of Shanghai as a global cosmopolitan center in the early twentieth century, see Meng Yue, *Shanghai and the Edges of Empires* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Marie-Claire Bergere, *Shanghai: China's Gateway to Modernity*, trans. Janet Llyod (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, *Global Shanghai, 1850-2010: A History in Fragments* (New York: Routledge, 2009). On women's fashion in Republican China, see Eileen Chang, "A Chronicle of Changing Clothes," trans. Andrew Jones, *positions: east asia cultures critiques* 11, no. 2 (2003): 427-441; Anotnia Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China: Fashion, History, Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008). On American flappers, see Joshua Zeitz, *Flapper: A Madcap Story of Sex, Style, Celebrity, and the Women Who Made America Modern* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2006). On flappers in France, see Whitney Chadwick and Tirza True Latimer, eds., *The Modern Woman Revisited: Paris between the Wars* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003).

[6] Haiyan Lee, *Revolution of the Heart: A Genealogy of Love in China, 1900-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); Susan Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and the State, 1915-1953* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Tze-lan D. Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

Fourth feminism, many reformers and revolutionaries voiced a pressing concern with patriarchal oppression, something they viewed as an intrinsic shortcoming of traditional (often dubbed "Confucian") Chinese culture. Because like footbinding, castration reflects the dominant perceptions of gender normativity at any given moment in time, the task of historicizing eunuchism requires us to be more cautious of its gendered implications, and its affiliation to what we might otherwise hasten to call "sex."

In an age of China's metaphoric portrayal as a "castrated civilization," the perception of eunuchs as demasculinized "third sex" figures became increasingly common. However, historical standards of masculinity and femininity, and by extension emasculation and defeminization, based on which such claims were purported shifted across time and place. As we will see, modern definitions of masculinity and femininity tend to be articulated within a Western biomedical lexicon and its cognate understandings of the human body. The absence of a Chinese word for "sex" until the 1910s suggests that the popular depiction of eunuchs as "third sex" (第三性, *disanxing*) people tells us more about our modern conceptual preoccupations than the historical experience of eunuchs themselves.[7] Before the emergence of the concept of sex, gender might be the more adequate category of analysis for understanding the meaning and practice of castration.[8] Rather than categorizing eunuchs as "third sex" subjects who nominally defy the boundaries of male and female, our historical inquiry would be more robust if we unpack castration's multiple layers of gendered meanings in the process of its demise. In fact, by delineating what castration meant for different

[7] On the emergence of the conceptual equivalent of "sex" in China, see Chapter 2 of this dissertation; Leon Rocha, "*Xing*: The Discourse of Sex and Human Nature in Modern China," *Gender and History* 22, no. 3 (2010): 603-628. On "third sex," see Shi Kekuan (施克寬), *Zhongguo huanguan mishi: renzao de disanxing* (中國宦官祕史: 人造的第三性) [The secret history of Chinese eunuchs: The man-made third sex] (Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe, 1988); Wang Yude (王玉德), *Shenmi de disanxing—Zhongguo taijian* (神秘的第三性—中國太監) [The mysterious third sex: Zhongguo taijian] (Hong Kong: Minchuang chubanshe, 1995).

[8] Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053-1075. On the significance of Scott's argument for Chinese historiography of gender, see Gail Hershatter and Wang Zheng, "Chines History: A Useful Category of Gender Analysis," *American Historical Review* 113, no. 5 (2008): 1404-1421.

groups of Chinese men, we could evaluate the practice itself, contrary to standard accounts, as a source of masculine identity and a mechanism of its social reproduction. This would invariably broaden the way we interpret the meaning of castration, which has been typically confined to the perspective of modern biology. Adopting this method, this chapter explores the rise of the perception of China as "a castrated civilization" from the historical discourse that comprised eunuchism's demise, which occurred in tandem with the rise of the modernist notion that eunuchs are "third sex" figures and the adjacent equation of castration with emasculation.

The emphasis on the masculinity of castration before the conceptual availability of "sex" revises the diverse scholarly literature on Chinese manhood that has drawn on legal, medico-scientific, family reform, homoerotic, theatrical, and diasporic examples.[9] It is perhaps worth noting that the gendered subjectivity of eunuchs has escaped the attention of contributors to the two path-breaking volumes, *Chinese Femininities/Chinese Masculinities: A Reader* (2002) and *Asian Masculinities: The Meaning and Practice of Manhood in China and Japan* (2003), and of Kam Louie in his *Theorising Chinese Masculinity: Society and Gender in China* (2002).[10] If we borrow the queer theoretical insight of Judith Halberstam, who has narrated the first comprehensive history of female masculinity in Euro-American literature and film, we might be better equipped to entertain a more radical analytical

[9] Matthew Sommer, *Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000); Everett Zhang, "Switching between Traditional Chinese Medicine and Viagra: Cosmopolitanism and Medical Pluralism Today," *Medical Anthropology* 26, no. 2 (2007): 53-96; Everett Zhang, "The Birth of Nanke (Men's Medicine) in China: The Making of the Subject of Desire," *American Ethnologist* 34, no. 3 (2007): 491-508; Susan Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and the State, 1915-1953* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Cuncun Wu, *Homoerotic Sensibilities in Late Imperial China* (London: Routledge, 2004); Wenqing Kang, *Obsession: Male Same-Sex Relations in China, 1900-1950* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009); Wenqing Kang, "Male Same-Sex Relations in Modern China: Language, Media Representation, and Law, 1900-1949," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 18, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 489-510; Giovanni Vitiello, *The Libertine's Friend: Homosexuality and Masculinity in Late Imperial China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Wu Cuncun and Mark Stevenson, "Speaking of Flowers: Theatre, Public Culture, and Homoerotic Writing in Nineteenth-Century Beijing," *Asian Theatre Journal* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 100-129; and David Eng, *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

[10] Susan Brownell and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, eds., *Chinese Femininities/Chinese Masculinities: A Reader* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Kam Louie and Morris Low, eds., *Asian Masculinities: The Meaning and Practice of Manhood in China and Japan* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003); Kam Louie, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity: Society and Gender in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

separation of masculinity from men as fecund agents.[11] Chinese masculinity can thus be understood as neither a social extension of biological maleness nor the social meanings assigned to men per se, but a social relational indicator of a discursive cultural practice, such as castration. This chapter's focus on the history of knowledge production about castration questions the naturalness assumed in previous studies regarding the immediate and productive relationship of men to manliness.

With respect to footbinding, historians have recently begun to revise its popular conception as a tool of gender oppression. In *Cinderella's Sisters* (2005), for example, Dorothy Ko shows that women as much as men participated in the perpetuation of this cultural practice with complex and nuanced historical agency.[12] That footbinding was often a marker of ethnic and national boundaries, a practice of concealment and adornment, and a sign of civility and culture before the nineteenth century betrays our modern explanations of it as a form of bodily mutilation, an "unnatural" practice, and a barbaric (even perverse) custom.[13] In a similar spirit, Angela Zito has demonstrated that twentieth-century discourses of the bound foot only reflect variations of its modernist fetishization, even thresholds of feminist theorization and intercultural displacements.[14] Taking cues from Ko and Zito, this chapter departs from outside the anti-castration discourse, attempting to balance the historiographical condemnation of Chinese eunuchs. In order to bring to visibility the historicity of eunuchism and to situate castration in its proper historical and technical contexts, I will pay particular attention to how paradigms of masculinity changed over time, how the visual milieu reciprocated its politics and thresholds of cross-cultural translation, and

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[11] Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

[12] Dorothy Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[13] Dorothy Ko, "The Body as Attire: The Shifting Meanings of Footbinding in Seventeenth-Century China," *Journal of Women's History* 8, no. 4 (1997): 8-27.

[14] Angela Zito, "Bound to be Represented: Theorizing/Fetishizing Footbinding," in *Embodied Modernities: Corporeality, Representation, and Chinese Culture*, ed. Fran Martin and Larissa Heinrich (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), pp. 21-41. See also Angela Zito, "Secularizing the Pain of Footbinding in China: Missionary and Medical Stagings of the Universal Body," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75, no. 1 (2007): 1-24.

the problem of narrating the historical experience of eunuchs based on the modern nationalist bias of our sources and informants. By reading against the grain, this chapter traces the formation of a textual and visual archive that documented the methods of Chinese castration, something that was distinctively absent before the nineteenth century and that, I suggest, directly led to eunuchism's social and cultural demise. We begin, therefore, with the ending of an historical epoch.

II. The Archival Problematic, and An Argument

Despite our best intentions, the reconstruction of an archive based on the sources available about Chinese castration is itself an inherently mediated and problematic project.[15] First, where do we end? If we assume that the metanarrative history of political change determines the metanarrative history of cultural transformation, we might conclude that the unequivocal demise of castration after the fall of the Qing empire in 1911 was a matter of course. However, even after the last Manchu emperor Puyi was expelled from the Forbidden City in 1924 by the warlord Feng Yuxiang, he was declared by the Japanese army as the Kangde Emperor of the puppet state of Manchuria in 1934. As the Kangde Emperor, Puyi was still surrounded by a dozen or so Chinese eunuchs.[16] When the Pacific War ended in 1945, these eunuchs did not suddenly just disappear altogether. Even in the postwar period, their bodies still served as a pivotal reminder of the past and their stories the lived experiences of castration, to both themselves and the global public. In October 1958, for instance, the Chinese government gathered the final cohort of eunuchs in Beijing and took a photo of them mixed in with Buddhist and Daoist monks (**Figure 1**). They were interviewed so that their oral histories could be officially transcribed, published, and

[15] The "archive" I am referring to here does not correspond to a physically existing archive. Rather, it refers to a repository of sources that I have collected that recount information about the castration operation as performed in late Qing China.

[16] Aixinluojue Puyi (愛新羅覺 溥儀), *Wo de qianbansheng* (我的前半生) [The first half of my life] (Beijing: Qunzhong chubanshe, 1981).

circulated to a worldwide audience.[17] Even the death of the last surviving Chinese eunuch, Sun Yaoting, in 1996 might be a misleading signpost for where the story of Chinese castration ends.[18] This is because the afterlife of eunuchism in China—namely, the emergence of transsexuality in Sinophone communities—is indebted to the genealogical precursors discussed in this chapter, factors that culminated in the thresholds of its beginning. Before we examine how the body morphology of eunuchs and transsexuals operate within shifting realms of scientific truth claims and geopolitics, our story must unravel the process whereby the normative regime of eunuchism lost its aura, meaning, and cultural significance.



Figure 1: Photograph of eunuchs and the entire staff of those in charge of the Beijing City Buddhist and Daoist temples (1958).

The last surviving eunuch, Sun Yaoting, is the eighth from the left on the third row.

[17] Ma Deqing (馬德清) et al., in *Wan Qing gongting shenghuo jianwen* (晚清宮廷生活見聞) [Life in Late-Qing Imperial Palace], ed. Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi quanguo weiyuanhui wenshi ziliao yanjiu weiyuanhui (中國人民政治協商會議全國委員會文史資料研究委員會) (Beijing: Wenshi ziliao chubanshe, 1982).

[18] Seth Faison, "The Death of the Last Emperor's Last Eunuch," *New York Times*, December 20, 1996.

Apart from the puzzling question of a precise endpoint, the reconstruction of the archive relies on the *type* of sources that are available. Here is where the parallel between footbinding's disappearance and castration's demise is most striking: the abundance of textual and visual sources from the nineteenth and early twentieth century almost always represents the bound foot and the castrated body by *exposing* them. This mode of representation runs against the very reason of their existence in Chinese history. After all, the naturalness of footbinding and castration depended on *concealing* the female and male bodies, because concealment links these customs to Chinese ideals of civility and culture (文, *wen*).[19] Therefore, upon reading the wealth of visual and textual documentations of the bound foot or the castrated body, the historian must avoid a telos of knowledge production that extracts from these sources a certain kind of historicity that lies beyond the hegemonic parameters of their existence. As Anjali Arondekar has reminded us in a different context, "even though scholars have foregrounded the analytical limits of the archive, they continue to privilege the reading practice of recovery over all others."[20] It might be more useful to read the archival remains not as the ultimate arbiter of historical recuperation, but as "traces" of the past that enable alternative epistemological arrangements of the way the past and the present conjoin.[21] In other words, we must not retell a story about eunuchs that identifies with the kind of story that the sources themselves suggest at face value. What they leave us is not something to be "recovered," but something to be self-reflexively configured.

Precise endpoints and the nature of the sources aside, the repository of "data" about Chinese castration is mediated by their availability. Three available "voices" unique to the historical period under consideration contributed to the making of this archive: Western

[19] Ko, "The Body as Attire," p. 10.
[20] Anjali Arondekar, "Without a Trace: Sexuality and the Colonial Archive," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14 (2005): 10-27, on p. 12.
[21] Anjali Arondekar, *For the Record: Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

spectators, eunuchs themselves, and members of the last imperial family. Together, the textual, photographic, and oral records they left behind disclose an increasing disparity between two registers of eunuchism as a mode of historical experience: on the macro level of global narration on the one hand, and on the micro level of individual embodiment on the other. My argument is that an anti-eunuch sentiment arose out of this growing disjuncture between a collective-public narration of nationalist teleology and a personal-private embodiment of preternatural corporeality. This nascent sensibility that casts the practice of castration and the existence of eunuchs as indicators of national shame and backwardness would reverberate through the rest of the twentieth century. As eunuchs' gender identity was evaluated anew in the modern era through the lens of Western biomedicine, China's association with the metaphor of a "castrated civilization" intensified over time. The period between the 1870s and the 1930s thus constituted a transitional phase when the castrated male body—much like women's bound feet and the leper's crippled body—seemed out of sync with the Chinese body politic at large.[22]

III. G. Carter Stent and the Formation of a Public Archive

The formation of an archive documenting the methods of Chinese castration marked a point of no return in the social and cultural demise of eunuchism in China. Textual descriptions of the operation highlight the fundamental difference between a natural male body and an altered, unnatural one. The first elaborate description of the method can be traced to an article by G. Carter Stent, published in the *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* in 1877. This piece, called "Chinese Eunuchs," is arguably the earliest incidence of putting the steps involved in Chinese castration into printed words.

[22] On the anti-footbinding movement, see Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters*, chaps. 1-2. On the leper's crippled body in the era of Chinese national modernity, see Angela Leung, *Leprosy in China: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), chap. 4.

The first textual objectification of the Chinese eunuch's corporeal experience thus came from the observation of an "outsider."[23]

Stent first read a version of his paper, which is more than forty pages in length, before the Royal Asiatic Society on 26 March 1877. His opening sentence stamped the intention—and eventually the persistent significance—of his study, namely to bring something invisible to visibility, to crystallize a vague impression: "Much has been said and written about eunuchs at various times, but very little seems to be really known concerning them." "In fact," Stent continued, "everything relating to them is described so vaguely that one is almost tempted to believe that eunuchs exist only in the Arabian Night's Entertainments and other eastern tales, or in the imaginations of the writers, rather than actually belonging to and forming no inconsiderable portion of the human race."[24] Assigning Chinese eunuchs a textual status of reality, Stent's words epitomized the effort to expose the private experience of eunuchism in the public realm.

Neither opinions about the existence of eunuchs nor attacks on the tradition of castration were new to Chinese discourses. But the novelty of Stent's endeavor in making Chinese eunuchs a reality stems from its unambiguous Christian and Orientalist overtone. In his words, "eunuchs are only to be found in eastern despotic countries, the enlightening influence of Christianity preventing such unnatural proceedings being practiced in the countries of those who profess it."[25] For Stent, the "unnatural proceedings" of castration in China reveals "at least one beneficial result of the spread of Christianity; for while we [Christian Westerners] are free from the baneful practice, it is a vile blot on less fortunate countries."[26] Similar to the discourse surrounding *tianzu* (天足, natural foot) in the anti-footbinding movement, the significance of Stent's words lies in his explicit juxtaposition

[23] G. Carter Stent, "Chinese Eunuchs," *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 11 (1877): 143-184.
[24] Stent, "Chinese Eunuchs," p. 143.
[25] Stent, "Chinese Eunuchs," p. 143.
[26] Stent, "Chinese Eunuchs," p. 143.

of China against a more enlightened West with an overt Christian justification.[27] However, Stent's assertion that Christianity and monogamy saved the West from the "unnatural proceedings" of castration is an erroneous interpretation, considering the important role played by the eunuchs in Byzantine history.[28] Defining China as one of the "less fortunate countries," Stent's project was unmistakably Orientalist in nature. It ultimately signaled the arrival of a rhetoric according to which China "lacked" the tools of narrating and recognizing its own deficiency, for which castration, like footbinding, typified an unnatural corporeal practice that was both out of place and time. As Yosefa Loshitzky and Raya Meyuhas have observed, "eunuchs are perceived by the modern Western audience as grotesque rarities of the past that are associated with the 'otherness' of exotic cultures."[29] They have often been regarded as a "barbaric, archaic, and uncivilized phenomenon and therefore as an anachronism."[30]

The aspect of Stent's study that exerts the most lasting historiographic influence is not his missionary message, however, but his discussion of the operation of castration itself. To this day his description of how, where, and by whom Chinese eunuchs were made remains the most cited reference on this topic since its first delivery in the 1870s. In fact, one would look in vain for a serious treatment of the subject that does not follow Stent's footsteps in one way or another. His words thus deserve quoting in full and a serious reappraisal.

> The place where men or boys are made eunuchs is just outside the inner Hsi-'hua gate (內西華門) of the palace, and within the imperial city. It is

[27] Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters*, p. 16.
[28] See Elizabeth James, ed., *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Shaun Tougher, ed., *Eunuchs in Antiquity and Beyond* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2002); Kathryn M. Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant: Eunuchs and the Social Construction of Gender in Byzantium* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Kathryn Ringrose, "Eunuchs in Historical Perspective," *History Compass* 5, no. 2 (2007): 495-506; and Myrto Hatzaki, *Beauty and the Male Body in Byzantium* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 86-115.
[29] Yosefa Loshitzky and Raya Meyuhas, "'Ecstasy of Difference': Bertolucci's The Last Emperor," *Cinema Journal* 31, no. 2 (1992): 26-44, on p. 31.
[30] Loshitzky and Meyuhas, "'Ecstasy of Difference,'" p. 34.

a mean-looking building, and is known as the Chang-tzu, 廠子, *the shed*. Within this building reside several men recognized by government, yet drawing no pay from it—whose duty consists in emasculating those who are desirous of becoming, or are sent to become—eunuchs.

These men are called tao-tzu-chiang, 刀子匠, "*knifers*," and depend entirely for their living on making eunuchs. They get a fixed sum—six taels—for every operation they perform on boys sent or brought to them, and for keep and attendance till the patients are properly recovered.

Grown up men desirous of becoming eunuchs, but who are too poor to pay the necessary fees, make arrangements with the "knifers" to repay them out of their salaries. But in any case the "knifers" dare not operate on them unless they (the candidates) have securities to vouch for their respectability.

The "knifers" have generally one or two apprentices to learn the profession; these are almost invariably members of their own families, so that the profession may be said to be hereditary.

When the operation is about to take place, the candidate or victim—as the case may be—is placed on a *kang* in a sitting—or rather, reclining position. One man supports him round the waist, while two others separate his legs and hold them down firmly, to prevent any movement on his part. The operating "knifer" then stands in front of the men—with his knife in his

hand—and enquires if he will ever repent. If the man at the last moment demurs in the slightest, the "knifer" will not perform the operation, but if he still expresses his willingness, with one sweep of the knife he is made a eunuch.

The operation is performed in this manner:—white ligatures or bandages are bound tightly round the lower part of the belly and the upper parts of the thighs, to prevent too much haemorrage. The parts about to be operated on are then bathed three times with hot pepper-water, the intended eunuch being in the reclining position as previously described. When the parts have been sufficiently bathed, the *whole*,—both testicles and penis—are cut off as closely as possible with a small curved knife, something in the shape of a sickle. The emasculation being effected, a pewter needle or spigot is carefully thrust into the main orifice at the root of the penis; the wound is then covered with paper saturated in cold water and is carefully bound up. After the wound is dressed the patient is made to walk about the room, supported by two of the "knifers," for two or three hours, when he is allowed to lie down.

The patient is not allowed to drink anything for three days, during which time he often suffers great agony, not only from thirst, but from intense pain, and from the impossibility of relieving nature during that period.

At the end of three days the bandage is taken off, the spigot is pulled out, and the sufferer obtains relief in the copious flow of urine which spurts out

> like a fountain. If this takes place satisfactorily, the patient is considered out of danger and congratulated on it; but if the unfortunate wretch cannot make water he is doomed to a death of agony, for the passages have become swollen and nothing can save him.[31]

This passage remains the most authoritative and influential source on the method of Chinese castration. However, for it to be treated as a trustworthy piece of primary evidence, presumably Stent would have to be present when one of such operations took place over the span of at least three days. The richness of his description is certainly remarkable, but its implicit claim of originality and validity is difficult to prove. In fact, this difficulty has not been sufficiently acknowledged in the literature, for almost all scholars of Chinese eunuchism have taken this passage for granted as a first-hand account of what actually happened during such an operation.

But what if Stent did not witness any of the castration surgeries? One can barely begin to imagine the historiographical implications if this were true, especially since Stent's text is indeed the earliest and most sophisticated documentation of how Chinese castration was performed.[32] Even if he did pay a visit to the "knifers" for just a single case of castration, did Stent stay for the entire duration (at least three consecutive days or longer)? In fact, his narrative would have us believe that he had personally observed at least two types of operation—successful and unsuccessful—in order to differentiate survival in the former case and potential death in the latter.

In a slightly different way, the content of Stent's words already betrayed their implicit claim of originality and validity. If the knowledge and skills required for performing castration were transmitted among "knifers" through hereditary apprenticeship, how was it

[31] Stent, "Chinese Eunuchs," pp. 170-171.
[32] The only exception might be the passage documented in Chen, *Bei yange de wenming*, p. 81. However, I have not been able to locate this historical source.

possible for the operation to be described so openly by a Westerner in the first place? If part of the social integrity of the Chinese "knifers" came from maintaining a custom of oral instruction and personal demonstration, it seems highly improbable that a non-family or non-professional member, let alone a foreigner, would be allowed to witness the surgical protocol in such remarkable detail. An empirical proof of the existence of "the shed," where these operations were supposedly performed by the "knifers," would add a layer of validity to Stent's description. However, in their study of eunuchs in Qing and Republican China, scholars have pointed out that no discussion of the "knifers" could be found in the Qing palace archives.[33] As late as 1991, two urologists from Beijing Medical University still conceded that "most people, including urologists, do not have a clear understanding of what is actually done to a man or boy to produce an eunuch."[34]

IV. Changing Paradigms of Masculinity

The exact procedure of castration is important because it essentially defines what makes someone a eunuch. The subtlety of Stent's emphasis that *both* the testes and the penis had to be removed in order for a surgical castration to be considered complete might escape the eyes of modern readers. The emphasis is subtle because this requirement sounds so natural to our ears. But as Gary Taylor has reminded us, if the ultimate purpose of castration is to impair a man's fertility, it is not necessary to destroy the penis but only the testes.[35] In fact, the earliest extant medical description of the operation, by the

[33] Melissa S. Dale, "With the Cut of a Knife: A Social History of Eunuchs during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) and Republican Periods (1912-1949)" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Georgetown University, 2000), p. 37; Liu Guojun (劉國軍) in Zhang Yaoming (張躍銘), *Zhanggong huanguan quanshu: Lidai taijian mishi* (掌宮宦官全書: 歷代太監密史) [The secret histories of eunuchs throughout the dynasties] (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1996), p. 1690.

[34] Wu Chieh Ping and Gu Fang-Liu, "The Prostate in Eunuchs," in *EORTC Genitourinary Group Monograph 10: Eurological Oncology: Reconstructive Surgery, Organ Conservation, and Restoration of Function*, ed. Philip H. Smith and Michele Pavone-Macaluso (New York: Wiley-Liss, 1990), pp. 249-255, on p. 254.

[35] Gary Taylor, *Castration: An Abbreviated History of Western Manhood* (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 85-109.

seventh-century Byzantine Greek physician Paul of Aegina, makes it clear that only the testicles, not the penis, were targeted by the techniques of contusion and excision.[36] Similarly, modern medical reappraisals of the operations performed on the European castrati singers indicate that only testicles were severed.[37] In his ambitious survey of the cultural history of the penis, David Friedman carefully incorporated a broad definition of the organ "not merely as the penile shaft and glass, but encompassing the testes, sperm, and all the other parts and products of the male genitalia."[38] This inclusive definition was fruitful for Friedman's undertaking precisely because the penile shaft had not always been the sole locus of biological masculinity since the beginning of Western civilization.

Indeed, Stent's discussion elicited polarizing reactions from those who claimed to have had personal interactions with the palace eunuchs. Dong Guo, author of a pioneer 1985 study on the history of Chinese eunuchs, contended that Stent's account is outright erroneous.[39] According to his conversations with Peking palace eunuchs, "the key [to castration] is this: when someone is made a eunuch at a relatively young age, the procedure resembles the gelding of pigs by removing or protruding the testicles. This operation is at least not fatal, and because there is no major concern over bacterial infection from the cut, the person recovers in three to five days."[40] On the other hand, based on their physical examination of the last group of Chinese eunuchs conducted in the 1960s, the two urologists from Beijing Medical University seconded Stent's observation: they confirmed that both the penis and the testes were detached from the eunuchs' body.[41] Though both were established on personal interactions with eunuchs, the discrepancy between verbal and visual evidence

[36] J. Lascaratos and A. Kostakopoulus, "Operations on Hermaphrodites and Castration in Byzantine Times (324-1453 AD)," *Urologia internationalis* 58, no. 4 (1997): 232-235.
[37] Enid Rhodes Peschel and Richard E. Peschel, "Medical Insights into the Castrati in Opera," *American Scientist* 75 (1987): 581-582.
[38] David M. Friedman, *A Mind of Its Own: A Cultural History of the Penis* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), p. 4.
[39] Dong Guo (東郭), *Taijian shengyai* (太監生涯) [The life of eunuchs] (Yonghe City: Shishi chuban gongsi, 1985), p. 21.
[40] Dong, *Taijian shengyai* , p. 22 (see also p. 12).
[41] Wu and Gu, "The Prostate in Eunuchs."

nonetheless left a historical residue of ambiguity surrounding the surgical parameters of castration. This exemplifies how "micro" accounts of eunuchoidal corporeality do not and *cannot* all subsume under "macro" narrations.

Recognizing this epistemic discrepancy, the urologists pointed out the popular "erroneous use of the term 'castration.'" "Although the Greek root of the word 'eunouchos' does indicate a castrated person," they explained, "the eunuch is not only castrated…'Emasculation' should be the right term to describe the procedure…We think it is better to define 'emasculation' as 'removal of external genitalia in man or boy', leaving 'castration' for removal of the testes.'"[42] This shift in conceptual preference from "castration" to "emasculation" highlights an important historical transformation in the biological definition of manhood: from a cultural regime of the scrotum to a regime of the penis. Between the sixteenth and twentieth century, the anatomical measure of manliness changed from whether a man has balls to whether a man has a big stick.[43] This fall of the scrotum and rise of the penis was accompanied by the process by which desire and libidinal pleasures replaced status and reproduction as the organizing principle for making sexual acts socially meaningful.[44] In late imperial China, the decline of the status-centered paradigm directly led to the increasing legal relevance of a gender-performance paradigm.[45]

One of the cultural forces that cemented the transformation from a scrotum-centered to a penis-centered regime of masculinity in Western Europe and America was the popularization of Freudian psychoanalysis in the early twentieth century. For Freud,

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[42] Wu and Gu, "The Prostate in Eunuchs," pp. 254-255.
[43] Taylor, *Castration*, pp. 46-47.
[44] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990 [1976]; Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800* (London: Longman, 1981); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985); John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper & Row., 1988); Sharon Ullman, *Sex Seen: The Emergence of Modern Sexuality in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Arnold Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).
[45] Matthew H. Sommer, *Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

castration anxiety was symptomatic of a psychogenic fear, or at least recognition, of "the lack of penis."[46] His most influential and controversial French disciple, Jacques Lacan, would subsequently prioritize the symbolic meaning of the *phallus* in lieu of the anatomical penis.[47] But the phallus is nothing but a figuration of the physical organ, a transcendental penis, so to speak, that extends rather than subverts its anatomical register.[48] To quote Taylor's astute insight, "castration—in humanist Europe, as in previous human societies—attacked the scrotum. In twentieth-century psychoanalysis, by contrast, castration has been redefined as an attack on the penis."[49]

V. Medical Images as Proof and Evidence

In the 1890s, one of the foremost "pillars" supporting the characterization of Chinese castration more as an attack on the penis can be found in the reports of the American physician Robert Coltman (1862-1931) (**Figure 2**). Born in Washington, Coltman received his medical training at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. He was appointed Professor of Anatomy at the Imperial School of Combined Learning (Tongwen Guan, 同文館, which later became part of Peking University) in 1896, Professor of Surgery at the Imperial University of Peking (later known as Peking University) in 1898, and personal physician to the Chinese royal family and surgeon at both the Imperial Maritime Customs and the Imperial Chinese Railways around that time.[50] Coltman was also known for his two books, *The Chinese, Their Present and Future: Medical, Political, and Social* (1891) and the

[46] Sigmund Freud, "The Passing of the Oedipus Complex," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 5 (1924): 419-424. For an account of the relevance of female castration to the development of psychoanalysis, see Carla Bonomi, "The Relevance of Castration and Circumcision to the Origins of Psychoanalysis: 1. The Medical Context," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 90 (2009): 551-580.
[47] See Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1977).
[48] For feminist endorsements of Lacan over Freud, see especially Jane Gallop, *Reading Lacan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 20-21.
[49] Taylor, *Castration*, p. 91.
[50] "Dr. Robert Coltman, Royalty's Friend, Dies; Was Physician to the Former Imperial Family of China, Where He Lived for Forty Years," *New York Times*, November 5, 1931, p. 23.

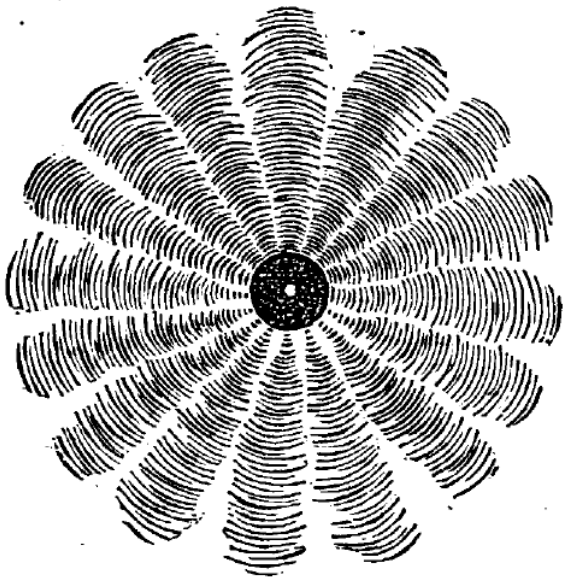
more famous *Beleaguered in Peking: The Boxer's War Against the Foreigner* (1901), which reflected his reputation for being the first Westerner to reach the outside world during the siege of Peking by the Boxers.[51] In 1894, Coltman presented a hand-drawn image of the site of castration as it appeared on the body of one of his patients (**Figure 3**). The expository text indicates that the image was produced by a Chinese assistant, a "xylographist."



The author in Chinese dress

Figure 2: Photograph of the American doctor Robert Coltman in Chinese dress (1901).

[51] Robert Coltman, *The Chinese, Their Present and Future: Medical, Political, and Social* (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis, 1891); Robert Coltman, *Beleaguered in Peking: The Boxer's War Against the Foreigner* (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis, 1901).



CICATRIX OF EUNUCH.

* In reproducing the above, our Chinese xylographist has somewhat improved on the original sketch, with regard to geometrical nicety.—(ED.)

Figure 3: Drawing of an eunuch's castration site (1894).

Coltman included this image in an article called "Peking Eunuchs," which appeared in the *China Medical Missionary Journal* in 1894.[52] The article was intended as a follow-up on his earlier discussion of three eunuchs in the *Universal Medical Journal* in 1893.[53] Together, the two entries mentioned six Chinese eunuchs in total who visited Coltman for medical assistance. These eunuchs came to Coltman mainly for the obliteration of the urethral orifice, because they all suffered from the closing up of the orifice which led to urination problems. Based on the six cases of eunuchs whom he treated, Coltman observed that "The majority of the eunuchs here [in China] have penis and testicles removed entire."[54] This statement was remarkable to him, because, as Coltman himself conceded, he "never for a moment supposed the mutilation extended beyond the testicles."[55] We will revisit Coltman in greater detail below when we compare Westerner's accounts and eunuchs'

[52] Robert Coltman, "Peking Eunuchs," *China Medical Missionary Journal* 8 (1894): 28-29.
[53] Robert Coltman, "Self-Made Eunuchs," *Universal Medical Journal* (November 1893): 328-329.
[54] Coltman, "Self-Made Eunuchs," p. 329.
[55] Coltman, "Peking Eunuchs," p. 28.

narration of their own castration experience. For now, suffice it to say that the textual descriptions and the image of castration that he presented helped (re)define Chinese castration specifically in terms of a penis-center paradigm of masculinity.

Similar to Stent's justification of a superior West, Coltman expressed "disgust and contempt" toward his Chinese eunuch patients.[56] His final word on them was "Do such specimen of humanity deserve sympathy?"[57] If we were to read the castration experience of Chinese eunuchs through the lens of Coltman's papers, we might subscribe to the view that the castrated male body undoubtedly *needed* Western biomedical assistance. We might hasten to add that the enlightenment nature of Western medicine was a viewpoint acknowledged even by Chinese eunuchs themselves, as demonstrated by their very decision to turn to Coltman for medical assistance. However, it is interesting to note that this group of eunuchs all expressed a considerable measure of resistance to treatment by a Western doctor, even a prestigious one like Coltman who became personal physician to the Chinese imperial family: none of them returned to Coltman after their first visit even if they were explicitly instructed to do so for health reasons and their own recovery assessment. Therefore, by exposing the eunuch's body, Coltman's medical reports on Chinese castration ultimately contributed to its demise. In reading these reports, one detects an unprecedented fracturing of the meaning and experience of eunuchism. The failed mutuality and reciprocation between the eunuchs and Coltman marked the rise of a disjuncture in the experience of eunuchs—a discrepancy between foreigners' totalizing condemnation and their own embodied selves.

An additional piece of "evidence" that construed Chinese castration as the removal of penis and not just the testicles came from another "outsider," Dr. Jean-Jacques Matignon (1866-1928). Matignon had been a physician to the French legation in Peking since 1894.

[56] Coltman, "Peking Eunuchs," p. 28.
[57] Coltman, "Peking Eunuchs," p. 29.

Having established a high reputation among European colonial officials, Matignon was about to be made Knight of the Legion of Honor. The unfortunate news of his victimization in the "Peking Massacre," the Boxer Uprising, reached Europe in July 1900.[58] In 1896, Matignon offered an illustration of the surgical instruments used in castration (**Figure 4**). Unfortunately, he did not indicate the source of these drawings, so it remains difficult to verify their originality and validity. He also obtained a photograph that exposes the naked body of a Chinese eunuch and reveals the physical site of castration (**Figure 5**). In the article in which Matignon first published these images, which continue to be circulated widely today, he repeated Stent's earlier description of how castration was operated in China. In other words, Matignon was explicit in his intention in adding credibility to Stent's words with the new visual evidence he provided.[59]

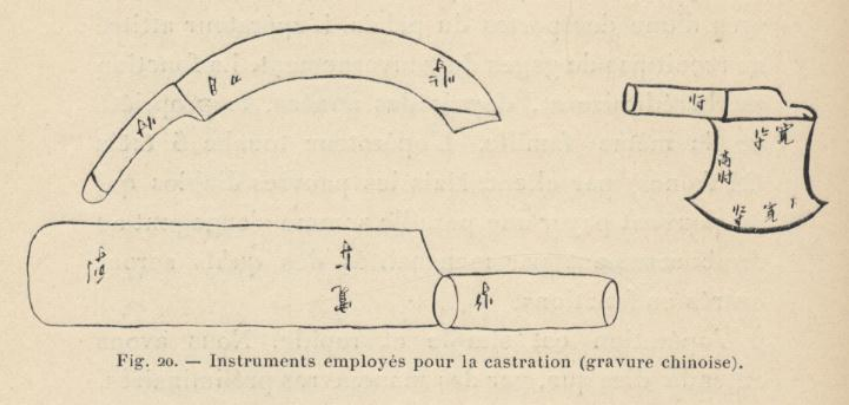


Fig. 20. — Instruments employés pour la castration (gravure chinoise).

Figure 4: Instruments used for Chinese castration (1896).

[58] "Obituary: J. J. Matignon," *British Medical Journal* 2, no. 2065 (1900): 268.
[59] Jean-Jacques Matignon, "Les eunuchen in Peking," *Arch Clin Bordeaux* 5 (1896): 193-204, reprinted in Jean-Jacques Matignon, *Superstition, crime et misére en Chine: sourvenirs de biologie sociale* (Lyon: A. Storck & Cie, 1899).



Figure 5: Photograph of an eunuch of the Imperial Palace in Peking (1896).

This photographic proof of a Chinese eunuch's "lack of penis" makes it difficult for any viewer to deny its captured reality. The challenge is more conspicuous in Matignon's photograph than in Coltman's image. The difficulty largely stems from the indirect cultural labor of the photo, in which the unilateral viewing didactic turns the beholder's gaze into the object of the eunuch's gaze. As Michel de Certeau has put it, a compelling reading of cultural representation pays attention not only to "the production of the image," but also to the less obvious "secondary production hidden in the process of its utilization."[60] Or, in the

[60] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California

words of Michael Taussig, "The image is more powerful that what it is an image of."[61] In the photograph presented by Matignon, the eunuch's reciprocal gaze forces anyone looking at his exposed body but to surrender to an implicit operation of knowledge that if neglected would indicate a betrayal of his or her own eyes. To deny that the eunuch's corporeal experience was marked by "the lack of penis" would mean to disqualify the very spectatorial relationship (between the viewer and the seemingly uncensored record of the naked eunuchoidal body) that made the denial possible in the first place. On the eve of the twentieth century, Matignon's photo thus consolidated a visual layering of "truth" about Chinese castration—that it involved the elimination of male genitalia in its entirety. This ocular evidence added credence to Stent's earlier textual description, establishing the absence of both the penis *and* the scrotum as an indisputable reality in a castrated Chinese body from this point onward. It paved the way for twentieth-century discussions of Chinese castration to *forget* any eunuchoidal corporeality outside a penis-centered paradigm of masculinity.

The broader import of this amnesia cannot be overstated. The aforementioned cultural mechanics fundamental to its shaping were part of a global circuit of power relations, one that mediated the rise of Chinese medical photography in the late nineteenth century.[62] According to Sarah Fraser,

> Photography's role in shaping China's image from 1860 to 1900 is evident in the visual transformation of the Chinese subject of over a half-century of colonial intervention. In these shifts related to China's visual culture, the camera was an instrument of the contemporary practice to create types, classify peoples, and impose hierarchies upon the world as it was being

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Press, 1984), p. xiii.

[61] Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 62.

[62] Larissa N. Heinrich, "The Pathological Empire: Early Medical Photography in China," *History of Photography* 30, no. 1 (2006): 26-37.

> observed…By the turn of the century, the photographic lens was focused on larger statements about "the Chinese" and national character. Scenes of itinerant workers, destitute people, and military captives at the time of the Boxer Uprising reflect racial debates about the modern Chinese subject prevalent in international power relations.[63]

In her study of the translational politics of visualizing the Chinese, Larissa Heinrich has similarly pointed out that "in early medical photography in China we see the convergence of those colonial, commercial, ethnographic, and scientific ideologies that marked the indisputable entrance of the 'Chinese specimen' into global discourses of race and health."[64] Through its heterogeneous modes of circulation (e.g., archives, museums, private collections, and publications) and deployment of stylistics (e.g., the "before and after" clinical contrasting trope, portraiture, battlefield documentary, and erotic thematization), photographic images of the ill de-contextualized and re-contextualized Chinese identity by "representing supposedly specifically Chinese pathologies to a global medical community."[65] In the formative years of China's nation formation, the increasing popularity of clinical photography gave representational claims of Chinese pathology a new set of cultural valence and ideological relevance. The diseased ontology of the photographic specimen came to be absorbed by the very medium of its cultural production and naturalized as representative of the inherently pathological quality of Chinese empire and identity. Over the course of the nineteenth

[63] Sarah E. Fraser, "Chinese as Subject: Photographic Genres in the Nineteenth Century," in *Brush and Shutter: Early Photography in China*, ed. Jeffrey W. Cody and Frances Terpak (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute, 2011), pp. 91-109, on p. 106.
[64] Larissa N. Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images: Translating the Pathological Body between China and the West* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), p. 76.
[65] Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images*, p. 105.

century, China was granted entrance into the global system of nation-states on the condition of being racially stereotyped as "the Sick Man of Asia" with growing intensity.[66]

The evolving relationship of the camera to its object of representation relied on, among other things, the circulation of certain medical beliefs about Chinese identity, which substantiated the "Sick Man" stereotype: in the nineteenth century, China was blamed to be the original home of the Bubonic plague, cholera, small pox, and, eventually, leprosy.[67] Through its photographic presence as medical specimens, the castrated male body joined the bound feet, the leper's crippled body, and other exotic corporeal "types" as exemplars of the material figuration of diseased embodiment peculiar to China. In this sense, Matignon's photograph could be viewed as a "confession of the flesh," whereby the penis-absent enuchoidal body displayed and circulated through it helped solidify an ideological portrayal of China as intrinsically deficient, problematic, and in need of Western (biomedical) assistance. Indeed, when we go back to Matignon's photo (**Figure 5**), what we are looking at is less about "what is wrong with the eunuch," than about "what is wrong with China." Or to borrow Jacques Derrida's terms, the ghost of the penis affirms the spectral presence of the Eurocentrically commodified body; the *hauntology* of this absent presence revalue the global ontology and epistemology of Being Chinese and knowing what Chinese is.[68]

How can the legacy of this (post-)coloniality be evaluated? When we compare a set of photographs of eunuchs published in an English medical article in 1933 (**Figure 6**) with images filed in the Qing palace archive (**Figure 7**), we witness a distinct contrast in the operation of their epistemological claims. Although both images objectify the eunuch's

[66] On the evolving politics of "the Sick Man of Asia," apart from Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images* (2008), see also Yang, *Bingfu, huanghuo yu shuishi* (2010); Keevak, *Becoming Yellow* (2011); and Rojas, *The Sick Man of Asia* (forthcoming).

[67] Carol Benedict, *Bubonic Plague in Nineteenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 166; François Delaporte, *Disease and Civilization: The Cholera in Paris* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986); Larissa N. Heinrich, "How China Became 'the Cradle of Small Pox': Transformations in Discourse, 1726-2002," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 15, no. 1 (2007): 7-34; Angela Leung, *Leprosy in China: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

[68] Jacques Derrida, *Specter of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994).

body, the former carefully structures the viewer's position in the subjective terms of clinical (and, one not must forget, colonial) gaze.[69] As the object of this particular kind of gaze, the naked bodies of eunuchs constitute the pathological material ground on which the didactics of spectatorship was made possible in the first place. These unclothed bodies are intended to be compared, deciphered, and scrutinized in every minute detail, and such an attempt on the part of the viewer is comforted, or at least made less guilt-driven, by the artificial "blindfolding" of the patient's eyes, an epitome of twentieth-century medical photography. Unlike the eunuch in Matignon's photograph, the eunuchs in this photograph are stripped away of their ability to stare back at the person who is looking at them. Their anonymity thereby makes the power inbalance of this entire visual stimulation all the less threatening to the viewer. The images of eunuchs in the Qing palace archive, on the other hand, defy the foreigner's clinical and colonial spectatorship. The fully clothed body and the revealing eyes depict these young eunuchs in the normative terms of the native population, not an ostensibly mysterious, deficient object waiting to be investigated and treated according to the normative metrics of Western biomedicine.

[69] This colonial gaze, strictly speaking, is not identical to the kind of clinical gaze described by Foucault. For Foucault's historicization of the Western medical gaze, see Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (New York: Vintage, 1994). For important critiques of Foucault's colonial blind spot, see, for example, Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

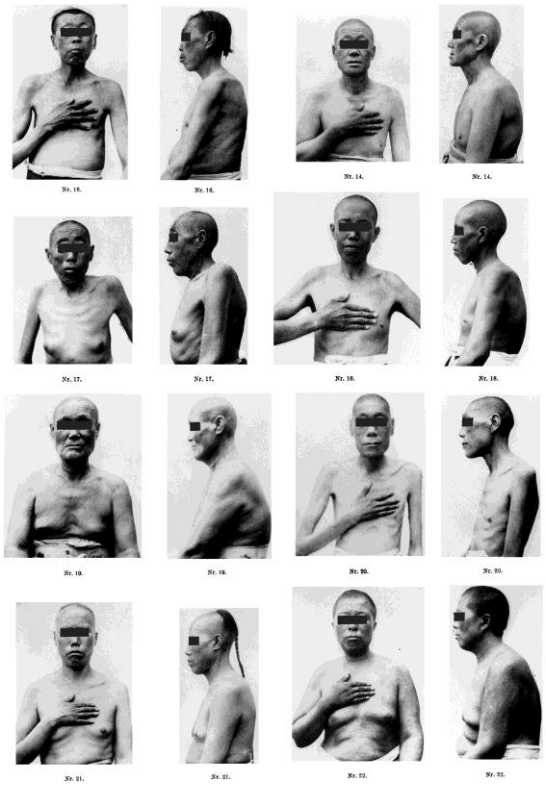


Figure 6: Western medical images of Chinese eunuchs (1933).

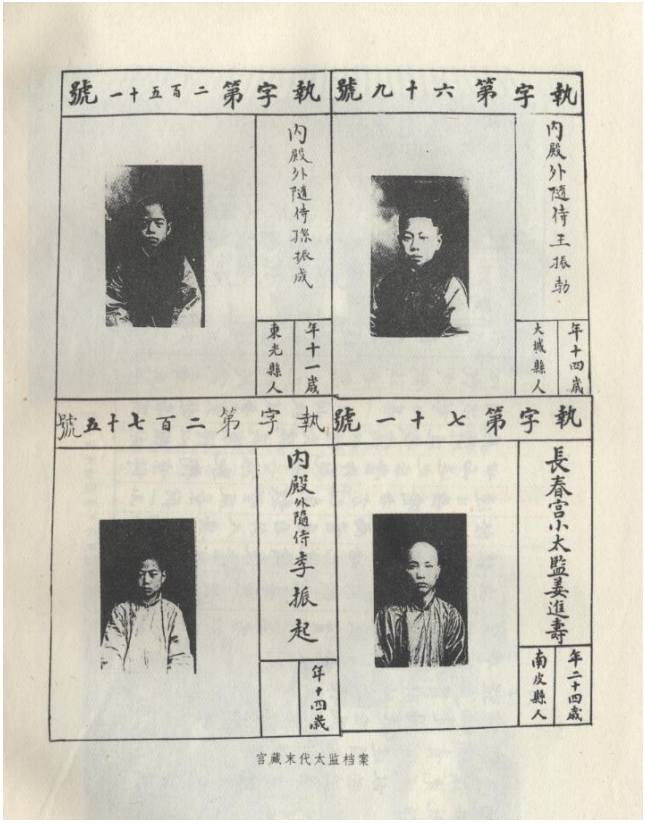


Figure 7: Photographs of eunuchs from the Qing Palace Archive.

The transformation in the power and epistemological claims of these images parallels Ruth Rogaski's insight regarding the conceptual transformation of *weisheng* in treaty-port China: what accompanied "a growing hegemony of biomedical approaches to health in the public discourse of Chinese elites" was "a concurrent acceptance of a picture of the Chinese people as inherently lacking when compared with Western-defined standards of health."[70] In the wake of what she calls hygienic modernity, the state launched an unprecedented public health campaign in which the meaning of *weisheng* moved away from a correlative cosmology of "guarding life," and toward an embrace of Western biomedical standards of health, disease, and cleanliness. Whether in the visual sphere of medical representation or in the conceptual domain of medical epistemology, imperialist circuits of power seized the Chinese body as an instrument for the production and validation of global knowledge claims about its inferiority. Nineteenth-century Western imperialism thus "left a brand on China," after which the image of China as a "castrated civilization" could be accepted, recycled, and even projected by the Chinese themselves.[71]

VI. From Missionary Narration to Eunuchs' Agency

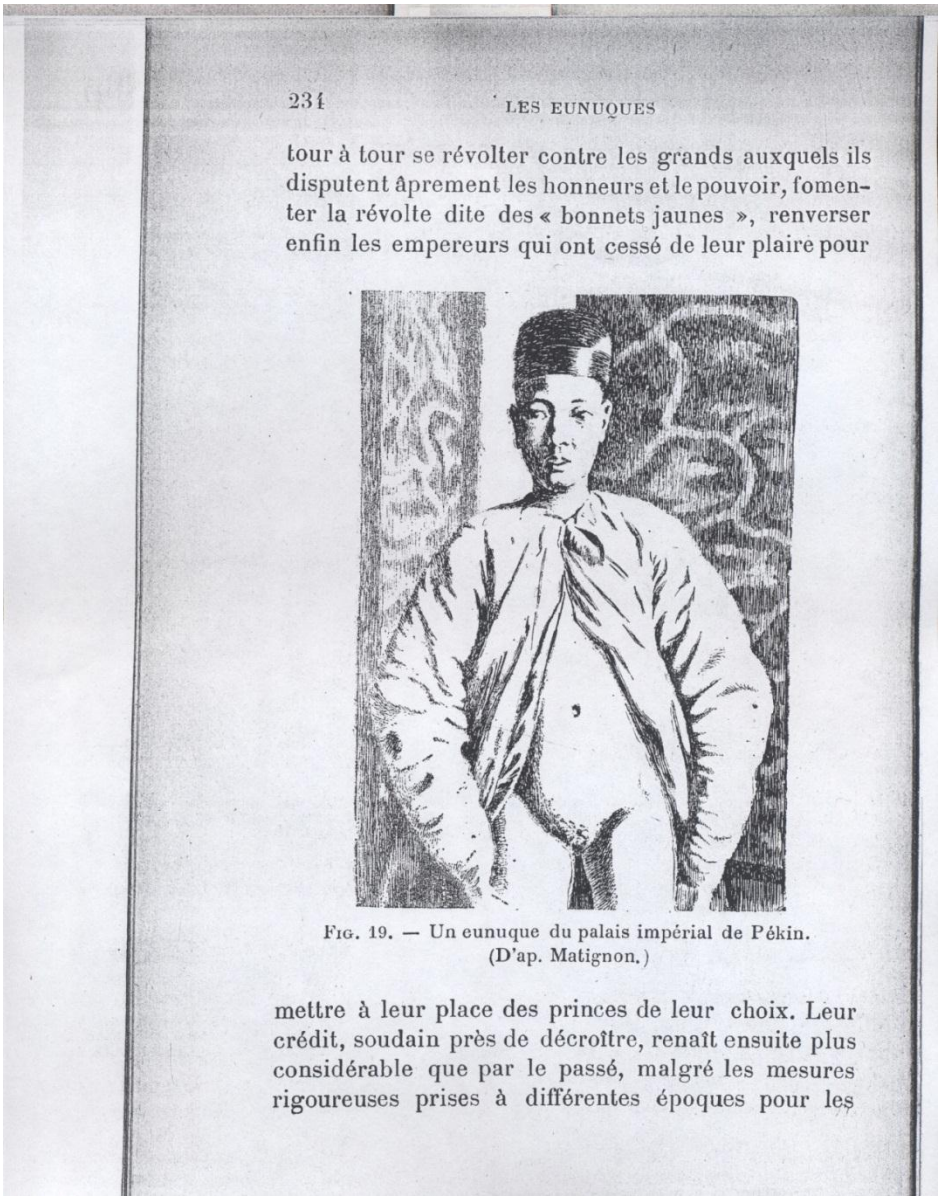
Historians and other scholars have treated the accounts of Stent, Coltman, and Matignon as the bona fide source record of how castration was conducted in late Qing China, and have relied on them accordingly to reconstruct the presumed historical reality of the practice. For example, in his widely cited *Chinese Eunuchs* (1970), the only source Taisuke

[70] Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press), p. 9.

[71] See James Hevia, "Leaving a Brand on China: Missionary Discourse in the Wake of the Boxer Movement," *Modern China* 18, no. 3 (1992): 304-332; James Hevia, "Looting Beijing: 1860, 1900," in *Tokens of Exchange: The Problem of Translation in Global Circulations*, ed. Lydia H. Liu (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 192-213; and James Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003). See also Lydia Liu, *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

Mitamua drew on in describing how the operation proceeded in late imperial China was Stent's documentation.[72] In their renowned *History of Chinese Medicine* (1936), K. Chimin Wong and Wu Lien-teh re-narrated Stent's description under the section on early Chinese surgery and reprinted Matignon's photograph that exposed a naked eunuch.[73] The entirety of Stent's article even made its way into the pages of one of the most humanist study of eunuchs to date, Charles Humana's *The Keeper of The Bed: A Study of the Eunuch* (1973).[74] A hand-drawn version of Matignon's photograph also appeared in Richard Millant's 1908 medical study of eunuchism, which treated the subject as a type of sexual perversion (**Figure 8**).[75] And these famous citations of Stent and Matignon represent only the tip of the iceberg. Even in his 1996 study of Ming-dynasty eunuchs, Henry Tsai still infers information about the castration operation in the early modern period from sources that are produced in the modern period, which always adopt a distinctively nationalist bias and are couched either in a scientific tone of objective observation or as an impassioned plea for abolition.[76]

[72] Mitamura Taisuke, *Chinese Eunuchs: The Structure of Intimate Politics*, trans. Charles A. Pomeroy (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle, 1970), pp. 28-35.
[73] K. Chimin Wong and Wu Lien-teh, *History of Chinese Medicine: Being a Chronicle of Medical Happenings in China from Ancient Times to the Present Period*, 2nd ed. (Shanghai: National Quarantine Service, 1936), pp.232-234.
[74] Charles Humana, *The Keeper of the Bed: A Study of the Eunuch* (London: Arlington, 1973), pp. 125-153.
[75] Richard Millant, *Les Eunuches à travers les ages* (Paris: Vigot, 1908), p. 234.
[76] Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *The Eunuchs in the Ming Dynasty* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995).



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tour à tour se révolter contre les grands auxquels ils disputent âprement les honneurs et le pouvoir, fomenter la révolte dite des « bonnets jaunes », renverser enfin les empereurs qui ont cessé de leur plaire pour

FIG. 19. — Un eunuque du palais impérial de Pékin. (D'ap. Matignon.)

mettre à leur place des princes de leur choix. Leur crédit, soudain près de décroître, renaît ensuite plus considérable que par le passé, malgré les mesures rigoureuses prises à différentes époques pour les

Figure 8: A hand-drawn replicate of Matignon's eunuch photo (1908).

Such detailed record as Stent, Coltman, and Matignon's was never committed in writing or visual imaging when castration was a widely accepted practice, because instructions for the practice were transmitted orally and demonstrated corporeally. Starting in the late nineteenth century, however, the availability of both textual and visual documentations regarding what castration entailed signaled the creation of new knowledge about eunuchs' bodies and new venues of its circulation. At the very least, this "repository" unveiled the secrecy surrounding the operation, transforming a private matter into something

public. It is therefore reasonable that scholars of Chinese eunuchs have accorded Stent's account a high level of evidential authority, celebrating it as a rare piece of primary source about the practice. Similarly, Matignon's photograph continues to be circulated today as solid evidence for a regime of masculinity defined around the penis.

However, by bringing a corporeal practice as private as castration into the public domain, both Stent's textual description and Coltman and Matignon's visualization actually elevated, rather than diminished, the tension between the private and the public awareness of Chinese eunuchism. These foreigners' epistemic standardization of the castrated body in the public domain simultaneously made its personal relevance all the more invisible, silencing any corporeal embodiment of eunuchism that did not match their globalizing narrative. The development of the increasing irrelevancy of certain forms of corporeal experience thus went hand in hand with the collapse of eunuchism as a contested subject of experience. Their effort, in other words, constituted the first major step in making a practice as incendiary as castration one of the most *un*controversial issues in and out of China.

From this standpoint, what appears to be utterly inadequate about the existing literature on Chinese eunuchs is the one-sided meaning scholars have assigned and extrapolated from the act of castration—the permanent elimination of the biological reproductive capability of men. Here, it might be useful to borrow the insight of Nancy Rose Hunt from a different context (early twentieth-century Congo) to help us appreciate the significance of castration in Chinese history: namely, to "broaden our focus from reproduction narrowly defined in demographic and medical terms as fecundity and the birth of children, to social and cultural reproduction."[77] Insofar as our perception of the consequences of castration remains inside the framework of biomedical reproduction, the

[77] Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon: Of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 32.

other half of the historical story completely escapes our attention: the castration of male bodies also *reproduces* eunuchs socially and culturally in imperial China.

To the extent that scholars have neglected the social and cultural reproductive aspect of castration, it could be said that they have implicitly behaved as passive agents of Western biomedicine in reinforcing its epistemic authority. Since the nineteenth century, the languages of Western reproductive anatomy and biology have provided both historians and historical actors an overt epistemic apparatus for privileging the biological consequence of castration to be the only indicator of its socio-cultural function and reality.[78] As a result of this revaluation of its social-cultural reproductive meaning in a biomedical lexicon, the castrated male body easily became a "third sex" (sex as understood in the anatomical terms of Western biomedicine) and a sign for the inherently deficiency of the Chinese body, thereby enabling a cultural depiction of China as a "castrated civilization" that lacked virility.

To overcome this limited reading, we need to acknowledge the constructed nature of the bifurcation of Chinese castration as a mode of historical experience rather than re-naturalizing it. On the level of personal-private experience, castration denotes a ritualized episode where the death of a man's biological fertility intersected with the birth of his new life as a eunuch. On the level of public-collective experience, castration represents a category that has marked both the elimination of its social and cultural reproductive role in history and the flattening of its epistemic significance to a biomedical one. In reducing the importance of castration to the realm of biology on both the macro and micro levels of historical experience, scholars have inevitably fallen short in handling the question of eunuchs' *agency* in their social and cultural reproduction.

[78] See, for example, Benjamin Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), chaps. 8 and 11; Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Science in Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), chap. 4; Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images*; Yi-Li Wu, *Reproducing Women: Medicine, Metaphor, and Childbirth in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); and chapter 2 of this dissertation.

VII. The Social and Cultural Reproduction of Eunuchism: Daily Experts

Whether we consider the scrotum to be the seat of male fertility or the penis the locus of male pleasure, the intended effect of castration on eunuchs is the deprivation of their power to breed biologically. And that's it. They were not impotent in any other sense. Jennifer Jay, for instance, has shown that Chinese eunuchs retained an overtly "male" gender in aspiring to a traditional Confucian lifestyle: "From both the historical sources and the anecdotal reminiscences of Qing eunuchs, it seems that with very few exceptions, the Chinese eunuchs were without gender confusion at the time of castration, and after the operation they experienced physiological changes but no apparent shift in their gender identity and male-oriented role in society."[79] Many eunuchs got married, adopted children, or had kids before offering themselves to the imperial court, suggesting that their masculine social role remained intact as they continued to embrace Confucian family norms. Quite simply put, undergoing castration did not indicate, to them and to their surrounding community, a complete erasure of their masculine identity. More importantly, eunuchs also faced a greater degree of opportunity and power in comparison to other female servants (宮女, *gongnü*) inside the palace.[80] Indeed, the extent of their involvement in the political arena has been the predominant focus of Chinese historiography ever since their institutional lives were first systematically documented in 1769 in *The History of the Palace* (*Guochao gongshi*), a project commissioned by the Qianlong Emperor.[81]

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[79] Jennifer W. Jay, "Another Side of Chinese Eunuch History: Castration, Adoption, Marriage, and Burial," *Canadian Journal of History* 28, no. 3 (1993): 459-478, on p. 466.

[80] By a greater degree of opportunity and power, I am referring to explicit/legal opportunities and power. One could argue that it was still possible for *gongnü* to exercise some kind of *de facto* political power implicitly, such as based on their ties to powerful female figures inside the palace. On the role of eunuchs in the Qing court, see Evelyn Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 162-166.

[81] Yu Minzhong (于敏中), ed., *Guochao gongshi* (國朝宮史) [A history of the palace during the Qing period], 5 vols. (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1965); Qing Gui (慶桂) et al., ed., *Guochao gongshi xubian* (國朝宮史續) [A supplemental history of the palace of the reigning dynasty], reprint ed. (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1994).

But conventional wisdom tends to explain the politically corrupt activities of Chinese eunuchs as the result of their internalized anger and frustration with their lost manhood.[82] Gary Taylor might have a point here in inviting us to view the eunuch as "not a defective man but an improved one."[83] In imperial China, apart from the court officials, eunuchs were after all the people whom the Emperor and his family trusted more than any other men. The tremendous political power Chinese eunuchs wielded extended beyond the bedchamber to the rest of the palace and, in well-known examples during the Tang and Ming dynasties, arguably throughout the Chinese empire.[84] Therefore, the political power of eunuchs should be interpreted less as an effect of their de-masculinized subjectivity, than a definitive feature of their social and cultural sense of self as gendered through their abiding presence in Chinese history.[85]

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[82] See, for example, Shi *Zhongguo huanguan mishi: renzao de disanxing*, pp. 8-12; Zou Lü 鄒律, *Lidai mingtaijian miwen* (歷代名太監祕聞) [The secrets of famous eunuchs] (Tianjin: Tianjin renming chubanshe, 1988), p. 306; Gu Rong (顧蓉) and Ge Jinfang (葛金芳), *Wuheng weiqiang—gudai huanguan qunti de wenhua kaocha* (霧橫帷牆—古代宦官群體的文化考察) [A study of the culture of ancient eunuchs] (Shanxi: Shanxi renmin jiaoyu chubanshe, 1992), pp. 316-354; Tang Yinian (唐益年), *Qing gong taidian* (清宮太監) [Qing palace eunuchs] (Shenyang: Liaoning University Press, 1993), p. 5; Yan Dongmei (閻東梅) and Dong Cunfa (董存發), *Ren zhong yao—wan Qing quanjian zhi mi* (人中妖—晚清權監之謎) [Monsters among humans: The riddle of late-Qing powerful eunuchs] (Beijing: China Renmin University Press, 1995), pp. 3-6; Wang, *Shenmi de disanxing*, p. i; Zhang, *Zhanggong huanguan quanshu*, p. 6; Xiao Yanqing (肖燕清) in Zhang, *Zhanggong huanguan quanshu*, p. 1901. See also the negative depiction of eunuchs in Han Suolin (韓索林), *Huanguan shanquan gailan* (宦官擅權概覽) [An overview of the power of eunuchs] (Shenyang: Liaoning University Press, 1991 [1967]); Du Wanyan (杜婉言), *Zhongguo huanguanshi* (中國宦官史) [History of Chinese eunuchs] (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1996); Zhang Yunfeng (張雲風), *Zhongguo huanguan shilui* (中國宦官事略) [Matters regarding Chinese eunuchs] (Taipei: Dadi, 2004); Wang Shounan (王壽南), *Tangdai de huanguan* (唐代的宦官) [Tang-dynasty eunuchs] (Taipei: Commercial Press, 2004); Shiniankanchai (十年砍柴), *Huangdi, wenchen he taijian: Mingchao zhengju de "sanjiaolian"* (皇帝,文臣和太監: 明朝政局的"三角戀") [The emperor, scholar officials, and eunuchs: The triangular relationship of the political situation in the Ming dynasty] (Nanning: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2007); Wang Jingzhong (汪靖中), *Wugen zhi gen: Zhongguo huanguan shihua* (無根之根: 中國宦官史話) [The roots of the rootless: History of Chinese eunuchs] (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 2009).

[83] Taylor, *Castration*, p. 38.

[84] Wang, *Shenmi de disanxing*, pp. 60-94, 115-155; Tsai, *The Eunuchs in the Ming Dynasty*; David Robinson, *Bandits, Eunuchs, and the Son of Heaven: Rebellion and the Economy of Violence in Mid-Ming China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); Wang Sho, *Tangdai de huanguan*; Zhang Chengxiang (張承祥), "Wan Ming huanguan Feng Bao zhi yanjiu" (晚明宦官馮保之研究) [Research on the late Ming eunuch Feng Bao] (M.A. thesis, National Central University, 2006); Shiniankanchai, *Huangdi, wenchen he taijian*.

[85] Historians today continue to have a difficult time in resisting the appeal of the trope of "emasculation," despite their critical positioning of their analyses of Chinese eunuchs. See, for example, Melissa Dale, "Understanding Emasculation: Western Medical Perspectives on Chinese Eunuchs," *Social History of Medicine* 23, no. 1 (2010): 38-55; Christine Doran, "Chinese Palace Eunuchs: Shadows of the Emperor," *Nebula: A*

Eunuchs could not reproduce biologically, but the practice of castration made their social and cultural reproduction possible. So even if it was not physically feasible for them to give birth to future generations of their own kind, eunuchs frequently took an active role in overseeing the nuts-and-bolts of castration, the single most important procedure that defined their identity. According to a lithograph from Shanghai in the late nineteenth century (**Figure 9**), when instances of self-castration occurred on the streets of late imperial Peking, eunuchs were the authorities to whom people often turned for assistance. The title of the lithograph is "How He Lost His Significance One Morning," and the textual description of the incident reads as follows:

> There once was a man named Tang who lived outside the Shunzhimen Gate in Peking. Though in his early twenties, Tang had already acquired the evil habit of gambling and on one recent occasion had lost all of his money. He had no place to flee to, nor any way to repay his debts.
>
> On the ninth of last month, Tang proceeded to the Changyu Pawnshop with the intention of obtaining two strings of cash by pawning a pair of short pants. The pawnbroker on duty told Tang that his pants weren't worth that much, and that he would have to add something more substantial if he hoped to obtain the desired amount. To this Tang replied, "But all I've got to my name are my balls (卵袋)!"
>
> "That would be just fine!" replied the pawnbroker with a laugh.

Tang walked away in a huff. When he got home, he sharpened his knife—which had a blade sharp enough to fell a kingdom—and returned to the Changyu Pawnshop. When he got there he removed all of his clothing and stood there as naked as when he was proceeded to turn himself into a sawed-off shotgun with a single energetic slash of his knife, losing enough blood in the process to float a pestle.

Tang passed out immediately, whereupon the pawnbroker, frightened out of his wits, rushed off to a local official's residence to find a eunuch who could come to Tang's rescue. On the way, he stopped at North City police headquarters to report the incident. Within minutes, the police had dispatched a runner to arrest the pawnbroker, and subjected him to a thorough questioning. Only through the intervention of an intermediary was he able to extract himself from a potentially burdensome lawsuit.

In the meantime, Tang had been carried home on a wooden plank, but he had lost so much blood that his life hung in a delicate balance. The proceedings described above cost the pawnshop some four hundred taels of silver.[86]

[86] Don J. Cohn, *Vignettes from the Chinese: Lithographs from Shanghai in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1987), pp. 36-37.

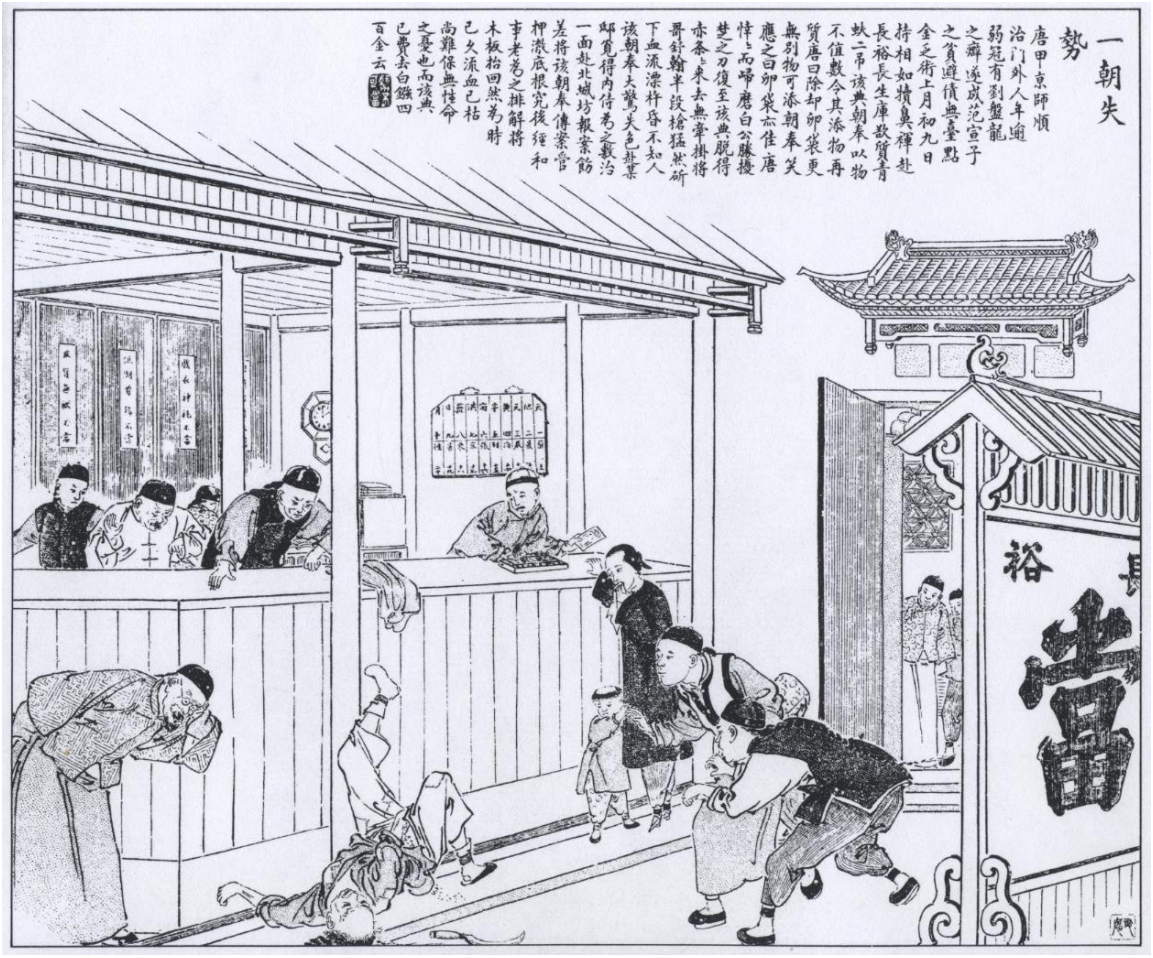

Figure 9: Late-Qing Shanghai lithograph "How He Lost His Significance One Morning"

Late nineteenth-century lithographs have long been considered by historians as a vivid source for the tangled social and cultural history of late Qing China.[87] This particular lithograph is no exception. First, Tang's choice of the word *ruandai*, which is translated here as "balls" but literally means an "egg bag," goes a long way to show that people had not always considered the bodily target of castration to be the entire male genital organ in late imperial China. This lithograph might in fact be the only visual representation of Chinese castration before Matignon's photograph. In the mid-nineteenth century, when the English word "testes" was translated into Chinese for the first time, the medical missionary Benjamin

[87] See Cohn, *Vignettes*; Wu Yoru (吳有如) et al., ed., *Qingmuo fushihui:* Dianshizhai huabao *jingxuanji* (清末浮世繪: 《點石齋畫報》精選集) [Late Qing Lithographs: Best Collections of *Dianshizhai huabao*] (Taipei: Yuanliou, 2008).

Hobson left no room for ambiguity when he remarked that the "outer kidney"—his terminology for the male gonad—was the organ responsible for "the generation of semen," and for "the change in voice and facial features alongside the elimination of reproductive power when castrated (閹之割之)."[88] In both examples the message is clear: before the rise of the penis, the anatomical target of castration was the scrotum.

Moreover, the lithograph implies that when it came down to castration, eunuchs were the everyday experts whom people sought for advice. That "knifers" were not involved in this incident is reasonable, because they would had been located too deep inside Peking at the time to be a source of assistance, if they existed at all in light of Stent's account.[89] But for a health issue as serious as loss of blood, and potentially death, it is interesting to note that no physician is either mentioned in the expository text or present in the lithographic staging of this male-dominated event. Curiously enough, the individual who had the best view of what Tang actually excised from his body is the child located at the center of the drawing, and most certainly not the eldest man on the left who seems to focus more on Tang's upper body. If the lithograph is an accurate representation of common attitudes toward castration in late Qing society to any degree, from it one can infer that the preservation of castration as a cultural practice relied heavily on the role of eunuchs as a determinant agent in guiding its historical existence in China.

VIII. The Social and Cultural Reproduction of Eunuchism: Self-Narration

Indeed, one of the most powerful ways through which eunuchs exerted a significant measure of agency in their social and cultural production was by narrating their own experience. This began arguably as early as when Stent was collecting materials for his

[88] Benjamin Hobson, *A New Treatise on Anatomy* (1851), section on 外腎 (*waishen*, "outer kidney"). See chapter 2 of this dissertation.
[89] Stent, "Chinese Eunuchs," pp. 170-171.

study. He mentioned twice about the existence of native "informants."[90] Given the secretive impression he gives of the system of "knifers" and "the shed," it would be only logical to assume that his account was based on information provided by other eunuchs, who would indeed be rather familiar with the practical measures involved in castration, at least more so than anyone else. Similarly, in Coltman's reports, all of the information about the actual castration experience were filtered and made accessible only through what the eunuchs said.[91] So the evidential status of foreigners' accounts is substantiated only when its epistemological function as a secondary, rather than a primary, source is adequately acknowledged.

But Chinese eunuchs did not narrate their experience through the voice of "outsiders" only. Besides the textual and visual repository created by foreigners like Stent, Coltman, and Matignon, additional historical information about the operation itself came from the personal recollection of late Qing eunuchs. According to Ren Futian and Chi Huanqing among the oldest surviving eunuchs in the twentieth century, the two most well-known places that offered professional services in castration prior to the 1890s were Biwu (Bi "the Fifth") and Xiaodao Liu ("pocket knife" Liu). Bi operated an establishment on Nanchang Street, whereas Liu's was located inside the Di'an Gate in the imperial city. "Each season," Ren and Chi explained, "they supplied the *Neiwufu* [Imperial Household Department] forty eunuchs. Together the two families were responsible for all the formal procedures pertinent to castration."[92]

According to Ren and Chi, "registration" with Bi or Liu was the first step required of parents who wished to turn their boys into palace eunuchs. In turn, the boys would be "examined—for his appearance, conversational skills, intelligence, and genital organ (done with his pants on)—and admitted only if considered appropriate." Although Bi and Liu

[90] Stent, "Chinese Eunuchs," pp. 171, 181.
[91] Coltman, "Self-Made Eunuchs"; Coltman, "Peking Eunuchs."
[92] Ma Deqing et al., in *Wan Qing gongting shenghuo jianwen*, p. 224.

"had many years of experience and the necessary utilities," Ren and Chi insisted that "the overall experience remained painful for the subject of operation, since they possessed neither pain relievers nor adequate medicinals that would help stop the bleeding. Antiseptic preparation was done simply by heating up the surgical knives with fire."[93] Committed to print almost a century apart, Ren and Chi's discussion of Bi and Liu seem to provide solid evidence for the "knifers" described by Stent.

However, their words verify Stent's account only by increasing, rather than decreasing, the distance he first established for the historical experience of castration, between a personal realm of embodiment and a public domain of collective memory. Evident from this example, eunuchs themselves participated in the archival rendering of the "knifers" as primary operators of Chinese castration. This historiographic substantiation adds another layer of complexity to the historian's task, to quote medievalist Gabrielle Spiegel, of "solicit[ing] those fragmented inner narratives to emerge from their silences."[94] For any eunuch whose castration experience deviated from this global narrative would require additional explanation and narrative space for inclusion. One of the most popular alternative routes to serving in the palace, for instance, was voluntary castration (*zigong*, 自宮), a category that included self-castration.

More prevalent in the Ming dynasty, self-castration became illegal under early Qing law. The lessons from Ming eunuchs' political corruption were difficult to ignore, so up to the second half of the eighteenth century, Qing emperors made it illegal for civilians to castrate themselves, which simultaneously curbed the number of available eunuchs. However, the legal codes that imposed death penalty for voluntary castration were not strictly enforced throughout the first hundred years or so of Qing rule. In June 1785, the Qianlong

[93] Ma Deqing et al., in *Wan Qing gongting shenghuo jianwen*, p. 225.
[94] Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "The Task of the Historian," *American Historical Review* 114, no. 1 (2009): 1-15, on p. 15.

Emperor took a step further in loosening the codes to allow the Imperial Household Department to accept individuals who offered themselves after voluntary castration.[95] Actually, this only reflected the strictness of the regulations imposed on eunuchs by early Qing rulers, which facilitated the decline in the formal supply of eunuchs and the growing number of eunuchs who fled. At one point Qianlong even promoted a policy of eunuch illiteracy.[96]

Famous late Qing eunuchs whom the court admitted as a result of voluntary castration include Zhang Lande (more popularly known as Xiaode Zhang), Ma Deqing, and the last Chinese eunuch who died in 1996, Sun Yaoting.[97] To be sure, persons born with ambiguous or dysfunctional genitalia were categorized by physicians as "natural eunuchs" (*tianyan*, 天閹) and sent to serve the imperial court as a typical solution. But in most cases of voluntary castration or *zigong*, the father was the person who performed the operation. Such was the experience of Ma Deqing, one of the last surviving Chinese eunuchs in the twentieth century:

> When I was nine, roughly in 1906, one day my father succeeded in persuading me to lie on the bed and castrated me with his own hands. That was a really agonizing and scary experience. I can't even recall the exact number of times I passed out. I've never been willing to discuss the incident with anyone, not because I'm shy, but because it was way too painful…

[95] Mei Xianmao (梅顯懋), *Luori wanzhong: Qingdai taijian zhidu* (落日晚鍾: 清代太監制度) [The system of Qing-dynasty eunuchs] (Shenyang: Liaohai chubanshe, 1997), p. 139.
[96] Dale, "With the Cut of a Knife," p. 27.
[97] On Zhang: Zou, *Lidai mingtaijian miwen*, pp. 292-303, on p. 294 (account through taiyi); Yang Zhengguang (楊爭光), *Zhongguo zuihou yige taijian* (中國最後一個太監) [The last eunuch in China] (Beijing: Qunzhong chubanshe, 1991), pp. 6-22, on p. 14; Yan and Dong, *Ren zhong yao* pp. 107-133, on p. 108; Xiao Yanqing (肖燕清) in Zhang, *Zhanggong huanguan quanshu*, pp. 1903-1907. On Ma: Ma Deqing et al., in *Wan Qing gongting shenghuo jianwen*. On Sun: Jia Yinghua (賈英華), *Modai taijian miwen: Sun Yaoting zhuan* (末代太監秘聞: 孫耀庭傳) [The secret life of the last eunuch: A biography of Sun Yaoting] (Beijing: Zhishi chubanshe, 1993); Ling Haicheng (凌海成), *Zhongguo zuihou yige taijian* (中國最後一個太監) [The last eunuch in China] (Hong Kong: Heping tushu, 2003), pp. 17-21.

> Think about it: in those years, neither anesthesia, needles, nor blood-flow prevention medicines were widely available...consider the kind of pain inflicted on a restless kid by holding him down on the bed and cutting his *yaoming de qiguan* ("organ for life") from his body! Every single vein was connected to my heart, and, with the kind of pain involved, I almost puked it out. Ever since, my reproductive organ and I became two separate entities.
>
> After the surgery, it was necessary to insert a rod at the end of the surgical opening. Otherwise, if the wound seals up, it becomes impossible to urinate and will require a second surgical intervention…Seriously, [in those years,] the meds applied to facilitate the healing of the wound were merely cotton pads soaked with white grease, sesame oil, and pepper-powder. Changing and reapplying the meds was always a painful experience.
>
> I remember I was on the dust *kang* ("depository") all the time, and my father only allowed me to lie on my back. Sometimes I wished to move a bit when my back started to sore, but how could I? Even a mild stir would bring up extraordinary pain from the cut.[98]

Similar in function to Ren and Chi's account, Ma's recollection of his childhood castration actually confirms aspects of the operation first described by Stent. Most notably, both Ma

[98] Ma Deqing et al., in *Wan Qing gongting shenghuo jianwen*, pp. 222-3.

and Stent mention the *kang* on which castration was operated and the post-surgery necessity to place a rod inside the main orifice to secure successful future urination. From the lithograph to Ma's life narrative, then, eunuchs actively monitored the details of what it took to become and live as a eunuch, historically and historiographically—that is, in both historical real time and as vanguards of their own body history.

However, it is worth stressing that whereas "knifers" or professional castrators took the center stage in previous documentations of the operation, their role was replaced by Ma's own father in his reminiscence of his childhood castration experience. This is one of the most significant parallels between footbinding and castration in Chinese history: the cultural survival of both practices entailed a homosocial environment in the occasion and demonstration of their corporeality. Footbinding was a custom conducted by women and on women; castration was a practice performed by men and on men. But whether mothers bound the feet of their daughters, fathers castrated their sons, or male "knifers" operated on boys, neither footbinding nor castration should be understood as a timeless, spaceless practice with a universal *raison d'être*. In discussing the actual measures involved in castration and the degrading ways they were treated by the imperial family, the stories Chinese eunuchs told of themselves ultimately joined the public repository developed by European "outsiders," constituting the second major step in defining their own bodies as templates for national histories.

In the waning decades of the Qing dynasty, Chinese eunuchs' self-narration and Western spectators' observation converged most tellingly in the Coltman reports. Recall that Robert Coltman, a personal physician to the Chinese imperial family, reported on treating six Chinese eunuchs in Peking and, based on his experience, provided an image of the castration site of one of his patients (**Figure 3**). Coltman revealed a transformation in

his feelings toward eunuchs from "sympathy" to "disgust and contempt."[99] In the two articles he published in the *Universal Medical Journal* and the *Chinese Medical Missionary Journal* in the 1890s, Coltman admitted that this transformation may be explained by his realization that a surprisingly high number of Chinese eunuchs, at least during the late Qing period, actually castrated themselves. In all of the cases he reported, the patients did not merely undergo voluntary castration, but they became eunuchs through the more specific measure of self-castration. In 1894, Coltman wrote: "I am now fully convinced, that many of the eunuchs employed in and about the palace, *have made themselves so*, for the purpose of obtaining employment."[100] In light of the later personal recollections of eunuchs as discussed above, one might assume that self-castration was rather rare, and most voluntary castrations were carried out by their father. On the contrary, Coltman's reports presented evidence for the prevalence of self-castration in the last decades of eunuchism's existence.

One of Coltman's patients, over fifty years of age and who went to him "for the obliteration the urinary meatus," was at once with the Tongzhi Emperor and, after the death of the emperor, took service with the seventh prince. This eunuch "stated that at twenty-two years of age, he being married and the father of a year old girl baby, resolved to seek employment in the palace. He secured a very sharp *ts'ai-tao-tzu*, and with one clean cut removed his external organs of generation entire."[101] Coltman also operated on an eunuch thirty-two years of age, "who emasculated himself eighteen months ago." "This man," according to Coltman, "is a large framed sturdy fellow who could earn a good living in any employment requiring strength, but he deliberately emasculated himself for the purpose of getting an easy position in the Imperial employ."[102] Interestingly, some eunuchs castrated themselves to spite their fathers. One of his patients, sixteen years old, "had an elder

[99] Coltman, "Peking Eunuchs," p. 28.
[100] Coltman, "Peking Eunuchs," p. 28 (emphasis mine).
[101] Coltman, "Peking Eunuchs," p. 28.
[102] Coltman, "Peking Eunuchs," p. 29.

brother who had been made an eunuch at an early age, and was in service at the imperial palace. Knowing that his father depended on him (his second son) for descendants to worship at his grave, this lad, after a quarrel with his father, on the 23d of March, took a butcher-knife and cut off his penis close to the symphysis pubis."[103] Another eunuch, aged twenty two, cut off his penis and testicles "with a razor," explaining that "he was the only son of this father, and having had a quarrel with him, he had, to spite him, thus deprived him of all hopes of descendants at one blow—the dearest hope known to an elderly China-man."[104] To stress the relatively high incidences of self-castration in the late Qing, Coltman concluded that "many able bodied men voluntarily submit to the operation by others, and *not a few* perform it upon themselves."[105]

These examples confirm a number of the crucial insights that we have drawn thus far regarding the history of the demise of Chinese eunuchism: the foregrounding of the penis in the biomedical (re)definition of masculinity with respect to Chinese castration, the separation of the eunuchs' masculine subjectivity in the social sphere (as husbands, fathers, and sons) from the (gendering) effect of the castration operation itself in the realm of embodiment, the crucial role of foreigners—especially Western doctors—in relating the castration experience of Chinese eunuchs to a global community of observers, and the self-narration of eunuchs, though often conveyed through the voice of foreign informants, as a cornerstone in the shaping of twentieth-century common understandings of their own experiential past.

IX. The Abolishment of the Imperial Palace Eunuchs System

Adding to the public discourse on the corporeal experience of castration sustained by Western commentators and eunuchs themselves, members of the imperial family completed the process of turning the eunuchoidal body into homogenous anchors of anti-castration

[103] Coltman, "Self-Made Eunuchs," p. 329.
[104] Coltman, "Self-Made Eunuchs," pp. 328-329.
[105] Coltman, "Peking Eunuchs," p. 29 (emphasis mine).

sentimentality. Strictly speaking, there was no anti-castration movement comparable to the anti-footbinding movement that acquired a national urgency in the final years of the nineteenth century. The eunuchs system was simply terminated when the last emperor, Puyi, decided to do so. Puyi's *ad hoc* explanation for his decision, supplemented by the detailed recollection of his cousin Pujia, thus brought an end to the social and cultural production of Chinese eunuchs. Once the eunuchs system was abolished, the cultural existence of castration also came to a halt in China.[106] With Puyi and his relatives' autobiographical words printed and circulated globally, Chinese eunuchism became a truly historical experience.

According to Puyi, his main motivation for expelling palace eunuchs came from a fire incident inside the Forbidden City during the summer of 1923. By then, more than a decade had passed since Sun Yat-sen inaugurated a new Republic. Puyi and the imperial family were nonetheless protected by the "Articles of Favorable Treatment of the Emperor of Great Qing after His Abdication" (清帝退位優待條件), an agreement reached between his mother Empress Dowager Longyu, Yuan Shikai, who was then the general of the Beiyang army in Beijing, and the provisional Republican government in Nanjing. The articles guaranteed Puyi and his family the right to continue residence in the Forbidden City and ownership of Qing treasures, as well as a $4 million stipend a year and protection of all Manchu ancestral temples. Under these conditions, Puyi retained his imperial title and was treated by the

[106] See also Pujie's recollection in Pujia (溥佳) and Pujie (溥傑), *Wan Qing gongting shenghuo jianwen* (晚清宮廷生活見聞) [Life in Late-Qing Imperial Palace] (Taipei: Juzhen shuwu, 1984), pp. 304-306. This statement requires further qualification. In the context of this chapter, "castration" is used in this sentence as a synonym for "eunuchism" as it relates to the Chinese imperium polity. There is a growing trend within the contemporary transgender community in the West to advocate/normalize castration ideation (e.g., "male-to-eunuch" instead of "male-to-female"). I thank Susan Stryker for pointing this out to me. See Richard J. Wassersug and Thomas W. Johnson, "Modern-Day Eunuchs: Motivations for and Consequences of Contemporary Castration," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 50, no. 4 (2007): 544-556; Thomas W. Johnson, Michelle A. Brett, Lesley F. Roberts, and Richard J. Wassersug, "Eunuchs in Contemporary Society: Characterizing Men Who Are Voluntarily Castrated," *Journal of Sexual Medicine* 4 (2007): 940-945; Michelle A. Brett, Lesley F. Roberts, Thomas W. Johnson, and Richard J. Wassersug, "Eunuchs in Contemporary Society: Expectations, Consequences and Adjustments to Castration," *Journal of Sexual Medicine* 4 (2007): 946-955; Lesley F. Roberts, Michelle A. Brett, Thomas W. Johnson, and Richard J. Wassersug, "A Passion for Castration: Characterizing Men Who Are Fascinated with Castration," *Journal of Sexual Medicine* 5 (2008): 1669-1680.

Republican government with the protocol and privileges attached to a foreign monarch. Hence, the overthrown of the Qing dynasty did not end the institutionalization of eunuchs immediately. The corporeal experience of Chinese eunuchs existed almost a quarter into the twentieth century, as the demand for them survived with the imperial family in Peking.

Still relying on their service and loyalty at the time of the fire, Puyi mainly held eunuchs responsible for the incident. The fire swept across and destroyed the entire surrounding area of Jianfu Palace (建福宮) at the northwest corner of the Forbidden City, including Jingyixuan (靜怡軒), Huiyaolou (慧曜樓), Jiyunlou (吉雲樓), Bilinguan (碧琳館), Miaolianhuashi (妙蓮花室), Yanshouge (延壽閣), Jicuiting (積翠亭), Guangshenlou (廣生樓), Nihuilou (凝輝樓), and Xiangyunting (香雲亭).[107] The timing of the event coincided with Puyi's effort in cataloguing his official assets. Indeed, Jianfu Palace stored most of his valuables, including the wealthy repertoire of antiques, paintings, pottery, and ceramics collected by the Qianlong Emperor. One day when he came upon (and was astonished) by a small portion of Qianlong's collection, he asked himself: "How much imperial treasure do I actually possess? How much of it is under my awareness, and how much of it has slipped through my fingers? What should I do with the entire imperial collection? How do I prevent them from being stolen?"[108] Ever since the founding of the Republic, Puyi and members of his extended family had confronted repeated reporting of theft. The frequency of palace robbery rose rapidly by the early 1920s, which fed into an increasing recognition of the value of the Qing collection of artistry and material goods on the global market. In hoping to control the situation, Puyi decided to tabulate and document his inventory at Jianfu

[107] Puyi, *Wo de qianbansheng*, p. 148; Pujia and Pujie, *Wan Qing gongting shenghuo jianwen*, p. 22.
[108] Puyi, *Wo de qianbansheng*, p. 147.

Palace. "On the evening of 27 June 1923," Puyi recollected, "the same day when the project was just underway, the fire took off, and everything was gone, accounted for or not."[109]

Puyi formally abolished the palace eunuchs system on 16 July 1923, only twenty days after the fire incident. In the words of his cousin, Pujia, who had been taking English classes with him since 1919, "the fire undoubtedly had a direct bearing on [this decision]."[110] Pujia recalled that after what happened to Fujian Palace, many eunuchs were interrogated, and Puyi learned from the interrogations about their previous success in stealing and selling his possessions. "And according to the fire department," Pujia added, "the crew smelled gasoline when they first arrived at the palace. When Puyi heard about this, he became even more confident in his accusation that eunuchs started the fire in order to cover up what they had stolen from Fujian Palace."[111] Initially met with great resistance from his father, uncles, wife, and other imperial family members, Puyi eventually won them over when he insisted: "If the palace is on fire again, who's willing to take the responsibility?"[112]

Interestingly, Puyi himself revealed a completely different reason for terminating the imperial employment of eunuchs. Although he realized how rampant theft was inside the palace, he was more concerned about his life than his possession. Not long after the Fujian Palace incident, another fire was indeed started right outside his own bedchamber, Yangxingdian. Given how badly he treated eunuchs, Puyi's real motivation, therefore, came from his growing suspicion that eunuchs actually tried to kill him for revenge.

Moreover, Pujia suggested that Puyi's decision to end the eunuchs system was also shaped by the influence of their English teacher, Reginald Johnston. In 1923, Johnston informed Puyi about eunuchs smuggling treasures out of the palace and selling them in antique shops. As an "outsider" and a non-Chinese, Johnston was able to remind Puyi

[109] Puyi, *Wo de qianbansheng*, p. 148.
[110] Pujia and Pujie, *Wan Qing gongting shenghuo jianwen*, p. 28.
[111] Pujia and Pujie, *Wan Qing gongting shenghuo jianwen*, pp. 31-32.
[112] Pujia and Pujie, *Wan Qing gongting shenghuo jianwen*, p. 32.

constantly and frankly of the rampant corruption of his palace eunuchs.[113] And Puyi was quite explicit about his admiration and respect for Johnston.[114]

But whether it is due to Puyi's own paranoia, frustration with palace theft, or intentional self-refashioning and self-Westernization under Johnston's influence, the historical reasons for getting rid of the eunuchs system are minimally concerned with how eunuchs felt or how they were treated. The elimination of eunuchism in China proceeded on one precondition: the transfer of historiographic agency from eunuchs themselves to members of the imperial family, especially the last emperor Puyi. With respect to castration, the historiographic distance between a public domain of collective memory and a private realm of individual embodiment was so firmly in place by the 1920s, that even when we are confronted with the concrete reasons and motivations for discontinuing eunuchism, a cultural system with two thousand years of history in China,[115] the reasons and motivations bear zero relevance to the actual embodied lives of castrated men. Eunuchism and castration are perceived as backward, oppressive, shameful, and traditional not because they impose violence onto men's bodies, not because they punish men corporeally, not because they hurt men's psychological wellbeing, and not because they demonstrate inflicted cruelty of the flesh: these are not the *real* reasons why eunuchism and castration elicit negative attitudes in Chinese nationalist sentimentality. Eunuchism and castration sound "bad" because they bring to sharp focus a host of social values—lagging behindness, oppression, shame, tradition, and even disregard for human rights—that gives Chinese civilization a history on the platform of the globe. When one enters this global platform to reflect on China's past, one essentially risks neglecting the personal voices of those castrated servants who lived closer than anyone else to the epicenter of that history.

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[113] For Reginald Johnston's own account of his interaction with Puyi during this period, see Reginald Fleming Johnston, *Twilight in the Forbidden City*, 4th ed. (Vancouver: Soul Care Publishing, 2008 [1934]).
[114] Puyi, *Wo de qianbansheng*.
[115] Yuan Qu (遠樞), *Diyici huanguan shidai* (第一次宦官時代) [The first era of eunuchs] (Taipei: Yuanliu, 1999).

X. Conclusion

From the Self-Strengthening to the May Fourth era, whereas the anti-footbinding movement was built on the rhetorical power of newly invented categories such as *tianzu* ("natural foot") and *fangzu* ("letting foot out"), the demise of eunuchism depended on the collapse of the saliency of already existing categories such as *tianyan* ("natural eunuch") and *zigong* ("voluntary castration"). The annihilation of the relevance of these categories in Chinese culture thus carved out a space for new conceptual ontologies to be associated with the practice of sex-alteration, such as transsexuality. Viewed from this perspective, both eunuchism and transsexuality are categories of experience whose historicity is contingent rather than foundational or uncontestable.[116]

My implicit argument has been that before we enter the history of transsexuality in postwar Sinophone culture, it is necessary to consider its genealogical preconditions. The critical reflections on the meaning and value of evidence throughout this chapter are attempts to demonstrate "the possibility of examining those assumptions and practices that excluded considerations of difference in the first place." They ask and highlight "Questions about the constructed nature of experience, about how subjects are constituted as different in the first place, about how one's vision is constructed—about language (or discourse) and history."[117] Insofar as the accounts analyzed above can be treated as representative of the social reality of castration in late Qing and Republican China, each of them moved from being a form of evidence operating on the level of individual embodiment to a source type functioning on the level of global historical narration. Surprisingly, they stand in for all that we know about how castration was actually operated in the past three millennia. As such, historiographically speaking, this textual and visual archive not only exposes the castrated

[116] Here I am drawing on the notion of historicizing experience discussed in Scott, "The Evidence of Experience."
[117] Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," p. 777.

body of the eunuchs in the public sphere, but also conceals its existence in the personal historical realm. I have adopted a very specific strategy to reading the archive assembled in this chapter: by "underscore[ing] the grids of intelligibility within which claims of both presence and absence have been asserted and questioned."[118] This method of archival problematization brings us closer to, rather than blinding ourselves from, the core issues of proof, evidence, and argumentation that define the historian's task.

The discursive effect of the sources laid out in this chapter belongs to the global episteme of historical narration, and is occasioned outside the pulses of men's embodied lives. Just like *tianzu* or *fangzu* are "'gigantic' categories formulated from a vintage point outside the concerns and rhythms of the women's embodied lives," the perpetual dissonance between the public records of Chinese castration and the varied private experiences of eunuchs in the past *becomes constitutive of* a nationalist sentiment that considers Chinese castration backward, traditional, shameful, and oppressive.[119] As a truly historical specimen, the castrated male body has come to appear completely out of sync with the Chinese body politic at large. When news of the "discovery" of the first Chinese transsexual eventually came from postcolonial Taiwan, her glamour saturated the lingering culture of a "castrated civilization." The birth of a "corpus style" is predicated upon another's death. A fuller assessment of this transition must examine how the grounds for truth claims about the body had changed. The next chapter shifts our attention from the historicity of a "corpus style" to the epistemology of a scientific concept.

[118] Arondekar, "Without a Trace," p. 26.
[119] Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters*, p. 68.

CHAPTER 2

FINDING SEX IN NATURE

I. From Etymology to Epistemology

The history of the demise of eunuchism registers a notion of civilizational worth according to which China came to embody the metaphoric projection of a "castrated civilization" and eunuchs a "third sex." In the last chapter, I argued that the historical production of knowledge about castration is best understood by reading against the archival grain. This is to avoid an analytic presumption that China had always been a static "castrated civilization" and that eunuchs had always possessed a transhistorical "third sex" identity. This myopic vision, in other words, would thus fix the two historic metaphors onto a sufficient basis for the universalizing explanations of the mutually generative histories of modern China and the body corporeal. Indeed, it would propel us to read into the past the discursive contingencies upon which Westernization and modernization came to stand in for one another in "most of the world."[1] I will now refocus the connection between the two metaphors by evaluating their transformations under the impact of Western biomedical knowledge.

By delving into a moment in Chinese history that scholars have labeled "colonial modernity," I aim to tabulate the grounds of new knowledge on which China evolved from a

[1] I use the phrase "most of the world" in the way that the postcolonial critic Partha Chatterjee has formulated it in a different context. As Chatterjee explains it, most of the popular politics of the governed "is conditioned by the functions and activities of modern governmental systems that have become part of the expected functions of governments everywhere." See Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 3. If we read the exposed castrated body as a mere example of bodily mutilation, then we are only rehearsing the discursive and functionalist governmentalization of the body everywhere, as "expected" to be found in most of the world. On a similar point, see also Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). For an insightful critique of the applicability of "political society," as formulated by Chatterjee," to postcolonial East Asia (and Taiwan more specifically), see Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), pp. 224-245.

"castrated civilization" into a modern nation.[2] The previous chapter has foregrounded the transformation of "China" by making eunuchs' sexual identity an ancillary, rather than a primary, object of historical inquiry. This and the next two chapters attempt to follow their collateral changes in a reverse manner: namely, by foregrounding conceptual issues surrounding the subject of sex over issues relating to China's changing political sovereignty. If eunuchs become, rather than having always already been, a "third sex" in this evolving process, the grounds of knowledge production must had also shifted accordingly so that new kinds of claims, especially scientific ones, could be made about the human body, China's "geo-body," and their co-determinacy.[3] Central to the evolving epistemological grounds of truth about the body, I suggest, lies the emergence and transformation of the concept of sex.

A cursory review of Chinese books published in the first decade of the twentieth century reveals that *xing* (性), the modern Chinese word for "sex," did not appear in any of the titles. This was true even for books with a thematic focus on reproductive medicine.[4]

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[2] On "colonial modernity" in modern Asian history, see Tani Barlow, ed., *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Gi-wook Shin and Michael Robinson, eds., *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); and Tamara Loos, *Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[3] I focus on scientific claims because claims of a scientific nature fall within the realm of truth-and-falsehood. For most relevant examples of the historical analysis of the truth-and-falsehood of scientific knowledge, see Lorraine Daston, "Historical Epistemology," in *Questions of Evidence: Proof, Practice, and Persuasion across the Disciplines*, ed. James Chandler, Arnold I. Davidson, Harry Harootunian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 282-289; Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, *Toward a History of Epistemic Things* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Arnold I. Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Ian Hacking, *Historical Ontology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Ian Hacking, "Truthfulness," *Common Knowledge* 11, no. 1 (2005): 160-172; Ian Hacking, *Scientific Reason* (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2009); Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, *An Epistemology of the Concrete: Twentieth-Century Histories of Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010). The idea of "geo-body" comes from Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

[4] Here is a sample of their titles: 《婚姻進化論》、《婚姻進化新論》、《生殖器新書》、《婚姻之領港》、《生殖器新書前後編》、《男女交合新論》、《妊娠論》、《傳種改良問答》、《訂正傳種改良問答》、《男女婚姻衛生學》、《少年男女須知》、《小兒養育法》、《男女育兒新法》、《處女衛生》、《處女衛生論》、《無上快樂》、《男女交合無上之快樂》、《戒淫養身男女種子交合新論》、《日本小兒養育法》、《婚姻指南》、《既婚未婚男女必讀》、《胎內教育》、《葆精大論》、《男女生殖器新論》、《男女之秘密》、《女子衛生學》、《普通妊娠論附小兒養育法》、《吾妻鏡》、《男女造化機論》、《造化機新論普通男女交合造化機新論》、《男女衛生新論》、《延壽得子法》、《男女下體病要鑒》、《男女情交》、《男女生殖器病秘書》、《男女生殖器病秘書附圖》、《男女交合秘訣》、《男女之研究》、《實用問答生殖器篇》、《生殖器全書》、《最新胎產研究書》、《育兒全書》、《生殖器之研究．男子之部．女子之部》、《育兒與衛生》、《改良男女傳種秘書》、《生殖譚》、《產科學初步》、《幼兒保育法》、《產科新法》、《育兒談》、《竹市產婆學》、《子之有無法》、《全體通考》、《產科》、《婦

Scholars such as Frank Dikötter, Judith Farquhar, Tze-lan Sang, Zhong Xueping, and Leon Rocha have observed that, strictly speaking, *xing* did not mean sex before the twentieth century.[5] Rocha, in particular, has provided us the first etymological answer to the pre-twentieth century absence of *xing* as a designation of sex. For example, for the many definitions of *xing* found in the *New China Character Dictionary* (2004)—such as "natural instincts," "inherent tendencies," "disposition," "temperament," "the nature of something (or of someone)," "life," among others—there is a plethora of corresponding sources in Classical Chinese in which the word *xing* was used.[6] They include Gaozi's well-known expression, from the Confucian text *Mencius*, that the appetite for food and the appetite for sex together constitute human nature: *shi se xing ye* (食色性也). Note that in this expression, what *xing* connotes is natural instinct and not sex, which is represented by the word *se*. The "Gaozi" chapter of *Mencius* also supplies the source for the meaning of *xing* as disposition or temperament: "When Heaven is about to give someone a great responsibility, it first makes his mind endure suffering…Heaven stimulates his mind, stabilizes his temper [xing] and develops his weak points."[7] Similarly, Buddhist texts, such as the Sanskrit, used *xing* to refer to the nature of something, thereby contrasting it to *xiang* (像), the superficial appearance of all things.[8] The usage of *xing* to mean life can be found in *The Chronicles of*

科》、《育兒新法》、《生殖器病學》、《胎生學》、《妊娠生理學》、《婦女衛生學白話》、《生殖器病學》、《新纂兒科學》、《婦人衛生科學》。 This list is taken from Zhang Zhongmin, "Publishing and Cultural Politics: The Books on Reproductive Medicine and Their Readership in Late Qing," *Academic Monthly* 41, no. 1 (January 2009): 128-142, on pp. 131-132.

[5] Frank Dikötter, *Sex, Culture and Modernity in China: Medical Science and the Construction of Sexual Identities in the Early Republican Period* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1995), p. 68; Judith Farquhar, *Appetites: Food and Sex in Post-Socialist China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), pp. 250-255; Tze-lan D. Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), chap. 4; Zhong Xueping, *Masculinity Besieged: Issues of Modernity and Male Subjectivity in Chinese Literature of the Late Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 54; Leon Antonio Rocha, "*Xing*: The Discourse of Sex and Human Nature in Modern China," *Gender and History* 22, no. 3 (November 2010): 603-628.

[6] *Xinhuan zidian* (新華字典) [New China character dictionary], 10th ed. (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2004).

[7] *Mencius* (*Mengzi*), "Gaozi II" 35, in *The Chinese Classics, with a Translation, Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes*, vol. 5, trans. and ed. James Legge (London: Trübner & Co., 1861), p. 323.

[8] William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, with Sanskrit and English Equivalents and a Sanskrit-Pali Index* (London: Kegan Paul, 1937), p. 258.

Zuo (左傳, *Zuozhuan*, fourth century BCE): "The people enjoy their lives [*xing*], and there are no enemies or thieves" or "New palaces are reared...the strength of people is taxed to an exhausting degree…the people feel that their lives [*xing*] are not worth preserving."[9] When it finally arrives at a definition of *xing* pertaining to sex, the *New China Character Dictionary* remains silent on a corresponding classical source. Rocha persuasively concludes that "If one takes for granted that dictionaries attempt to record usages of a certain word in common currency, then *xing* until the twentieth century continued to signify what Heaven had decreed; *xing* named an unsexed, ungendered concept of innate human nature or essence."[10]

On the level of etymological investigation, Rocha offers two main explanations for how *xing* came to mean sex by the 1920s. First, he traces the origin of this association to Ye Dehui's (1864-1927) "Preface to *The Classic of the Plain Girl*," which appeared in 1907. According to Rocha and Jai Ben-ray, the first mentioning of *xing* qua sex appeared in the following sentence: "The spirit of the study of sex [性學, *xingxue*], how could the pedantic Confucian scholars possibly be able to see its essence?"[11] It is important to note that the sexual designation of *xing* first appeared in a phrase, *xingxue*, that would later become the standard translation of terms such as sexology, sex science, sexual sciences, and sex research. We will return to the disciplinary formation of sexology in the next chapter.[12] For now, suffice it to conclude from this first sexual designation of *xing* that it crucially depended on a scientific, naturalized understanding of sex that is radically different from its earlier obscene, negative, or moralistic connotations, as found in such traditional expressions as *yin* (淫), *se*

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[9] *The Chronicles of Zuo* (*Zuozhuan*), "Duke of Zhao Year XIX" (*Zhao Gong shijiu nian*) 1, in *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 5, trans. and ed. James Legge (London: Trübner & Co., 1872), p. 674; *The Chronicles of Zuo* (*Zuozhuan*), "Duke of Zhao Year VIII" (*Zhao Gong ba nian*) 1, in *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 5, trans. and ed. Legge, p. 620.

[10] Rocha, "*Xing*," p. 608.

[11] Rocha, "*Xing*,"pp. 611-12; Jia Ben-ray, "*Zongguoren xing guan chutan* [A Preliminary Investigation of the Chinese View on Sex]," in *Si yu yan* [Thought and Language] 33 (1995): 27-75.

[12] By the 1920s, an equally popular translation is *xing kexue* (性科學), which highlights the scientific components of this area of scholarly inquiry more explicitly. See chapter 3 of this dissertation.

(色), and *pi* (癖).[13] Notice that the statement itself proclaimed an epistemological break from earlier scholarly discourses. In the 1910s, a few Chinese vernacular publications on women and feminism began to equate *xing* with sex, either to refer to the relationship between men and women or to mean sexual desire.[14]

Another important etymological origin of the modern definition of *xing* is the Japanese-mediated translation of the English word "sex." In this etymological route, the 1920s represents a watershed moment, "as *sei*-sex was institutionalised in Japanese reference works for the first time."[15] The following Japanese dictionaries published from the 1890s to the 1910s, for instance, contained no record of *sei*-sex: Otsuki Fumihiko's *Sea of Words – Genkai* (1891), Owada Tateki's *Nihon da jiten* (1897), Shozaburo Kanazawa's *Forest of Words – Jirin* (1907), Shigeno Yasutsugu's *Sanseido kanwa dajiten* (1910), and Matsui Kanji and Uedo Kazutoshi's *Fuzanbo dainihon kokugo jiten* (1915). By 1927, the equation of *sei* with sex was most powerfully articulated by Ochiai and Naobumi and Haga Yaichi in their *Fountain of Words – Gensen*: "*Sei*. English: *sex*, the differences in the psychological and physical qualities of men and women."[16] However, as Rocha has carefully pointed out, a few scattered Japanese-English dictionaries published before the 1920s did record *sei*-sex, including Shibata Shoukichi and Koyasu Takashi's *Eiwa jii* (1873), the Japanese translation of *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* (1888) by Tanahashi Ichiro and Frank Warrington Eastlake, and Kanda Naibu's *Mohan shin eiwa daijiten* (1911), and *Shuchin konsaisu eiwa jiten* (1922). Therefore, Rocha concludes that

> The pattern that emerges is that, until the twentieth century, the character called *xing* in Chinese was used in Japanese to also signify nature, life and

[13] Rocha, "*Xing*,"pp. 608-11.
[14] Rocha, "*Xing*,"pp. 612-614.
[15] Rocha, "*Xing*,"p. 614.
[16] Ochiai Naobumi and Haga Yaichi, *Fountain of Words: Comprehensive Japanese Dictionary* (*Gensen nihon dai jiten*) (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Senta, 1927), p. 2295.

> so forth, and from the 1870s to 1880s, the *kanji* was used to signify sex and this new usage became more popular in the 1920s, displacing older words such as *iro* (the Japanese equivalent of the Chinese *se*). This corroborates Furukawa Makoto's finding that *sei* (as sex) became a fashionable word in the 1920s…we could venture the hypothesis that the Japanese used the *kanji* called *xing* in Chinese to translate 'sex' and 'sexuality' *before* the Chinese.[17]

The strange career of the translation of "sex" into *xing*, above all, exemplifies what Lydia Liu has called "return graphic loans": "the Japanese used *kanji* (Chinese characters) to translate European terms, and the neologisms were then imported back into the Chinese language."[18] Specifically, these "return graphic loans" were "imported back into Chinese with *a radical change in meaning*."[19] Therefore, given all the meanings of *xing* other than sex before the twentieth century, the established equivalence of ideas about sexual anatomy, sexual behavior, sexual desire, and so on with the Chinese word *xing* must be understood as a product of these early twentieth-century neologistic constructions.

The translational trajectory of sex, as mediated by the Japanese language, reflects the broader historical patterns of the translation of other words that are central to our study, including, most importantly, "science." In Classical Chinese, *kexue* (科學) meant "studies for the civil examinations"; after the Japanese appropriation (*kagaku*), however, it became "science" in twentieth-century China. This history of mediated translation had direct bearing on the meaning and practice of knowledge production. Before the 1920s, in places such as the Jiangnan Arsenal and the Commercial Press in Shanghai, scientific thinkers, men

[17] Rocha, "*Xing*," p. 615 (emphasis original).
[18] Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 190-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 32.
[19] Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice*, p. 33 (emphasis mine).

of letters, missionaries, and philologist activists all participated in the "unruly" practices of translating science and compiling and rewriting foreign texts. In the ad hoc practices of the Jiangnan Arsenal, the *chouren* (畴人) tradition of the eighteenth century and the *gezhi* (格致) learning of the nineteenth century were reappropriated in a similar way to refer to "an open spectrum of learning established through a translative relationship between different systems of knowledge."[20] In the trans-compilation activities of the Commercial Press, as evident in the production of *Botanical Nomenclature* (植物學大辭典, *Zhiwuxue da cidian*, 1908-1917) and *Nomenclature of Zoology* (動物學大辭典, *Dongwuxue da cidian*, 1921), the editors combined the classification systems of Linnaeus and Anderson with the empirical underpinnings of the classical philological tradition. In other words, in both cases, the participants of these moments and activities of "transculturation" promulgated an universality of knowledge production and the translatability between discrepant systems of knowledge.

The Japanese-mediated translation of "science" into *kexue* in the early twentieth century reduced the epistemological and practical potentials of *chouren* and *gezhi*. This mediated process of translation equated both words with "Chinese learning" and positioned them as such in opposition to "Western learning." Conservative officials, such as Weng Tonghe (1830-1904) and Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909), and reformists, such as Liang Qichao, mapped the new concept of *kexue* onto Western learning and juxtaposed it as an hierarchically superior form of knowledge against Chinese learning, *chouren*, and *gezhi*. By the early twentieth century, *chouren* and *gezhi* would lose all of the "uncontrollable proliferation of textualities" that characterized their late nineteenth-century scientific praxes. Similarly, by the time when a younger generation of intellectuals, such as Hu Shi and Yang Yunwu, replaced the earlier group of philologist editors at the Commercial Press, the early yet more creative phase of the press's history, which Meng Yue has called an era of "semiotic

[20] Meng Yue, *Shanghai and the Edges of Empires* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), p. 11.

modernity," came to an end.[21]

According to Wang Hui, by the time that the mainstream intellectuals of the New Culture Movement, such as Chen Duxiu, Hu Shi, Wu Zhihui, Ding Wenjiang, among others, adopted the *kexue* translation of science, their efforts both reflected and produced a fundamental rearrangement of modern Chinese thought in the early Republican period: "a scientific 'worldview based on axiomatic principles' (公理世界觀, *gongli shijie guan*) reformed and replaced the traditional 'worldview based on heavenly principles' (天理世界觀, *Tianli shijie guan*)."[22] The articulation of issues of civic impartiality, social legitimacy, and individual rights drew on the new abstract scientific vocabularies of objectivity, validity, rationality, and so on. If the birth of the "modern Chinese nation" was directly connected to the rise of a new "modern scientific worldview" in China, this chapter begins to make that connection even more relevant to its implicit epistemological undergirding of the concept of "sex." Put differently, my goal is to shift our attention away from the familiar competing discourses of nationalism between the constitutionalists (e.g., Liang Qichao) and revolutionaries (e.g., Zhang Binling) around the turn of the twentieth century. As many historians have pointed out, their respective visions of national citizenship and anti-Manchu "Han" nationalism mainly revolved around the questions of race and ethnicity.[23] This

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[21] Meng Yue, *Shanghai and the Edges of Empires*, pp. 31-61.

[22] Wang Hui, "Scientific Worldview, Cultural Debates, and the Reclassification of Knowledge in Twentieth-Century China," *boundary 2* 35, no. 2 (2008): 125-155, on p. 126. See also Wang Hui, "The Fate of 'Mr. Science' in China: The Concept of Science and Its Application in Modern Chinese Thought," in *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*, ed. Barlow, pp. 21-81.

[23] See Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890-1907* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971); Young-tsu Wong, *Search for Modern Nationalism: Zhang Binglin and Revolutionary China, 1869-1936* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1989); Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); Joan Judge, *Print and Politics: Shibao and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Joshua A. Fogel and Peter G. Zarrow, eds., *Imagining the People: Chinese Intellectuals and the Concept of Citizenship, 1890-1920* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997); and Edward J.M. Rhoads, *Manchus & Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861-1928* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000). Of course, the debates on race and ethnicity have deeper historical roots in the Qing dynasty. See, for example, Pamela Crossley, *Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); and Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

chapter, therefore, aims to reorient our analytical spotlight on the largely overlooked, yet no less salient, issue of sex.

In order to "map" the conceptual cartography of *xing*, I will focus on some of its key epistemic nodal points around which its modern definition of sex coalesced.[24] An etymological investigation, such as the one executed by Leon Rocha, certainly has its heuristic value. But words have a life of their own outside pure linguistic boundaries.[25] The way they are *used* to make certain statements meaningful suggest that their history—and historicity—far exceeds the etymological realm. It might be useful, for instance, to consider the social significance of key terms as stemming from their operation not only as words with specific definitions, but as *concepts* whose comprehensibility depends largely on the context of discussion and knowledge production. Here is where I slightly depart from Raymond Williams' "keyword" approach and adopt the method of historical epistemology as developed by such philosophers of science as Ian Hacking, Lorraine Daston, Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, and Arnold Davidson.[26] Insofar as certain translated terms, like science, race, and sex, played a central role in elite and vernacular Chinese discourses of nation formation and beyond, their conceptual contingency and discursive historicity are as important as, if not

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[24] My using of "mapping" and "cartography" in the more metaphoric sense is closer to how Gregory Pflugfelder has utilized it in his study of male same-sex sexuality from early modern to modern Japan. According to Pflugfelder, he "evoke[s] the image of mapmaking in the title [of his book], if only metaphorically, out of a belief that human understanding involves a continual mapping and remapping, not just of physical but also of social reality. Maps of the latter variety are not necessarily tangible, but they are no less instrumental than the conventional sort in orienting us to our environments." Gregory M. Plugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 1.

[25] See John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed., ed. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975); Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

[26] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976). This statement is not to undermine Williams' approach, which has proven by other historians and philosophers of science to be a useful approach for studying the history of various ideas in the natural sciences under such unifying themes of biology as "adaptation," "natural selection," "fitness," and "life form," which will form the center of my discussion below. See Evelyn Fox Keller and Elisabeth A. Lloyd, eds., *Keywords in Evolutionary Biology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); and Stefan Helmreich and Sophia Roosth, "Life Forms: A Keyword Entry," *Representations* 112 (2010): 27-53. On historical epistemology, see Daston, "Historical Epistemology"; Rheinberger, *Toward a History of Epistemic Things*; Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*; Hacking, *Historical Ontology*; Hacking, *Scientific Reason*; Rheinberger, *An Epistemology of the Concrete*; Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, *On Historicizing Epistemology: An Essay* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010)

more so than, their etymological origins in the shaping of their cultural significance.[27] It is on this conceptual register of words—their epistemological conditions—that constitutes the focus of my genealogical analysis of sex.

By "epistemology," I follow the French tradition, best exemplified by the work of Gaston Bachelord, George Canguilhem, and Michel Foucault, to reflect on "the historical conditions *under* which, and the means *with* which, things are made into objects of knowledge."[28] This definition of epistemology differs from one typical of the classical tradition, which tends to be preoccupied with the question of what it is that makes knowledge scientific. In other words, the historical epistemology approach I adopt here does not invoke a theory of knowledge that inquires into a presumed scientific basis of the structures and nature of knowledge, but is primarily concerned with "the process of generating scientific knowledge and the ways in which it is initiated and maintained."[29] Hans-Jörg Rheinberger characterizes this shift in terms of "a transformation of the problem situation": "A reflection on the relationship between concept and object from *the point of view of the knowing subject* was gradually replaced by a reflection of the relationship between object and concept that started from *the object to be known*."[30]

With this historical epistemology approach, the present study will proceed from treating *xing* as a concept and sex as its corollary scientific object to be known. One should avoid the assumption that the nature of the historical relationship of sex to science was fundamentally fixed so that an undisguised view of *xing* qua sex was merely waiting to be acquired by Chinese biologists and other scientists. This would fall under the classical epistemologist tradition. A more useful point of departure, which is the one employed here,

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[27] Rheinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1990); Rheinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Presner, Kerstin Behnke, and Jobst Welg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).
[28] Rheinberger, *On Historicizing Epistemology*, p. 2 (emphasis original).
[29] Rheinberger, *On Historicizing Epistemology*, p. 3.
[30] Rheinberger, *On Historicizing Epistemology*, p. 3 (emphasis mine).

is to start from the opposite of that very assumption: by looking at the conditions that *had to be established* in order for *xing* qua sex to become "objects of empirical knowledge under historically variable conditions."[31]

My larger thesis is that the modern formulation of *xing* hinges upon the rise of new structures of knowledge around the relationship between the visual realm, the subjectivity of human desire, and the malleability of the body. The historical process whereby *xing* became the conceptual equivalent of sex reflects a much broader underlying transformation in its epistemological designation of human nature: from the rock-solid essence of things into a mutable ontological referent. Through the vernacularization of ideas in biology, psychology, and endocrinology, *xing* acquired new elements of visuality, carnality, and transformitivity in coming to mean sex in the twentieth century. Each of these three historical-epistemological conditions that made sex a possible object of knowledge will be examined independently in the following three chapters.

This chapter explores the first part of this broader epistemic shift: the culmination of new layers of visual evidence that made it possible for sex to become an object of observation. It pays particular attention to the ways in which gender boundaries were redrawn within a visual bioscientific framework of sexual difference. As discussed earlier in the context of the mediated translation of "science," during the Self-Strengthening Movement (circa 1860s to 1890s), the urban center of Chinese culture and society shifted from the heartland to the shore.[32] Along coastal China, many missionary doctors dedicated themselves to translating Western-style medicine, including asylum practices and modern anatomical knowledge.[33] Their work stamped the first sustained effort in redefining Chinese understandings of sexual difference in terms of Western reproductive anatomy. Focusing specifically on the first

[31] Rheinberger, *On Historicizing Epistemology*, p. 3.
[32] Meng Yue, *Shanghai and the Edges of Empires*.
[33] On asylum practice in late Qing China, which is beyond the scope of this chapter, see Peter Paul Szto, "The Accommodation of Insanity in Canton, China, 1857-1937" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2002).

Western-style anatomy text introduced to China, Benjamin Hobson's *A New Treatise on Anatomy* (*Quanti xinlun*, 全體新論; 1851), my analysis begins with the mid-nineteenth century as a crucial turning point for the modern visual representations of sex. By comparing Western with Chinese-style anatomical studies, I suggest that the visual realm occupied a central role in the reconceptualization of sex and provided a point of commensurable and universal reference for the modern definition of the body. The reorientation of the visual representation of bodily sex, in other words, provided the ground for the formation of a Chinese body politic on the verge of national modernity.

The gradual spread of the Western biomedical epistemology of sex from elite medical circles to vernacular popular culture reached a crescendo in the 1920s. After a close reading of Hobson's text, I turn to Republican-era vernacular literature in the life sciences. In the years surrounding the New Culture Movement (1915-1919), Chinese biologists learned from their Euro-American colleagues to promote a popular understanding of sex dimorphism. Their writings strengthened the visual evidence of anatomical drawings that first appeared in the work of late Qing missionaries. Refining the older drawings with more "accurate" translations and more diffused apparatuses of observation, they construed the bodily morphology and function of the two sexes as opposite, complementary, and fundamentally different. Republican-era life scientists also provided the first topographic drawings that divided all life forms into *ci* (雌, female) and *xiong* (雄, male) types. They accorded the concept of *xing* a layer of visual indexicality by establishing epistemic connections between what they called "primary," "secondary," and "tertiary" sexual characteristics. Like Western biologists, they extended these connections to all organisms across the human/non-human divide, attempting to explain hermaphroditism with genetic theories of sex-determination.

When the issue of the "life" of the Chinese nation rose to an unprecedented degree of urgency and uncertainty, scientists offered more intricate ways of visually representing sex.

By the 1940s, three techniques of visualization operated conterminously in transforming sex into a scientific concept, the essence of life, and a fundamental object that can be seen and identified by everyone: the anatomical aesthetic of medical representation, the morphological sensibility of the natural history tradition, and the subcellular gaze of experimental genetics.[34] These techniques of systematic depiction in the visual realm established the first and foremost conditions under which sex became an empirical object of knowledge.

II. Anatomical Aesthetic

In early modern medicine, abstract understandings of the body both shaped and reflected the status, role, and experience of women in society. Thomas Laqueur's study makes clear the trajectory by which conceptualizations of sex in Europe took a decisive turn during the eighteenth century, when the "one-sex" model (which viewed women and men as two versions of a single-sexed body) eventually gave way to the "two-sex" model (which treated men and women as incommensurable opposites).[35] Charlotte Furth's work contrasts the androgynous "Yellow Emperor's body" with the female gestational body that

[34] I describe these as "techniques of visualization" rather than simply "modes of representation," because representation tends to assume a positivist ontological status for the object being represented. As we will see over the course of this paper, the images should be comprehended as the product less of representation, than of visualization. They do not merely represent sex on different levels—of anatomical configuration, morphological appearance, and subcellular agents; rather, each of them involves a different kind of epistemological projection that constructs, rather than replicates, the object (sex) they claim to represent. "Technique," therefore, is used here without a direct allusion to technological advancement. For a critique of the essentialist connotations of representation, see Steve Woolgar, *Science, the Very Idea* (London: Travistock Publications, 1988).

[35] Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990). For critiques of Laqueur's thesis, see Katharine Park and Robert A. Nye, "Destiny is Anatomy," *New Republic* 204 (1991): 53-57; Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, "The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature: Sexual Ambiguity in Early Modern France," in *Premodern Sexualities*, ed. Louise Fradenburg and Carla Freccero (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 117-136; Katharine Park, "The Rediscovery of the Clitoris," in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 171-194; Michael Stolberg, "The Anatomy of Sexual Difference in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," *Isis* 94 (2003): 274-299; Karen Harvey, *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Dror Wahrman, "Chang and the Corporeal in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Gender History: Or, Can Cultural History Be Rigorous?" *Gender and History* 20, no. 3 (2008): 584-602. For Laqueur's response to Stolberg, see Thomas Laqueur, "Sex in the Flesh," *Isis* 94 (2003): 300-306.

distinguished itself when *fuke* (gynecology) developed in Song dynasty China (960-1280).[36] Whereas Laqueur uses politics and epistemology to explain the evolving relationship between gender and the body in the West, Furth focuses on the changing social status of medical practice and the doctor-patient relationship to explore its correlative in imperial China. Whether we treat the emergence of the two-sex model in Enlightenment Europe or the rise of gynecology in Song China as paradigmatic turning points in the history of medicine, both historians stress that the significance of these changes was not confined to the internal realm of medical ideas and practices. Rather, they anchored broader conceptual transformations in the relationship between the body proper and the body social.

In the historiography of Chinese medicine, the female body has attracted a greater measure of attention than the male body. In the development of *fuke* until the Ming, Chinese physicians overwhelmingly emphasized the importance of blood in diagnosing (female) gender-specific ailments. This was best captured by the omnipresent medical cliché, "in women, the blood is the ruling suspect." According to Furth, between the late sixteenth century and the nineteenth century, a "positive model of female generativity" depicted female bodily experience not around symbols of purity and pollution but vitality and loss. That is, from late Ming onward, medical texts often associated blood (血) with the female body and described *qi* (氣) primarily as a male essence. Construed in these dialogical terms with roots in the yin and yang cosmology, women's medical problems were perceived as characteristic of bodily depletion and loss. Due to their explicit and implicit associations with blood, unlike men, women were often dubbed as the "sickly sex": Chinese doctors considered female bodies to be more prone to sickness in general, not only in the reproductive realm but also due other physical processes such as menstruation. Nonetheless,

[36] Charlotte Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History, 960-1665* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999). For the prehistory of Furth's story, see Angela Ki Che Leung, ed., *Medicine for Women in Imperial China* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

Furth contends that "female gender in the medical imagination implied sources of symbolic power," since it was represented by a range of images from that "of the 'prenatal' cosmic vitality of earth, to the constructive energy of the growing and reproducing body, to the dangerous efficacy of reproductive substances able to cure or kill."[37] By being the "sickly sex," women also served their proper role in the web of Chinese social relations—as powerful agents of reproduction.[38]

In "Concepts of Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Infancy," Furth extends her analysis of the relationship between reproductive medicine and gender with the example of childbirth. From menstruation and pregnancy to gestation and childbirth, Qing doctors frequently described women as having a physically and (to some degree emotionally) weak body due to their serious manifestations of the depletion of blood. Such physical symptoms made them more susceptible to diseases that accompanied their bodily losses. In reinforcing Confucian familial preferences and moral values, the Qing medical vision of the female gender construed mothers as "both nurturing creators and a toxic source of childhood disease and death."[39] Proper diet, sexual abstinence, and emotional stability all played an important role in the health of the mother and, by extension, the child. As both the guarantor of generativity and the potential source of reproductive pathology, women and their relation to blood in Chinese medicine reflected a larger social system of gender, one that permeated the standardization of the proper roles, behaviors, and social relations of women and men.

Focusing similarly on childbirth, Yi-Li Wu has recently deepened our understanding of the way late imperial Chinese doctors envisioned the female reproductive body. Although blood was undoubtedly the central focus of discussion when doctors referred to the

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[37] Charlotte Furth, "Blood, Body, and Gender: Medical Images of the Female Condition in China," *Chinese Science* 7 (1986): 43-66, on p. 48.
[38] On this point, see also Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
[39] Charlotte Furth, "Concepts of Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Infancy in Ch'ing Dynasty China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 1 (1987): 7-35, on p. 8.

female body, Wu shows that "the womb" occupied an equally significant, if slightly different, role in Chinese medicine.

> Unlike blood, whose protean nature made it an obvious focus for investigation and therapeutic manipulation, the womb seems to have been largely taken for granted as a relatively stable object whose range of functions and pathological states were more narrowly defined. But to fully understand the intellectual architecture of *fuke* requires us to acknowledge what Chinese writers took for granted: that blood health and womb health were both essential for successful childbearing.[40]

Tracing the earliest medical discussion of the womb to the appearance of the term *bao* (胞) in the *Yellow Emperor's Inner Questions*, Wu notes that doctors also debated on the womb's actual shape. Beginning in the seventeenth century, some doctors even believed that both men and women had wombs. This de-articulation of symptoms and diseases as being specifically female-linked supported the larger trend in the Qing to retreat to an "androgynous" understanding of the medical body.[41] According to Wu, "Even as elite medical doctrine subsumed the female womb into a rhetoric of bodily universality, the treatment of female diseases still assumed that women's bodies had special morphological features and functions. The dynamic functions of *qi* and Blood in women, in other words, were inevitably patterned by the physical layout of the female body, and the womb was the key node in the system of hydraulic flows that enabled female fertility."[42]

Despite the rich and dynamic discussions of women's medicine, whether the focus

[40] Yi-Li Wu, *Reproducing Women: Medicine, Metaphor, and Childbirth in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), chapter 3 draft manuscript (from personal communication), p. 163.
[41] Furth, *A Flourishing Yin*; Wu, *Reproducing Women*, chapter 1.
[42] Wu, *Reproducing Women*, chapter 3 draft manuscript, pp. 208-209.

was on blood or the womb, Chinese doctors never delivered *visual* representations of distinct male and female bodies. The introduction of Western, dissection-based anatomies to China, in this regard, denotes an important turning point in the modern Chinese understandings of the body. As many have noted, Benjamin Hobson's (1816-1873) *A New Treatise on Anatomy* (1851), the earliest of these anatomies, was a landmark contribution to the systematic development of Western anatomical knowledge in the second half of the nineteenth century. Hobson was a British surgeon who served as a medical missionary in China under the auspices of the London Missionary Society from 1839 to 1859. According to Larissa Heinrich, Hobson's text was important because it invented new terminologies that crossed Chinese and Western medicine (although many of them were later revised or dropped altogether); it synthesized and distilled a wide range of Western anatomical texts for the Chinese audience (since it was not a translation of one specific text); and it posited an universal corporeal referent (the emerging discourse of race notwithstanding) as the plausible and necessary ground for the cross-cultural translations of meanings of the body.[43] As Hobson himself explained it, a major motivation for him to author his anatomical treatises came from the observation that there was a notable absence of refined anatomical knowledge and practice among Chinese doctors: "The human anatomy of internal viscera, bones and muscles, and blood and pulsation is identical in China and the West. Yet, a sophisticated knowledge of it and the mastery of the application of that knowledge are present only in Western countries. There is no comparable phenomenon in China. Isn't it a pity?"[44]

Above all, the transmission of Western-style anatomy to China, as exemplified by the

[43] Larissa Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images: Translating the Pathological Body between China and the West* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), chapter 4. See also, Yi-Li Wu, "God's Uterus: Benjamin Hobson and Missionary "Midwifery" in Nineteenth-Century China," presented at the conference "The Disunity of Chinese Science," University of Chicago, May 10-11, 2002.

[44] Benjamin Hobson, *Xiyi luelun* (西醫略論) [Outline of Western medicine] (1857), preface. The edition that I am relying on is the one available at the Rare Books Collection at Princeton University Library: Benjamin Hobson, *Seii ryakuron* (西醫略論) [Outline of Western medicine] (Edo: Yorozuya Hyōshirō, Ansei bogo, 1858 [1857]).

publication of Hobson's text, produced a radical transformation in "the philosophical priorities and ways of seeing or imagining the body" from the principle of relative function to that of scientific observation, so that "concepts of surface, depth, and scale took on a newly finite flavor."[45] This, as Heinrich has shown, was accomplished through the introduction of a new mode of representation, or what she identifies as the "anatomical aesthetic," grounded in dissection-based realism.[46] Indeed, Hobson's *New Treatise* was among the first of a steady stream of illustrated texts in Chinese that in the following decades would find their way into (1) the curricula of medical school classes, (2) the academies affiliated with the arsenals established as part of the Qing "self-strengthening" movement, and (3) even the hands of practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine.[47] By the 1910s and 1920s, leading writers like Lu Xun would incorporate the new dissection-based "anatomical aesthetic" into their own production of literary realism.[48]

In *A New Treatise*, Hobson used the term *outer kidney* (外腎, *waishen*) to refer to testicles and *yang essence* (陽精, *yangjing*) to translate semen. He described the anatomy of the outer kidney as follows:

> Outer kidney, more popularly known as *luanzi* [卵子], is the producer of *jing* [精, "essence"] and the conduit of reproduction; its removal [or "castration," 閹之割之] will transform the vocal pitch and facial appearance of a man and eliminate his reproductive power entirely.

[45] Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images*, p. 147.
[46] Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images*, p. 14. For a parallel discussion of the "rhetoric of the real" in Renaissance anatomy, see Martin Kemp, "Temples of the Body and Temples of the Cosmos: Vision and Visualization in the Vesalian and Copernican Revolution," in *Picturing Knowledge: Historical and Philosophical Problems Concerning the Use of Art in Science*, ed. Brian S. Baigre (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 40-85.
[47] Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Modern Science in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), chap. 4.
[48] Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images*, chap. 4.

> The scrotum has two layers—inner and outer. There is a middle region, which separates the two *luanzi* into two halves—or, two sacs. In each sac, there is a [double-sided] membrane region: one side of the membrane connects to the inner layer of the scrotum, and the other side operates as the protective layer of *luanzi*.
>
> The membrane is often filled with water to maintain moisture. If there is too much water inside the membrane region, the scrotum will appear swollen and luminal. This disorder is called [scrotal] hernia [水疝, *shuishan*].
>
> The physical appearance of *luanzi* looks like the flatter version of a bird's egg. Its length is about an inch, and its width is about eight *fen* [分, 1 *fen* = 0.33 cm; roughly 2.64 cm]. A testicle weighs about four to five *qian* [錢, 1 *qian* = 3.75 g; so roughly 15g].[49]

After locating the seat of masculinity, Hobson honed in on the physiology of its secretion:

> *Jing* [精, "essence"] is produced from blood, and it appears in the form of a liquid. When one examines it under the microscope, one will discover that it contains many vital entities [活物] that look like tadpoles. These

[49] Benjamin Hobson, *Quanti xinlun* (全體新論) [A new treatise on anatomy] (1851), section on "outer kidney" (外腎經). The edition that I am relying on for textual analysis is the one available at the Rare Books Collection at Princeton University Library: Benjamin Hobson, *Zentai shinron* (全體新論) [A new treatise on anatomy] (Edo: Suharaya Mohē, Ansei 4, 1857 [1851]).

tadpole-like entities [sperm] have long tails and swim really fast, but their life lasts only a day. These are true for the *jing* of all kinds of beasts and animals, with the exception that the physical appearance of the vital entities varies.

For teenage boys before the age of twenty, blood does not produce semen. After twenty, blood enters the outer kidney. It moves from testicular arteries [微絲管] into seminiferous tubules [眾精管], where the sperm cells are produced. Sperm cells then move from the tubules to epididymis [卵蒂], and from there to below the bladder through vas deferens [精總管]; they are stored inside the seminal vesicles [精囊, actually at epididymis].[50]

From elucidating the nature of the male reproductive organ, including its production of the seminal fluid, Hobson went on to relating them to sexual intercourse:

During sexual intercourse, semen is released from the seminal vesicles [through the ejaculatory ducts]. Semen is difficult to produce, and yet easy to lose [or dispense?]. Adolescents usually lack the maturation of blood and *qi* and various body parts. So if they allow themselves to indulge in sexual intercourse, the consequences of such behavior range from signs of physical weakness to the possibility of death.

As a practice of remaining lustless, *yangsheng* [養生, the cultivation of health] comes from reducing the level of desire. If one masturbates to

[50] Hobson, *Zentai shinron*, section on "Yang Essence" (陽精論).

> accomplish this, it will be more detrimental to physical health, including the possibility of becoming blind or deaf.[51]

With such a detailed description of the form and function of the male reproductive organ, Hobson provided multile illustrations of its surrounding area in the body to give the reader both a cross-sectional perspective and a more complete impression (**Figure 10**). He also included illustrations of *yin* (陰), his term for the womb, which contained other crucial parts of the female reproductive organ, such as *zigong* (子宮, uterus) and *yindao* (陰道, vagina) (**Figure 11**).[52] In his *Outlines of Western Medicine* (*Xiyi luelun*, 西醫略論), Hobson guided the reader with visual demonstrations of the surgical treatment of scrotal hernia (**Figure 12**).[53] Out of the plethora of vocabulary that Hobson invented to introduce human reproductive anatomy to the Chinese, his words for semen (*jing*), scrotum (*shennang*), uterus (*zigong*), and vagina (*yindao*), among others, remain today as the standard Chinese translations of the corresponding English terms.

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[51] Ibid.
[52] Hobson, *Zentai shinron*, section on "Yin" (陰經).
[53] For textual descriptions, see Hobson, *Seii ryakuron*, chapter on "Scrotum" (腎囊証), section on "Scrotal Hernia" (腎囊水疝).

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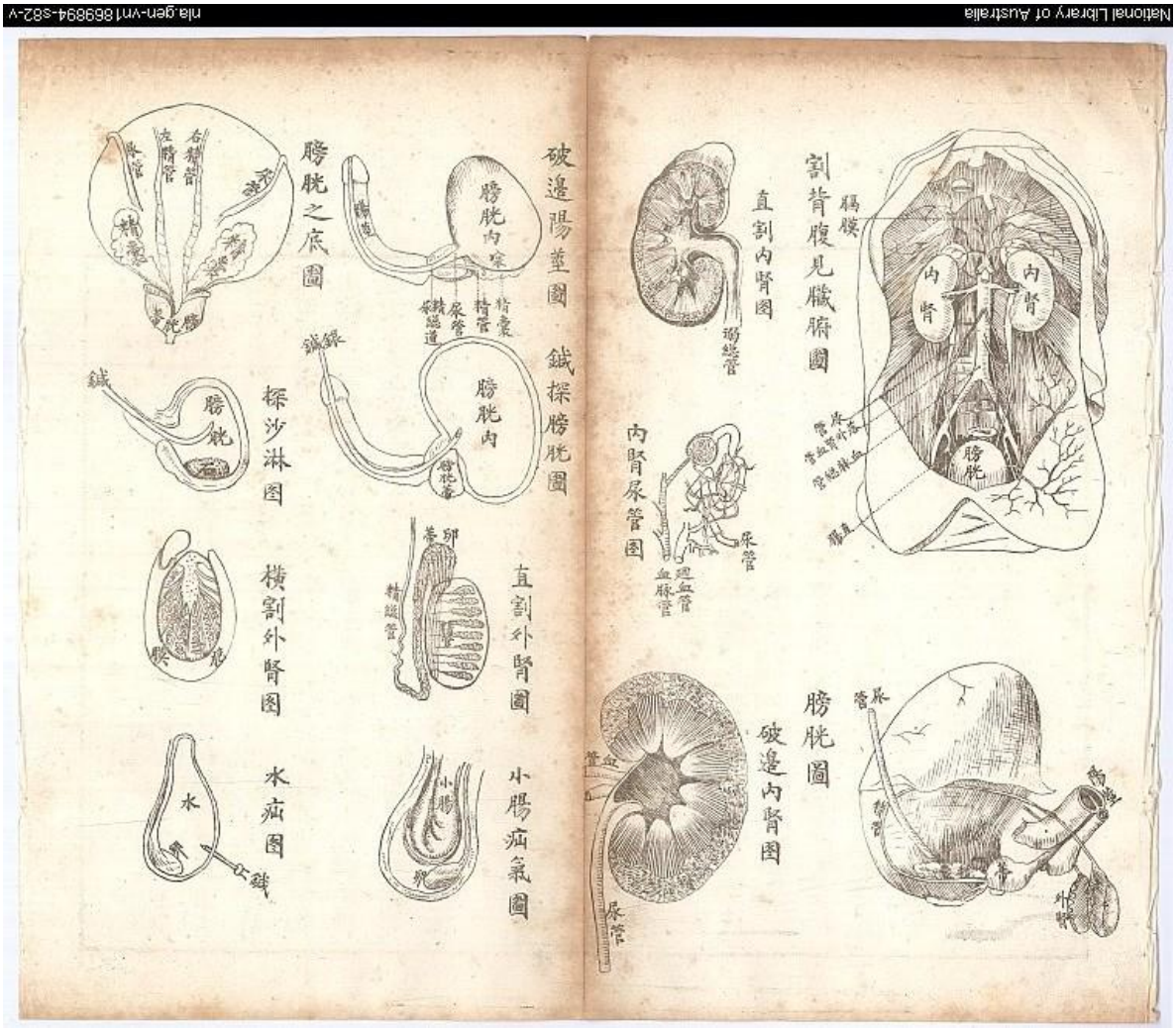

Figure 10: Hobson's illustrations of male reproductive anatomy (1851).

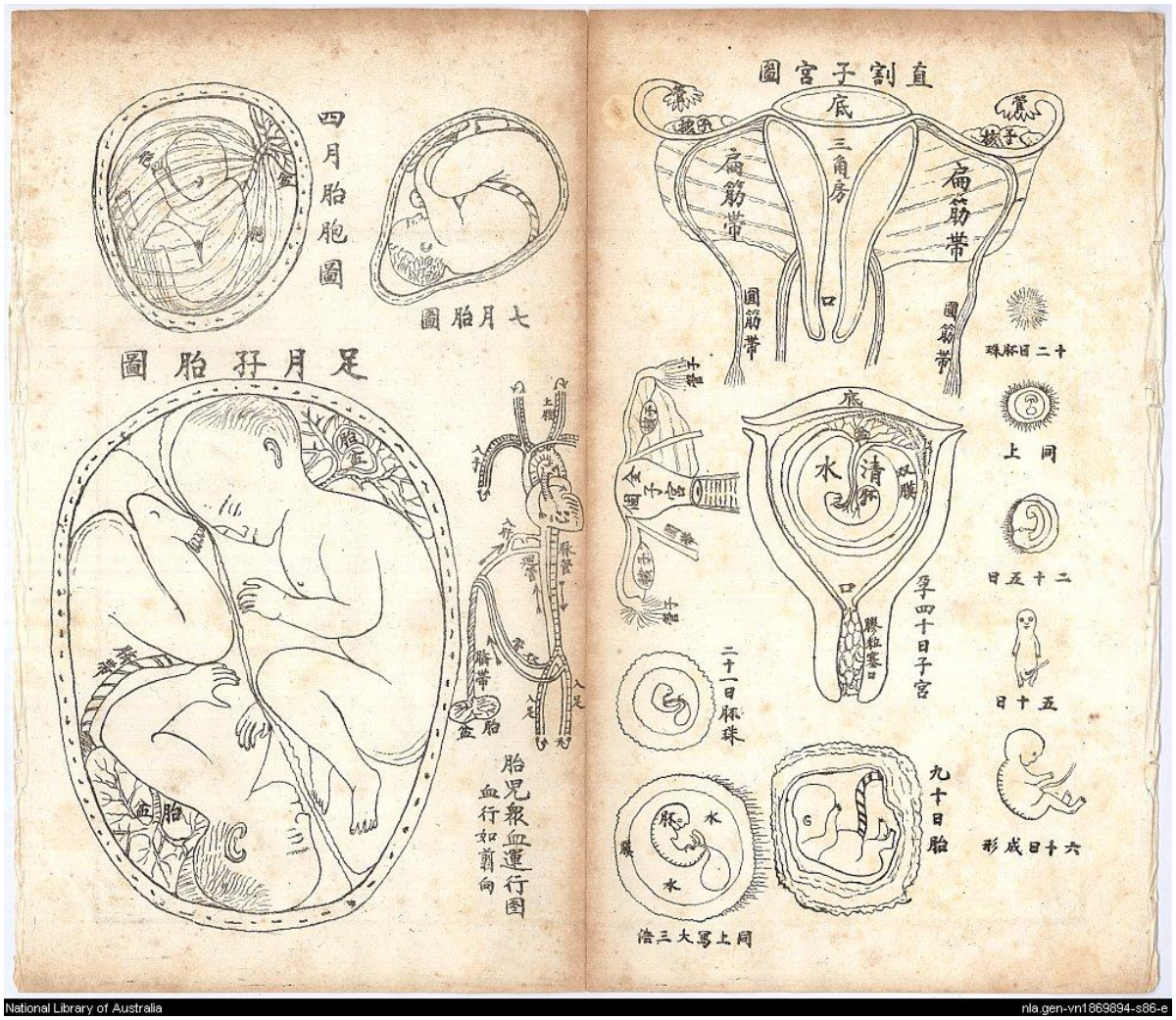

Figure 11: Hobson's illustrations of female reproductive anatomy (1851).

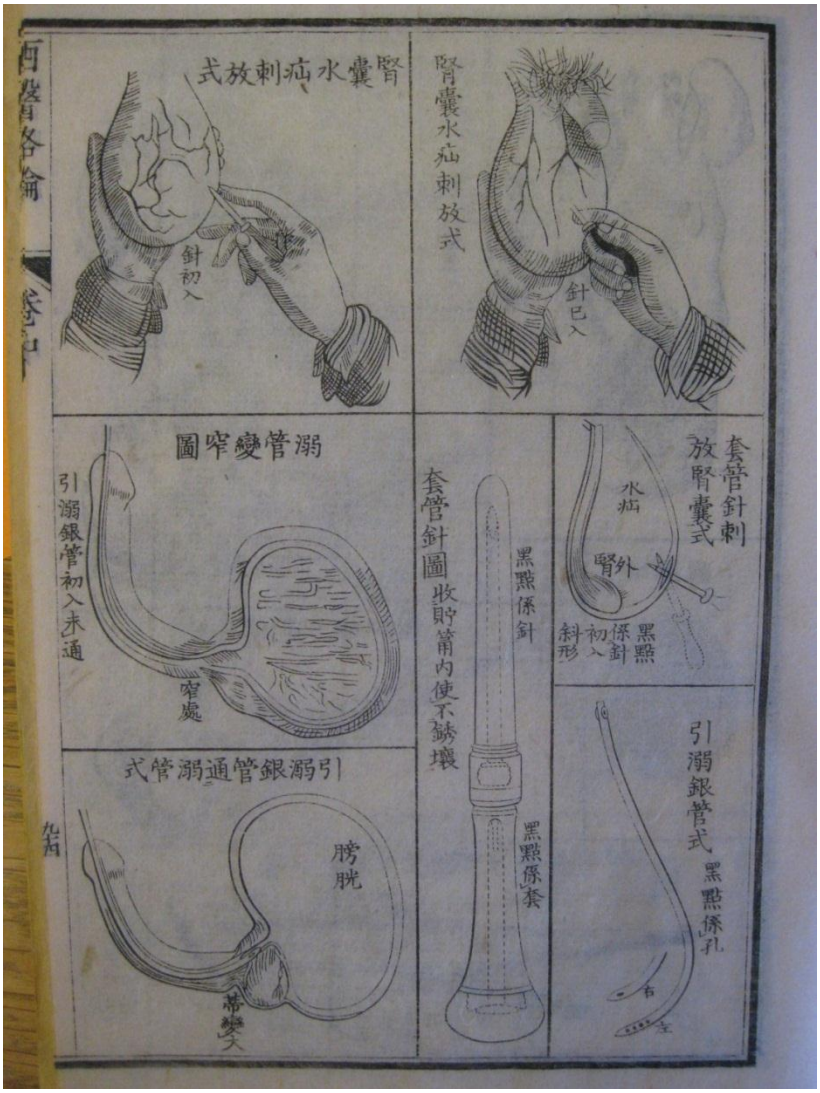

Figure 12: Hobson's illustrations of the surgical treatment of scrotal hernia (1857).

These illustrations were the first of its kind in Chinese to visually depict the male and female reproductive organs according to the anatomical aesthetic of Western medical representation. Unlike the discussions of gender-specific ailments in earlier gynecological texts, these images established for the reader a certain way of knowing about the body based on concrete anatomical terms that could be *seen* in the physical-visual sphere. The profound influence these anatomical images had on their viewers went beyond mere representationalism. Even for doctors of professional standing, as Shigehisa Kuriyama has reminded us,

> Dissection is never a straightforward uncovering of truths plain for all to see. It entails a special manner of seeing and requires an educated eye. The dissector must *learn* to discern order, through repeated practice, guided by teachers and texts. Without training and long experience, Galen insists, one sees nothing at all…The anatomist aspires to see beyond the immediate, unpleasant material stuff of the body and behold the end (*telos*) for which each part is fashioned.[54]

To see the differences between Western and Chinese-style anatomical representations, in other words, requires different ways of looking.

Indeed, Hobson's anatomical images train the eye to perceive the body in a way radically different from before. Whereas Chinese physicians were accustomed to imagine the organs of the body in relative terms within an elaborate system of conceptual correspondence (**Figures 13-14**), Western anatomy introduced a new concrete sense of depth and closure to the dissected body (**Figures 15-16**). In compiling a compendium like *New Treatise*, missionaries like Hobson essentially instilled a new mode of conceptual and visual engagement, one that relied not only on a critical distance between the viewer and the image of representation, but also on a exact sense of the physical locations of what is being represented. Contrary to the anatomical representations found in earlier Chinese medical texts, which assumed no precision in the distance between the viewer and the visual object, Western-style anatomical images turned that distance into the very mechanism of its persuasion. Here, the introduction of a new mode of representation began to stake an epistemological claim of objectivity that was distinctively absent in Chinese medicine. The

[54] Shigehisa Kuriyama, *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine* (New York: Zone Books, 2002), pp. 127-8 (emphasis original).

anatomical aesthetic of Western medicine, put differently, undermined the link between the represented and the real in Chinese medicine by claiming the physical distance between the viewer and the visual object as its ultimate source of authority.



Figure 13: Diagram of the internal organs in *Huangdi Neijing*.

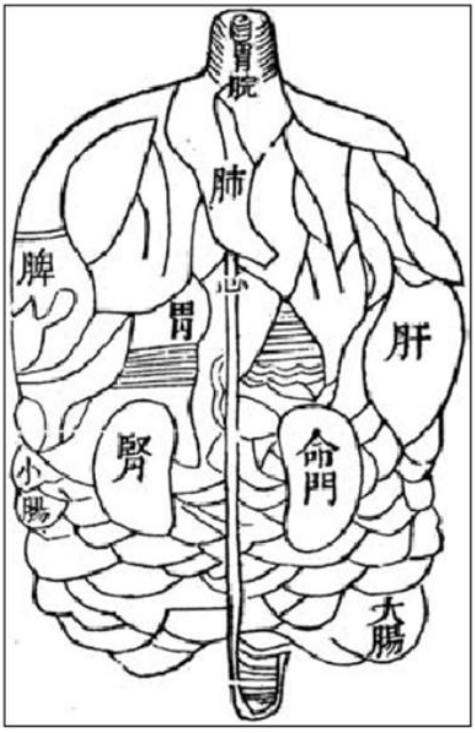

Figure 14: Diagram of the position of the five viscera in *Huandi Neijing*.

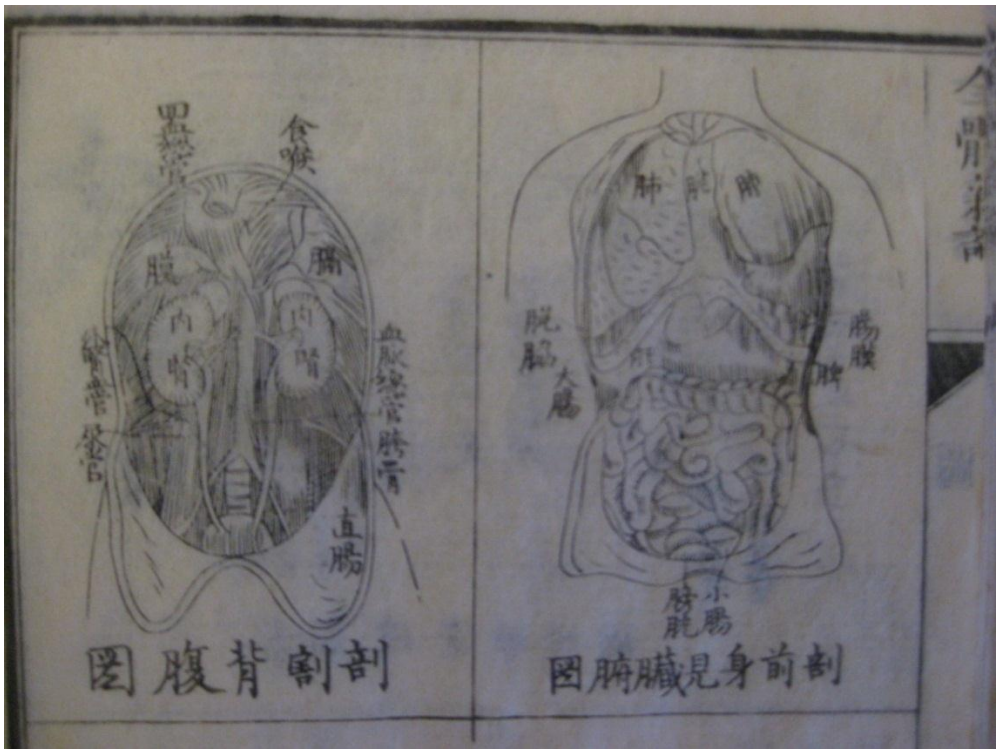

Figure 15: Hobson's diagram of organs visible from anatomical dissection I (1857).



Figure 16: Hobson's diagram of organs visible from anatomical dissection II (1857).

To be sure, we are not merely facing a simple difference in the forms and conventions of representation between Western versus non-Western anatomy. It is worth pointing out that unlike the anatomical illustrations that appeared in Andrea Vesalius' *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem* (1543) or Bernhard Albinus' *Tabulae sceleti et musculorum corporis hominis* (1747), most of the anatomical drawings found in Hobson's *New Treatise* embodied a more nuanced kind of natural realism. That is to say, the kind of anatomical illustrations that appeared in the works of Vesalius and Albinus were "ideal"—absolute perfect but imagined—composites, because some of their artistic fabrications were intended to imitate "the best patterns of nature." Hobson's anatomical depictions, on the other hand, resembled the drawings found in William Hunter's *Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus* (1774): these were "corrected idealizations" that although aiming to map the internal details of a perfect body, still reflected the effects of nature in slightly more pronounced ways, as demonstrated

by the none-too-subtle violence wrought upon the cadaver.[55] Decisively absent in these later anatomical illustrations, for instance, include the standing posture of a skeleton or the unfragmented body in whole. These critical eliminations of certain artistic techniques render the body as a direct specimen of the clinical gaze *as it is seen*, rather than with enriched and elaborate imaginations.

Moreover, as Kuriyama has shown, the absence of Western-style anatomy in China before the nineteenth century does not mean Chinese doctors lacked faith in visual knowledge. A handful of surviving records prove that a small number of dissections were performed in the ancient and medieval periods.[56] It is also probably more important to stress what Chinese physicians *actually saw* in a body instead of what they did not see: meridian tracts rather than nerves or muscles, the palpation of *mo* instead of the circulation of blood, and the color of the living rather than the cadaver of the dead. The first of each of these pairs of preoccupations involves a way of conceptualizing the somatic body different from Greek anatomy. Moreover, the existence of male and female reproductive organs in texts such as *Ishimpo* since the tenth century and the *Manchu Anatomy* since the eighteenth century, though with limited circulation imposed by the imperial archive, implies the possibility that some gynecological experts in imperial China were familiar with these drawings before they read Hobson.[57]

Nonetheless, the physical nature of sexual difference only became an object of serious medical scrutiny with the introduction of Western reproductive anatomy to China. It is not that Chinese physicians lacked a way of knowing that differentiated the development of

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[55] A more in-depth discussion of the distinction between "ideal" and "corrected ideal" anatomical representations can be found in Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, "The Image of Objectivity," *Representations* 40 (Autumn 1992): 81-128, on pp. 88-93.

[56] Kuriyama, *The Expressiveness of the Body*, pp. 155-159; Saburo Miyasita, "A Link in the Westward Transmission of Chinese Anatomy in the Later Middle Ages," *Isis* 58, no. 4 (1967): 486-490.

[57] I wish to thank both Angela Leung for pointing this out to me and Pierce Salguero for confirming this through e-mail communications. On the *Manchu Anatomy*, see Daniel Asen, "'Manchu Anatomy': Anatomical Knowledge and the Jesuits in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century China," *Social History of Medicine* 22, no. 1 (2009): 23-44. Though beyond the scope of Asen's discussion, the *Manchu Anatomy* included plates of male and female reproductive organs.

maleness from that of femaleness. In fact, if we turn to the passage in *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Questions* that attempts to achieve the closest to what we are trying to do here, we find evidence for a systematic way of explaining sexual differentiation.

> Huang Di asked, "When people grow old then they cannot give birth to children. Is it because they have exhausted their strength in depravity or is it because of natural fate?"
>
> Ch'I Po answered, "When a girl is seven years of age [*sui*], [her kidney *qi* (腎氣)] become[s] abundant, she begins to change her teeth and her hair grows longer. When she reaches her fourteenth year she begins to menstruate and is able to become pregnant and the movement in the great thoroughfare pulse (太衝脉) is strong. Menstruation comes at regular times, thus the girl is able to give birth to a child.
>
> "When a girl reaches the age of twenty-one years [her kidney *qi* is stabilized], the last tooth has come out, and she is fully grown. When the woman reaches the age of twenty-eight, her muscles and bones are strong, her hair has reached its full length and her body is flourishing and fertile.
>
> "When the woman reaches the age of thirty five, the pulse indicating [the region of] the 'Sunlight' (陽明) deteriorates, her face begins to wrinkle and her hair begins to fall. When she reaches the age of forty-two, the pulse of the three [regions of] Yang deteriorates in the upper part (of the body), her entire face is wrinkled and her hair begins to turn white.

"When she reaches the age of forty-nine she can no longer become pregnant and the circulation of the great thoroughfare pulse is decreased. Her menstruation is exhausted, and the gates of menstruation are no longer open; her body deteriorates and she is no longer able to bear children.

"When a boy is eight years old [his Kidney *qi* is replete]; his hair grows longer and he begins to change his teeth. [At sixteen his Kidney *qi* is] abundant and he begins to secrete semen. He has an abundance of semen which he seeks to dispel; [he can begin unite yin and yang and so beget young.]

"At the age of twenty-four [his Kidney *qi* is stabilized]; his muscles and bones are firm and strong, the last tooth has grown, and he has reached his full height. At thirty-two his muscles and bones are flourishing, his flesh is healthy and he is able-bodied and fertile.

"At the age of forty [his Kidney qi begins to wane]; he begins to lose his hair and his teeth begin to decay. At forty-eight [the yang energy of the head begins to deplete, the face becomes sallow, the hair grays, and the teeth deteriorate.] At fifty-six [his liver qi] deterioriates, his muscles can no longer function properly. [At sixty-four the *tian kui* dries up and the *jing* is drained, resulting in kidney exhaustion, fatigue, and weakness.][58]

[58] Ilza Veith, trans., *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 98-100.

According to Charlotte Furth's reading, this passage describes two parallel trajectories for the development of the same, homologous Yellow Emperor's body. In contrast to Laqueur's early European "one-sex model," what Furth calls the Yellow Emperor's body is "more truly androgynous," because it "has no morphological sex, but only gender."[59] Furth's interpretation is compelling especially in the context of her broader argument about the rise of Chinese gynecology (*fuke*) in the Song dynasty. But from reading the above passage alone, one does not need the sophisticated language of gender theory to acknowledge that pregnancy and menstruation are the markers of female bodily process, whereas semen/essence secretion is the main signifier of the male body. The mere presence of hair, teeth, bone, and other fleshy body parts does not constitute the concrete ground upon which gender difference can be inferred, although the *timing* of their development does. In the medicine of systematic correspondence, it seems, the body is truly androgynous insofar as our conception of sex is strictly grounded in Western anatomical terms.

Moreover, we can at least conclude from the above quotation that the developments of male and female bodies share one thing in common: the kidney being the most important of the five viscera responsible for the regulation of vitality and growth. In fact, this "master system" is the only viscous that is mentioned in this passage in respect of "the generative powers of both sexes."[60] Likewise, the expository text of a *Neijing* illustration of the kidneys (**Figure 17**) suggests that in Chinese medicine, one of the kidneys is indeed understood as the quintessential seat of sexual differentiation. Below is the full passage from *The Classic of Difficult Issues* (*Nanjing*) from which part of that expository text has been excerpted:

> The thirty-sixth difficult issue: Each of the depots is a single [entity], except for the kidneys which represent a twin [entity]. Why is that so?

[59] Furth, *A Flourishing Yin*, 46.
[60] Furth, *A Flourishing Yin*, 45.

> It is like this. The two kidneys are not both kidneys. The one on the left is the kidney; the one on the right is the gate of life [命門]. The gate of life is the place where the spirit-essence [精] lodges; it is the place to which the original influences are tied. Hence, in males it stores the essence; in females it holds the womb [繫胞]. Hence, one knows that there is only one kidney.[61]

According to his commentary, Hua Shou seems to fully endorse the passage:

> There are two kidneys. The one on the left is the kidney; the one on the right is the gate of life. In males, the essence is stored here. The essence [transmitted] from the five depots and six palaces is received and stored here. In females, the womb is tied here. It receives the essence [from the males] and transforms it. The womb is the location where the embryo is conceived.[62]

Interestingly, this *Nanjing* passage appeared almost word for word in Hobson's *A New Treatise* under the section on "Inner Kidney" (內腎). Hobson opened the section with this passage in order to introduce the subtle distinction between the inner, "real" kidney and the outer kidney, a term he reserved for translating testes.[63] **Figure 14** presents a *Neijing* illustration of the relative locations of the five viscera in the body. Right below the center of

[61] Paul Unshuld, *Nan-Ching: The Classic of Difficult Issues* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 382; cf. the 39th issue.
[62] Unshuld, *Nan-Ching*, p. 385.
[63] Hobson, *Zentai shinron*, section on "Inner Kidney" (內腎經).

the diagram, we see a "kidney" (腎) on the left and a "gate of life" (命門) on the right. If **Figure 17** leaves room for conflating the two, **Figure 14** allows for no ambiguity. Nonetheless, it is difficult to single out any hint of sexual difference (or differentiation for that matter) simply by looking at either anatomical illustration. This is because these *Neijing* images, insofar as they are intended to support medical claims of gender difference, operated within a structure of knowledge for which *visual* depictions of male and female reproductive bodies fell outside its primary "epistemological function."[64]

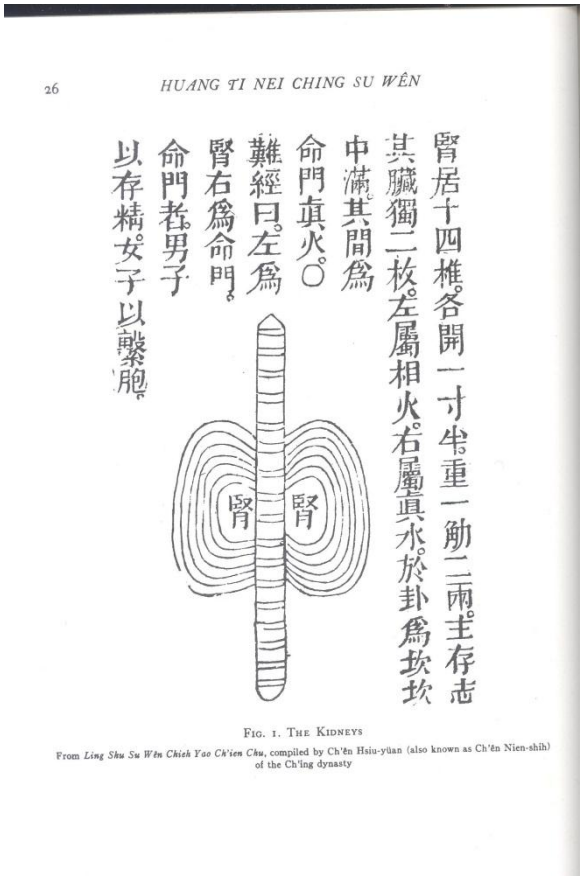

FIG. 1. THE KIDNEYS
From *Ling Shu Su Wên Chieh Yao Ch'ien Chu*, compiled by Ch'ên Hsiu-yüan (also known as Ch'ên Nien-shih) of the Ch'ing dynasty

Figure 17: Diagram of the kidneys in *Huandi Neijing*.

On the contrary, Hobson's images posit the relation of truth to sexual nature in terms of physical, visualizable differences between male and female anatomy. So what his

[64] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 177.

anatomical illustrations enabled was an epistemic shift in the conceptualization of sexual differentiation away from relative theoretical terms and towards concrete visual depiction. Images of Western reproductive anatomy trained Chinese people to connect what could be said about sex to what the eye could see of the physical body, rather than in terms of organ developments or functional relativity. With the dissection-based anatomical realism, it was now possible for everyone to infer anatomical meanings from a concrete body in its present state, rather than having to consider multiple layers of factors regarding bodily functional process. No longer discussed in such vague, invisible, and even highly elitist terms, sex was universally visualized through the production of Western biomedical images. These illustrations reoriented the burden of proof away from the system of theoretical correspondence and into the realm of anatomical appreciation and its attendant techniques of visual comprehension. The epistemological logic and consequence is clear. The availability of the more "scientifically objective" images of Western anatomy, which depended on the implicated precision in their distance from the viewer, translated into a more "scientifically objective" image of Western anatomy. In the Republican period, the popular dissemination of Western-style anatomical images, alongside other natural scientific illustrations, would further bolster the epistemological authority and legitimation of biomedical science.

III. Morphological Sensibility

In the early twentieth century, China's rapid and unexpected defeat by Japan completely repositioned the two countries' international standing. The signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895 represented a watershed event in the cultural imagination of China's power and weakness, on both domestic and foreign fronts. According to Benjamin Elman and Ruth Rogaski, the turn of the century witnessed the reversal of frames of reference

between China and Japan in which one "acquired" scientific knowledge and conceptions of health and diseases from the other.[65] As the key to maintaining social order, classical learning and natural studies slowly gave way to Western scientific, medical, and technological expertise, which Chinese educated individuals began to learn via Japan, as opposed to the convention in which the Japanese learned from Chinese scholars in the early modern period.[66] To be sure, after their interactions with the Jesuits in the "investigation of things and extension of knowledge" during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Chinese literati were exposed to Western science by direct contact with Protestants in the nineteenth century.[67] Yet, to bring Japan into the larger East Asian picture, after waves of self-strengthening efforts, Chinese officials and reformists alike learned from their global embarrassment that Western science and technology held the distinct key to effective modernization. And this soon became imbricated with the larger discourse of nationalism.

The survival of the Chinese nation emerged as one of the foremost preoccupations of government officials, local elites, and educated individuals after the fall of the Qing. Though immensely shaped by the imported discourse of Social Darwinism and the adjacent discussion of "species," this preoccupation nonetheless raised a separate but fundamentally related question: the question of life itself.[68] At this point, however, the status of popular religion and natural science was so volatile that it is difficult to discern in retrospect whether one or the other was regarded by the Chinese as the ultimate authority for answering questions about life. The relations between science and religion were perhaps not consistently oppositional, but a variation of this certainly surfaced in the famous 1923

[65] Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Elman, *A Cultural History of Modern Science in China*.
[66] Benjamin Elman, "From Pre-Modern Chinese Natural Studies to Modern Science in China," in *Mapping Meanings: The Field of New Learning in Late Qing China*, ed. Michael Lackner and Natascha Vittinghoff (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 25-73.
[67] See Benjamin Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).
[68] Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*; James R. Pusey, *Lu Xun and Evolution* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998).

"science versus metaphysics" debate in the aftermath of the New Culture Movement.[69] This, of course, did not resolve for many, then or now, the question of whether Confucianism was ultimately a type of "religion" or a system of philosophical—and to some even "scientific"—knowledge.[70]

The debate, however, reflected a growing tendency among many Chinese intellectuals to approach Western science with greater appreciation and commitment. The emerging urban-based, broadly educated class of entrepreneurs and managers, too, grabbed onto the language of "survival of the fittest" and applied the principles of free market competition to international relations.[71] It was within this broader political and cultural context that Western biology gained epistemological grounding over classical neo-Confucian cosmology for the empirical understanding of life.[72] Chinese thinkers' gravitation towards natural science led to an exponential growth of translations of foreign biology texts and pictures, which included not only diagrams of human anatomy but also various depictions of the animal kingdom and the natural world. A new technique of visualization that emerged from this wave of popular biology books was the morphological sensibility of the natural history tradition. This visualization process assigned scientific meanings of sex to all forms of life. By sexualizing the human/non-human connection, this universalizing technique expanded the kind of visual objectivity that was still evolving from the anatomical aesthetic of Western

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[69] On the historical significance of the debate, see, for example, Michael Adas, "Contested Hegemony," *Journal of World History* 15, no. 1 (2004): 31-63; Tse-Tsung Chow, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), esp. pp. 327-337; Elman, *A Cultural History of Modern Science in China*, pp. 223-226; Charlotte Furth, *Ting Wen-chiang: Science and China's New Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), esp. chapter 5; D. W. Y. Kwok, *Scientism in Chinese Thought: 1900-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), esp. chap. 6.

[70] Elman, *On Their Own Terms*.

[71] Wen-hsin Yeh, *Shanghai Splendor: Economic Sentiments and the Making of Modern China, 1843-1949* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

[72] James P. Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*; Frank Dikötter, *Sex, Culture, and Modernity in China: Medical Science and the Construction of Sexual Identities in the Early Republican Period* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995); Frank Dikötter, *Imperfect Conceptions: Medical Knowledge, Birth Defects, and Eugenics in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Pussey, *Lu Xun and Evolution*; Laurence A. Schneider, *Biology and Revolution in Twentieth-Century China* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); Andrew Jones, *Developmental Fairy Tales: Evolutionary Thinking and Modern Chinese Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

medicine.

In the 1920s, popular life science writers first and foremost categorized all higher-level organisms into two distinct types: *ci* (雌, female) and *xiong* (雄, male). Chai Fuyuan, author of the popular booklet *ABC of Sexology*, identified "the two unique organs in higher-level species" as one being "*xiongxing* [雄性], which produces sperm" and "another *cixing* [雌性], which produces egg."[73] Similarly, in the succinct words of Feng Fei, author of *Treatise on Womanhood*, "*ci* organisms are organisms that produce egg; *xiong* organisms are those that produce sperm."[74] The *ci-xiong* distinction therefore portrays higher-level life forms in a dualistic framework. According to Wang Jueming, translator of a Japanese textbook called *The Principle of Sex*, "There is no *xing* distinction among lower-level unicellular organisms…The reproductive cells of the more evolved species are called sperm and ovum, and they mark the difference between *ci* and *xiong* vital beings." Wang continued, "The morphological distinction between *ci* and *xiong* is present in all animals, but in varying degrees. We even have terms that reflect this notable difference. For example, the male chicken is called a 'rooster' and the female a 'hen'; the male deer is called a 'buck' and the female a 'doe'; the male cattle is called a 'bull' and the female a 'cow,' etc.[…] 'Sex-dimorphism' is a term that denotes this difference in biological morphology."[75] To sharpen his point, Wang synthesized the main points of Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thompson's book, *The Evolution of Sex* (1889), and, based on that information, produced a list of differences between female (*citi*, 雌體) and male organisms (*xiongti*, 雄體) in terms of binary opposites (**Table 1**).[76]

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[73] Chai Fuyuan (柴福沅), *Xingxue ABC* (性學 ABC) [ABC of sexology] (Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1932 [1928]), p. 14.

[74] Feng Fei (馮飛), *Nüxing lun* (女性論) [Treatise on womanhood] (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1920), p. 1.

[75] Wang Jueming (汪厥明), trans., *Xing zhi yuanli* (性之原理) [The principle of sex] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1926), p. 66.

[76] On the popularization of the scientific theory of "sex antagonism" in Europe, see Chandak Sengoopta, *The Most Secret Quintessence of Life: Sex, Glands, and Hormones, 1850-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago

Table 1: Sex Differences in Terms of Binary Opposites (1926).

雄體 (Male)	**雌體 (Female)**
精子生產著 (Sperm Producer)	卵子生產者 (Egg/Ovum Producer)
生殖之消費較小	生殖之消費較大
(Lower "Output" in Reproduction)	(Higher "Output" in Reproduction)
新陳代謝激烈 (Higher Metabolism)	新陳代謝不激烈 (Lower Metabolism)
較為易化的 (Affinity for Difference)	比較為同化的 (Affinity for Similarity)
間有壽命較短者	間有壽命較長者
(Some Have Lower Longevity)	(Some Have Greater Longevity)
間有身體小者	間有身體較大者
(Some Have Smaller Body Size)	(Some Have Larger Body Size)
色彩多壯麗 (More Colorful)	色彩多質素而不鮮明 (Less Colorful)
能力之激發者 (More Able to Stimulate)	較有耐忍力 (More Able to Withstand)
性急而為試驗的	較為固執的保守的
(More Impatient and Experimental)	(More Stubborn and Conservative)
去幼少者之體型較遠	去幼少者之體型較近
(Body Type More Dissimilar)	(Body Type More Similar)
變異性較大 (More Mutable)	變異性小 (More Stable)
求滿足性慾之意志甚強	務求作家族
(Stronger Sexual Desire)	(More Focused on the Family)
較為好鬪 (More Ambitious)	堅固家族 (More Domestic)

In ways that had not previously held sway, the human-nonhuman divide came to anchor the entire Chinese biological discourse of *ci* and *xiong*. This divide defined what was so decisively different between these two terms and others such as *nü* (女)/*nan* (男) or *yin* (陰)/*yang* (陽), both of which appeared with higher frequency in popular discourses. Indeed, the epistemic functionality of *ci* and *xiong* acquired an unprecedented scope of cultural discursiveness in China only after the introduction of Western biology. For instance, one finds in Charlotte Furth and Judith Zeitlin's studies that the notion of *yin* and *yang* prevailed in much of the literary, legal, and medical discussions of hermaphroditism in the

Press, 2006).

late imperial period.[77] As *ci* and *xiong* became the most widely employed pair of biological concepts for conveying sexual difference in the early twentieth century, they gradually replaced *yin* and *yang* as the definitive rubric for understanding the relationship between sex and life in the natural world. In fact, the congruency between these two pairs of concept—*ci*/*xiong* and *yin*/*yang*—precisely relied on their similarity in denoting sex as a *form* of life.

Based on the biologizing discourse of sex, writers defined men (*nanxing*, 男性) and women (*nüxing*, 女性) simply as human equivalents of *ci* and *xiong*. For Feng Fei, "Humans represent the most complex biological organisms. *Xiong* and *ci* humans are called man (*nan*) and woman (*nü*) respectively, and they constitute the most telling example of morphological dimorphism. As such, man and woman are sheer manifestations of the material aspect of the biological world."[78] In the essay "The Evolution of *Xing*," Zhou Jianren, the youngest brother of Lu Xun, similarly remarked that "In the evolution of sex, after the first step of making a distinction between an egg and a sperm, the second step is thereby to differentiate *ci* from *xiong* on the individual organismal [個體] level—the individual organism that produces sperm is identified as *xiong* and the organism that produces eggs is identified as *ci*."[79] Connecting *ci*/*xiong* to *nü*/*nan*, Zhu wrote that "humans are animals that are either *ci* or *xiong* and not both [雌雄異體的動物]: those who generate sperms are called *nan*; those who generate eggs are called *nü*."[80] According to these formulations, the biological basis of sex dimorphism defined *nü* as the human counterpart of

[77] See Charlotte Furth, "Androgynous Males and Deficient Females: Biology and Gender Boundaries in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century China," *Late Imperial China* 9, no. 2 (1988): 1-31; reprinted in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michèle Barale, and David Halperin (New York & London: Routledge, 1993), 479-497; Judith Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), chap. 4.

[78] Feng, *Nüxing lun*, p. 2.

[79] Zhou Jianren (周健人), *Xing yu rensheng* (性與人生) [Sex and human life] (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1928 [1927]), pp. 19-20.

[80] Zhou Jianren (周健人), *Xingjiaoyu* (性教育) [Sex education] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1931), p. 37.

ci and *nan* that of *xiong*. Neither the words *nan* and *nü* nor the concept of *shengzhi* (生殖, reproduction) were new to Chinese discourses. But the novelty of *xing* in the twentieth century stems from its conceptual operation around which all three coalesced to mean sex.

In the 1920s and 1930s, life science books made available visual illustrations of the *ci* and *xiong* morphologies of animals and plants (**Figures 18**-**21**). These images were not "typical" (Goethe's archetype), "ideal" (absolute perfect but imagined composite), or "corrected ideal" (Hobson's anatomical drawings), but "characteristic," because they located the "typical" in an individual and make the organism depicted to stand for a whole kind of class.[81] By pairing up the organisms, these drawings situated the qualitative difference between *ci* and *xiong* animals on the physical-morphological level. Many of these illustrations may have been direct appropriations from foreign biology books. Nevertheless, one feature distinguished them from the pictures produced by the European naturalists in Qing China.[82] Whereas the nineteenth-century naturalists did not label their drawings with *ci* or *xiong*, these twentieth-century images invited its viewer to "compare and contrast" the *ci* and *xiong* versions of any animal type. This "compare and contrast" effect fundamentally depended on, and in turn crystallized, the new scientific concept of sex.

The mapping of a new concept onto the visual representation of nature was an important step in expanding the image of the objectivity of Western bioscience. This connection between the visual and the objective imported new rules for the production of truth about the natural world. Whereas the earlier anatomical drawings allowed people to see sexual difference in the physical human body, the new illustrations reinforced their embedded visual objectivity by broadening the conceptual applicability of sexual difference. Sex, these new images declared, was an essential aspect of life, so it could be identified not

[81] See Daston and Galison, "The Image of Objectivity," pp. 84-98.
[82] See Fa-ti Fan, *British Naturalists in Qing China: Science, Empire and the Cultural Encounter* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

only in humans, but across the entire animal (and plant) kingdom. The visual illustrations did not merely correspond to words or sentences that made up new claims of truth-and-falsehood, although that was a definitive element of their validity. These pictures "became more than helpful tools; they were the words of nature itself."[83]

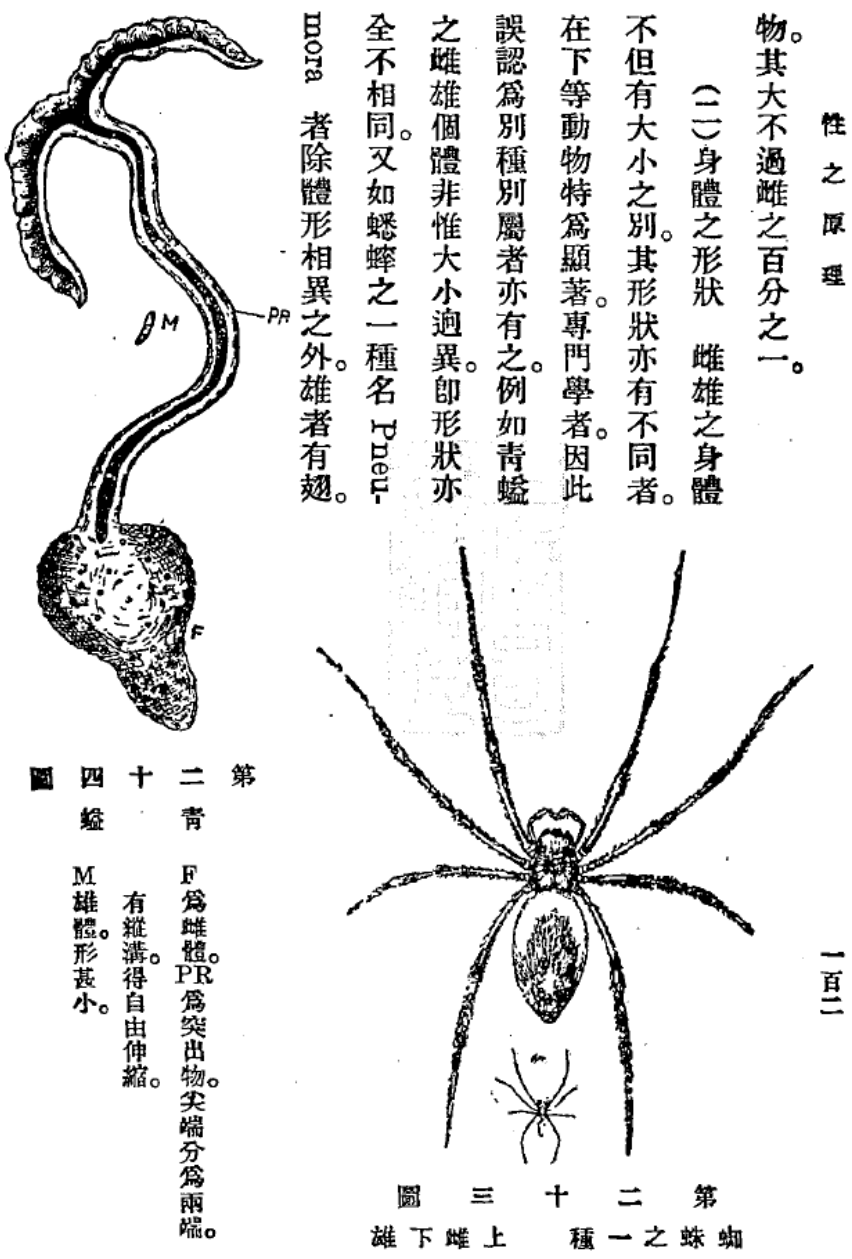
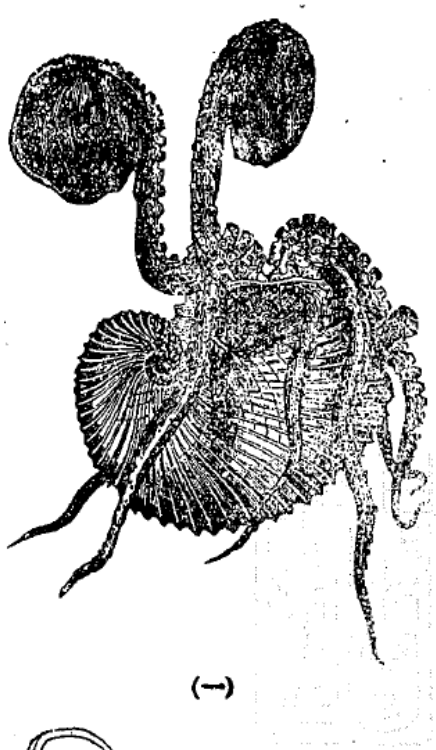
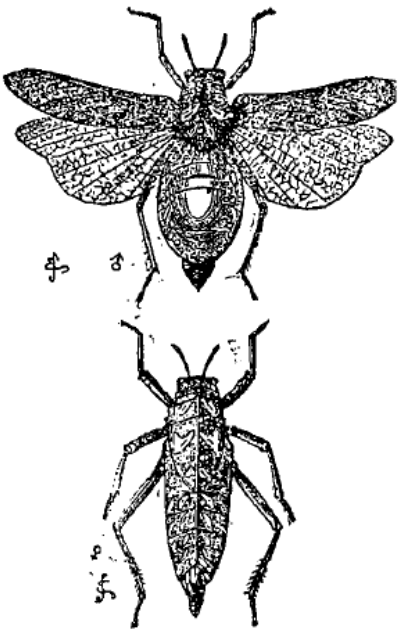


Figure 18: *Ci* and *xiong* morphology of Echuria (spoon worm) and spider (1926).

[83] Daston and Galison, "The Image of Objectivity," p. 116.



(一)

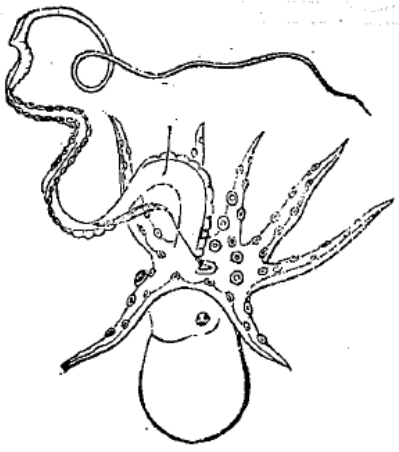


第二十五圖

蜾蠃之一種(Pneumora)

上雄下雌

雌則無之。蛾類與螢類中亦不乏此例。又如蟻羣中之雄蟻、職蟻、雌蟻等形態。形態各異亦其一例也。又如舡魚之雌體亦較雄體爲大。有二肢能分泌爲孵卵室用之殼。常覆殼上。雄者無

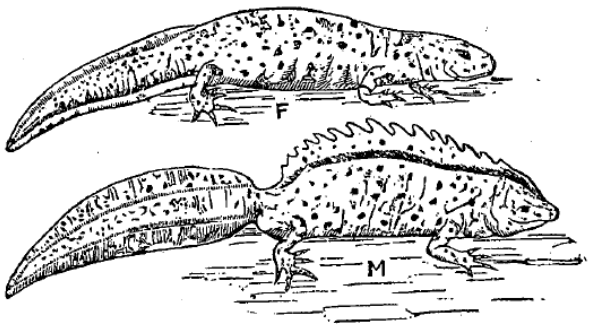


(二)

第二十六圖　舡魚

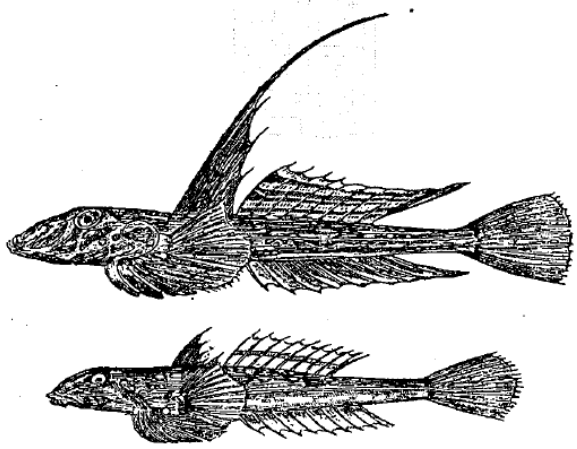
(一) 雌　(二) 雄

Figure 19: *Ci* and *xiong* morphology of Argonaut and grasshopper (1926).



第三十三圖 蠑螈之一種

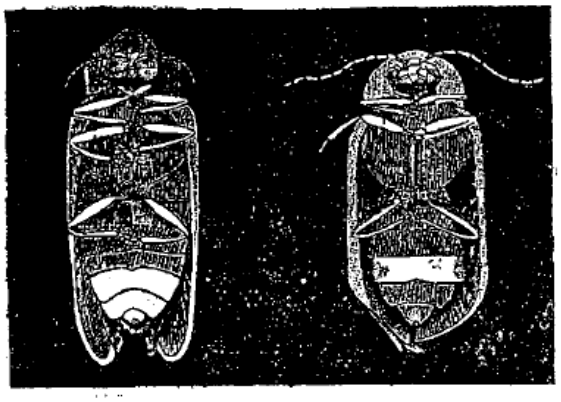
雄 M 雌 F



第三十四圖 玉沙魚

上雄 下雌

Figure 20: *Ci* and *xiong* morphology of salamander and *yusha* fish (1926).



第三十五圖

(右)雌與(左)雄之螢

Figure 21: *Ci* and *xiong* morphology of Lampyridae (firefly) (1926).

The kind of morphological sensibility expressed through these images persisted well into the period after the War of Resistance (1937-45). The best example was none other than the work of one of the leading authorities in reproductive biology in twentieth-century China, the embryologist Zhu Xi (朱洗, 1899-1962), best known for his study of the parthenogenesis of frogs. Throughout the late 1930s and the 1940s, Zhu authored and revised a total of six monographs under the book series called "Modern Biology" (現代生物學叢書; published by *Wenhua Shenhuo Chuban She* [Cultural Life Publishing House]) that introduced various subjects in Western biology to the Chinese lay public.[84]

According to Laurence Schneider's institutional history of Chinese biology, the history of genetics and evolutionary biology can be seen as an example of "how modern science was transferred to China, how it was established there and *diffused throughout culture* and institutions."[85] Indeed, numerous Republican Chinese magazine and journal articles, periodicals, books, and pamphlets published under the banner of "biology" were not always written by individuals belonging to formal establishments of natural scientific research, such as at Peking, Qinghua, Yanjing, or Nanjing Universities. Zhou Jianren, for instance, was one of the most reputable popular life-science journalists at the time. Unlike his two elder brothers, Zhou continued pursuing his interest in the sciences (rather than literature for example) and earned his bachelor's degree from the Agricultural School of Tokyo Imperial University. He frequently published articles and opinion pieces in popular periodicals such

[84] Zhu Xi (朱洗), *Aiqing de laiyuan* (愛情的來源) [The origins of love], rev. ed. (Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe, 1946); Zhu Xi, *Danshengren yu renshengdan* (蛋生人與人生蛋) [Human from eggs and egg from humans], rev. ed. (Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe, 1946b [1939]); Zhu Xi, *Women de zuxian* (我們的祖先) [Our ancestors], rev. ed. (Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe, 1948a [1940]); Zhu Xi, *Zhognü qingnan* (重女輕男) [Women over men], rev. ed. (Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe, 1948b [1941]); Zhu Xi, *Cixiong zhi bian* (雌雄之變) [Changes in biological femaleness and maleness], rev. ed. (Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe, 1948 [1945]); Zhu Xi, *Zhishi de laiyuan* (智識的來源) [The origins of intellectual knowledge], rev. ed. (Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe, 1948d [1946]).

[85] Schneider, *Biology and Revolution*, p. 1 (emphasis added).

as the *Eastern Miscellany* (東方雜誌). His writings that defended Lamarkism during the Republican period and Lysenkoism after the rise of the Chinese Communist Party attracted a much wider readership than the technical writings of professional geneticists.[86] So in Republican China, the riddle of life was taken up discursively by a wide array of cultural actors. By extension, many who wrote about life also wrote about sex, as was the case with Zhou, and that the field of reproductive biology by no means preoccupied only those who would be considered "biologists" according to a strictly-defined Euro-American standard of scientific competence.[87]

In this respect, Zhu Xi and other important Chinese geneticists and biologists such as Tan Jiazhen were notable exceptions.[88] Born in Linhai, Zhejiang Province, Zhu went to France with several friends in May 1920 as participants in the anarchist Li Shizeng's "work-study programme." According to his autobiographical account, they received no assistance from the Sino-French Education Association upon arriving in France, so they had to live in tents on the lawn in front of the Chinese Federation. Eventually, they were allowed to sleep on the floor of the building on a temporary basis. During the first five to six years of his life in France, Zhu's experience was quite typical of Chinese young adults who decided to join the "work-study programme" and travel overseas: frequent job changes, difficult physical labor, poor living conditions, unending negative encounters with Westerners, and an increasingly entrenched sense of disappointment and despair. Nevertheless, Zhu eventually attended Montpellier University and studied embryology under J. E. Bataillon

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[86] See Schneider, *Biology and Revolution*, pp. 44-45, 132-133, 148-149. The only biography of Zhou to date is in Chinese: see Xie Dexian (謝德銑), *Zhou Jianren pingzhuan* (周建人評傳) [Biography of Zhou Jianren] (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1991). See also Wong Xuefeng (王雪峰), *Jiaoyu zhuanxing zhijing: Ershi shiji shangbanshi Zhongguo de xingjiaoyu sixiang yu shijian* (教育轉型之鏡: 20 世紀上半時中國的性教育思想與實踐) [Mirror of the education paradigm shift: Theories and practices of sex education in China in early 20th century] (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2006), pp. 155-196; and Jones, *Developmental Fairy Tales*, pp. 91-93.

[87] For the problem of the "universal language" of science, especially in the context of scientific translations, see Marwa S. Elshakry, "Knowledge in Motion: The Cultural Politics of Modern Science Translations in Arabs," *Isis* 99, no. 4 (2008): 701-730.

[88] More on Tan Jiazhen, see Schneider, *Biology and Revolution*.

from 1925 to 1932. After earning his doctorate degree in biology from Montpellier, Zhu returned to China and began his academic career as a professional biologist. From 1932 on, he was associated with the National Zhongshan University, the Beijing Academy of Sciences, and various private research organizations. Zhu became a member of the Experimental Biology Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) in 1950, and was appointed as its director three years later.[89]

Before joining the CAS Experimental Biology Institute, Zhu authored and expanded his six monographs for the "Modern Biology" book series, the aim of which was to introduce a wide spectrum of Western biological ideas to the Chinese non-expert public. In his general preface to this six-volume project, Zhu made clear his goals:

> My intention in publishing this series of monographs is to offer my knowledge in biology to the lay reader in a systematic way, hoping that it will encourage a better understanding of humans themselves. The topics of our investigation include the origins of human beings, the evolution of their ancestors, and the development of human thinking, behavior, and moral consciousness. Simply put, we need to analyze ourselves, research ourselves, understand ourselves; after this sort of understanding we need to improve ourselves, allowing humans to be part of science and to march forward to somewhere more reliable.[90]

This statement shows the conviction Zhu shared with many other modernizing thinkers (not only scientists) in the Republican period that it was important to acquire a general knowledge

[89] Marilyn A. Levine, *The Found Generation: Chinese Communists in Europe during the Twenties* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1993), pp. 84-85; Schneider, *Biolgy and Revolution*, p. 137; Zhu Xi, "Sishiyi ge yue de qingong jianxue shenghuo" (四十一個月的勤功兼學生活) [My forty-one months of life in the Work-Study Movement], *Minguo ribao* (民國日報), March-May 1923.

[90] Zhu Xi, *Dan sheng ren yu ren sheng dan*, p. ii.

about life through a scientific way of thinking rooted in Western biological, especially evolutionary, ideas.[91] He therefore opened his series with a volume called *Humans from Eggs and Eggs from Humans* (蛋生人與人生蛋) that described various aspects of the developmental phases of life, including detailed accounts of male and female reproductive anatomy (as well as an interesting chapter on teratology).[92] In this first volume, Zhu distinguished humans from animals, plants, and other living species in ways that would become even more vivid throughout his subsequent writings—by holding up sex as an integral dimension of life.

In *Changes in Biological Femaleness and Maleness* (1945), the fourth volume of the series, Zhu began his scientific investigation of sex with an opening chapter called "The Conceptualization of *Ci* and *Xiong*" (雌雄的概觀).[93] He argued that the most important calibers of differentiation in living species—animals, plants, and humans—were also the most representative differences between *ci* and *xiong* (or *nü* and *nan* when he referred to humans).[94] Like the visual illustrations of *ci* and *xiong* species circulating in other popular biology books (**Figures 18-21**), his hand-drawn images of different organisms achieved one simple goal: to enable the viewer grasp from a critical distance the nature of sexual difference across a wide spectrum of life forms (**Figure 22**).

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[91] See, for example, Benjamin Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yan Fu and the West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964); and Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*; Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*; Pusey, *Lu Xun and Evolution*; Jones, *Developmental Fairy Tales*.

[92] Zhu Xi, *Dan sheng ren yu ren sheng dan*.

[93] The second edition appeared in 1948, three years after the Second Sino-Japanese War. The main difference between the two editions is the additional materials Zhu included in the second addition of his text. Under the influence of Western studies in endocrinology and biochemistry, Zhu adopted a chemical model of sex in this post-war material, which reflected the increasing prominence of sex endocrinological research in the preceding decades. For the additional materials in the second edition, see Zhu, *Cixiong zhibian*, pp. 335-380. See chapter 4 of this dissertation on the development of endocrinological ideas in Republican China.

[94] Zhu, *Cixiong zhibian*, pp. 5-16.

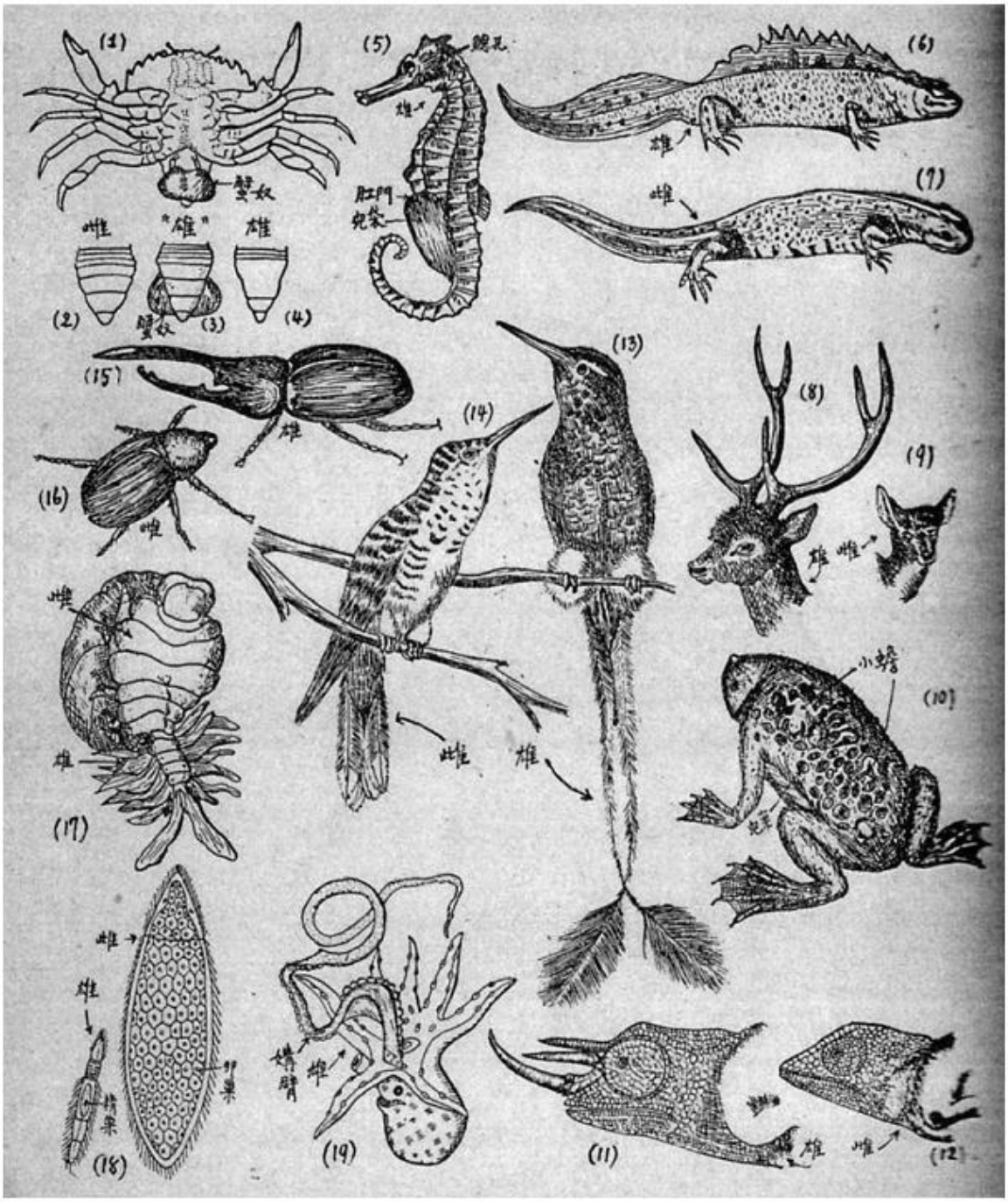

Figure 22: Zhu, "The Morphological Differences between *Ci* and *Xiong* Animals" (1945).

Above all, these images must be understood as the product of visualization rather than mere representation.[95] The nineteen illustrations in **Figure 22** teach the eye to recognize

[95] Luc Pauwels, "Introduction: The Role of Visual Representation in the Production of Scientific Reality," in *Visual Cultures of Science: Rethinking Representational Practices in Knowledge Building and Science*

specific patterns: they assist the reader to *know by seeing* how *ci* and *xiong* should be differentiated. Whereas pictures 6, 8, 11, 13, and 15 all refer to the "雄" (*xiong* or "male") versions of a particular species, pictures 7, 9, 12, 14, and 16 indicate their "雌" (*ci* or "female") counterparts. The very marking and explicit indications of such words as "雌" (*ci*) and "雄" (*xiong*) on the diagrams give these words a particular semantic epistemo-*logicality*, according to which *ci* and *xiong* acquire their linguistic logic, usage, coherence, and, essentially, possibility by being visually equated with particular physical representations of a wide range of biological organisms. The reader could learn to distinguish *ci* from *xiong* precisely from their indicated epistemic associations on the page.

Similarly, although the visual illustrations in other biology books (**Figures 18-21**) were presented as if they truthfully described reality, they were in fact establishing new boundaries within which claims of truth-and-falsehood about sex could be made. As Michael Lynch has insightfully noted, visual representation in science is really about "the production of *scientific* reality."[96] Since these images did not simply represent nature, they had deep implications for the negotiation of truth claims. In this case, they claimed an epistemological status of their own by showing that the nature of sex could be seen through the morphological appearance of various living organisms. **Figures 18-22** were not just passive aids for learning, but they prescribed for the reader the conceptual boundaries of life and the forms in which it took shape, such as through the binary manifestations of *ci* and *xiong*. In other words, the "scientific" reality of sex, or sexual difference, depended on the way the morphological sensibility of these images operated on top of the anatomical aesthetic of the earlier medical representations. Although the word *xing* did not yet mean "sex" before the twentieth century, the visual mappings of biological form made it possible for the

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Communication, ed. Luc Pauwels (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2006), pp. vii-xix.

[96] Michael Lynch, "The Production of Scientific Images: Vision and Re-vision in the History, Philosophy, and Sociology of Science," *Communication & Cognition*, 31, nos. 2-3 (1998): 213-28, on p. 223.

earlier anatomical drawings and the later naturalist illustrations to coalesce epistemologically around the concept of sex in the 1920s. By claiming a "scientific" status for the images they produced, both techniques of visualization ultimately secured an objective image for the sciences themselves.[97]

Indeed, in the new discursive context of the *ci-xiong* distinction, natural science writers were quick to reengage with the anatomical aesthetic of medical representation. They often included in their books detailed descriptions and drawings of human reproductive anatomy. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, examples could be found in Chai Fuyuan's *Sexology ABC* (1928), Zhu Jianxia's edited translation of *The Physiology and Psychology of Sex* (1928), Li Baoliang's *Sexual Knowledge* (1937), and Chen Yucang's *Research on the Human Body* (1937), among other professional and popular publications (**Figures 23-26**). The circulation of these images continued a long tradition of the cross-cultural translation and dissemination of Western anatomical knowledge, an endeavor dating back to as early as the seventeenth century.[98] As discussed in the last section, in the nineteenth century, medical missionaries including Benjamin Hobson (1816-1873), John G. Kerr (1824-1891), John Dudgeon (1837-1901), and John Fryer (1839-1928) extended and revised this intellectual trajectory.[99]

The new illustrations of the Republican period not only updated many of the previous

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[97] My arguments in this section build on the extensive body of literature on the important role visual images play in the production of scientific knowledge. See, for example, Rudolph Arnheim, *Visual Thinking* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Micahel Lynch and Steve Woolgar, "Introduction: Sociological Orientations to Representational Practice in Science," *Human Studies* 11, nos. 2-3 (1988): 259-283; Karin Knorr-Cetina and Klaus Almann, "Images Dissection in Natural Scientific Inquiry," *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 15, no. 3 (1990): 259-283; Bruno Latour, "Drawing Things Together," in *Representation in Scientific Practice*, ed. Michael Lynch and Steve Woolgar (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), pp. 19-67; Peter Taylor and Ann S. Blum, "Pictoral Representation in Biology," *Biology and Philosophy* 6 (1991): 125-134; Brian S. Baigrie, ed., *Picturing Knowledge: Historical and Philosophical Problems Concerning the Use of Art in Science* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

[98] See, for example, Elman, *A Cultural History of Modern Science in China*; Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images*; Asen, "'Manchu Anatomy.'" See the above section on "Anatomical Aesthetic."

[99] The most comprehensive biography of Dudgeon to date is Gao Xi (高晞), *Dezhen zhuan: Yige Yingguo chuanjiaoshi yu wan Qing yixue jindaihua* (德珍傳: 一個英國傳教士與晚清醫學近代化) [A Biography of Dudgeon: A British Medical Missionary and the Medical Modernization of the Late Qing Dynasty] (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2009).

"errors" and "mistranslations," but also consolidated a systematic language of maleness and femaleness in the universal terms of bioscience. For example, one finds great resemblance between the diagram of the female reproductive system on the lower right hand side of **Figure 24** and the one on the upper right hand side of **Figure 11** from Hobson's treatise. Whereas late-Qing missionary anatomical drawings were circulated mainly among the medical elites, especially those who were less resilient to Western biomedicine, Republican-era anatomical illustrations were printed in popular publications and reached a critical mass. Above all, the *popularization* of the anatomical aesthetic of medical representation shows that "What is accepted as true knowledge ultimately depends not exclusively on truth claims negotiated among experts but required public mediation."[100] The sheer quantity and accessibility of this new set of illustrations not only reinforced the visual authority of late-Qing anatomical drawings, but they demonstrate that, at least by the 1920s, the universality of Western bioscientific discourse was even endorsed and advocated by Chinese native writers themselves.

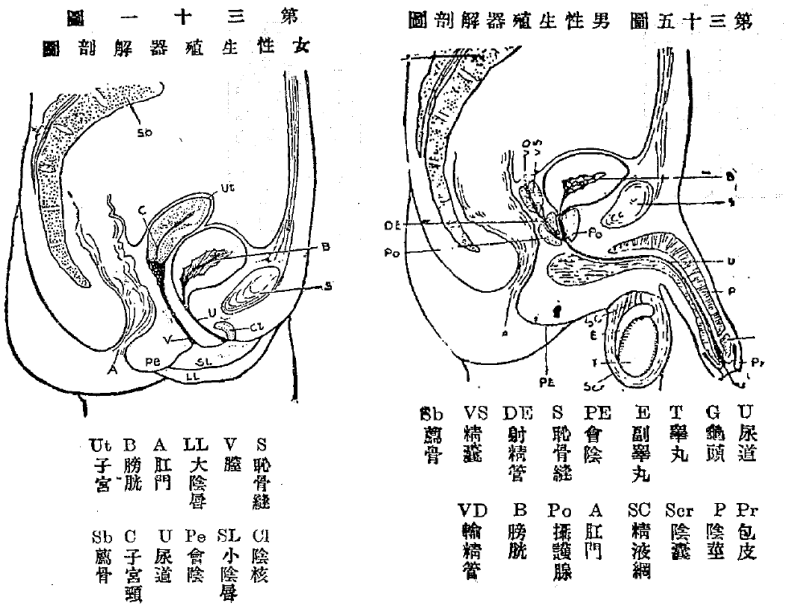

Figure 23: Zhu's anatomical diagrams of male and female reproductive organs (1928).

[100] Bernd Hüppauf and Peter Weingart, "Images in and of Science," in *Science Images and Popular Images of the Sciences*, ed. Bernd Hüppauf and Peter Weingart (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 3-31, on p. 18.

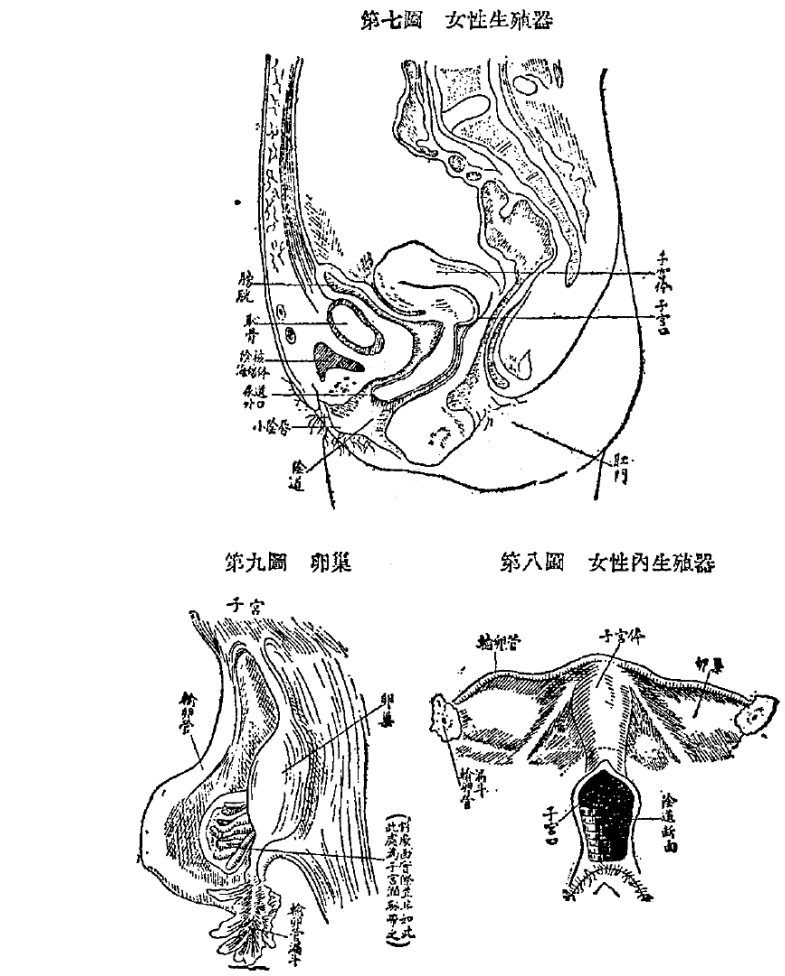

Figure 24: Li's anatomical diagrams of the female reproductive system (1937).

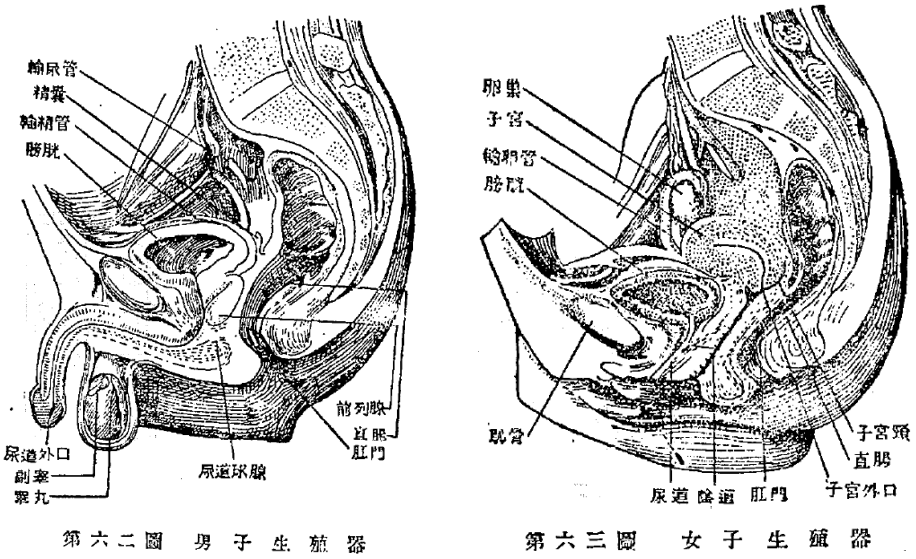

Figure 25: Chen's anatomical diagrams of male and female reproductive organs (1937).

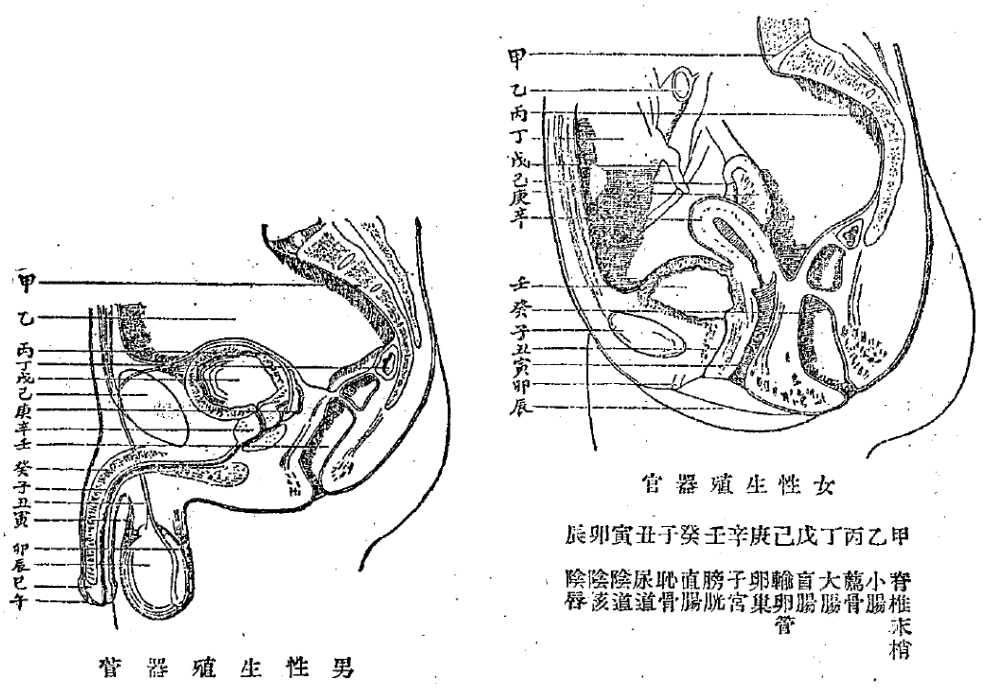

Figure 26: Chai's anatomical diagrams of male and female reproductive organs (1928).

IV. From Gender to Sex

In the new logic of bioscience, physical structure and morphology only reflected, rather than predetermined, human gender difference. More often, popular writers claimed the secret of masculinity and femininity to reside in the gametes and gonads, which formed a crucial part of what biologists called "primary sexual characteristics."[101] In this spirit, Gao Xian, the translator of another Japanese biology textbook *Sex and Reproduction* (1935), posited a broader definition of *ci* and *xiong* that incorporated the role of anatomical parts: "Organisms in the animal kingdom that either produce spermatozoa or have a testis that produces it are called *xiong* (male); those that produce ovum or have a functional ovarium that can produce it are called *ci* (female)."[102] For Gao, the essence of *ci*-ness and *xiong*-ness

[101] Whereas I adopt the more familiar term "sexual characteristics," the phrase "sexual character" seems to be the convention among this group of writers. See the quoted texts below.

[102] Gao Xian (高銛), trans., *Xing ji shengzhi* (性及生殖) [Sex and reproduction] (Shanghai: Commercial Press,

entirely depended on the "actual presence of a testis or an ovary," which constituted "*zhuyao tezheng* [主要特徵] (principal sexual character)," and those bodily features that "bear some immediate relevance to the principal sexual character are called *fudai tezheng* [附帶特徵] (accessory sexual character). Together, they are called *diyici xingtezhen* [第一次性特徵] (primary sexual character)."[103] The anatomical drawings (**Figures 23-26**) therefore provided direct visual evidence for the natural existence of these primary sexual characteristics. Through these images, the eye could see what normally could not be seen beyond the physical appearance of the human body. In other words, the anatomical aesthetic of these medical representations allowed the viewer's gaze to penetrate the external integument of the body, a fundamental attribute of the morphological sensibility of the natural history tradition. Here, we begin to see how the two techniques of visualization worked on top of each other.

If the seat of masculinity and femininity could be observed from these anatomical drawings, the morphological appreciation of natural history was still important for distinguishing these features from what biologists called "secondary sexual characteristics." Chinese writers often credited John Hunter as the originator of this idea. According to Gao's definition, "coined by John Hunter, *dierci xingtezhen* [第二次性特徵] (secondary sexual character) typically refers to variations in body size, morphology, color of physical appearance, sound production, odor and its intensity, illumination and its intensity, parts of the body that illuminate, etc. among normal animals."[104] Wang Jueming, in translating *The Principle of Sex*, summed up the definition of "secondary sexual characters" rather cogently: "a concept invented by Hunter and adopted by Darwin" that referred to "sexual characters

1935), p. 12.
[103] Gao, *Xing ji shengzhi*, p. 17.
[104] Gao, *Xing ji shengzhi*, p. 17.

that bear no direct relationship to biological reproduction."[105] Labeled "secondary," physical features such as the antlers of male deer helped build a perception of the difference between *ci* and *xiong* animals as a natural distinction (illustrations "8" and "9" in **Figure 22**). The morphological sensibility found in **Figures 18-22** precipitated a sense of visual objectivity precisely by contrasting the physical appearance of male and female species. Like the anatomical aesthetic of medical representation, it put the viewer in a position where it was still possible to determine the sex of the object represented on the page; the crucial difference, though, was that this process of "sex-determination" was made possible not by looking beneath the layers of the skin, but by looking precisely at those physical features that were externally visible. Therefore, both the anatomical aesthetic of medical representation and the morphological sensibility of the natural history tradition grounded the objectivity of sex in visual representation, except that they achieved this differently. Each established a different kind of epistemic relationship between the viewing subject and the object of representation.

Similar to the congruence between *ci*/*xiong* and *nü*/*nan*, the visuality of sex depended on the application of "secondary sexual characteristics" to humans. In *Sexual Knowledge* (1937), Li Baoliang wrote that "The best examples of secondary sexual characteristics in humans include women's smaller physique, paler pigmentation, softer skin, richer body fat, and less well-defined muscles in comparison to men."[106] Other features of human "secondary sexual characteristics," according to Li, included men's hairier bodies, lower-pitched voice, and narrower pelvis (**Figure 27**).[107] Li reasoned that women had wider pelvises due to their procreative function, similar to how their biological capability to milk babies lent easily to the development of larger breasts. "Therefore," wrote Li, "many

[105] Wang, *Xing zhi yuanli*, p. 68.
[106] Li Baoliang (李寶梁), *Xing de zhishi* (性的知識) [Sexual knowledge] (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1937), p. 39.
[107] Li, *Xing de zhishi*, pp. 39-41.

scientists have observed wider female pelvises among people of races on the higher end of the evolutionary scale. This is because the brain size of the babies of better races tends to be larger, and larger pelvises would allow a better fetus to develop inside a woman's womb."[108] Such extension of secondary sexual features to the human body developed a visual framing of sex dimorphism in *all* living beings as a fundamental product of nature.

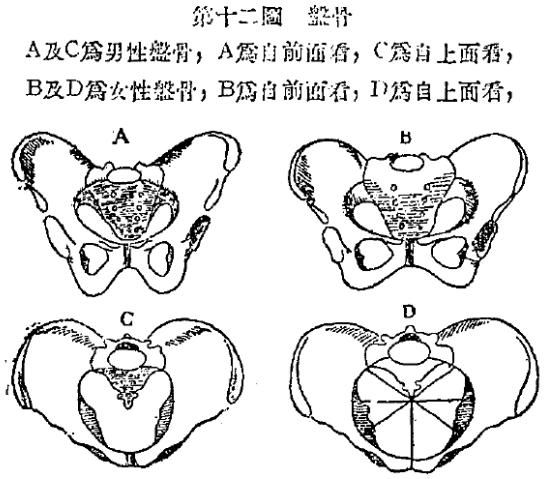

Figure 27: Li, "The Pelvises" of men and women (1937).

Ultimately, though, it was the naturalization of the connection between "primary" and "secondary" sexual characteristics itself that gave *xing* an epistemological grounding in the visual discursive realm. By naming all those sex features not directly involved in reproduction "secondary," observers described human gender difference as the natural outgrowth of "primary" characteristics, ones that also determined sexual difference in animals. This biologizing discourse conceptualized maleness and femaleness beneath the surface of observable bodily features, as evident in the anatomical aesthetic of medical representation and the subcellular gaze of experimental genetics to be discussed later. It was with this in mind that Shen Chichun, author of *The Life of Sex* (1935), argued that although

[108] Li, *Xing de zhishi*, pp. 40-41.

"women have large breasts; men have beards," these "do not constitute quintessential gender difference [根本上的夫婦之別]," because "quintessential gender difference refers to anatomical difference [解剖上的區別]." Shen explained that "If an ovum [卵粒], a yolk [卵黃], and an oviduct [輸卵管] are found inside an animal after dissection, then the organism is *ci*. If testes and vas deferens are found, the animal who has sacrificed his life [for the dissection] should be *xiong*."[109] In his implicit connection of human gender difference to the *ci-xiong* sex distinction, Shen instructed his reader to consider a layer of truth, in relation to nature, beyond what the eye could see. These anatomical and morphological drawings—and the chromosomal depictions to be discussed below—enabled Chinese readers to imagine sex beyond the physical markers of breast and beard and to locate the biological seat of manhood and womanhood in the anatomical distinctions of the reproductive system, i.e., testes and ovaries.

Apart from primary and secondary sexual characteristics, cultural commentators often spoke of "tertiary" ones, too. They univocally attributed this concept to the British sexologist Havelock Ellis. According to Wang Jueming's translation of *The Principle of Sex*, the notion of "tertiary sexual characters" was "invented by Ellis to highlight unique features of male and female bodies. Tertiary sexual characters are not as obvious as secondary ones, but examples abound."[110] Among the examples he listed include the differences between male and female skull size, body height, level of physical activity, blood cell count, and cerebral regions in the brain. Sexual difference in these somatic traits, according to the author, may appear less significant to a zoologist than, say, a sociologist or an anthropologist. As such, "even if they cannot all be grouped under secondary sexual characters, it is still useful to include them under the broad category of tertiary sexual characters. Although this

[109] Shen Chichun (沈霽春), *Xing de shenghuo* (性的生活) [The life of sex] (Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1934), p. 33.
[110] Wang, *Xing zhi yuanli*, p. 70.

concept has been endorsed variously by Papillault, Haeckel, P. Weber, and Kurella, each scientist outlines a different set of criteria for associating it with certain sex-specific features."[111] Tertiary sexual characteristics thus gave Chinese readers an important scientific vocabulary (and the cognate set of visual proof) to naturalize those sexual/gender differences that had no immediate relationship to chromosomal or gonadal sex.

Simply put, what the cultural discourse of bioscience mediated in the early Republican period was the transformation of previous bodily "gender" into modern "sex." Although some historians have used the blanket term "scientism" to explain the optimism that many Chinese thinkers expressed towards Western scientific principles and practices in the early twentieth century, they rarely, if ever, specify the underlying mechanisms of knowledge production by which the cultural authority of that optimism came about.[112] What I have called the technique of visualization is precisely intended to help us specify the epistemological procedures that produced such optimism. As we have seen, in their effort to challenge neo-Confucian prescriptive claims about gender hierarchy, urban elites relied on the natural sciences to recast gender distinction in terms of biologically determined structures. More specifically, they relied on the anatomical aesthetic of medical representation and the morphology sensibility of the natural history tradition to establish an objective nature of sex that could be identified in the visual domain.

Relying on the concrete physical structures of sex, they also reconceptualized functional processes of the body. Earlier cultural markers of femaleness, such as menstruation, were now reframed from the viewpoint of modern physiology. As mentioned earlier, the increasing association of women with blood depletion reflected the rise of a "positive model of female generativity" in late imperial Chinese medicine. From the late Ming on, this model construed female health around symbols of vitality and loss. Chinese

[111] Wang, *Xing zhi yuanli*, p. 71.
[112] Kwok, *Scientism in Chinese Thought*.

physicians considered women to be the "sickly sex" that had a physically (and to some degree emotionally) weak body more prone to sickness due to their constant association with blood loss, such as through childbirth and menstruation.[113]

In the 1920s and 1930s, blood discharge continued to be perceived as the preeminent biological marker of femaleness. In 1935, Su Yizhen opened her *Hygiene Manual for Women* with the statement that "menstruation is the most unique physiological difference between men and women."[114] In their book on *Women's Hygiene* (1930), Guo Renyi and Li Renling also structured women's life cycle around definitive turning points of menstruation: it is decisively absent before the onset of puberty; its first occurrence marks the girl's entry into young adulthood; and its permanent cessation marks the beginning of menopause, the final stage of the female life cycle.[115] Hence, Western bioscience universalized femininity by recoding traditional physical markers such as blood and menstruation in modern anatomic-physiological terms. As a result, womanhood became epistemologically comparable to manhood. The introduction of Western biology turned earlier gender signifiers into "natural" sex differences by the Republican period.

The transformation of women's gender into female sex corroborates Tani Barlow's assertion that, strictly speaking, "woman" (女性, *nüxing*) did not exist in China as a universal category before the twentieth century. The closest term that was available was *funü* (婦女), which referred to various female subject positions within the discursive network of family, marriage, kinship relations. Women were always virtuous wives, mothers, daughters, and so on, but they were never identified as a distinct group of individuals outside family relations. As such, one of the most reputable legacies of May Fourth feminism was the creation of a

[113] Furth, "Blood, Body, and Gender".
[114] Su Yizhen (蘇儀貞), *Nüxing weisheng changshi* (女性衛生常識) [Hygiene manual for women] (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1935), p. 1.
[115] Guo Renyi (郭人驥) and Li Renling (酈人麟), *Nüxing weisheng* (女性衛生) [Women's hygiene] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1930), p. 4.

generic category of womanhood filtered from its earlier grounding in kin relationality. As Barlow explains it,

> Feminist texts accorded a foundational status to physiology and, in the name of nineteenth-century Victorian gender theory, they grounded sexual identity in sexual physiology. Probably the most alarming of all of progressive Chinese feminism's arguments substituted sexual desire and sexual selection for reproductive service to the jia [family] and made them the foundation of human identity.[116]

As modernizing elites began to explain gender roles and relations within a Western biomedical lexicon, the images and language of anatomy substantiated a popular vision of sex dimorphism. This turned *xing* into a concept of dualistic humanity that manifested itself most tellingly in the physical (sexual) differences between men and women. Consider, for example, Zhang Xichen's remark in 1924:

> In the past ten years, there is something most powerful that is developing most rapidly—that is, a shapeless reform in consciousness. This reform is what is called women's awakening as 'human beings.' […] Women who had some contact with new thought all have the consciousness that '*a woman is a human being, too*.' The books which have been regarded women's bibles, such as *Nüjie*, *Neixun*, *Nülun*, and *Nüfan*, have all been trampled under the feet of new women.[117]

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[116] Tani E. Barlow, *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 53. For an instructive reflection on the heuristic value of "women," "gender," and "sexuality" for historical analysis outside the Western contexts, see Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Beyond the Americas: Are Gender and Sexuality Useful Categories of Historical Analysis?" *Journal of Women's History* 18, no. 1 (2006): 11-21.

[117] Se Lu, "Zuijin shiniannei funüjie de huigu" [A review of women in the past ten years], *Funü zazhi* [The ladies' journal] 10, no. 1 (1924): 21-22, emphasis added, cited in Zheng Wang, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment: Oral and Textual Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 115.

Zhang's words signal the formation of an autonomous female subjectivity from the shadow of *funü* in the new intellectual climate of May Fourth feminism, as womanhood came to be understood no longer in strict relations to family relations and kinship, but as the biological representation of half of the human population whose social status is (or ought to be) equal to men. This egalitarian view was clearly expressed in 1904, for example, by another pioneer in the women's movement, Chen Xiefen, the daughter of the editor of the radical Shanghai journal *Subao*: "The inhabitants of China number about four hundred million all together. Men and women each constitute half of this."[118] As such, Barlow observes that Chinese women "became nüxing only when they became the other of Man in the colonial modernist Victorian binary. Woman was foundational only insofar as she constituted a negation of man, his other."[119]

Since the late nineteenth century, Liang Qichao had emphasized the potential contribution that independent women could make to the nation's economy. But in the years surrounding the New Culture Movement, as Frank Dikötter has shown based on his survey of childbirth manuals, gynecological treatises, books of medical remedies, family handbooks, marriage guides, and other primers on sexual hygiene, the new discourse of *nüxing* (meaning biologically sexed woman) proliferated and mainly drew on the ideas of the Western life sciences—an epistemic move away from metaphysics—that would not only discuss women and female subjectivity in terms of their biology and sexuality, but also completely overturn the authority and prestige of neo-Confucian learning.[120] According to Leon Rocha, "before it was possible to have a discourse of woman based on her sexual, biological, actual differences (that is, *nüxing*), sex had to first become human nature through the creation of the

[118] Chen Xiefen, "Crisis in the Women's World," cited in *Writing Women in Modern China: An Anthology of Women's Literature from the Early Twentieth Century*, ed. Amy D. Dooling ad Kristina M. Torgeson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 84.
[119] Barlow, *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism*, p. 54.
[120] Frank Dikötter, *Sex, Culture and Modernity in Chin*.

neologism *xing*."[121] Gender like age became an important marker of the self.[122]

The political, social, and cultural factors that motivated Chinese intellectuals, journalists, social reformers, university professors, doctors, and other cultural elites to replace Confucian philosophy with human biology are undoubtedly significant. Their efforts, for instance, cannot be understood independently of the 1898 reform movement, which had already challenged the imperial institutions and orthodox ideologies in significant ways, the abolishment of the civil service examination system in 1905, the fall of the imperial polity in 1911, the anti-footbinding and feminist movements, the rise of the printing press, the birth of vernacular Chinese literature, the establishment of modern universities, the consolidation of an intellectual class, and, of course, the resulting famous science versus metaphysics debate in 1923, just to mention a few poignant examples.

But "scientism" has often been introduced as a catchall term for rationalizing these cultural elites' interest in and commitment to the universal value of Western science. On the contrary, my implicit argument has been that perhaps the universal value that guided these Chinese thinkers was mutually generative of their very discourse of modernization: the visual objectivity of sex, therefore, emerged from and critically anchored the authority of the production of images of human anatomy, *ci* and *xiong* animals, and, as we will see, genes and chromosomes. By making it possible for people to relate what they called *xing*/sex to the discursive visual realm in concrete terms, biomedical science simultaneously established for itself the status of being the ultimate arbiter of truth about life and nature in ways that fell outside the epistemological parameters of Confucian philosophy or Chinese medicine. Rather than taking for granted the rhetorical authority of anatomical sex in May Fourth feminist discourse, techniques of visualization help explain *how* Western biological notions of sex came to be established as the new epistemological ground for making claims about

[121] Rocha, "*Xing*," p. 606.
[122] Wen-hsin Yeh, *Alienated Academy: Culture and Politics in Republican China, 1919-1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

gender and the body.

V. Man and Machine

The biologization of gender did not apply only to women. A parallel historical transformation can be identified for the scientific reconceptualization of manhood. If blood and menstruation were reframed as the most "visible" cultural indicators of womanliness, the chief "natural" markers of maleness remained sperm and spermatorrhea. In 1935, the Commercial Press published a book called *The Sexual Hygiene and Morals of Adolescents*, with the opening sentence that "Being the most essential ingredient of health, the internal secretion of the testicles is also known as the 'inner energy.'"[123] On the next page, the author reinforced the importance of semen conservation. He cited an example of a male student who could not perform his duties responsibly after having a "lewd" dream the previous night, which led to "the loss of his essential internal secretions." "Based on this example," the author concluded, "a young man's physical health is closely related to the natural product of his body."[124]

The new vocabulary of bioscience allowed the author to explain the health implications of semen physiology in a way that would sound almost incomprehensible to premodern ears: "Teenagers' secretion will be absorbed by blood, sent to the heart and through the arteries to the muscle fibers; through such a journey, muscles grow and strengthen. When the secreted substance is sent to the brain, it enables the brain to have thoughts, hopes, and expectations and gives the mind evidences of rationality, critical judgment, deep ambitions, strong determination, and rich volition."[125] This explanation would not make sense in an earlier time because its style of reasoning relied on a style of

[123] Ren Baitao (任白濤) and Yi Jianxu (易家鉞), *Qingnian zhi xing de weisheng ji daode* (青年之性的衛生及道德) [The sexual hygiene and morals of adolescents] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1925), p. 1.
[124] Ren and Yi, *Qingnian zhi xing de weisheng ji daode*, p. 3.
[125] Ren and Yi, *Qingnian zhi xing de weisheng ji daode*, pp. 4-5.

visual imagination—the anatomical aesthetic of medical representation, to be more precise—which did not exist before the nineteenth century.[126] The author stressed the importance of attaining accurate knowledge about sperm: "Research on the physiological function of sperm is the most important thing, because sperm is the most essential thing in life—it's the thing that makes someone a father—and the nature of its size makes it almost invisible unless with the help of the microscope."[127] Ultimately, what the author conveyed was the establishment of an unprecedented congruency between sperm (a Western anatomical concept) and traditional notions of male essence. Again, this epistemic realignment of the visual markers of manhood exemplifies the effect of the emergent Western bioscientific discourse on the new conceptual operation of *xing*: it relied on an implicit element of visuality in coming to mean sex, as reproductive anatomy "naturalized" gender difference.

Consider another example, the discussion of spermatorrhea by the self-proclaimed sexologist Chai Fuyuan in the late 1920s. According to Chai's definition, "spermatorrhea refers to the discharge of semen while the mind is in an unconscious state. It is a bodily condition unique to men, who often begin to experience it in adolescence."[128] Chai explained that teenage boys typically experienced two types of spermatorrhea: one with dreams and one without. In the former case, the person was said to have "inappropriate thoughts," and this made the condition more of a "physiological" type. These subconscious "physiological" ejaculations were the outcome of the central nervous system's natural response to the bodily overflow of semen accumulation. In contrast, the "pathological" type, according to Chai, was often associated with masturbation, sexual indulgence, leprosy, diabetes, testicular infections, bladder stones, enlarged prostate, and tuberculosis, among other diseased bodily states.[129]

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[126] On "style of reasoning," see Chapter 3 of this dissertation.
[127] Ren and Yi, *Qingnian zhi xing de weisheng ji daode*, p. 6.
[128] Chai, *Xingxue ABC*, p. 28.
[129] Chai, *Xingxue ABC*, pp. 28-29.

Chai maintained that physiological spermatorrhea was neither "beneficial" nor "harmful": it was purely "the result of abstinence." On the other hand, pathological spermatorrhea was an entirely different story, not the least "because semen is the most important essence of the male body." To broach the continuing relevance of this view stemming from traditional Daoist conceptions of sexual health and longevity, Chai quoted from modern Western doctors the claim that "one drop of semen equals to forty drops of blood." He warned his reader the long-term detrimental effects of pathological spermatorrhea, which included dizziness, visual disturbance, auditory disorders, hand-trembling, notable drop in body weight, pale face, and lack of appetite. Hence, Chai implied a causal relation between spermatorrhea and those physical symptoms *not related to sex*.

Moreover, the corollary example of masturbation helps to show how Republican-era discussions of spermatorrhea gave *xing* an epistemological grounding in the realm of visual identification. According to Chai, "although both [spermatorrhea and masturbation] involve ejaculation, they are completely different." Whereas masturbation referred to "a conscious experience practiced by both men and women," spermatorrhea was "an unconscious experience *unique to men*."[130] The analogy of masturbation thus made spermatorrhea a *sex-specific* biological process. This parallels how contemporary discussions of menstruation revealed the persistence of the cultural labeling of certain bodily experience associated with blood loss as female-specific. Chai's discussion visualized *xing* by stressing sexual difference as the biological guarantor of an adequate understanding of seminal leakage.

The examples of menstruation and spermatorrhea make it evident that the new discourse of Western biology defined sex dimorphism in terms of not only physical structure,

[130] Chai, *Xingxue ABC*, pp. 31-32, emphasis added.

but also biological *function*. The introduction of Western-style reproductive anatomy also gave rise to a metaphoric framework that compared the body to a machine. Already in the late Qing, the reformer Tan Sitong described male and female bodies "like a machine" that "functioned independently from any external reality; a collection of intricately assembled parts, it was imagined to be self-contained."[131] Based on this view of the body as a machine, for instance, Liang Qichao stressed the potential contribution that women's bodies could make to the economic mode of production. And as the historian Dorothy Ko has noted, the body-as-machine played a central role in the invention and dissemination of the discourse of *tianzu* ("natural foot"), based on which the early twentieth-century anti-footbinding rhetoric flourished.[132]

In the mid-1930s, the best known author who promoted this mechanical metaphor was Chen Yucang. Educated abroad, Chen became the director of the provincial hospital of Hubei province, the director of the Medical College of Tongji University, and a secretary to the Legislative Yuan. In his *Life and Physiology* and *Research on the Human Body*, both published in 1937, Chen included visual illustrations of the human body as a mechanical entity comprised of smaller parts performing distinct duties all crucial for the efficient operation of the entire unit (**Figure 28-29**), of the digestive system as a large factory of metabolism breaking down food material into micromolecules of nutrients and wastes (**Figure 30-31**), and of the heart as the epicenter of human energy (**Figure 32**).[133] In his explanation of the sensory system, the physiology of visual perception relied on the mechanical similarities between the eye and a visual recorder (**Figure 33**); whereas the auditory process depended on the resemblance of the ear to a telephone (**Figure 34**). Other

[131] Cited in Dikötter, *Sex, Culture and Modernity in China*, p. 21.
[132] Dorothy Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 9-37.
[133] Chen Yucang (陳雨蒼), *Shenghuo yu shengli* (生活與生理) [Life and physiology] (Shanghai: Zhengzhong shuju, 1947 [1937]); Chen Yucang (陳雨蒼), *Renti de yanjiu* (人體的研究) [Research on the human body] (Shanghai: Zhengzhong shuju, 1947 [1937]). A likely source of Chen's illustrations is the work of the Berlin-based gynecologist and popular science writer, Fritz Kahn.

authors, such as Hu Boken, described the human body as a macro apparatus that comprised various smaller machineries: "Although we often compare the human body to a machine, this 'single machine' metaphor is not entirely adequate. A better way to imagine the body is the interactive working of multiple machines."[134]

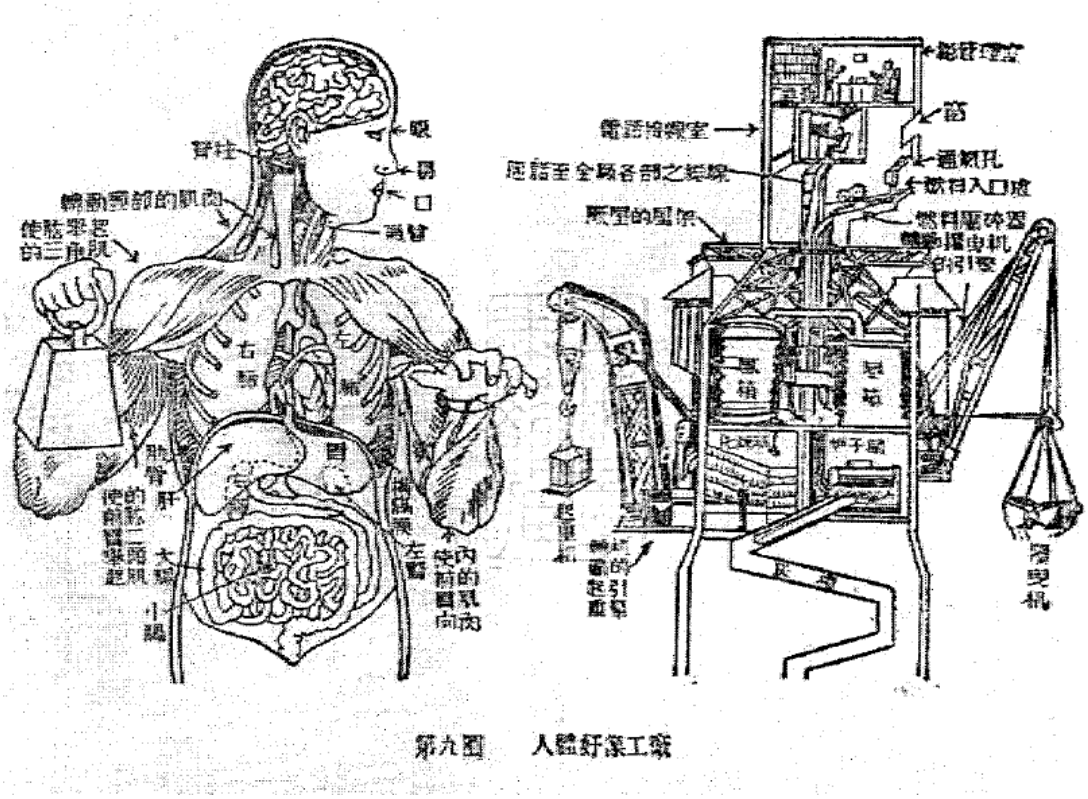

Figure 28 Chen, "The Human Body is Like a Factory" (1937).

[134] Hu Boken (胡伯墾), *Renti gouzao yu shengli* (人體構造與生理) [The structure and physiology of the human body] (Shanghai: Yaxiya shuju, 1935), p. 2.

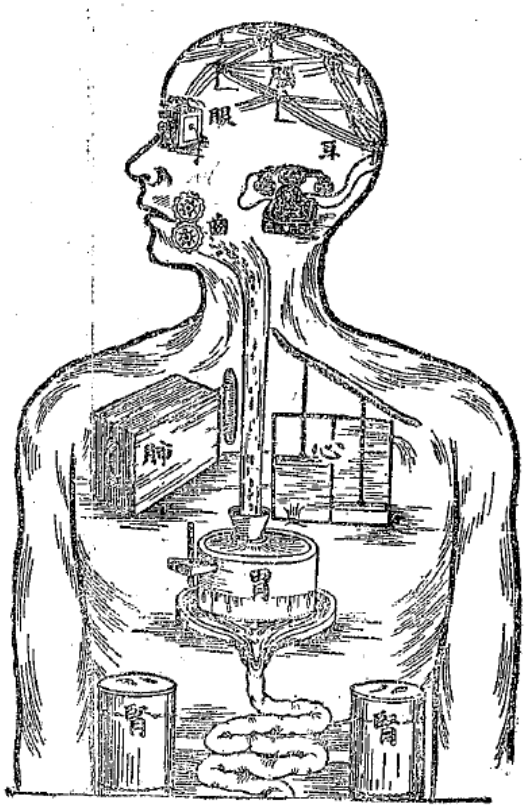

圖 2. 人體的機器

Figure 29 Chen, "The Machine of the Human Body" (1937).



第五二圖 消化的機械設置

Figure 30 Chen, "The Mechanical System of Digestion" (1937).



圖 10. 消化的工廠

Figure 31: Chen, "The Factory of Digestion" (1937).

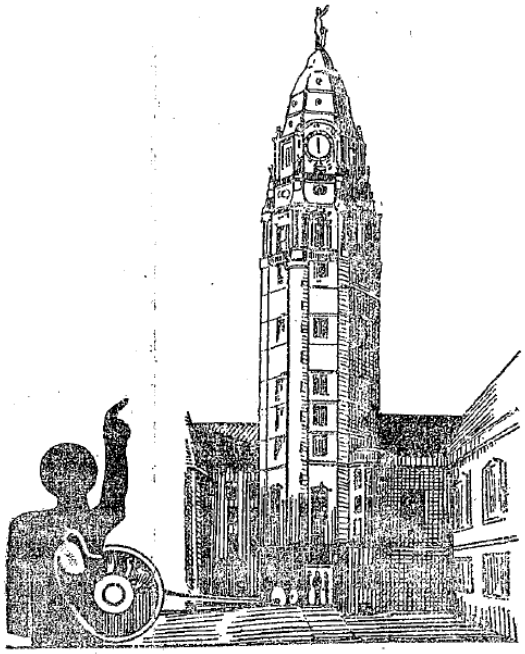
圖 16. 心臟在二十四時以內的工作能力

Figure 32: Chen, "The Daily Energy of the Heart" (1937).

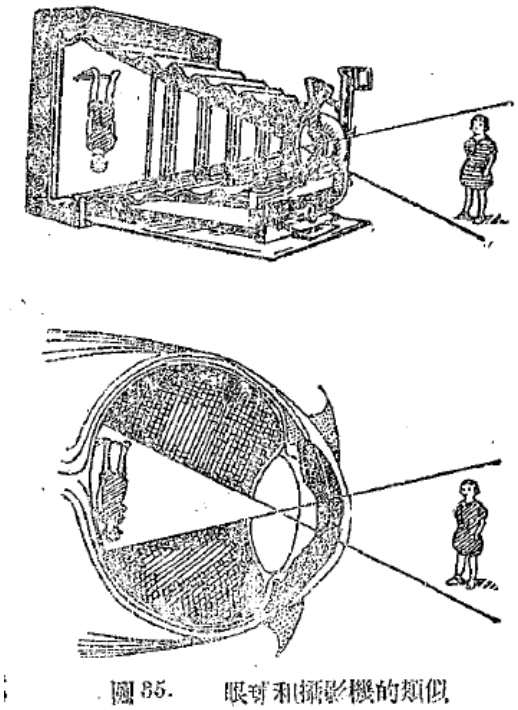

Figure 33: Chen, "The Similarity between the Eye and the Camera" (1937).

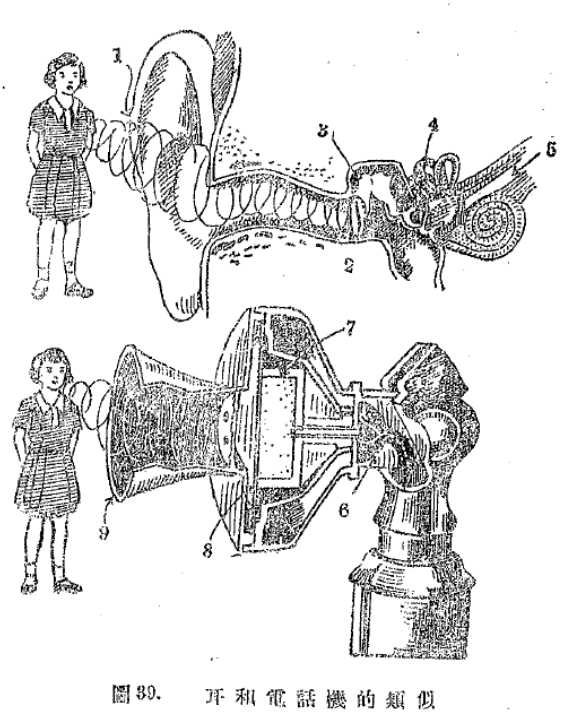

Figure 34: Chen, "The Similarity between the Ear and the Telephone" (1937).

With the rise of this new functionalist body-as-machine metaphor, biological sexual difference both served the basis for and mirrored social gender norms. The most striking example was the popular depiction of sperm as aggressive and eggs as passive agents. Again, in his *ABC of Sexology*, Chai Fuyuan viewed the social differences between men and women as preordained by nature:

> The main difference in men and women's temperament is best articulated in the active-passive distinction. This has real connections to the nature of the sex cells. The way the male sperm moves represents activity and mobility. The nature of women's ovum is completely opposite and has the characteristic of being static and latent. Therefore, men are active and women are passive, just like the nature of sperm and ovum. This sex difference is also reflected in the tradition of men proposing marriage to a woman. Even after marriage, men are often the initiator in sexual intercourse. The wife would refrain from initiating an intercourse even if she becomes sexually aroused. Instead, she would always come up with a plan to make the husband initiate. Men always end up being the active party.[135]

In *The Life of Sex* (1934), Shen Qichun similarly stated that

> Sperm is super tiny. Its size is hard for me to describe. I can only tell you this, my friend: if you collect hundreds and thousands of them in an envelope and mail them out to your relatives and friends in the country, all

[135] Chai, *Xingxue ABC*, pp. 51-52.

> you need is a four-cent stamp, and they will reach their destination without a problem! Its miniscule physique and proficient movement are exactly what gives it its uniqueness in life. Sperm's only job and purpose in life is the constant search of a mate—an ovum.[136]

For Hu Buoken, "the ovum is more quiet and inactive. Its movement relies on the tiny flagella on the wall of the oviduct." In contrast, "sperm is exceptionally active. Each sperm (there are many, each being very tiny) has a long tail. When it swings, it enables sperm cells to swim as fast as they can in semen, like how fishes swim in the water."[137]

The similarity between these descriptions and the discussions of the active sperm and the passive egg penned by Western biologists is striking.[138] But their broader historical import does not simply lie on the level of metaphors or stereotypes. The techniques of visualization evident in these images point to something more significant: what these Republican-era authors translated was not just the science of sex or the gender stereotypes embedded in them, but an entire system of scientific authority that established sex as an object of natural observation through its visualization. By the time that descriptions about the dominance of the sperm or the passiveness of the egg had emerged, these scientific visualizations and discourses already took for granted the objectivity of the observer. They assumed that the author and reader of these books alike could visually imagine the sperm and the egg, their indirect and explicit relationships to anatomical sex, their implications for the morphological appearance of maleness and femaleness, and their naturalizing effects on the role and function of men and women. In light of their mechanisms of visualizing sex, either

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[136] Shen, *Xing de shenghuo*, pp. 36-37.
[137] Hu, *Renti gouzao yu shengli* pp. 122-123.
[138] The most obvious contemporaneous example can be found in the writings of Patrick Geddes and John Arthur Thomson, *The Evolution of Sex*, rev. ed. (New York: Walter Scott Publishing, 1908). In fact, this rhetoric of active sperm/passive egg remains pervasive in biology textbooks today. See Emily Martin, "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles," *Signs* 16, no. 3 (1991): 485-501.

by adopting the anatomical aesthetic of medicine or the morphological sensibility of natural history (or both), these texts and drawings cannot be interpreted only on the level of translated meanings or representations. They attest to a whole new way of looking at the human body based on a different epistemological calculus. These anatomical and morphological logics of visual imagination—or what I call techniques of visualization—made it no longer possible to discuss gender without sex.

V. The Subcellular Gaze

After 1928, the Kuomingtang (KMT) government provided China greater unity and stability.[139] Following the leads of the Rockefeller Foundation's China Medical Board and the China Foundation for the Promotion of Education and Culture, the two main institutions responsible for the development of a large infrastructure of scientific and medical research in the early twentieth century, the government advocated the strengthening and expansion of all areas of science research and education.[140] The first generation of Chinese geneticists, who were mostly educated at Cornell or Columbia, began to play a prominent role in the field of biological research. They made significant contributions, for example, to the neo-Darwinian synthesis of the 1930s and 1940s.[141] Although social commentators took a serious interest in evolutionary theory, experimental biologists for the most part focused their attention on establishing accurate understandings of genetic science (although both groups shared a distinct interest in the larger problem of heredity).[142] Their professional interest in genetics,

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[139] Tomoko Shiroyama, *China during the Great Depression: Market, State, and the World Economy, 1929-1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[140] On the Rockefeller Foundation's China Medical Board, see Mary Brown Bullock, *An American Transplant: The Rockefeller Foundation and the Peking Union Medical College* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980). On the China Foundation, see Yang Tsui-hua (楊翠華), *Zhongjihui dui kexue de zanzhu* (中基會對科學的贊助) [Patronage of science: The China Foundation for the Promotion of Education and Culture] (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1991).

[141] Schneider, *Biology and Revolution*, p. 22. The most authoritative work on the history of the neo-Darwinian synthesis is Betty Smocovitis, *Unifying Biology: The Evolutionary Synthesis and Evolutionary Biology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

[142] Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*; Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race*; Frank Dikötter, *Imperfect Conceptions*.

like their American colleagues, took them in a slightly different direction from the Social Darwinist reformers and nationalists of their time. As Laurence Schneider has noted, an early cohort of matured geneticists "contributed to the ongoing differentiation of science from scientism in China, particularly by wresting the discourse of heredity and evolution in China from the monopoly of Social Darwinism, utopian socialism, and other social philosophies."[143]

The idea that sex was determined by chromosomes played a pivotal role in early twentieth-century genetics debates.[144] Between the 1920s and 1940s, the specific topic of sex-determination and the related discussions of Mendelian genetics and Morgan's theory of heredity could be found in plain language national journals like *Eastern Miscellany* (*Dongfang zazhi*) and *Science* (*Kexue*), as well as more in-depth textbooks, such as Chen Zhen's *General Biology* (*Putong shengwuxue*).[145] Chinese biologists' interest in the genetics of sex-determination sustained a sophisticated cross-cultural conversation on hermaphroditism, which they tried to explain with the theories of intersexuality and gynandromophism first articulated by American geneticists. Focusing on Zhu Xi's discussion of hermaphroditism, this section delves into the topic's importance in Republican-era biology. Zhu's work offered complex theories of natural hermaphroditism and, with that, introduced a third technique of visualizing sex: the subcellular gaze of experimental genetics. This particular technique added another layer of visual evidence to the naturalizing discourse of sex by projecting its presence on a level beneath the cell. It did not, however, replace the anatomical aesthetic of medicine or the morphological sensibility of natural history found in the earlier examples. Instead, it continued to rely on these two mutually reinforcing techniques of visualization in order to consolidate a full-scale rendering of sex as an object of observation and empirical knowledge.

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[143] Schneider, *Biology and Revolution*, p. 23.
[144] Nathan Ha, "The Riddle of Sex: Biological Theories of Sexual Difference in the Early Twentieth Century," *Journal of the History of Biology* 44, no. 3 (2010): 505-546.
[145] Chen Zhen, *Putong shengwuxue* (普通生物學) [General biology] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1924).

The topic of hermaphroditism revealed an underlying paradox in the biological theories of sex: life scientists differentiated *ci*/*xiong* from *nü*/*nan* even as they were said to be semantically and conceptually related. As discussed earlier, in promoting the biological basis of sex dimorphism, scientists defined *nü* as the human equivalent of *ci* and *nan* that of *xiong*. According to this logic of situating *ci*/*xiong* and *nü*/*nan* on two different semantic planes, the epistemic functionality of the former pair of biological terminologies denotes a lexical grid that grounds its meaningfulness as a non-human marker, while the latter pair acquires its intelligibility by being layered with exclusive anthropocentric value. Especially apparent in examples of organisms with a sexually ambiguous status, the ways in which Republican Chinese life scientists attempted to interpret, explain, and essentially describe the sexual features of animals and humans show that what they took as indications of natural sex (or sex differences) were in fact the product of their own constructions—the result of their assignment of meanings to what they considered carrying the indexical values of sex. Their application of Western genetic theories of sex-determination to both animal and human case studies makes it evident that in order for *ci* and *xiong* to mean "biological femaleness" and "biological maleness" respectively, the figuration of the hermaphrodite played a crucial role in stabilizing the human-nonhuman boundary, making it the tacit threshold for the *ci*/*xiong*-*nü*/*nan* distinction—as well as always deferring the most immediately relevant significance of the former pair to its mapping onto non-human species.

To put this differently, Chinese life scientists organized the visual objectivity of sex around the implicit typological significance of hermaphroditism, an effort that made it possible for the epistemological rendering of sex as a *form* of life. Hermaphroditism was a term reserved for a natural condition that displayed various possible combinations of the biological features of both sexes.[146] We could understand how the visual appreciation of sex

[146] Late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century European sexologists also entertained the notion of

came about better by probing the conceptual importance of hermaphroditic species—or at least how scientists understood them—because scientific definitions of the boundaries of sex were the most salient and at the highest stake in the process of discerning the sexually ambiguous status of this biological category. If the condition of hermaphroditism enabled the possible epistemological rendering of sex as a form of life, scientists who took them seriously would invariably make certain underlying assumptions about sex—or at least understandings of the "physical circumstances [that] might delimit the space in which life forms manifest."[147] In short, the significance of hermaphroditic organisms and the corollary logical coherence, lexical possibility, and syntactic relevance of *ci* and *xiong* bring to the fore issues of visualization at the very threshold of making sex a hermeneutic object of scientific scrutiny.

The topic of hermaphroditism also opened up for scientists the possibility of visualizing sex as a *function* of life. In the 1930s and 1940s, Zhu Xi understood hermaphrodites to be life entities with distinct visual configurations. The two terms that Zhu used most frequently to describe the biological condition of hermaphroditism are *cixiong tongti* (雌雄同體) and *liangxing tongti* (兩性同體). The former literally means "*ci* and *xiong* in the same body," and the latter literally means "two sexes in the same body." Zhu's intricate explanation of hermaphroditism featured both the temporality and spatiality of sex, representing sex as not only a form but also a function of life. In places where Zhu began to use such terminologies as *nan* and *nü* for human hermaphroditism, the human-nonhuman divide would appear all the more crucial to the comprehensibility and epistemic functionality of *ci* and *xiong*.

"psychical hermaphroditism." Two of the most reputable physicians advocating this idea were Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Magnus Hirschfeld. See, for example, Richard v. Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis, with Especial Reference to Contrary Sexual Instinct: A Medico-Legal Study*, 7th ed., trans. Charles Gilbert Chaddock (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis, 1892 [1886]); Magnus Hirschfeld, *The Homosexuality of Men and Women*, trans. Michael A. Lombardi-Nash (New York: Prometheus Books, 2000 [1914]).

[147] This is Stefan Helmreich and Sophia Roosth's interpretation of *Lebensform*, a German equivalent of "living form" that first appeared in 1838 in *Jenaer Literatur-Zeitung*. See Helmreich and Roosth, "Life Forms," p. 31.

In *Changes in Biological Femaleness and Maleness*, Zhu stressed that in order to understand natural hermaphroditism, a fundamental conceptual distinctions needed to be made between the theory of intersexuality and the theory of gynandromorphism. Two diagrams included in his eleventh chapter on "An Analysis of the Two Sexes in Invertebrate Animals" are most representative of his effort to clarify this distinction (**Figures 35-36**).

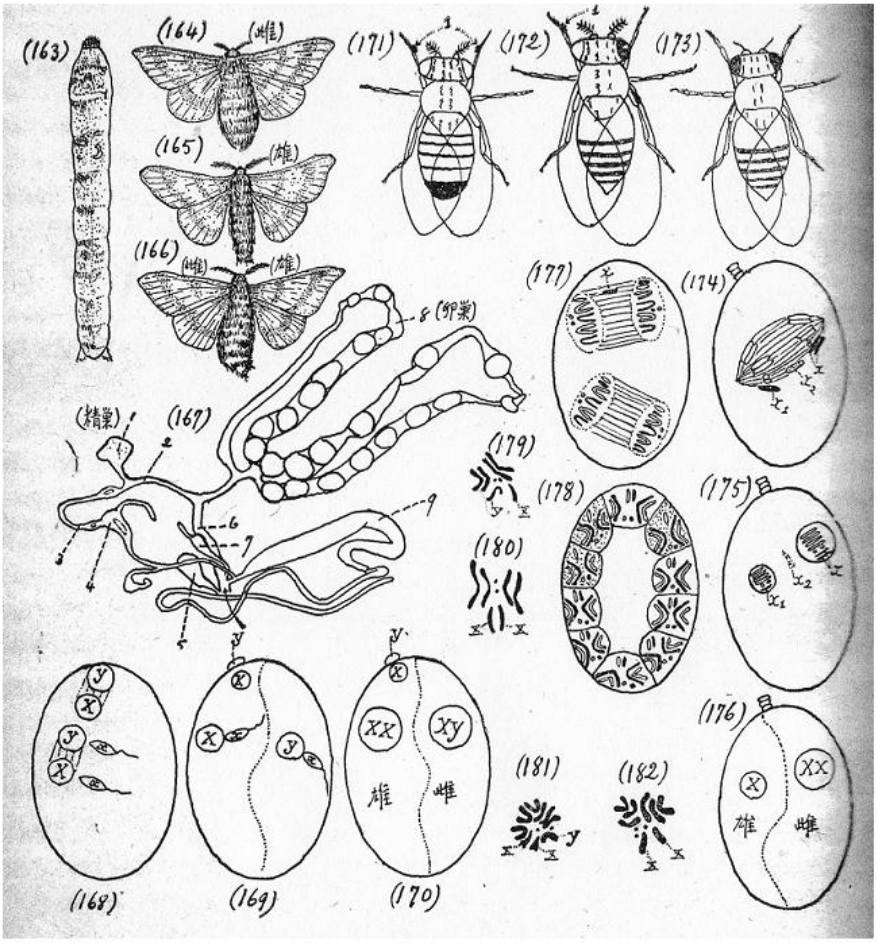

Figure 35: Zhu, "The Gynandromorphism of Silkworms and Fruit Flies" (1945).

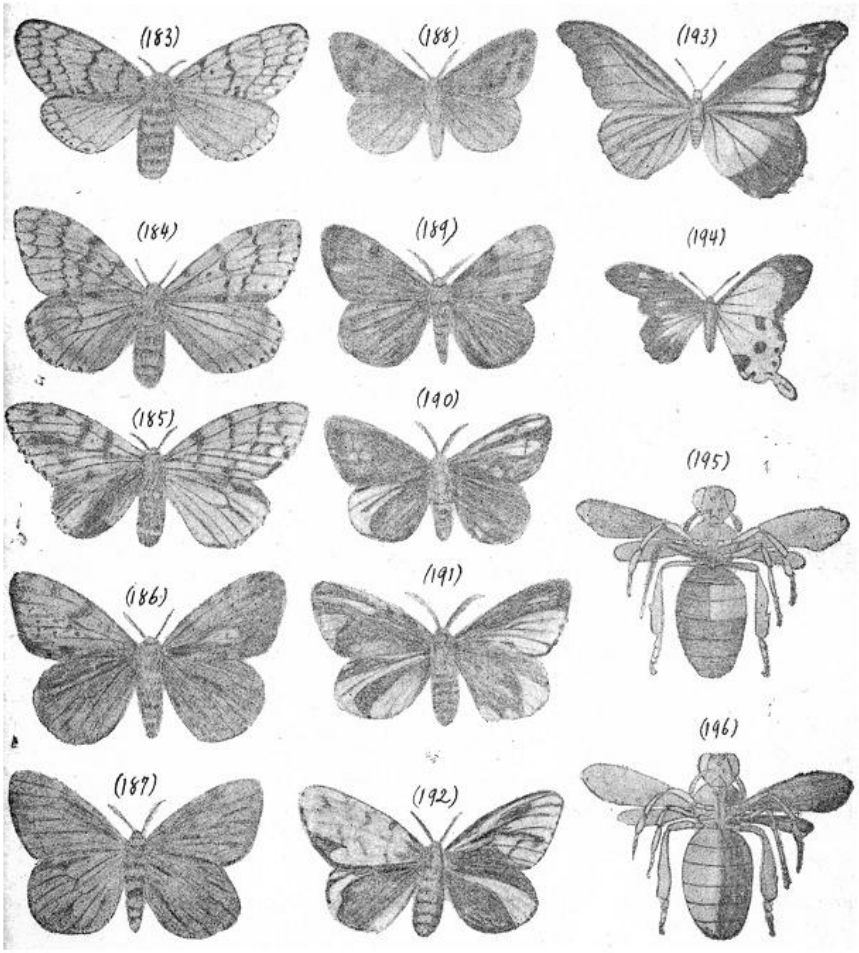

Figure 36: Zhu, "The Intersexuality of Tussock Moths and Butterflies and the Gynandromorphism of Bees" (1945).

In introducing the theory of intersexuality, Zhu wrote:

From 1921 to 1922, after [Calvin] Bridges, one of the foremost American Morganists, examined the reproductive results of fruit flies, apart from pure *ci* and pure *xiong* types, he observed a third kind of organism that appears to have a type of body that is neither *ci* nor entirely *xiong*. At first he was very surprised, but after careful research, he realized that they are abnormal creatures with a *ci-xiong* dual-sexed body [雌雄兩性混生的

> 怪物], a condition that could be called hermaphroditism [雌雄同體]. However, this author specifically names them "Intersexes" [中間性個體], in order to distinguish them from the regular hermaphrodites. Although these abnormal creatures [怪物] have the features of both sexes, they can never reproduce.[148]

The point Zhu went on to make with respect to the theory of intersexuality was that through a deep chromosomal analysis of intersexed fruit flies, Bridges realized that the mere presence or absence of a Y chromosome alone could no longer be the sole determinant factor of sex. Zhu referred to the diagrams labeled "181" and "182" in **Figure 35** as showing that "the chromosomal numbers inside these creatures' cellular nuclei are entirely different from normal *ci* or *xiong* individuals! They have instead *three pairs of autosomes and one pair of X chromosomes*."[149] As such, Zhu noted that Bridges began to incorporate the number of autosomes into his formula of sex-determination. As Bridges began to recalculate the ratio of the number of X chromosomes to the number of autosomes in fruit flies, he further developed the concepts of "Superfemales" (過雌體) and "Supermales" (過雄體) to denote those organisms that contained a ratio of X chromosomes to autosomes *higher* or *lower* than the ratio for normally-sexed organisms respectively.[150] The subcellular boundaries between what counts as male and what counts as female, according to this theory of intersexuality, were unsettled by the category of hermaphroditism. The relevant agents in this technique of visualization were no longer anatomical configurations or morphological bodies. The seat of maleness and femaleness, or what biologists called "primary sexual characteristics," was now determined on the level of chromosomes.

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[148] Zhu, *Cixiong zhibian*, p. 224.
[149] Zhu, *Cixiong zhibian*, p. 224. An autosome is any chromosome that is not sex chromosome.
[150] Zhu, *Cixiong zhibian*, pp. 225-226.

In introducing the theory of gynandromorphism, Zhu began with Morgan and his students:

> Among the fruit flies they investigated, [Thomas] Morgan and his students unexpectedly discovered cases in which the features of *ci* and *xiong* collapsed in a single body [雌雄形性合璧的個體]; one side of this body not only displays *xiong* secondary characters but also contains testes, while the other side of the body not only displays *ci* secondary characters but also contains ovaries.[151]

To portray this "mosaic" understanding of hermaphroditism, Zhu directed the reader's attention to the diagram labeled "172" in **Figure 35**. According to Zhu, picture "171" referred to the normal body of *xiong* fruit flies with white eyes, picture "173" referred to the normal body of *ci* fruit flies with red eyes, and "172" showed the body of a "gynandromorph" fruit fly with both *xiong* white eyes on the left and *ci* red eyes on the right. The theory of gynandromorphism, it seems, still relied on the morphological technique of visualization. It crucially differed from the chromosomal explanation of intersexed organisms.

To explain the difference between "gynandromorphs" and "intersexes" more fully, Zhu cited the works of Richard Goldschmidt and argued that one distinct feature of "intersexes" was that they could be further separated into "*xiong*/male intersexes" and "*ci*/female intersexes," whereas gynandromorphs could not. In **Figure 36**, for example, diagram "183" was supposed to represent a normal *ci*/female tussock moth, with "a large abdomen, light-colored wings, and short antennas." Diagrams "184" through "187" were representations of "*ci*/female intersexed" moths. Similarly, diagram "188" was a normal

[151] Zhu, *Cixiong zhibian*, p. 226.

xiong/male moth, with "a small abdomen, dark-colored wings, and long antennas," while "189" through "192" represented "*xiong*/male intersexed" moths.[152] So the theory of intersexuality was now explained via the morphological technique of visualization. These images therefore suggest that it was possible to visualize intersexuality, and by extension sex, through different techniques, on the level of either morphological bodies or chromosomal agents. The introduction of a new technique of visualization did not replace the earlier ones. As the example of intersexuality makes clear, the empirical status of sex was consolidated through the very interaction of different modes of visual depiction.

And Zhu's discussion of intersexuality continued. He went on to point out and explain its quantitative nature. Based on Goldschmidt's theory of intersexuality, Zhu explained that a "lower degree of intersexuality" simply referred to a very limited "change in sex" (變性) due to a later (in the temporal sense) opportunity for inducing this developmental change in the sexual appearance of an individual organism.[153] Therefore, the extent to which this notion of a "lower degree of intersexuality" differed from a "higher degree of intersexuality" (高度的中間性) only depended on the *timing* of the possibility for modifying the sexual characteristics of an organism along its developmental pathway.[154] According to Zhu, diagram "184" in **Figure 36** would represent a *ci* moth with a "lower degree of intersexuality," while "187" would be a moth with a "higher degree of intersexuality," and both "185" and "186" were simply ones that lay somewhere in between ("a medium degree of intersexuality"). This quantitative notion of intersexuality was not restricted in its applicability to *ci* intersexes; *xiong* intersexed organisms could also display different degrees of intersexuality. It follows that diagram "189" would represent a *xiong* moth with a "lower degree of intersexuality," while "192" would be one with a "higher degree of intersexuality,"

[152] Zhu, *Cixiong zhibian*, p. 223.
[153] Zhu, *Cixiong zhibian*, p. 243.
[154] Zhu, *Cixiong zhibian*, pp. 243-244.

and both "190" and "191" resembled those that display a "medium degree of intersexuality."

In order to bring home the fundamental difference between gynandromorphism and intersexuality, Zhu explained that

> The origins of gynandromorphic bodies derive from the moment of conception. Due to the irregular choromosomal interactions at the time…some cells are *ci* types that contain a *ci*-like chromosomal make-up in the nucleus, thus displaying *ci* features. Other cells are *xiong* types that contain a *xiong*-like chromosomal make-up in the nucleus, thus displaying *xiong* features…
>
> As for the origins of intersexuality, all of the cells of an intersexed individual are either *ci* or *xiong*…Intersexed bodies are the result of sex-change at some point along the developmental pathway [中途變性]; it is purely a function of the time of sex-change, which could be early or late, that the degree of transformation (high or low) corresponds to…What is important here is that intersexuality is a symptom of change with respect to a developmental pathway; this can be identified as *a change in temporality* [時間上的變化]. On the other hand, gynandromorphism is something inherent to the individual organism; this can be identified as *a change in spatiality* [空間上的變化].[155]

Through the example of the sexually-ambiguous category of hermaphroditism, sex was now conceived not only as a *form* of life, but also as a complex *function* of life—a function of its

[155] Zhu, *Cixiong zhibian*, pp. 250-251.

time and space.

Zhu further clarified what he meant by "degrees of intersexuality":

> To sum up, humans are like other animals: the origins of sex-determination reside within the hereditary materials. Midway sex-changes in humans take place in ways similar to how they occur in animals—there is nothing unique about this. Moreover, similar to the sex-transformation cases in animals, *nü-bian-nan* ("female-to-male changes") in humans tend to occur more frequently than *nan-bian-nü* ("male-to-female changes"). From this observation, we can conclude that the basis of *nüxing* ("female essentials" or "femaleness") is more mutable, similar to the cases in amphibians and other types of animals. In the past, what people meant by female human pseudo-hermaphrodites [女性的假兩性同體者] can be more accurately understood as individuals with a lower degree of intersexuality; what people meant by true human hermaphrodite [地道的男女同體者] can be more accurately understood as individuals with a medium degree of intersexuality (having testis, ovaries, and the corresponding spermatic duct and oviduct simultaneously in the reproductive organ); what people meant by male human pseudo-hermaphrodites [男性的假兩性同體者] can therefore be more accurately understood as individuals with a higher degree of intersexuality that completely transformed from a female to a male.[156]

Therefore, the most significant aspect of Zhu's understanding of human hermaphrodites was

[156] Zhu, *Cixiong zhibian*, p. 312.

that they should be best understood as intersexuals rather than gynandromorphs. More specifically, perhaps Zhu even considered all human hermaphrodites to be female intersexes. This would explain why Zhu referred to the human hermaphrodite illustrated in **Figure 37** (diagram "153") as an "intersexed lady" (中間性女子).[157] His usage of such phrases as "a lower degree of intersexuality," "a medium degree of intersexuality," and "a higher degree of intersexuality" to describe such conditions as "female human pseudo-hermaphrodites," "true human hermaphrodites," and "male human pseudo-hermaphrodites" respectively makes it evident that he viewed all forms of human hermaphroditism as heterogeneous manifestations of human *female* intersexuality. He thus ended the paragraph with a clause specifying his definition of "male human pseudo-hermaphrodites": as individuals "that completely transformed from a *female* to a male."

[157] Zhu, *Cixiong zhibian*, p.197.

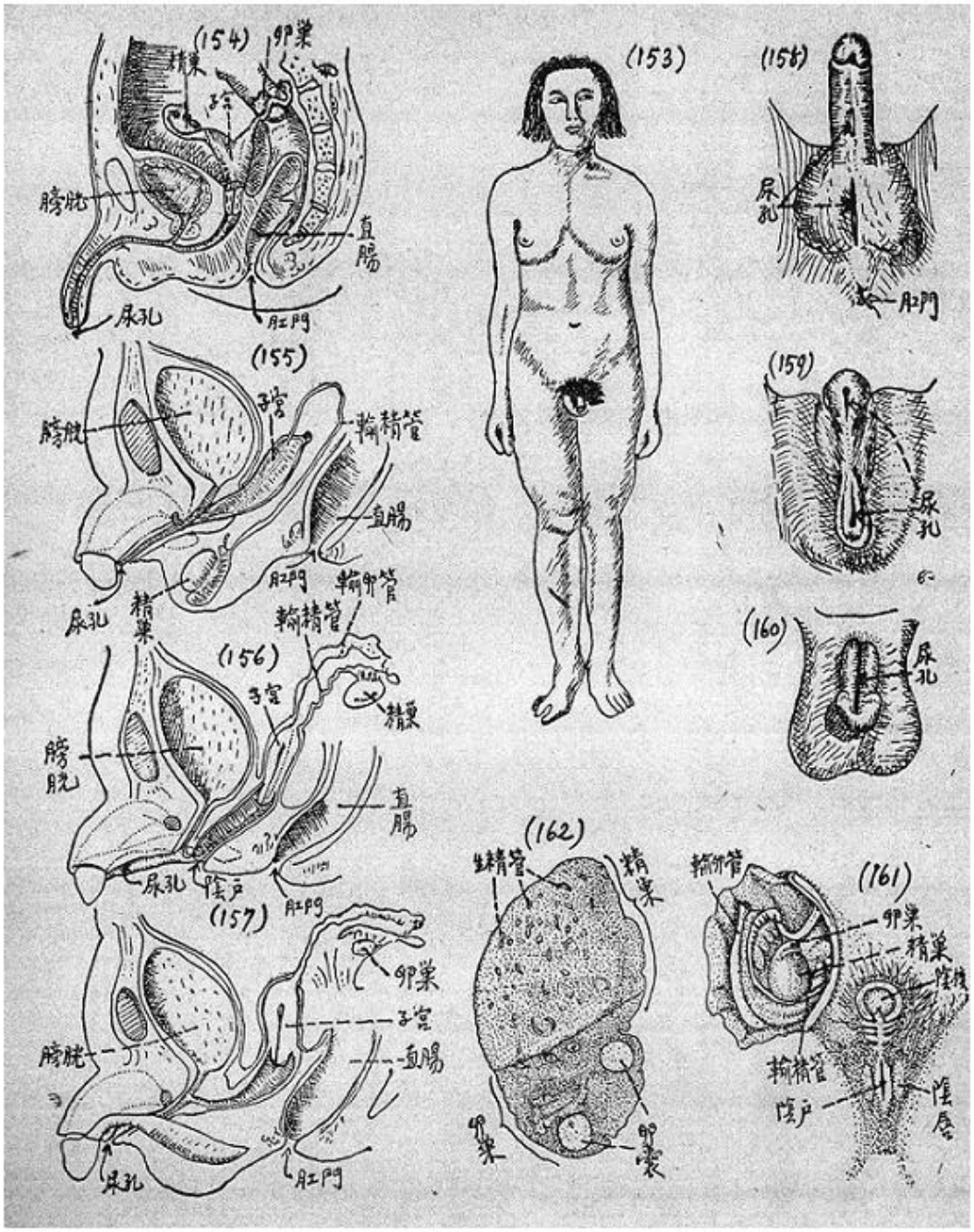

Figure 37: Zhu, "The Morphology of Sex-Transformations in Human Reproductive Organs" (1945).

The most striking thing about Zhu Xi's illustrations (**Figures 35-37**), especially when viewed in conjunction with one another, is the way they capture three techniques of visualization simultaneously. Again, the subcellular gaze of experimental genetics comes across most clearly in **Figure 35** ("168" to "170" and "174" to "182"). In the context of

explaining the mutability of life forms with the theory of intersexuality, Zhu used the images to restructure the reader's visual imagination of sex: sex was no longer visualized and conceptualized in terms of the morphological appearance of an organism (e.g., **Figure 36**) or the internal anatomical configurations of the body (e.g., **Figure 37** except "153). The subcellular gaze of experimental genetics locates the seat of maleness and femaleness on a level beneath the cell: on chromosomes, genes, chromatins, microtubules, and the like. Meanwhile, the significance of this subcellular epistemic grid was closely intertwined with, rather than independent of, the far-reaching effects of the other two techniques of visualization. In Zhu Xi's discussion, the anatomical, morphological, and subcellular visual depictions overlapped and worked off one another in order to render hermaphroditism an important topic of biological discourse. Male and female chromosomal sex, the anatomical organs of human hermaphrodites, and the morphological appearance of moths, flies, and the intersexed lady all came together in a visual matrix of scientific observation. By representing hermaphroditism this way, the three mutually reinforcing techniques of visualization reflected "a relentless [effort] to replace individual volition and discretion in depiction by the variable routines of mechanical reproduction."[158] Indeed, Chinese doctors would carry this mechanical effort into the second half of the twentieth century (**Figures 38-40**).[159] As these photographs make clear, sex remained a meaningful object of knowledge through the allegorical figuring of the hermaphrodite and the intersection of different axes of scientific perception.

[158] Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, "The Image of Objectivity," p. 98.
[159] Liu Ben-Lih (劉本立) and Liu Kai (劉嗌), "True Hermaphroditism: Report of Two Cases," *Chinese Medical Journal* 71 (1953): 148-154.

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Fig. 1. Showing patient's physical stature.

Figure 38 Liu and Liu's clinical photograph of human hermaphroditism I: Morphological visualization of sex (1953).



Fig. 2. Appearance of external genitalia. Notice prominence of the left labium major.

Figure 38 Liu and Liu's clinical photograph of human hermaphroditism II: Anatomical visualization of sex (1953).

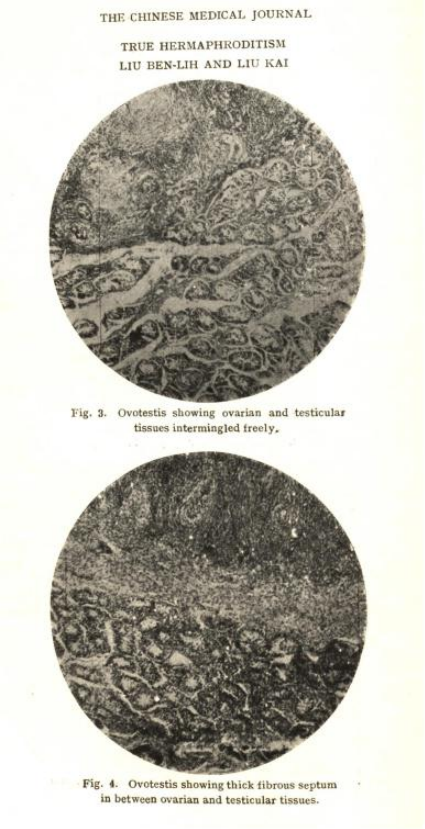
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Fig. 3. Ovotestis showing ovarian and testicular tissues intermingled freely.

Fig. 4. Ovotestis showing thick fibrous septum in between ovarian and testicular tissues.

Figure 40 Liu and Liu's clinical photograph of human hermaphroditism III: Subcellular visualization of sex (1953).

VI. From Science Images to the Image of Science

This chapter began with an etymological investigation of sex, but it concludes with an epistemological explanation. My objective has been to reorient our attention from words to concepts, from modes of representation to techniques of visualization, and, above all, from an abstract notion of scientism to an account of how scientific authority took shape with respect to the visual sphere. Scholars who study modern Chinese history through the lens of "colonial modernity" have unearthed the importance of the new discourse of Western sexual science in the early Republican period. Tani Barlow, Frank Dikötter, Tze-lan Sang, Wenqing Kang, Charles Leary, Hsiao-yen Peng, Leon Rocha, among others, have shown that in the context of China's colonial modernity, new subject positions emerged that corresponded to the new sexualized subjectivity of individualism, intellectualism, and

liberalism of the 1920s.[160] In a similar spirit, *The Modern Girl Around the World* project highlights one of the many horizontal global ramifications of colonial modernity in the realm of cultural politics between the era of high imperialism and the period of de-colonization.[161] In the Chinese context, "nüxing [woman] coalesced as a category when, as part of the project of social class formation, Chinese moderns disavowed the old literary language of power…the career of nüxing firmly established a foundational womanhood beyond kin categories. It did so on the ground of European humanism and scientific sex theory."[162] Nonetheless, recognizing the metaphysical importance of this new sexual science is one thing, but understanding the underlying processes of its epistemological deployment and transformation is another.

This chapter suggests that what colonial modernity scholars of China have largely overlooked is not the new science of sex and sexuality per se, but its underlying epistemological operation in the visual sphere.[163] The anatomical aesthetic, morphological sensibility, and chromosomal gaze discussed in the foregoing analysis are strategies of observation insinuated by the epistemological effects of the various scientific visualizations of sex.[164] These techniques of visualization form the basis of a system of shared beliefs that

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[160] Barlow, *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism*; Dikötter, *Sex, Culture and Modernity in China*; Tze-lan D. Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Wenqing Kang, *Obsession: Male Same-Sex Relations in China, 1900-1950* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009); Charles Leary, "Intellectual Orthodoxy, the Economy of Knowledge, and the Debate over Zhang Jingsheng's Sex Histories," *Republican China* 18 (1994): 99-137; Hsiao-yen Peng, "Wusi de xin xingdaode: Nüxing qingyu lunshu yu jiangou minzu guojia" (五四的新性道德: 女性情慾論述與建構民族國家) [The new sexual ethics of May Fourth: The discourse of female sexuality and nation-building], in *Haishang shou qingyu* (海上說情慾) [Talking about love and desire on the sea] (Taipei: Institute of Chinese Literature & Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 2001), pp. 1-26; Rocha, "*Xing*."

[161] Tani Barlow, Madeleine Dong, Uta Poiger, Priti Ramamurthy, Lynn Thomas, and Alys Weinbaum, eds., *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

[162] Barlow, *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism*, p. 53.

[163] Notable exceptions are scholars of empire and imperialism in nineteenth-century China. See James Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); and Lydia Liu, *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in the Modern World Making* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004). See also Hugh Shapiro, "The Puzzle of Spermatorrhea in Republican China," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 6, no. 3 (1998): 551-596.

[164] For an in-depth discussion of the place of scientific observation in studies of epistemology and ontology, see Lorraine Daston, "On Scientific Observation," *Isis* 99, no. 1 (2008): 97-110.

gives these scientific images and, by extension, science a universal power of persuasion—and principle of faith. In other words, whether all of the writers, editors, or translators of the sources surveyed actually practiced medicine, natural history, or experimental genetics is perhaps less important (although many of them, like Benjamin Hobson and Zhu Xi, did) than the fact that they had made available to Chinese people the authority of scientific objectivity rooted in the visual realm. In effect, the objectivity of the various scientific visualizations of sex came to stand in for the alleged objectivity of the sciences themselves. Emerging from the shadow of a "castrated civilization," the modern Chinese nation learned to embrace the universalism of scientific objectivity. As many historians have noted, perhaps this objectivity also played off on a central preoccupation with the survival of the Chinese "race" or Han "ethnicity" in the world of nation-states. But no longer castrated, China also found sex in the work of nature.

Lest any reader still finds the co-emergence of sex and visual objectivity unconvincing, it might be useful to revisit Matignon's photograph of an eunuch (**Figure 5**) and compare it to the photo of a Chinese hermaphrodite from the 1950s (**Figure 38**). A comparison of the two reveals the profound nature of transformation in the cultural representations of "China" in the first half of the twentieth century. In the 1894 photo, we witness a castrated body that is supposed to resemble the "lacking," diseased Chinese body politic: the Sick Man of Asia stares back and begs for Western (biomedical) assistance. In the 1953 photo, we are rest assured that Western biomedicine has finally gained footing in China, the nation itself has finally "stood up" (under Mao), and, rather than "lacking," the problem with the specimen is its excessive body parts (having both male and female genital organs). Given this anatomical configuration and the covering of the eyes, the 1953 photo certainly begs the question of who is looking. Yet more importantly, if the 1894 photo represents China's "lack," what was gained after half a century?

CHAPTER 3

REASON AND DESIRE

I. *Carnal* Transformations

A well-known example of the rich cross-cultural currents between Qing China and Tokugawa Japan is the translation of the erotic novel, *The Carnal Prayer Mat* (肉普團, *Rouputuan*), into Japanese in 1705. The playwright Li Yu's name (李漁, 1611-1680) did not appear on the cover of the book, but most critics attribute this erotic comedy to him.[1] Written in 1657, only thirteen years after the northern Manchus took over Beijing, the novel is replete with graphic descriptions of the sexual pursuit of the protagonist, Wei Yangsheng (未央生). As the front page of the Japanese translation indicates (**Figure 41**), the book was considered by many in the early modern period as "the most promiscuous story in the world" (天下第一風流小說). The most complete surviving duplication of the original copy is archived at Tokyo University in Japan. Given its explicit content, the book cannot be sold to minors in Taiwan and is still banned in the People's Republic of China.

[1] For a discussion of the authorship of the book, see Nathan K. Mao and Liu Ts'un-Yan, *Li Yü* (Boston: Twayne, 1977), pp. 90-95.

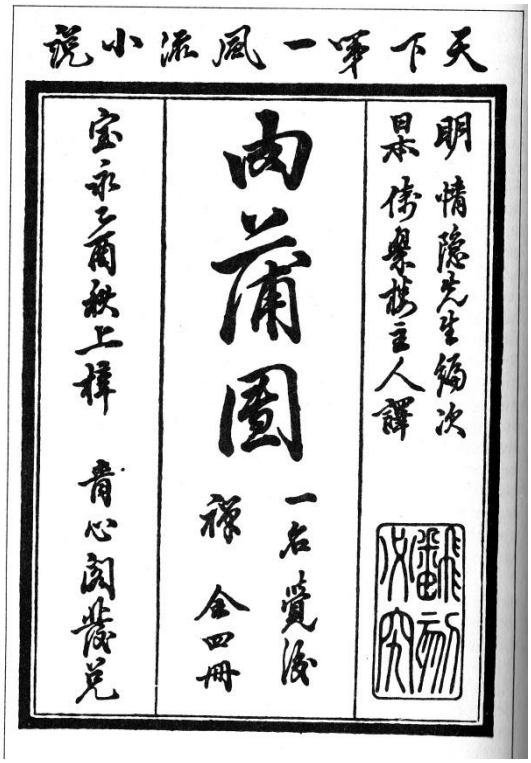

Figure 41 Front cover of the Japanese translation of *The Carnal Prayer Mat* (1705).

Situating *The Carnal Prayer Mat* squarely in the genre of literary pornography adjoins the way other erotic novels have been perceived in and out of China's past. The late-Ming *The Plum in the Golden Vase* (金瓶梅, *Jin Ping Mei*), which appeared only a few decades before *The Carnal Prayer Mat*, is perhaps the most stellar example. What these seventeenth-century erotic novels capture, some scholars have argued, is the hedonistic and amoral urban behaviors associated with the growing consumer culture in the waning decades of the Ming.[2] Feminist historians and other literary scholars, too, point to the loosening of gender boundaries and sexual mores of the time, as reflected in the blossoming of women's cultural creativity and alternative arrangements of love and intimacy, especially in the South.[3]

[2] Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

[3] See Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chamber, Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995); Sophie Volpp, "The Discourse on Male Marriage: Li Yu's 'A Male Mencius's Mother,'" *positions: east asia cultures critique* 2 (1994): 113-132; Sophie Volpp, "Classifying Lust: The Seventeenth-Century Vogue for Male Love," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 61 (2001): 77-117; Giovanni

But the most striking thing about these novels is the level of attention they continue to attract in contemporary Chinese culture. The plots of *The Carnal Prayer Mat* and *The Plum in the Golden Vase* are adapted time and again in the production of new computer games and films, including the three-dimensional cinematic adaptation of *The Carnal Prayer Mat* that appeared in spring 2011.[4]

If one focuses on the book itself, certain episodes of *The Carnal Prayer Mat* appear surprisingly queer. Granted, as many critics have pointed out, the story brings a sense of closure to Wei Yangsheng's erotic adventure, reinstating a normative sense of Confucian discipline through eventual punishment. Having mistreated all the women with whom he had sexual relationships, including his wife, Wei eventually castrates himself and becomes a Buddhist monk to atone for his sins. However, as Angela Zito has argued, it might be more compelling to foreground Li Yu's narrative method and the protagonist's constant subversion of Confucian orthodoxy: "Li Yu presents [the choices of male characters] as the ineluctable outcome of their karmic fates, using against the patriarchal norm, even queering, a Buddhism that, in complex ways, shored up patriarchal familial arrangements in this time."[5]

Indeed, the homoerotic contents of the novel are as explicit as the heterosexual ones. After leaving his wife, Wei meets a stranger who would eventually become his buddy, Sai Kunlun (賽崑崙). Spending a night together, naked, Wei insists that Sai shares stories of his past sexual encounter with women. Sai accepts the request, and his stories fulfill Wei's desires:

Vitiello, *The Libertine's Friend: Homosexuality and Masculinity in Late Imperial China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

[4] The first proclaimed Chinese 3-D pornographic film came out in theater in early 2011 and is based on *The Carnal Prayer Mat*. See Stephen Shiu, Stephen Shiu, Jr., and Mark Wu, *3-D Sex and Zen: Extreme Ecstasy*, dir. Christopher Suen (Hong Kong: One Dollar Production, 2011). For an earlier version, see Lee Ying Kit, *Sex and Zen*, dir. Michael Mak (Hong Kong: Golden Harvest, 1991).

[5] Angela Zito, "Queering Filiality, Raising the Dead," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10, no. 2 (2001): 195-201, on p. 201.

> At this point, it is as if the voice of a promiscuous woman comes from right next to Wei, causing his body to tremble. He suddenly ejaculates a dose of semen that he has kept to himself for too long. Unless he is asked otherwise, it is quite evident what has just happened.[6]

Similar to the kind of male-male intimacy that Eve Sedgwick uncovers in English literature, Wei's homosocial desire for Sai becomes intelligible by being routed through an implicit triangular relation involving women.[7] And before he acquires a hugely expanding dog's penis through surgery, Wei makes love to his sixteen-year-old boy servant one last time.[8]

Neither the implicitly homoerotic nor the explicitly homosexual scene appears in any of the twentieth-century adaptations of the story. Despite their prominence and wide circulation in contemporary popular culture, the modern versions of *The Carnal Prayer Mat* and *The Plum in the Golden Vase* in film and other media are notorious for being consistently marketed with the promise of fulfilling the heteronormative desires of men. If one treats these "texts" as immediate historical evidence of sexuality across time, one might be inclined to conclude that homoeroticism "disappeared" in the twentieth century. Or, more specifically, the juxtaposition between the seventeenth-century novels (with their frank and open homoerotic depictions) and their modern, more conservative variations seems to suggest a neat discrepancy between the "presence" of same-sex sexuality before its twentieth-century "absence." It is perhaps safer to conclude that the afterlife and proliferation of these pornographic texts in the contemporary period rely on an indirect censorship of their homoerotic content. This censorship exemplifies what Sedgwick has called an "epistemological privilege of unknowing," a successful concealment of certain ways of

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[6] Li Yü, *Rouputuang miben* (肉普團密本) [The carnal prayer mat] (Taipei: Guojia Chubanshe, 2011), p. 45. All translations are mine.
[7] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp. 201-202.
[8] Li, *Rouputuang*, pp. 71-73.

thinking within the broader structures of knowledge.[9] In Sedgwick's words, "many of the major modes of thought and knowledge in twentieth-century Western culture as a whole are structured—indeed, fractured—by a chronic, now endemic crisis of homo/heterosexual definition, indicatively male, dating from the end of the nineteenth century."[10]

Similarly, we can interpret the evolving cultural representation of such novels as *The Carnal Prayer Mat* and *The Plum in the Golden Vase* through the lens of this "endemic crisis of homo/heterosexual definition." By turning to the rise of Chinese sexological science in the 1920s, this chapter offers an alternative explanation for the "disappearance" of homoerotic representations in their modern adaptations. After all, what the trajectory of this historical evolution reveals is not so much the coincidental "disappearance" of homosexuality, but its very emergence. With the removal of their homoerotic contents, Ming-Qing erotic texts have essentially become heterosexualized in today's mass culture. The heteronormalization of *The Carnal Prayer Mat*, therefore, points to something more fundamental to the conceptual transformation of sex: the emergence of its scientific designation as the subject of desire.

II. The Emergence of (Homo)Sexuality

In the last chapter, I have shown how Republican-era biologists and other life science writers translated the epistemological authority of natural science through the production of anatomical, morphological, and chromosomal images. These images affirm a certain kind of distance from the viewer, making it possible to decipher truth's relation to nature through their means of visual objectivation. This chapter explores a different kind of relationship between truth and nature and a different kind of distance between the subject and object of knowledge. By the 1920s, biological sex was a commonsense in the popular imagination.

[9] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 5.
[10] Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, p. 1.

With that commonsense, some iconoclastic intellectuals began to contend that the hidden nature of erotic preference could also be discovered and known. Sex, they argued, was no longer something only to be seen, but it was something to be desired as well. They participated in a new concerted effort, though not without friction, to emulate European sexological sciences. Their translation and appropriation of Western sexological texts, concepts, methodologies, and styles of reasoning provided a crucial historical condition under which, and the means through which, sexuality emerged as an object of empirical knowledge. The disciplinary formation of Chinese sexology in the Republican period, therefore, added a new element of carnality to the scientific meaning of sex.

In the aftermath of the New Culture Movement (1915-19), an entire generation of cultural critics promoted sex education and sexological studies in an unprecedented, systematic fashion. Among the famous May Fourth iconoclastic intellectuals, some not only translated texts and adopted methodological rigor from European sexology, but they also developed their own theories of human sexual behavior and desire. They frequently engaged in heated debates over the meaning, principles, and boundaries of a science of sexuality. Questions of competence, credential, expertise, and authority preoccupied those of early twentieth-century urban intelligentsia who spoke seriously about sex in public. By the 1930s, disparate efforts and conversations converged in the founding of such periodicals as *Sex Science*. For the first time in China, sexuality was accorded a primacy of scientific "truthfulness."[11]

[11] I have in mind, specifically, the notion of truthfulness used by Bernard Williams in *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002). In this regard, I take cue from Ian Hacking and use "truth" in this chapter as a formal (as opposed to a strictly realist) concept. See Ian Hacking, *Scientific Reason* (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2008), pp. 1-48. Although scholars have pointed out that there is no fully adequate Chinese translation of the Western concept of "sexuality," the underlying premise of my study is that, at least on that level of epistemology, the emergence of homosexuality implies a broader emergence of the concept of sexuality itself. For a critical perspective on the Chinese translation of sexuality, see Fang Fu Ruan, *Sex in China: Studies in Sexology in Chinese Culture* (New York: Plenum Press, 1991). For a slightly different account of the emergence of sexuality in Republican China based on psychoanalytic-literary analysis, see Haiyan Lee, *Revolution of the Heart: A Genealogy of Love in China, 1900-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), pp. 186-217.

This chapter focuses on the intellectual journey of two pivotal figures in this rich tradition of Republican Chinese sexology: Zhang Jingsheng (張競生) and Pan Guangdan (潘光旦). Historians have considered Zhang's prescription of proper heterosexual conduct as a hallmark of his sexological enterprise, especially as it involved his controversial theory of the "third kind of water."[12] Meanwhile, studies of Pan's contribution to Chinese sexology have typically focused on his annotated translation of Havelock Ellis's *Psychology of Sex*, which grew out of his lifelong interest in promoting eugenics in China.[13] Less well studied, however, is their discussion of same-sex desire.[14] From the early 1920s on, Zhang and Pan

[12] Charles Leary, "Sexual Modernism in China: Zhang Jingsheng and 1920s Urban Culture" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, 1994); Hiroko Sakamoto, "The Cult of 'Love and Eugenics' in May Fourth Movement Discourse," *positions: east asia cultures and critique* 12 (2004): 329-76; Jing Tsu, *Failure, Nationalism, and Literature: The Making of Modern Chinese Identity, 1895-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 128-66; Haiyan Lee, "Governmentality and the Aesthetic State: A Chinese Fantasia," *positions* 14 (2006): 99-129; Wang Xuefeng (王雪峰), *Jiaoyu zhuanxing zhi jing: Shiji shangban shi zhongguo de xingjiaoyu sixiang yu shijian* (教育轉行之鏡: 世紀上半時中國的性教育思想與實踐) [Mirror of the education paradigm shift: Theories and practices of sex education in China in early 20th century] (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2006), pp. 249-65; and Leon A. Rocha, "Zhang Jingsheng (1888-1970): Love, Sex, Aesthetics, Eugenics, Utopia" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2010). Leary and Rocha's studies are the most detailed and comprehensive treatments of Zhang's life and work to date.

[13] Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); Gerald H. J. Lee, "Pan Guangdan and the Concept of Minzu" (Master's Thesis, Cambridge University, 1996); Yuehtsen Juliette Chung, *Struggle for National Survival: Eugenics in Sino-Japanese Context, 1896-1945* (London: Routledge, 2002); Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 225-53; Tsu, *Failure, Nationalism, and Literature*, pp. 98-166; Sakamoto, "The Cult of 'Love and Eugenics'"; Wang, *Jiaoyu zhuanxing zhi jing*, pp. 197-232; and Lee, *Revolution of the Heart*, pp. 186-217; Thomas Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011). The only published biographies of Pan to date are Lü Wenhao (呂文浩), *Pan Guangdan tuzhuan* (潘光旦圖傳) (Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 2006); and Wang Yanni (王燕妮), *Guangdan zhihua* (光旦之華) (Wuhan: Changjiang wenyi chubanshe, 2006).

[14] For a brief analysis of Pan's sexological writings on homosexuality, see Tze-lan D. Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 120-22. A more extended study can be found in Wenqing Kang, *Obsession: Male Same-Sex Relations in China, 1900-1950* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), pp. 52-8. In the course of writing this chapter, I have intentionally avoided revisiting the sources that have been analyzed by Sang and Kang. These sources include: Shan Zai (善哉), "Funü tongxing zhi aiqing" (婦女同性之愛情) [Same-sex erotic love between women], *Funü shibao* (婦女時報) [Women's times] 1, no. 7 (June 1911): 36-38; Shen Zemin (沈澤民), trans., "Tongxing'ai yu jiaoyu" (同性愛與教育) [Same-sex love and education], *Jiaoyu zazhi* (教育雜誌) [Education magazine] 15, no. 8 (1923): 22115-22124 (this is a translation of Edward Carpenter's "Affection in Education," which was the fourth chapter of his *The Intermediate Sex* [1899]); Yan Shi (宴始), "Nannü de geli yu tongxing'ai" (男女的隔離與同性愛) [The segregation between the sexes and same-sex love], *Funü zazhi* (婦女雜誌) [Women's magazine] 9, no. 5 (1923): 14-15; Wei Sheng (薇生), trans., "Tongxing'ai zai nüzi jiaoyu shang de xin'yiyi" (同性愛在女子教育上的新意義) [The new meaning of same-sex love in women's education], *Funü zazhi* (婦女雜誌) [Women's magazine] 11, no. 6 (1925): 1064-1069; Xie Se (謝瑟), trans., "Nüxuesheng de tongxing'ai" (女學生的同性愛) [Same-sex love among female students], *Xin wenhua* (新文化) [New culture]

also debated vociferously about each other's legitimacy as a scientist of sex. Frequently joined by an extended cast of sex educators and other self-proclaimed experts, such debates reflected the complexity of their sexological maneuver. Moving away from the heteronormative and eugenic emphases of their work, I will draw from these examples a snapshot of the broader epistemic context in which the concept of homosexuality emerged as a meaningful point of referencing human difference and cultural identity in twentieth-century China.

The emphasis on homosexuality and the relevant stakes of scientific disciplinarity revises the limited scholarly literature on the history of Republican Chinese sexology. In his earlier study of the medico-scientific constructions of sex, Frank Dikötter argues that early twentieth-century Chinese modernizing elites did not fully grasp or reproduce European concepts of sexual "perversions," including homosexuality.[15] Similarly, Joanna McMillan asserts that while "sexological studies of perversions were widespread in European medial circles, the literature in Republican China remained almost entirely silent on these enquiries."[16] More recently, in response to Dikötter's thesis, other scholars such as Tze-lan D. Sang and Wenqing Kang have exposed the ways in which selected May Fourth intellectuals—through various debates in the urban tabloid press—actually contributed to the increasing awareness of foreign categorizations of human sexuality in early twentieth-century Chinese mass culture.[17]

1, no. 6 (1927): 57-74 (this is a translation of Havelock Ellis's "The School Friendships of Girls" in *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, vol. 2, *Sexual Inversion* [1897]); Yang Youtian (楊憂天), "Tongxing'ai de wenti" (同性愛的問題) [The problem of same-sex love], *Beixin* 北新 3, no. 2 (1929): 403-439; Qiu Yuan (秋原) (possibly Hu Qiuyuan, 胡秋原), trans., "Tongxinglian'ai lun" (同性戀愛論) [On same-sex romantic love], *Xin nüxing* (新女性) [New woman] 4, no. 4 (1929): 513-534 and no. 5 (1929): 605-628 (this is a translation of Edward Carpenter's "The Homogenic Attachment," chapter 3 of *The Intermediate Sex*). As Kang has speculated, it turns out that Shen Zemin may have been Hu Qiuyuan. Since the Chinese translations of Edward Carpenter's writings have been carefully studied by Sang and Kang, this chapter will not touch on those translations.

[15] Frank Dikötter, *Sex, Culture, and Modernity in China: Medical Science and the Construction of Sexual Identities in the Early Republican Period* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), pp. 143-5.

[16] Joanna McMillan, *Sex, Science and Morality in China* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 90. It is interesting to note that McMillan is Dikötter's student.

[17] See Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian*; and Kang, *Obsession*.

Nonetheless, taken together these studies tend to depict Republican Chinese sexology as a unified field that treated homosexuality merely as a social, rather than a personal, problem.[18] According to Kang, for example,

> Whereas in the West, sexological knowledge pathologized homosexuality as socially deviant, thus reducing it to an individual psychological problem, in China sexology as a form of modern knowledge was used more to diagnose social and national problems…As Chinese writers and thinkers introduced Western sexology to China, male same-sex relations were stigmatized more as a disruptive social deviance than a personal medical condition.[19]

Sang's analysis, too, seems to support the claim that no effect similar to the European "individualization" of homosexuality took place in Republican China. In the context of the May Fourth era, Sang observes, "*tongxing ai* ['same-sex love'] is primarily signified as a modality of love or an intersubjective rapport rather than as a category of personhood, that is, an identity."[20]

In this chapter, I suggest that this interpretation is an oversimplification. The view that homosexuality was only a social problem was not consistently shared by such pivotal sexologists as Zhang Jingsheng and Pan Guangdan. In the process of establishing sexuality as an appropriate object of scientific inquiry, they held different opinions on the etiology, prevention, and significance of same-sex love. They even disagreed on the fundamental

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[18] Dikötter, *Sex, Culture, and Modernity*, pp. 140-41; Chou Wah-shan, *Tongzhi: Politics of Same-Sex Eroticism in Chinese Societies* (New York: Haworth, 2000), p. 50; Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian*, pp. 7 and 118; Kang, *Obsession*, pp. 42-3. For an account that stresses the role of Western psychiatry and general political trends but does not touch on the significance of the translation of "homosexuality," see Jin Wu, "From 'Long Yang' and 'Dui Shi' to Tongzhi: Homosexuality in China," in *The Mental Health Professions and Homosexuality: International Perspectives*, ed. Vittorio Lingiardi and Jack Drescher (New York: Haworth Medical Press, 2003), pp. 117-43.

[19] Kang, *Obsession*, pp. 42-3.

[20] Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian*, p. 118.

principles of sexological research. Given the multiple perspectives competing at the time, it is perhaps more compelling to suggest that homosexuality appeared to Chinese experts and popular audiences as much a personal problem as it was a social one—an explicit issue of personhood, subjectivity, and identity. Open communications between "sexperts," their readers, and other "sexperts" further enriched this incitement of a discourse that found truth in sex. To borrow Michel Foucault's insight on the incitement to speak about sex in modern bourgeois society, "Whether in the form of a subtle confession in confidence or an authoritarian interrogation, sex—be it refined or rustic—had to be put into words."[21] Sexology in Republican China was indeed a new system of knowledge in which, literally, new subjects were made.

Ultimately, participants of this new discourse established for China what Foucault has called *scientia sexualis*, which first distinguished itself in nineteenth-century Europe: a new regime of truth that relocated the discursive technology of the sexual self from the theological sphere of pastoral confession to the secular discourse of science and medicine.[22] Contrary to previous studies, I argue that from the 1920s through the 1940s, the conceptual space for articulating a Western-derived homosexual identity emerged in China precisely from the new regime of truth circumscribed by the arrival of European sexology. Moreover, whereas Dennis Altman, Lisa Rofel, and Judith Farquhar have respectively claimed that "gay identity" and *scientia sexualis* first appeared on the China scene only by the post-socialist era, my historicization suggests that both have deeper roots that can be traced to an earlier epistemic turning point—in the Republican period.[23]

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[21] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), p. 32.
[22] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*.
[23] Dennis Altman, *Global Sex* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), chap. 6; Lisa Rofel, *Desiring China: Experiments in Neoliberalism, Sexuality, and Public Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), chap. 3; Judith Farquhar, *Appetites: Food and Sex in Post-Socialist China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), chap. 5. See also Loretta Wing Wah Ho, *Gay and Lesbian Subculture in Urban China* (London: Routledge, 2010); Travis Kong, *Chinese Male Homosexualities: Memba, Tongzhi, and Golden Boy* (London: Routledge, 2010); McMillan, *Sex, Science and Morality in China*; and James Farrer, *Opening Up: Youth Sex*

Part of my disagreement with previous studies seems to stem from the absence of a theoretical vocabulary that fully registers the complexity of sexological claims in this period. Chinese sexologists' conviction that Western science held the key to effective modernization suggests that claims about tradition and modernity were embedded within claims of sexual knowledge. Though distinct, these two layers of the production of sexual truth are somewhat confounded in the analyses of Dikötter, Sang, and Kang: for them, sexological research on homosexuality in the Republican period itself marked a condition of modernization, rather than a condition that permitted further referential points of argumentation about the authenticity, traditionality, and modernity of Chinese culture. This conflation rests on the assumption that broader trajectories of historical change—such as modernization and nationalization—are taken for granted and more immediately relevant to the emergence of a discourse of sexology in Republican China. But what if the stakes of the formation of such a discourse depended as much on these broader processes of historical change as on its internal disciplinary tensions and epistemic frictions? As generations of science studies scholars have shown, such dissonances are crucial to the consolidation of any kind of scientific valuation.[24]

In order to differentiate the two levels of truth production on which sexological claims operated, this chapter proposes and develops the analytic rubric of "epistemic modernity." My application of epistemic modernity in this paper refers to an apparatus in the Foucauldian sense that characterizes a historical moment during which a new science of sexuality consciously gained epistemological grounding in Chinese culture. In the next section, I

Culture and Market Reform in Shanghai (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). On the argument for an emphasis shift in modern Chinese historiography to the Republican era, see Frank Dikötter, *The Age of Openness: China before Mao* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); and my argument about turning points in the history of sexuality in Howard Chiang, "Liberating Sex, Knowing Desire: *Scientia Sexualis* and Epistemic Turning Points in the History of Sexuality," *History of the Human Sciences* 23, no. 5 (December 2010): 42-69.

[24] For important examples in the history of the French life sciences, see Toby Appel, *The Cuvier-Geoffroy Debate: French Biology in the Decades Before Darwin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); and John Farley and Gerald Geison, "Science, Politics and Spontaneous Generation in Nineteenth-Century France: The Pasteur-Pouchet Debate," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 48 (1974): 161-198.

make even more explicit the historiographical rationale for implementing this theoretical neologism, including an operational definition appropriate for the purpose of this study. The core of this chapter consists of three inter-related sections, each featuring an aspect of epistemic modernity. Together, they help reveal a macro, multidimensional picture of East Asian *scientia sexualis*: the creation of a public of truth, in which the authority of truth could be contested, translated across culture, and reinforced through new organizational efforts, constitutes the social-epistemic foundation for the establishment of sexology in Republican China. I conclude by coming back to the central issue of how homosexuality emerged as a meaningful category of experience in this context. Its comprehensibility, I argue, depends on a new nationalistic style of argumentation that arose from the interplay between the introduction of a foreign sexological concept and the displacement of an indigenous understanding of same-sex desire.

III. Epistemic Modernity and Its Historiographical Rationale

The rich history of male homoeroticism in traditional China has been a topic of in-depth scholarly discussion.[25] This history, however, is not static but dynamic: over the years, the social significance of same-sex relations in pre-modern China evolved according to the relevant historical factors. As Matthew Sommer's work on Chinese legal history has shown, sodomy appeared as a formal legislation in China only by the late imperial period. During the eighteenth-century Yongzheng reign (1723-1735), male same-sex practice was for the first time directly "assimilated" to heterosexual practice under the rubric of "illicit sex." This Qing innovation, according to Sommer, fundamentally reoriented the organizing

[25] Robert Hans van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974); Xiaomingxiong (小明雄) [Samshasha], *Zhongguo tongxing'ai shilu* (中國同性愛史錄) [The history of homosexual love in China] (Hong Kong: Fenhong sanjiao chubanshe, 1984); and Bret Hinsch, *Passions of the Cut Sleeve: The Male Homosexual Tradition in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). For a lucid analysis that situates Xiaomingxiong's study in proper historical context, see Helen Leung, "Archiving Queer Feelings in Hong Kong," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 8 (2007): 559-71.

principle for the regulation of sexuality in China: a universal order of "appropriate" gender roles and attributes was granted some foundational value over the previous status-oriented paradigm, in which different status groups were expected to hold unique standards of familial and sexual morality.[26] But whether someone who engaged in same-sex behavior was criminalized due to his disruption of a social order organized around status or gender performance, the world of imperial China never viewed the experience of homosexuality as a separate problem.[27] The question was never homosexuality per se, but whether one's sexual behavior would potentially reverse the dominant script of social order. If we want to *isolate* the problem of homosexuality in China, we must jump to the first half of the twentieth century to find it.

The relationship between forms of experience and systems of knowledge thus occupies a central role in this historical problem, if only because what we have come to call "sexuality" is a relatively recent product of a system of medico-scientific knowledge that has its own unique style of reasoning and argumentation.[28] In the European context, Arnold Davidson has identified the emergence of sexuality from the new conceptual space conditioned by the nineteenth-century shift from an anatomical to a psychiatric style of medical reasoning. "Before the second half of the nineteenth century," according to Davidson, "Anatomical sex exhausted one's sexual identity," because "the anatomical style of reasoning took sex as its object of investigation and concerned itself with diseases of

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[26] Matthew Sommer, *Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000). For earlier works that look at the legal construction of sodomy in China, see Marinus J. Meijer, "Homosexual Offences in Ch'ing Law," *T'oung Pao* 71 (1985): 109-33, reprinted in *Asian Homosexuality*, ed. Wayne R. Dynes and Stephen Donaldson (New York and London: Garland, 1992); Vivian W. Ng, "Ideology and Sexuality: Rape Laws in Qing China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 46 (1987): 57-70; and Vivian Ng, "Homosexuality and State in Late Imperial China," in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin B. Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey (New York: New American Library, 1989), pp. 76-89.

[27] For an explanation of why homosexuality was not criminalized in the Republican period, see Wenqing Kang, "Male Same-Sex Relations in Modern China: Language, Medical Representation, and Law, 1900-1949," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 18, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 489-510

[28] I distinguish "styles of argumentation" from "styles of reasoning" more carefully in the conclusion. On the epistemological applicability of "style," see also Howard Chiang, "Rethinking 'Style' for Historians and Philosophers of Science: Converging Lessons from Sexuality, Translation, and East Asian Studies," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 40 (2009): 109-18.

structural abnormality." Hence, "As little as 150 years ago, psychiatric theories of sexual identity disorders were not false, but rather were not even possible candidates of truth-or-falsehood. Only with the birth of a psychiatric style of reasoning were there categories of evidence, verification, explanation, and so on, that allowed such theories to be true-or-false."[29] "Indeed," Davidson claims, "sexuality itself is a product of the psychiatric style of reasoning."[30] The historical specificity and uniqueness of sexual concepts cannot be overstated, especially since our modern formulation of homosexuality, as the classicist David Halperin reminds us, does not anchor on a notion of object-choice, orientation, or behavior alone, but "seems to depend on the unstable conjunction of all three."[31]

If understanding the historical relationship between sexuality and knowledge claims in the Western context involves such careful historicism, the situation in East Asia requires at least one additional layer of consideration. Since the mid-nineteenth century, the social situation of China was characterized by an increasingly conspicuous struggle to reconcile the existing canon of traditional Chinese medicine with foreign Western biomedical knowledge. For instance, as the last chapter has shown, Benjamin Hobson's anatomical drawings represented a radical epistemological departure from conventional theories of the sexual body in Chinese medicine. The heterogeneous efforts to bring together two coexisting but oftentimes competing systems of medical epistemology were overwhelmingly articulated within a larger socio-political project conceived in terms of nationalism.[32] Ideas and

[29] Arnold I. Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 36.
[30] Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*, p. 37.
[31] David M. Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 131. On the historicism of homosexuality, see also David Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990). For a similar historical argument regarding heterosexuality, see Jonathan Ned Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007 [1995]).
[32] See Xiaoqun Xu, "'National Essence' vs 'Science': Chinese Native Physicians' Fight for Legitimacy, 1912-37," *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 4 (1997): 847-877; Sean Lei, "When Chinese Medicine Encountered the State" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1999).

practices of nation-making would come to acquire the center stage in Chinese political and cultural discourses, especially following the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895).[33]

Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that, unlike its Western counterpart, the Chinese context of sexual knowledge did not present itself as a somewhat epistemologically-sealed space in which a previous anatomical style of reasoning actually existed, against which the nineteenth-century psychiatric style of reasoning could be so neatly juxtaposed. To ask the very least, why did modernizing thinkers like Zhang Jingsheng, Pan Guangdan, and others use Western sexological ideas rather than traditional Chinese medical theory to purport a style of reasoning that stigmatized same-sex desire? What are the broader historical implications? The relationship between systems of knowledge and notions of modernity in East Asia requires problematization as we historicize the concept of homosexuality—or for that matter, sexuality—itself. In order to carefully account for the historical condition under which homosexuality became a meaningful category in China, we

[33] The historiography of Chinese nationalism has grown exponentially since the 1980s, and is too vast to cite here. A cursory review of the literature reveals that the earlier formulations by Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, and Anthony Smith have provided the main points of departure for subsequent studies. In broad brush strokes, more recent studies not only rework Anderson, Gellner, and Smith's framing of nationalism from a non-Western-centered perspective. By emphasizing the importance of literary, consumer, and material cultures, they also significantly depart from a state-centered approach to Chinese nationalism. As an early example, Prasenjit Duara's work on the relationship between historical narration and Chinese nationalism brilliantly challenges a linear interpretation of the history of the Chinese nation. Duara shows that indeed, fractured cultural contestations contributed to narratives of modern China as much as their suppression in claims and discourses of Chinese nationalism, although his work sometimes tends to reify a state-centered approach. Adopting a refreshing psychoanalytic perspective of masochism, Jing Tsu argues that negative notions of "failure," rather than inherently positive feelings, provided the consistent basis for Chinese nationalistic identifications. As another example of this recent wave of studies, Rebecca Karl explores the ways in which Chinese nationalism emerged from the "staging" of "globality" in the period between the first Sino-Japanese war and the founding of the Republic. According to Karl, the conceptual formation of Chinese nationalism drew more from "Third World" anti-colonialist sentiments than from the worldview of Euro-American-Japanese nation-statism. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, rev. ed. (London and New York: Verso, 2006 [1983]); Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (University of Nevada Press, 1992); Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Rebecca Karl, *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002); and Jing Tsu, *Failure, Nationalism, and Literature*. On the relationship between consumerism and nationalism, see also Karl Gerth, *China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003). The present paper thus adds to this conversation on Chinese nationalism by moving away from the state-centered approach, and by offering an epistemological perspective that foregrounds the historical relationship between science and sexuality.

need to complicate the epistemological and historiographical issues that we wish to address about the relation between sexuality and science in Chinese history.

To that end, I find what I call epistemic modernity, which builds on Prasenjit Duara's notion of "the East Asian modern," particularly useful. When proposing the idea of "the East Asian modern" in his groundbreaking study of Manchukuo, Duara aims to address two concomitant registers of historical production: how "the past is repeatedly re-signified and mobilized to serve future projects" and the transnationality of "the circulation of practices and signifiers evoking historical authenticity in the region." The concept allows Duara to treat "the modern" as a "hegemonic" project, "a set of temporal practices and discourses that is imposed or instituted by modernizers…rather than a preconstituted period or a given condition."[34] The emergence of homosexuality in early twentieth-century China reflects a parallel moment of contingent historicity. The analytic lens of epistemic modernity allows us to see homosexuality *not* as a strictly "modern" category, but as a by-product of a contested historical process that yielded specific cultural associations with the traditional, the modern, and the authentic.

In trying to highlight similar aspects of the transnational processes, flows, and interactions of regimes of cultural temporality and specificity in East Asia, my notion of epistemic modernity refers to a discursive apparatus of knowledge production that concomitantly governs implicit claims of traditionality, authenticity, and modernity: it essentially defines the index of imbrication in people's simultaneous preoccupation with the epistemology of scientific valuation and the determination of what counts as traditional, authentic, or modern. The analytic rubric enables a perspective on the historical question of, to cite Tani Barlow from a different context, "how our mutual present came to take its apparent shape" in "a complex field of relationships or threads of material that connect

[34] Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), pp. 3 and 6 n. 6.

multiply in space-time and can be surveyed from specific sites."[35] As such, epistemic modernity does not merely denote a system of knowledge; rather, it is a set of ongoing practices and discourses that mediates the relationship between systems of knowledge (e.g., Chinese or Western medicine) and modalities of power (e.g., biopower) in yielding specific forms of experience (e.g., sexuality) or shaping new categories of subjectivity (e.g., homosexual identity). Modernity, to borrow the words of Kuan-Hsing Chen, is therefore "not the normative drive to become modern, but an analytical concept that attempts to capture the effectiveness of modernizing forces as they negotiate and mix with local history and culture."[36]

By treating traditionality and authenticity as not ontologically given but constructed as such through the ongoing modernizing technologies of nationalistic processes, I thus follow Duara's attempt to offer sharper insights concerning the *regional mediation* of globally circulating discourses, categories, and practices in twentieth-century East Asia. The history of homosexuality in China, based on this model, is a history of how globally circulating categories, discourses, and practices were mediated within that particular geobody we call "China." A major aim of this chapter is to show that, in the context of early twentieth-century China, homosexuality was precisely one of these categories; sexology exemplified this kind of discourse; and the articulation of a Western psychiatric style of reasoning about sexuality represented one of these practices. A relevant case in point is Ruth Rogaski's study of "hygienic modernity," for one can understand the hygiene-public health nexus as an exemplary model of how globally circulating discourses (of hygiene) and practices (as promulgated by public health campaigns and state interventions) were mediated

[35] Tani Barlow, "Introduction: On 'Colonial Modernity,'" in *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*, ed. Tani Barlow (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 1-20, on p. 6. By citing Barlow here, I am of course fully endorsing her "colonial modernity" approach for the historical context under discussion, so this chapter must be seen as a continuation of the argument I posited in the earlier two chapters that "China" and "sex" have been bound by a mutually generative relationship.

[36] Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), p. 244.

by the discursive apparatus of epistemic modernity in the historical formation of national Republican China.[37]

Whether our analytic prism is sexuality or hygiene, epistemic modernity presents an opportunity to take the growing global hegemony of Western conceptions of health and diseases seriously without necessitating a full-blown self- or re-Orientalization. By that I mean an intentional project that continually defers an "alternative modernity" and essentializes non-Westernness (including Chineseness) by assuming that the genealogical status of that derivative copy of an "original" Western modernity is somehow always already hermeneutically sealed from the historical apparatus of Westernization.[38] Now that studies in the history of sexuality in non-Western regions have begun to mature,[39] historians should be even more (not less) cautious of any effort to view the broader historical processes of epistemic homogenization as having any lesser bearings than forms of local (or "Oriental") resistance.[40] The idea that "local" configurations of gender and sexuality cannot be

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[37] See Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity*.

[38] For recent reflections on the problem of Chinese self- or re-Orientalization, see Ien Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living between Asia and the West* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Chu Yiu-Wai, "The Importance of Being Chinese: Orientalism Reconfigured in the Age of Global Modernity," *boundary 2* 35 (2008): 183-206. For an informative set of essays dealing with the problem of "alternative modernity" in twentieth-century Chinese history, see Madeleine Yue Dong and Joshua Goldstein, eds., *Everyday Modernity in China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006). For a parallel problematization in contemporary Chinese music representation, see Samson Young, "Re-considering Cultural Politics in the Analysis of Contemporary Chinese Music: The Case of *Ghost Opera*," *Contemporary Music Review* 26, no. 5 (2007): 605-618.

[39] See, for example, Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Dorothy Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Dror Ze'evi, *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Kathryn Babayan and Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Islamicate Sexualities: Translations across Temporal Geographies of Desire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[40] See, for example, Dennis Altman, "Rupture or Continuity? The Internationalization of Gay Identities," *Social Text* 14 (1996): 77-94; Dennis Altman, "Global Gaze/Global Gays," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 3 (1997): 417-36; Peter Drucker, "Introduction: Remapping Sexualities," in *Different Rainbows*, ed. Peter Drucker (London: Gay Men's, 2000), pp. 9-42; Linda Garber, "Where in the World Are the Lesbians?" *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14 (2005): 28-50; Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Beyond the Americas: Are Gender and Sexuality Useful Categories of Analysis?" *Journal of Women's History* 18 (2006): 11-21; Evelyn Blackwood, "Transnational Discourses and Circuits of Queer Knowledge in Indonesia," *GLQ* 14 (2008): 481-507; Peter A. Jackson, "Capitalism and Global Queering: National Markets, Parallels among Sexual Cultures, and Multiple Queer Modernities," *GLQ* 15 (2009): 357-95; and my reappraisal of similar issues in Howard Chiang, "Empire of Desires: History and Queer Theory in an Age of Global Affect," *InterAlia: A Journal of Queer Studies* 3 (2009).

overridden by modern Western taxonomies of sexual identity is by now a standard interpretation of both the historical record and cultural archive of non-Western same-sex desires. But a variant of this interpretation has already generated controversial repercussions in the field of Middle Eastern sexuality studies. Consider Joseph Massad's infamous claim that all social significations of homosexuality, including internal gay rights activism, reflect the growing penetration of Western cultural imperialism: "The categories of gay and lesbian are not universal at all and can only be universalized by the epistemic, ethical, and political violence unleashed on the rest of the world by the very international human rights advocates whose aim is to defend the very people their intervention is creating."[41] It bears striking similarity, however ironically and uncomfortably, to Lisa Rofel's adamant critique of a "globalized gay identity."[42]

To redress these analytical conundrums concerning the relationship between transnationalism and sexuality from a strong historicist viewpoint, what I am concerned with, then, is not a social history of homosexuals in China "from below," but an *epistemological history* in the Foucauldian sense that "is situated at the threshold of scientificity."[43] In other words, this is a study of "how a concept [like homosexuality]—still overlaid with [earlier] metaphors or imaginary contents—was purified, and accorded the status and function of a scientific concept. To discover how a region of experience [such as same-sex intimacy] that has already been mapped, already partially articulated, but is still overlaid with immediate

[41] Joseph Massad, *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 41.
[42] Joseph Massad, "Re-Orienting Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World," *Public Culture* 14, no. 2 (2002): 361-85; Massad, *Desiring Arabs*; Lisa Rofel, *Desiring China: Experiments in Neoliberalism, Sexuality, and Public Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). The target of Rofel's critique is Altman, *Global Sex*. Note how strikingly similar are the titles of Massad's and Rofel's books.
[43] For a recent set of essays that begin to push transnational Chinese queer studies in a more fruitful direction, see Howard Chiang, ed., "Queer Transnationalism in China," topical cluster, *English Language Notes* 49, no. 1 (2011): 109-144. Rheinhart Koselleck, of course, has problematized historians' strict distinction of social history from intellectual history. See, especially, Rheinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Presner, Kerstin Behnke, and Jobst Welg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

practical uses or values related to those uses, was constituted as a scientific domain."[44] The rest of this chapter is devoted to examining closely the historical condition under which the concept of same-sex desire came to fall within the realm of Chinese scientific thinking. Each of the following sections features an aspect of the cultural apparatus I call epistemic modernity: a public of truth, a contested terrain of authority, and an intellectual landscape of disciplinarity. Each helps distinguish the two levels of truth production on which sexological claims operated: one concerning explicit claims about the object of scientific knowledge, e.g., sexuality, and another concerning implicit claims about cultural indicators of traditionality, authenticity, and modernity, e.g., ways of narrating sexual truth. Operating together within the governing apparatus of epistemic modernity, they anchored the ways in which same-sex sexuality crossed the threshold of scientificity and reveal the very foundations upon which a *scientia sexualis* coalesced in the cultural context of Republican China.

IV. Making Truth Public

No other point of departure serves the purpose of our inquiry better than the sex education campaign that began to acquire some formality in the 1920s. In order to make sex a legitimate object of scientific inquiry and education, a notable segment of Chinese urban intelligentsia used the language of Western biology and psychology to anchor their public discussions of sexual behavior and desire. These discussions took place in university lecture rooms, health care settings, public debates, and both the mainstream press and the vernacular print culture, including the newly established periodicals that featured explicit coverage of sex-related matters, such as *New Women*, *New Culture*, *Sex Magazine*, *Sex Science*, and to some extent *West Wind*. In these forums, pedagogues, doctors, scientists, social reformers,

[44] Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, tr. A. M. Sheridan Smith (1969; New York: Pantheon, 1972), p. 190.

cultural critics, and other public intellectuals taught people how to think about sexuality in scientific terms. In the years following the Xinhai Revolution and surrounding the New Culture Movement, they viewed open talk about sex as a sign of liberation. Or, to borrow the term from D. W. Y. Kwok's classic study, they squarely situated this frankness in the spirit of a new "scientism," defined as "that view which places all reality within a natural order and deems all aspects of this order, be they biological, social, physical, or psychological, to be knowable only by the methods of science," that characterized Chinese culture in the first half of the twentieth century.[45]

Public spokesmen who took the initiative to translate and disseminate Western biological and psychological concepts typically received their advanced degrees at European, American, or Japanese institutions. Upon returning from abroad, many of them shared the conviction that adequate sex education was important for the strengthening of the nation, a belief intimately linked to the broader cultural ambience of the May Fourth Movement. According to Dikötter's observation of this period, "For the modernizing élites in Republican China, individual sexual desire had to be disciplined and evil habits eliminated, and couples were to regulate their sexual behaviour strictly to help bring about the revival of the nation."[46] By setting up the British sexologist Havelock Ellis as a role model, many of these modernizing elites singled out his seven-volume encyclopedic *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* as the epitome of scientific research on human sexuality. One of the foremost modernizing thinkers who emulated Ellis's work was China's own "Dr. Sex" (性博士, *xingbuoshi*), Zhang Jingsheng (1888-1970).

A university professor and a sex educator, Zhang Jingsheng treated his own sexological treatise, *Sex Histories* (*Xingshi*, 性史), as a Chinese adaptation of Ellis's

[45] D. W. Y. Kwok, *Scientism in Chinese Thought, 1900-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965).
[46] Dikötter, *Sex, Culture, and Modernity*, p. 2.

Studies.[47] After earning his doctorate in Philosophy from Université de Lyon, Zhang returned to China in 1920 and initially taught at the Jingshan Middle School in Guangzhou. For being educated abroad, Zhang was very much part of the work-study movement promoted by the French and Chinese governments in the 1910s. Although part of the initial rationale for this "work-study programme" was to "popularize" education and dissociate it from cultural elitism, by the end of the decade, the program was soon associated only with those who were anxious to study abroad. Not surprisingly, many of these individuals actually came from a family background that was fairly well off. In the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, however, most students studying overseas actually went to either the United States or Japan.[48] Zhang's decision to study in France allowed him to maintain close ties with important figures such as Wong Jingwei, Cai Yuanpei, Wu Yüzhang, and Li Shizeng. With these anarchists of the KMT party, Zhang participated in the founding of the Sino-French Education Association, branches of which, by 1919, could be found in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Hunan, Shandong, and Fujian.[49]

Zhang's participation in the Association and the early work-study movement significantly shaped his intellectual orientation. When he was forced to resign from his post at the Jingshan Middle School in 1921, Cai Yuanpei offered him a teaching position at Peking University, the epicenter of the May Fourth Movement. Throughout the second half of the 1910s, the Sino-French Education Association actively promoted the view that

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[47] The edition that I rely on for this paper is Zhang Jingsheng (張競生), *Xingshi 1926* (性史 1926) [Sex histories 1926] (Taipei: Dala, 2005).

[48] After the United States decided to remit its share of the Boxer indemnity to finance Chinese students' oversea education in the United States, the total number of students in America sent by the Chinese government was 847 by 1914. Paul Bailey, *Reform the People: Changing Attitudes towards Popular Education in Early 20th Century China* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p. 228. While the number of Chinese students who went to the United States for education increased, the number of those who went to Japan began to decline after 1906 with increasing governmental restrictions. The number had fallen to 1,400 by 1912. See Bailey, *Reform the People*, p. 249 n. 12.

[49] Bailey, *Reform the People*, p. 236. On the work-study movement, see also Y. C. Wang, *Chinese Intellectuals and the West, 1872-1949* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1966); Marilyn A. Levine, *The Found Generation: Chinese Communists in Europe during the Twenties* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993).

overseas study in France offered a rare opportunity for Chinese people to learn European science and humanist thinking without entirely relying on Japan. Adopting this vision, Zhang saw in Cai's offer to teach at Peking (at the peak of the May Fourth) a unique opportunity to enlighten the Chinese public. His first two books, *A Way of Life Based on Beauty* (1924) and *Organizational Principles of a Society Based on Beauty* (1925), expressed his conviction that the Chinese nation should be strengthened by learning from Europe, the United States, and Japan, especially on the topics of economic structure and military organization. Championing positive eugenics, Zhang even encouraged interracial marriage (and procreation) between Chinese people and those races that possessed strength where the Chinese race was weak, including the Europeans, Americans, Russians, and even the Japanese.[50]

Following these two well-received books, Zhang's publication of *Sex Histories* in 1926 earned him the popular title "Dr. Sex." *Sex Histories* comprised seven life histories written in the form of first-person narrative by those who responded to Zhang's "call for stories," which was originally published in the supplemental section of the *Capital Newspaper* (京報, *Jingbao*) in early 1926. This "call for stories" asked young people to contribute stories and any other relevant, even mundane, information about their sex lives.[51] It also indicated that these stories would be "psychoanalyzed" and would help serve the

[50] Zhang Jingsheng (張競生), *Meide renshengguan* (美的人生觀) [A way of life based on beauty], in *Zhang Jingsheng wenji* (張競生文集) [Collected works of Zhang Jingsheng], ed. Jiang Zhongxiao (江中孝), 2 vols., v. 1 (Guangzhou: Guangzhou chubanshe, 1998), pp. 24-138; Zhang Jingsheng (張競生), *Meide shehui zuzhifa* (美的社會組織法) [Organizational principles of a society based on beauty], in *Zhang Jingsheng wenji* (張競生文集) [Collected works of Zhang Jingsheng], 2 vols., v. 1, pp. 139-264. On Zhang's eugenic perspective, see Charles Leary, "Intellectual Orthodoxy, the Economy of Knowledge, and the Debate over Zhang Jingsheng's Sex Histories," *Republican China* 18 (1994): 99-137; Leary, "Sexual Modernism in China"; Sakamoto, "The Cult of 'Love and Eugenics'"; Lee, "Governmentality and the Aesthetic State"; Tsu, *Failure, Nationalism, and Literature*, pp. 128-66; Wang, *Jiaoyu zhuanxing zhi jing*, pp. 249-65; and Rocha, "Zhang Jingsheng (1888-1970)."

[51] Zhang Jingsheng (張競生), "Yige hanjia de zuihao xiaoqianfa" (一個寒假的最好消遣法) [A way to kill time for the winter vacation], reprinted in Zhang, *Xingshi*, pp. 24-27.

purpose of "hygienic" intervention.[52] Zhang studied these life histories carefully and provided commentaries at the end of each story he included in *Sex Histories*. Therefore, Zhang's book adopted a case-study format similar to the way Western sexologists typically organized and presented their research finding.

Indeed, when Zhang published *Sex Histories*, he demanded the book to be treated as "a piece of science, because it documents facts."[53] In his view, there was nothing obscene or inappropriate about his effort to compile a book based on people's sexual thoughts and behaviors. After all, this documentation method had preoccupied European psychiatrists and other forensic doctors for decades already, although their focus had been primarily on aberrant sexual expressions.[54] "To keep a strict record of how things happened in the way they did is the type of mindset that any scientist should have," Zhang insisted.[55] He ended the book with a reprint of the "call for stories" entry, which also solicited collaborators for a project that he had envisaged on translating Ellis's *Studies*.[56] In a word, Zhang felt rather strongly that what he was doing in China resembled what the European sexologists were doing on the other side of the world.[57]

Zhang's appropriation of the methodological empiricism of Western sexology—as exemplified by his case studies and effort to "document facts"—illustrates a straightforward example of epistemic modernity: implicit in his self-proclaimed expertise on human sexuality lay a claim of another sort concerning referential points of tradition and modernity in Chinese

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[52] Zhang, *Xingshi*, p. 26.
[53] Zhang, *Xingshi*, p. 31.
[54] On the historical relationship between science and homosexuality in the United States, see, for example, Simon LeVay, *Queer Science: The Use and Abuse of Research into Homosexuality* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997); Vernon Rosario, ed., *Science and Homosexualities* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Jennifer Terry, *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Henry Minton, *Departing from Deviance: A History of Homosexual Rights and Emancipatory Science in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
[55] Zhang, *Xingshi*, p. 31.
[56] Zhang, *Xingshi*, p. 27.
[57] See Hsiao-Yen Peng, "*Sex Histories*: Zhang Jingsheng's Sexual Revolution," in *Critical Studies: Feminism/Femininity in Chinese Literature*, ed. Peng-hsiang Chen and Whitney Crothers Dilley (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), pp. 159-77.

culture. In Zhang's sexological project, knowledge about sexuality involved a modern phenomenon of narrating one's life history in a *truthful* manner. Whereas literature (e.g., fiction, poetry, etc.) had been the traditional vehicle for the cultural expression of love and intimacy (including homoeroticism) in late imperial China, according to Zhang's sexology, this mode of representation was no longer appropriate in the twentieth century.[58] His empirical methodology posited a new way of confessing one's erotic experience in the name of science, the domain of modernity in which the truthfulness of sexual desires was to be recorded, investigated, and explained. Similar to the ways in which "sex was constituted as a problem of truth" in nineteenth-century Europe, the procedure for producing sexual knowledge promulgated by Zhang transformed personal desire into scientific data: "sex was not only a matter of sensation and pleasure, of law and taboo, but also of truth and falsehood."[59]

By encouraging people to talk about their sexual experiences in a way that conformed to the "norms of scientific regularity," Zhang hoped to achieve more than just archiving "the facts of life."[60] As the "call for stories" makes clear, narrators who were brave enough to speak out and report their sex life were rewarded with the unparalleled opinion of a "sexpert," who, according to the entry, possessed the kind of enlightening scientific knowledge about sexuality from which laypersons could learn and benefit. So drawing on his academic training in philosophy and the empirical approach he had adopted from European sexologists, Zhang framed the modernism of his sexological science with another epistemological tool:

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[58] Cuncun Wu, *Homoerotic Sensibilities in Late Imperial China* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004); Giovanni Vitiello, *The Libertine's Friend: Homosexuality and Masculinity in Late Imperial China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

[59] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 56.

[60] I borrow the notion of "norms of scientific regularity" from Foucault: see Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 65; I borrow the phrase "facts of life" from the title of Roy Porter and Lesley Hall's book on the history of British sexuality: Roy Porter and Lesley Hall, *The Facts of Life: The Creation of Sexual Knowledge in Britain, 1650-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

theoretical innovation. He did this by developing a coherent set of guiding principles in human sexual conduct based on concepts of Western bioscience.

His theory of a "third kind of water" is perhaps the most famous and controversial example. According to this theory, the female body produces three kinds of water inside the vagina: one by the labia, another by the clitoris, and a third from the Bartholin glands. The release of all three kinds of water, especially the "third kind," during sex would benefit the health and pleasure of both partners. Reflecting its eugenics underpinning, the theory claims that the release of this "third kind of water" at the right moment, which normally means twenty to thirty minutes into sexual intercourse as both partners achieve simultaneous orgasm, is crucial to the conception of an intelligent, fit, and healthy baby.[61] At least one other self-proclaimed "sexpert," Chai Fuyuan, author of *ABC of Sexology* (1928), supported Zhang's idea of female ejaculation.[62]

Interestingly, apart from construing women as active agents in heterosexual intercourse (e.g., by asking them to perform "vaginal breathing"), Zhang also held them responsible for reducing male homosexual behavior in China.[63] In *Sex Histories*, for instance, Zhang reasoned that since the anus lacked "momentum" and any kind of "electrolytic *qi*," it could not compete with the vagina, which was filled with "lively *qi*." As long as women took good care of their vagina and used it properly for sex, such as by complying to his theory of the "third kind of water," the "perverted," "malodorous," "meaningless," and "inhumane" behaviour of anal intercourse among men could be

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[61] See Zhang Jingsheng (張競生), "Disanzhongshui yu luanzhu ji shengji de dian he yosheng de guanxi" (第三種水與卵珠及生機的電和優生的關係) [The relationship between the third kind of water and the ovum, and, the electric vital moment and eugenics], *Xin wenhua* (新文化) [New culture] 1, no. 2 (February 1927): 23-48. Zhang claims that there is even a "fourth kind of water" produced inside the uterus/womb. See ibid., p. 26; and "Xingyu tongxin" (性育通信) [Sex education letters], *Xin wenhua* (新文化) [New culture] 1, no. 2 (February 1927): 111.

[62] Chai Fuyuan (柴福沅), *Xingxue ABC* (性學 ABC) [Sexology ABC] (Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1928), p. 42.

[63] On "vaginal breathing," see, for example, Zhang Jingsheng (張競生), "Xingbu huxi" (性部呼吸) [The breathing of sex anatomy], *Xin wenhua* (新文化) [New culture] 1, no. 4 (May 1927): 21-32; Zhang Jingsheng (張競生), "Xingbu yu dantian huxi" (性部與丹田呼吸) [The breathing of sex anatomy and the diaphragm], *Xin wenhua* (新文化) [New culture] 1, no. 5 (July 1927): 1-23.

ultimately eliminated.[64] This example powerfully illustrates the subtle ways in which male same-sex practice came to be discussed in the language of biological science: although not the direct cause of homosexuality per se, according to Zhang's theory, the properties, quality, and physiological mechanism of female reproductive anatomy was nonetheless understood as a key determinant of the prevalence of male homosexual conduct. Meanwhile, in prioritizing Western biology as a modernistic discourse for the cultural appreciation of female sexuality, his theoretical project construed Daoist alchemy as a symbol of tradition in conceptions of sexual health in Chinese culture.

Zhang ultimately sought to create a new public of truth about sex. By privileging the scientific public as the ultimate site for sexual understanding and narration, his effort made unproblematic a discourse based on *reason* to speak of sex. The autobiographical narratives that he collected in *Sex Histories* strictly cohered around this vision. Additionally, in his capacity as the founding editor of the popular magazine *New Culture*, he published translations of excerpts from Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*. The periodical soon became a venue for other kindred spirits to present the science of sexology to a popular audience and to establish their own "sexpertise." But most importantly, *New Culture* was not a forum devoted exclusively to the voice of experts; it published readers' responses to not only its most controversial essays, but also any contemporary issue that seemed relevant to the scope of the magazine, including sex-related subjects. In the pages of *New Culture*, "the speaking subject [was] also the subject of the statement."[65]

Readers, presumably many of whom resided in urban areas where the mass circulated print publications were most readily accessible, seized the opportunity to respond to Zhang's provocative writings. Some felt the need to confirm the scientific value of his work. One reader, for example, interpreted *Sex Histories* as an "outstanding scientific piece of 'sex

[64] Zhang, *Xingshi*, pp. 110-11.
[65] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 61.

research.’’’[66] Another even urged him to publish more sexological treatises like *Sex Histories* by asking “why have you published only one volume of *Sex Histories*? Have you accomplished your goal with that single contribution?”[67] Others similarly maintained that *Sex Histories* “definitely cannot be viewed as a pornographic piece of writing. Its content is all valid research material on sexual activities.”[68]

Others did not deem it necessary to justify the scientific nature of Dr. sex’s advice. From the outset, many took for granted that his words already constituted science. One woman wrote to Zhang:

> There is one part of your advice that said “the female partner should try to become excited, so that there will be a great amount of water released in the vagina. The male partner could then gradually insert his penis into her vagina…and rub it back and forth smoothly and easily.” This part, I think, is a little bit too idealistic. In fact, it cannot be accomplished: although I am a woman who has been married for over a year, if I follow your suggestion, I think it certainly will not work. This is because people who are impatient, men or women, would quickly lose sexual interest in the process. As for those who prefer to take their time, they probably would start getting tired and annoyed of the process, and this might even have a negative effect on two persons’ love for each other. What do you think?[69]

[66] Konggu (空谷), “Tongxun” (通訊) [Letters], *Xin wenhua* (新文化) [New culture] 1, no. 1 (January 1927): 49.
[67] Zhengyi (正誼), “Tongxun” (通訊) [Letters], *Xin wenhua* (新文化) [New Culture] 1, no. 1 (January 1927): 47.
[68] Shifen (世芬), “Tongxun” (通訊) [Letters], *Xin wenhua* (新文化) [New Culture] 1, no. 1 (January 1927): 51.
[69] He Zhifen (何芷分), “Xingyu tongxin” (性育通信) [Sex education letters], *Xin wenhua* 新文化 [New culture] 1, no. 2 (February 1927): 100.

Though disagreeing with Zhang's initial advice, the author still considered him as the ultimate authority on matters related to sex. In fact, the letter squarely conveyed her desire to contribute to Dr. Sex's science by providing a personal perspective, which bore a similar empirical value to the case studies collected in *Sex Histories*. Another reader named Xu Jingzai even offered Zhang his own insight concerning the proper way of "sexual breathing."[70] Others similarly respected what Zhang had to offer, but either wanted to learn more about his theory of the "third kind of water" from the perspective of men or expressed frustration with its impracticality based on their own experience in the bedroom.[71]

A number of readers directly responded to Dr. Sex's brief discussion of homosexuality. Supporting Zhang's effort in promoting sex education on scientific grounds, a lady named Su Ya argued that the prevalence of undesirable sexual behaviours would decline once adequate sex education becomes common in China. Su wrote to Zhang, "As long as sex education continues to be promoted and advanced, all the illegal sexual behaviors, such as rape, homosexuality, illegal sex, masturbation, etc., could be eliminated."[72] Miss Qin Xin, however, disagreed: "Homosexuality is not a natural sexual lifestyle. It is a kind of perversion and derailment in human sexuality, so it should not have a proper place in sex education."[73] Another reader asked, "It seems that homosexuality exists among both men and women, but could these people's 'sexual happiness' be identical to the kind of enjoyment

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[70] Xu Jingzai (徐敬仔), "Xingyu tongxin" (性育通信) [Sex education letters], *Xin wenhua* 新文化 [New culture] 1, no. 3 (March 1927): 59-63.

[71] On requests for a "male perspective," see Nan Xi (南溪), "Xingyu tongxin" (性育通信) [Sex education letters], *Xin wenhua* (新文化) [New culture] 1, no. 3 (March 1927): 66-67; and Zhi Jun (芝君), "Xingyu tongxin" (性育通信) [Sex education letters], *Xin wenhua* (新文化) [New culture] 1, no. 3 (March 1927): 73. For examples of frustrations with the impracticality of Zhang's theory, see Chang Lu (昌瓐), "Xingyu tongxin" (性育通信) [Sex education letters], *Xin wenhua* (新文化) [New culture] 1, no. 3 (March 1927): 69-70; Kuang Sheng (鄺生), "Xingyu tongxin" (性育通信) [Sex education letters], *Xin wenhua* (新文化) [New culture] 1, no. 3 (March 1927): 71.

[72] Su Ya (素雅), "'Xing' zhishi pupian le jiu meiyo 'qiangjian'" ('性'智識普遍了就沒有'強姦') [Rape will be gone after sex education has become common], *Xin wenhua* (新文化) [New culture] 1, no. 2 (February 1927): 104.

[73] Miss Qin Xin (芹心女士), "Tongxing lian'ai taolun" (同性戀愛討論) [Discussion on homosexuality], *Xin wenhua* (新文化) [New culture] 1, no. 3 (March 1927): 63-66, on p. 63.

experienced in sexual activities with the opposite sex?" Zhang simply answered no: "Other than being a personal hobby, homosexuality cannot be compared to the kind of happiness one achieves in heterosexual intercourse. Since on the physical level it cannot generate the kind of electric *qi* found in heterosexual mutual attraction, homosexuality also does not provide real satisfaction on the psychological level."[74] Zhang's response thus reminded his readers the importance of knowing and practicing the correct form of heterosexual intercourse, implying the paramount significance of following his theory of the "third kind of water" that defined women's proper sexual performance, attitude, and responsibility.

Together, the guidelines that Zhang offered in *Sex Histories* and the interactive communications that proceeded in the pages of *New Culture* reveal a distinct social justification for the consolidation of sexological science in Republican China: expert intervention. To borrow Foucault's insight on this matter again, it was a technology of power in which "One had to speak of sex; one had to speak publicly and in a manner that was not determined by the division between licit and illicit…one had to speak of it as of a thing to be not simply condemned or tolerated but *managed*, inserted into systems of utility, regulated for the greater good of all, made to function according to an optimum. Sex was not something one simply judged; it was a thing one administered."[75] Starting in the 1920s, under the influence of Dr. Sex, some Chinese urbanites began to treat heterosexuality and homosexuality as scientific categories of discussion and sexology as a serious discourse of expertise knowledge. In 1927, one individual who worked for the Fine Arts Research Society (美術研究會, *Meishu yanjiuhui*) observed that "due to the recent progress in academia, there is a new *independent* scientific field of study that surprises people. What

[74] SSD, "Xingyu tongxin" (性育通信) [Sex education letters], *Xin wenhua* (新文化) [New culture] 1, no. 3 (March 1927): 71-73.
[75] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 24 (emphasis mine).

kind of science is it? It's called sexology."[76] In particular, Zhang Jingsheng's theory of the "third kind of water" both biologized and psychologized sex. It biologized sex because it discussed people's erotic drives and motivations in the framework of the somatic functions of male and female reproductive anatomy. The theory psychologized sex by explaining people's sexual behaviour and activities in terms of what they thought and how they felt.

And the methodology underlying these processes of knowledge production was consistent with the empirical approach of contemporary Western sexology. Among the fields other founding fathers, Havelock Ellis, Sigmund Freud, Richard v. Krafft-Ebing, Iwan Block, Max Marcuse, and Magnus Hirschfeld all discussed, classified, understood, theorized, and, in essence, made knowledge claims about human sexuality by collecting and studying individual life histories. This approach bore little resemblance to the sociological-statistical method to be adopted later by Alfred Kinsey, the American sexologist who would assume an international reputation by the mid-century.[77] As reflected in their correspondences, the Chinese Dr. Sex and his readers faithfully believed that sexuality—hetero or homo—was something to be known scientifically, and that both the experts and non-experts mutually relied on one another for valuable information. The inter-subjective dynamic between the Chinese "sexperts" and their readers closely resembled the reciprocal dialogue between medical doctors and their patients in European and American *scientia sexualis*. As Harry Oosterhuis has claimed, "The new ways of understanding sexuality emerged out of a confrontation and intertwining of professional medical thinking and patients'

[76] Tang Hao (唐豪), "Lian'ai yu xing de jiqiao zhi meishuhua" (戀愛與性的技巧之美術化) [The art of the technique of love and sex], *Xing zazhi* (性雜誌) [Sex magazine] 1, no. 2 (June 1927): 1-6, on p. 1 (emphasis mine).

[77] For a discussion of the epistemic tension between Kinsey's statistical notion of sexual normality and American psychiatrists' framework of psychopathology around the mid-twentieth century, see Howard Chiang, "Effecting Science, Affecting Medicine: Homosexuality, the Kinsey Reports, and the Contested Boundaries of Psychopathology in the United States, 1948-1965," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 44, no. 4 (2008): 300-318.

self-definition."[78] Foucault's observation, again, may be of great relevance here: "It is no longer a question of saying what was done—the sexual act—and how it was done; but of reconstructing, in and around the act, the thoughts that recapitulated it, the obsessions that accompanied it, the images, desires, modulations, and quality of the pleasure that animated it. For the first time no doubt, a society has taken upon itself to solicit and hear the imparting of individual pleasures."[79] In his attempt to enlighten the public with reliable and "accurate" knowledge about proper heterosexual behavior, Zhang's sexological project gave true or false statements of homosexuality an unprecedented scope of conceptual comprehensibility in China. It is worth reemphasizing that what *scientia sexualis* produced was not so much homosexual experience per se, than the historical condition of its possibility—a system of truth-and-falsehood that structures individual identity in terms of a heterosexual-homosexual polarity.

V. Competing Authorities of Truth

The public dissemination of scientific knowledge about sexuality was a hallmark of Zhang Jingsheng's "utopian project," to borrow the phrase from Leon Rocha.[80] In pushing for the public circulation of private sexual histories, Zhang's sexological enterprise simultaneously defined certain aspects of China's sexual culture as traditional or modern, whether in terms of modes of narration (literary vs. scientific) or knowledge foundations (Daoist alchemy vs. Western biology). In this new public of truth, the nature of human desire and passion was openly debated by experts and their readers. But the cast in these debates included other public contenders as well. This section of the chapter extends the previous by highlighting another aspect of epistemic modernity crucial to the establishment

[78] Harry Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren of Nature: Krafft-Ebing, Psychiatry, and the Making of Sexual Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 212.
[79] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 63.
[80] Leon Rocha, "Zhang Jingsheng's Utopian Project" (paper presented at the 81st Annual Meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine, Rochester, New York, 11-13 April 2008).

of *scientia sexualis* in Republican China: a public platform on which authorities of truth competed.

Whereas a great majority of the urban mass idolized Zhang by calling him *the* "Dr. Sex," other mainstream scholars publicly gainsaid his teaching. These critics ridiculed Zhang's sexological work mainly for its lack of scientific integrity. The author of an article in *Sex Magazine* called Zhang's sexological theory "fraudulent science [偽科學 *weikexue*]," because Zhang "does not even understand the most basic workings of human physiology."[81] Even though Zhou Jianren (1888-1984), the youngest brother of Lu Xun, had praised Zhang's first two books for their sound philosophical argument, he, too, attacked Zhang's theory of the "third kind of water" immediately after the publication of *Sex Histories*. Author of numerous popular life-science books and an editor at the Shanghai Commercial Press, Zhou argued that Zhang's theory did not correctly account for the biological process of ovulation in women's menstrual cycle. Zhou noted that if the female body produces an ovum only on a periodic basis, Zhang's advice for women to voluntarily release an egg and the "third kind of water" in each sexual intercourse was evidently "pseudo-scientific" at best. Another sex educator, Yang Guanxiong, even described Zhang as a public figure destructive to the entire sex education movement. For key interlocutors in the sex education movement like Zhou and Yang who were familiar with contemporary developments in the Western natural sciences, the most problematic aspect of Zhang Jingsheng's sexology was its inaccurate grounding in human biology.[82]

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[81] Han (瀚), "Wuhu! Zhang Jingsheng de luanzhu" (嗚呼! 張競生的卵珠) [Woohoo! Zhang Jingsheng's Ovum], *Xing zazhi* (性雜誌) [Sex magazine] 1, no. 1 (April 1927): 1-3, on p. 2. Another writer for the periodical devoted twelve pages to discussing "what the third kind of water exactly is" and concluded that "Professor Zhang's understanding of the third kind of water as the secretion of the Bartholin glands is obviously incorrect." See Qianqian (倩倩), "Disan zhongshui de yanjiu" (第三種水的研究) [Research on the third kind of water], *Xing zazhi* (性雜誌) [Sex magazine] 1, no. 2 (June 1927): 1-12, on p. 10.

[82] See, for example, Zhang Jingsheng (張競生), "Da Zhou Jianren xiansheng 'Guanyu *Xingshi* de jijü hua'" (答周建人先生 《關於〈性史〉的幾句話》) [A response to Mr. Zhou Jianren's "Few Words on *Sex Histories*"], *Yiban* (一般) [Ordinary magazine] (November 1926), reprinted in *Zhang Jingsheng wenji* (張競生文集) [Collected works of Zhang Jingsheng], ed. Jiang Zhongxiao (江中孝), 2 vols., v. 2 (Guangzhou: Guangzhou

Out of the many critics of Zhang, the most vociferous was probably Pan Guangdan (1899-1967), the famous Chinese eugenicist who also considered himself a loyal devotee of Havelock Ellis's sexological oeuvre. Pan received his bachelor's and master's degrees in biological science, respectively, at Dartmouth College in 1924 and Columbia University in 1926. In light of his high academic performance, Pan was conducted into the Phi Beta Kappa honor society upon his graduation from Dartmouth.[83] His educational experience in New York coincided with the peak of the American eugenics movement, the center of which was located in the upper-class resort area of Cold Spring Harbor on Long Island. In 1904, the Station for the Experimental Evolution was established there under the directorship of Charles Davenport with funds from the Carnegie Institution of Washington.[84] In the summer of 1923 and between his undergraduate and graduate studies, Pan visited Davenport's Eugenics Record Office (founded in 1910) to learn more about human heredity research.

After returning to China in 1926, Pan did not conduct experimental research in biology (given his interest in eugenics, experimentation with human breeding was of course not an option). Like most European and American eugenicists, he spent most of his time studying the ethno-social implications of sex instead by constructing extended family pedigrees and collecting other forms of inheritance data.[85] His *Research on the Pedigrees of Chinese Actors* (1941) is an exemplary outcome of his eugenics research.[86] Like the

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chubanshe, 1998), p. 420-422; Zhou Jianren (周建人), "Da Zhang Jingsheng xiansheng" (答張競生先生) [Response to Mr. Zhang Jingsheng], *Yiban* (一般) [Ordinary magazine] (November 1926), reprinted in *Zhang Jingsheng wenji* (張競生文集) [Collected works of Zhang Jingsheng], 2 vols., v. 2, pp. 423-426; and Yang Guanxiong (楊冠雄), *Xing jiaoyufa* (性教育法) [Doctrines of sex education], (Shanghai: Liming shuju, 1930), pp. 150 and 166. The only biography of Zhou to date is in Chinese: see Yang Dexian (楊德銑), *Zhou Jianren pingzhuan* (周建人評傳) [Biography of Zhou Jianren] (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1991).

[83] Lü, *Pan Guangdan tuzhuan*, p. 46.

[84] Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), p. 45.

[85] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, pp. 45-46.

[86] Pan Guangdan (潘光旦), *Zhongguo lingren xieyuan zhi yanjiu* (中國伶人血緣之研究) [Research on the Pedigrees of Chinese Actors] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1941), reprinted in *Pan Guangdan wenji* (潘光旦文

Anglo-American eugenicists whom he tried to emulate, Pan also prioritized the making of an "eugenic-minded" public.[87] He did this by delivering numerous lectures around the country and publishing extensively in both academic journals and the popular press to promote his positive vision of eugenics.[88] The Chinese public in general viewed him as a trustworthy intellectual in light of his impressive academic credentials. Through Pan, "eugenics" quickly became a household term in China in the late 1920s and 1930s.[89]

Having the same intellectual worries as Zhou Jianren, Pan regarded Zhang Jingsheng's writings on human sexuality as "fake science." Pan was particularly disdainful of anything Zhang had to say about the relationship between sex and eugenics, because he despised Zhang's lack of formal training in biological science. Even though Zhou, like Zhang, had a background in philosophy, his writings on evolutionary biology proved his erudition in the life sciences. On the contrary, in Pan's view, Zhang's ideas about human sexuality demonstrated an apparent failure in communicating principles of human biology. Responding to Zhang's theory of a "third kind of water," Pan remarked in 1927:

集) [Collected works of Pan Guangdan], 14 vols., v. 2 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1994), pp. 73-303. Pan has presented a similar view concerning Chinese musicians in an earlier article: see Pan Guangdan (潘光旦), "Lujiang Huangshi de yinyuecai" (鷺江黃氏的音樂才) [The musical talent of Huang's in Lujiang], *Yousheng yuekan* (優生月刊) [Eugenics monthly] 2, no. 2 (15 February 1932), reprinted in *Pan Guangdan wenji* (潘光旦文集) [Collected works of Pan Guangdan], 14 vols., v. 8 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1994), pp. 409-410. See also the impressive series of pedigrees that he constructed but never published in 1937 and 1938: Pan Guangdan (潘光旦), *Cunren xhuwu lishi renwu shixi biaogao* (存人書屋歷史人物世系表搞) [Draft of pedigrees of historical figures] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1941), reprinted in *Pan Guangdan wenji* (潘光旦文集) [Collected works of Pan Guangdan], 14 vols., v. 4 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1994).

[87] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, p. 60.

[88] For Pan, individual and social health depended first and foremost in heredity and not behavior. He encouraged marriage and breeding among those deemed genetically superior, which would in turn strengthen the health of the nation. Both Frank Dikötter's study on the Chinese conception of race and Ruth Rogaski's book on health and hygiene in Tianjin have situated the significance of Pan's eugenic visions within the larger social and cultural expressions of modernization during the Republican period. See Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*; and Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity*, pp. 225-253. See also Tsu, *Failure, Nationalism, and Literature*, pp. 98-166; Lee, *Revolution of the Heart*, pp. 186-217; Sakamoto, "The Cult of 'Love and Eugenics'"; Wang, *Jiaoyu zhuanxing zhi jing*, pp. 197-232; Gregory E. Guldin, *The Saga of Anthropology in China: From Malinowski to Moscow to Mao* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994); Lee, "Pan Guangdan and the Concept of Minzu"; Chung, *Struggle for National Survival*; and Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation*.

[89] Frank Dikötter, "Eugenics in Republican China," *Republican China* 15 (1989): 1-17.

> [Zhang] claims that he has discovered a "third kind of water," but we do not know what it is. He has indicated that it simply refers to the secretion of the Bartholin glands. If that is the case, then it is really nothing new to any educated person who has some familiarity with the physiology of sex….One of the functions of the Bartholin secretions is to decrease resistance during sexual intercourse. The amount of secretion increases as the female partner becomes more aroused, so the quantity of secretion depends entirely on the intensity of her sexual desire and arousal...Since this function is present in most females, one wonders on what statistical basis does [Zhang] claim that women in our nation usually do not release this third kind of water. When he claims that this kind of water is more typically released in the body of European urban women, one is equally suspicious about the statistical evidence on which he relies, if there is any at all. If he has none yet still speaks so confidently in these words, his intention in making these unsupported claims is dubious.[90]

Pan subsequently attacked Zhang's understanding of eugenics by citing the statistical data collected by Charles Davenport and Francis Galton. Pan even accused Zhang for having overlooked Galton's work completely: "Since the Englishman Francis Galton published his *Hereditary Genius* in 1869, the book has proved to be immensely useful; and the recent developments in intelligent testing have grown exponentially. Why doesn't [Zhang] consult these works a bit more? He probably is not even aware of the existence of these studies; one

[90] Pan Guangdan (潘光旦), "Jinri zhi xingjiaoyu yu xingjiaoyuzhe" (今日之性教育與性教育者) [Today's sex education and sex educator], *Shishi xinbao xuedeng* (時事新報學燈) [Current events newsletter] (5 May, 24 June, and 14 June 1927), reprinted in *Pan Guangdan wenji* (潘光旦文集) [Collected works of Pan Guangdan], 14 vols., v. 1 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1994), pp. 401-412, on pp. 402-403.

really cannot understand why someone would speak about eugenics so elaborately without some basic familiarity with these works."[91]

In his reply, Zhang showed no acquiescence. He pointed out that Pan's comments "have in fact proven the scientific aspect of my theory. The third kind of water is, of course, something present in every woman…I am merely bringing people's attention to this kind of water and teach them how to release it."[92] Zhang even described Pan's recourse to the work of Francis Galton as evidence of poor research and understanding of eugenics: "In terms of heredity and eugenics, [Pan's] knowledge in these subjects is even more limited. He is familiar with Francis Galton's work, but Galton's theory does not seem well-grounded…Three years ago, I had already indicated in my book, *A Way of Life Based on Beauty*, that Galton's eugenic theory is not real science, but what we want is real science…Please allow me to invite [Pan] to study my work more carefully in addition to Galton's."[93] To Zhang, Pan was the one who lacked scientific and scholarly integrity.

This public correspondence between Pan and Zhang offers a window onto the ways in which, in the 1920s and 1930s, experts defined and debated the boundaries of a scientific discourse of sexuality. An important aspect was the mutual contestation of the credibility and validity of expertise, a regular aspect of any scientific discipline. For Pan, formal training in the biological sciences represented a crucial feature of sexological credibility. Even if an expert lacked this credential, sexological competence could still be achieved by acquiring Western scientific knowledge faithfully and refraining from making unsubstantiated empirical claims about sex. This is why he regarded Zhou Jianren as a better equipped sex educator and a more respectable scientist than Zhang Jingsheng. To Zhang, Pan had obviously misinterpreted what he was trying to do. In fact, Pan's oversight

[91] Ibid., p. 406.
[92] Zhang Jingsheng (張競生), "Youchu yige guaitou" (又出一個怪頭) [The appearance of another weirdo], *Xin wenhua* (新文化) [New culture] 1, no. 4 (May 1927): 126-128, on p. 126.
[93] Ibid., p. 127.

of Zhang's earlier scholarly output indicated a weakness of Pan's research and scholarship. In turn, Zhang even encouraged Pan to study his own writings more carefully in addition to the work of foreign scientists like Galton. Since he had already built a foundation of sexological expertise, Dr. Sex believed that this foundation should be studied, or at least acknowledged, by new incomers to the field, including Pan.

The debates between Zhang and his critics thus reveal the larger evolving context in which homosexuality became a matter of scientific discussion. This contested terrain of authority denotes a public platform on which self-proclaimed experts in sexology competed and challenged each other's scientific legitimacy. By scientific "legitimacy," they considered a host of criteria, including academic credentials (whether someone was trained in the humanities or sciences and in what discipline), methodological approach, accuracy in understanding and communicating the specific contents of Western scientific knowledge, and evidence of candid research experience (including familiarity with previous scholarship), among others. In this regard, East Asian sexology, as a regionalized globally circulating discourse marked by the trends and currents of epistemic modernity, reflected the broader stakes of scientific disciplinarity looming over Chinese culture at the time.[94]

Similar to the famous 1923 "science versus metaphysics" controversy, debates over sexual knowledge contributed to the increasingly hegemonic intellectual agenda in which the interrogation of the very meaning of science became a preoccupation unique to the early Republican period. In a double move of sort, the growing currency of debates on scientism—itself a new symbol of modernity—contextualized the gradual process by which the category of homosexuality absorbed the dominant frame of thinking about same-sex

[94] On the development of sexology in modern Japan, see Gregory Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600-1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Sabine Früstück, *Colonizing Sex: Sexology and Social Control in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Michiko Suzuki, *Becoming Modern Women: Love and Female Identity in Prewar Japanese Literature and Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

desire in the twentieth century.[95] In China and abroad, the competing authorizations of truth established sexology as a historically-specific configuration of contested knowledge. Deriving particular pleasures from the scientific analysis of sexual confession, the diverging opinions and claims to disciplinary propriety created a heterogeneous—and perhaps even ambiguous—space in which, echoing Foucault's own suspicion, the distinction between *ars erotica* (under which Foucault himself initially categorized China) and *scientia sexualis* eventually dissolved.[96]

VI. Intellectual Translation and Disciplinary Consolidation

In addition to the invention of a new public of truth and a contested terrain of authority, the grounding of *scientia sexualis* in Republican China involved a third endeavor: the consolidation of its disciplinarity through the translation and reinforcement of specialized authority across culture. The novelty of Zhang Jingsheng's *Sex Histories* was highlighted in its incitement of a new Chinese discourse in which the truth of people's sexual experience was negotiated in public; but the book's cultural legacy and significance was even more pronounced in the way it reproduced the social dynamics between the observer (the sexologist) and the observed (sexual desire and behavior) that characterized Western sexual science. The criticisms leveled against him, by Pan Guangdan and others, broadened the purview of such dynamics of relations of power. They made public not only people's sex life, but also each other's in/competence to speak about the scientific nature of sex. By the 1930s, through translating, reinforcing, and re-contextualizing the cultural authority of

[95] For other analyses of the debates between Zhang Jingsheng and people like Zhou and Pan on the proper meaning of "sex science" and "sex education," see Leary, "Sexual Modernism in China," pp. 236-80; Chung, *Struggle for National Survival*; and Wang, *Jiaoyu zhuanxing zhi jing*, pp. 267-74. On the problem of scientism as a category of historical analysis, see my discussion in chapter 2 of this dissertation. On "scientific worldview" in Republican China, see, for example, Wang Hui, "Scientific Worldview, Culture Debates, and the Reclassification of Knowledge in Twentieth-Century China," *boundary 2* 35 (2008), pp. 125-55.

[96] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, pp. 70-71. For further reflections on the problem of this distinction, see Leon Rocha, "Scientia Sexualis versus Ars Erotica: Foucault, van Gulluk, Needham," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 42 (2011): 328-343.

sexology, Chinese sex scientists accomplished beyond disclosing sexual truths and the contested nature of their "sexpertise" in public: they introduced, on the level of epistemology, a new *style of reasoning* about sexuality and, in the domain of social sphere, an unprecedented forum of intellectual debates that defined their project as culturally relevant, socially legitimate, and disciplinarily independent.

By the point where *Sex Histories* had undergone numerous reprints and could be found in almost every corner of Shanghai and Beijing, it seemed urgent to sex educators that the study of sexuality required a more rigorous scientific grounding. This drew the line between Dr. Sex, who was primarily concerned with popularizing his "theory of the third kind of water," and his critics, who increasingly viewed his work as narrowed and unscientific. Again, this was best exemplified by the difference between Zhang Jingsheng and Pan Guangdan in their approach to the empirical study of sex, including homosexuality.

Despite their shared interest in emulating Havelock Ellis, Pan has been considered by many to this day as a more pivotal figure in pioneering the introduction of Western sexology to China. For one, Zhang rarely offered insights concerning human sexuality other than heterosexual intercourse. In 1929, the author of an article, "The Problem of Same-Sex Love," explained that he wrote the piece to illuminate "the most unimaginable secret of sex—homosexuality," since even "Professor Zhang's discussion of sex never falls outside the boundaries of male-female sexual relations."[97] In contrast, Pan often discussed a wide range of "deviant" sexual practices in writing and lectures. For critics of Dr. Sex, investigation into diverse topics of human sexuality not limited to "normal" heterosexual practice was a cornerstone of European sexology that he had obviously missed. Zhang's work, in short, pushed for the normalization of heterosexual monogamy; the work of other sexologists including Pan achieved "the setting apart of the 'unnatural' as a specific dimension in the

[97] Yang, "Tongxing'ai de wenti," p. 403.

field of sexuality." Diverging from Dr. Sex, their writings made room "for [marginal] figures, scarcely noticed in the past, to step forward and speak, to make the difficult confession of what they were."[98]

In terms of quantity, Pan also translated more Western sexological texts. Although claiming that the facts and autobiographical narratives he solicited from readers formed the scientific basis of his sexological writing, Zhang translated relatively few foreign sexological works into Chinese. And even though Zhang frequently cited Ellis,[99] Pan translated at least three monograph-length studies by Ellis, including the entire manuscript of *Psychology of Sex: A Manual for Students*.[100] Pan was so intrigued by Ellis's discussion of sexual inversion that at the end of his annotated translation of *Psychology of Sex*, he even included an appendix on "Examples of Homosexuality in Chinese Literature."[101] For the Ming-Qing period, Pan listed twelve cases of male homosexuality and one case of female homosexuality.[102] Other classics by prominent turn-of-the-century European sexologists such as Marie Stopes, August Forel, and Solomon Herbert were also translated into Chinese, and they provoked similar public interests on the topic of same-sex affect.[103] This was an endeavor beyond the intellectual concerns of Dr. Sex.

Apart from topical diversity and the actual number of translated text, Chinese sex scientists also valued the role of historical information in the cultural authority of sexology. If the signature characteristic of sexology for Dr. Sex was merely the empirical understanding

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[98] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 39.

[99] One should also note that as the editor of *New Culture*, Zhang did publish several translated excerpts of Ellis's work (by himself or others) in the journal. One of these is an article on female homosexuality taken from Ellis's *Sexual Inversion*. See Xie Se, trans., "Nü xuesheng de tongxing ai." But in general, Zhang's effort in translating Ellis's work was neither as comprehensive nor as extensive as Pan's.

[100] Pan Guangdan (潘光旦), trans., *Xing xinlixue* (性心理學) [Psychology of Sex] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1946), reprinted in *Pan Guangdan wenji* (潘光旦文集) [Collected works of Pan Guangdan], 14 vols., v. 12 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1994), pp. 197-714.

[101] For an extensive study of this appendix, see Kang, *Obsession*, pp. 52-8.

[102] Pan, *Xing xinlixue*, p. 701.

[103] See, for example, Hu Buoken (胡伯墾), trans., *Women de shenti* (我們的身體) [Our body] (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1933); Zhang Xichen (章錫琛), ed., *Xindaode taolunji* (性道德討論集) [On sexual morality] (Shanghai: Liangxi tushuguan, 1925); and Zhu Jianxia (朱劍霞), trans., *Xing zhi shengli* (性之生理) [The physiology and psychology of sex] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1928), see esp. pp. 108-13.

of sexual behavior through compiling and collecting actual life histories, it also involved, for Pan, the rendition of historical data on sexual variations so to better illumine their relevance in contemporary Chinese society. Elsewhere, throughout the 1920s and 1930s, other writers followed Pan in looking back on same-sex practice in ancient societies (most notably Greek) and discussing its implications for the modernization and nationalization of China.[104] Though both valued empiricism, Zhang and Pan adopted contrasting approaches to emulating Havelock Ellis: whereas Zhang was more concerned with collecting and responding to the contemporary "stories" or "cases" that people had provided him about their sexual experience, Pan devoted more effort to translating Ellis' work, a project supplemented by his own historical, sociological, and ethnological insights.

Although many Chinese sexologists considered Havelock Ellis to be the preeminent European sex scientist whom they tried to emulate, he was not the only role model. For instance, Pan also introduced Freud's view of human sexuality to the Chinese public. If American eugenicists like Davenport paid no attention to Freud,[105] Pan certainly embraced Freudian psychoanalysis wholeheartedly and used it as a legitimate scientific theory to explain sexual desire. In his psycho-biographical study of the late Ming poetess Feng Xiaoqing (1595-1612), Pan psychoanalyzed Feng's writings and concluded that she had narcissistic tendencies.[106] Other Sinologists have viewed this effort as an early example of

[104] My sources are replete with examples of this sort. See, for instance, Cheng Hao (程浩), *Jiezhi shengyu de wenti* (節制生育的問題) [The problem of birth control], (Shanghai: Yadong tushuguan, 1925), pp. 148-153; Zhang Dongmin (張東民), *Xing de chongbai* (性的崇拜) [The worship of sex], (Shanghai: Beixin shuju, 1927), pp. 46-47; and Bin (彬), trans., "Tongxing'ai" (同性愛) [Same-sex love], *Xing kexue* (性科學) [Sex science] 1, no. 2 (January 1936): 92-94.

[105] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, p. 53.

[106] Pan initially wrote a draft of this essay as a term paper for a history survey course taught by Liang Qichao at Qinghua University. See Nicole Huang, *Women, War, Domesticity: Shanghai Literature and Popular Culture of the 1940s* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 181. He later revised it and published it as a book with additional materials in 1929 after returning from the United States. Pan Guangdan (潘光旦), *Feng Xiaoqin: Yijian yinglian zhi yanjiu* (馮小青: 一件影戀之研究) [Feng Xiaoqin: A study of unconscious desire] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1941), reprinted in *Pan Guangdan wenji* (潘光旦文集) [Collected works of Pan Guangdan], 14 vols., v. 1 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1994), pp. 1-66.

how psychoanalysis was transferred to China in the early twentieth century.[107] According to Haiyan Lee, "In [the hands of Western-educated May Fourth intellectuals], psychoanalysis was divorced from its clinical setting and retooled as a critical hermeneutic strategy. It served the enlightenment agenda of displacing both the Confucian moral discourse of sex/lust and the cultivational discourse of health/generativity with a scientific discourse of sexuality."[108]

Indeed, Pan systematically used psychoanalysis in his writings as a modernizing scientific tool for diagnosing the sexual problems of Chinese society. In his annotated translation of the chapter on "Sexual Education" from Ellis's *Sex in Relation to Society* (the sixth volume of *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*), Pan, in a footnote, recapitulated the idea of a five-stage progression of psychosexual maturation that he first articulated in his psycho-biographical study of Feng: "'primary identification between mother and son,' 'maternal desire,' 'narcissism,' 'homosexuality,' and 'heterosexuality.'"[109] Two years later, in an article titled "Sexuality Today," Pan reiterated an identical pathway of psychosexual development: "it is necessary for the development of sexual desire to go through several stages: (1) primary identification, (2) the objectification of the mother's body and the desire for her, (3) the realization of self-awareness and narcissism, (4) homosexuality as a result of the expansion of narcissism, and (5) heterosexuality as the result of the maturation of sexual physiology and sexual psychology."[110] When his translation of Ellis's *Psychology of Sex*

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[107] Tsu, *Failure, Nationalism, and Literature*, pp. 98-166; Lee, *Revolution of the Heart*, pp. 186-217. On the importation of Freudian psychoanalysis in early twentieth-century China, see also Jingyuan Zhang, *Psychoanalysis in China: Literary Transformations, 1919-1949* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Dikötter, *Sex, Culture, and Modernity*; Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Wendy Larson, *From Ah Q to Lei Feng: Freud and Revolutionary Spirit in 20th Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

[108] Lee, *Revolution of the Heart*, p. 189.

[109] Pan Guangdan (潘光旦), trans., *Xing de Jiaoyu* (性的教育) [Sexual education] (Shanghai: Qinnian xiehue shuju, 1934), reprinted in *Pan Guangdan wenji* (潘光旦文集) [Collected works of Pan Guangdan], 14 vols., v. 12 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1994), pp. 1-99, on p. 98.

[110] Pan Guangdan (潘光旦), "Xing'ai zai jinri" (性愛在今日) [Sexuality today], *Huanian* (華年) 5, nos. 45, 49,

appeared in 1946, he would refer to this process of psychosexual development again to explain the single case of female homosexuality he included in the appendix.[111]

In his 1910 revision of *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), Freud added the following footnote on homosexuality:

> In all the cases [of sexual inversion] we have examined we have established the fact that the future inverts, in the earliest years of their childhood, pass through a phase of very intense but short-lived fixation to a woman (usually their mother), and that, after leaving this behind, they identify themselves with a woman and take *themselves* as their sexual object. That is to say, they proceed from a narcissistic basis, and look for a young man who resembles themselves and whom *they* may love as their mother loved *them.*[112]

Therefore, it seems that, from the 1920s to the late 1940s, Pan endorsed Freud's explanation of homosexuality rather faithfully. Pan insisted throughout his publications that psychosexual maturation "is like a stream of water, and two changes could occur in the middle of this process: arrested or reversed development."[113] Readers who found Pan's psychoanalytic explanations intriguing, or even convincing, would thus interpret same-sex desire in Freudian terms as an arrested or reversed phase of sexual maturation, and as an inadequately developed psychological condition due to early childhood experience. As such, the absorption of the socio-cultural meaning of "same-sex desire" by the scientific category

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and 50 (21 November, 19 December, and 26 December 1936), reprinted in *Pan Guangdan wenji* (潘光旦文集) [Collected works of Pan Guangdan], 14 vols., v. 9 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1994), pp. 370-387, on pp. 375-376.

111 Pan, *Xing xinlixue*, pp. 705-706.

112 Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (1905; New York: Basic Books, 2000), pp. 10-11, n. 1.

113 Pan Guangdan, "Xing'ai zai jinri," p. 376.

of "homosexuality" was in part enabled by the new epistemological framework of psychoanalysis.

Other medical and scientific experts shared a similar view. In 1936, after returning from her psychiatric training at Johns Hopkins University, the practicing gynecologist Gui Zhiliang wrote in her widely read *The Life of a Woman* that "homosexuality is a kind of intermediate or preparatory stage to heterosexuality; it is necessary for people to go through it." According to Gui, those who develop "normally" would "pass" (過度, *guodu*) the stage of homosexuality, but others would "get blocked" (阻礙, *zuai*) or "stop" (停止, *tingzhi*) in the process and express "abnormal homosexuality" (不普通的同性戀愛, *buputong de tongxing'lianai*). Similar to what Freud argued as early as in 1903, Gui did not think that homosexuality was necessarily "treatable" or "correctable."[114]

Unlike Zhang Jingsheng's somatic-oriented interpretations of sexuality, the transmission of Freudian psychoanalysis in the 1920s and 1930s offered a strictly *psychogenic* way of explaining same-sex desire. Sexologists such as Gui and Pan were no longer "concerned solely with what the subject wished to hide," which defined Dr. Sex's preoccupation, "but with what was hidden from himself."[115] And by implication, they maintained their power —constituted not in advance, of course, but in a hermeneutic function, or "a discourse of truth on the basis of its decipherment"—to verify the truth of sex by

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[114] Gui Zhiliang (桂質良), *Nüren zhi yisheng* (女人之一生) [The Life of a Woman] (Beijing: Zhengzhong shuju, 1936), pp. 63-66. But it seems that Gui did not entirely agree with Freud on the interpretations of other types of psychopathology. This is most evident in her textbook, Gui Zhiliang (桂質良), *Xiandai jingshen bingxue* (現代精神病學) [Modern psychopathology] (Shanghai: Xinyue shudian, 1932). In a 1903 interview with the Vienna newspaper *Die Zeit*, Freud indicated his "firm conviction that homosexuals must not be treated as sick people, for a perverse orientation is far from being a sickness." Cited in Henry Abelove, "Freud, Male Homosexuality, and the Americans," in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 381-93, on p. 382. Similarly, Arnold Davidson has historicized and analyzed very carefully Freud's view of homosexuality in *Three Essays*: "what we ought to conclude, given the logic of Freud's argument and his radically new conceptualization…is precisely that cases of inversion can no longer be considered pathologically abnormal." See Arnold Davidson, "How to Do the History of Psychoanalysis: A Reading of Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*," in *The Emergence of Sexuality*, pp. 66-92, on p. 79.

[115] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 66.

rendering the subject's confession incomplete.[116] The making of a new science of sexuality both produced and relied on the psychoanalytic codification of their authority as the inducer, interpreter, interrogator, and ultimate arbiter of truth about people's libidinal drive. Serving as a new conceptualizing and modernizing tool, psychoanalysis emerged as an important cultural technology of the Republican period that made homosexuality an important candidate of scientific thinking, a subject whose truth-and-falsehood became debatable among doctors and scientists of sex.

One of the major debates on homosexuality in the 1920s and 1930s concerned the question of whether it could be treated or cured. Besides Gui, many other participants of the debate who had either translated foreign (Western or Japanese) sexological texts into Chinese or written about sex from a "scientific" viewpoint themselves, did not consider homosexuality necessarily curable. In an article that appeared in the journal *Sex Science* (性科學, *Xing kexue*) in 1936, for instance, the translator Chang Hong defined "sexual perversion" as "those expressions of sexual desire that neither accompanied male-female love nor established procreation as its ultimate goal."[117] The author presented homosexuality as one among the many existing types of sexual perversion (others include bestiality, fetishism, sadism, and masochism), and remarked that "if a man expresses both feminine and homosexual tendencies, no natural treatment is effective. At the same time, there is no pharmaceutical cure for this kind of situation."[118] Despite this explicit acknowledgement that no effective treatment of homosexuality was available, the article still construed same-sex desire and behavior as undesirable, especially by emphasizing its categorical similarity to other kinds of sexual perversion like sadism, fetishism, and bestiality.

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[116] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 67.

[117] Chang Hong (長虹), trans., "Biantai xingyu yu qi liaofa" (變態性欲與其療法) [Sexual perversion and its treatment], *Xing kexue* (性科學) [Sex science] 2, no. 1 (May 1936): 3-7, on p. 4. The top of the article only indicates that this is a translation of a piece originally written by a German medical doctor.

[118] Chang, "Biantai xingyu," p. 6.

Chang's translated piece offered just one among the many perspectives circulating in a thematic issue of *Sex Science* devoted to the topic of homosexuality. Another translated article with the title "Can Real Homosexuality be Cured?" advocated a less stigmatizing position. The author claimed that "recent scholars have come to believe that the nature of homosexuality is inborn, congenital, and immutable. The only situation in which an individual's homosexual desire could be changed is if it is an 'acquired' or 'fake' homosexuality. I agree with this perspective."[119] Elsewhere in the same issue, treatment methods for homosexuality such as surgical castration or psychological hypnosis were often cast in a highly suspicious light.[120]

By and large, however, essays in this thematic issue of *Sex Science* emphasized the likelihood for homosexuality to be acquired. While acknowledging that most experts had agreed on the inborn nature of homosexual tendencies, they nonetheless paid more attention to the prevalence of homosexual behavior in unisex settings, such as in schools, dormitories, factories, military units, prisons, etc.[121] Yang Kai, a doctor who earned a medical degree at the University of Hamburg in Germany, noted that the number of homosexuals "among female students, employees, and workers is especially large in the present time." At the same time in recognizing that the main cause of this "perversion" is "inherited," Yang still attributed the high frequency of homosexual practice to "habits and the environment."[122]

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[119] Jian (建), trans., "Zhenzheng de tongxing'ai keyi zhiliao ma?" (真正的同性愛可以治療嗎?) [Can real homosexuality be cured?], *Xing kexue* (性科學) [Sex science] 2, no. 4 (November 1936): 4-8, on p. 6. The article only indicates that this is a translation of a piece originally written by an American medical doctor.

[120] Mo (漠), trans., "Tongxing'ai de yanjiu he fangzhi" (同性愛的研究何防止) [The study and prevention of homosexuality], *Xing kexue* (性科學) [Sex science] 2, no. 4 (November 1936): 15-26, on pp. 23-24.

[121] See Ping (平), trans., "Jiachong huo xide de tongxing'ai de tezhi" (假充或習得的同性愛的特質) [The characteristics of fake or acquired homosexuality], *Xing kexue* (性科學) [Sex science] 2, no. 4 (November 1936): 9-11; and Hong (洪), trans., "Nüxing de tongxing'ai he xingde biantai" (女性的同性愛和性的變態) [Female homosexuality and sexual perversion], *Xing kexue* (性科學) [Sex science] 2, no. 4 (November 1936): 13-15. On sexuality in the prison environment, see also Xi Tuo (西拓), trans. and intro., "Meiguo qiufan de xingshenghuo" (美國囚犯的性生活) [The sexual lives of American prisoners], *Xing kexue* (性科學) [Sex science] 4, no. 1 (July 1937): 51-57.

[122] Yang Kai (楊開), "Xing de diandao'zheng—tongxing'ai" (性的顛倒症—同性愛) [Sexual inversion—homosexuality], *Xing kexue* (性科學) [Sex science] 2, no. 4 (November 1936): 11-13, on p. 12.

This was congruent with the impression one would get from reading the popular sexological handbook, *ABC of Sexology*, in which the author Chai Fuyuan noted that male same-sex love is more prevalent in schools, the military, and temples, and that the incidence of female homosexuality is especially high in the work place and factories.[123] According to another lengthy (translated) article in this special issue of *Sex Science*, "The Study and Prevention of Homosexuality,"

> The question of how homosexuality can be prevented is an empty question. Since homosexuality is widely recognized as a congenital condition, preventive methods are certainly very ineffective. But a hygienic social environment could suppress the occurrence of acquired, immature, or temporary homosexuality. Schools should be the primarily targets of hygienic intervention, because this could prevent the spreading of homosexuality on campuses.[124]

But this must be done with great caution, as the opening essay of the forum warned its reader: if the surveillance policies of school dormitories are too strict and rigid, students might become "overly sensitive to sexual stimuli," and this would lead to a situation in which students are actually "more likely to engage in masturbation and homosexuality."[125] Hence, most of the articles in this special issue of *Sex Science* recommended more opportunities of opposite-sex social interaction as a way to control or prevent homosexuality, implying that most same-sex erotic behaviors are perhaps more correctable than assumed.[126]

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[123] Chai, *Xingxue ABC*, p. 117.
[124] Mo, "Tongxing'ai de yanjiu," p. 23.
[125] Kong Kongzhang 空空章, trans., "Xuesheng jian tongxing'ai yu fumu shizhang de jiaoyu" (學生間同性愛與父母師長的教育) [Homosexuality among students and the involvement of parents and teachers in education], *Xing kexue* (性科學) [Sex science] 2, no. 4 (November 1936): 2-4, on p. 3.
[126] There is evidence that the readers of these sexological writings very much shared this view. See, for

Correctable or untreatable, inborn or acquired, same-sex desire was now indisputably discussed with the Western psychiatric style of reasoning. The acquisition and articulation of this novel style of reasoning gave same-sex desire a new epistemological grounding in twentieth-century China. In 1932, Gui Zhiliang, author of *The Life of a Woman*, stated in her book, *Modern Psychopathology*, that "Some experts in psychopathology claim that homosexuality is the cause of paranoia...but although homosexuality could possibly induce paranoia, it does not have to be the sole cause of it."[127] Gui's allusion to the famous Freudian association of male homosexuality with paranoia revealed that the Western psychiatric style of reasoning completely exhausted the linguistic meaning and comprehensibility of same-sex eroticism in the context of this knowledge claim by the early 1930s. When twentieth-century Chinese commentators used "homosexuality" as a conceptual blueprint for understanding same-sex relations, they had completely displaced any of its non-pathological connotations in the pre-modern context. What they translated was not merely the vocabulary of homosexuality itself, but a whole new style of reasoning descending from Western psychiatric thought about sexual perversion and psychopathology.

It should be noted that sex was not new to conceptions of health in traditional Chinese medicine. Concerns about the dangers of undisciplined sexual activities can be found in the very opening chapter of the *Inner Canon's Basic Questions*:

> The people of archaic times who understood the Way modeled [their lives] on [the rhythms of] yin and yang, and accorded with the regularities imposed by disciplines [of self-cultivation]. Their eating and drinking were controlled, their activity and rest were regular, and they did not exhaust themselves capriciously….

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example, Miss Qin Xin, "Tongxing lian'ai taolun," pp. 64-6.

[127] Gui, *Xiandai jingshen bingxue*, p. 32.

> People of our times are not like that. Wine is their drink, caprice their norm. Drunken they enter the chamber of love, through lust using up their seminal essence (*jing*), through desire dispersing their inborn vitality (*zhenqi*)…Devoted to the pleasures of the heart and mind, they reject the bliss that accompanies cultivation of the vital forces.[128]

Unlike the Western psychiatric style of reasoning about sexual disorders, this passage makes it evident that traditional Chinese medical thinking conceptualized sexual desire and activity in quantitative terms, conveying a general rubric of "sexual economy."[129] This economy of sex follows the idea of an orderly life, stressed by medical scholars since the first millennium, that requires strict moral self-regulation and a spiritual life lived in harmony with the environment. In this cosmically ordered world of imperial China, as Charlotte Furth reminds us, "no *kind* of sex act or object of desire was singled out in medical literature as pathological."[130] To paraphrase Arnold Davidson, then, we can confidently say that as little as one hundred years ago, Western psychiatric notions of sexual identity (e.g., homosexuality) were not false in China, but rather were not even possible candidates of truth-or-falsehood. Only after the translation and introduction of a psychiatric style of reasoning by the modernizing thinkers in the 1920s and beyond, were there ways of arguing, verifying, explaining, proving, and so on, that allowed such notions to be true-or-false.

The translation, mediation, and introduction of this new psychiatric style of reasoning hinged on an intellectual landscape of sexological disciplinarity. Though priding itself to be

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[128] Translated and cited in Nathan Sivin, *Traditional Medicine in Contemporary China* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1987), p. 98.

[129] This is the phrase that Ruth Rogaski uses to characterize discussions of sex in traditional Chinese medicine. See Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity*, pp. 37-40.

[130] Charlotte Furth, "Androgynous Males and Deficient Females: Biology and Gender Boundaries in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-century China," *Late Imperial China* 9.2 (1988), pp. 1-31, on p. 6 (emphasis added). See also Paul Goldin, *The Culture of Sex in Ancient China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).

a symbol of modernity, Zhang Jingsheng's *Sex Histories* soon triggered an opposite effect. His critics defined his sexological project as unscientific and attempted to move beyond its limitations. The scope of Pan's sexology, for example, included a broader range of topics not limited to "normal" heterosexual intercourse, translated a significantly higher quantity of foreign sexological literature, sought and drew on historical data for valuable insights concerning contemporary sexual problems, introduced a purely psychological account of human sexuality in the language of Freudian psychoanalysis, and thereby enabled debates on the etiology and prevention of "deviant" sexual practices. The convergence of all these efforts formed the social-epistemic foundations upon which sexology came to be established as an independent scientific discipline. This in turn provided sufficient grounds for bringing a foreign psychiatric style of reasoning into comprehensibility in Chinese culture. In depicting Zhang's sexological enterprise as hopelessly out of date, sex educators and scientists used it as a foil against which new measures of being "scientific," "modern," and, by extension, "traditional" could be juxtaposed.

No other example illustrates the outcome of this epistemic modernity better than the existence of an academic periodical called *Sex Science* in 1930s China. At least a "Chinese Academy of Health" was named as its official editorial governing board on the front page of each issue, and a "Shanghai Sexological Society" was listed as the editorial collective of another periodical called *Sex Magazine* (性雜誌, *Xing zazhi*). Although there is no doubt that many modernizing intellectuals at the time viewed human sexuality through the lens of social problems, the presence of these learned societies and disciplinary journals suggests that sexual problems were considered as topics worthy of serious investigation in their own right. In addition to providing a more focused venue for the translation of foreign sexological literature, *Sex Science* offered Chinese "sexperts" an unique opportunity to publish original contributions and sophisticated opinion pieces in direct dialogue with one another. Their

debates on the congenital or acquired nature of homosexuality reflected the gradual spread of psychoanalytic thinking about sexual latency, which in turn cast Dr. Sex's earlier explanation of heterogenital contact in terms of electrolytic *qi* as overly simple and insufficient. Similar to its Western counterparts such as the *Journal of Sexual Science* in Germany and *Sexology* in the United States, *Sex Science* functioned as a textual archive reinforcing the specialized authority of sexology across culture. Its founding and circulation thus marked an important episode in the intellectual translation and disciplinary consolidation of *scienta sexualis* in Republican China.

VII. From the Psychiatric Style of Reasoning to a Nationalistic Style of Argumentation

If Foucault was correct in asserting that Western civilization was "the only civilization to practice a *scientia sexualis*," such practice had certainly proliferated to the East Asian world by the early twentieth century like never before.[131] But this chapter has also attempted to show that the historical significance of this proliferation rested on a level deeper than the superficial transfer of ideas across cultural divides. The epistemological grounding of *scientia sexualis* in Republican China was governed by a discursive apparatus that I call epistemic modernity, in which explicit claims of sexual knowledge were imbricated with implicit claims about cultural indicators of traditionality, authenticity, and modernity.[132]

In the context of Zhang Jingsheng's sexology, whether it is the dualism between literary representations of love versus scientific truthfulness of sex, or the juxtaposition between Daoist cultivational ideas in Chinese medicine versus the bio-psychological

[131] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 58. For a fuller articulation of this problem, see also Howard Chiang, "Double Alterity and the Global Historiography of Sexuality: China, Europe, and the Emergence of Sexuality as a Global Possibility," *e-pisteme* 2, no. 1 (2009): 33-53; and Chiang, "Liberating Sex, Knowing Desire." For another in-depth study of Republican Chinese *scientia sexualis*, see Howard Chiang, "The Conceptual Contours of Sex in the Chinese Life Sciences: Zhu Xi (1899-1962), Hermaphroditism, and the Biological Discourse of *Ci* and *Xiong*, 1920-1950," *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal* 2 (2008):401-430.

[132] In some ways, Sean Lei has done something similar for statements about "experience" in the history of Chinese medicine: see Sean Hsiang-lin Lei, "How Did Chinese Medicine Become Experiential? The Political Epistemology of *Jingyan*," *positions* 10 (2002): 334-64.

language of Western biomedicine, epistemic modernity helps delineate the two registers of truth production on which sexological claims operated: one concerning explicit claims about the object of scientific knowledge (human sexuality) and another concerning implicit claims about cultural markers of traditionality, authenticity, and modernity (modes of narrating sex, theoretical foundations of medicine, etc.). But Zhang's project quickly turned into the antithesis of science and modernity in the eyes of his contemporaries. Moving beyond the limitations of his work, they aimed to establish an independent discipline with greater resemblance to European sexology. By the mid-1930s, disparate efforts in making sexuality a legitimate subject of scientific discussion and mass education culminated in such projects of disciplinary consolidation as the founding of *Sex Science*. These unprecedented achievements gave rise to a radical reorganization of the meaning of same-sex desire in Chinese culture around a new psychiatric style of reasoning.

In the politically volatile context of Republican China, the introduction of Western sexology often reframed same-sex desire as an indication of national backwardness. In his *Sexological Science*, after documenting the prevalence of homosexual practice in different Western societies, Zhang Minyun concluded that "the main social cause for the existence of homosexuality is upper-class sexual decadence and the sexual thirst of the lower-class people."[133] And this, according to Zhang, should help shed light on "the relationship between homosexuality and nationality."[134] "For the purpose of social improvement," according to another concerned writer, "the increasing prevention of homosexuality is now a pressing task."[135] Pan Guangdan expressed a similar nationalistic hostility towards the boy actors of traditional Peking opera: since they often participated in sexual relationships with their male literati patrons, Pan described them as "abnormal" and detrimental to social

[133] Zhang Mingyun (張敏筠), *Xing kexue* (性科學) [Sexological science] (Shanghai: Shidai Shuju, 1950), p. 78.
[134] Zhang, *Xing kexue*, p. 75.
[135] Yang, "Tongxing'ai de wenti," p. 436.

morality. He explained that their lower social status prevented them from participating in the civil examination system, implying that a modernizing nation in the twentieth century certainly has no place for them.[136] The physician Wang Yang, known for his expertise in human sexuality and reproduction, went so far to identify homosexuality as "a kind of disease that eliminates a nation and its races."[137]

Therefore, if we take the insights of Lydia Liu and others seriously, the apparatus I call epistemic modernity that mediated the transmission of *scientia sexualis* into China ultimately characterizes a *productive* historical moment.[138] When Republican Chinese sexologists viewed the *dan* actors and other cultural expressions of homoeroticism as signs of national backwardness,[139] they have in essence domesticated the Western psychiatric style of reasoning and turned it into a new *nationalistic style of argumentation* about same-sex desire.[140] In addition to staging certain elements of the Peking opera field as being out of time and place, epistemic modernity occasioned an entrenched nationalistic platform, on which other aspects of this cultural entertainment also functioned as a powerful symbol of quintessential Chinese tradition and authenticity. Rendered as a prototypical exemplar of the modern homosexual, the twentieth-century *dan* actor became a historic figure signifying a

[136] Pan, *Xing xinlixue*, pp. 708-9. See also Pan, *Zhongguo lingren xieyuan zhi yanjiu*, pp. 255-8.
[137] Wang Yang (汪洋), *Fufu xingweisheng* (夫婦性衛生) [The sexual hygiene of married couples] (Shanghai: Zhongyang shudian, 1935), pp. 49 and 53.
[138] Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Cutlure, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995). See also the essays collected in Liu Kang and Xiaobing Tang, eds., *Politics, Ideology, and Literary Discourse in Modern China: Theoretical Interventions and Culture Critique* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); and Lydia H. Liu, ed., *Tokens of Exchange: The Problem of Translation in Global Circulations* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999). On the relationship between translation and empires, see also Lydia H. Liu, *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).
[139] On the association of male homosexual practice with national backwardness in the Republican period, see also Kang, *Obsession*, pp. 115-44; Cuncun Wu and Mark Stevenson, "Male Love Lost: The Fate of Male Same-Sex Prostitution in Beijing in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *Embodied Modernities: Corporeality, Representation, and Chinese Cultures*, ed. Fran Martin and Larissa Heinrich (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), pp. 42-59.
[140] On "style," see also Chiang, "Rethinking 'Style' for Historians and Philosophers of Science."

hybrid embodiment of the traditionality and what Prasenjit Duara aptly calls "the regime of authenticity" of Chinese culture.[141]

It is therefore possible to contrast this new nationalistic style of argumentation with the *culturalistic* style of argumentation that underpinned the comprehensibility of same-sex desire in the late imperial period.[142] For this purpose, we can turn to the late Ming essayist and social commentator, Zhang Dai, who reflects on his friend Qi Zhixiang's fondness for a young man, named Abao, in his *Tao'an mengyi* (Dream reminiscence of Tao'an). Tao'an is Zhang's pen name, and this collection of miscellaneous notes serves as a good window onto literati lifestyle circa the Ming-Qing transition, since Zhang is often considered as an exemplar of literati taste of the time. An example from the late Ming is also most apt because the period is infamous for marking the peak of a flourishing "male love" (男色, *nanse*) homoerotic culture in late imperial China. The title of this passage is "The Obsession of Qi Zhixiang," and because it places seventeenth-century male same-sex love in the context of multiple desires, it is worth quoting in full:

> If someone does not have an obsession (*pi*), they cannot make a good companion for they have no deep passions; if a person does not show some flaw, they also cannot make a good companion since they have no genuine spirit. My friend Qi Zhixiang has obsessions with calligraphy and painting, football, drums and cymbals, ghost plays, and opera. In 1642, when I arrived in the southern capital, Zhixiang brought Abao out to show me. I remarked,

[141] Prasenjit Duara, "The Regime of Authenticity: Timelessness, Gender, and National History in Modern China," *History and Theory* 37 (1998): 287-308. On the complicated historical layering of the *dan* figure, see John Zou, "Cross-Dressed Nation: Mei Lanfang and the Clothing of Modern Chinese Men," in *Embodied Modernities*, ed. Fran Martin and Larissa Heinrich, pp. 79-97; and Joshua Goldstein, *Drama Kings: Players and Publics in the Re-creation of Peking Opera, 1870-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

[142] For a classic discussion of the transformation from 'culturalism' to 'nationalism' in the Chinese political sphere, see Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: A Trilogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965).

> "This is a divine and sweet voiced bird from [the paradise of] the western regions, how did he fall into your hands?" Abao's beauty was as fresh as a pure maiden's. He still had no care for decorum, was haughty, and kept others at a distance. The feeling was just like eating an olive, at first bitter and a little rough, but the charm is in the aftertaste. Like wine and tobacco, the first mouthful is a little repulsive, producing a state of tipsy lightness; yet once the initial disgust passes the flavor soon fills your mind. Zhixiang was a master of music and prosody, fastidious in his composition of melodies and lyrics, and personally instructing [his boy-actors] phrase by phrase. Those of Abao's ilk were able to realize what he had in mind. In the year of 1645, the southern capital fell, and Zhixiang fled from the city to his hometown. En route they ran across some bandits. Face to face with death, his own life would have been expendable, but not his treasure, Abao. In the year of 1646, he followed the imperial guards to camp at Taizhou. A lawless rabble plundered the camp, and Zhixiang lost all his valuables. Abao charmed his master by singing on the road. After they returned, within half a month, Qi again took a journey with Abao. Leaving his wife and children was for Zhixiang as easy as removing a shoe, but a young brat was as dear to him as his own life. This sums up his obsession.[143]

This passage also sums up what a man's interest in young males meant in the seventeenth century remarkably well: it was perceived as just one of the many different types of "obsessions" that a male literatus could have—a symbol of his refinement. For Zhang, a

[143] Zhang Dai (張岱), *Tao'an mengyi* (陶庵夢憶) [Dream reminiscences of Tao'an] (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1982), pp. 35-36, as translated [with my own modifications] and cited in Cuncun Wu, *Homoerotic Sensibilities in Late Imperial China* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), pp. 42-43.

man's taste in male lovers was as important as his "obsessions" in other arenas of life, without which this person "cannot make a good companion." Despite all the hardship, the romantic ties between Qi and Abao still survived, and perhaps even surpassed Qi's relationship with his wife and children.[144]

[144] I am aware of Sophie Volpp's astute critique of historians' tendency to read literary accounts of male homoeroticism as evidence of its greater social tolerance in late Ming China. According to Volpp, "those texts that indicate a new level of interest in male love cannot be read as documents of practice, nor do they necessarily signal a new tolerance of male love. Rather, they testify to the seventeenth-century interest in classifying lust, in cataloguing all its permutations" (pp. 80-81). Volpp continues: "This discourse casts such boys as luxury goods, but also seeks, through an exploration of their loyalty to their protectors, to show that they are more cognizant of the Confucian bonds of human relation than the men who treat them as luxury objects." As such, Volpp concludes that "male love is considered peripheral socially and spatially, yet somehow repeatedly appears in the center of a moral topography" (p. 87). Alternatively put, this kind of "logical dissonance" in the seventeenth-century representations of male love shows that it was simultaneously affirmed and disdained (p. 116). Following Michel Foucault, Volpp ultimately sees this kind of "speaking of the sexual had in fact become a way of policing it" (p. 80). Although Volpp reminds the reader that "the concept of tolerance derives from a rhetoric of individual rights, and is not terribly relevant to a society where individual rights were not at issue," one could argue that the project she had set out for herself squarely conveys an equally ahistoricist attempt to challenge other historians' interpretation of the social acceptance of homoeroticism in seventeenth-century China (p. 85). All quotations are from Sophie Volpp, "Classifying Lust: The Seventeenth-Century Vogue for Male Love." See also Sophie Volpp, "The Discourse on Male Marriage: Li Yu's 'A Male Mencius's Mother"; Volpp, "The Literary Circulations of Actors in Seventeenth-Century China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 6, no. 3 (2002): 949-984; and Volpp, *Worldly Stage: Theatricality in Seventeenth-Century China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011). In many ways, Volpp supports Timothy Brook's argument that male homoeroticism was fashionable only among a small class of male literati elites: see Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure*, pp. 229-233.

Cuncun Wu follows a more generalizing approach in analyzing these texts by adopting the trope of "homoerotic sensibilities": see Wu, *Homoerotic Sensibilities in Late Imperial China*. Wu's conclusion is closer to the view that Giovanni Vitiello defends: "to show that male homoeroticism in late Ming culture can best be appraised when placed within the broader context of male homosociality. By relegating homoeroticism to elite or isolating it from other discourses on male relations and by stressing its ephemerality, we risk failing to appreciate its place and ramifications within the plot of late Ming culture and beyond." Giovanni Vitiello, "Exemplary Sodomites: Chivalry and Love in Late Ming Culture," *Nan Nü* 2, no. 2 (2000): 207-258, on p. 256. In other words, the emphasis need not be on the practice or description of homoeroticism per se, but the wider cultural context that was congenial for its literary or social expression. In this respect, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Anthony Rotundo has made a similar argument regarding romantic friendships among American women and men in the nineteenth century: see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1 (1975): 1-25; Anthony Rotundo, "Romantic Friendship: Male Intimacy and Middle-Class Youth in the Northern United States, 1800-1900," *Journal of Social History* 23, no. 1 (1989): 1-25. For a more recent perspective on female same-sex eroticism and social relationships, see Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). To me, whether same-sex behavior was only practiced among a small class of male elites or much more culturally pervasive in late imperial China, remains an interesting debate. I should emphasize, however, that my concern does not rest strictly on the level of social acceptance or tolerance of same-sex intimacy. In quoting the above passage by Zhang Dai, my more immediate task in this paper has been to study the *epistemological* reconfiguration of same-sex desire in China.

On homoeroticism in late imperial Chinese literature, see also Patrick Hanan, *The Chinese Vernacular Story* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); Keith McMahon, "Eroticism in Late Ming, Early Qing Fiction: The Beauteous Realm and the Sexual Battlefield," *T'oung Pao* 73, nos. 4-5 (1987): 217-264; Keith McMahon, "A Case for Confucian Sexuality: The Eighteenth-Century Novel *Yesou puan*," *Late Imperial China* 9, no. 2 (1988): 32-55; Keith McMahon, *Causality and Containment in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Fiction* (Leiden: Brill, 1988); Keith McMahon, "The Classic 'Beauty-Scholar' Romance and the Superiority of the

Let me now bypass roughly three hundred years. For the most part, there was a distinct absence of discussion about same-sex sexuality in the numerous sex education pamphlets published throughout the late 1940s and 1950s.[145] But in the few instances where homosexuality was actually mentioned, the way it was described and the specific context in which it was brought up would appear so strange and foreign to Ming-Qing commentators on the subject. In a sex education booklet for adolescents published in 1955, the author wrote:

> Certainly, sometimes "same-sex desire" is only psychological and not physical. For example, a girl might be very fond of another girl classmate, to the extent that she even falls in "love" with her. Their relationship could be quite intimate, and they could possibly even have slept together on the same bed and felt each other, but there is actually nothing beyond that. For this type of same-sex love/desire, it is easily curable. As long as they get married separately, whatever happened could be easily forgotten.[146]

The author, Lu Huaxin, went on to describe a symmetrical situation for those adolescent boys who have developed a similar kind of affection for same-sex classmates. But Lu insisted

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Talented Woman," in *Body, Subject and Power in China*, ed. Angela Zito and Tani Barlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 227-252; Keith McMahon, *Misers, Shrews, and Polygamists: Sexuality and Male-Female Relations in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Fiction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); Ruan, *Sex in China*, pp. 107-143; Fan-fu Ruan and Yung-mei Tsai, "Male Homosexuality in the Traditional Chinese Literature," *Journal of Homosexuality* 14, nos. 3-4 (1987): 21-33; Chloe Starr, "Shifting Boundaries: Gender in Pinhua Baojian," *Nan Nü* 1, no. 2 (1999): 268-302; Giovanni Vitiello, "The Dragon's Whim: Ming and Qing Homoerotic Tales from the Cut Sleeve," *T'oung Pao* 78, nos. 4-5 (1992): 341-372; Vitiello, "The Fantastic Journey of an Ugly Boy: Homosexuality and Salvation in Late Ming Pornography," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 4, no. 2 (1996): 291-320; Vitiello, "The Forgotten Tears of the Lord of Longyang: Late Ming Stories of Male Prostitution and Connoisseurship," in *Linked Faiths: Essays on Chinese Religions and Traditional Culture in Honour of Kristofer Shipper*, ed. Jan A. M. de Meyer and Peter M. Engelfriet (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 227-247; and Vitiello, *The Libertine's Friend*.

[145] Harriet Evans, *Women and Sexuality in China: Female Sexuality and Gender Since 1949* (New York: Continuum, 1996), p. 206.

[146] Lu Huaxin (陸華信), *Shaonan shaonü xingzhishi* (少男少女性知識) [Sexual knowledge for young men and women] (Hong Kong: Xuewen shudian, 1955), p. 53.

that "as long as [these] teenager[s] get married, the pathological feelings will disappear."[147] Only for certain teenagers whose "lifestyle has become decadent" and who "really starts pursuing abnormal sexual gratifications," Lu continued, "their brain then really needs to be treated. Because their brain is unhealthy and filthy; they have been infected by the pornographic virus. If an individual of this type is identified, friends should encourage everyone to offer him help and assistance."[148]

By the mid-twentieth century, same-sex desire had acquired a set of social meaning and cultural significance completely different from the way it was conceived before the onset of epistemic modernity. For one, the relationship between same-sex desire and heterosexual marriage is viewed as incommensurable or incompatible, even antithetical. One could not possibly be married to an opposite sex while still passionately desiring someone of the same sex.[149] In fact, according to Lu, heterosexual marriage is precisely the most useful "cure" of same-sex desire. Same-sex desire now also means a pathological—and not just abnormal—tendency, based on which an autonomous relationship between two persons of the same sex is conceivable regardless of their social status. Lu located the seat of this deviant subjectivity inside the brain, via a vague notion of viral infection, which underscores the "pathological" or "unhealthy" nature of its psychological status. Again, as same-sex desire now represents something that is "curable," heterosexual marriage could serve that function most powerfully. No longer understood simply as one of the many "tastes" or "obsessions" a man of high status could have, erotic preference for someone of the same sex became

[147] Lu, *Shaonan shaonü xingzhishi*, p. 53.
[148] Lu, *Shaonan shaonü xingzhishi*, p. 54.
[149] I am being careful and specific when discussing "marriage to an opposite sex," because other scholars have unearthed the popularity of same-sex "marriages" in eighteenth-century China, especially in the region of Fujian. See Micahel Szonyi, "The Cult of Hu Tianbao and the Eighteenth-Century Discourse of Homosexuality," *Late Imperial China* 19, no. 1 (1998): 1-25. For "same-sex marriages" in premodern England, see Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (1982; New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

something that could be eliminated with the help of friends, as opposed to something that could be appreciated by them.

To assess the epistemological transformation of same-sex desire in Chinese culture from an indigenous historical perspective, then, we can begin to reconstruct some of the polarized concepts that constitute two opposed styles of argumentation. We are presented, for instance, with the polarities between literati taste and sick perversion, refined obsession and pathological behavior, cultural superiority and psychological abnormality, markers of elite status and signs of national backwardness. The first of each of these pairs of concepts partially makes up the culturalistic style of argumentation about same-sex desire, while the second of each of these pairs helps to constitute the nationalistic style of argumentation. These polarities therefore characterize two distinct conceptual modes of representation, two conceptual spaces, two different kinds of deep epistemological structure. It follows that the discursive apparatus of epistemic modernity has not merely mediated the introduction of the foreign sexological concept of homosexuality, but, in doing so, it has simultaneously catalyzed an internal shift in the conceptual paradigm of Chinese same-sex desire.

According to Larissa Heinrich, in the nineteenth century China metamorphosed from being identified as "the Cradle of Smallpox" to a pathological empire labeled as "the Sick Man of Asia" with growing intensity.[150] My analysis suggests that this transformation took another turn in the early Republican period. After the introduction of European *scientia sexualis* in the 1920s, the Chinese body could no longer be conceived in mere anatomical terms. It became rather appropriate, and perhaps even necessary, for us to conceptualize the Chinese body as explicitly *sexual* in nature. Chinese corporeality is now always linked to implicit claims of psychiatric reasoning and nationalistic significance. Put differently, a distinct problem in modern Chinese historiography has been the question of why, starting in

[150] Larissa Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images: Translating the Pathological Body between China and the West* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

the Republican period, Chinese modernizers began to view earlier expressions of same-sex eroticism (and gender transgression) as domestic indicators of cultural deficiency. And what I am suggesting is that, much like how the gradual acceptance of an intrinsically pathological view of China helped the reception of Western-style anatomy in nineteenth-century medicine, the epistemic alignment of pre-nationalistic homoeroticism with the foreign notion of homosexuality precisely undergirded the appropriation of a new science of Western-style sexology in twentieth-century China.

In light of the prevailing criticisms of Foucauldian genealogy, many historians of sexuality have refrained from advancing a claim about the occasioning of an epistemological break in the Republican era by showing that earlier concepts associated with male same-sex sexual practice (e.g., *nanse* or *pi*) jostled alongside and informed the new sexology discourse.[151] However, it has been my intention to show that the congruency between earlier and later understandings of same-sex practice *is itself* a cultural phenomenon unique to the Republican period and not before. Historian Wenqing Kang, for example, has argued that preexisting Chinese ideas about male favorites and *pi* "laid the ground for acceptance of the modern Western definition of homo/heterosexuality during [the Republican] period in China." His first explanation is that "both the Chinese concept *pi* (obsession) and Western sexology tended to understand same-sex relations as pathological." He then relies on Eve Sedgwick's model of the overlapping "universalizing discourse of acts and minoritizing

[151] Criticisms of Foucault have been voiced most prominently in lesbian historiography. See, for example, Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Bernadette J. Brooten, *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Judith M. Bennett, "Confronting Continuity," *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 3 (1997): 73-94; Judith M. Bennett, "'Lesbian-Like' and the Social History of Lesbianism," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9 (2000): 1-24; Louis Fradenberg and Carla Freccero, eds., *Premodern Sexualities* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996); Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); and Martha Vicinus, *Intimate Friends: Women Who Loved Women, 1778-1928* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). For an excellent defense of the social constructionist approach to lesbian history, see Valerie Traub, "The Present Future of Lesbian Historiography," in *A Companion to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies*, ed. George E. Haggerty and Molly McGarry (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 124-145. For criticisms of the Foucauldian genealogical method raised in the historiography of Chinese sexuality, see, for example, Kang, "Male Same-Sex Relations in Modern China"; Vitiello, *The Libertine's Friend*, pp. 13-14, 200-201.

discourse of persons" to suggest that indigenous Chinese understandings shared a comparable internal contradiction in the conceptualization of male same-sex desire. In his words, "The concept *pi* which Ming literati used to characterize men who enjoyed sex with other men, on the one hand implied that men who had this kind of passion were a special type of people, and on the other hand, presumed that the obsession could happen to anyone."[152]

My reading of Zhang Dai's passage on *pi* suggests that isolating both a pathological meaning and this internal conceptual contradiction of *pi* represents an anachronistic effort that reads homosexuality into earlier modes of thought. Zhang's remark precisely reveals the multiplicity of the meaning and cultural significance of *pi* that cannot be comprehended through a single definition of pathology or an independent lens of same-sex relations decontextualized from other types of refined human desire. Kang therefore seems to forget that the very semblance between what he calls "the internal contradictions within the Chinese indigenous understanding of male same-sex relations" and "those within the Western modern homosexual/heterosexual definition" was made possible and meaningful only alongside or after the emergence of the concept of homosexuality in China.[153] In this regard, the following statement confuses his interpretation of historical sources with the very colonial landscape it claims to exceed: "When Western modern sexology was introduced to China in the first half of the twentieth century, the Chinese understanding of male same-sex relations as *pi* (obsession) was very much alive, as evidenced in the writings of the time. It was precisely because of the similarity between the two sets of understandings that Western modern sexology could gain footing in China."[154] The claim is confusing because the similarity Kang points to would not have made much sense in a context without the epistemological salience of the very concept of homosexuality itself, that is, before the twentieth century. Treating the discursive nature of discourse seriously requires us to pay

[152] Kang, *Obsession*, p. 21. For Sedgwick's original formulation, see Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*.
[153] Kang, "Male Same-Sex Relations," p. 490.
[154] Kang, "Male Same-Sex Relations," p. 492.

closer attention to how old words take on a new meaning (and life) in a different historical context, rather than imposing later familiar notions onto earlier concepts.[155] A distinct problem with Kang's reading remains the way he turns a blind eye to the *hierarchical nature* of the invocation of *pi* in literati discourses. It might be useful to rephrase this problem by borrowing David Halperin's remark: "Of course, evidence of conscious erotic preferences does exist in abundance, but it tends to be found in the context of discourses linked to the senior partners in hierarchical relations of pederasty or sodomy. It therefore points not to the existence of gay sexuality per se but to one particular discourse and set of practices constituting one aspect of gay sexuality as we currently define it."[156]

Despite how Pan Guangdan's condemnation of the homosexuality of boy actors (and, by implication, their patrons) was informed by the long-standing and still-continuing practices of male prostitution, his condemnation was made possible (and comprehensible) only by the arrival of a psychiatric style of reasoning that construed same-sex relations in negative terms. In their study of nineteenth-century "flower guides" (*huapu*), Wu Cuncun and Mark Stevenson have probed the many social taboos surrounding this literary genre that extolled the beauty of boy actors, including "rules about money and taste and passion and lust, and also rules about the representation of social competition." They conclude that "none of these were concerned with fears of same-sex desire or of stigma through connection to the world of Beijing's homoerotic nightlife."[157] The scientific reasoning of desire that gained

[155] My disagreement with Kang in part can be viewed as the resurfacing of an earlier debate between Sedgwick and David Halperin, with whom my analysis side, on the genealogy of homosexuality in Western culture. For Halperin's response to Sedgwick, see Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*. For a classic defense of an essentialist approach to the history of sexuality, see John Boswell, "Revolutions, Universals, and Sexual Categories," in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey (New York: Meridian, 1989), pp. 17-36. For critiques of Boswell's tendency to elide historicism, see David Halperin, "Sex Before Sexuality: Pederasty, Politics, and Power in Classical Athens," in *Hidden from History*, pp. 37-53; and Robert Padgug, "Sexual Matters: Rethinking Sexuality in History," in *Hidden from History*, pp. 54-64.

[156] David Halperin, "How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality," *GLQ* 6, no. 1 (2000): 87-124, on pp. 98-99.

[157] Wu Cuncun and Mark Stevenson, "Speaking of Flowers: Theatre, Public Culture, and Homoerotic Writing in Nineteenth-Century Beijing," *Asian Theatre Journal* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 100-129, on p. 121. In this

rapid momentum in the 1920s, on the other hand, ushered in a new era of the social stigmatization of male same-sex relations. Pan and other sexologists isolated homosexuality as a conceptual blueprint for individual psychology *independent of* hierarchical indexes of power relations, social status, class subjectivity, and so on, but it was a concept that, unlike heterosexuality, carried a pathological connotation and linked to notable cultural signifiers of traditionality contributing to, according to them, China's growing national deficiency.

Therefore, the twelve cases of male homosexuality and the one case of female homosexuality that Pan enumerated in his annotated translation of *Psychology of Sex* should be understood less as historical evidence of homosexual experience in the Ming and Qing dynasties, than a reflection of how the epistemological reorientations brought about by a new psychiatric style of reasoning culminated to generate the condition of their comprehensibility. Here is where I depart from Giovanni Vitiello, who interprets Pan's effort "as if to provide a Chinese perspective on an experience inadequately represented in the Western book. These negotiation attempts remind us that the transformation of sexual culture in twentieth-century China cannot be read simply as the replacement of one model with another."[158] There are two major assumptions embedded in Vitiello's statement: (1) that the internal coherence of an unified structure of homoerotic sentiment had always already existed in China before the Western concept of homosexuality, and (2) that the congruency between the former and the latter structures of knowledge was inevitable and unproblematic.

I do not think the heart of the matter concerns the question of whether the contested process of translation is itself fraught with the possibility of "losing" or "adding" new dimensions of knowledge (because of course it is). But what escapes Vitiello's reading is the way in which both (1) the internal coherency of an indigenous structure of knowledge on

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regard, Wu and Stevenson diverge from the view of Andrea Goldman, who discusses *huapu* authors' "awareness of the stigma that was associated with the sex trade in boy actors." See Andrea Goldman, "Actors and Aficionados in Qing Dynasty Texts of Theatrical Connoisseurship," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 68, no. 1 (2008): 1-56, on p. 5.

[158] Vitiello, *The Libertine's Friend*, p. 201.

which the foreign model of homosexuality could be easily mapped and (2) the condition of possibility of this mapping *were themselves* historically contingent on—even historically produced by—the very process whereby "homosexuality" was translated into Chinese. Likewise, when Pan and other sexologists utilized examples from ancient Greece to render the modern category of homosexuality intelligible, the result was a similar moment of epistemic alignment in the establishment of *scientia sexualis* in China. Their debates on "true" or "fake," "inborn" or "acquired," "natural" or "curable," homosexuality in the pages of *Sex Science* already takes for granted the new psychiatric style of reasoning and so treats sexuality and its attendant "disorders," such as homosexuality, as if they were naturally given and carrying broader implications for the modern nation. Simply put, the epistemic continuity established by Chinese sexologists between the foreign concept of homosexuality and earlier examples of homoeroticism do not undermine the kind of Foucauldian epistemological rupture this paper substantiates, but actually exemplify it. Before the rupture, according to the normative definition of desire in male spectatorship and connoisseurship, the possibility of having the same (homo)sexuality as either the *dan* actor or the male favorite would appall the literati gentleman.

Epistemic modernity, then, is more than just an example of "translated modernity"; rather, it refers to a series of ongoing practices and discourses that could generate new ways of cultural comprehension and conceptual engagement, allowing for possible intersecting transformations in history and epistemology. If we ever wonder how to make sense of the prevalence of same-sex sexual practice in imperial China before the rise of an East Asian *scientia sexualis*, as so vividly captured in *The Carnal Prayer Mat*, we only need to remind ourselves that, as little as a century ago, the question of sexual identity did not even fall within the possible parameters of Chinese thinking. For in China there is no such thing as homosexuality outside epistemic modernity.

CHAPTER 4

A MALLEABLE ESSENCE

I. Introduction

The comprehensibility of the modern concept of sex was crystallized through the intersections of its three epistemological coordinates—as the object of observation, the subject of desire, and a malleable essence of the human body. The last two chapters have explored the unilateral epistemic labors of various images of persuasion, newly invented words, narrative techniques, expertise frictions, and claims of modernity that anchored the development of new structures of knowledge around the visuality and carnality of sex. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate its third epistemological dimension: transformativity. To accomplish that, I will delineate a vibrant discourse of "sex change" in the mass circulation press of Republican China from the 1920s to the 1940s.

In the 1920s, the Chinese urban intelligentsia began to envision a more fluid definition of humanity. They no longer drew on the limited language of anatomy and sexology to talk about two different but equal sexes; rather, they started to think of men and women as simply two versions of a universal human body. This chapter begins by discussing how Chinese sexologists entertained the possibility of sex transformation based on a new scientific theory of universal bisexuality and famous animal sex reversal experiments in Europe. Building on the epistemic modernity rubric proposed in the last chapter, I also demonstrate how indigenous Chinese frameworks for understanding reproductive anomalies (including human hermaphrodites and eunuchs) provided them an epistemological point of reference for communicating new and foreign ideas about sex. I then turn to the impact of a highly sensationalized story of "female-to-male" transformation in mid-1930s Shanghai on

the urban public's increasing awareness of human sex alteration. The chapter ends with an analysis of the culminating effects of these epistemological reorientations in a science fiction short story called "Sex Change" (1940) by the pedagogical writer Gu Junzheng.

I argue that over the course of this period, as scientific ideas were transmitted and disseminated into popular culture and the value of biomedical science deepened beyond its professional parameters, accounts of "sex change" gradually loosened its association with animal experiments and human reproductive defects and turned into sensationalized stories of bodily change that, in the decades before the concept of "transsexuality" was available, introduced Chinese readers to the possibility of sex transformation. As stories about the relative ease of its metamorphosis flooded media discussions, sex became a concept that made the body seemed more malleable than previously assumed.

II. A New Hormonal Model of Sex

Departing from an anatomical framework, Chinese sexologists from the mid-1920s on shifted their definition of "sex" to one based on chemical secretions. Informed by European endocrine sciences, they began to view sex as a variable of the amount of specific chemical substances found in the blood stream.[1] Previously, the anatomical register of the human body proved to be a useful guide for deciphering the biological difference between male and female.[2] By the mid-1920s, however, Chinese writers no longer looked to the structural underpinnings of testes and ovaries as the natural arbiter of sexual difference. Rather, they became invested in the idea that gonadal secretions—specifically, the chemical substance produced by testes or ovaries—were the actual determining agent of human sex difference.

[1] Nelly Oudshoorn, *Beyond the Natural Body: An Archeology of Sex Hormones* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Adele Clarke, *Disciplining Reproduction: Modernity, American Life Sciences, and "The Problems of Sex"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); and Chandak Sengoopta, *The Most Secret Quintessence of Life: Sex, Glands, and Hormones, 1850-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
[2] Frank Dikötter, *Sex, Culture, and Modernity in China: Medical Science and the Construction of Sexual Identities in the Early Republican Period* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), pp. 14-101.

Whereas eggs and sperm occupied the center stage in an earlier scientific discourse of sex, "hormones"—the name that was available for the chemical messengers that control sexual maturity and development—became the focus of discussions on sex by Chinese modernizing intellectuals throughout the 1920s and 1930s.[3]

In *The Internal Secretions* (1924), Gu Shoubai expressed this new view of sex in unambiguous terms. A German-educated anthropologist who authored a number of books on human biology for the Shanghai Commercial Press, Gu stated that "in addition to sperm cells," testes "produce a kind of stimulating substance [刺激素] that gives the physical body a uniquely male quality [男性特有之發育]."[4] Similarly for the female sex, Gu remarked, "besides eggs, ovaries produce a kind of stimulating substance, whose clinical presence has been experimentally proven by researchers." The surgical removal of ovaries would thus result in an unwomanly-like physical and mental state: "Specifically, her body becomes larger and stronger; she lacks gentleness; her genital develops inadequately; she lacks sexual desire; psychologically, she does not show the kind of characteristics and temperaments typically associated with women."[5]

Other sexologists spoke of the effect of the internal secretions in a more opaque fashion. "Other than producing eggs," Chai Fuyuan explained in his widely read *ABC of Sexology* (1928), "the ovary, like testicles, plays a functional role in the internal secretions. It secretes a fluid with an unpleasant odor in the blood stream that promotes the development of femaleness [形成女性]."[6] Whereas Gu described the chemical secretion of the sex glands in a more cautious way (by calling it a "stimulating substance"), Chai simply called it

[3] The term "hormone" was coined in 1905 by Ernest Henry Starling, Professor of Physiology at University College in London, who defined it as "chemicals that have to be carried from the organ where they are produced to the organ which they affect, by means of the blood stream." See John Henderson, "Ernest Starling and 'Hormones': An Historical Commentary," *Journal of Endocrinology* 184 (2005): 5-10.

[4] Gu Shoubai (顧壽白), *Neifenmi* (內分泌) [The internal secretions] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1924), p. 23.

[5] Gu, *Neifenmi*, p. 26.

[6] Chai Fuyuan (柴福沅), *Xingxue ABC* (性學 ABC) [ABC of sexology] (Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1932 [1928]), pp. 42-43.

a liquid. His reader was thus led to believe inaccurately that hormones are actually fluids. Less ambiguous was Chai's effort in holding these chemical substances responsible for determining one's biological manhood and womanhood. He outright declared that "women are women only because of this fluid," which, according to him, "has three main effects on women: first, it increases female sexual desire and women's acceptance of orgasm resulted from body contact with men. Second, it stimulates secondary sex characteristics [次性特徵], including the enlargement of the pelvis, the scarcity of body hair, the smoothness and paleness of the skin, etc. Third, it nourishes the body, strengthens the mind, and increases memory capacity and the ability to imagine." Notably, two of the three effects Chai listed correspond to those found in Gu's discussion above. And lest any reader felt uncertain about what to conclude from reading all of this, Chai stressed that "without the internal secretions, a woman is not a woman."[7]

According to the new vision of sex as articulated by Gu Shoubai and Chai Fuyuan, the degree of maleness and femaleness depended less on the presence of gonads, than on the quantity of chemical agents that Gu called "stimulating substance," a term he evidently used to translate the Western concept of "hormone." It would be at least another half a decade before male and female sex hormones were structurally discovered, isolated, and synthesized by scientists in the United States.[8] But, in the 1920s, the Chinese public was already introduced to a quantitative definition of sex. The natural construction of manhood and womanhood seemed more malleable than previously assumed. Earlier discussions on the subject by May Fourth feminists tended to ground social gender equality in the biological construction of the dual anatomical sexes. With new ideas coming from endocrinology, the nature of sex no longer relied on the structural ontology of reproductive organs, but was

[7] Chai, *Xingxue ABC*, p. 43.
[8] Nelly Oudshoorn, "Endocrinologists and the Conceptualization of Sex, 1920-1940," *Journal of the History of Biology* 23, no. 2 (1990): 163-186. See also, Oudshoorn, *Beyond the Natural Body*; Clarke, *Disciplining Reproduction*; and Chengoopta, *The Most Secret Quintessence of Life*.

directly governed by the invisible chemical messengers circulating in the blood stream.

Hormones straightforwardly linked secondary to primary sexual characteristics.[9] They helped explain, for instance, the positive correlation frequently found in male bodies between penis and testicles, on the one hand, and other "masculine" physical traits such as muscular strength, larger bone structure, deeper voice, etc. on the other. In a sexological textbook called *The Principle of Sex,* translated from Japanese into Chinese by Wang Jueming in 1926, "hormone" was referred to as "something without which the development of secondary sex characteristics cannot happen." The author qualified that "adequate growth of all secondary sex characteristics begins only with the full maturity of the sex glands."[10] The new language of endocrinology was not available to an earlier cohort of reformers and nationalists who also advocated sexual equality. In the 1920s, its vernacularization helped make readily apparent the connection between anatomical sex and secondary sex characteristics—those bodily traits typically associated with manliness and womanliness. To a new generation of Chinese commentators on gender, hormones proved to be a powerful biological lexicon for naturalizing the social interpretation of sexed bodies.

III. Animal Sex Transformations

In the early twentieth century, the idea that masculinity and femininity was manipulable through biochemical agents soon triggered an avalanche of publicity about sex transformation. For decades, European sexologists had produced a vast quantity of clinical literature on atypical gender identification and sexual inclinations. Late Victorian Western sex scientists often conflated a range of different gender and sexual expressions in their writings. At the same time, they devised an impressive taxonomy to categorize these

[9] With the exception of this sentence, I employ the term "sex characteristics" (rather than the more conventional "sexual characteristics") throughout this chapter, because this was the translation more commonly used by the writers discussed in this context.

[10] Wang Jueming (汪厥明), trans., *Xing zhi yuanli* (性之原理) [The principle of sex] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1926), p. 137.

diverse orientations. It was only by the mid-twentieth century, nonetheless, that such crucial sexological categories as homosexuality, bisexuality, and transsexuality became distinguished more cogently in the medical literature. But when this process was just beginning to unfold, scientists in Europe were already addressing the broader significance of sex change surgeries on a frequent basis.

In the 1910s, Vienna stood at the forefront of sex change experiments. The Austrian physiologist Eugen Steinach attracted international acclaim for his "transplantation" experiments on rats and guinea pigs. In 1912, he published "Arbitrary Transformation of Male Mammals into Animals with Pronounced Female Sex Characteristics and Feminine Psyche," followed in 1913 by "Feminization of Males and Masculinization of Females."[11] The articles soon became scientific classics, and the experiments on which they were based led Steinach to place his research in the larger turn-of-the-century scientific project that attempted to locate the biological essence of sex in gonadal secretions. These groundbreaking experiments also suggested the possibility of medically transforming sex. As he put it, "The implantation of the gonad of the opposite sex transforms the original sex of an animal."[12] His work directly influenced Magnus Hirschfeld, Harry Benjamin, and other sexological scientists who participated in the delineation of the concept of "transsexuality" by the mid-twentieth century.[13]

Word of the sex change experiments conducted by Western biologists reached China primarily through the mass circulating sexological literature in the 1920s. Some Chinese sexologists placed Steinach's "transplantation" studies in a broader discussion of the

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[11] Eugen Steinach, "Willkürliche Umwandlung von Säugetiermännchen in Tiere mit ausgeprägt weiblichen Geschlechtscharacteren und weiblicher Psyche," *Pflügers Archiv* 144 (1912): 71; Eugen Steinach, " Feminierung von Männchen und Maskulierung von Weibchen," *Zentralblatt für Physiologie* 27 (1913): 717.

[12] Eugen Steinach, *Sex and Life: Forty Years of Biological and Medical Experiments* (New York: Viking, 1940), p. 66.

[13] See Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Ernest Harms, "Forty-Four Years of Correspondence between Eugen Steinach and Harry Benjamin: A Valuable Addition to the Manuscript Collection of the Library of the New York Academy of Medicine," *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 45, no. 8 (1969): 761-766.

relationship between secondary sex characteristics and heredity. As early as 1924, Fei Hongnian, a professor of biology at Beijing Agricultural University, introduced Steinach's work in a discussion of the effect of "transplantation" surgeries on generation in his *New Treatise on Life*. Fei first described the results obtained by the German scientist Johannes Meisenheimer, who claimed to have inserted ovaries into male moths and testes into female moths, with the result that the transplanted organs remained functional and grew without impeding the process of metamorphosis.[14] Steinach's work was then pointed out as another example of the success of gonadal transplantations without detrimental effects on vitality in rats. Finally, Fei mentioned American physiologist C. C. Guthrie's findings after grafting ovaries of black hens into white hens and ovaries of white hens into black hens. The change in the color of eggs as a result of ovarian transplantation was said to be an interesting contribution to the study of the effect of transplantation on heredity.[15]

In the 1920s, many Chinese intellectuals considered physical sex transformation the most intriguing aspect of these "transplantation" experiments. The scientific reports from Europe and America allowed some Chinese to at least entertain the possibility of sex reversal in animals. In *The Internal Secretions*, for example, Gu Shoubai offered a more sustained discussion of Steinach's studies under the sections called "The Feminization of Males" and "The Masculinization of Females."[16] He began by stipulating the recent discovery that gonadal secretions bear a causal relationship to male and female traits, both psychological and physical. "According to this line of reasoning," Gu wrote, "if a male organism's testes are removed and replaced with ovaries before puberty, he can turn into a female [男性當可化

[14] See J. T. Cunningham, *Hormones and Heredity* (Teddington, Middlesex: Echo Library, 2008), p. 91. But his findings contradict Steinach's, whose work has attracted more attention from historians of science.
[15] Fei Hongnian (費鴻年), *Xin shengming lun* (新生命論) [New treatise on life] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1924), p. 63.
[16] The section titles echoe the title of Steinach's article "Feminization of Males and Masculinization of Females" (1913).

為女性]."[17] It was with the intention of providing this statement a scientific basis that Gu presented Steinach's findings in remarkable detail.

First, Gu briefly described Steinach's laboratory method: "Steinach removed the testes from male animals and transplanted ovaries into their body as an attempt to feminize them both physically and psychologically [使其肉體精神均為女性化]."[18] Gu's discussion proceeded with Steinach's findings. After three to four weeks, Gu noted, Steinach made the following observations about castrated male rats with implanted ovaries: their implanted ovaries developed normally and even produced eggs; their original penis shrank and degenerated (退化萎縮, *tuihua weisuo*); the size of their enlarged breasts was similar to the size of breasts found in regular female rats, and they even exhibited "maternalistic" tendencies; in comparison to the thicker type of body hair found in normal males, these animals had finer and smoother hair; they accumulated more body fat; their bone structures were smaller than normal males; and they displayed more "female-like" qualities, including a softer and more gentle physique.[19] But for Gu, the pivotal feature that suggested the male animals were indeed feminized was the psychological changes induced by Steinach's surgeries: the laboratory animals "displayed no male psychological traits"; they were "not passionate, not stimulated, and not excited" when put in contact with female animals; and in contrast, when they were acquainted with other male peers, they "suddenly displayed manners that are uniquely female, including raising the posterior end of their boy to seduce male animals…they basically exhibited any trait typically associated with female animals."[20]

In the section on "The Masculinization of Females," Gu Shoubai offered a symmetrical description of Steinach's experiments on female organisms. Steinach inserted testicles into the body of infant female rats whose ovaries had been eliminated. According

[17] Gu, *Neifenmi*, p. 42.
[18] Gu, *Neifenmi*, p. 42
[19] Gu, *Neifenmi*, pp. 42-43.
[20] Gu, *Neifenmi*, p. 44.

to Gu, Steinach made the following observations about these transplanted animals: their implanted testicles developed normally; their original vulva degenerated and all or parts of their vaginal opening shrank significantly; their breasts could not grow into the size of regular female breasts; their hair became as thick as regular male body hair; their fat accumulation was not as significant as what would give them a regular female physical appearance; their bone structure developed into a manly-like size and shape; and psychologically, they became as competitive as their male counterpart.[21] After presenting Steinach's experiments on rats, Gu expressed a considerable level of interest in similar sex change phenomenon in humans: "Although the two kinds of sex transformation described above are experiments conducted on animals with success, we do not yet have formal reports of similar procedures tested on humans. Theoretically speaking, though, it is reasonable to entertain the possibility [of human sex transformation]."[22]

In the early twentieth century, Steinach's sex change experiments soon became classics in not only Western but also East Asian sexological discourses. European trained scientists such as Fei Hongnian and Gu Shoubai had the linguistic ability to introduce a range of European and American scientific studies on sex to Chinese readers in a first hand manner. However, around the same time, more Chinese students studied in Japan rather than in Western countries on Qing government scholarships. Indeed, a significant portion of the Chinese public acquired familiarity with Western sexology from reading translations of Japanese sexological literature. Steinach's work was mentioned, for instance, in Wang Jeuming's translation of *The Principle of Sex* (1926), originally written in Japanese. The book pitched Steinach's studies, along with other transplantation experiments, as evidence for the direct influence of glandular secretions on the development of secondary sex characteristics. After briefly summarizing Steinach's experimental procedures, the author

[21] Gu, *Neifenmi*, pp. 44-45.
[22] Gu, *Neifenmi*, p. 45.

was convinced that "secondary sex characteristics can easily switch between the two sexes."[23]

IV. The Theory of Universal Bisexuality

By the late 1920s, the idea that maleness and femaleness were flexible fitted nicely with the new endocrinological model of sex. If biological sex was "determined" not through gonadal presence or chromosomal makeup, but through glandular secretions, scientists began to question a fixed and immutable definition of sex. In German-speaking intellectual circles, psychoanalytic thinkers like Sigmund Freud and philosophers like Otto Weininger vehemently challenged the Victorian notion of separate and opposite sexes.[24] Social context mattered, too. In the late Qing and early Republican periods, Christian missionaries steadily created an increasing measure of educational opportunities for women, and after the 1911 Revolution the Guomindang government recommended for the first time co-education policies in the national educational system.[25] As more women pursued higher education, entered the labor force, and participated in social reform movements, Chinese leaders increasingly voiced the importance of granting women greater access to the public and political spheres. The new emphasis on gender equality construed men and women as more similar than dissimilar human beings. At the same time, the influx of new, Western-derived categories like "feminism" and "homosexuality" called attention to masculine women and effeminate men.[26]

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[23] Wang, *Xing zhi yuanli*, p. 138.

[24] See Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); Chandak Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger: Sex, Science, and Self in Imperial Vienna* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

[25] Jessie Gregory Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges, 1850-1950* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1971); Paul Bailey, *Gender and Education in China: Gender Discourses and Women's Schooling in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2007).

[26] On "feminism" in modern China, see Tani E. Barlow, *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); and Dorothy Ko and Wang Zheng, ed., *Translating Feminisms in China* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007). On "homosexuality," see chapter 3 of this dissertation, which is a revised and expanded version of Howard Chiang, "Epistemic Modernity and the Emergence of Homosexuality in China,"

Against this social backdrop, Chinese modernizers who were drawn to Western natural sciences began to shift their vision of sex. As accounts of foreign research on sex change became available in the bourgeoning print culture, they started to cast doubt on the old notion of binary opposite sexes. Meanwhile, in the 1920s and 1930s Western biochemists learned to extract and detect hormones from the organs and urine of animals, and they soon discovered that men and women had both male and female hormones. It made sense in this social and intellectual context to consider all humans as having the potential of being both male and female. Early twentieth-century scientists, in China and abroad, gradually pushed for the argument that male and female were ideal types that did not exist in reality. What the new wave of scientific findings showed, they said, was that everyone fell somewhere between the two idealized poles. All females had elements of the male; all males had elements of the female. By the 1930s, scientifically-minded Chinese joined experimental scientists in Europe and America to biologize the human body as inherently two-sexed. News of surgical attempts at changing sex, along with the emergent hormonal model of sex as something malleable, posited a new scientific theory of universal bisexuality.[27]

From the start the introduction of bisexual theory to China depended on the writings of Japanese sexologists.[28] Again, the Chinese translation of *The Principle of Sex* included an elaborate discussion of human innate bisexuality and a review of Western theorists who supported the view. The chapter on "Sex in Theory and Sex in Practice" listed numerous human conditions that blurred the biological boundaries of gender: men with overdeveloped

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Gender and History 22, no. 3 (2010): 629-657; Tze-lan D. Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Wenqing Kang, *Obsession: Male Same-Sex Relations in China, 1900-1950* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009).

[27] Oudshoorn, *Beyond the Natural Body*; Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body*; Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*; Sengoopta, *The Most Secret Quintessence of Life*.

[28] On the role of Japan as an intermediary in the transmission of Western scientific knowledge, see, for example, Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

large breasts, women with flat chests, men without facial hair, women with mustaches, men with female-shaped pelvis, women with male-shaped pelvis, men with womanly-like throats, women with manly-like throats, women whose voice, facial appearance, temperament, and body hair became mannish after regular menstruations have stopped, and, most notably, women who were "conspicuously masculinized" as a result of never having conceived.[29] Despite how exceptional these physical conditions may be, the author stressed that "even normal men and women actually possess latent aspects of the opposite sex in their body."[30] The exceptional cases, then, were simply "extreme" occurrences of the universal bisexual condition. Such biological categories as pure male or pure female only existed in theory, the author insisted, as "they do not exist in reality."[31]

The names of renowned Western proponents of the bisexual theory found their way into the subsequent pages of the book: Otto Weininger, Robert Müller, Rosa Mayreder, Solomon Herbert, Edward Carpenter, Leland, and Cattaneo. Out of this group, the name most frequently associated with the theory of bisexuality was Weininger.[32] Although Weininger's contribution anchored most of the discussions, the book closed by highlighting another influential study of the time, *The Sex Complex* by the British gynecologist William Blair Bell.[33] In siding with Bell's clinical findings, the author drove home the theory of biological bisexuality: "Each individual has the inner qualities and external morphology of both sexes in varying degrees. All men and women are mixtures of the essential elements of both sexes."[34] What this new theory of sex challenged was the feasibility of discrete categories. To proponents of this view such as Weininger and Bell in Europe or the author

[29] Wang, *Xing zhi yuanli*, pp. 145-146.
[30] Wang, *Xing zhi yuanli*, p. 146.
[31] Wang, *Xing zhi yuanli*, p. 146.
[32] See Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger*.
[33] W. Blair Bell, *The Sex Complex: A Study of the Relationship of the Internal Secretions to the Female Characteristics and Functions in Health and Disease* (London: Baillière, 1916). When Bell first published the book in 1916, his intention was to bring together a host of literature on the similar finding that reproductive functions are controlled by all the organs of internal secretion acting in concert.
[34] Wang, *Xing zhi yuanli*, p. 150.

and translator of *The Principle of Sex* in East Asia, average men were merely made up of a higher portion of "maleness," or traits typically associated with men, and a lower level of "femaleness," or qualities normally associated with women. Normal women, on the other hand, were the combination of predominant female elements and a lower expression of maleness. Everyone had the potential of expressing both ways. To quote from *The Principle of Sex* again, all men and women were simply variants of how certain traits "receded" to the background or "lay latent."[35] In the 1920s and 1930s, scientific investigations of sex moved toward an emphasis on individual variation in which categories blended into spectra or continua. The popular view of sex shifted, that is, from the categorical to the scalar.

Some Chinese sexologists went directly to the English sources themselves. In 1928, the Shanghai Commercial Press published a translation of Solomon Herbert's *The Physiology and Psychology of Sex*. With extensive coverage on both the biology and psychology of sex, the book offered a comprehensive overview of the main intellectual currents in Western sexology. As discussed in detail in the last chapter, many iconoclastic May Fourth intellectuals had already written on and introduced European sexological ideas about homosexuality.[36] By the time the translation of Herbert's work appeared, the notion of "sexual inversion" invoked by Havelock Ellis and Sigmund Freud frequently appeared in the vernacular lexicon of urban China. In 1929, for instance, a tabloid article identified a handful of foreign cross-dressers as exemplars of "sexual inversion."[37] Meanwhile, Chinese writers often mentioned Edward Carpenter's idea of the "intermediate sexes" in discussions of feminine men, mannish women, and other intermediary types.[38] By the time that the

[35] Wang, *Xing zhi yuanli*, p. 150.
[36] Apart from Chapter 3 of this dissertation, see also Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian*; Kang, *Obsession*; Chiang, "Epistemic Modernity and the Emergence of Homosexuality"
[37] Zhou Shoujuan (周瘦鵑), "Diandao xingbie zhi guainü qinan" (顛倒性別之怪女奇男) [Deviant women and men of sexual inversion], *Zi ruo lan* (紫羅蘭), v. 4, no. 5 (1929): 1-6.
[38] See, for example, Hu Qiuyuan (胡秋原) and Yang Youtian (楊憂天), *Tongxinglian wenti taolunji* (同性戀問

Commercial Press published a Chinese edition of Herbert's book, the subtle distinction between somatic and psychological sex had already gained some footing in the popular imagination.

From reading the Chinese translation of Herbert, one could easily relate recent findings in endocrinology to the new quantitative definition of sex and the theory of universal bisexuality.

> Recent scholars have come to the consensus that rather than assuming sex as something determined by reproductive organs, it is more correct to say that sex is determined by the various combinations of the internal secretions. Any individual with one of the sex glands (testes or ovaries) simultaneously maintains the characteristics of the opposite sex [同時保有他方異性之特徵].[39]

These words prepared the reader for a fuller exposition of what the Western sexologists called "sexual inversion" (性的顛倒, *xing de diandao*). In the same paragraph, bodily sex and psychological traits were carefully distinguished to challenge a dominant perspective of this clinical condition:

> The general public tends to consider male sexual inverts as individuals with a male soma and a female psyche [肉體為男性而精神為女性], but this view is too extreme and simplistic. In fact, the entire mental state [of the male sexual invert] is not female: only their sexual desire and emotions

題討論集) [A volume on the problem of homosexuality] (Shanghai: Beixin shuju, 1930).

[39] Zhu Jianxia (朱劍霞), trans., *Xing zhi shengli* (性之生理) [The physiology and psychology of sex] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1928), pp. 110-111.

> are female and the remaining parts [of their bodily constitution] remain normal.[40]

Unlike most European sexologists, Herbert did not use the soma/psyche distinction to propound a straightforward explanation of sexual inversion. Influenced by the emergent perspective of sex as quantitative rather than qualitative, he found the existing "a female soul trapped inside a man's body" interpretation to be problematic. The theory of human bisexuality posited that everyone was a mixture of both sexes. Thus, the paragraph continued:

> However, individuals with female characteristics are not a minority even among men, and yet most of them do not have perverted tendencies [變態的傾向]. Therefore, the difference between feminine men and male sexual invert is all the more difficult to discern based on a single criterion of the presence or absence of female sexual emotion [是否具有女性之性的感情之一點決定之]. Similarly, distinguishing sexual inverts from normal [men] is not a simple task.[41]

So subtle and confusing was the distinction between normal and pathological individuals. The translation of *The Physiology and Psychology of Sex* allowed Chinese readers to rethink some of the fundamental issues underlying the subject of same-sex desire, scientific narratives about abnormality, and the nature of sex itself.

[40] Zhu, *Xing zhi shengli*, p. 111.
[41] Zhu, *Xing zhi shengli*, p. 111.

V. Castration and the Feminized Male Sex

However startling or luring they may be, new discoveries in sex hormones, animal sex change, and universal bisexuality convinced some Chinese sexologists in part because they shared aspects of the existing *mentalité.* Or, to put it another way, the comprehensibility of these foreign ideas had to do with specific intellectual and political agendas of Chinese modernizing thinkers and social commentators. After the founding of the new Republic, longstanding corporeal practices in China, such as footbinding and castration, came to be denounced in elite and popular discourses as an unfavorable reminder of the past. The first chapter explored how the normative regime of eunuchism came to an end through the lens of the history of knowledge production about the castration operation itself. This section highlights another dimension of its social and cultural demise: how the body of eunuchs provided a concrete example from traditional Chinese culture that enabled Republican Chinese sexologists to focus their attention on and grasp new Western theories of sex. This re-gendering of eunuchs as feminized males signaled an epistemological departure from the cultural norms of Chinese castration according to which eunuchs retained a distinct masculine identity in late imperial political culture.[42]

In the 1920s, all of the key figures who subscribed to the theory of universal bisexuality brought up the example of eunuchs to elucidate the glandular model of sex. Again, Gu Shoubai played an important role in disseminating new findings in hormonal biology in this period. In *The Internal Secretions* (1924), Gu noted that boys at a relatively young age do not have "reproductive desires" (生殖慾, *shengzhiyu*) and their bodily makeup "is similar to girls." The rapid development of male sex characteristics, Gu pointed out, "begins only at the age of sixteen, when a boy enters a stage of human development that is

[42] See chapter 1 of this dissertation; Jennifer W. Jay, "Another Side of Chinese Eunuch History: Castration, Adoption, Marriage, and Burial," *Canadian Journal of History* 28, no. 3 (1993): 459-478.

typically called puberty."[43] At this point, a boy develops "the desire for and fondness of the opposite sex."[44] All of this, however, can be altered by castration:

> The removal of a boy's testicles will bring obstacles to his physical and mental growth. Even when he reaches puberty, his bodily development will not undergo those physical changes that are uniquely male [男性特有之變化]. Specifically, his muscles are less stringent; his strength is weaker; his body accumulates more fat; he has less body hair; the growth of his larynx stops and his vocal folds do not get any longer or thicker, and as a result his vocal production is similar to that of children; he has no reproductive desire; his mental reaction is slower than normal; and he lacks both moral judgment and the will to compete.[45]

No other corporeal figures than "eunuchs in our country's past" and "castrati in southern Europe" could better illustrate these psychosomatic changes after surgical castration. For Gu, Chinese eunuchs (宦官, *huanguan*) and Italian castrati were "concrete human examples of castration—one created for the purpose of preventing promiscuity [防其淫亂] and the other for the purpose of maintaining a beautiful voice [保其妙音]."[46]

Whatever the perceived value of eunuchs' existence in imperial China, their image as "emasculated" or "effeminate" living creatures has remained pervasive in and out of China.[47] If eunuchs were to be recognized as historical agents with some degree of masculinity at all,

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[43] Gu, *Neifenmi*, p. 23.
[44] Gu, *Neifenmi*, p. 24.
[45] Gu, *Neifenmi*, p. 24.
[46] Gu, *Neifenmi*, p. 24.
[47] Consider the lingering effect of this trope as assumed in the work of Melissa Dale on Chinese eunuchs: Melissa Dale, "Understanding Emasculation: Western Medical Perspectives on Chinese Eunuchs," *Social History of Medicine* 23 (2010): 38-55.

they were often cast as feminized men with unusual bodily traits. The discovery of chemical messengers that linked the sex glands to conventional gender morphologies unlocked the secret, for many, of those physical and psychological changes observers typically identified with eunuchs' embodied experience. As Gu's discussion above demonstrates, the eunuchs' body, in both the figurative and material senses, became an engine of transcultural exchange, a token of historic signifier, and a conduit of the material epistemology of knowledge by enabling scientifically-oriented thinkers in China to grasp and comprehend the new science of internal secretions emerging from the West.

Symmetrical discussions about the castrated male body can be found in Chinese translations of foreign sexological texts. In Wang Jueming's translation of *The Principle of Sex*, an analysis of the effects of human castration followed the section on Steinach's sex transplantation surgeries. Since Steinach experimented only on animals, the implications of his studies for humans seemed worth expounding: "eunuchs who were castrated at youth [幼時去勢之閹宦]" have "underdeveloped genitals [外部生殖器自不發達]." Their vocal folds do not elongate, so "the pitch of their voice is high like women's." Their body undergoes greater fact accumulation and grows lesser facial and body hair. Their pelvis would "not grow properly, just like that of a child." With respect to their psychological condition, they are "as gentle and sweet as a virgin youth [溫順如處子]."[48] Similar statements appeared in the Chinese edition of S. Herbert's *Physiology and Psychology of Sex*: "eunuchs who are castrated at youth [幼年去勢之宦官] experience no change in 'vocal production,' as they still maintain a voice with high pitch like the voice of young children."[49]

Although these quotes are taken from works originally written in Japanese or English, the translators' word choice for translating "eunuchs" into Chinese—*yanhuan* (閹宦) and

[48] Wang, *Xing zhi yuanli*, p. 138.
[49] Zhu, *Xing zhi shengli*, p. 96.

huanguan (宦官)—reveals an existing cultural lexicon deeply rooted in the norms of traditional Chinese social life. But the invocation of these terms in an intellectual horizon shaped by the conceptual contours of Western natural sciences also points to something more: a new consideration of castration as a scientific procedure and eunuchism as a bodily state that defied the fixed nature of sex binarism, an underlying preoccupation that would appear so foreign and strange to Chinese commentators on the subject before the twentieth century. In the modern period, the body of eunuchs became a "text" whose corporeal feminization suggested that men could become more female. As much as the new biochemical model of sex may had helped explain the effects of human castration, the castrated male body offered a concrete epistemological ground for the transmission, absorption, and articulation of new truth claims about sex and its transmutability and embodiment in the transition from late imperial to national Republican China.

VI. Hermaphroditism as a Natural Anomaly

Escalated publicity about surgical attempts at changing sex led to a renewed interest in natural reproductive anomalies. To readers of the modern sexological literature, castration represented a case in point of human-induced alteration of sex. For centuries, however, Chinese physicians endorsed various perspectives on patients born with ambiguous genitalia. The first systematic medical categorization of intersexed bodies appeared in the late Ming, with Li Shizhen's listing of five "non-males" and five "non-females" in his compendium of material medica, *Bencao gangmu* (1596).[50] As historian Charlotte Further has suggested, Qing physicians for the most part adhered to, or at least systematically referenced, Li's classification.[51] As chapter two has shown, the situation started to change

[50] Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu* [Systematic Materia Medica], pub. 1596. See *juan* 52, "人傀."
[51] Charlotte Furth, "Androgynous Males and Deficient Females: Biology and Gender Boundaries in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century China," *Late Imperial China* 9, no. 2 (1988): 1-31.

with the growing popularity of Western-style anatomical texts since the mid-nineteenth century.[52] By the Republican period, Chinese biologists demonstrated a sophisticated grasp of the competing perspectives and experimental findings on hermaphroditism—even on the microscopic scale of genes and chromosomes—coming from Europe and the United States.[53]

In the 1920s, though, some popularizers of sexology boiled down complex scientific theories for a general audience. Towards the end of his widely read *ABC of Sexology* (1928), self-proclaimed expert on sex Chai Fuyuan included a chapter on "Abnormal Sexual Lifestyle" (畸形性生活, *jixing xingshenghuo*). The chapter focused on four topics in particular: "incomplete male growths" (男性發育不全, *nanxing fayu buquan*), "incomplete female growths" (女性發育不全, *nüxing fayu buquan*), "ambiguous genital sex" (男女性別不明, *nannü xingbie buming*), and "homosexuality" (同性戀愛, *tongxing lian'ai*).[54] In the first two sections on incomplete male and female growths, Chai borrowed from Li Shizhen's categorization to explain human reproductive anomalies in Western anatomical terms. On "incomplete male growths," Chai wrote:

> The incomplete growth of male reproductive organs is a phenomenon commonly known as "natural castration" (天閹, *tianyan*). There are several types of natural castration. The first type is characterized by the incomplete development of external genitalia. Even with fully functional testicles and the biological capacity to produce sperm, people with this

[52] See, for example, Benjamin Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Larissa N. Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images: Translating the Pathological Body between China and the West* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Yi-Li Wu, *Reproducing Women: Medicine, Metaphor, and Childbirth in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).
[53] See chapter 2 of this dissertation; Howard Chiang, "The Conceptual Contours of Sex in the Chinese Life Sciences: Zhu Xi (1899-1962), Hermaphroditism, and the Biological Discourse of *Ci* and *Xiong*, 1920-1950," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Society* 2, no. 3 (2008): 401-430; and Howard Chiang, "*Scientia Sexualis* and the Transformation of *Xing* in Modern China" (paper presented at the "Routes of Knowledge and Practice: Science and Culture in China, 1860s-1930s" conference, Yale University, 29-30 January 2010).
[54] My analysis here excludes the section on "homosexuality," which is discussed in chapter 3.

> condition cannot mate due to the small size of their penis. The second type is exactly the opposite: although people with this condition are physically capable of mating, they lack sexual motivation and the physiological ability to produce sperm. The last type is a combination of both: people with this condition have incomplete internal and external sexual organs. Internally, their bodies do not possess functional testes; externally, they have an immature penis.[55]

Chai proceeded with a symmetrical discussion of "incomplete female growths":

> Women with an incomplete set of reproductive organs are typically called "stone maidens" (石女, *shinü*). The original meaning of "stone maiden" refers to women with genital anomalies of the sort that would make sexual penetration impossible. Eventually, the term was broadened to become associated more generally with incomplete female growths. With the external type, the genital organ is completely in an impenetrable state. It may be that the hymen is too thick so that it covers the vagina, or the labia is too thick and the vaginal opening too small making sexual penetration impossible. With the internal type, the individual either lacks ovaries or lacks ones that are functional, resulting in the absence of sexual motivation and the reproductive organs without proper female functions.[56]

Interestingly, none of the physical conditions Chai described here would be considered "hermaphroditic" by contemporary standards in Western biomedicine; rather, he merely

[55] Chai, *Xingxue ABC*, p. 115.
[56] Chai, *Xingxue ABC*, pp. 115-6.

reiterated a longstanding concern in traditional Chinese medicine with the generational capacity of individuals. For Chai, persons with the kind of physical symptoms and sexual experience outlined above would still be treated as reproductive anomalous, but whose genital sex per se does not present itself with a slightest degree of uncertainty.

Chai took a step further. In his discussion of the congenital malformations of the reproductive system, he included an additional section on "ambiguous genital sex."

> "Ambiguous Genital Sex" refers to people with external male genitalia and internal female reproductive system or with external female genitalia and internal male reproductive system, also known as "half *yin-yang* persons." If a man has a penis with a slight vaginal opening, he is called "male half *yin-yang*" (男性半陰陽). If a woman has an enlarged clitoris with reduced vagina and labia, she is called "female half-*yin-yang*" (女性半陰陽). If both ovaries and testes are internally present and a penis, labia, and a vagina are externally present, if an individual is physically capable of engaging in sexual intercourses with both men and women and experience organism from them, and if both the male and the female sex appear in the same body, this condition is called "bisexual half *yin-yang*" (兩性半陰陽).[57]

Using Chinese words with which lay readers felt more comfortable (i.e., *nan* and *nü*, *yin* and *yang*) than entirely foreign medical terms, Chai implicitly distinguished pseudo-hermaphrodites from true human hermaphrodites. His classification provided a way in which people could understand those new modern anatomical concepts, such as penis,

[57] Chai, *Xingxue ABC*, p. 116.

vagina, testes, and ovaries, based on traditional conceptions of human reproduction.[58] The biologic implications behind such categories as "male half *yin-yang*," "female half *yin-yang*," and "bisexual half *yin-yang*" blended nicely with the emergent theory of constitutional bisexuality that many of his contemporaries embraced. At least in these rare cases of reproductive anomalies, the physical make-up of the human body seemed to be innately dual sexed.

More often, Chinese urban intelligentsia assumed an opposite approach: to not simplify scientific information. In this spirit, another self-proclaimed natural scientist Liu Piji treated the topic of human hermaphroditism with finer detail in his *Common Misinterpretations of Biology*. The Shanghai Commercial Press published *Common Misinterpretations* in 1928, and, as the title of the book suggests, it was written to inform a popular audience about general misunderstandings of problems in biology. The motivation behind publishing the book, that is, squarely reflected the normative ethos of middle-brow print culture in the aftermath of the May Fourth: that it was important for educated Chinese to move toward a greater appreciation of the epistemological value of Western natural scientific knowledge, and away from Confucian philosophy or misguided superstitions (迷信, *mixin*). Liu authored *Common Misinterpretations* to garner greater public interest in Western science, by straightening out puzzles of everyday life for which modern biology seemed to offer the most adequate and reliable answers.

For Liu, misconceptions of human sexual oddity reflected a crucial oversight in Chinese knowledge about life. Popular errors and unfounded myths about sexually ambiguous bodies were pervasive, but Liu insisted that they could be misspelled only with accurate and direct interpretations of modern biological knowledge. In Chai Fuyuan's *ABC*

[58] Bridie Andrews has delineated a similar historical process for the reception of germ theory in early twentieth-century China. See Bridie J. Andrews, "Tuberculosis and the Assimilation of Germ Theory in China, 1895-1937," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 52, no. 1 (1997):114-157. See also Bridie J. Andrews, "The Making of Modern Chinese Medicine, 1895-1937" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1996).

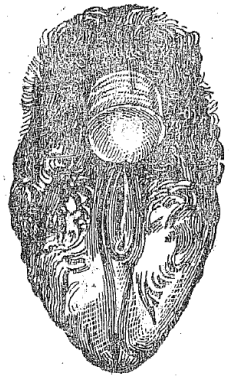
of Sexology, for example, earlier typologies of reproductive anomalies (from traditional Chinese medicine) were invoked to render the modern scientific category of hermaphroditism meaningful. He never articulated a neat distinction between "true" and "pseudo-" hermaphroditism, but his differentiation of "male half *yin-yang*" and "female half *yin-yang*" from "bisexual half *yin-yang*" was implicitly informed by it. In contrast, Liu was keen on translating the "true" and "pseudo-" distinction more explicitly into Chinese. He began by collapsing various Chinese labels for human hermaphrodites: "*Ci-xiong* humans (雌雄人) are also known as *yin-yang* humans (陰陽人), dual-shaped (二形), or bisexual abnormality (兩性畸形)."[59] Despite this variety, Liu suggested that they all designated a similar biological condition, which could be classified into two main categories: "true *ci-xiong* humans or true half *yin-yang*" and "pseudo-*ci-xiong* humans or pseudo-half *yin-yang*."[60]

Liu further divided pseudo-*ci-xiong* humans into two subtypes: "male *ci-xiong* humans" (男性雌雄人) and "female *ci-xiong* humans" (女性雌雄人). According to Liu's definition, the former label referred to individuals who had "internal male sex glands (with testes)" (內部生殖腺為男性 [有睪丸的]), but, externally, his "genital appearance resembles the female sex" (外陰部為女性); the second subtype referred to those who had ovaries but with male external genitalia. The physical appearance of male *ci-xiong* humans looked like a woman and the physical appearance of female *ci-xiong* humans a man. This left "true *ci-xiong* humans" for people born with "both types of male and female sex glands (meaning, having both testes and ovaries)." This unique condition, Liu hastened to add, was referred to as "a man yet a woman, a woman yet also a man" (値男即女値女即男) in the late Ming

[59] Liu Piji (劉丕基), *Renjian wujie de shengwu* (人間誤解的生物) [Common misinterpretations of biology] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1935 [1928]), p. 81.

[60] Liu, *Renjian wujie de shengwu*, p. 82. This distinction between true half *yin-yang* (真性半陰陽) and pseudo-half *yin-yang* (假性半陰陽) was also endorsed by the practicing gynecologist Gui Zhiliang. See Gui Zhiliang, *Nüren zhi yisheng* (女人之一生) [A woman's life] (Beijing: Zhengzhong shuju, 1936), p. 11.

materia medica *Bencao gangmu* by Li Shizhen.[61] To illustrate his point, Liu reproduced a hand-drawn image of the genial area of female *ci-xiong* humans (**Figure 42**) and a picture of Marie-Madeleine Lefort (1799-1864), a famous female pseudo-hermaphrodite (**Figure 43**).[62]



圖三十二第
部陰之陽陰半假性女

Figure 42: Liu Piji, "The Genital Area of Female Pseudo-Hermaphrodites" (1928).



圖四十二第
女性假半陰陽 Nagdalena Lefort 之肖像
（時年六十五歲）

[61] Liu, *Renjian wujie de shengwu*, p. 82.

[62] Interestingly, the biologist Zhu Xi also reproduced this image of Marie-Madeleine Lefort just after the title page of his book, *Changes in Biological Femaleness and Maleness* (1945). Zhu Xi, *Cixiong zhi bian* (雌雄之變) [Changes in biological femaleness and maleness], rev. ed. (Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe, 1948 [1945]). On Lefort, see Alice Domurat Dreger, *Hermaphrodites and the Medical Invention of Sex* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 54.

Figure 43: Liu Piji, "The Portrait of the Female Pseudo-Hermaphrodite, Nagdalena Lefort (65 Years of Age)" (1928).

More so than this classification scheme, Liu devoted a significant part of his discussion to the question of why and how these congenital malformations occurred in nature. He drew on embryological knowledge to provide an adequate explanation for the existence of these rare human conditions. Supporting the theory of innate bisexuality, he located their cause in irregular embryonic development. In his words, "the sex glands (referring to testes and ovaries) of the human embryo are identical for men and women…Sexual differentiation begins only during the second to the third month of fetal development, when the sex glands gradually matures into a finer differentiation between the two sexes. This is also the time when [testicular and ovarian cells] are formed."[63] He noted the "disappearance" of the Müllerian duct in normal male embryonic development and the "disappearance" of the Wolfferian duct in the maturation of the female fetus. Typically, the former embryonic duct developed into uterus, vagina, and fallopian tubes in the woman, whereas the latter developed into seminal vesicle, epididymis, and vas deferens in the man. "The concurrent growth of both ducts," Liu explained, "would thus produce a true *ci-xiong* individual."[64] On the other hand, the external genitals of male pseudo-*ci-xiong* humans were "insufficiently developed" (發育不完全), thus "appearing not as a penis but as a clitoris" (不成陰莖而像女的陰核), whereas female pseudo-*ci-xiong* persons had "clitorises that were "irregularly developed" (異常發育) and "appear like a penis" (外觀像是陰莖).[65]

The scientific classification and explanation put forth by Liu Piji featured none of the overriding concerns with reproductive potential in traditional medicine. In introducing the

[63] Liu, *Renjian wujie de shengwu*, p. 83.
[64] Liu, *Renjian wujie de shengwu*, p. 84.
[65] Liu, *Renjian wujie de shengwu*, p. 86.

modern biomedical divide between "true" and "pseudo-" hermaphrodites, he reworked Li Shizhen's naturalist observations in the new lexicon of glandular and embryological sciences. Chai's allusion to *Bencao gangmu* in his *ABC of Sexology*, on the other hand, foregrounded those issues of generational capacity that crucially characterized the naturalist's original typology. But whether Liu was more "accurate" than Chai is perhaps less important here. The significance of their writings lies in the similar ways in which they provided Chinese readers the first sustained contact with Western biological knowledge about sexually ambiguous bodies. In the 1920s, the hermaphroditic body, like the castrated male body, became a "text" whose corporeal significance helped anchor a new vision of sex. If the embodied experience of eunuchs exemplified the potential transformation of a man into a more female-like figure, true and pseudo-hermaphrodites were the most basic and natural examples of universal human bisexuality.

Despite the multiplicity of modernizing attitudes surrounding a new vision of sex, in the 1920s Chinese sexologists remained oblivious to the possibility of complete sex transformations in humans. Even though new findings in endocrinology, accompanied by the biological theory of bisexuality, boosted the notion that men could become female and women could become male, for the most part, Chinese scientists commented with greater confidence (and ease) on sex reversal in animals only. When they discussed explicit examples of human sexual defects, they focused on eunuchs and hermaphrodites. Indeed, Liu Piji intended his scientific exposition of intersexed conditions to alleviate any misconceptions about *renyao* (人妖), for which the best English translations would be "freak," "fairy," or "human prodigy."[66] Specifically, he wanted to dismiss the validity of this traditional concept, which had been used in Chinese discourses to describe a diverse spectrum of individuals in ambiguous and, according to him, unscientific ways.

[66] See discussion of the term in Judith Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 104; and Kang, *Obsession*, pp. 33-39.

After listing the various categories of human hermaphrodites, Liu remarked that "our country has a long history of calling these individuals 'freaks' [怪胎] or 'human prodigy' [人妖]. Many of them were tortured to death, but even for the minority who fortunately survived, they were often not treated as proper human beings."[67] Liu's message was clear: the longstanding popular rendition of *renyao* lacked a scientific basis, especially as it led to, for centuries, the social mistreatment of natural variants in the human population. Popular errors and myths about the figure of *renyao*, he argued, should be replaced with modern biological accounts of human intersexuality. Liu concluded his chapter, entitled "*Ci-Xiong* Humans Misunderstood as Human Prodigies," with the following remark:

> With pseudo-hermaphrodites, it is possible for the male sex to change into a female and the female into a male. His/her inner physiology is usually without any defect, but the outer part is not completely formed. As a result, the body undergoes many changes at puberty, when the outer part fully develops and reveals itself in its true appearance. Traditionally, people did not understand the reasons for these changes and considered men who become women and women who become men demonic. Consequently, records of such phenomena in official histories and popular gazetteers have been ambiguous and lacked specificity. In reality, it is nothing but a very ordinary phenomenon; what is there to be surprised about?[68]

In Liu's formulation, then, men who become female and women who become male are all

[67] Liu, *Renjian wujie de shengwu*, p. 82.
[68] Liu, *Renjian wujie de shengwu*, pp. 88-89. Cf. Frank Dikötter's translation in *Imperfect Conceptions: Medical Knowledge, Birth Defects, and Eugenics in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 74-75 (with incorrect citation).

pseudo-hermaphrodites and nothing more.

Liu restated this view in *Scientific China*, one of the leading popular science magazines of the Republican period. In 1934, the magazine featured a Q&A section on "What is the Explanation for Female-to-Male Transformation." Zi Yin, a reader from Shanghai, had learned about the sudden transformation of a sixteen-year-old French girl named Henriette Acces into a boy. According to Acces' doctor, orthogonadist Robert Minne, "Henriette Acces has become physiologically male," and "it is entirely possible, and even probable, that Henri can become a father."[69] *Scientific China* asked Liu to respond to this foreign incident of sex change raised by Zi Yin. Consistent with the reasons he provided in his book, Liu explained human sex transformation as a natural outcome of pseudo-hermaphroditism. Again, Liu insisted that "men who become women and women who become men are only due to their biological structural defect, and should not be considered as freaks." For people with incomplete external genital formations, including Acces, they may switch sex around the age of fifteen or sixteen. Liu suggested that this is because bodily pathologies and defects typically reveal themselves at puberty. But how come some individuals with ambiguous genitalia never undergo sex transformation? These individuals, according to Liu, are true hermaphrodites who possess both male and female genitals that developed normally. To underscore his point, Liu concluded his response with the following words: "True hermaphrodites cannot experience sex change, a possibility limited to pseudo-hermaphrodites. Since Henriette Acces is a pseudo-hermaphrodite, she certainly can undergo the type of sex change that is also known as female-to-male transformation. Such bodily transformation merely reveals her original masculine trait and should not be deemed as a rare and repulsive event."[70]

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[69] "Medicine: Girls into Boys," *Time*, 27 August 1934.

[70] "Nübiannan jiujing sheme daoli" (女變男究竟什麼道理) [What is the explanation for female-to-male sex transformation], *Kexue de Zhongguo* (科學的中國) [Scientific China] 4, no. 9 (1934): 398.

In these discussions, Liu Piji's intention was, of course, not to generate novel scientific hypotheses about biological malformations, but simply to demonstrate the power of modern science to throw light on all aspects of life. In hoping to correct the popular tendency to demonize and marginalize the figure of the "human prodigy," Liu implied that human sex change was possible only among people born with intersexed conditions. His normalization of human hermaphrodites, so to speak, simultaneously articulated the *impossibility* of sex transformation among non-intersexed persons. Liu's point was not that human sex reversal was impossible, but just that such a biological phenomenon could be explained with an adequate grasp of modern biological knowledge about natural genital defects. Ultimately, even modernizing voices such as Liu Piji's did not convey a keen message about the physical change of sex among normal (non-intersexed) adults. In the 1920s, Chinese scientists entertained the possibility of human sex change and even offered scientific explanations for it, but they oftentimes retreated to biologically anomalous cases such as eunuchs and hermaphroditic subjects. They had not yet articulated a vision of individuals as agents capable of requesting surgical sex transformations.

VII. Yao Jinping and the Publicity on Sex Change

The idea that non-intersexed individuals could change their sex began to reach a wider public in the mid-1930s when the press reported on a lady from Tianjin named Yao Jinping (姚錦屏), who turned into a man and changed her name to Yao Zhen (姚震) in 1934. On 17 March 1935, news of her sex transformation appeared in major papers, including *Shenbao* (申報) and *Xinwenbao* (新聞報), and soon became the spotlight of urban public discourses in China. According to Yao's grandfather, the family lost contact with her father, Yao Yotang (姚有堂), after his army was defeated by the Japanese troops and retreated to Xinjiang. Yao cried day and night and would rarely get out of bed until one night in the late

summer of 1934, when a lightning struck the roof of their house. Yao felt a sudden change to her body. On the next morning, she reported her possible sex alteration to her grandmother, who felt Yao's fully clothed genital area and was confident that Yao had turned into a man. Her body metamorphosis earned the uniform label *nühuanan* (woman-to-man, 女化男) in the media.[71]

Although surprised by the transition at first, Yao's grandfather eventually decided to bring her to Yao Yotang's general officer in Shanghai and explained the situation to him. On the day before Yao's news appeared in print, reporters met Yao in person but mainly spoke to her grandfather, who assumed the responsibility of communicating the details of her bodily change to the press. Her grandfather presented several pieces of "evidence" to prove Yao's former biological femininity, including a diploma indicating Yao's graduation from a female unisex elementary school in 1930. The most significant piece of evidence that her grandfather showed the reporters were two of Yao's photographs taken before and after her sex change (**Figure 44**). These photos were printed and distributed in all the newspapers that reported on Yao's story.[72] Apart from this crucial piece of evidence, journalists highlighted other fragmented hints of femininity, including her pierced ears and slightly bound feet. Given these indications, the headline of Yao's account in *Shenbao* read "evidence points to the factual status [of sex change] and waits to be examined by experienced physiologists."[73] *Xinwenbao* identified the Yao story as "something similar to a fairy tale" and the evidence provided by her grandfather as "nothing like the *biji* [筆記] notes…but hard facts."[74]

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[71] "Nühua nanshen zhi Yao Jinping yeyi di Hu" (女化男身之姚錦屏業已抵滬) [The woman-to-man Yao Jinping has arrived in Shanghai], *Shenbao* (申報), March 17, 1935, no. 4, p. 13.

[72] See, for example, "Nühua nanshen zhi Yao Jinping yeyi di Hu," *Shenbao*; "Yao Jinping yeyi di Hu" (姚錦屏業已抵滬) [Yao Jinping has arrived in Shanghai], *Xinwenbao* (新聞報), March 17, 1935, no. 13; and Dan Weng (丹翁), "Nühuanan" (女化男) [Woman-to-man], *Jingbao* (京報), March 20, 1935, no. 2.

[73] "Nühua nanshen zhi Yao Jinping yeyi di Hu," *Shenbao*.

[74] "Yao Jinping yeyi di Hu," *Xinwenbao*.

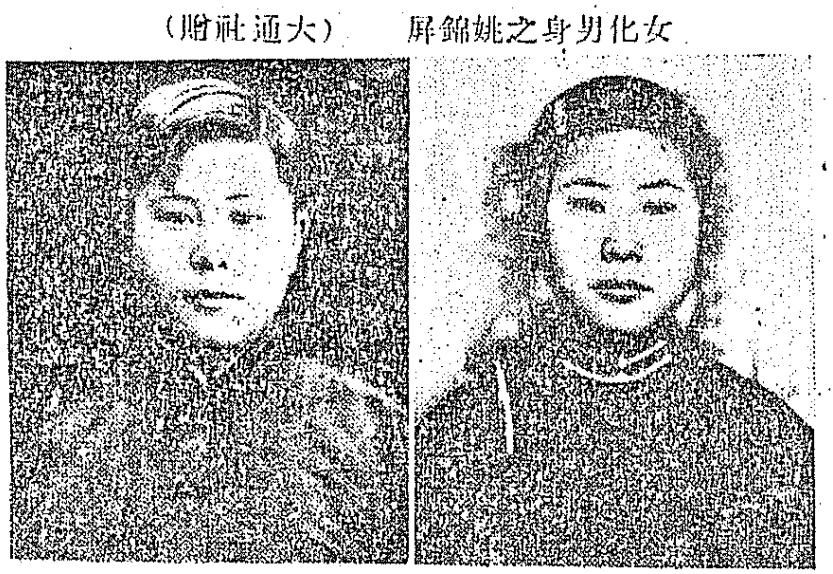

Figure 44: "Yao Jinping's Female-to-Male Transformation," *Shenbao* (1935).

On the second day of her publicity, Yao finally opened herself up and narrated her own experience to the journalists, in part because they soon considered the details provided by her grandfather to be "inconsistent." Yao explained that during her childhood, she lived like all the other girls she knew. She began to experience menstruation on a regular basis at the age of 14. One day in the summer of 1934, Yao felt extreme physical discomfort, dizziness, and a distinct lack of appetite. She stayed in bed throughout the day until upon hearing a lightning strike at night, when her reproductive organ suddenly transformed into the opposite sex. After her grandmother had strategically confirmed Yao's physical changes, Yao was kept in the house for an entire month. Over the course of her recovery, Yao's chest flattened so that her upper body looked more masculine, and a bulge appeared on her throat that resembled an Adam's apple. She turned into a man at the age of 20. According to the account in *Shenbao*, "these are the physiological changes that occurred following the transformation of [her] reproductive organ."[75] Leaking another piece of information about

[75] "Yao Jinping huanan fangwen ji" (姚錦屏化男訪問記) [Interview with Yao Jinping about her sex

her past, *Xinwenbao* ran the exposé with the headline "marriage arranged prior to sex change now cancelled."[76]

Upon hearing Yao's own recollection, reporters hastened to ask about the relevant psychological changes. They were eager to find out whether Yao had begun to experience "sexual feelings towards women" (對女子之性感覺), especially in light of her decision to cancel her arranged marriage. Yao expressed unease upon hearing this question, so she refused to answer it directly. Instead, she wrote on a piece of paper: "I am currently no different from a normal man. One hundred days after my physical sex change, I started to experience an admiration of sorts upon meeting other women." At this point, her grandfather stepped in and told the reporters that although Yao now had a male genital organ, it remained underdeveloped. The reporters recommended Yao to allow herself to be physically examined by a medical practitioner. But her grandfather insisted that she still needed more rest, only after which they may consider a full medical exam. Meanwhile, her father's senior official, General Li Du, acknowledged his responsibility to schedule Yao for a full physical check-up. He also expressed his willingness to financially support Yao so that she could go back to school.[77]

On the same day, reporters directly consulted a few medical experts for professional opinion on Yao's case. Yan Fuqing (顏福慶), the president of the National Shanghai Medical School (國立上海醫學院), remarked that Yao's physiological transformations may be symptoms of a "*ci* becoming *xiong*" (雌孵雄) condition, or pseudo-hermaphroditic female-to-male sex transformation. Nonetheless, he insisted that the truth behind Yao's incident can only be confirmed after her body has been thoroughly examined according to

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transformation], *Shenbao* (申報), March 18, 1935, no. 3, p. 12.

[76] "Yao Jinping de zizhu hou jiang qiuxue" (姚錦屏得資助後將求學) [Yao Jinping will return schooling after receiving financial support], *Xinwenbao* (新聞報), March 18, 1935, no. 11.

[77] "Yao Jinping huanan fangwen ji," *Shenbao*.

strict scientific standards. Similarly, Xu Naili (徐乃禮), the Acting Chair of the Medical Association (醫師公會監委), commented that although a case like Yao's was indeed rare, the facts remained to be fully uncovered. A definitive diagnosis of Yao's condition must not be formulated based on unfounded speculations.[78]

On the following day, other interlocutors from the medical profession voiced their opinion. The gynecologist Mao Wenjie (毛文杰) paid Yao a visit on the morning of 18 March and requested to inspect her body carefully. Yao refused to take off her clothes, so Mao proceeded with an assessment of her reproductive organ in a fully dressed situation, which was identical to how her grandmother verified her change of sex. Based on this indirect observation, Mao conjectured that Yao's condition was congruent with what doctors normally called "female pseudo-hermaphroditism," or what was more commonly known in Chinese as "*ci* becoming *xiong*." Mao testified that Yao's male genital organ remained underdeveloped, because although he could sense a penis that was immediately erected upon physical contact, he was certain of Yao's lack of testicles. He also called attention to specific residual female traits of Yao's body, such as a large right breast (but a small left one) and a significant amount of vaginal secretion that left a strong odor around her genital area.[79]

Mao pointed out a similar case in 1930 of a man who underwent sex metamorphosis in Hangzhou. The twenty-one-year-old Shen Tianfang (沈天放) had experienced abdominal pain on a monthly basis since the age of 16. By July 1930, the periodic discomfort Shen had felt for years reached an unbearable degree, so his mother finally brought him to several doctors for treatment. While some physicians attributed Shen's condition to intestinal problems, others considered Shen to have contracted some type of sexually transmitted

[78] "Yao Jinping huanan fangwen ji," *Shenbao*.
[79] "Yao Jinping xi fushen huananti" (姚錦屏係副腎化男體) [Yao Jinping's masculinization of the adrenal gland], *Shenbao* (申報), March 19, 1935, no. 3, p. 12; "Yao Jinping nühua nanshen" (姚錦屏女化男身) [Yao Jinping's body transformed into a man], *Xinwenbao* (新聞報), March 19, 1935, no. 10.

disease. Yet still, after a handful of consultations, Shen's condition only worsened. Finally, in August, Shen and his mother met Dr. Wang Jiren (王吉人) of the Tongren Hospital (同仁醫院) on Qingnian Road (青年路) in Shanghai. Wang specialized in the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, with a secondary expertise in surgery. He considered Shen's reproductive organs to be symptomatic of a congenital defect, most certainly unlike the ones infected by sexually transmitted diseases. Nor did Wang think that there was any problem with Shen's digestive system. Wang found no testes inside Shen's scrotum and compared his enlarged breasts to women's. Consequently, he gave Shen the diagnosis of "female pseudo-hermaphroditism," and, to treat it, he surgically constructed "an artificial vagina" (人工造膣). The *Shenbao* report claimed that Shen "suddenly becomes a woman" and showed a photograph of Shen's genital area after the sex change operation (**Figure 45**).[80] For Mao, Shen's medicalized sex transformation provided an important precedent for interpreting Yao Jinping as just another case of female pseudo-hermaphroditism.

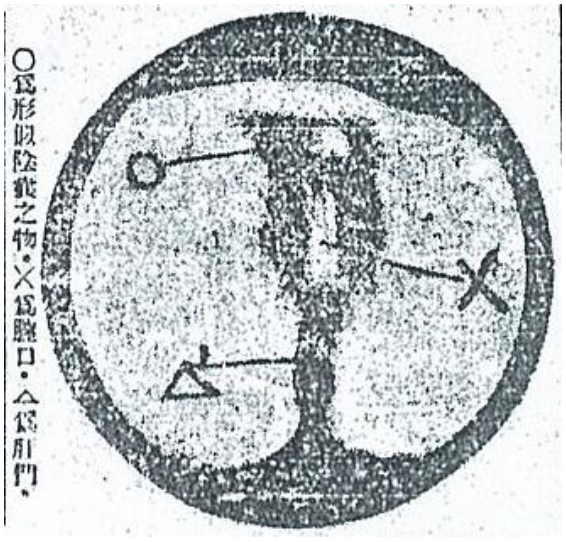

Figure 45: Shen Tianfang's genital area after sex change surgery, *Shenbao* (1930).

[80] "Ershiyi sui nanzi hubian er nüzi" (二十一歲男子 乎變而女子) [21-year-old man suddenly becomes a woman], *Shenbao* (申報), October 29, 1930, no. 4, p. 15.

Another physician named Wang Guning provided a different diagnosis for Yao's condition. Wang graduated with a doctorate from the Faculty of Medicine at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, and he was previously a surgeon at the Beijing Railway Hospital and a neurologist at the Royal Manchester Hospital in England. Wang claimed to have expertise in sexual pathology and believed Yao's incident to be one among the many female-to-male sex transformation cases that could be best situated at the forefront of medical research. Instead of explaining her condition with the more popular notion of pseudo-hermaphroditism, Wang introduced a sophisticated-sounding medical term, "the masculinization of the adrenal gland" (副腎化男體, *fushen huananti*), to further impress the public of his professional knowledge. According to Wang, doctors around the world have yet to agree on a consistent set of symptoms for this physiological disorder, but it was found mainly among women living in the temperate regions. Mature women who have this disorder would undergo bodily changes that make their physical appearance similar to men. However, Wang added, these changes are typically due to long-term effects of hormonal imbalance. Therefore, Wang warned that Yao's attribution of her sex change to a lightning strike must only be a false illusion and cannot be the actual reason for her bodily transformations. Like other medical experts, Wang concluded that final word on Yao's sex change can be reached only after her body has been carefully scrutinized by a licensed practitioner.[81]

While most health care experts who spoke out were enthusiastic about the possibility that Yao's case would bring significant breakthroughs in the medical field, all of them remained careful in not arriving at a definitive diagnosis before a physical examination of Yao's body has taken place. On the day that Yao was transported to the National Shanghai Medical School, its director, Yan Fuqing, met with General Li Du and was surprised to learn of Yao's claim that her sex changed abruptly over night. According to Yan, the

[81] "Yao Jinping xi fushen huananti," *Shenbao*.

female-to-male transformations that result from female pseudo-hermaphroditism are typically gradual. In order to figure out what was really going on behind Yao's self-proclaimed sex change over such a short span of time, Yan promised to assign to this case the best practitioners in his hospital, including the chair of the gynecology department, Dr. Wang Yihui (王逸慧), and the chair of the urology department, Dr. Gao Rimei (高日枚).[82]

Word that Yao's story was merely a hoax soon shocked the public. On 21 March, the *Shenbao* coverage of the result of Yao's clinical examination was introduced with the headline "Yao Jinping is Completely Female." The *Shenbao* reporters confirmed this startling finding with General Li over telephone on the evening of 20 March. According to Li, because Yan Fuqing highly valued Yao's case for its tremendous potential in contributing to the progress of medicine, he assigned six of his best doctors (two Westerners and four Chinese) to conduct a thorough examination on Yao. At nine o'clock in the morning (of 20 March), they tried to persuade Yao to take off her clothes so that her body could be closely examined by the medical team, but Yao's refusal to cooperate ensued. Eventually, the team had to rely on anesthesia to bring Yao to sleep, and, upon close investigation, the doctors realized that Yao's body remained completely female without a slightest degree of transformation into the male sex. This disappointing discovery was confirmed by eleven o'clock in the morning. Pressed by General Li immediately afterward, Yao explained that her intention in presenting herself as a man was to be able to join the army in Xinjiang and reconnect with his father. This would not have been feasible for a woman. General Li quickly forgave Yao and promised an annual support of 300 Yuan for Yao's family plus the cost required to send Yao back to school in Tianjin.[83] The coverage in *Xinwenbao* the next

[82] "Yao Jinping zuoru yiyuan jianyan" (姚錦屏昨入醫院檢驗) [Yao Jinping entered the hospital yesterday for examination], *Shenbao* (申報), March 20, 1935, no. 3, p. 10; "Zuo song Shanghai yiyuan jianyan" (昨送上海醫學院檢驗) [Entered the Shanghai Hospital for examination], *Xinwenbao* (新聞報), March 20, 1935, no. 12.
[83] "Yao Jinping wanquan nüershen" (姚錦屏完全女兒身) [Yao Jinping is a complete woman], *Shenbao* (申報), March 21, 1935, no. 3, p. 12.

day revealed that the deceiving erected male reproductive organ felt (indirectly) by Dr. Mao Wenjie on 18 March was only a bundle of cloth wrapped in a rod-like fashion.[84]

VIII. Sex Change and the Popular Press

For the most part, the general public viewed Yao Jinping neither as a freak nor as someone embodying those negative connotations typically associated with the traditional figure of "the human prodigy." Instead, when confronted with this highly sensationalized case of sex transformation, Chinese readers of the mass circulation press reacted in a surprisingly sympathetic tone. In light of the level of publicity that Yao received, it provoked interest in arguably every corner of urban Chinese culture in March 1935. The majority of observers endorsed the epistemological value of science as it was conveyed in the sexological literature. Some commentators stressed the importance of gathering sufficient scientific evidence before jumping to hasty conclusions about Yao's bodily change; others, following the voice of most doctors, assumed that her sex change was already real and argued the other way around: the value of Yao's experience for unlocking the secret of nature and thus the advancement of science (in China). More often, though, Yao's ostensible sex transformation was perceived with a growing sentimentalism that framed her behavior and motivations in extraordinarily positive terms. In the mid-1930s, the press coverage of Yao Jinping generated a "public passion" on an unprecedented scale towards the issue of sex change and beyond.[85]

On 18 March, the day after Yao Jinping's name made headlines in China, a commentary that appeared in *Xinwenbao* attempted to offset the sudden peak of public interest and anxiety surrounding Yao's story. The writer, Du He (most likely a pseudonym),

[84] "Yao Jinping yanxi wanquan nüshen" (姚錦屏驗係完全女身) [Yao Jinping has been confirmed to be a complete woman], *Xinwenbao* (新聞報), March 22, 1935, no. 12.
[85] The term "public passions" is adopted from Eugenia Lean, *Public Passions: The Trial of Shi Jianqiao and the Rise of Popular Sympathy in Republican China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

began by pointing out the prevalence of both female-to-male and male-to-female transformations in the Chinese historical record. The popular tendency to dismiss these cases as outright impossible, according to Du He, should be corrected. In fact, around this time another case of female-to-male transformation was widely reported outside China. The message was clear: this coincidence of "Sino-Western reflection" (中西對照, *zhongxi duizhao*), in the author's words, suggested the non-uniqueness of Yao Jinping's experience. Locating the cause of Yao's transformation in congenital physiological defects, Du He argued against considering it as an irregular or surprising event. Here, the view promoted by Chinese sexologists (such as Liu Piji) in the 1920s had filtered down to the popular level: modern science could throw light on puzzles of life previously less well understood.

Interestingly, Du He insisted that Yao was already a man regardless of his physiology. Apart from the fact that Yao was consistently referred to as a "he" (他) instead of a "she" (她), the entire discussion proceeded on the assumption that Yao had already turned into a man. To the author, Yao embodied a distinctively masculine gender worth praising rather than being doubted upon:

> Yao Jinping deeply missed his father when he was a girl. He cried day and night. Now that he has become a man, he promised himself to find and reconnect with his father. It is evident that he is not only filial but also masculine-hearted by nature. People like him and those who are associated with him should be applauded and granted extra love and care. With positive support, he can turn into a "good man" (好男兒). His physiological changes should not be the focus of discussion, which would render him as a rare biological oddity.

By placing an equal, if not greater, emphasis on gender embodiment, the author differed from the sexologists who held up science as the only answer to all aspects of sexual life. Notwithstanding his reinforcement of gender stereotypes, Du He wanted to convey a larger point regarding societal treatments of people who undergo sex change: that their social status should not be stigmatized by scientific standards and narratives of abnormality.[86]

Others perceived the relationship between science and Yao's unconventional changeover in a less antagonistic way. According to an article that appeared in the Shanghai tabloid newspaper *Crystal* (晶報, *Jingbao*) on 21 March, "Research on Female-to-Male Transformation" (女轉男身之研究), the value of Yao's experience and the value of scientific research should be more adequately understood in reciprocal terms. The author Fang Fei also opened with the observation that there had been plenty of historical documentations of sex change in China, "but, without reliable evidence, they are not trustworthy." Fang claimed that Yao Jinping's transformation from a woman to a man, on the other hand, provided a rare and important opportunity for the scientific assessment of similar phenomena. Even "the pierced ears and the bound feet" in Yao's case "do not constitute solid evidence, because they are the result of human labor [人為]." In contrast, such natural changes in Yao's physiology as genital transformation, the flattening of breasts, the development of an Adam's apple, and, according to Fang, "the most surprising observation that all of these were induced by a strike of lightning" would be "something worth further investigation by scholars in our country."[87]

By and large, Fang's discussion endorsed the spirit of scientism promoted by May Fourth sexologists. In her view, Yao's case presented researchers and medical doctors a valuable opportunity to study the nature of sex transformation based on hard evidence and, by

[86] "Nühua nanshen," (女化男身) [Woman-to-man bodily transformation], *Xinwenbao* (新聞報), March 18, 1935, no. 17.

[87] Fang Fei (芳菲), "Nüzhuan nanshen de yanjiu" (女轉男身的研究) [Research on women who turned into men], *Jingbao* (京報), March 21, 1935, no. 3.

extension, to advance the status of the Chinese scientific community. Because actual human sex change was "such a rare event in life" (此為人生難得之遭逢), Fang encouraged experts in medicine and biology to not let this opportunity slip. Similar to Du He, Fang's assumption here, before knowing the eventual outcome of Yao's story, was that Yao had already become male. But unlike Du He, Fang did not take science as a powerful force of cultural authority that necessarily pathologized and marginalized the social status of people like Yao Jinping. Fang instead argued that precisely due to its rarity, Yao's unique experience should actually make her proud after "abandoning any feeling of shame and offering [herself] to the advancement of science."[88]

At the peak of Yao's publicity, some tabloid writers followed the leads of earlier sexologists and brought to public discourse similar bodily conditions, such as hermaphroditism and eunuchism. In a *Crystal* article entitled "Reminded of A'nidu because of Yao Jinping" (因姚錦屏迴想阿尼度), the author Xiao Ying recalled a lady named A'nidu from the Shanghai Courtesan House after being exposed to Yao's publicity. A'nidu, who died a few decades before the Yao incident, turned out to be the foster parent of the famous Shanghainese courtesan Wendi Laoba (文第老八). According to Xiao Ying, A'nidu's body was masculinized in ways similar to Yao's transformation: she "had a *yang* presence but a *yin* face," and "she wore women's clothes to emulate a *ci* [female] appearance, yet her large physique resembled a man." When A'nidu was still alive, many assumed that she was an "underdeveloped man" (發育未全之男子). Xiao Ying regretted that A'nidu's body was not subjected to postmortem examination. For Xiao Ying, the difference between a man and a woman (男女之別) could not be determined solely based on genital appearance: the internal structures of the reproductive system mattered, too. Writing in a language similar to Chai Fuyuan's notorious *ABC of Sexology* (especially his discussion of "incomplete male growth"

[88] Fang, "Nüzhuan nanshen de yanjiu."

[男性發育不全]), Xiao Ying seemed to have applied some of his sexological ideas about natural reproductive anomalies to the case of A'nidu.[89]

With respect to Yao Jinping, Xiao Ying's overarching point was that any claims laid about her sex change could only be inconclusive before her body has been subjected to a thorough medical examination. "Although Yao Jinping is publically known to have transformed from *yin* to *yang*," Xiao Ying carefully asserted, "her lower body parts have not been investigated by anyone. The statements made by her grandfather, Yao Qingpu, about her penile development have not been verified. Most doctors judge the case to be the '*ci* becoming *xiong* [雌孵雄]' type, but it seems to be too early to draw such a conclusion." Unlike Du He and Fang Fei, Xiao Yign did not assume that Yao Jinping had already undergone a sex transformation. Xiao Ying brought up A'nidu precisely to underscore the importance of a careful physical check-up, especially in order to achieve a reliable assessment of the anatomical status of similarly ambiguous bodies. "It would be most welcome," Xiao Ying wrote, if "the determination of Yao Jinping as either *ci* or *xiong* by doctors" could "be reported in various newspapers and print venues." In arguing for the publicity of the result of Yao's sex determination, rather than emphasizing her marginal and stigmatized status, Xiao's intention, similar to the previous two writers, was to promote the value of science in an age of social and political uncertainties.[90]

Xiao Ying also claimed that the whole publicity on Yao Jinping brought back memories of eunuchs. Four days after the article on A'nidu appeared, she contributed another piece to *Crystal* called "Reminded of Eunuchs because of Yao Jinping's Female Body" (因姚錦屏女身想起太監). As its opening sentence suggests, news of Yao's unchanged female sex was widely reported by this point: "The self-proclaimed female-to-male Yao

[89] Xiao Ying (小英), "Yin Yao Jinping huixiang A'nidu" (因姚錦屏迴想阿尼度) [Reminded of A'nidu because of Yao Jinping], *Jingbao* (京報), March 20, 1935, no. 3.
[90] Xiao Ying (小英), "Yin Yao Jinping huixiang A'nidu."

Jinping was confirmed to be female after being medically examined by a group of seven doctors—Chinese and Western—at the National Shanghai Medical School." But Xiao Ying did not offer a straightforward rendition of what happened.

> The doctors discovered that her fake male genital appearance was made possible by a phallic-like bundle of cloths and not due to an actual female-to-male transformation of the reproductive organ. This bears striking similarities to the castration surgeries operated on eunuchs for the sudden effect of dismemberment (若昔之太監淨身脫然而落也). [Upon uncovering the truth behind Yao's sex change,] Professor Yan Fuqing and his group of doctors must have enjoyed a good laugh.[91]

Yao Jinping reminded Xiao Ying of castration in both realistic and metaphoric ways. Realistically, Yao's female body was laid bare in front of the group of medical experts like an eunuch's body without an actual penis. In Xiao Ying's metaphoric formulation, the doctors' "discovery" of Yao's true sex became a performative restaging of castration itself—the public enactment of a medical procedure that "removed" Yao's highly publicized male identity. Whether Yao Jinping was reminiscent of the hermaphroditic body (via A'nidu) or the allegorical experience of castration (via eunuchs), Xiao Ying never abhorred her intention in becoming a "false" male. She merely approached Yao's sex change from the angle of rendering medical science as the cradle of truth.

After the public exposure of Yao's disguise, or perhaps because of it, the tabloid press continued to identify physicians as the most reliable authority on reproductive defects. Shortly after Xiao Yin related Yao's sex change to hermaphrodites and eunuchs, another

[91] Xiao Ying (小英), "Yin Yao Jinping nüshen xiangqi taijian" (因姚錦屏女身想起太監) [Reminded of eunuchs because of Yao Jinping's female body], *Jingbao* (京報), March 24, 1935, no. 3.

Crystal writer reported on the perspective of an eminent gynecologist named Yu Songyun (余忪筠). As the national spotlight on Yao was just beginning to recede, the subject of her sex change came up in a conversation the writer had with Yu, who established the Gynecological Clinic of Zhongde Hospital (中德醫院平民產科醫院) in Shanghai. Yu suggested that even if Yao's case did turn out to be a real "*ci* becoming *xiong*" transformation, a national sensation would still be an overreaction given that she was not the first in China anyway.

Five years ago, in 1930, Yu delivered a child born with the genital appearance of both sexes. The medical team considered the child to be biologically more female than male, so Yu distinguished her from Yao Jinping and categorized her instead as an example of "*xiong* becoming *ci*" (雄孵雌). The parents refused to listen to the doctors, who tried to dissuade them from viewing such rare birth defects with disgust. The baby was eventually transported to the Jiangping Yuyingtang (江平育嬰堂) to be raised there. The hospital kept her case file, which included her photographs, her date of birth, and the names of her parents. Based on his experience as a practicing gynecologist in Shanghai, Yu Songyun also encountered births with "an external fleshy bulge in the shape of grapes" (產肉葡萄一束者) and "internal organs born external to the body" (產五臟六府在外之兒者).[92] Similar to Xiao Yin, the writer of this article did not view Yao Jinping as a freak of nature. His intention in reporting on Yu's clinical experience converged with the intentions of the other tabloid writers and contemporary sexologists: to deepen a middle-brow print culture that promoted a vision of modernity grounded in the pursuit of accurate scientific knowledge. In this context, clarifying the epistemic ambiguity surrounding sex change became a spirit embodied by all participants of this new cultural production.

And the public attention shifted to the role of other cultural agents. After Yao's

[92] Gong Shou (恭壽), "Yu Songyun suojian zhi xiongfuci" (余忪筠所見之雄孵雌) [Ya Songyun's witness of *xiong* becoming *ci*], *Jingbao* (京報), March 27, 1935, no. 3.

unchanged female identity was revealed in the press, some critics held reporters, journalists, and popular writers responsible for the public disappointment about her deceiving sex change. According to a *Crystal* article that appeared on 23 March, "At first, the news of [Yao's] transformation into a man due to a strike of lightning came from Tianjin," and "reporters and journalists from all major presses visited Yao, interviewed her family, gathered together narratives of her past, and vigorously spread the word about the incident." "Because they demonstrated a conspicuous lack of common knowledge," the author Xin Sheng added, "newspaper reporters and journalists must take at least half of the responsibility for [Yao's] fraud" (故其作偽之責任，新聞記者之無常識，當負其半也). According to Xin Sheng, "Current scientific knowledge posits that the reversal of male and female physiology over night is unreasonable. From the start, the author and his friends have firmly believed that the sudden national spotlight on Yao would only extend nonsense and superstitious attitudes towards the supernatural and the strange (荒誕神怪之不良觀念也). Now that the truth is uncovered…it is truly a joke." The writer indicated that news such as Yao Jinping's sex change story attempted to lure Chinese readers with shocking accounts of unusual phenomenon, rare biological problems, and astonishing medical solutions. The writer took them as unhealthy press coverage that contributed nothing productive and "deeply hope that press editors do not publish any more circumstantial writings of this sort without the support of solid evidence."[93] Rather than blaming Yao for her self-fashioned sex change, some informed readers equated the significance of journalists with the role of modern scientific knowledge as the vanguard of a more reliable print culture.

In the wake of the Yao story, creative writers, too, began to articulate their own vision of cultural modernity. Apart from serious tabloid commentaries, the publicity showered on Yao Jinping inspired a few poems and song lyrics that appeared in both mainstream and

[93] Xin Sheng (辛生), "Nühuanan xinwen changshi" (女化男新聞常識) [Common knowledge about news of woman-to-man transformation], *Jingbao* (京報), March 23, 1935, no. 2.

tabloid newspapers.[94] The tone of much of these creative pieces tended to cast Yao as a filial subject and, like the above article, to attribute the growing disappointment with the outcome of Yao's medical examination to the public lack of scientific knowledge.

In these tabloid accounts, not a single author passed a moralist judgment on human sex change. None of the commentators cast Yao Jinping in a negative light, and, before she was medically examined at the National Shanghai Medical School, some observers even described her bodily state as a rare and unique biological condition that could potentially provide scientific researchers and medical doctors a multitude of research possibilities. All of them invoked medical knowledge to *naturalize* birth defects and human anomalies. But more importantly, Yao Jinping's story played a pivotal role in turning the popular press into a platform for both the expression of a normative sexological ethos of scientism and the gradual transformation of "sex change" into a more general category of experience not confined to congenital bodily defects. Despite its outcome, Yao's story triggered a wide range of responses that looked beyond the single medical explanation of pseudo-hermaphroditism. As the belief in scientism deepened, the idea that even non-intersexed individuals can undergo sex change became fully crystallized in Chinese popular culture by the 1940s. The next section recounts an episode of this crystallization process through a close reading of the science fiction short story called "Sex Change" (1940), arguably the first transsexual autobiographical narrative in Chinese history.

X. Gu Junzheng's "Sex Change" (1940)

In 1940, Gu Junzhen's (顧均正) science fiction short story "Sex Change" (性變, *Xingbian*) was serialized in the magazine *Scientific Interest* (科學趣味, *Kexue quwei*).[95] A

[94] See, for example, Hai (害), "Jie Yao Jinping mu" (接姚錦屏幕) [Uncover Yao Jinping], *Jingbao* (京報), March 26, 1935, no. 1; "Jinping qu" (錦屏曲) [Jinping qu], *Xinwenbao* (新聞報), March 23, 1935, no. 17.
[95] Gu Junzhen (顧均正), "Xingbian" (性變) [Sex change], *Kexue quwei* (科學趣味) [Scientific interest] 2, no. 1

popular science writer, novelist, and translator, Gu became an editor in the translation department of the Commercial Press in 1923. He then relocated to the Kaiming Bookstore (開明書店), which was established in 1926, and became one of its chief editors in 1928. His interest in popular science literature began in the early 1930s and led him to co-found the magazine *Scientific Interest* in 1939. His three other more well known science fiction short stories—"The London Plague" (倫敦奇疫, *Lundun qiyi*), "Below the North Pole" (在北極底下, *Zai Beiji dixia*), and "A Dream of Peace" (和平的夢, *Heping de meng*)—also appeared in *Scientific Interest* in the 1940s, and they dealt mostly with the theme of wartime turbulence and chaos and a disturbed world order. In questioning the category that seemed most fundamental and fixed of all, "Sex Change" stood out for diverging from the predominant emphasis of the science fiction genre on war and anti-imperialist nationalism at the peak of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945).[96]

The narrator begins by recalling a homicide case that occurred roughly eight to nine years earlier. Also known as "the case of a mad murderer" (瘋子殺人案), the incident involved the abrupt disappearance of the famed biologist Dr. Ni Weili (倪維禮) and his daughter Ni Jingxian (倪靜嫻). Instead, an old woman was found dead along with an unconscious teenage boy in Dr. Ni's research laboratory, both of whose identity have since remained unknown. On the same day, Ni Jingxian's fiancée, Shen Dagang (沈大綱), showed up in a nearby police station and confessed that he was responsible for the crime. The case seemed all the more puzzling because Shen's motivation was unclear. His subsequent suicide added another layer of mystery to the case. According to the forensic report, Shen's death was caused by self-poisoning one to two hours before he turned himself

(1940): 31-35; 2, no. 2 (1940): 93-98; 2, no. 4 (1940): 214-219; 2, no. 5 (1940): 276-280; 2, no. 6 (1940): 331-335.

[96] Lin Jianqun (林健群), "Wan Qing kehuanxiaoshuo zhi yanjiu (1904-1911)" (晚清科幻小說之研: 1904-1911) [On science fictions in the late Qing, 1904-1911] (MA Thesis, National Chung Cheng University, 1997), chap. 6.

in, suggesting that his motivation for committing suicide probably had nothing to do with guilt.

The narrator then refers to the entry on "The Case of Shen Dagang's Surrender" in a book called *Mystery Cases of the Twentieth Century* written by the supposedly authoritative criminal psychologist Huang Huiming (黃慧明), who is of course, like Dr. Ni, a fictional character. In deciphering Shen's motivation for killing the Ni family and, eventually, himself, Huang eliminates the possibility that it stemmed from conflicts over money or relationship (because Shen's salary was quite high at that point and he remained deeply invested in proposing to Ni Jingxian). Huang raises two related question. First, who was the old lady found dead and the teenage boy found unconscious in Dr. Ni's laboratory? Their identities are still unknown, and the boy suddenly disappeared one day from the hospital where he was taken for treatment. Second, what happened to the bodies of Dr. Ni and his daughter? If the Ni family was indeed killed by Shen, as revealed by himself, what did he do with their bodies? Most popular accounts simply explained the incident away by suggesting that Shen Dagang had gone mad. But Huang considers this too simplistic an explanation and concludes instead that without the necessary clues and sufficient facts that can shed new light on the above two questions, "The Case of Shen's Surrender" must remain a true mystery of the century.

In citing the perspective of an authoritative criminal psychologist, the narrator of "Sex Change" seems to hint at the possible limitations of modern science. However, to begin with Shen Dagang's crime, he also sets it up as an enigma for which the story of "Sex Change" itself can offer a crucial solution. The narrator thus writes: "But Mr. Huang, you are wrong. The answer to the true mystery you described can be found here [in the following pages]."[97] As such, the structural underpinning of "Sex Change" can be viewed in a Q&A format, with

[97] Gu, "Xingbian," *Kexue quwei* v. 2 n. 1 (1940): 33.

an introductory "question" section that delineates the parameters of a homicide mystery and the rest of the narrative being the "answer" section that supposedly holds the key to resolving it. Here, metaphorically, the medical possibility of "sex change" and its desirability are mediated through the genre of science fiction, as the story of "Sex Change" testifies the value of medical science by playing the role of scientific discovery itself that promises to provide answers to a commonly misunderstood problem—in this case, Shen Dagang's motivation for committing the crime and the fate of Dr. Ni's family.

After describing "The Case of Shen's Surrender," the narrator immediately brings the reader back to where it all started: Shen Dagang's return from the city where he has been working and his decision to directly pay Dr. Ni a visit on a sunny day in late spring. On his way to Dr. Ni's research laboratory, Shen reflects on his career development and the growth of his love for Ni Jingxian over the last two years. Before then, Dr. Ni refused his daughter's request to marry Shen on multiple occasions, explaining that Shen's career instability constituted a major obstacle. Now with a stable income, Shen is excited about the prospect of proposing to Ni Jingxian again even though they have not been in touch for over two years. But upon Shen's arrival in his office, Dr. Ni immediately focuses their conversation on his most recent research breakthrough, leaving Shen almost no opportunity to bring up the marriage proposal.

Dr. Ni's ability to convey the latest scientific theories and research on sex designates one of the most unique features of the story: its accurate recounting of modern scientific knowledge. The main source that Gu Junzheng relies on in developing Dr. Ni's extensive overview of the scientific study of sex seems to be the writings of the renowned life scientist Zhu Xi (1899-1962). Gu begins this part of the narrative by citing Zhu's *Humans from Eggs and Eggs from Humans* (1939) and ends with a reference to his *Scientific Perspectives on Life,*

Aging, Illness, and Death (1936).[98] In addition to drawing from the work of the best known authority on reproductive biology in twentieth-century China,[99] the story touches on the embryological theory of sexual development to underscore the point that, in Dr. Ni's words, "all new embryos display a common feature: they are sexless. They all possess the potential of developing elements of maleness and femaleness."[100] Dr. Ni also discusses the chromosomal theory of sex determination, explaining that whereas in women the sex chromosomes are the two X chromosomes, men have one X chromosome and one Y chromosome. But he continues, "although it might seem that sex is naturally determined at the moment of conception, something that happens randomly and cannot be altered by will, all of this is not set in stone."[101]

Evidently, in his discussion Dr. Ni begins to move toward a definition of sex as something malleable. After noting his dissatisfaction with the genetic theory of sex determination, Dr. Ni describes biological sex using the metaphor of a "balance" (天平), something that when tipped one way or the other would result in the predominant expression of maleness or femaleness. Here, Dr. Ni points out European scientists' recent discovery of parasitic castration, a natural phenomenon in which crustaceous animals such as bees or crabs would switch their sex after their gonads have been attacked by parasites.[102] Speaking of parasitic castration "makes the old professor even more exited," leading him to make the following remark: "Consequently, I think the sex of human beings is not pre-determined. If we know the criteria of sex determination, we would be able to change people's sex."[103] To

[98] Gu, "Xingbian," *Kexue quwei* 2, no. 2 (1940): 93-97.
[99] See chapter 2 of this dissertation; Chiang, "The Conceptual Contours of Sex"; Chen Fu (陳阜), *Zhu Xi* (朱洗) (Hebei: Hebei Education Press, 2000); Zhang Zhijie (張之傑), "Zhu Xi yu zhengfu zhuyi: Wei shengwuxuejia Zhu Xi zhuanji buyi" (朱洗與無政府主義: 為生物學家朱洗傳記補遺) [Zhu Xi and anarchy: A biographical supplement for the biologist Zhu Xi], *Zhonghua kejishixue huikan* (中華科技史學會刊) [Journal of the Chinese Association for the History of Science] 12 (2008): 25-38.
[100] Gu, "Xingbian," *Kexue quwei* 2, no. 2 (1940): 94.
[101] Gu, "Xingbian," *Kexue quwei* 2, no. 2 (1940): 94.
[102] See Chiang, "The Conceptual Counters of Sex."
[103] Gu, "Xingbian," *Kexue quwei* 2, no. 2 (1940): 95.

add credibility to his comment, Dr. Ni brings up Eugen Steinach's classic experiments that induced male-to-female (雄化雌) and female-to-male (雌化雄) transformations in rats. And to make all of these observations on the transmutability of sex sound even more plausible and convincing, Dr. Ni finally introduces Shen Dagang to the idea of "sex hormones," the internal secretions that play a decisive role in sexual maturation. Like the Chinese sexologists and tabloid writers discussed earlier, Dr. Ni seizes this opportunity to use the example of "eunuchs of the Qing dynasty" to highlight the significance of sex glands: as a result of not having a functional gonad, these castrated individuals "remain beardless even at an old age, and their physical appearance resembles neither a man nor a woman."[104] These passages demonstrate that the scientific theory of universal bisexuality is now absorbed by and rearticulated in the cultural domain of popular fictional literature, and Chinese indigenous examples of reproductive anomalies such as eunuchs continue to operate as a cross-cultural epistemological anchor for crystallizing foreign ideas about sex and sex alteration.

Moreover, the careful application—and not just the nominal referencing or presentation—of modern scientific knowledge could be said to be a staple of an early wave of literary production that simultaneously pushes for a greater degree of flexibility and creativity in the science fiction genre.[105] In "Sex Change," this is best exemplified by the biomedical breakthrough on which Dr. Ni has prided himself throughout his conversation with Shen Dagang. According to Dr. Ni, the "experimental product" of this breakthrough is a white potion that "can turn a woman into a man both biologically and psychologically in four days after injection into the blood stream."[106] As the reader would soon discover, Dr. Ni has belabored the various scientific theories of sex and introduced this recent invention of his to

[104] Gu, "Xingbian," *Kexue quwei* 2, no. 2 (1940): 96.
[105] Lin, "Wan Qing kehuanxiaoshuo zhi yanjiu," chap. 6.
[106] Gu, "Xingbian," *Kexue quwei* 2, no. 2 (1940): 97-98.

Shen only because he has used it to change the sex of his daughter, Ni Jinxian, thus making it impossible for Shen to propose to, let alone marry, his only child. The example of Dr. Ni's sex change potion reflects a tremendous degree of informed creativity on the part of the author, Gu Junzheng, who has not only appropriated and accurately presented Western scientific ideas about sex, but also built from them and deliberately proposed a new method of human sex transformation beyond the existing scope of medical technology. This is best captured in Dr. Ni's own words before he shows Shen the actual potion:

> Scientists have now confirmed that secondary sex characteristics in humans are determined entirely by the secretions of the sex glands, so these sex characteristics can be easily modified with the surgical techniques of castration, transplantation, or [hormonal] injections. However, there is still no procedure that can change an individual's primary sex characteristics. In other words, although scientists can make a woman look like a man and a man look like a woman, they are still unable to turn a woman into a man and a man into a woman completely. But allow me to inform you now that, after many years of research and experimentation, I have found a way to alter sex characteristics on the primary level.[107]

Although the potion is a fictional entity, its material possibility and functional comprehensibility is circumscribed by the existing biomedical lexicon of sex. Whereas bodily modification techniques such as castration, tissue transplantation, and the administration of synthetic hormones constitute a crucial source of imagination, the author's

[107] Gu, "Xingbian," *Kexue quwei* 2, no. 2 (1940): 97.

presentation of the potion as the sole technological innovation that can alter one's true sex achieves a level of literary production and originality that exceeds any existing epistemological configuration of medical science. This thus marks a radical departure from the science fiction novels written before the Republican period.

As a story about a topic as ahead of its time as sex alteration, the plot of "Sex Change" ironically embraces and reflects broader cultural claims about the relationship of science to gender. Dr. Ni's rationale for creating the potion, for instance, is undergirded by a predominant bias of Chinese culture that values sons over daughters. After being told that his intended bride-to-be had turned into a boy, Shen Dagang press Dr. Ni for an explanation. Posing "an implicit sign of victory," Dr. Ni responds:

> You think I would back off and just let you take [my daughter] away from me? You fool! You have no idea how much I love her. For years I have focused on my research day and night for the simple reason that I wanted to turn her into a son! You fool! Do you think I would let some stupid kid to propose to her just because he selfishly thinks that he loves her and to use her to threaten me? This is something that I would never allow, because she is my child. If she is a boy, I would not have to worry about anyone proposing to her. If I have a son, I can make him pursue my unfinished work. His accomplishment can open a fresh chapter for the Chinese scientific community. How wonderful and valuable would that be?![108]

The white potion gives Dr. Ni a son by transforming his daughter, a female character, into a

[108] Gu, "Xingbian," *Kexue quwei* 2, no. 5 (1940): 276-277.

masculine subject, a supposed sign of scientific progress. Dr. Ni's explanation implies that what women want and hope for plays no role in the determination of their fate. Instead, it is only the men—the father and the potential husband—that participate in the manipulation—a power play of sorts—of women's lives. Dr. Ni's words make it evident that whether his daughter actually desires a sex change is insignificant. What is at issue here is his own desire for his daughter's sex change (to fulfill his own ambition of contributing to science and China), mirroring Shen Dagang's subsequent desire for Ni Jingxian to undergo a second sex change (so that she can be turned back into a girl). In other words, the male voice and opinion dominates the entire structural dynamics of the relationship between Dr. Ni, his daughter, and Shen Dagang, relegating the female voice, not only here but throughout the narrative, to the background and even a status of non-existence. Medical technology, the plot seems to imply, helps men perpetuate the value of their sexed existence.

It can be said that the author is making an implicit critique of ideas about gender and the body in traditional Chinese culture. Or, more specifically put, the story of "Sex Change" can be interpreted as formulating an implicit critique that plays off on the gender dynamics of a society in which such corporeal practices as footbinding thrived. Both footbinding and Ni Jinxian's sex change involve the transformation (if not "mutilation") of the female body, but mainly for the explicit pursuit of male pleasure, desire, and even ambition.[109] By narrating the story about Ni Jingxian's change of sex through the power struggle between Dr. Ni and Shen Dagan, the author similarly reveals the underlying patriarchal biases, unfair assumptions, and male selfishness of the gendered custom of footbinding.

However, throughout the narrative of "Sex Change," the reader is never exposed to the voice of Ni Jingxian, such as in regards to how she feels about her sex change and its consequent effects on her life. Her only spoken dialogue in the story appears immediately

[109] My emphasis on "explicit" is important here. Cf. Dorothy Ko's work on the "implicitness" of female agency in the history of footbinding: *Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

after Shen Dagang comes face to face with the masculinized version of her: "Ah, Dagang…this wasn't my intention. I thought my father has told you that already."[110] These meager words reveal the author's intentional effort to make room for the expression of female agency in the text only through the masculinist discourse—the voice of Dr. Ni and his reasons for changing the sex of his daughter. And perhaps what distinguishes Ni Jingxian's sex change from footbinding is again the role of medical scientific invention. In the story, the sex change potion symbolizes scientific progress and what it can do symbolizes male success and accomplishment. Even as the narrator of "Sex Change" is revealed in the end to be (the post-sex change) Ni Jingxian herself, this exposure only further suggests that the act of uncovering "truth" (in this case, the truth behind the homicide mystery introduced at the beginning of the story) can be done and articulated only by a masculine subject (for the narrator is really no longer the female Ni Jingxian but a married physiologist and father of two children).

The story's propagation of patriarchal values is also exemplified by its overall message that science remains a masculine endeavor. Pressured by Shen to turn Ni Jingxian back into a girl, Dr. Ni comes up with another potion for which he needs an experimental subject. Running out of patience, Shen immediately injects the new potion into Dr. Ni's body, exclaiming "you are the most convenient experimental subject, old fool!"[111] Contrary to the positive tone associated with Dr. Ni's success in changing her daughter's sex, his own transformation leads to a disastrous final episode, for which the author gives the subtitle "A Tragedy." Unfortunately, after Dr. Ni becomes an old woman, she is no longer capable of creating the magical sex change potion again. After Shen has repeatedly begged the old woman to remake the potion that can potentially bring back te female Ni Jingxian,

[110] Gu, "Xingbian," *Kexue quwei* 2, no. 4 (1940): 216.
[111] Gu, "Xingbian," *Kexue quwei* 2, no. 5 (1940): 280.

> The old woman adamantly stares at Shen and frowns. She finds his request distasteful and says nothing. She is no longer a professor passionate about the progress of science. She has completely forgotten about science, as if she has never learned a thing about it.[112]

This passage conveys the author's explicit association of science with men (or the masculine gender), implying that the pursuit of science remains outside the scope of women's sphere. Correspondingly, an implicit underlying message of the story seems to be that male-to-female transformation is less preferable than female-to-male transformation, which again reinforces a central component of Chinese society that puts fathers and sons instead of mother and daughters at the center of kinship relations. Like how most tabloid writers felt toward Yao Jinping's intention to alter the public appearance of her sex, the depiction of Ni Jingxian's female-to-male transformation in "Sex Change" is layered with various positive signs of scientific progress and gendered modes of ambition. On the other hand, Dr. Ni's sex change resulted in the shattering of hope (specifically, Shen Dagang's hope). And the truth behind the entire incident would only be recovered and uncovered years later through, once again, the voice of a masculine subject who was previously female.

XI: Concluding Remarks

This chapter has attempted to chart an evolving discourse of "sex change" in the Chinese mass circulation press from the 1920s to the 1940s. Relevant scientific ideas such as the theory of biological bisexuality found in the sexological literature of the 1920s were filtered through media sensationalism and publicity on sex change, such as the media blitz surrounding Yao Jinping's story, and finally diffused into the popular imagination, as

[112] Gu, "Xingbian," *Kexue quwei* 2, no. 6 (1940): 335.

manifested in the work of science fiction writers like Gu Junzheng. Meanwhile, as sexological explanations of biological reproductive defects reached a wider public, the concept of "sex change" gradually moved away from being a specialized term circulated primarily in the scientific literature and became a more general category of experience with which individuals with an autonomous desire for the transformation of bodily sex could eventually come to associate. By the 1940s, this vibrant discourse of transformativity, on top of the visual and carnal dimensions discussed in the previous two chapters, had turned sex into an epistemologically concrete referent in the Chinese lexicon. With a fully matured concept of sex, Chinese people soon "discovered" their first transsexual in postwar Taiwan. But the emergence of transsexuality was highly contingent of the concurrent reconfiguration of Cold War Chinese geopolitics. This new chapter in the mutually generative history of China's "geo-body" and the body corporeal is where we turn next.

EPILOGUE

TRANS POSTCOLONIALITY

I. An Episode of Transnational Spectacle

On 14 August 1953, the *United Daily News* (聯合報, *Lianhebao*) surprised the public by announcing the discovery of an intersexed soldier, Xie Jianshun (謝尖順), in Tainan, Taiwan. The headline read "A Hermaphrodite Discovered in Tainan: Sex to be Determined after Surgery."[1] By 21 August, the paper adopted a radically different rhetoric, now with a headline claiming that "Christine Will Not Be America's Exclusive: Soldier Destined to Become a Lady."[2] Considered by many as the "first" Chinese transsexual, Xie was frequently dubbed as the "Chinese Christine." This allusion to the contemporaneous American ex-G.I. transsexual celebrity Christine Jorgensen, who travelled to Denmark for her sex reassignment surgery and became a worldwide household name immediately afterward due to her personality and glamorous looks, reflected the growing influence of American culture on the Republic of China at the peak of the Cold War.[3] Within a week, the characterization of Xie in the Taiwanese press changed from an average citizen whose ambiguous sex provoked uncertainty and anxiety throughout the nation, to a transsexual cultural icon whose fate would indisputably contribute to the global staging of Taiwan on par with the United States. By delving into this rhetorical-historical dissonance, this chapter argues that the publicity surrounding Xie Jianshun's transition worked as a pivotal fulcrum in

[1] "Nanshi faxian yinyangren jiangdong shoushu bian nannü" (南市發現陰陽人 將動手術辨男女) [A hermaphrodite discovered in Tainan: Sex to be determined after surgery], *Lianhebao* (聯合報) [United Daily News], August 14, 1953, no. 3.

[2] "Burang Kelisiding zhuanmei yuqian dabing jiang bianchen xiaojie" (不讓克麗絲汀專美於前 大兵將變成小姐) [Christine will not be America's exclusive: Soldier destined to become a lady], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), August 21, 1953, no. 3.

[3] On Christine Jorgensen, see Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

shifting common understandings of transsexuality, the role of medical science, and their evolving relation to the popular press in mid-twentieth century Chinese culture.

Dripping with national and trans-Pacific significance, Xie's experience made *bianxingren* (變性人, transsexual) a household term in the 1950s.[4] She served as a focal point for numerous new stories that broached the topics of changing sex, human intersexuality, and other atypical conditions of the body. People who wrote about her debated whether she qualified as a woman, whether medical technology could transform sex, and whether the two Christine's were more similar or different. These questions led to persistent comparisons of Taiwan with the United States, but Xie never presented herself as a duplicate of Jorgensen. As Xie knew, her story highlighted issues that pervaded post-World War II Sinophone society: the censorship of public culture by the state, the unique social status of men serving in the armed forces, the limit of individualism, the promise and pitfalls of science, the normative behaviors of men and women, and the boundaries of acceptable sexual expression.[5] Her story attracted the press, but the public's avid interest in sex and its plasticity prompted reporters to dig deeply. As the press coverage escalated, new names and previously unheard medical conditions grabbed the attention of journalists and their readers. The kind of public musings about sex change that permeated Chinese culture earlier in the century now took center stage in Republican Taiwan.

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[4] The word *transexual* was first coined by the American sexologist David Cauldwell in 1949. Cauldwell wrote: "When an individual who is unfavorably affected psychologically determines to live and appear as a member of the sex to which he or she does not belong, such an individual is what may be called a *psychopathic transexual*. This means, simply, that one is mentally unhealthy and because of this the person desires to live as a member of the opposite sex." David Cauldwell, "Psychopathia Transexualis," *Sexology* 16 (1949): 274-280. In 1966, endocrinologist Harry Benjamin used the word *transsexual* in his magnum opus, *The Transsexual Phenomenon* (New York: The Julian Press, 1966). This book was the first large-scale work describing and explaining the kind of affirmative treatment for transsexuality that he had pioneered throughout his career. On the intellectual and social history of transsexuality in the United States, see Bernice L. Hausman, *Changing Sex: Transsexualism, Technology, and the Idea of Gender* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*.

[5] The Sinophone world refers to Sinitic-language communities and cultures on the outside or on the margins of China and Chineseness. See Shu-mei Shih, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). I will come back to this concept and discuss the broader historical significance of the Xie Jianshun story in this framework in the conclusion.

II. Discovering Xie

The very first article that told the story of Xie began with a direct reference to Christine Jorgensen: "After the international frenzy surrounding the news of Miss Christine, the American ex-G.I. who became a lady after surgery, a *yin-yang* person [hermaphrodite] has been discovered at the 518 Hospital in Tainan." This opening sentence reflected the popular tendency to conflate sex change surgery with the medical treatment of intersexed conditions in the 1950s. When Xie's biographical information was disclosed in public for the first time, the *United Daily News* featured an article suggesting that Xie had been fully aware of his bodily femaleness since childhood, but had been keeping it a secret until its recent "discovery" by the doctors in Tainan. After revealing that the 36-year-old Xie, a native of Chaozhou, Canton, joined the army when he was 16, lost his father at the age of 17, and lost his mother at 18, the article noted that "At the age of 20, his breasts developed like a girl. Arriving in Taiwan with the army in 1949, he has kept this secret in the military rather successfully without being noticed. It was discovered on the 6th of this month, upon his visit to the Tainan 518 Hospital for a physical examination due to regular abdominal pains and crams, by the chair of external medicine Dr. Lin. He has been staying at the hospital since the 7th."[6]

In their first impression of Xie, the public was given the opportunity to imagine his sexually ambiguous body based on the extensive somatic descriptions available in the press: "According to Dr. Lin, the abnormal bodily features of the *yin-yang* person include the following: protruding and sagging breasts, pale and smooth skin, soft hands, manly-like legs, squeaky and soft voice, a testicle inside the left lower abdomen but not the right, closed and blocked reproductive organ, no [male] urinary tract, an urethra opening between the labia, a very small symbolic genital, and could stand like a man when urinates." The article

[6] "Nanshi faxian yinyangren."

continued: Xie's "head appears to be normal, mental health is slightly below average, facial features are feminine, personality is shy, other bodily parts and dietary habits are both normal." According to Dr. Lin Chengyi (林承一), a graduate of the Tokyo Zhaohe Hospital and the external medicine department of the Jingjing Medical School, Xie's first operation was scheduled to take place within one week on August 20th and would involve the following three major steps: exploratory laparotomy (the opening of the abdominal cavity) in order to detect the presence of ovarian tissues; labia dissection in order to examine the vaginal interior, to determine the length of the vagina, and to confirm the presence (or absence) of the virginal hymen; and finally, "if ovaries and vagina are found inside the womb, removing the penis can turn Xie into a woman; otherwise he becomes a man." From its assumption about Xie's intention to hide his biological femaleness, to its detailed description of Xie's physical make-up, and to its presentation of the criteria involved in Xie's sex determination or transformation, the press operated as a cultural vehicle through which medical biases towards Xie's body were expressed. Through and through, Xie was assumed to be a biological woman trapped inside a male body, whose feminine-like features gradually revealed themselves under the fingertips of medical experts and in the eyes of the public.[7]

On the day following the public "discovery" of Xie, the media immediately signaled a radical departure of his experience from the familiar story of the American Christine. Whereas the American transsexual celebrity had a deep-seated desire to be physically transformed into a woman, the Republican Chinese soldier had an unshakable longing to remain as a heterosexual man. The headline read "*Yin-Yang* Person Uncovers a Personal Past and Hopes to Remain as a Man." The article began by telling its reader that "the *yin-yang* person Xie Jianshun remains in love with his lover of more than two decades—the rifle," and that he "personally desires to become a perfectly healthy man." Most tellingly,

[7] Ibid.

the paper disclosed Xie's heterosexual past by offering a biographical account of his relationship experience with women, including graphic descriptions of his sexual encounters in the past. The *United Daily News* account did not forget to remind the reader of Xie's physical defects: "At the age of seven, Xie fell sick. At the time, his penis was tied to his labia, but given his living situation in the countryside, going to a doctor for surgical intervention did not prove to be feasible. His mother therefore simply tore them apart by hand. From that point on, he had been urinating from both secretion openings."[8]

According to the journalist, Xie's "unpleasant experience with his physiological abnormality" really started at the age of 12. That year, his grandmother introduced him to a girl, to whom he was arranged to eventually marry. Although he was just a kid, his feeling towards the girl grew by day. One day, when no one else was around, he initiated an intercourse with the girl but ultimately failed due to his "physiological defect" (生理上的異狀). They ended up getting around the problem "by using their hands" (動手動腳的). Since then, Xie had "acquired the habit of masturbation without the ability to produce sperm, being in a state of more physiological pain." After joining the army, he fell in love with another girl. Her father even agreed to let them get married. This seemingly positive news, however, upset Xie. Given his "physiological shortcomings" (生理上的缺陷), Xie wanted to avoid leading the girl into an unhappy marriage. Back then, he still did not have the courage to speak openly about his situation. He therefore ran away from the girl and the relationship, a decision the journalists interpreted as "a comedy of marriage escape" (逃婚喜劇).[9]

The most significant message that this biographical synopsis seemed to convey squarely concerned his (forthcoming) sex determination or transformation. Will Xie

[8] "Yinyangren xisu wangshi yuan cishen chengwei nan'er" (陰陽人細訴往事 願此身成為男兒) [The hermaphrodite reveals his/her past: Hopes to remain a man], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), August 15, 1953, no. 3.
[9] Ibid.

become a man or a woman? What did *he* want? The article ended with a confident answer from Xie: "He firmly hopes to be a man, to be able to return to the troops and pick up the rifle again" in order to "defeat mainland China and eliminate the communists" (反攻大陸，消滅共匪).[10] Indeed, the paper had mentioned in passing earlier that Xie "experiences 'sexual' desire when interacting with women, but none towards men."[11] Construed as a respectable citizen of the country, Xie was heterosexualized and masculinized as a national subject fulfilling his duty, even as he faced the possibility of being stripped away of his manliness within a week. At least for a brief moment, Xie was able to articulate his desire of *not* wanting to change his sex through the popular press. And it was the first time that readers heard Xie's voice. The statement "If my biology does not allow me to remain a man but forces me to become a woman, what can I do?" marked the first appearance of his words in the press. On the second day of his media exposure, readers started to sympathize with Xie and found him, unlike the American Christine, to be a rather normal, however unfortunate, heterosexual man.

If doctors and reporters purported a clear picture of Xie's hidden sex and normative sexuality, they attempted to uncover his gender orientation more cautiously. As soon as the 518 Hospital scheduled Xie's first "sex change surgery" (變性手術), the relevant experts proposed a plan to determine Xie's gender self-awareness. They sent a group of female nurses to mingle with Xie five days prior to the operation. Given Xie's long time career involvement in the military, "the hospital considers his previous social interactions with mostly men to constitute insufficient ground for determining how Xie feels deep down inside as manly- or womanly-like. In preparing for Xie's sex reassignment surgery, a number of 'attractive' nurses were asked to accompany Xie and chat with him on August 15th." Through Xie's interaction with these nurses, it was hoped that "a better understanding of

[10] Ibid.
[11] "Nanshi faxian yinyangren."

his/her inner sense of self as a man or woman could be reached by observing how it is reflected in his emotions and facial expressions." It is worth noting that neither the medical profession nor the popular press locked him to a particular gender role at this point. Despite their assumptions about Xie's biological hidden (female) sex, doctors at the 518 Hospital actually believed that they had adopted a more careful, "objective" approach to determining his psychological gender. And despite its covert announcement of his heterosexuality, the press refrained from reaching any conclusion about Xie's gendered sense of self based on the doctors' method of assessment.[12]

III. The First Operation

The first turning point in the framing of Xie Jianshun's story in both medical and popular discourses came with his first operation. Again, the press collaborated closely with the physicians who were involved in Xie's case and kept the public informed about their progress. On 20 August, the day of Xie's first operation, *United Daily News* published a detailed account of the surgical protocols scheduled for three o'clock that afternoon: "The operation scheduled for today involves an exploratory laparotomy, followed by a careful examination of his lower cavity to detect the presence of uterus and ovary. If Xie's reproductive anatomy resembles a typical female anatomy, a second operation will follow suit after Xie has recovered from this first one. In the second operation, the presently sealed vaginal opening will be cut open, and the vaginal interior will be examined for symptoms of abnormality. If the results of both operations confirm that Xie has a female reproductive system, the final step involves the removal of the symbolic male genital organ on the labia minora, turning him (her) into a pure female (純女性). Otherwise, Xie will be turned into a

[12] "Yinyangren bianxing shoushu qian zhunbei hushi xiaojie qunyu tanxiao miqu xinli fanying ziliao" (陰陽人變性手術前準備 護士小姐群與談笑 覓取心理反映資料) [Before the hermaphrodite's sex change operation: Chatting with nurses to reveal psychological data], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), August 16, 1953, no. 3.

pure male (純男性).”[13]

By bringing the viewer’s eyes “inward” towards Xie’s internal anatomical configurations, the press repeated the epistemological claims of the medical operation intended for the determination of Xie’s sex. Step by step, the *United Daily News*, presumably relying on the information provided by Dr. Lin and his medical staff, told its reader the surgical procedures and criteria for the establishment of Xie’s female sex. Yet, no symmetrical explanation was given for establishing Xie’s male identity. The narrative only concluded with a brief remark that “Otherwise, Xie will be turned into a pure male.” One wonders what would happen if Xie’s interior anatomy was found to be drastically different from the normal female reproductive system. What, then, were the doctors going to do with his “sealed vaginal opening”? If Xie could be transformed into a “pure female” by simply cutting off his “symbolic male genital organ,” what would turning him into a “pure male” entail? Would that also involve the removal of something? Or would it require the adding-on of something else? Even if female gonads were found in his reproductive system and the second operation followed suit, what happens next if his vaginal interior showed signs of anatomical abnormality? On what grounds would the doctors evaluate the resemblance of his vagina to that of an average woman at this stage? To what degree could his vagina deviate from the internal structure of a “normal” vagina before it is considered too “abnormal”? The passage in the *United Daily News* answered none of these questions. In the pretense of keeping its readers informed, it actually imposed more assumptions about Xie’s “real” sex. By the day of his first operation, the medical and popular discourses congruently prepared the lay public for a sensational outcome of this unprecedented sex change event in Chinese culture. Xie’s sex was arguably already “determined” and “transformed” before the actual surgery. This reciprocated the ambiguity surrounding the

[13] “Yinyangren Xie Jianshun jinkaidao biancixiong” (陰陽人謝尖順 今開刀辨雌雄) [Hermaphrodite Xie Jianshun: Sex determined today through surgery], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), August 20, 1953, no. 3.

purpose of his first operation: Was its goal the determination or transformation of his sex?

United Daily News included an extensive coverage of Xie's surgery the following day, with the headline, "Soldier Destined To Become a Lady," which echoed the headline of the New York *Daily News* front-page article that announced Christine Jorgenson's sex change surgery back in December 1952, "Ex-GI Becomes Blonde Beauty." The subtitle of the *United Daily News* piece read "The *Yin-Yang* Person's Interior Parts Revealed Yesterday after Surgery: The Presence of Uterus and Ovaries Confirmed." From this point on, Xie was frequently dubbed as the "Chinese Christine" (中國克麗斯汀). Whereas reporters had always used either the masculine pronoun "he" (他) or both the masculine and the feminine pronouns (他 [她]) during the first week of press coverage, they changed to adopting the feminine pronoun exclusively to refer to Xie in all subsequent writings. The recounting of Xie's operation opened with "Dr. Lin's assertion" that "Xie Jianshun should be converted into a woman in light of his physiological condition" and that this procedure would have "a 90 per cent success rate." The article described the proceeding of Xie's first surgery with remarkable detail:

> Xie's operation began at 3:40pm yesterday. Dr. Lin Chengyi led a team of physicians, including Le Shaoqing and Wang Zifan, and nurses, including Jinming. Because this is the first clinical treatment of an intersexed patient in Taiwan, Dr. Lin permitted out-of-town visiting doctors and news reporters to observe the surgical proceeding in the operating room with a mask on. After anesthesia, Dr. Lin cut open the lower abdominal area at 3:50 and examined its interior parts. The operation ended successfully at 4:29, with a total duration of 39 minutes. It also marked a decisive moment for the sex determination of the *yin-yang*

person Xie Jianshun.[14]

This excerpt thus brought the reader back to the clinical setting of Xie's surgery, thereby reinforcing Xie's status as an object of medical gaze even after the surgery itself. Ultimately, this careful textual re-staging of Xie's medical operation translated its *clinical* standing into a glamorized *cultural* phenomenon in postwar Taiwan.

Xie's growing iconicity as a specimen of cultural dissection also built on the detailed public exposure of the surgical findings. According to the press coverage,

> After a thirty-minute inspection of the [lower] abdominal region, the *yin-yang* person is confirmed to be female given the presence of ovarian tissues. The uterus is 6cm long and 3.5cm wide, which is similar to the uterus size of an unpenetrated virgin (含苞未放處女), but slightly unhealthy. Not only are the two ovaries normal, the existence of Fallopian tubes is also confirmed. Upon physical inspection prior to the surgery, no testicle can be detected on the lower right abdominal region and only an incomplete testicle can be found on the left. Because Xie Jianshun once had chronic appendicitis, her appendix is removed during this operation. The five viscera are identified as complete and normal. Based on the above results, have [the doctors] decided to perform a [sex change] surgery on Xie Jianshun? The affirmative reply is with 90 per cent certainty.

According to what her physician in charge, Dr. Lin, told the

[14] "Burang Kelisiding zhuanmei yuqian."

> reporters following the operation, the [sex] transformation surgery will take place in two weeks after Xie Jianshun has recovered from this exploratory laparotomy. The procedure for converting [him] into female begins with the cutting open of presently closed labia majora and labia minora (將閉塞之大小陰唇切開). After that, a close inspection of [her] vagina will be necessary to see if it is healthy and normal. Anyone with a uterus has a vagina. After both the *labia majora* and *labia minora* have been split open and the symbolic phallic organ has been removed from the latter, [Xie]'s transformation into a pure woman will be complete.[15]

Based on these descriptions alone, the reader was able to join Dr. Lin's medical team and examine Xie's physical body, similar to what proceeded during the previous day at the 518 Hospital. This narrative even made it possible to anticipate and imagine a future for this unprecedented medicalized sex transformation in Chinese culture. Although one type of interrogation was conducted in the "private" (closed) space of the operation room, and the other was carried out in the "public" (open) domain of printed publications, medical science and the popular press ultimately converged as mutually reinforcing sites for the anatomization of Xie's sex change embodiment. One policeman could not hide his excitement and publicly declared his desire for Xie and strong interest in dating her after this first operation.[16]

As the result of Xie's first operation became widely publicized, the press further aligned itself with the medical profession by keeping Xie in a public "closet." This "closet" was characterized in a way different from what gay and lesbian scholars have typically considered

[15] "Shoushu shunli wancheng gaizao juyou bawo" (手術順利完成 改造具有把握) [Surgery successfully completed: Alteration is feasible], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), August 21, 1953, no. 3.
[16] "Yinyangren yiyou zhiyin" (陰陽人 已有知音) [Hermaphrodite already has an admirer], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), August 24, 1953, no. 4.

the staple features of queer lives in the past: hidden, secretive, and "masked."[17] Instead of concealing one's (homo/bi)sexuality in public, Xie's closet allowed the public to hide his transsexuality from himself. Following the surgery, to quote the exact words in the *United Daily News*, "'Miss' Xie Jianshun opened her eyes and looked with a slightly painful expression at the people surrounding her. But she seems to be in a good psychological state. While not a single word has come out of her mouth, and although she has not consulted the doctors regarding the outcome of her surgery, at present she is still negligent of her fate—that she is destined to become a lady." When a photo of the surgical proceeding and a photo of Xie became available for the first time in the press by 22 August, the news of future medical efforts to change his sex (including female hormonal therapy) still remained unknown to Xie (**see Figure 1**).[18] Xie finally "came out of the closet" nine days after the exploratory laparotomy operation, which was deemed a success.[19] On the afternoon of 29 August, Dr. Lin discussed the result of the surgery with Xie, and, being the last person to know about his fate, Xie agreed to cooperate in all subsequent medical procedures that would eventually lead to a complete sex reassignment.[20] Prior to that, by maintaining his sex change operation as a secret from Xie himself, both the doctors involved in his case and the press that reported on it generated a public "closet" that delineated a cultural division between the desire of the transsexual individual and the desire of others. Only in this case, however ironically, Xie,

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[17] On the significance of cultural concealment in American gay history, see John D'Emiliio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); John Laughery, *The Other Side of Silence: Men's Lives and Gay Identities: A Twentieth-Century History* (New York: Henry Holt, 1998); Martin Meeker, "Behind the Mask of Respectability: Reconsidering the Mattachine Society and Male Homophile Practice, 1950s and 1960s," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10, no. 1 (2001): 78-116; Martin Meeker, *Contacts Desired: Gay and Lesbian Communications and Community, 1940s-1970s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). For an analytical rendition of the "closet" more salient to the history of transsexuality, see David Serlin, "Christine Jorgensen and the Cold War Closet," *Radical History Review* 62 (Spring 1995): 136-165.

[18] "Xie Jianshun kaidaohou zuori qingkuang zhenchang" (謝尖順開刀後 昨日情況正常) [Xie Jianshun's operation proceeded normally yesterday], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), August 22, 1953, no. 3.

[19] "Yinyangren daokou chaixian" (陰陽人 刀口拆線) [The Hermaphrodite's stiches removed], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), August 28, 1953, no. 3.

[20] "Yinyangren Xie Jianshun tongyi gaizao nüxing" (陰陽人謝尖順 同意改造女性) [Hermaphrodite Xiejianshun agreed to be turned into a woman], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), August 30, 1953, no. 3.

the transsexual, had the longing to be *not* transsexed.

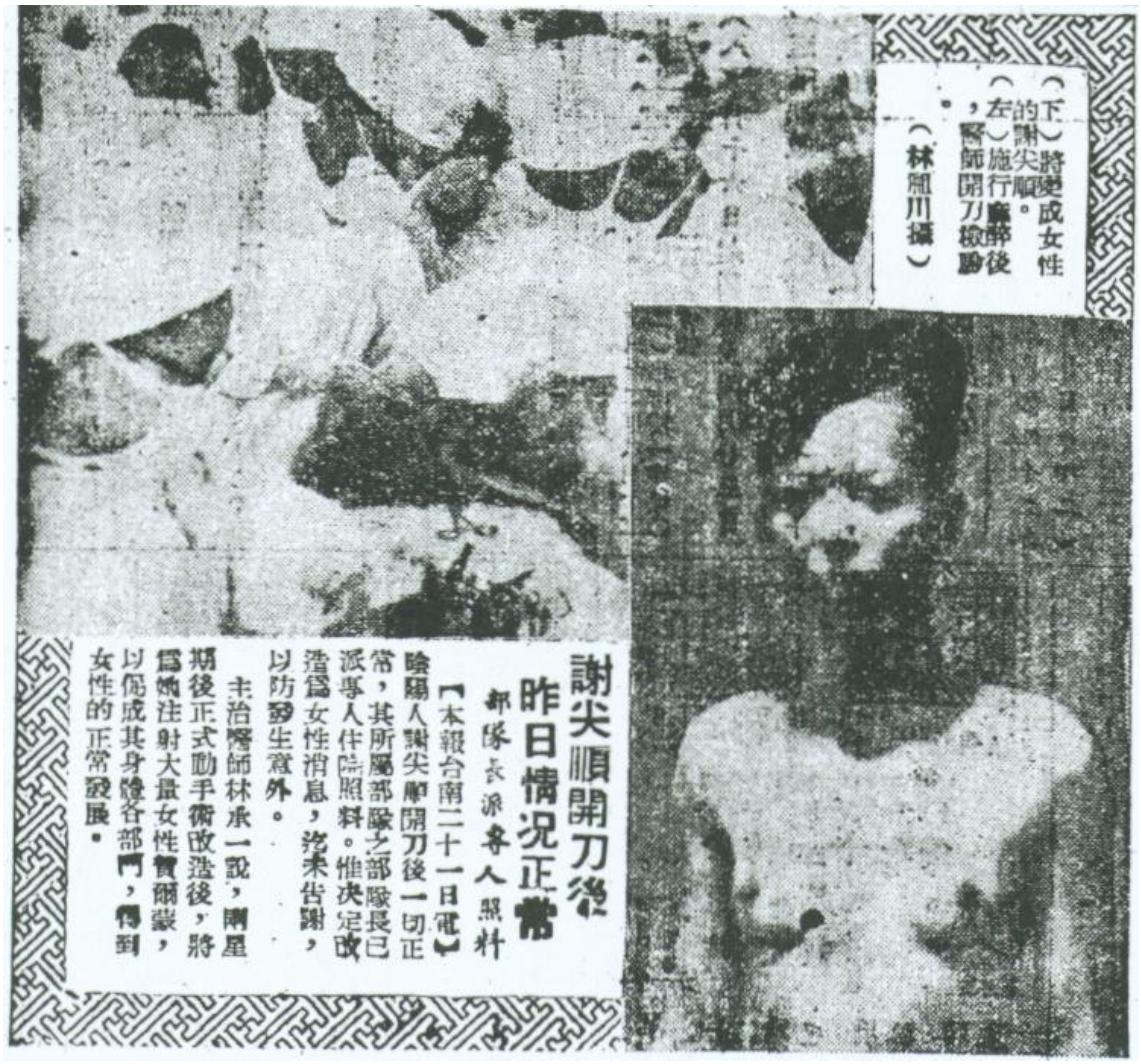

Figure 46: Photo of Xie Jianshun after the first operation, *Lianhebao* (1953).

Why didn't the medical team immediately inform Xie of their decision to change his sex? As Dr. Lin explained, his team learned from the nurses that Xie had expressed great anxiety about becoming a woman after having lived as a man for more than thirty-six years. Given his strong desire to remain biologically male, Dr. Lin's staff was afraid that, if Xie found out about their decision to turn him into a woman, he would commit suicide, which

was implicated in his earlier conversations with the nurses.[21] Although the doctors attempted to uncover Xie's gender orientation (by sending a group of "attractive" female nurses to mingle with him) just a few days before the first operation,[22] the surgical outcome—reinforced by the sensational tone of the press—nonetheless suggested that for them biology trumped psychology. Even though Xie's case was really a case of human intersexuality, the doctors insisted that they were surgically transforming his sex.

From the beginning, the exploratory laparotomy operation lacked a clear objective. Although the doctors announced their attempt to determine Xie's sex based on his internal anatomical configurations, they persistently proposed a series of surgeries to be performed on Xie's body and called them "sex transformation" operations. After the first operation, bolstered by the sensationalist accounts that appeared in newspapers across the nation, they successfully maintained a "public closet" that prevented Xie from intervening their claim to change his sex. Xie's refusal to become a woman shifted from public knowledge to an open secret. The doctors continued to push for an opposite surgical outcome, and, as the press sensationalism surrounding his ambiguous medical condition accumulated, they behaved as vanguards of medical science in the Republic of China by hinting at their ability to change Xie's sex like the doctors abroad. In the shadow of the notorious Christine Jorgensen, the construction of Xie Jianshun's (trans)sexual identity was driven less by his self-determination and more by the cultural authority of the surgeons involved and the broader impact of the mass circulation press.

IV. The Chinese Christine

Nine months after the New York *Daily News* announced the sex change surgery of Jorgensen, readers in postwar Taiwan were told that they, too, had their own "Chinese

[21] "Shoushu shunli wancheng."
[22] "Yinyangren bianxing shoushu qian zhunbei."

Christine." An identically titled *United Daily News* article provided a poignant cross-cultural comparison of the two transsexual cultural icons.[23] The writer, Guan Ming, began by describing Jorgensen's situation in the U.S., noting the insurmountable measure of fame and wealth that her sex-change surgery had brought her. Guan also rightly noted how the Jorgensen story became harder to "sell" when news of her incomplete female anatomy went public. (Jorgensen did not undergo vaginoplasty until 1954, and prior to that, many physicians considered Jorgenson's sex change unsuccessful.) Indeed, after Jorgenson returned from Denmark, American journalists soon questioned her surgically transformed sex. *Time* declared, "Jorgenson was no girl at all, only an altered male," and *Newsweek* followed suit.[24]

In contrast, Guan observed, "Our 'Chinese Christine,' Xie Jianshun, has become a 100 per cent woman biologically, outplacing the 'incomplete female' Christine Jorgensen." Unlike the American celebrity, Xie was inclined to continue living as a man, "let alone earning money [with an iconoclastic transsexual embodiment]." Guan added that Xie was even "afraid of losing his privilege of being a [military] warrior after sex reassignment." Based on these differences, the author concluded that Jorgensen's sex reassignment effected an international sensation in part because of her "opportunistic inclinations" and the "widespread curiosity in society"; Xie's sex change operation, on the other hand, proceeded as a proper medical solution for a congenital bodily defect. "But no adequate social resources were yet available for people like Xie," wrote Guan.[25] At the time of expressing his views, Guan of course could not anticipate the kind of spiritual and financial support that Xie had sporadically received from various military units in southern Taiwan.[26] More

[23] Guan Ming (管明), "Zhongguo Kelisiding" (中國克麗斯汀) [The Chinese Christine], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 1, 1953, no. 6.
[24] Joanne Meyerowitz, "Sex Change and the Popular Press: Historical Notes on Transsexuality in the United States, 1930-1955," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 4, no. 2 (1998): 159-187, on pp. 173-174.
[25] Guan, "Zhongguo Kelisiding."
[26] See "Nanbu junyou fenshe weiwen Xie Jianshun" (南部軍友分社 慰問謝尖順) [Soldiers from the southern

problematically, Guan had mistaken Xie's first exploratory laparotomy operation for a full sex transformation surgery, and he also overlooked the convention among doctors in Europe and America, in the years before Jorgensen, to declare sex change surgeries as acceptable treatment for intersexed conditions.[27]

Nonetheless, Guan's comparison of the two transsexual iconoclastic figures nicely illustrates how sexualized bodies circulating in the early-Cold-War-era public milieu proved to be an ambivalent platform on which claims about national similarities (e.g., between the United Sates and the Republic of China) could simultaneously infuse broader claims about cultural (and perhaps even civilizational) divergence between "China" and the West.[28] On the one hand, by systematically referring to Xie as the "Chinese Christine," contemporary Taiwanese journalists and public commentators interpreted Xie's medical condition and Jorgensen's transsexual experience as more similar than different. On the other hand, they brought Xie's intention to remain biological male to full public disclosure and, at one point, even suggested the possibility that Xie may be a "true" hermaphrodite and Jorgensen only a "pseudo" hermaphrodite.[29] For Guan in particular, whereas the international notoriety of Jorgensen's sex change could be attributed to the social norms of "opportunistic" thinking and curiosity in the West, Xie's publicity in postwar Taiwan depended on Chinese doctors'

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station console Xie Jianshun], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 4, 1953, no. 3; "Zenkuan Xie Jianshun buwang abingjie" (贈款謝尖順 不忘阿兵姐) [Donating to Xiejianshun: Never forget the female soldier], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 21, 1953, no. 4; "Xie Jianshun xiaojie jiang beilai kaidao" (謝尖順小姐 將北來開刀) [Miss Xie Jianshun coming to Taipei for surgery], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), October 29, 1953, no. 3; "Wei qiuzheng shengli yi diding yinyang" (為求正生理 易地定陰陽) [To validify physiology and yin or yang], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), December 5, 1953, no. 3.

[27] See Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*; Alison Redick, "American History XY: The Medical Treatment of Intersex, 1916-1955" (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University, 2004); Christina Matta, "Ambiguous Bodies and Deviant Sexualities: Hermaphrodites, Homosexuality, and Surgery in the United States, 1850-1904," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 48, no. 1 (2005): 74-83.

[28] For theoretical considerations of the problem of civilizationalism, see Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 22-49; Kuan-Hsing Chen, "Civilizationalism," *Theory, Culture & Society* 23, nos. 2-3 (2006): 427-428. For another example of the Xie-Jorgensen comparison, see "Hebi ruci feijing" (何必如此費勁) [Why go through so much trouble], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), March 26, 1954, no. 3.

[29] "Xie Jianshun jue laibei kaidao xinan yinü nanding duankao erci shoushu" (謝尖順決來北開刀 係男抑女難定 端看二次手術) [Xie Jianshun has decided to relocate to Taipei for surgery: sex determination depends on the second operation], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), November 27, 1953, no. 3.

ethical responsibility to provide proper care for a medical condition like Xie's. In either case, the popular press portrayed Xie's condition and his sex change surgery as a rare and important event in medical science, thereby modeling such advancement in postwar Taiwan after the latest surgical breakthrough in Western biomedicine. In this way, the story of Xie Jianshun helped to situate Taiwan on the same global horizon as the United States.[30]

Despite the prevailing tendency to compare the two transsexual icons, Xie reacted to her unforeseen publicity in a manner radically different from the notorious American Christine. Whereas Jorgensen enjoyed her international fame, collaborated with various media agents to shape it, and took other deliberate measures to promote it, Xie did not seize the press coverage of her genital surgery as an opportunity to boost her own reputation. To Xie, the popular rendition of her body as a valuable medical specimen and a concrete ground for U.S.-Taiwan idiosyncratic comparison were less important than her hope to be treated properly and rejoin a normal and healthy life. Little did Xie realize that the significance of her celebrity came not only from the direct comparisons with Jorgensen, but from the underlying similarities between the popular perceptions of transsexuals as changed by her publicity and the subsequent flood of other stories in Taiwan, both inflected by the global reach of the Jorgensen narrative. As the nominal label of "Chinese Christine" suggests, "the power behind the culture of U.S. imperialism comes from its ability to insert itself into a geocolonial space as the imaginary figure of modernity, and as such, the natural object of identification from which the local people are to learn."[31]

V. The Second Operation

As the Republican government officials took a more serious interest in her case, Xie resisted their hegemonic decisions. Xie's second operation was initially scheduled to take

[30] Guan, "Zhongguo Kelisiding."
[31] Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), p. 177.

place within two weeks after the first, but the only news that reached the 518 Hospital four weeks after the exploratory laparotomy operation was a state-issued order that she must be transported to Taipei. The reporters wrote, "In order to ensure Xie's safety, and in the hope that a second operation will be carried out smoothly, it has been decided that she will be relocated to Taipei. After being evaluated and operated upon by a group of notable doctors in a reputable hospital, [Xie's sex change] will mark a great moment in history." Xie refused. She immediately wrote to officials to express her preference for staying in Tainan and being operated again there.[32]

To her dismay, Xie paid a price for challenging the authorities. They neglected her and left her unoperated for at least three weeks following her request. The press reappeared as a viable venue to voice her dissent. On 17 October, Xie disclosed the anxiety she had developed from her last menstrual experience, which occurred roughly a month ago. "Given her vaginal blockage, wastes could only be discharged from a small [genital] opening, leading to extreme abdominal pains during her period," an article with the title "The Pain of Miss Xie Jianshun" explained. Since another menstrual cycle was just right around the corner, she urged Dr. Lin, again, to perform a second operation as promptly as possible. But Dr. Lin despairingly conceded that he must receive a formal response from the central government before he could proceed with any additional surgical protocols. All he could do at this point, as one might have expected, was to re-forward Xie's second request to the higher officials and wait.[33] At the end of the month, Xie's former captain, Fu Chun (傅純), paid her a visit, bringing her 300 dollars to help her get by this period of unrest.[34]

By late November, the prolonged waiting and the accumulated unanswered requests

[32] "Xie Jianshun gaizao shoushu huo jianglai Taibei kaidao" (謝尖順改造手術 或將來台北開刀) [Xie Jianshun's alteration surgery might take place in Taipei], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 24, 1953, no. 3.
[33] "Xie Jianshun xiaojie de yintong" (謝尖順小姐的隱痛) [The pain of Miss Xie Jianshun], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), October 17, 1953, no. 3.
[34] "Xie Jianshun xiaojie jiang beilai kaodao."

forced Xie to agree reluctantly to relocate to Taipei. The *United Daily News* announced the fifth of the following month to be the date of her arrival and the Taipei No. 1 General Hospital (台北第一總醫院) the place of her operation. A medical authority from the Taipei hospital anticipated their takeover of Xie's case: "In light of Xie's biology, there should be no leap of faith in how successfully the second operation will convert Xie into a woman. The only thing that remains to be determined is whether Xie is a fake or true hermaphrodite [偽性或真性半陰陽]. This can be accomplished by taking a sample from one of Xie's incomplete testes [一顆不完全的睪丸] and determine whether it could produce semen**.**" The doctor reinforced the popular perception of Xie's condition as an unordinary phenomenon of nature by describing it as "truly rare in the world's medical history."[35]

In early December, the *United Daily News* announced "Chinese Christine Coming to Taipei Today for Treatment," and many gathered around the Taipei main station that day expecting to greet the transsexual celebrity in person.[36] Despite the great measure of patience and enthusiasm with which her Taipei fans waited, the papers reported on the following day, 6 December, that their hopes ended up in despair: Xie's anticipated relocation failed to materialize, which disappointed those who were eager to witness the legendary transsexual icon. The papers reported that "Xie's Taipei trip might have been cancelled or postponed due to unknown reasons" and offered no estimation of her new arrival date.[37] To the public's dismay, it would be at least six more weeks before Xie quietly showed up at the No. 1 General Hospital in Taipei.

The press had heretofore functioned as a key mediator between the medical professionals, Xie Jianshun, and the Taiwanese public. Newspapers across the nation served

[35] "Xie Jianshun jue laibei kaidao."
[36] "Wei qiuzheng shengli yi diding yinyang."
[37] "Zhongguo Kelisiding zuori wei beilai" (中國克麗絲汀 昨日未北來) [The Chinese Christine did not arrive at Taipei yesterday], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), December 6, 1953, no. 3.

as the primarily means through which readers could learn Xie's own viewpoints and opinions. Those who followed her story closely also relied mainly on the papers for the ins and outs of her medical procedures. Recall that doctors even allowed news reporters to witness the exploratory laparotomy operation and, afterward, publicly disclosed their decision to turn Xie into a woman before telling Xie herself. Similarly, Xie considered the press as the most immediate (and perhaps reliable) way to publicize her desire to remain biologically male before the operation and her unwillingness to leave Tainan afterward. Almost without a slightest degree of hesitation, both Xie and the medical experts who looked after her readily collaborated with the journalists to escalate the initial scoop of media reporting into a nationwide frenzy.

Although the reporters continued to clamor, the coverage took a dip near the end of 1953. In 1954, only three articles in the *United Daily News* and none in either the *China Daily News* (中華日報, *Zhonghua Ribao*) or the *Taiwan Shin Sheng Daily News* (台灣新生報, *Taiwan Xinshengbao*) followed up on Xie's situation. After the cancellation of her December trip, the first update on Xie's health condition came in as late as mid-February 1954. It was only by that point that her reticent move to Taipei on 16 January was revealed to the public. The name of her new surgeon in charge at the No. 1 General Hospital was Jiang Xizheng (姜希錚). Yet, despite the surprising news that Xie was now in Taipei, the closest impression one could gain from reading this article was a description of the hospital room in which she was staying: "Xie Jianshun's room is simply decorated, with a single bed, a tea table, a long table, and a chair. There is a window at the end of the room, but the curtains are almost always closed in order to avoid others from peeking into [her] secrets."[38] What these words reflected was not only the physical distance between Xie and any

[38] "Xie Jianshun bingfang shenju jingdai shoushu ding yiyang" (謝尖順病房深居 靜待手術定陰陽) [Xie Jianshun residing in the hospital room: Waiting for sex-determination surgery], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), February 15, 1954, no. 3.

curious-minded individuals who would take the initiative to visit her at the hospital; these words were also meant to relate the metaphorical distance between Xie and the readers who found it increasingly difficult to gather information about her medical condition and the concrete plans for her second operation based on the newspaper reports alone. Even as the *United Daily News* indicated that Xie was now taking hormones so that she was closer to becoming "the second Christine," it failed to identify who exactly provided that piece of information and how reliable it was.[39]

The long silence in the press coverage might suggest that the public's interest in Xie's story had begun to lose its toll. However, the next *United Daily News* article, which appeared roughly a month later in mid-March, indicated otherwise and put forth a more plausible explanation.

> The hospital is especially secretive about the exact location of her room, because this is to avoid unsolicited visits from intrusive strangers. Meanwhile, perhaps as part of the process of her male-to-female transformation, Xie Jianshun has become increasingly shy in front of strangers, so she has asked the doctors to promise not to disclose any further information about her medical condition to the public while she is hospitalized. Deeply concerned with her psychological wellbeing, the doctors agreed as a matter of course.[40]

In other words, the dip in the press coverage had less to do with the public's declining interest in Xie, than with a mutual agreement between Xie and her medical staff to refrain from

[39] Ibid.
[40] "Xie Jianshun youju daibian yijue de titai jiaorou" (謝尖順幽居待變 益覺得體態嬌柔) [Xie Jianshun secluding herself and becoming feminized], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), March 18, 1954, no. 3.

speaking to the journalists. This constituted the second turning point in the evolving relationship between the medical profession and the reporting of Xie's sex change in the mass media. The popular press no longer played the role of a friendly mediator between the public, the doctors, and Xie herself. To both Xie and her medical staff after the first operation, the publicity showered on them seemed to impede rather than helping their plans. Xie, especially, might had considered the authorities' indifference toward her earlier request to stay in Tainan as a consequence of nationwide media coverage, thereby holding her prolonged waiting against the reporters. Apart from a brief comment about how Xie displayed "more obvious feminine characteristics" as a result of her hormone injections, the March *United Daily News* article included no new information on her situation.

As the voice of the newspaper accounts became increasingly speculative, and as the mediating role of the press gradually receded to the background, to the readers, public information about Xie's second operation proved to be less certain and more difficult to ascertain. The tension between the reporters and those who tried to protect Xie from them peaked around late June, when the *United Daily News* reported on Xie for the third and final time in 1954. The article opened with a sentence that mentioned only in passing Xie's "more 'determinant' operation recently performed at the No. 1 General Hospital." Framed as such, Xie's "second" operation was barely publicized, and even if readers interpreted this line to mean that Xie had undergone a second operation, the doctors withstood from providing any updates on it. When the reporters consulted Xie's medical team on June 24, they were met with a persistent reluctance to respond to any questions and to permit any non-medical personnel to visit Xie. A staff at the No. 1 General Hospital was even quoted for saying that "We are not sure if Xie Jianshun is still staying with us in this hospital."[41]

[41] "Xie Jianshun jiju nüertai qinsi mantou fenbaimian youju mixhi yizeng xiu" (謝尖順極具女兒態 青絲滿頭粉白面 幽居密室益增羞) [Xie Jianshun appears extremely feminine], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), June 25, 1954, no. 5.

In contrast to the sensationalist tone and mundane details that dominated the discussion of Xie's first surgery, the press coverage of the second operation was less fact-oriented and filled with more suppositions. The *United Daily News* glossed over any information that would support the claim that Xie had become more biologically female after her relocation. Despite the best intentions of the hospital staff to distance the media people from Xie,

> A journalist has conducted an investigation inside the hospital and found signs that suggest that Xie Jianshun has become more lady-like and that she is undergoing an accelerated metamorphosis. […] Despite the high surveillance under which Xie Jianshun is monitored, sometimes her face still can be seen. According to an individual who claims to have seen Xie Jianshun in person recently, it is difficult to determine whether Xie Jianshun has completely transformed into a woman. Nonetheless, based on what he saw, Xie's hair has grown longer than before, and her face has become paler and smoother. The general impression one would get from looking at Xie now is that Xie Jianshun is gradually becoming more female like by day [謝尖順已日漸頃向於女性型].[42]

Not only did this account fail to mention what the second operation entailed, it only *surmised* the outcome based on some unknown secondary source. Unlike the step-by-step recounting of the surgical protocols involved in the first operation, the doctors' plans for pursuing Xie's bodily transformation in the immediate future were also not made clear this time round.

[42] Ibid.

VI. Sensationalism beyond Xie

As the doctors, the authorities, and Xie became more self-conscious about what they said in public, the press found it more and more challenging to sensationalize new narratives about the first Chinese transsexual. After the first operation, reporters lacked direct access to information on Xie's medical care, so they began to look for other surprising stories of gender transgressive behavior or ailments of the body. Between late 1953 and late 1954, the popularity of Xie's transsexual narrative prompted other similar, however "less genuine," accounts of unusual body morphology to surface in the Taiwanese press.

The media coverage of Xie's story enabled some readers to consider the possibility of experimenting with their own gender appearance. For example, in September 1953, the *United Daily News* ran an article with the headline, "A Teenage Boy Dressed as a Modern Woman." The 19-year-old cross-dresser named Lü Jinde (呂金德) was said to "appear beautifully," had "a puffy hairstyle," wore "a Western-style white blouse that showed parts of her breast, a blue skirt, a white slingback, and a padded bra on her chest," and carried "a large black purse" on a Thursday evening in Taipei.[43] This "human prodigy" (人妖, *renyao*) was found with "foundation powder, powder blush, lipstick, hand mirror, and a number of photos of other men and women" in her purse, and her face was said to be "covered with a thick layer of powder" and decorated with "a heavy lipstick application." She also "penciled her eyebrows so that they look much longer." "All of these," the reporter claimed, "make her look like a modern woman."[44] Lü, who used to work as a hair dresser, was identified by one of her former clients who lived in the Wanhua (萬華) district. This client followed Lu around briefly before turning to the police, explaining that Lü "walked in a funny way that

[43] Lü was originally from Miaoli county.

[44] "Dianyingjie zuowan chuxian renyao shaonian qiaozhuang modengnü zikui shengwei nan'ersheng" (電影街昨晚出現人妖 少年喬裝摩登女 自愧生為男兒身) [Human prodigy appeared on movie street last night: A man dressing up like a modern woman, loathing a natural male body], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 25, 1953, no. 3.

was neither masculine nor feminine." After being arrested, Lü told the police that "Because I like to be a lady (做個小姐), starting roughly two months ago, I have been wondering around the streets in female attire (男扮女裝) everyday after sunset." "Although Lu's appearance emulated a modern lady rather successfully," the paper insisted, "his full female attire still could not conceal his masculine characteristics, which were easily recognizable by others."[45] One observer considered Lu's cross-dressing behavior acceptable, pointing out the counterexample of the increasing number of women who had begun imitating the roles of men in society.[46] Most reacted rather conservatively, though, claiming to have witnessed "an immoral, confusing, and gender ambiguous persona that provoked disgust" (不倫不類非男非女的樣子，叫人看了要嘔吐).[47]



Figure 47: Photos of Lü Jinde, *Lianhebao* (1953).

Original male appearance on the left; in female attire on the right.

[45] Ibid.
[46] "Yidu dianying duanzuo youtian" (一睹電影・頓作憂天) [A trip to the movie・fast becoming worries], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 26, 1953, no. 4.
[47] "Renyao zhanzhuan qijie nongde mianwu qunxie shangfeng baisu juliu santian" (人妖輾轉起解 弄得面污裙斜 傷風敗俗拘留三天) [The human prodigy no longer appears fabulous: Detained for three days for offending public morals], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 26, 1953, no. 3.

Another story of gender transgression falls more appropriately in the category of what historians of modern America have called "passing."[48] The 23-year-old Ding Bengde (丁甭德) dressed up as a man and was arrested for having abducted another young woman named Xu Yueduan (許月端). Xu's mother turned Ding in to the police after the two girls reappeared in Xu's hometown, Huwei District (虎尾鎮), and accused Ding for seducing and abducting Xu. Ding explained that she came to Huwei with the sole purpose of meeting a friend. She had to be able to earn a substantial living in order to support her family, so she decided to disguise as a man in public. This "passing" would lower her chances of being mistreated by her coworkers or other men. Labeled by the press as a "female cross-dressing freak" (女扮男裝怪客), Ding denied the accusation that Xu's mother had brought on to her. Similar to the coverage of Lü Jinde, the paper fascinated its reader with engrossing details about Ding's male appearance: "The female cross-dressing freak wore a long-sleeve white shirt, a pair of white pants, no shoes, a sleek hairstyle, natural movement, giving people the impression that it is difficult to discern his/her sex (使人見之難別雌雄)." The reporters moreover hinted at a "deeper meaning" to this case, which the police were still in the process of figuring out. Perhaps by "deeper meaning" they had in mind the possibility, however remote, of a lesbian relationship between Ding and Xu. But neither the concept of homosexuality nor the word lesbianism was ever invoked in the textual description of this incident.[49]

Apart from explicit gender transgressive behaviors, other astonishing accounts of bodily

[48] On "passing," see Jonathan Katz, ed., *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.* (New York: Avon, 1976), pp. 317-422; San Francisco Lesbian and Gay History Project, "'She Even Chewed Tobacco': A Pictorial Narrative of Passing Women in America," in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey Jr. (New York: New American Library, 1989), pp. 183-194; Louis Sullivan, *From Female to Male: The Life of Jack Bee Garland* (Boston: Alyson, 1990).

[49] "Jiananren youguai shaonü chongxian jietou bei juji" (假男人誘拐少女 重現街頭被拘拏) [Fake man abducts a young lady: Arrested when reappears in public], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 28, 1953, no. 3.

irregularity also made their way into the press. In writing about these stories, the reporters always began by referring to Xie Jianshun's experience as a departing point for framing these rare disorders of the reproductive system. For example, a gynecologist came across a young woman with two uteruses in Tainan, where news of Xie's sex transformation originated. This coincidence led the paper to declare that "While the date for the second sex reassignment surgery of Xie Jianshun, the Christine of Free China, remains undetermined, another anomalous case of a patient who pursued surgical treatment due to physiological problems was discovered in Tainan."[50] The woman was pregnant and near the end of her third trimester when she visited the Provincial Tainan Hospital (省立台南醫院) for medical assistance.

Upon seeing two uteruses inside the woman's womb, Dr. Huang Jiede (黃皆得) decided that for her delivery, he would first perform a Caesarian section, followed by a tubectomy (tubal ligation). The purpose of the tubectomy, according to Huang, was to prevent "gestation in both uteruses, which would lead to unfavorable conditions in the future." Reporters pressed Huang for further clarification on the safeness and necessity of the C-section procedure. Huang explained that normal vagina birth would be difficult in this case, "because [the patient] has two uteruses." He stood by his decision "to deliver the baby with a C-section, which is the safest option." Interestingly, unlike the tremendous degree of publicity they accorded to Xie Jianshun, the reporters followed the medical team's instruction to withhold the personal information, including the full name, of this patient. What is certain, though, is that the media exposure of this bi-uteral condition hinged on its potential to be compared directly to the Xie story, given that both shared a certain feature of "rareness in

[50] "Ji yinyangren hou you yi yiwen poufu qutai fang nanchan chuyun shaofu liang zigong" (繼陰陽人後又一異聞 剖腹取胎防難產 初孕少婦兩子宮) [Another strange news after the hermaphrodite: C-section performed on a woman with two uteruses], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 28, 1953, no. 3.

the medical community."[51]

In November 1953, the press discovered another individual with uncommon pregnancy problems. Only this time, the patient was a man. Born in 1934, the farmer Liao (廖) experienced persistent crams and abdominal discomfort over the past two decades. The pain became more pronounced over time, especially in recent years, reaching an intolerable state that forced Liao to seek medical assistance with the company of his family. Although this was not the first time that Liao consulted doctors about his situation, it was the first time that he received surgical (and perhaps terminal) treatment for it. Dr. Yang Kun'yan (楊坤焰), the president of the Jichangtang Hospital (吉昌堂醫院), situated on Zhongzheng Road in the Luodong District of Yilan county (宜蘭縣羅東鎮中正路), operated on Liao on 7 November. News of this male pregnancy was circulated at least on two levels: the local district level and the county level. On the local district level, the paper explained that "because [Liao's male body] does not allow for natural delivery, Dr. Yang could remove [the head of the fetus] only surgically."[52] The county-level coverage of Liao's condition was more detailed: "Dr. Yang found a growth in Liao's abdomen and excised the pink fleshy bulge that weighed four pounds (四公兩). The doctors were unable to determine the causes of this tumor even after careful research and investigation. After removing it from Liao's body, they found a head [with some hair], a pair of eyes, a nose, and a mouth on the fleshy growth. The only parts that are missing [that would otherwise make this growth resemble a fetus] are the arms and legs."[53]

In the shadow of Xie Jianshun's sex change, the question of Liao's sexual identity was high on the reporters' radar. The district-level reporters wrote: "Everyone is curious about

[51] Ibid.
[52] "Qingnian nanzi sheng youyun yishi pouchu renxingliu" (青年男子身有孕 醫師剖出人形瘤) [Doctor excised a human-form growth from a pregnant man], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), November 13, 1953, no. 3, report from Luodong district.
[53] "Qingnian nanzi sheng youyun," report from Yilan county.

where Liao's baby comes from and whether he will be transformed into a man or a woman. In Dr. Yang's perspective, Liao is indisputably male [道地的男人]. Therefore, after recovering from the delivery and the laparotomy incision surgery, Liao will be able to leave the hospital and enjoy living the rest of his life like a normal man." Similarly, the county-level coverage recounted Dr. Yang's confirmation that Liao "was neither a woman nor a hermaphrodite."[54] The venturing into Liao's sexual identity led to greater clarification of his physical ailment. "The growth," Dr. Yang's speculated, "may have been the result of twin conception during his mother's pregnancy and that one of the fetuses formed prematurely and remained in his body."[55] The district-level coverage introduced Liao's male pregnancy with the opening sentence: "The ex-soldier Xie Jianshun, now a lady, has become a household name in Taiwan, being the focus of the most popular current event of the year."[56] The county-level coverage stressed the value of the Liao case by noting the strong interested that numerous medical experts had expressed towards it: "This rare event has taken the county by storm. The medical profession places great emphasis on this case, believing that it bears a tremendous degree of value for medical research."[57] Although neither the lady with two uteruses nor the pregnant man was experiencing medical symptoms related to sex change per se, the Xie Jianshun story provided a prism into these problems. The papers allegedly claimed that, like Xie's transsexuality, these were rare biological phenomena that could potentially contribute to the advancement of biomedical research. On their end, in both cases, the doctors justified surgical intervention for these "unnatural" bodily defects.

In the midst of the coverage on Xie Jianshun's relocation to Taipei, in December 1953, the press recounted the story of another transsexual: Gonggu Bao (宮古保), a foreign criminal who sometimes disguised as a man, but more often appeared as a woman, and who

[54] "Qingnian nanzi sheng youyun," Luodong.
[55] "Qingnian nanzi sheng youyun," Yilan.
[56] "Qingnian nanzi sheng youyun," Luodong.
[57] "Qingnian nanzi sheng youyun," Yilan.

had lived in different parts of Asia at various points of her life. Born in Siberia in 1902, Gong entered the world as Gonggu Baozi (宮古保子). Her father was Chinese, and her mother was half Koryak and half Japanese. After her mother had died due to malnutrition during the Russian-Japanese War (1904-1905), her father married another Japanese woman and relocated to Tokyo. At the age of seven, Gonggu Baozi discovered that her facial and other physical appearances began to exhibit "masculine traits." Doctors performed plastic surgeries on her (how intrusive these surgeries were in terms of direct genital alteration is unclear from the newspaper account), but she still appeared "neither womanly-like nor manly-like" (不像女的，也不像男的). Given the situation, her father and stepmother decided to change her name to Gonggu Bao, believing that by adopting this new (more masculine) name, she was destined to live as a man from this point onward.

Unfortunately, at the age of thirteen, Bao began to menstruate. This horrified her, as someone who had been assigned a biological male identity for half of her life. She began to alienate herself. She never played with other kids from her school. Her parents, hugely disappointed at the situation, decided to send her away to live with her grandmother. Since the age of fifteen, so the newspapers claimed, Bao had committed at least 38 crimes all over the world, including in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, and even Alaska and Canada. But more importantly, what Gonggu Bao's story confirmed was that Xie Jianshun's sex change was neither exceptional nor the first in Asia. Although their life trajectories proceeded in vastly different social, cultural, political, and historical contexts, Gong and Xie followed the same legacy of bodily transformation through medical intervention.[58] Moreover, the renewed interest in Gonggu Bao implied that it would be too simplistic to consider her, like Christine Jorgensen, merely as a historical precedent to Xie's popularity; rather, it is precisely due to the ways in which the popular press behaved as an important

[58] "Yinyangren liulangji" (陰陽人流浪記) [The tale of a hermaphrodite], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), December 30, 1953, no. 3.

vehicle for the dissemination of the possible idea of sex change that the stories of Gonggu, Jorgensen, and Xie enjoyed an unprecedented public consideration as interwoven and interrelated in early Cold War Sinophone culture.

In addition to Gong, in the same month, reporters uncovered two more domestic stories of human intersexuality. In both cases, the newspaper accounts began by referring to Xie's experience as a window into these anomalous medical surprises. The first concerned a 35-year-old man, Mr. Zheng (鄭), whose ambiguous genital anatomy was discovered by doctors during the screening of new military recruits at Yuanli District (苑裏鎮). After a long and careful consideration, the doctors ultimately agreed on the label of "middle sex" (中性) when filling out his gender on their medical forms.[59] The second story concerned the 19-year-old Lin Luanying (林鸞英), who was a frequent client of a tofu shop in Yeliu Village (野柳村) of Taipei County owned by the widow Li Axiang (李阿向). Building on two years of customer relation, Lin became very intimate with Li's eldest son, Hu Canlin (胡燦林), and with parental consent, Lin and Hu decided to get married on 8 December of the Chinese calendar. As the wedding day was rapidly approaching, however, Lin began to panic. She believed that something was wrong with her body, so she consulted a doctor at Yilan Hospital (宜蘭醫院) and "tried to fixe her problem." The papers framed her visit in voluntary terms, describing her as "a *yin-yang* person like Xie Jianshun," who also went to the doctors for a checkup after having experienced great physical discomfort. "The major difference" between them, though, "was that Lin was soon to be turned into a bride." After performing an operation on Lin (presumably the kind of exploratory laparotomy operation that resembled Xie's first surgery), the doctors were surprised by the incomplete formation of her genital area, with the external absence of *labia majora* and *labia minora* and the internal absence of

[59] "Yuanlizheng bingyi tijian faxian yige yinyangren" (苑裏鎮兵役體檢 發現一個陰陽人) [A hermaphrodite discovered in Yuanli District], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), December 10, 1953, no. 3.

an uterus. The papers announced that "the doctors were astounded by what they saw, but they claimed to lack the technical expertise that could help improve her condition" (醫師見而興嘆, 乏術開闢桃源). Lin's condition, the doctors suggested, proved to be more complicated than the simple determination of gonadal tissues that made sex alteration in Xie's case possible and more straightforward.[60]

As the cast of characters mounted, newspapers published more sensational stories. The most heartening and tragic of these was probably the story of Wang Lao (汪老), a 57-year-old intersex who had committed suicide in March 1954 due to her accumulated loneliness and depression. The media interpreted her biological condition as "identical to Xie Jianshun" with the exception that her intersexuality had never been properly attended by doctors.[61] The most optimistic and encouraging story was probably that of the 5-year-old Du Yizheng (杜異征). While the result of Xie's transition was still up in the air, doctors in Taichung (台中) claimed to have successfully converted this child into a girl, giving her a normal life and the public an additional boost of confidence in Taiwan's medical professionals. As the press framed it, this case proved to be a welcome achievement of the medical profession that gave parents stronger faith in the way doctors approached clinical cases of intersexed children.[62]

But the story of the transsexual Liu Min (劉敏) stood out as one of the most puzzling and intriguing. The *United Daily News* article opened with the enigma itself: "for a woman who had delivered a baby to turn into a man within a decade is an event that reasonably

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[60] "You yi yinyangren linjia fangxin daluan wulu yindu yulang" (又一陰陽人 臨嫁芳心大亂 無路引渡漁郎) [Another hermaphrodite anxious prior to marriage but unable to be treated], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), December 31, 1953, no. 3.

[61] "Rensheng guji dengxianguo touhuan yisi yinyangren" (人生孤寂等閒過 投繯縊死陰陽人) [A hermaphrodite kills herself for loneliness], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), March 16, 1954, no. 3.

[62] "Yinyangren gaizao chenggong qitai zhuidi nannü mobian yishu huitian mingzhu chenghui" (陰陽人改造成功 奇胎墜地男女莫辨 醫術回天明珠呈輝) [The sex of a hermaphrodite successfully transformed through surgery], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), April 12, 1954, no. 3.

arouses suspicion on all fronts."[63] Liu Min had recently transformed into a man due to medical complications, but she also had a daughter named Xiaozhen (小真) with her husband. Is it possible for a transsexual to give birth to a child? With the unknown consequence of Xie Jianshun's sex change surgeries (including their effect on her eventual ability to conceive) still lurking, the combination of Liu's past pregnancy with her recent sex transformation seemed all the more bizarre, relevant, and worth pursuing. For over a week, Liu's life history prompted the speculations and opinions of people from all walks of life, and the initial coverage soon escalated into a nationwide obsession.[64]

It turned out that Liu never delivered a baby; Xiaozhen was only her step sister and, accordingly, adopted child. In 1938, after marrying her cousin, Liu felt regular distress around her abdominal region, not unlike Xie's early conditions. (By that point, Liu's biological father had already abandoned her mother and her for over a decade.) Her relatives considered these crams to be signs of actual pregnancy. Upon learning this, her mother immediately disclosed her own recent pregnancy to Liu (without stating who the father was). But with her mother's economic and physical situation at that point, it was not feasible for her mother to raise a second child. Her mother therefore begged her to raise her step sister as her own child in the pretense of casting this whole situation as the outcome of her ostensible pregnancy. With her husband's agreement, Liu accepted her mother's request and promised to never reveal this secret to anyone. Meanwhile, over the years, Liu had surgically removed her uterus in Beijing, which led to increasingly startling changes in her genital area, including "the closing up of her vagina" (陰道逐漸閉塞) and "the formation of

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[63] "Bianxingren Liu Ming tulu zhenqing jianwei shengnü shijia yuanshi yifu meimei" (變性人劉敏吐露真情 前謂生女是假 原是異父妹妹) [Transsexual Liu Min reveals the truth: Her daughter is actually her stepsister], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), December 13, 1954, no. 3.

[64] "Benshu fujia shunü biancheng rongma zhangfu" (本屬富家淑女 變成戎馬丈夫) [A well-to-do lady turned into a military man], *Lianhebao*, December 10, 1954, no. 3; "Gechu nüxing qiguan keneng bianzuo nanxiang" (割除女性器官 可能變作男相) [Possible masculinization by the removal of female genital organ], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), December 14, 1954, no. 3; "Liu Ming wuzui" (劉敏無罪) [Liu Min is innocent], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), December 20, 1954, no. 3.

a male phallus on top of her labia" (大小陰唇之上便開始長出男性生殖器). According to Liu, the reporter to whom she told this secret was only the fourth person to know about it.[65]

By the end of 1954, reporters had lost almost all contacts with Xie Jianshun and her medical team. Xie Jianshun eventually moved from current event to yesterday's news, but as other stories of unusual bodily problems surfaced and resurfaced, the media reminded the public that manhood, womanhood, and the boundaries between them were neither as obvious nor as impermeable as they once had seemed. From Lü Jinde's cross-dressing to the lady with two uteruses, and from Liao's male pregnancy to Lin Luanying's intersexed condition, the earlier publicity showered on Xie provided a leverage for both the journalists and health care professionals to relate other nominal stories of bodily irregularity to the idea of "transsexuality." Although not necessarily about sex change per sex, these stories enabled some readers to take seriously the possibility of sex/gender transformation. With an elevated awareness of the malleability of sex, they began to learn what the label of "transsexuality" meant and appreciated the immediate role of medical intervention in the reversing one's sex. Through the press coverage, stories of intersexuality and sex transition recast earlier questions about human identity in a new light. The authority of doctors, in particular, to unlock the secret of sexual identity was more and more firmly planted in the popular imagination.

VII. Transformation Complete

The story of Liu Min finally pushed medical experts to step up and come clean about Xie Jianshun's situation. In January 1955, a newspaper article with the headline, "Xie Jianshun's Male-to-Female Transformation Nearly Complete: The Rumor of Surgical Failure Proved to be False," shattered any doubts about the progress of Xie's sex change. After the

[65] "Bianxingren Liu Ming tulu zhenqing."

first operation, given the way that Xie's doctors had intentionally refrained from leaking any word to the press, the public was left with an opaque impression of what was going on inside the hospital specifically and what was going on with Xie more generally. After the news of Liu Min's false pregnancy broke, readers began to wonder about Xie too. In the week after the revelation of Liu's relationship to her daughter, rumor had it that doctors' long silence meant Xie's transition into a woman ultimately failed. According to the article, the cause of this rumor "can be traced to an incident reported last month in Tainan of an *yin-yang* person. The general public's memory of Xie was refreshed by this story of the *yin-yang* person in Tainan, and as a result of this reminder, the public began to revisit the question of whether Xie had successfully turned into a woman." In attempt to dispel any doubts, doctors from the No. 1 General Hospital were quoted for confirming that "the rumor is certainly not true." They clarified that "Xie Jianshun's sex transformation has in fact proceeded rather successfully [since her relocation to Taipei] and is reaching its final stages." Xie, the doctors promised, "is living a perfectly healthy life." But when the reporters asked to speak to Xie in person, they were turned away at the hospital and were told by the staff that this kind of request "could only be fulfilled with a permit from the military authorities."[66]

The initial upsurge of the renewed interest in Xie only lasted briefly. It would take another eight months—after the doctors had performed Xie's "third" and final operation—before her name would make headlines again.[67] On 31 August 1955, the *United Daily News* carried an extended front-page article with the headline, "A New Chapter in the Nation's Medical History: The Success of Xie Jianshun's Sex Change Surgery."[68] On the

[66] "Xie Jianshun younan biannü shoushu yi jiejin chenggong" (謝尖順由男變女 手術已接近成功) [The surgery of Xie Jianshun's male-to-female transformation almost complete], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), January 9, 1955, no. 3.

[67] I put the word "third" in quotation marks here (and only here), because the official report released later in the year will contradict this count and indicate that this was actually Xie's fourth operation. See below.

[68] "Woguo yixue shishang de chuangju Xie Jianshun bianxing shoushu chenggong" (我國醫學史上的創舉 謝尖順變性手術成功) [A new chapter in the nation's medical history: The success of Xie Jianshun's sex change surgery], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), August 31, 1955, no. 1.

next day, the newspapers teased the public by announcing that "The Details of Xie Jianshun's Sex Change Operations will be Publicized Shortly." According to Xie's physician in charge, "Contrary to a number of fabricated claims, Xie Jianshun's final operation proceeded very smoothly on the morning of 30 August. With respect to the protocols and results of this decisive surgery, the medical team promises to release all of the relevant information in a formal report shortly." The papers glossed over the aim of this operation with the succinct words "to unclog her fallopian tubes," the obstruction of which had caused her periodic discomfort for months. Xie felt dizzy immediately after the operation, but recovered completely by the next morning. The representatives from the No. 1 General Hospital explained that both Xie herself and the uniqueness of her case constituted the main reasons for them to hold off on disclosing detailed information about her clinical experience. Since Xie had explicitly asked her medical staff to abstain from speaking to the journalist and reporters, the doctors assumed the responsibility of protecting Xie from media exposure. On the other hand, the doctors believed that her sex change operations "promise to mark an important medical breakthrough in the country" (此一手術尚為我國醫學界之創舉), so they wanted to be extra careful in making any kind of statement about the surgical proceedings and result. Silence seemed to be the best strategy to demonstrate their precaution before the final verdict.[69]

On the following day, the papers declared "the success of Xie Jianshen's sex change surgery," pitching it as "a fact that can no longer be shaken." Although the staff at the No. 1 General Hospital pledged to disclose the specificities of Xie's surgery in the near future, readers in Taiwan already learned a great deal on the day following the operation. Xie's popularity first skyrocketed two years ago, in August 1953, when doctors, scientists, the press,

[69] "Xie Jianshun biangxing shoushu jingguo duanqi zhengshi gongbu" (謝尖順 變性手術經過 短期正式公佈) [The details of Xie Jianshun's sex change surgery to be publicized shortly], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 1, 1955, no. 3.

and the lay public "discovered" her. Despite the detailed coverage of her first operation, or because of it, Xie and the people in her immediate circle became much quieter in front of the reporters. As its press coverage began to thin out in 1954, the Xie story grew more and more mysterious, while other stories of uncommon body morphology appeared and reappeared in the press. Even the timing and the surgical accomplishments of her second operation were never clear to the public until now. The papers now clarified that, in the months following her first operation, Xie not only resisted relocating to Taipei, but ardently opposed to changing her sex. The second operation eventually took place in April 1954, and it involved "the removal of the two symbolic male gonads" (割除其左右鼠蹊部內象徵性的睪丸). After the second operation, Xie "began to develop stronger female sexual characteristics" (體內女性生理性能轉強), which included the enlargement of her breasts and the onset of regular menstruation. Because Xie's reproductive system lacked a fully matured vaginal canal, her periodic menses caused her regular discomfort when they were excreted along with her urine through the urethra. As she "started to learn how it feels to be a woman" (開始嘗到做女人的滋味), these physiological effects made her more reluctant to the idea of becoming a woman. After wrestling with the idea of relocating to Taipei, she struggled with and eventually failed to convince her surgeons to not transform her sex.[70]

Amid a world of uncertainties brought about by World War II and its immediate aftermath, the media used the metaphor of the Cold War to depict Xie's relationship with the doctors. If the rough timing of the second operation were true, sixteen months had elapsed before Xie entered her recent surgery. To quote the exact words used by the journalists to frame this extended period of time, "the Cold War between Xie Jianshun and the hospital lasted until 5 April of this year." What got frozen during this period was not only Xie's

[70] "Xie Jianshun de nü'erjing qi xumei busheng xiunao huai jilü jingnian fangjie" (謝尖順的女兒經 棄鬚眉不勝羞惱 懷積慮經年方解) [Xie Jianshun's anxiety about menstruation problems finally resolved], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 2, 1955, no. 3.

reaction to the decisions of her physicians in charge, but also the overall fate of her medical treatment (or sex transformation). Due to the difference in the ambitions of Xie and her doctors, she requested a second relocation to a different hospital, but her request was ultimately denied. What "ended this Cold War," according to the newspapers, was a letter that she wrote to the president, Chiang Kai-Shek, in which she expressed her disdain towards how the doctors handled her case and the absence of nutritious diet at the hospital.[71]

In response to the letter, the Ministry of National Defense sent two representatives to the No. 1 General Hospital to resolve the tension between Xie and the doctors. Xie's complaint about how she was mistreated at the hospital, they found out, was a misleading "expression of her wrong set of mind" (內心理不正常發出的牢騷). They told her that the regular crams she was experiencing were due to the menstrual periods, which typified the somatic experience of the female reproductive system. In order to alleviate this physiological (and not psychological) discomfort, the doctors needed to construct a functional vaginal canal inside her body. Ultimately, the two representatives successfully persuaded Xie to take the doctors' advice and complete her sex transformation with one last surgery. The newspapers speculated that "perhaps it is due to her prejudice against the hospital staff, or perhaps it is due to her propensity to be more loyal to military personnel, she agreed to a third operation after only ten minutes or so of contemplation."[72] The year-long "Cold War" thus ended with the direct intervention of not the medical experts but state authorities. Whereas, according to historian Elaine May, the contemporaneous structural norms of American families helped offset the nation's domestic and foreign political insecurities, Cold War's metaphoric power, as evident in the example of Xie's transsexuality, was diffused in the public discussion of sexually malleable bodies in the context of postwar Taiwan, situated

[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.

on the fringes of China and Chineseness.[73]

Before the doctors released their official report of Xie's case, details of the third operation and how to assess its influence on Xie were already openly discussed by those who were in close contact with her. The new surgeon in charge, Zhang Xianlin (張先林), for example, uninhibitedly expressed his opinion on the nature of Xie's most recent operation. Whereas most peopled considered this operation to be the most critical and fate-determining, Zhang regarded it merely as "a simple cosmetic surgery" (簡單的矯形手術而已). Because Xie's body and reproductive system already resembled a normal woman, according to Zhang, the operation involved the enhancement of her female biology by "removing her symbolic phallic organ" (把她那象徵性的陰莖予以割除) and, more importantly, "the construction of an artificial menstrual canal" (開闢出一條人工的排經道), which would allow her to menstruate normally. The operation, which Zhang considered to be a breeze, began at eight o'clock in the morning and ended at ten after nine.[74] In order to evaluate the effect of the operation on Xie, the doctors vowed to administer an X-Ray examination in two weeks.[75] As another example, when the *United Daily News* in Taiwan and the *Kung Sheung Daily News* (工商日報) in Hong Kong published half-nude photos of the "post-op" Xie on 8 September, representatives from the No. 1 General Hospital quickly stood up and dismissed them as a sham.[76] And as a sign of their interest in looking after Xie's psychological wellbeing, within three weeks after the operation, the Ministry of National Defense awarded Xie 1,000 New Taiwan Dollars to help her defray the cost of purchasing new hyper-feminine

[73] See Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).
[74] "Xie Jianshun de nü'erjing."
[75] "Xie Jianshun bianxing shoushu hou yishi liangzhou hou kexue yan quansheng" (謝尖順變性手術後 醫師兩週後 科學驗全身) [Doctors will examine Xie Jianshun's body scientifically two weeks after sex change operation], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 3, 1955, no. 3.
[76] "Xie Jianshun luoxiong zhaopian zhengshi xi gongpin" (謝尖順裸胸照片 證實係贋品) [Xie Jianshun's half-nude photo: A hoax], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 10, 1955, no. 3.

attire.[77] This generous sum offered Xie greater freedom in constructing a social image—and a new sense of self—that aligned cogently with her new biological sex.

As doctors sought to clarify what happened during and after the third operation, newspapers continued to report on other astonishing stories of sex transformation. In early May, for instance, another soldier with a medical condition similar to Xie was discovered in Chia-Yi County (嘉義縣). This 28-year-old "gender ambiguous soldier" (性別可疑的軍人), Xu Zhenjie (徐振傑), was born in Henan. The first people who raised an eyebrow on his gender identity were those from within his troop. According to them, Xu was always reserved and quiet, and what especially made others suspicious of him was his decision to never shower with other men or to always leave on his clothes when he actually joined them. Initially, the doctors who examined his body only had a vague sense of the structural difference between his reproductive organ and that of other male soldiers, but they were not sure whether he was a man or a woman. After the news broke, the gynecologists and nurses at the Chia-Yi Hospital recalled that during his previous visit for a checkup, Xu complained about his own gender confusion and unfortunate fate.[78]

The story of Xu echoed certain elements of the earlier public anxiety and fascination with Liu Min, whose fake pregnancy stimulated renewed public interest in Xie. What grabbed everyone's attention, again, was the intriguing relationship between transsexuals and childbirth. At one point, Xu related to his relatives that his genital was "more feminine than masculine"; in fact, he suspected that he "may be a hundred percent female." If that were the case, has he ever menstruated or become pregnant before? "Faced with these questions," Xu only "kept silent and turned away shyly." It fact, when Xu first joined the army near the

[77] "Banfa yingbianfei qianjin zeng hongzhuang" (頒發應變費 千金贈紅妝) [Awarding Xie for building her new feminine look], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 21, 1955, no. 3.
[78] "Zilian feinan yi feinü huzhang yinzhong dong chunqing chuban baiyi tianshi houbian wei'an yingxiong" (自憐非男亦非女 虎帳隱衷動春情 初扮白衣天使後變偉岸英雄) [Self-loathing of sexual ambiguity], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), May 7, 1955, no. 3.

Dianmian (滇緬) borders, he self-identified as a woman. Having eventually enlisted in a male troop, however, Xu became close friends with other men in the army. His relationship with one of them became especially intimate, and after revealing his unusual biology to the person, Xu had his child. After delivering the baby, however, he found his own gender identity to be even more perplexing and distressful. By the time of his discharge from the military, "one could hardly tell the difference between Xu's mannerism and physical bearing from other men."[79] Even as Xu tried to dissociate himself from a masculine past, the press homed in on his masculine image. Although the question of whether Xu had actually experienced menstruation and childbirth (and what happened to the child if he did) remained up in the air, the press seemed to be more interested in using them as a foil against which to juxtapose his current masculine persona.[80]

After the initial stories on Christine Jorgensen dwindled, reporters produced a food of sensational copy of sex-change operations in American newspapers, periodicals, and magazines. Much like the way the coverage in Taiwan centered on Xie Jianshun, each new story confirmed that Jorgensen was not alone and that a number of others similarly desired to alter their bodily sex. The stories came from all over the world, but those from Britain and the United States attracted the most attention from the American press.[81] In the mid-1950s, these stories began to make their way across the Pacific and reached the Chinese-speaking audience. One of these stories in particular, that of Tamara Reese, appeared in the *United Daily News* in July 1955.[82] By reading the brief coverage in the *United Daily News*, Chinese readers learned not only of the names, age, and occupations of the couple—the

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[79] Ibid.

[80] "Xu Zhenjie de mimi" (徐振傑的祕密) [Xu Zhenjie's secret], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), May 9, 1955, no. 3; "Liuying fang yiren nanjie yimianyuan" (柳營訪異人 難結一面緣) [Searching for a stranger at Liuying: Difficult to see a face], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), May 11, 1955, no. 3.

[81] See Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*, pp. 81-97; Meyerowitz, "Sex Change and the Popular Press."

[82] "Daqian shijie mei bianxing sanbing zuo xinnian" (大千世界 美變性傘兵作新娘) [American paratrooper becomes a bride], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), July 29, 1955, no. 2. On Reese, see Meyerowitz, pp. 84-85; Ralph R. Greenson, "On Homosexuality and Gender Identity," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 45 (1964): 216-218.

31-year-old MTF paratrooper Reese (李絲) and the 30-year-old businessman James Courtland (卡德倫)—but also something of Reese's transsexual experience. The article clearly indicated the time and location of Reese's sex change operation—in Holland in January 1954—thereby hinting at a much broader and global dimension to sex-reassignment surgeries beyond Taiwan and the United States. Of course, what the Chinese coverage did not include were the minor details of Reese's transition. For instance, born in 1924, Reese had already begun taking hormones and started to live as a woman in Los Angeles before she travelled to Amsterdam for her genital surgery. After she married Courtland in July 1955, one magazine even called the wedding "history's first transvestite marriage."[83] And when the psychoanalyst Ralph Greenson later published an article on Reese in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* in 1964, he interpreted her gender confusion as a case of "homosexuality similar to that of neurotic adults."[84]

In contrast to the American stories, news of sex change in Taiwan came most frequently from the medical screening of new recruits at military units. In September 1955, a 25-year-old young man by the name of Wu Kunqi (吳坤祈) was identified with a "dual-sexed genital organ" (兩性器官) by the doctors at Zhongshantang (中山堂) in the Gangshan District of Kaohsiung County (高雄縣岡山鎮). Wu's medical screening revealed "a tiny hole below his penis" with "a size penetrable by a finger"; his penis "lacked a urethral opening," and his "urine came out of the tiny hole" rather than the penis. When asked by the doctors, Wu admitted that he often ejaculated from the tiny hole as well.[85] In the same month, the father of the 21-year-old Zeng Qingji (曾清吉) arrived at Madou (麻豆), also in Southern Taiwan, and asked the doctor responsible for screening new recruits to exempt Zeng

[83] Quoted in Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*, p. 85.
[84] Greenson, "On Homosexuality and Gender Identity," p. 218.
[85] "Yinan shi tijian jianshi yinyangren" (役男施體檢 見是陰陽人) [Conscripted soldier discovered to be a hermaphrodite], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 23, 1955, no. 3.

from military service due to his congenital sexual disorder. After a careful examination of Zeng's body, Dr. Wang Baikun (王百焜) found both a penis and a vaginal opening in his genital area. Like Wu, Zeng's penis did not have an urethral opening, but there was a tiny hole surrounded by a pair of labia underneath the penis. Unlike Wu, whose body could produce semen, Zeng discharged regular small-quantity menses. According to Dr. Wang's diagnosis, then, Zeng was a "pseudo-hermaphrodite" (假性陰陽人), and given his mature female biological makeup, he could be easily transformed into a woman by the surgical removal of his male reproductive organ.[86] Similar to the experiences of Xie Jianshun and Xu Zhenjie, all of these later accounts of sex change embraced a principal narrative of "hiding" one's ambiguous sexual identity. Both Wu and Zeng expressed great disappointment when their intersexuality was "discovered" by the doctors. Most importantly, in these stories, doctors always construed sex transformation as the most desirable medical solution after bursting these extremely personal secrets wide open.

On 28 October 1955, the *United Daily News* carried a front-page story that finally proclaimed "The Completion and Success of Xie Jianshun's Sex Change Operation."[87] The story continued on page three, which contained a full-length official report on Xie's clinical experience released by the No. 1 Army Hospital. The official report revealed numerous aspects of the Xie story that overthrew earlier speculations. Of these revelations, the most surprising was probably the fact that Xie's latest operation was actually her fourth and not her third. Recall that Xie's second operation received little publicity in the previous year. By June 1954, from reading the scattered newspaper accounts, interested readers were able to gain a vague impression that doctors in Taipei had performed a second sex change surgery on

[86] "Ruoguan yinan jixing fayu shenju nannü liangxing yishi nanfen cixiong" (弱冠役男畸形發育 身具男女兩性 醫師難分雌雄) [Irregular development of dual-sexed genitalia on conscripted soldier: Doctors perplexed by the discerning of sex], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), October 6, 1955, no. 3.

[87] "Lujun diyi zongyiyuan xuanbu Xie Jianshun shoushu chenggong" (陸軍第一總醫院宣佈 謝尖順變性手術成功) [No. 1 Hospital announces the completion and success of Xie Jianshun's sex change operation], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), October 28, 1955, no. 1.

her, but the date of the operation and its nature and objective were never made explicit. According to this official report, however, Xie's second operation, which was also an exploratory laparotomy but with the additional step of removing parts of her male gonadal tissues, took place on 10 April 1954. Based on the samples extracted from her body during this operation, the doctors confirmed Xie's status to be a true hermaphrodite, meaning that she had both ovarian and testicular tissues in her gonads. The doctors also clarified that at that point, her "testicular tissues were already deteriorating and unable to produce sperm" (睪丸的組織，已呈萎縮的狀態，並且已經沒有精子形成的現象), but her "ovarian tissues were still functional and able to produce eggs" (卵巢的組織，卻仍然有排卵的活動). In light of a stronger presence of female sex characteristics, the medical team performed a third operation on her on 26 August 1954. After the surgery, Xie's penis was replaced by an artificial vaginal opening. All of this had happened more than a year ago. Taking place on 30 August 1955, Xie's most recent and fourth genital surgery was simply a vaginoplasty. Now with "a normal woman's vaginal interior" (陰道內腔與正常女性一樣), Xie Jianshun's "transformation from a soldier into a lady is now indisputable."[88] Brought to light by the report, Xie's personal triumph encapsulated the postwar fears and hopes about the possibilities of medical science.[89]

On the same day, the second page of *United Daily News* included the sixteenth installment of "The Story of Miss Xie Jianshun," a biography of Xie that had been serialized

[88] "Sici shoushu yibianerchai Xie Jianshun bianxing jingguo" (四次手術易弁而釵 謝尖順變性經過) [Male to female transformation after four surgeries: The sex change experience of Xie Jianshun], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), October 28, 1955, no. 3.

[89] For voices that challenged the propriety and authority of the official report, pointing out that its explicit content was too invasive of Xie's privacy and that its "scientific" tone did not pay sufficient attention to Xie's post-op psychology, see, respectively, "Fabiao Xie Jianshun mimi weifan yishifa buwu shidangchu" (發表謝尖順祕密 違反醫師法 不無失當處) [Publicizing Xie Jianshun's secret goes against the legal regulation of medicine], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), October 29, 1955, no. 3, and "He yi wei Xie Jianshun" (何以慰謝尖順) [How to console Xie Jianshun], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), October 29, 1955, no. 3.

daily since October 13.[90] The concluding installment appeared on November 18, which meant that for over a month, Taiwanese readers were exposed to Xie's life history with familiar moments and surprising details.[91] This extended exposure seemed to reflect the fact that the Xie story continued to sell even two years after the initial frenzy. No less significant, again, was the similarity in the marketing strategies of the Taiwanese and American presses. The stylistic objective of "The Story of Miss Xie Jianshun" closely resembled the series "The Story of My Life" that appeared in *American Weekly* three days after Jorgensen returned to the United States from Denmark. Jorgensen's series was billed as "the story all America has been waiting for," which would have been an equally appropriate advertisement for the Xie installments with a nominal substitution of the word "Taiwan" for "America."[92] But the two series bore significant differences as well. Whereas the first-person confessional format of the American version gave Jorgensen a chance to convey her own voice, the third-person observational format of the Taiwanese version allowed the reporter, Yi Yi (憶漪), to narrate Xie's experience with an unique tone that was authoritative yet absorbing at the same time. This mode of narration, of course, built on the earlier public image of Xie, who had been constantly portrayed as a nationally and transnationally significant figure but never for reasons acknowledged by herself. Although Jorgensen's full-length personal memoir was eventually published in 1967, and its film adaptation released in 1970, by that point Xie had lost all contacts with the press people and faded from the public sphere.[93] Ever since the birth of "the Chinese Christine," the comparison of Xie to Jorgensen had intrigued, satisfied, and resonated with observers time and again, but never without limits.

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[90] Yi Yi (憶漪), "Xie Jianshun xiaojie de gushi" (謝尖順小姐的故事) [The story of Miss Xie Jianshun], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), October 13, 1955, no. 3; Yi Yi (憶漪), "Xie Jianshun xiaojie de gushi" (謝尖順小姐的故事) [The story of Miss Xie Jianshun], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), October 28, 1955, no. 2.

[91] Yi Yi (憶漪), "Xie Jianshun xiaojie de gushi" (謝尖順小姐的故事) [The story of Miss Xie Jianshun], *Lianhebao* (聯合報), November 18, 1955, no. 2.

[92] Quoted in Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*, p. 65.

[93] Christine Jorgensen, *Christine Jorgensen: A Personal Autobiography* (San Francisco: Cleis Press, 2000 [1967]); *The Christine Jorgensen Story*, directed by Irving Rapper (Los Angeles: United Artists, 1970).

VIII. Zooming Out: Queer Sinophone (Re)Production

In their initial diagnoses of Xie, doctors frequently spoke of a hidden "female" sex. In contrast, the press provided a cultural space for him to articulate a past heterosexual romantic life and the desire of *not* wanting to change his sex in a masculinist voice. Early on, both medical and popular discourses adhered to a neutral position in discussing his psychological gender. Both discourses were fundamentally reoriented by the time of his first operation. The pre-op coverage of the details of his first surgery only foreshadowed a highly sensational outcome—the characterization of Xie as the "Chinese Christine," the first transsexual in Chinese society. By elevating Xie's iconic status as both the object of medical gaze and the specimen of (trans)cultural dissection, medical and popular discourses foreclosed any space of epistemic ambiguity concerning Xie's "innate" sex, gender, and sexuality. Many believed that Xie was destined to become a woman. Or, more aptly put, he became nothing but a transsexual star like the American Christine Jorgenson. In the following two years, the press covered less and less stories on Xie and began to report more widely on other surprising accounts of unusual bodily conditions. After her fourth surgery in May 1955, Xie's popularity as the first transsexual in Chinese culture, on top of these other pathological "symptoms" of postcolonial modernity, helped establish the global significance of Taiwan vis-à-vis the neocolonial hegemony of the United States.

It is interesting to note that in the context of the 1950s, the Chinese term *bianxingren* carried almost none of the psychopathological connotations that distinguished its English counterpart, *transsexual*. This probably reflected the relatively late involvement of Taiwanese psychiatric experts in dealing with patients diagnosed with *bianxing yuzheng* (變性慾症, transsexualism).[94] In this regard, the national spotlight on the male-to-female

[94] Su-Ting Hsu (徐淑婷), "Bianxingyuzheng huanzhe bianxing shoushu hou de shenxin shehui shiying" (變性

(MTF) transsexual Jiang Peizhen (江佩珍) in 1981 opened a new chapter in the history of transsexuality in Taiwan that lies beyond the scope of this chapter (which concerns specifically with its emergence). According to Jiang's psychiatrist and past superintendent of the Tsyr-Huey Mental Hospital in Kaohsiung County, Dr. Jung-Kwang Wen (文榮光), the story of Jiang Peizhen made a huge impact on enhancing the public awareness of transsexualism in Taiwan in the early 1980s. Her case pushed doctors, especially the psychiatrists, to come to terms with patients who requested sex reassignment or with symptoms of gender identity disorder, and to consult the Harry Benjamin Standards of Care that had been adopted by American medical and psychological experts since 1979.[95] The breadth and significance of the cultural reach of the Jiang story was supported by personal testimonies of transsexuals. Miss Lai (賴), a former MTF patient of Wen, noted how the possibility of sex reassignment surgeries was brought to her attention only by the time of the media coverage of Jiang.[96] In the 1980s, Xie Jianshun and her surgeons had disappeared altogether from the public sphere, and this seemed to confirm that one era had ended. For the new generation of transsexuals and doctors like Miss Lai and Wen, the hero(ine) from the 1980s onward was Jiang.[97]

Nevertheless, the saga of Xie Jianshun and other sex change reports that sprung up in the Taiwanese press exemplify the emergence of transsexuality as a form of modern sexual embodiment in Chinese society. Xie's story, in particular, became a lightning rod for many post-WWII anxieties about gender and sexuality, and called dramatic attention to issues that

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慾症患者變性手術後的身心社會適應) [The physical, psychological and social adaptation among transsexuals after sex reassignment surgery: A study of six cases] (M.A. Thesis, Kaohsiung Medical University, 1998).

[95] Personal interview with Jung-Kwang Wen on 20 March 2008.

[96] Personal interview with Miss Lai on 22 March 2008. I thank Dr. Wen for introducing me to Miss Lai.

[97] See Josephine Ho, ed., *Kuaxingbie* (跨性別) [Trans] (Jungli, Taiwan: National Central University Center for the Study of Sexualities, 2003); Liu Dao-Jie (劉道捷), "Biannan biannü bian bian bian" (變男變女變變變變) [Transsexualism and sex-reassignment surgery in Taiwan] (M.A. Thesis, National Taiwan University, 1993). For a thick ethnographic study of contemporary transgender embodiment in Taiwan, see Josephine Ho, "Embodying Gender: Transgender Body/Subject Formations in Taiwan," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 7, no. 2 (2006): 228-242.

would later drive the feminist and gay and lesbian movements in the decades ahead.[98] In a different way, the stories of Xie and others also illustrate how the Republican government regained sovereignty in postwar Taiwan only by inheriting a Western biomedical epistemology of sex from both the intellectual complexity of its earlier scientific globalism and the Japanese colonial regime.[99] Parallel to British colonial Hong Kong, Taiwan experienced the highly institutionalized establishment of Western biomedical infrastructure under Japanese occupation.[100] In the 1950s, when Mao "nationalized" Chinese medicine in continental China, both Taiwan and Hong Kong represented the most advanced Chinese regions in modern Western medicine situated on the geo-margins of the Sinosphere.[101]

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[98] Yu Hsin-ting (余欣庭), "Taiwan zhanhou yiduanxing/shenti de guansu lishi: Yi tongxinglian han yinyangren weilie, 1950s-2008" (臺灣戰後異端性/身體的管束歷史：以同性戀和陰陽人為例, 1950s-2008) [Regulating deviant sexualities and bodies in Taiwan, 1950s-2008: The cases of homosexuality and heramphrodites] (M.A. Thesis, Kaohsiung Medical University, 2009).

[99] See Chapters 2 to 4 of this dissertation. On the legacy of Japanese colonialism in the healthcare system of postwar Taiwan, see, for example, Shiyung Liu (劉士永), "Zhanhou Taiwan yiliao yu gongwei tizhi de bianqian" (戰後台灣醫療與公衛體制的變遷) [The transformation of medical care and public health regime in postwar Taiwan], *Huazhong shifan daxue xuebao* (華中師範大學學報) 49, no. 4 (2010): 76-83; Daiwie Fu (傅大為), *Yaxiya de xinshenti: Xingbie, yiliao yu jindai Taiwan* (亞細亞的新身體: 性別、醫療與近代台灣) [Assembling the new body: Gender/sexuality, medicine, and modern Taiwan] (Taipei: Socio Publishing, 2005).

[100] See Shiyung Liu (劉士永), "1930 niandai rizhi shiqi Taiwan yixue de tezhi" (1930 年代日治時期臺灣醫學的特質) [Taiwanese medicine during Japanese occupation in the 1930s], *Taiwan shi yanjiu* (臺灣史研究) 4, no. 1 (1998): 97-147; Shiyung Liu, "Medical Reform in Colonial Taiwan" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2000); Shiyung Liu, "Building a Strong and Healthy Empire: The Critical Period of Building Japanese Colonial Medicine in Taiwan," *Japanese Studies* 23, no. 4 (2004): 301-313; Fan Yan-qiu (范燕秋), *Jibing, yixue yu zhimin xiandaixing: Rizhi Taiwan yixueshi* (疾病, 醫學與殖民現代性: 日治台灣醫學史) [Diseases, medicine, and colonial modernity: History of medicine in Japan-ruled Taiwan] (Taipei: Daw Shiang Publishing, 2006); Shiyung Liu (劉士永), "Shengming tongji yu jibingshi chutan: Yi riju shiqi Taiwan weilie" (生命統計與疾病史初探：以日據時期台灣為例) [Preliminary study of biostatistics and disease history: Using Japan-ruled Taiwan as example], *Zhongguo shehui lishi pinglun* (中國社會歷史評論) 8 (2007): 70-87; Shiyung Liu, "The Ripples of Rivalry: The Spread of Modern Medicine from Japan to its Colonies," *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal* 2, no. 1 (2008): 47-71; Hui-yu Caroline Ts'ai, *Taiwan in Japan's Empire-Building: An Institutional Approach to Colonial Engineering* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Shiyung Liu (劉士永), "Yixue, shangye yu shehui xiangxiang: Rizhi Taiwan de hanyao kexuehua yu kexue zhongyao" (醫學、商業與社會想像：日治臺灣的漢藥科學化與科學中藥) [Medicine, commerce, and the social imagination: The scientification of herbal medicine and scientific Chinese medicine in Japan-ruled Taiwan], *Taiwanese Journal for Studies of Science, Technology and Medicine* (科技、醫療與社會) 11 (2010): 150-197. Although the activities of the Canadian missionary George E. Mackay represent an effort to introduce modern Western biomedicine to Taiwan before Japanese colonialism, many critics have pointed out its limited role in the formation of Taiwan's modernity. On Mackay's activities, see Fu, *Yaxiya de xinshenti*, chapter 2. On the issue of Mackay's representativeness, see Daiwie Fu, "How Far Can East Asian STS Go? A Position Paper," *East Asian Science, Technology and Society* 1 (2007): 1-14, on p. 7.

[101] On the nationalization of Chinese medicine in early communist China, see Kim Taylor, *Chinese Medicine in Early Communist China, 1945-1963: A Medicine of Revolution* (New York: Routledge, 2005). For a recent study of "the Sinosphere" vis-à-vis Japan, see Joshua A. Fogel, *Articulating the Sinosphere: Sino-Japanese*

Adding to her catalytic role in the transmission of Western biomedical knowledge and practice, British colonialism was instrumental for establishing Hong Kong as a cultural haven when other parts of mainland China were strictly governed by a socialist state.[102] These historical factors thus led to the immense media publicity showered on Xie Jianshun—and sex change more generally—first in Taiwan, followed by Hong Kong. Together, the rapid technology transfer of Western biomedicine and the availability of a fairly open social and cultural milieu enabled the Sinophone articulations of transsexuality to emerge first and foremost across the postcolonial Pacific Rim.

Pioneered by Shu-mei Shih, the "Sinophone" is an amended analytic category and a long-overdue alternative to the discourses of "Chinese" and "Chinese diaspora" that have traditionally defined Chinese studies. In *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific* (2007), Shih defines the Sinophone world as "a network of places of cultural production outside of China and on the margins of China and Chineseness, where a historical process of heterogenizing and localizing of continental Chinese culture has been taking place for several centuries."[103] In a later essay "Against Diaspora," Shih offers a programmatic view of the parameters of Sinophone studies, which by 2010 she defines simply as "the study of Sinitic-language cultures and communities on the margins of China

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Relations in Space and Time (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

[102] For examples of queer cultural production in Hong Kong in the 1960s, see Weixing shiguan zhaizhu (唯性史觀齋主), *Zhongguo tongxinglian mishi shang* (中國同性戀秘史 上) [The secret history of Chinese homosexuality, vol. 1] (Hong Kong: Yuzhou chuban, 1964); Weixing shiguan zhaizhu (唯性史觀齋主), *Zhongguo tongxinglian mishi xia* (中國同性戀秘史 下) [The secret history of Chinese homosexuality, vol. 2] (Hong Kong: Yuzhou chuban, 1965). Scholars have begun to reconceptualize the history of love, intimacy, and sexuality in socialist China, but most revisionist readings are limited to discussions of heteronormative desires. See Men Yue, "Female Images and National Myth," in *Gender Politics in Modern China: Writing and Feminism*, ed. Tani Barlow (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), pp. 118-136; Harriet Evans, *Women and Sexuality in China: Female Sexuality and Gender Since 1949* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1996); Wendy Larson, "Never So Wild: Sexing the Cultural Revolution," *Modern China* 25, no. 4 (1999): 423-50; Emily Honig, "Socialist Sex: The Cultural Revolution Revisited," *Modern China* 29, no. 2 (2003): 153-175; Yunxian Yan, *Private Life Under Socialism: Love, Intimacy, Family Change in a Chinese Village, 1949-1999* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Everett Zhang, "Rethinking Sexual Repression in Maoist China: Ideology, Structure, and the Ownership of the Body," *Body and Society* 11, no. 3 (2005): 1-25; Gail Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

[103] Shu-mei Shih, *Visuality and Identity*, p. 4.

and Chineseness."[104] Finally, in her most recent iteration titled "The Concept of the Sinophone," Shih broadens her conception of Sinophone Studies as "the study of Sinitic-language cultures on the margins of geopolitical nation-states and their hegemonic productions."[105] She qualifies that "Sinophone studies disrupts the chain of equivalence established, since the rise of nation-states, among language, culture, ethnicity, and nationality and explores the protean, kaleidoscopic, creative, and overlapping margins of China and Chineseness, America and Americanness, Malaysia and Malaysianess, Taiwan and Taiwanness, and so on, by a consideration of specific, local Sinophone texts, cultures, and practices produced in and from these margins."[106]

The story of Xie Jianshun must be identified with the broader horizon of Sinophone production, because its epistemological-historical pillars came from outside the geopolitical China proper, including the legacies of Japanese postcolonialism, American neo-imperialism, the re-contextualization of the Republican state's scientific globalism, and Taiwan's cultural (which was in turn driven by economic) affiliations with other sub-regions of Cold War East Asia, such as Hong Kong and Japan.[107] As it is well known, between the end of the Korean War in the mid-1950s and the reopening of the Chinese mainland in the late 1970s, Japan, Okinawa, South Korea, and Taiwan became U.S. protectorates. "One of the lasting legacies of this period," according to the cultural critic Kuan-Hsing Chen, "is the installation of the anticommunism-pro-Americanism structure in the capitalist zone of East Asia, whose overwhelming consequences are still with us today."[108] Inherent in the concept of the Sinophone lays a more calculated awareness of the implicit role played by communist China in the stabilization of this (post-)Cold War structure in transnational East Asia.

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[104] Shu-mei Shih, "Against Diaspora: The Sinophone as Places of Cultural Production," in *Global Chinese Literature: Critical Essays*, ed. Jing Tsu and David Wang (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 29-48, on p. 29.
[105] Shu-mei Shih, "The Concept of the Sinophone," *PMLA* 126, no. 3 (2011): 709-718, on p. 710.
[106] Shih, "The Concept of the Sinophone," pp. 710-11.
[107] For a programmatic view of the contours and definitions of Sinophone studies, see Shih, *Visuality and Identity*; and the essays in Tsu and Wang, eds., *Global Chinese Literature*.
[108] Chen, *Asia as Method*, p. 7.

Considering Xie's celebrity and influence as a Sinophone (re)production of transsexuality is also instructive in four other regards. First, the Sinophone approach pushes postcolonial studies beyond its overwhelming preoccupation with "the West." Drawing on empirical examples mainly from the South Asian context, postcolonial scholars have problematized the West either by deconstructing any variant of its essentialist invocation or by provincializing (or de-universalizing) the centripetal force of its greatest imperial regimes, such as Europe and America. Naoki Sakai's essay "Modernity and Its Critique: The Problem of Universalism and Particularism" (1988) and Dipesh Chakrabarty's "Provincializing Europe: Pastcoloniality and the Critique of History" (1992) are perhaps the most representative studies of each approach respectively.[109] At other times, critics have attempted to recuperate nativist examples from the histories of third world nations. Certain modern concepts often understood as imposed from the outside and sustained by the colonial system, they argue, were actually already internal to the indigenous civilization. The work of Ashis Nandy is exemplary in this regard.[110] But, as I have argued in Chapter 3 with the example of homoeroticism in late imperial China, these otherwise brilliant efforts often risk performing "reverse," "self," or "re-"Orientalism. Simply put, the delineation of an intrinsically Asian (or non-Westernized) order of things actually reinforces the Orientalist framework it claims to exceed. More to the point, the West is analytically deployed as an universalized imaginary Other in all of these three strategies. By perpetually being treated as method in historical narration and cultural criticism, the West continues to function as "an opposing entity, a system of reference, an object from which to learn, a point of measurement, a goal to catch up with, an intimate enemy, and sometimes an alibi for serious discussion and

[109] Naoki Sakai, "Modernity and Its Critique: The Problem of Universalism and Particularism," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (1988): 475-504; Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Provincializing Europe: Postcoloniality and the Critique of History," *Cultural Studies* 6, no. 3 (1992): 337-357.
[110] Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

action."[111]

On the contrary, viewing Xie's sex change as an historical event of Sinophone production repositions our compass—and redraws our map—by re-centering the non-West, Asia, and China more specifically. In his provocative book, *Asia as Method*, Kuan-Hsing Chen invites postcolonial scholars to "deimperialize" their own mode of investigation by moving beyond the fixation of "the West" as a sole historical-theoretical caliber of civilizational, national, imperial, colonial, and Cold War predicaments.[112] In his words,

> In Asia, the deimperialization question cannot be limited to a reexamination of the impacts of Western imperialism invasion, Japanese colonial violence, and U.S. neoimperialist expansion, but must also include the oppressive practices of the Chinese empire. Since the status of China has shifted from an empire to a big country, how should China position itself now? In what new ways can it interact with neighboring countries? Questions like these can be productively answered only through deimperialized self-questioning, and that type of reflexive work has yet to be undertaken.[113]

My foregoing narration of the history of Chinese transsexuality, centering on the case of Xie Jianshun, can be viewed as an attempt at this type of reflexive work. Again, the genealogical trajectory that I trace from Republican-era biology, sexology, and endocrinology to common understandings of transsexuality in postwar Sinophone Taiwan shows that the Cold War "mediates the continuity between the colonial and postcolonial history of East

[111] Chen, *Asia as Method*, p. 216.
[112] Chen, *Asia as Method*, pp. 211-255.
[113] Chen, *Asia as Method*, p. 197.

Asia."[114] The dispersed circuits of knowledge that saturated the Chinese Christine's glamor in the 1950s refocus our attention from the "influence" of Western concepts and ideas to the inter- and intra-Asian regional dynamics of subjectivity condition—from denaturalizing the West to provincializing China, Asia, and the Rest.

Secondly, by provincializing China, the Sinophone framework enables us to see and think beyond the conventions of China studies.[115] In terms of the substantive objects of study, a growing number of Sinophone scholars have already ventured into multiple place-based analyses of literary and cinematic examples across the Pacific, from Southeast Asia to Hong Kong to Taiwan to America.[116] These localized examples in literature and film—in light of their authorial background or artistic form and content even—are rarely invoked in Chinese studies, Asian American studies, or other traditional (area studies) disciplines.[117] Sinophone studies, as "the 'study of China' that transcends China," to borrow the phrase from Mizoguchi Yuzo, therefore acknowledges unforeseen possibilities in Sinological practice in the aftermath of its Cold War structuration.[118]

In the spirit of marking out "a space in which unspoken stories and histories may be told, and to recognize and map the historically constituted cultural and political effects of the cold war,"[119] this epilogue has implicitly raised a series of inter-related questions situated at

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[114] Chen, *Asia as Method*, p. 111.
[115] Shu-mei Shih, "Theory, Asia, and the Sinophone," *Postcolonial Studies* 13, no. 4 (2010): 465-484.
[116] Shih, *Visuality and Identity*; Tsu and Wang, eds., *Global Chinese Literature*; Peter T. W. Shen, "Sinophone Travels: Transnationalism and Diaspora" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 2010); Brian C. Bernards, "Writing the South Seas: Postcolonialism and the Nanyang Literary Imagination" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2011); Jing Tsu, *Sound and Script in Chinese Diaspora* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011); Lily Wong, "Deflowering Attachments: Prostitutes, Popular Culture, and Affective Histories of Chineseness" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2012); Shu-mei Shih, Chien-Hsin Tsai, and Brian Bernards, eds., *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, forthcoming); Howard Chiang and Larissa Heinrich, eds., *Queer Sinophone Cultures* (New York: Routledge, forthcoming).
[117] For example, on the limitations of "diaspora" for the study of Chinese cinemas, see Olivia Khoo and Audrey Yue, eds., *From Diasporic Cinemas to Sinophone Cinemas*, special issue, *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* (forthcoming).
[118] Mizoguchi Yuzo, *Ribenren shiyezhong de zhongguoxue* (日本人視野中的中國學) [China as method], trans. Li Suping (李甦平), Gong Ying (龔穎), and Xu Tao (徐滔) (Beijing: Chinese People's University Press, 1996 [1989]), p. 93.
[119] Chen, *Asia as Method*, p. 120.

the interstices of various categorical assumptions that continue to haunt a "China-centered perspective."[120] Was Xie Jianshun's transsexuality "Chinese" or "American" in nature? Transsexuality in whose sense of the term? Was it a foreign import, an expression (and thus internalization) of Western imperialism, or a long-standing indigenous practice in a new light? How can we take the Republican state's administrative relocation in the late 1940s seriously? Is it possible to speak of a "Republican Chinese modernity" that challenges the familiar socialist narrative of twentieth-century Chinese history? Which China was alluded to by the Chineseness of the label "Chinese Christine"? In the yet to appear discourse of Taiwanese nativism, did the Republican regime exemplify settler colonialism, migration, immigration, or diaspora? To better comprehend the historical context, we might also ask "Is the KMT regime a government in exile (which would mean that it resides abroad), a regime from another province, a defeated regime, or simply a cold-war regime?"[121] Evidently, the complexity of the history far exceeds the common terms used to describe the historical characteristics of postwar Taiwan. To call the KMT a regime from the outside or a colonial government only partially accounts for its proto-Chineseness or extra-Chineseness, and precisely because of the lack of a precedent and analogous situations, it is all the more difficult to historicize, with neat categorical imperatives or ways of periodization, the social backdrop against which and the epistemic condition under which people began to talk about the first Chinese transsexual.

In terms of chronology, then, dominant historical narratives of twentieth-century China tend to be anchored on three pivotal years: 1919, 1949, and 1989. The bulk of this dissertation stretches across the first two turning points. It begins by situating the emergence of "sex" as a conceptual and technical problem in the waning decades of the Qing

[120] For a historiographical rendition of the "China-centered perspective," see Paul A. Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past*, new ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010 [1984]).
[121] Chen, *Asia as Method*, p. 154.

imperium, especially as this process was occasioned by the new global interest in the production of knowledge about Chinese castration operations; it then offers a genealogy of sex by outlining the contours of its epistemology and popular dissemination across the biological, sexological, and endocrinological sciences; and it closes with the rise of transsexuality in postwar Taiwan as a culminating episode in which the intellectual and socio-cultural developments explored in the earlier chapters unfolded. Understood in terms of both the ontological possibility conditioned by the demise of eunuchism and the epistemological implementation of biomedical, psychological, and hormonal understandings of sex, the biopolitics of Xie Jianshun's sex change and the consequent national sensationalism surrounding transsexuality suggest *greater continuities beyond 1949*.

This study, with its emphasis on the body as the material ground of knowledge production, thus joins recent scholarship in the history of the human sciences in China to cross the 1949 divide. Yet whereas most of these other works confine their geographical coverage to the PRC, this dissertation brings the narrative to Taiwan, where the Republican regime completed its retreat by the end of the Civil War (1945-49). While studies on the history of ethnic classification, eugenics, psychoanalysis, public health, and paleoanthropology in China have explained the postwar developments of these scientific fields by reaching back in time and locate their intellectual genealogies in the global scientific communities of the Republican period (especially after 1919), the historical-epistemological transformations of sex examined in this dissertation point to an alternative afterlife in postcolonial Taiwan.[122] By travelling to Taiwan with the Republican government after 1949,

[122] Frank Dikötter, *Imperfect Conceptions: Medical Knowledge, Birth Defects, and Eugenics in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Wendy Larson, *From Ah Q to Lei Feng: Freud and Revolutionary Spirit in 20th Century China* (Stanford University Press, 2008); Sigrid Schmalzer, *The People's Peking Man: Popular Science and Human Identity in Twentieth-century China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Thomas Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). On the social sciences, see also Yung-chen Chiang, *Social Engineering and the Social Sciences in China, 1919-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Tong Lam, *A Passion for Facts: Social Surveys and the Construction of the Chinese Nation-State,*

the narrative of this study extends beyond the conventional parameters of Chinese historiography, especially as it is practiced in North America.[123] In her groundbreaking study of the history of lesbian sexuality in Chinese literature, Tze-lan Sang makes a similar note on the significance of transcending the 1949 chronological break: "the legacy of Republican Chinese modernity was to some extent transported to Taiwan when the Nationalist government fled there in 1949, bringing with it larger numbers of intellectuals and students as well as troops."[124] Even if the connections (or the leap, as the case may be) from pre-1949 to post-1949 Republic of China await to be crystallized further and evened out better with more concrete empirical examples, their potential presence nonetheless reminds us the underlying problems of invoking "Cultural China as a strategy to counter Western hegemony," which oftentimes "ends up being a reproduction of imperialist desire, locked in the binary opposition of China versus the West."[125]

Thirdly, understood as "a way of looking at the world," the epistemological rendition of the Sinophone as "an interruptive worldview" not only breaks down the China-versus-the West binary, but it also specifies the most powerful type, nature, and feature of transnationalism whose interest-articulation must lie beyond the hegemonic constructions of the nation-state. According to Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih, the transnational "can be less scripted and more scattered" and "is not bound by the binary of the local and the global and can occur in national, local, or global spaces across different and multiple spatialities and temporalities."[126] If "China" and "Chineseness" had indeed evolved over the course of the history of sex change from castration's demise to the growing influence of

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1900-1949 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

[123] See Cohen, *Discovering History in China*.

[124] Tze-lan D. Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 231.

[125] Chen, *Asia as Method*, p. 41.

[126] Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih, "Introduction: Thinking through the Minor, Transnationally," in *Minor Transnationalism*, ed. Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), pp. 1-23, on pp. 5, 6.

Western biopolitics, the changes over time we witness in this history have less to do with the "coming out" of transsexuals, than with the shifting transnationalism of queer Chinese cultures: from the growing global hegemony of Western conceptions of lifehood and sexuality in *major* transnational China to the rhizomic interactions of geopolitical forces, historical conditions, and cross-cultural contours in *minor* transnational China.

Although I have used mid-twentieth-century Taiwan as the exemplary context of queer Sinophone (re)production, its implications obviously extend beyond Taiwan and the early Cold War period. By invoking the notion of minor transnational China, I hope to garner more in-depth dialogues on the potential *horizontal* connections in queer cultural, social, and political production across postcolonial locations such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and even South Korea. Building on the theoretical construct of the Sinophone and the non-identitarian-based history of Chinese transsexuality narrated here, I call this phenomenon of queer minor transnationalism "trans postcoloniality," by which I mean the formation of a politics of postcoloniality defined around the historical terms under which the temporalities and spatialities of postwar *trans*-nationalism that helped shape the geopolitical contours of "Greater China" coincided with the condition of possibility for the emergence of modern *trans*-sexual subjects across the Pacific Rim.[127] The idea of trans postcoloniality brings together, historically, the recirpocal rigor of queer and Sinophone theoretical critiques; being an analytical vector of compound marginality, trans postcoloniality thematizes the coproduction of gender heteronormativity and the hegemonic (Chinese) nation-state as they are articulated through one another most powerfully.

[127] My definition of trans postcoloniality around "Greater China" should not be taken to imply that Sinophone Asia stands in for the entire trans Asia. This more or less idiosyncratic delineation is only intended to account for the centrality of placed-based analysis in any meaningful trans-regional histories of Asia. I thank Rayna Rapp for pointing out this potential confusion. For my first iteration of "trans postcoloniality," see Howard Chiang, "Sinophone Production and Trans Postcoloniality: Sex Change from Major to Minor Transnational China," *English Language Notes* 49, no. 1 (2011): 109-116; Chiang, "The Sinophone (Re)Production of Transsexuality," paper presented at "The Making of Asia: Health and Gender" conference, University of Hong Kong, 9-10 March 2012.

Together, the queerness of Sinophone perspectives and the anti-Sinocentric logic of queering settle on unsettling the overlapping recognitions of Xie Jianshun's transsexuality as a Chinese copy of a Western original, a Sinophone production of a Chinese original, a straight mimesis of a male-to-female transgendered body, a queer reproduction of an American blond beauty, so on and so forth. Trans postcoloniality, in short, comprises the broad spectrum of these potential straightforward convergences and post-normative divergences.

My general argument in this dissertation has been that in order to capture the history of sex change in modern China in all of its complexity, one needs to account for the demise of eunuchs as much as the emergence of transsexuals, to chronicle events and processes of change as much as to theorize the genealogy of sex change and the historicity of transsexuality. If our perspective is flexible enough to vacillate between the vertical and the horizontal, transnationalism appears to be neither always nor necessarily a top-down homogenizing force, but can very much operate as a bottom-up heterogenizing vector. One of the shortcomings of queer theory lies in its frequent inability to offer meaningful vocabularies that cut across both the global and the local in order to adequately register the queer otherness of non-Western cultures. But perhaps the problem also lies in the predominant mode of analysis in queer studies that oftentimes lacks in-depth historical insights. On such topics as the evolving meaning and transregional politics of Chineseness and gender modernity, queer studies can benefit from a more historically-sensitive approach to situating the roots of global queer formations in the intercultural articulations of desire and the rhizomic interactions of minor transnational cultures "from below."

Simply put, focusing critically on a non-Western region alone is insufficient for the theoretical and empirical enrichment of global queer studies. As the example of Chinese transsexuality shows, in order to delineate its proper genealogical context, it is necessary to develop such analytical-conceptual portals as "Sinophone production" and "trans

postcoloniality," which help clarify not only the situated subcultural formations but also the *historical origins* of contemporary Chinese queer subjectivity, epistemology, and embodiment. Both portals challenge a homogenous postcolonial interpretation of twentieth-century Taiwan that figures in either Chinese imperial hegemony or Japanese colonialism (or American neocolonialism for that matter) as its exclusive preoccupation. The intraregional emphasis on these intertwined historical legacies, therefore, accounts for a more sophisticatedly layered "postcolonial Taiwan," one that compliments but complicates the model developed by the literary critic Fang-Ming Chen, yet always insisting on the multiplicity of its possible limits and meaningful points of entry.[128]

This brings us to the last, yet perhaps the most important, contribution of the Sinophone methodology: the ability to appreciate the formation of a Sinophone modernity that began to distinguish itself from and gradually replaced an older apparatus of colonial modernity in the course of twentieth-century Chinese history. The year 1989 is a pivotal turning point for reflecting on the historical development of late twentieth-century Chinese and Sinophone cultures.[129] The PRC government's military action to suppress the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989 has been widely condemned by the international community. Taking place two years after the lifting of the martial law in Taiwan, the incident has been taken to be a direct reflection of the sharp divergence in democratic characteristics of various Chinese-speaking communities (e.g., between Taiwan and Hong Kong, on the one hand, and the Chinese mainland on the other). If the Cold War structure of East Asian capitalist zones had in fact remained intact by as late as the 1990s, it would still be heuristically useful to periodize contemporary Chinese history along this temporal axis.[130]

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[128] Fang-Ming Chen (陳芳明), *Houzhiming Taiwan: Wenxue shilun jiqi zhoubian* (後殖民台灣: 文學史論及其周邊) [Postcolonial Taiwan: Essays on Taiwanese literary history and beyond] (Taipei: Maitian, 2002).
[129] Wang Hui, "The Year 1989 and the Historical Roots of Neoliberalism in China," in *The End of Revolution: China and the Limits of Modernity* (London: Verso, 2009), pp. 19-66.
[130] Bruce Cumings, *Parallax Visions: Making Sense of American-East Asian Relations at the End of the Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

In this legacy of the Cold War, and despite its termination, American culture, in both its elite and popular forms, continued to operate as one of the defining forces shaping Taiwanese culture even after Nixon's normalization of American diplomatic relations with Communist China (completed in 1979) at the expense of ties with Taiwan.[131]

In the post-1987 era, the Taiwanese social and cultural space soon became home to a vibrant group of queer authors, scholars, activists, and other public figures who passionately emulated North American gay and lesbian identity politics and queer theoretical discourse.[132] Apart from social movement and academic theorization, gay men and lesbians in Taipei in particular have constructed an urban geography of their own with unique subcultural tempos and patterns. As Jens Damm has observed, "Taipei is the only city—probably not only in Taiwan but the whole of East Asia—where a huge open space, the Red House district, has been successfully developed into an area where gays and lesbians have openly created their own urban infrastructure, with bars, restaurants, shops and information exchange

[131] Chen Ying-zhen (陳映真), "*Taiwan de meiguohua gaizao*" (台灣的美國化改造) [Taiwan's Americanization], in *Huigui de lütu* (回歸的旅途) [The trip of return], ed. Dan Yang (丹陽) (Taipei: Renjian, 1998), pp. 1-14.

[132] In October 1994, the *Daoyu bianyuan* (島嶼邊緣) magazine hosted a local workshop on queer and women's sexuality in Taipei, Taiwan. It was arguably the first sustained forum where scholars, authors, and activists debated on the proper translation and meaning of "queer" in Chinese-speaking communities. See Josephine Ho, ed., *Ku'er: Lilun yu zhengzhi* (酷兒: 理論與政治) [*Queer politics and queer theory*], special issue, *Working Papers in Gender/Sexuality Studies* nos. 3-4 (Jungli, Taiwan: National Central University Center for the Study of Sexualities, 1998), pp. 47-87. For a more recent collection of essays, see Queer Sounding Editorial Board, ed., *Ku'er xinsheng* (酷兒新聲) [*Queer sounding*] (Jungli, Taiwan: National Central University Center for the Study of Sexualities, 2009). For insightful contextualizations of queer (literary) culture in late twentieth-century Taiwan, see Chi Ta-wei (紀大偉), "Ku'er lun: Sikao dangdai Taiwan ku'er yu ku'er wensue" (酷兒論: 思考當代台灣酷兒與酷兒文學) [On *ku'er*: Thoughts on *ku'er* and *ku'er* literature in contemporary Taiwan], in *Ku'er kuanghuan jie* (酷兒狂歡節) [Queer carnival], ed. Chi Ta-wei (紀大偉) (Taipei: Meta Media, 1997), pp. 9-28; Chu Wei-cheng (朱偉誠), "Tongzhi・Taiwan: Xinggongmin, guozu jiangou huo gongmin shehui" (同志・台灣: 性公民、國族建構或公民社會) [Queer(ing) Taiwan: Sexual citizenship, nation building, or civil society], *Nüxue xuezhi: Funü yu xingbie yanjiu* (女學學誌: 婦女與性別研究) [Journal of women's and gender studies] 15 (2003): 115-151; Fran Martin, ed. and trans., *Angel Wings: Contemporary Queer Fiction from Taiwan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003); Martin, *Situating Sexualities: Queer Representation in Taiwanese Fiction, Film and Public Culture* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003); and Martin, *Backward Glances: Contemporary Chinese Culture and the Female Homoerotic Imaginary* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010). For an historical overview of the discourses and cultures of same-sex desire in Taiwan in the two decades preceding the lifting of the martial law, see Jens Damm, "Same-Sex Desire and Society in Taiwan, 1970-1987," *The China Quarterly* 181 (2005): 67-81.

opportunities."[133] Since the 1990s, cultural flows between the PRC, Taiwan, and Hong Kong have steadily accelerated. Critics now tend to trace the roots of queer political activism in mainland China in the early twenty-first century to the initial influx of Western queer theory (酷兒理論, *ku'er lilun*) and the rise of the gay and lesbian movement (同志運動, *tongzhi yundong*) in Taiwan and Hong Kong in the 1980s and 1990s.[134] The first gay pride parade in Chinese-speaking communities took place in Taiwan in 2003, followed by Hong Kong in 2008 and Shanghai in 2009. Echoing the kind of minor transnationalism discussed above, many gay and lesbian activists in Taiwan and Hong Kong today believe that they have nothing to learn from the mainlanders and that the trajectory of activism-strategy learning would only flow in one direction: from Sinophone communities to the PRC.[135] Clearly, the queer Sinophone framework underscores the ways in which particular polities mediating the transmission of foreign/Western knowledge to China (such as Japan in the early Republican period as often viewed through the lens of colonial modernity), at least in the areas of gender and sexuality, have been gradually replaced by Sinophone communities by the end of the twentieth century.[136] But what the case of Xie Jianshun reveals is a *much earlier* moment of historical displacement, in the immediate postwar era, when the social and cultural articulations of non-normative sexualities were rerouted through—and thus re-rooted

[133] Jens Damm, "Discrimination and Backlash against Homosexual Groups," in *Politics of Difference in Taiwan*, ed. Tak-Wing Ngo and Hong-zen Wang (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 152-180, on p. 172.
[134] On the meaning, history, and politics of the term *tongzhi*, see Chou Wah-shan, *Tongzhi: Politics of Same-Sex Eroticism in Chinese Societies* (New York: The Haworth Press, 2000). On queer culture and politics in late twentieth-century Hong Kong, see Helen Leung, *Undercurrents: Queer Culture and Postcolonial Hong Kong* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008); Travis Kong, *Chinese Male Homosexualities: Memba, Tongzhi, and Golden Boy* (New York: Routledge, 2011).
[135] Personal e-mail communication with Jens Damm on 23 August 2011.
[136] For an erudite study of the history of twentieth-century Taiwanese (literary) thought through the lens of colonial modernity, see Fang-Ming Chen (陳芳明), *Zhimindi moden: Xiandaixing yu Taiwan shiguan* (殖民地摩登: 現代性與台灣史觀) [Colonial modernity: Historical and literary perspectives on Taiwan] (Taipei: Maitian, 2004). On colonial modernity and Taiwan's medical history, see Fan, *Jibing, yixue yu zhimin xiandaixing*. For general historical and theoretical perspectives on colonial modernity in East Asia, see the essays in Tani E. Barlow, ed., *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

in—Sinitic-language communities and cultures on the periphery of Chineseness.[137] The transition from colonial to Sinophone modernity around the midcentury, therefore, is something that we are only beginning to appreciate.

[137] This observation therefore challenges some of the conventional interpretations of Taiwanese intellectual history from the viewpoint of literature. These conventional readings tend to "acknowledge" the historical significance of gender and sexuality only with the rise of women's/feminist literature (女性文學) and gay and lesbian literature (同志文學), along with the literatures of aborigines (原住民文學), military dependents' villages (眷村文學), and environmental groups (環保文學), in the post-1987 era. Critics have called the 1980s in Taiwan's literary history the decade of "identity literature" (認同文學). See, for example, Fang-Ming Chen (陳芳明), *Dianfan de zhuiqiu* (典範的追求) [Paradigm search] (Taipei: UNITAS Publishing, 1994), p. 235; Chen, *Houzhimin Taiwan*; and Fang-Ming Chen (陳芳明), *Taiwan xin wenxueshi* (台灣新文學史) [New Taiwanese literary history] (Taipei: Linking, 2011).

CONCLUSION

CHINA TRANS FORMED

This dissertation began with the story of eunuchs in late imperial Peking, and it ends with transsexuals in Sinophone Taiwan. Putting the transformation of "China" at the center of historical inquiry by looking at a seemingly marginal phenomenon—the transformation of "sex"—has been a methodological thread that connects the preceding chapters. This recurring motif foregrounds the differences between eunuchs and transsexuals less as a natural mutation over time, than the culmination of historical contingencies. Yet some might argue that these two groups of historical actors are more similar than different. Certainly, the idea of eunuchism implies achieving some kind of systematic surgical procedures on the body; so does transsexuality. For eunuchs, their genital alteration in particular was a cornerstone of their new social, cultural, and political identity, and so is this for transsexuals. Eunuchs were oftentimes looked down upon as social outcasts, yet at times glorified by others as martyrs of their day; so are transsexuals in the history of the medical and legal battles they have fought. Often seen as either a rare specimen or culturally inferior, eunuchs' existence and treatment (including their privilege, power, and function) in society had been a conspicuous subject of debate, especially among a supporting cast of cultural elites, in imperial China, and the same thing could be said about the experience of transsexuals around the world today. However, to collapse these similarities under the nominal designation of eunuchs as "pre-modern transsexuals" elides the nuances and complexities of the process whereby sex became a meaningful category of experience in twentieth-century China.

As this study has shown, the modern formulation of *xing* qua sex rested on the rise of

new structures of knowledge around the relationship between the visual realm, the subjectivity of desire, and the malleability of the body. In the second half of the nineteenth century, missionary doctors such as Benjamin Hobson introduced Western anatomical concepts of the human reproductive body. As we saw in Chapter 2, these new concepts were accompanied by visual illustrations that featured a dissection-based "anatomical realism," a new aesthetic convention that formed a kind of distance between the viewer and the image not apparent in earlier Chinese anatomical illustrations. By reorienting the burden of proof away from the system of theoretical correspondence and into the realm of anatomical appreciation and its attendant techniques of visual comprehension, this novel anatomical realistic distance translated Western anatomical images of the body into a more "scientifically objective" image of Western anatomy itself. Illustrations of the Western anatomical body were endorsed and reproduced by Chinese bioscientists in the early twentieth century. They also circulated images that highlighted the morphological differences between male and female organisms, the similarity between the human body and mechanical objects, and the distinctions between the two sexes on the subcellular register. Biologists like Zhu Xi used the allegorical figure of the hermaphrodite to anchor their discussions of the scientific basis of sex and to highlight its discursive visual context.

The influence of these techniques of visualization persisted into the second half of the twentieth century, but already in the aftermath of the New Culture Movement, sex acquired a new layer of epistemological dimension. As Chapter 3 showed, May Fourth iconoclastic intellectuals including Zhang Jingsheng and Pan Guangdan emulated European sexologists by collecting "data" on the sexual lives of Chinese people and by translating foreign sexological classics on the psychology of sexual variances. Of all the sexological vocabularies, the concept of homosexuality received most traction among Chinese sex scientists in the 1920s and 1930s. Among other activities, they strategically promoted

eugenics, argued about the proper credentials of sex educators, formed professional organizations to consolidate the disciplinary boundary of sexological science, and debated vociferously on the causes and prevention of homosexual relations. Sex, in their formulations, was no longer something to be observed in nature, but it was something to be desired. In moving from biological understandings of sex into the psychological realm of sexuality, the effort of Republican-era sexologists produced an epistemological break in the conceptualization of same-sex desire: from a culturalistic to a nationalistic style of argumentation that made homosexuality a nodal point of referencing human difference and social identity.

Apart from being the object of observation and the subject of desire, the modern concept of sex acquired its comprehensibility through a third epistemological coordinate: a malleable essence of the human body. Whereas the development of the new structures of knowledge around the visuality and carnality of sex relied on biological and psychological models, the transformativity of sex emerged from a new glandular model that quantified sex in chemical terms. In reporting on the findings of European animal sex reversal experiments, Chinese sexologists introduced a theory that construed everyone as inherently bisexual. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, this bisexual theory emphasized the innate transmutability of sex and fitted nicely with the glandular definition of sex as a variable of endocrine secretions, according to which everyone had both male and female sex hormones. Chinese writers grabbed onto the nascent idea of sex hormones and the theory of universal bisexuality to shed new light on existing ideas about the effects of castration, hermaphroditism, and gender translocations. In the 1930s and 1940s, this growing awareness of the mutability of sex provided leverage for the ascending media publicity on human sex transformation and the filtering of elite scientific ideas about sex into vernacular culture.

By the 1950s, the visuality, carnality, and transformativity of sex had made it possible for some individuals to be identified with the label "transsexual" (*bianxingren*) in Chinese-speaking communities. Prior to *bianxingren*, writers used "*ci* becoming *xiong*" to describe female-to-male transformations and "*xiong* becoming *ci*" to refer to male-to-female transformations in the natural world. They reserved the parallel terms *nühuanan* (woman-to-man) and *nanhuanü* (man-to-woman) for human sex transformations. The circulation, popularity, and subtle interchangeability of these expressions around the time of the Yao Jinping incident revealed the growing influence of Western biomedical sciences in the 1930s and 1940s. But the word *xing* had yet to appear in these earlier formulations. The various scientific, social, and cultural developments eventually culminated in the 1950s, when the name of the first *bianxingren*, Xie Jianshun, hit the newspaper headlines in Taiwan.

The trajectory from eunuchs in late imperial Peking to transsexuals in Sinophone Taiwan tracks two coeval historical transformations of "the Chinese body." First is the transformation from a world in which surgically altered bodies did not correlate to any particular medical notions of sexual deviance, to a world in which similarly modified bodies are now assigned the visual, desiring, and malleable scientific connotations of sex—a trend in the biomedicalization of the human body that we can designate as *the growing plasticity of sex*. Second is the transformation from a historical context in which China's geopolitical borders were rapidly encroached by foreign imperial powers, to an unprecedented situation in which China's geopolitical frontiers, especially in regions like Taiwan and Hong Kong (replacing Japan and other key agents of colonial modernity), have begun to play an increasingly prominent role in mediating the transmission of foreign sexual knowledge and identity politics into mainland China—a trend in the reconfiguration of China's geobody that we can identify with *the growing plasticity of Chineseness*. Over the course of the twentieth century, whereas the definition of sex was gradually crystallized and its layers of complexity

slowly unpacked by scientists, doctors, journalists, educators, tabloid writers, and other observers, the question of China's geocultural sovereignty over its bordering communities and the proper definition of Chineseness unfolded in an opposite, more opaque direction.

Ultimately, the "hyperbolic" development of the growing plasticity of sex and Chineseness instills a *genealogical* relationship between the demise of eunuchism and the emergence of transsexuality. Both castration and sex-reassignment surgeries entail body modification processes, especially genital alteration, but eunuchs did not become women and most transsexuals yearn for full sex transitions. Both eunuchs and transsexuals are often perceived as social pariahs, but some eunuchs wielded enormous political power in certain epochs of Chinese history and could thus be considered as living right next to the epicenter of Chinese empires. On the contrary, transsexuals have always been viewed as an extreme minority in the human population—as individuals dwelling on the margins of society and who continue to pressure the boundaries of cultural norm, the extent of medical pathologization, and the limits of the legal system. Although the issue of self-volition looms large for subjects of both castration and sex-reassignment surgeries, the incentives for becoming an eunuch assume zero resemblance to a transsexual's deep-seated desire to become the opposite sex. In the course of the twentieth century, eunuchs and transsexuals converged in terms of their bodily morphology, but they also diverged in significant ways in the evolving conditions of possibility for claims of scientific truth and the shifting structures of Chinese East Asian geopolitics.

At the dawn of the century, men and women in China began to understand their social differences in terms of modern scientific knowledge. The introduction of a Western biomedical epistemology of sex not only assigned eunuchs a "third sex" identity, but through that new identity it also eroded the very meaning and aura of their cultural existence. In the half-century before the Cold War, the reorientation of the visual, carnal, and malleable

representations of bodily sex provided the ground for the formation of a Chinese body politic that reverberated throughout the subsequent decades. Towards the end of the century, people were now able to observe, desire, and manipulate sex, and the excavation of this new imaginative space had paved the way for the increasing visibility of transsexuals' self-legitimacy. The genealogy from eunuchs to transsexuals embodies the very reasons why sex, as a product of history, still matters today.

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