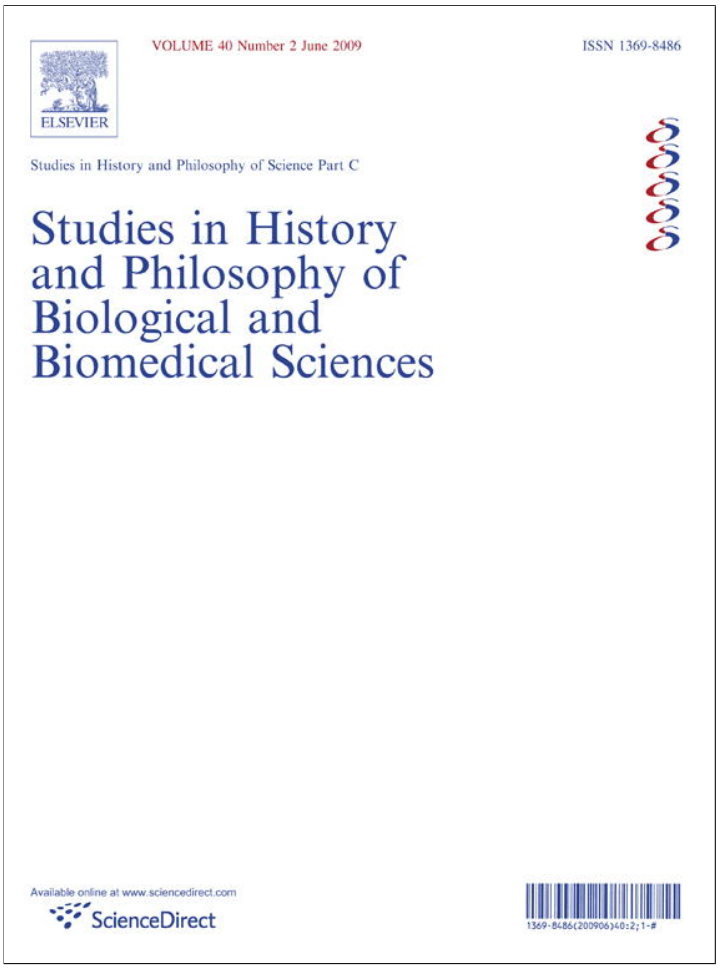

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Rethinking 'style' for historians and philosophers of science: converging lessons from sexuality, translation, and East Asian studies

Howard H. Chiang

Department of History, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey 08544, USA

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ABSTRACT

Historians and philosophers of science have furnished a wide array of theoretical-historiographical terms to emphasize the discontinuities among different systems of knowledge. Some of the most famous include Thomas Kuhn's "paradigm", Michel Foucault's "episteme", and the notion of "styles of reasoning" more recently developed by Ian Hacking and Arnold Davidson. This paper takes up this theoretical-historiographical thread by assessing the values and limitations of the notion of "style" for the historical and philosophical study of science. Specifically, reflecting on various methodological and theoretical concerns prompted by sexuality, translation, and East Asian studies, this paper argues that the heretofore ways in which historians and philosophers of science have used the notion of "style" are severely restricted in terms of its mere applicability to the intellectual history of Western science. The particular example of the translation of "homosexuality" into Chinese during the May Fourth era reveals that the notion of "style" has the potential of carrying a much more dynamic conceptual weight, as when used in "styles of argumentation". The paper also engages briefly with the historiography of scientific "national styles" and ends with some concluding remarks on the limitations of "social histories from below" and the under appreciated importance of "epistemological histories of possibilities".

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1. Introduction

In this paper, my main objective is to offer some explicit methodological and theoretical reflections on the potential ways in which the field of the history and philosophy of science can benefit from sexuality, translation, and East Asian studies. To accomplish this, I will focus on specific historiographic "points of convergence" that bring the four disciplines together to bear on one another. I see this as a fruitful endeavour especially at the present juncture in time, when the field of the history and philosophy of science is increasingly moving away from treating an all encompassing Western derived definition of "science" as its major frame of reference.[1] However, before delving into the history and philosophy of science immediately, it might help to begin by paying some attention to a larger turning point in the history of the modern historical profession: what scholars have loosely identified as the "cultural turn" of the 1970s.

It is perhaps a well established consensus that, following the broader turn to culture (also known as the "postmodern turn" or the "linguistic turn") in general historiography, historians have become much more attuned to the heuristic value of the politics of naming and, by extension, of defining.[2] Whether it exists on the substantive level of primary sources or on the analytical level of historians' own scholarship, this kind of cultural politics had not always seemed particularly interesting to a substantial part of the historical profession until the heightened awareness to the relationship between language, discourse, and experience was facilitated by post-Marxist theoretical inflections from literary criticism (e.g. via the

E-mail address: hchiang@princeton.edu

[1] For a helpful discussion of this trend, see Cunningham and Williams (1993).

[2] For an authoritative collection of essays on the "cultural turn", see Bonnell and Hunt (1999). For critical responses to this volume, see, for example, Suny (2002), Bratlinger (2002), Handler (2002). For a critical assessment of the cultural turn in history in relation to the social sciences, see Sewell (2005).

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work of Hayden White and others).[3] One of the most obvious consequences of this "cultural turn" is that *identity* became a key site of historical and historiographical interrogation. Gender, race, sexuality, class—and the list could be extended easily—together helped consolidate this organizing principle of historical inquiry. Interestingly, some postcolonial historians, as well as a growing number of historians of gender and sexuality, have responded by staking new grounds for post-identity history writing.[4]

The field of the history and philosophy of science bears an interesting, reciprocal relationship to this "cultural turn". On the one hand, the field takes direct advantage of the turn when issues of gender and race, for instance, are addressed much more explicitly in subsequent scholarship. This suggests that the so called "cultural turn" plays a somewhat exogenous role in history and philosophy of science—that the former simply influenced the latter. On the other hand, the turn itself could also be understood as something that directly grew out of some of the now classic texts in the field, such as the writings of Michel Foucault and even Thomas Kuhn.[5] Foucault's and Kuhn's critical insights concerning the historical production of scientific knowledge highlight the social constructiveness of the nature of such processes.[6] Foucault's works in particular offer unique conceptions of power and its relation to knowledge via the notions of "discourse" and "technologies of the self".[7]

For identity and subjectivity to become a dense location of historical scrutiny and historiographical contestation, a primary concern of historians shifted to what could thus be identified as the politics of naming and defining in a manner like never before. The politics of naming and defining "science" is where I hope my various reflective trajectories will ultimately converge. And it is also in this sense that I still find elements of Foucault's work indispensable. The point from which I hope to depart for my methodological and theoretical considerations is actually the politics of naming and defining "sexuality" in the context of twentieth-century China. I will focus specifically on only one typology of sexuality, namely homosexuality, as the central research problem that drives my historiographic reflections.[8]

2. "Style" and the history of homosexuality

When I began my research project that explores the historical relationship between science and homosexuality in Republican China (1912–1949), I realized that I had both too much and too little relevant secondary literature to start me off. The number of articles and monographs on the relationship between homosexuality and science in the context of European and North American history is overwhelming.[9] As far as East Asia is concerned, however, up to 2006 there are only a handful of sporadic book chapters that address this topic to a degree comparable to the work done on the Western context.[10] Apart from concerns about quantity, the quality of this thin body of secondary literature on sexology and homosexuality in twentieth-century China varies greatly. While some can be quite superficial, others are more sophisticated but still fail to answer the guiding question that appears to me at once perplexing and most intriguing: what are the conditions under which the notion of homosexual *identity* could emerge in China?

Subsequently, I turned to the scholarship on Europe and North America for appropriate methodological and theoretical frameworks. For the Western world, the most prominent scholars arguing for the social constructionism of homosexuality include Jeffrey Weeks, Jonathan Ned Katz, and David Halperin.[11] Their social constructionist view argues that before the concept was coined in the late nineteenth century (in 1869, to be more precise), homosexuality in the way we understand it today simply was not something around which the social, cultural, and political landscapes of individual thinking and experience could be organized.[12] Halperin went so far to title one of his most influential books *One hundred years of homosexuality*, implying that when one talks about "homosexuality" one is talking about a concept that has no more than only one hundred years of history. Especially evident in Halperin's works, the intellectual genealogy of this thesis can be best traced to the scholarship of Michel Foucault. On the example of homosexuality, to quote two of the most famous sentences from the first volume of Foucault's *History of sexuality*, 'We must not forget that the psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was characterized ... The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; *the homosexual was now a species*'.[13] According to Halperin, 'Foucault did for "sexuality" what feminist critics had done for "gender"'.[14]

This historicist argument invited both warm receptions and sharp criticisms. To cite here just one of the most poignant critiques of Halperin, queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in *Epistemology of the closet* argues that 'an unfortunate side effect of [the antipositivist finding of the Foucauldian shift] has been implicitly to underwrite the notion that "homosexuality as we conceive of it today" itself comprises a coherent definitional field rather than a space of overlapping, contradictory, and conflictual definitional forces'.[15] In defence of historicism, Halperin responded a decade later by saying that 'Despite the accusations of Foucauldianism levelled against it, the problem with the book [*One hundred years of homosexuality*], as Sedgwick's critique made clear, was that *it wasn't Foucauldian enough*: it retained too great an investment in conventional social history and made too little use of Foucauldian (or Nietzschean) genealogy.'[16] To continue this historiographic reflection, I

[3] See White (1987). Other, and some would even argue more important, influences in history and philosophy of science over the consideration of "culture" than White include the works of Roger Chartier, Robert Darton, Clifford Geertz, and Stephen Greenblatt. Here, I understand "cultural politics" in the way it is used by Gayatri Spivak (1988a).

[4] See, for example, Spivak (1988b), pp. 197–221; Prakash (2000), Marcus (2007), Chiang (2008d, 2009).

[5] Foucault (1972 [1969]) (1988 [1961]) (1990a [1976]) (1990b [1984]) (1994a [1963]) (1994b [1966]), and (2006 [1961]; Kuhn (1996).

[6] Golinski (2005).

[7] Another related popular concept from Foucault is "governmentality". See, for example, the wide ranging essays exploring this notion collected in Burchell, Gordon & Miller (1991) and in India (2005). See Rose (2007) for a recent reflection on the ramifications of the biomedical sciences in the early twenty-first century.

[8] The methodological and theoretical considerations raised in this paper draw on my experience in conducting the research for Chiang (Forthcoming). For a preliminary report of the significance of the findings, see Chiang (2008b).

[9] The literature is too vast to cite and give full acknowledgement here. For the most representative studies, see Bayer (1981), Duggan (1993), Dixon (1997), Hansen (1992), Somerville (1994), LeVay (1996), Mondimore (1996), Rosario (1997,2002), Eder et al. (1999), Terry (1999), Minton (2002), Crozier (2000, 2001, 2008).

[10] On China, see Dikötter (1995), pp. 137–145; Sang (2003), Ch. 4; Kang (2006), Ch. 2. On Japan, see Pflugfelder (1999), Ch. 5. Even the only other monograph on Japanese sexology, Frühstück (2003), barely touches on the topic of homosexuality.

[11] Weeks (1977,1981,1985), Katz (1983), esp. pp. 137–174; Halperin (1990, 1995, 2002). Out of the three authors mentioned here, Katz stands out as the most notable one who shifted from articulating an earlier "essentialist" position (1992 [1976]) to later adopting a "social constructionist" position. On the social construction of homosexuality, see also Greenburg (1988) and Reed (2001).

[12] For a useful essay on the social constructionism of sexuality, see Vance (1989).

[13] Foucault (1990a [1976]), p. 43; my emphasis.

[14] Halperin (1990), p. 7.

[15] Sedgwick (1990), p. 45.

[16] Halperin (2002), p. 13; original emphasis.

would suggest that one of Foucault's most significant genealogical contributions to the historical study of sexuality can be best characterized as demonstrating how the epistemic apparatus governing the conceptual comprehensibility of people's sexual activities in the West was transformed from the theological sphere to the discourse of medicine and science.[17] What Foucault calls *scientia sexualis* thus emerged only in the nineteenth century as the new regime of truth that conditioned a new technology of the self for the making of the modern erotic subject.[18]

It is in this sense that I have found in Arnold Davidson's *The emergence of sexuality* the most compelling resolution to the theoretical confusions over the best approach to the study of the history of homosexuality.[19] Similar to Ian Hacking, Davidson is interested in the historical process of "making up people".[20] Specifically, Davidson argues that there are no "perverts" before the second half of the nineteenth century. This, according to Davidson, can be best explained by the conditions under which certain statements come to be comprehensible as candidates of truth or falsehood.[21] Before the second half of the nineteenth century, physicians took the anatomical structure of genital organs as their object of investigation. Accordingly, they explained sexual diseases in terms of microscopic or macroscopic morphological abnormality. In this "anatomical style of reasoning", questions of sexual identity were not false, but were not even possible candidates for being true or false. It was only with the birth of a "psychiatric style of reasoning" during the second half of the nineteenth century, that there were ways of making inferences, verifying, proofing, analogizing and so on that allowed the category of "perverts" to come to be a comprehensible candidate of medical thinking. This is because the psychiatric style of reasoning, amplified by the pure psychodynamic theories of psychoanalysis around the turn of the century, took as its object of investigation matters of tastes, aptitudes, impulses, satisfactions, and psychic traits.[22]

We are thus presented with the polarities:

> between sex and sexuality, organ and instinct, structure and function, and anatomical defect and perversion. The first of each of these pairs of concepts partially makes up the anatomical style of reasoning about diseases, while the second of each of these pairs helps to constitute the psychiatric style of reasoning.[23]

These polarities therefore analytically differentiate two conceptual modes of representation, two distinct conceptual spaces, two fundamentally different epistemological structures. Consequently, by relying on Davidson's notion of "style of reasoning", we are also able to make sense of the distinction insisted by other Foucauldians such as Halperin between the modern "homosexual" identity and the pre-twentieth century "sodomite" subject position, recognizing that each belongs to two fundamentally different worlds of epistemological possibility. From sexuality studies, I have found "style" of unparalleled value for historical analysis.

3. Extending the epistemological application of "style"

To be sure, in history and philosophy of science, the epistemological application of the notion of "style" goes all the way back to the writings of Ludwik Fleck. In *Genesis and development of a scientific fact*, Fleck provided one of the earliest formulations of "style" as in "thought style".[24] In the 1970s, Alistair Crombie developed his idea of "styles of scientific thinking",[25] which Ian Hacking would soon rework into "styles of (scientific) reasoning" by the late 1980s and early 1990s.[26] It was around the same time that Davidson appropriated "style" from art historians for his study of the scientific comprehensibility of psychiatry.[27]

Even though Hacking and Davidson share similarly strong investments in sharpening the analytic value of "styles of reasoning" for historians and philosophers, it is apparent that the respective ways in which that rubric is entertained by Hacking and Davidson are quite different.[28] Hacking's "styles of reasoning" tend to emphasize the methodological dimension of the production of scientific knowledge. Hacking could therefore speak of the statistical (quantitative) style of reasoning, the laboratory (experimental) style of reasoning, the taxonomic style of reasoning, and so on. On the other hand, Davidson uses "style of reasoning" in ways that are more directly telling of the rules governing the particular apparatus of a "conceptual space", which he defines as "a space that determines what statements can and cannot be made with the concepts".[29] His "anatomical" versus "psychiatric" styles of reasoning not only juxtapose the foundational differences between objects of medical understanding, but show that the broader historical significance of these changing objects of clinical investigation involves a radical break in the epistemic regularities that made them and their associated concepts comprehensible at different times. Although, undoubtedly, both Hacking and Davidson address the epistemology of science historically through the various explanatory modes of different "styles of reasoning" that they propose, the former is more interested in "what brings in the possibility of truth and falsehood", and the latter is more concerned with the rise of "a new division of truth and falsity".[30]

Still, for the more immediate purpose of my project, which attempts to make sense of how homosexuality became a comprehensible candidate of scientific thinking in the context of twentieth-century China, Davidson's use of "style"—as applied to his historical epistemological distinction between sex and sexuality—appears to be more analytically promising. In the context of Europe and North America, for instance, Davidson's distinction illuminates both Halperin's idea of "one hundred years of homosexuality" and Hacking's notion of "making up people" with a much more solid genealogical grounding. As far as China is concerned, late imperial male same sex practice and cultural expression has been a topic of intense discussion in a voluminous corpus of scholarship.[31] As Matthew Sommer's work on Chinese legal history has shown,

[17] On the topic of masturbation in the context of this historical transfer of cultural comprehensibility, see Singy (2003).
[18] For a discussion that emphasizes the heterogeneous nature of the turn-of-the-century early discourse of sexology, see Chiang (2008c). Chiang (2008a) argues that this heterogeneous nature surfaced in the form of an explicit tension in the conceptualization of sexual normality between Kinsey's sociological sexology and American psychiatrists' clinical medicine by the mid-twentieth century.
[19] Davidson (2001).
[20] Hacking (2002b).
[21] On truth-or-falsehood, see Hacking (2002c).
[22] Davidson (2001b), pp. 30–65.
[23] Davidson (2001a), p. 137.
[24] Fleck (1979 [1935]).
[25] See Crombie (1981, 1994).
[26] Hacking (2000c, 1992).
[27] Davidson (2001b); see also (2001a), pp. 125–141.
[28] See Singy (2005).
[29] Davidson (2001a), p. 136.
[30] Hacking (2002c), p. 167; Davidson (2001a), p. 201.
[31] The standard works, among others, include Xiaomingxiong (1984), Hinsch (1990), Vitiello (2000), Volpp (2001).

sodomy appeared as a formal legislation in China only by the late imperial period. This Qing innovation, according to Sommer, fundamentally reoriented the organizing 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.[32]

But whether someone who engaged in same sex behaviour 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. The question was never homosexuality per se, but whether one's sexual behaviour 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. By relying on Davidson's "psychiatric style of reasoning", we could then begin to make sense of how that style of reasoning, which underpinned the comprehensibility of the very category of "homosexuality", gradually absorbed and exhausted the cultural meaning of same sex desire over the course of the Republican period. It was only in the first half of the twentieth century that homosexuality became both an independent conceptual blueprint and a topic of discussions of truth and falsehood in China.[33] If Foucault was correct in asserting that Western civilization was "the only civilization to practice a *scientia sexualis*"—the new regime of truth that conditioned a new technology of the self in nineteenth-century Europe—such practice had certainly proliferated to the East Asian world by the early twentieth century like never before.[34]

However, it is also because my project shifts the focus of this type of historical epistemological investigation to a non-Western context that "styles of thinking or reasoning", in the ways Crombie, Hacking, and even Davidson have conceived it, fall short given their exclusive focus on the ideas and practices of science in Europe. When I tried to appropriate Davidson's "styles of reasoning" as my leading methodological and theoretical framework in examining the historical relationship between science and homosexuality in China, I soon realized that I did not have the luxury of a geopolitically sealed system of Western biomedical knowledge to rely on in order to offer, for example, the conceptual–historical distinction between sex and sexuality. In the 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'.[35] Anatomical or psychiatric, Davidson's styles of reasoning appear less useful when I turn to a geographic region in the world during the first half of the twentieth century where the indigenous canon of Chinese medical knowledge and the foreign practice of Western biomedicine were themselves constantly in the process of being labelled and reconstructed as distinct markers of tradition or modernity.[36] Presented with the challenges stemming from the Chinese context, it seemed only reasonable to me that the epistemological value of "style" could be expanded much further beyond how Hacking and Davidson have rendered it analytically useful.

Crombie's emphasis on *thinking* is "too much in the head" for Hacking, who prefers *reasoning* because 'it is done in public as well as in private: by thinking, yes, but also by talking and arguing and showing'.[37] I decided to adopt *argumentation* as in "styles of argumentation" to highlight the form, content, and, most importantly, *functionality* of scientific discussions in non-Western contexts.[38] In other words, I employ "argumentation" to entertain the possibility that "styles of reasoning" can travel across space and, ultimately, that "scientific ways of knowing" are inherently imbricated with their role, status, and function in society and politics. This is where I depart most drastically from Davidson, for Davidson rightly admits that his historical accounts 'contain virtually no social history'.[39] To anticipate myself a bit, whereas the shift from an anatomical to a psychiatric style of *reasoning* underpinned the emergence of homosexuality as a conceptual category in Europe, the transformation from a culturalistic to a nationalistic style of *argumentation* characterized the appropriation of homosexuality as an independent organizing concept of same sex relations in China.[40] Both the culturalistic and the nationalistic type of conceptual representation in the Chinese context embed *normative arguments* about the relationship of same sex erotic intimacy to proper social order and political righteousness, henceforth the more cogency to identify them as styles of argumentation rather than styles of reasoning per se.

4. Epistemic modernity and the historiographic problem of nationalism

My task to understand how the concept of "homosexuality" came into being in China quickly became a simultaneous opportunity for exploring its underlying much more complicated historical processes of transcultural interaction. I searched elsewhere for additional methodological and theoretical frameworks that would sufficiently help me to probe the global dynamics of gender and sexuality as they were realized in the context of twentieth-century East Asia. It was at this point that Prasenjit Duara's notion of "the East Asian modern" presented itself as the most ideal tool that could help me frame and appreciate these cultural processes of the conceptual reconfiguration of same sex relationships in East Asian history.[41] According to Duara's definition, the East Asian modern is 'a regional mediation of the global circulation of the practices and discourses of the modern'.[42] To explicate the geopolitic functional role of scientific and medical knowledge in Republican China (and not just their pure epistemic contents), I was finding a way to combine the insights of Davidson's "styles of reasoning" and Duara's "East Asian modern".

I thus proposed the analytic framework of "epistemic modernity" to comprehend how homosexuality became a candidate of scientific thinking in early twentieth-century China. I define "epistemic modernity" as that discursive cultural apparatus that mediates the relationship between systems of knowledge (for example Chinese or Western medicine) and modalities of power (for example biopower) in yielding specific forms of experience (such as sexuality) or shaping new categories of subjectivity (for example homosexual or heterosexual identity). To look at the history of

[32] Sommer (2000).
[33] See Chiang (Forthcoming).
[34] Foucault (1990a [1976]).
[35] Furth (1993), p. 482; my emphasis.
[36] See Andrews (1994, 1997, 2001), Lei (1999, 2002).
[37] Hacking (2002a), p. 180.
[38] Davidson (2001a) also mentions styles of reasoning and argumentation but does not distinguish between the two.
[39] Ibid., p. viii.
[40] For a discussion of the transformation from "culturalism" to "nationalism" in the political arena, see Levenson (1965). It is my contention here by using "style of *argumentation*" to suggest the implicit political functionality of scientific discourses, something that Hacking or Davidson's "style of *reasoning*" tends to ignore.
[41] See Duara (2003).
[42] Duara (2003), p. 2.

homosexuality in China, therefore, is also to look at how globally circulating categories, discourses, and practices were mediated within that particular geobody we call "China". Based on this model, I came to argue that in the context of early twentieth-century China, homosexuality is precisely one of these categories, sexology exemplifies this kind of discourse, and the articulation of a Western psychiatric style of reasoning represents one of these practices. As such, I find my arguments particularly supportive of Ruth Rogaski's study on "hygienic modernity", for one can understand the hygiene–public health nexus as an exemplary model of how globally circulating discourses (of hygiene) and practices (circumscribed by public health campaigns) were mediated by the discursive apparatus of epistemic modernity in the context of the historical transition from late imperial to Republican China.[43]

In effect, "epistemic modernity" is a rather straightforward adaptation of Duara's "East Asian modern" in that both are defined as *regional mediations* of the flows, movements, contours, and processes of (re)configurations of ideas and ways of articulating and experiencing them. This is why although I am interested in the translation of homosexuality, I de-emphasize the historical agency of certain social actors, including those May Fourth intellectuals who actually translated and introduced Western sexological texts to the Chinese public. What appears to me to be more critical in the history of Chinese homosexuality is to identify a cultural apparatus—such as the one I call epistemic modernity—that functioned on a discursive level in this history. In other words "homosexuality", as a category of experience, mode of subjectivity, or blueprint of identity (and, eventually, frame for socio-political organization), was not historically "created" by certain groups of social actors; but it certainly was produced within a cultural–historical condition that mediated globally circulating categories, discourses, and practices. As such, one of the key differences between my "epistemic modernity" and Duara's "East Asian modern" would be that in Duara's account, Manchukuo is treated more as a *political* laboratory in which competing sovereignty rights were bounded by claims of authenticity that only highlighted their very own constructive nature; yet, in my account, China is treated more as a *cultural* laboratory in which competing conceptualizing technologies were realized in the name of reproducing their very symbolic value of traditionality and modernity.

Nonetheless, Duara's work still offers valuable lessons on the epistemological applicability of "style" for historians and philosophers of science in a slightly different way. Here I am thinking of the ways in which "style" has operated both successfully and poorly in discussions about different "national styles" of science.[44] In the most successful cases, "national styles" are demonstrated through national cultures with more inclusive, cohesive, and discursive institutionalized systems of knowledge making in relation to larger conditions of epistemic opportunities (for example conventionalised modes of learning, geography, and so on). In the history of the life sciences, Jonathan Harwood's work on German genetics and Daniel Todes' studies on Russian physiology and evolutionary thought spring to mind immediately as three of the most pre-eminent examples.[45] "National styles" however, become more difficult to imagine in the post-war era. I would suggest that this reflects the growing internationalisation of scientific communities in a century when global Cold War politics were made possible only by the consolidation of a growing number of self-recognizable, self-governable, and self-reinforcing nation states.

In light of the rapidly evolving historiography of East Asian nationalism, then, we can begin to appreciate more fully the weaknesses and problems inherent in discussions of "national styles". Rebecca Karl's *Staging the world*, to just take one stellar example, argues for a kind of historical analysis that does not privilege a Western oriented perspective of nationalism.[46] Claiming that Chinese nationalism began to take shape in the period between the first Sino-Japanese war (1894–1895) and the founding of the Republic (1911), Karl challenges the idea that the Euro-American worldview of nationalism, as mediated through Japanese imperialism, was what the Chinese drew on in their vision of Chinese nation building.[47] Instead, Karl shows that Chinese intellectuals looked to "Third World" anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist sentiments in their own imagination and realization of the world, which in turn contributed directly to the staging of globality around the turn of the twentieth century. According to Karl, Hawaii, Philippines, and South Africa, rather than Europe, America, and Japan were the more immediate sites of Chinese nationalistic identification; this "initially expansive global or internationalist moment of identification (1895–1905)" was gradually reduce to "a conceptualisation of racial-ethnic revolution in pursuit of state power (1905–1911)".[48]

In this sense, if twentieth-century nationalism (as demonstrated in the exemplary contexts of Manchukuo, China, Japan, etc.) is merely one type of those highly contested discourses mediated by the historical and cultural interactions found in what Duara calls "the East Asian modern", to talk about "national styles" reveals the ways in which historians could act as "passive agents of powers such as the nation state that control the meanings of such categories".[49] As the historian of molecular biology Jean-Paul Gaudillière reminds us, 'Labelling a discipline, a theory, or a small piece of biological research with a national adjective does not tell us much about what "national" is'.[50] A critique of "national styles" therefore forces us to think through the problem of 'how space and time are conceived and produced in history', refusing 'to be finally framed by the spatio-temporal vectors of national histories' that are driven by 'linear evolutionism'.[51] It is perhaps more fruitful to think of historical progression not as a simple teleological rejection of or evolution from the past, but as a complex, overlapping process of encompassing, superseding, and producing it. Meanwhile, national communities, as we learn from Benedict Anderson, can be understood as *imaginable* through the convergence of the cultural technologies of print capitalism, the calendrical apprehension of time, and Creole functionaries, as well as *reproducible* through the mechanisms of "modularity".[52] Or, in the words of Duara, nations are 'cognitively and institutionally constituted by global circulations that are

[43] Rogaski (2004).
[44] For an example of poor analytic use of "national styles", see Gould (1983).
[45] Harwood (1993), Todes (1989,2002). For the most recent application of "styles of reasoning" to nineteenth-century British biology, see Elwick (2007a,b).
[46] Karl (2002).
[47] This underscores a fundamental weakness of Benedict Anderson's otherwise perceptive conception of "modularity": it under specifies, to quote Duara's astute critique, "who borrowed what, when and why". See Anderson (2006 [1983]), Duara (2008).
[48] Karl (2002), p. 3. The global dimension of the historical construction of Chinese nationalism as emphasized in both Karl and Duara's accounts is further substantiated in Meng Yue (2006), which demonstrates how Shanghai emerged in and repositioned by this context of global circulation as a geophysical site of urban festivity driven by non-capitalist forms of consumption and a city of dazzling cosmopolitanism situated at the edges of empires. On the historiographic status of footbinding that grew out of this transnational Chinese nationalism, see Ko (2005), Ch. 1.
[49] Duara (1998), p. 118. On this point, see also Duara (1995).
[50] Gaudillière (1993), p. 473.
[51] Duara (1998), pp. 118, 116, 108. On linear evolutionism, see also Duara (1995).
[52] See Anderson (2006 [1983]).

mediated, in turn, by regional historical and cultural interactions'.[53] Conceived in these terms, "modern China" would appear less as a pregiven, self contained geopolitical entity with some sort of ahistorical ontological status, but more as a broader set of ongoing processes mediated through the transnational versus regional dynamics of global circulation, as well as the historical interactions between external influences and internal forces that defined its own unique imprint of developmental trajectory since the nineteenth century.[54]

5. From styles of reasoning to styles of argumentation

Yet, in many ways I also found the insights of sexuality studies and East Asian studies to be insufficient; in order to fully make sense of "epistemic modernity" and the emergence of homosexuality in China, the critical input of translation studies has probably harboured an even more penetrating role of influence. Informed by the theoretical frameworks on the economy of translation in global circulations recently developed by Lydia Liu and others, I see translational processes as a complicated phenomenon of historical negotiation inherently absorbing and adsorbing, inflecting and deflecting, displacing and inscribing, transnational ideas.[55] Translation is therefore characterized by *economic* regularities according to which things, people, concepts, practices, and, as Liu's *The clash of empires* demonstrates,[56] even entire ways of life could be either lost or made possible. The system of translation is both reductive and productive in nature.

When early twentieth-century Chinese sexologists such as Pan Guangdan explained same sex desire by introducing the writings of European sexologists such as Henry Havelock Ellis to the Chinese public, what they translated was not just the category of "homosexuality" itself, but a whole new "style of reasoning" about same sex desire descending from Western psychiatric thought about perversion and sexual psychopathology.[57] Moreover, to think through the model of translational economy developed by Liu, when viewing the *dan* actors of Peking opera and other cultural expressions of same sex eroticism (for example male prostitution) as signs of national backwardness, Republican Chinese sexologists had in essence *produced* what I have been calling *a new nationalistic style of argumentation* about same sex desire from translating the Western psychiatric style of reasoning about homosexuality.[58] This new nationalistic style of argumentation would thus replace the culturalistic style of argumentation that conceptually anchored how same sex desire was understood in the world of late imperial China. In addition to depicting certain aspects of Peking opera as signs of backwardness, to borrow the insight of Joshua Goldstein, the discursiveness of epistemic modernity created an entrenched nationalistic platform on which other aspects of this cultural entertainment could also function as a powerful symbol of Chinese tradition and authenticity.[59]

Following the juxtaposition between Davidson's "anatomical" and "psychiatric" styles of reasoning, a crucial part of my historical analysis therefore suggests the possibility of contrasting the twentieth-century nationalistic style of argumentation with the late imperial culturalistic style of argumentation about same sex desire. When we turn to the late imperial Ming-Qing transition, in the essayist Zhang Dai's reflections on the relationship between his friend Qi Zhixiang and a boy named Abao, we see that same sex desire was described as a symbol of cultural refinement:

> If someone does not have an obsession (癖), they cannot make a good companion for they have no deep passions (深情); if a person does not show some flaw (疵), they also cannot make a good companion since they have no genuine spirit (真氣). My friend Qi Zhixiang has obsessions with calligraphy and painting, football (蹴鞠), drums and cymbals (鼓鈸), ghost plays (鬼戲), and opera (梨園). In 1642 (壬午), when I arrived in the southern capital, Zhixiang brought Abao out to show me ... 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 1646 (丙戌), 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 (孌童崽子) was as dear to him as his own life. This sums up his obsession.[60]

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 sign of his cultural elitism. For Zhang, a 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".

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 the 1950s.[61] 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 premodern commentators on the subject. For example, in a sex education booklet for adolescents published in 1955, the author Lu Huaxin wrote:

> Certainly, sometimes homosexuality can be 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 more than that. For this type of same sex love/desire, it is easily curable. As long as they get married separately, whatever happened in the past could be completely forgotten.[62]

By the mid-twentieth century, same sex desire denoted a pathological—and not just abnormal—tendency, based on which an autonomous relationship between two persons of the same sex was conceivable regardless of their social status. Insofar as same sex desire represented something that was "curable", heterosexual

[53] Duara (2008), p. 323.
[54] See Duara (2009).
[55] See, for example, Kang and Tang (1993), Liu (1995, 1999, 2004).
[56] Liu (2004).
[57] See, for example, Pan (1946).
[58] On the association of male homosexual practice with national backwardness during the Republican period, see also Kang (2006), pp. 233–306; Wu and Stevenson (2006), pp. 42–59.
[59] See Goldstein (2007).
[60] Zhang (1982), pp. 35–36, as translated (with my own modifications) and cited in Wu (2004), pp. 42–43.
[61] Evans (1996).
[62] Lu (1955), p. 53.

marriage could serve that function of cure most powerfully. No longer understood simply as one of the many "tastes" or "obsessions" a man of high status could have (if not something they ought to strive for), erotic preference for someone of the same sex became something that could be eliminated with the help of friends, as opposed to something that could be appreciated by them.

To assess the transformations in the epistemology of same sex desire in China from an internal 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 behaviour, 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 help 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 only mediated the importation of a psychiatric style of reasoning about homosexuality from the Western world, but, in doing so, it has simultaneously catalysed an internal shift in the conceptual paradigm of same sex desire.

6. Conclusion

Historians and philosophers of science have furnished a wide array of theoretical–historiographical terms to describe different systems of knowledge and emphasize the discontinuities among them. Some of the most famous include Gaston Bachelard's "epistemological obstacles", Thomas Kuhn's "paradigm", Michel Foucault's "episteme" and "apparatus", Gerald Holton's "themata", Paul Feyerabend's "incommensurability", and the notion of "style of reasoning" more recently developed by Ian Hacking and refined by Arnold Davidson.[63] We can easily extend the list to include "thought collective", "mentality", "representation", "discourse", anthropologists' "culture", philosophers' "language", Pierre Bourdieu's "habitus", and the idea of "worldview". Again, the key thread that runs through all of these terms is how an example of each encapsulates a very specific structure of conceptualisation, system of ideas, order of knowledge, condition of comprehension, framework of epistemic engagement, modes of conceptual representation, and ways of seeing, understanding, knowing, inquiring, comprehending, and even sensing.[64] In this paper, I have taken up this theoretical–historiographical thread by evaluating the values and limitations of the notion of "style" for the historical and philosophical study of science. Specifically, offering a converging perspective from sexuality, translation, and East Asian studies, I have argued that the heretofore ways in which historians and philosophers of science have used the notion of "style" are severely restricted in terms of its mere applicability to the intellectual history of Western science.

The particular example of the translation of "homosexuality" into a comprehensible Chinese concept during the May Fourth era thus reveals that when historians and philosophers of science broaden their geo-political horizon to appreciate the developments (such as in modes of thought about sexuality) in non-Western parts of the world, the notion of "style" has the potential of carrying a much more dynamic conceptual weight: the specific idea of "styles of scientific reasoning" appears to be much more limited than has been typically assumed. When we look at the example of how the cultural apparatus of epistemic modernity mediated the translation of a Western psychiatric *style of reasoning* about homosexuality into a Chinese nationalistic *style of argumentation* about same sex desire, we learn much more than the historical "factual" insight that Chinese public intellectuals simply re-contextualised European sexology in the Republican period. By the middle of the twentieth century, same sex desire had acquired a completely different set of social meaning and cultural valency than the way it was conceived arguably as little as fifty years ago. On this point, the most significant lesson is that in the 1920s and 1930s, the notion of same sex desire actually *crossed the threshold of scientificity* in China as "homosexuality" got translated into *tongxing lian'ai* (同性戀愛) in Chinese. That is, the concept of same sex desire now belonged to the realm of scientific thinking in the context of East Asia.[65] A converging perspective from sexuality, translation, and East Asian studies thus brings into better visibility the conceptual analytical boundaries of what historians and philosophers would consider as properly constitutive of "science".

Given that "science" and "medicine" were themselves constantly going through a fluctuating process of reformulation and restabilization in the context of twentieth-century East Asia,[66] how the historical mechanism of translating a Western concept (such as homosexuality) simultaneously gives it a status of independency and scientific comprehensibility in a non-Western region is undoubtedly a subject worth being probed more deeply by historians and philosophers of science. Indeed, the politics of naming and defining science has precisely been the focus, implicitly or explicitly, of both the critical reflections of Daiwie Fu and the optimistic outlook of Benjamin Elman and Fa-ti Fan, all of whom, joining many other South Asianists, emphasize the possibility for the field of the history of science to be reconfigured by moving Asian science, technology, and medicine from the liminal status of subdisciplinary marginality to the foundational place of disciplinary centrality in the field.[67] Although I share this view, the central tenet of my methodological and theoretical reflections has also been to suggest that there is even greater potential for transforming and reassembling the historiographies of both East Asia and science when *sexuality* could serve as an interventional nexus to think more critically about translation at the threshold of scientificity and scientificity at the threshold of translation.

[63] See Bachelard (2002 [1938]); Kuhn (1996); Foucault (1994 [1966], 1972 [1969]); Holton (1988 [1973]), Feyerabend (1988, 1993 [1975]); Hacking (2002), 159–199; Davidson (2001). Foucault explicitly distinguishes his notion of "episteme" from "apparatus" in Foucault (1981), see especially pp. 196–197.

[64] On "sensing" in the comparative history of Greek and Chinese medicine, see Kuriyama (2002). For a recent solid overview of the history of sensibilities as it relates to the kind of cultural history that arose out of the social history revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, see Wickberg (2007).

[65] In *Archeology of knowledge*, Foucault defines the ways in which a concept is situated at the "threshold of scientificity" as:

> how a concept—still overlaid with metaphors or imaginary contents—was purified, and accorded the status and function of a scientific concept. To discover how a region of experience that has already been mapped, already partially articulated, but is still overlaid with immediate practical uses or values related to those uses, was constituted as a scientific domain. (Foucault, 1972 [1969], p. 190)

[66] See, for example, Elman (2006), Meng (2006), Ch. 1.

[67] Fu (2007), Elman (2007), Fan (2007). For critical response to Fu, see various articles in the journal *East Asian Science, Technology and Society*, *1* (2). The historiography of South Asian science, technology, and medicine is, of course, too vast to cite and do justice to here. Prakash (1999) and Arnold (2000) have been typical examples that adopt Foucauldian notions of "power/resistance" to challenge the assumed universality of Western knowledge. See Raj (2007) for a recent example that approaches similar issues through the notion of "global circulation" and brings to light the important role of oversea trading companies in the formation of modern science.

In this sense, I find the notion of "style" to be a particularly useful historical and philosophical template for thinking about the tension between locality and globality in the actualisation of conceptualising blueprints. When "styles of reasoning" are distinguished from "styles of argumentation", some elements of "style" are retained, but others are modified to a greater extent. Historians and philosophers of science not only maintain, but in fact extend, the epistemological applicability of "style" when its associated use with "reasoning" is isolated from its use in conjunction with "argumentation", which I have proposed to be an analytic rubric that addresses a broader reach of socio-political factors than "reasoning" alone.

To recapitulate, when the anatomical versus the psychiatric styles of reasoning are juxtaposed against one another in Davidson's work, what he takes to be the primary, if not exclusive, historical concern are only the internal rules governing two distinct conceptual apparatuses that cohered around two different sets of concepts: one associated with the epistemic organization of sex and the other with that of sexuality. This historical–epistemological distinction between sex and sexuality says very little about the socio-political forces surrounding the role of science and medicine in the historical dynamics of the modern global culture. Davidson's account does not offer much room for thinking about how styles of reasoning can move across geo-cultural locations, especially in relation to the contours of temporal changes.

On the other hand, when the culturalistic versus the nationalistic styles of argumentation are contrasted in my analysis, what I attempt to bring into better visibility, in addition to temporal shifts, are issues of cross-cultural interaction (for example, by focusing on historical moments of the translation, travelling, and consolidation of concepts) and global circulation processes that help constitute the historical momentum so essential for the ways in which the world unfolded over the course of the twentieth century. Specifically, this paper has been concerned with the question of why, starting in the Republican period, Chinese modernizers began to view previous cultural expressions of same-sex eroticism as domestic indicators of mental deficiency. And my argument has been 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,[68] the epistemic alignment of pre-nationalistic homoeroticism with the foreign notion of homosexuality precisely undergirded the appropriation of a science of Western sexology in the twentieth century. In historicizing scientificity itself, the analytic framework of epistemic modernity has allowed me to underscore the intrinsically socio-politicized layer of historical processes of scientific conceptual formation. In short, styles of *argumentation* make explicit science's implicit geo-political functionality that has been the most conspicuously widespread blind spot in old internalist historiography.

By "old" internalist historiography, I am referring to that body and mode of historical scholarship that has persistently failed to make that "one more turn after the social turn" of Bruno Latour's.[69] "New internalists",[70] to borrow Latour's terminology again, such as Arnold Davidson, Ian Hacking, Lorraine Daston, Peter Galison, and Latour himself, precisely go beyond the social turn by not discussing politics in a framework that intentionally excludes it from the core site of knowledge production.[71] For the "new internalists", politics—within and without the world of scientists—resides not just inside but on a location of forceful tangibility that is *inherently constitutive of* the laboratory, the field, the museum, the clinic, and so on.[72] According to this historiographical logic of perpendicularizing the subject(ivity)-object(ivity) plane with respect to the natural-social axis,[73] when our studies bring to light epistemic shifts or ruptures in historical experiences informed by interacting systems of knowledge, we are simultaneously tracing the much more profound rearrangements of social order and political possibilities. Learning from the converging concerns prompted by sexuality, translation, and East Asian studies, the fuller extent of both the limitations of externalist "social histories from below" and the under acknowledged potentials of internalist "epistemological histories of possibilities" is something that we are only beginning to appreciate.[74]

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[68] Heinrich (2008).
[69] Latour (1992a).
[70] Latour (1992b), p. 303.
[71] Davidson (2001); Hacking (2002); Daston and Galison (2007), Latour (1987, 1993 [1991]).
[72] On the laboratory, see Latour (1983,1990). On the field, see Fabian (2000), Kingsland (2005). On the museum, see Outram (1995). On the clinic, see Foucault (1994a [1963]); Davidson (2001); Singy (2004).
[73] See Latour (1992a).
[74] Reinhart Koselleck, for instance, has illuminated the danger of using the disciplinary subdivision of "social history", as opposed to "conceptual history", to claim greater validity for historians' construction of past reality:

> What has 'actually'—and not linguistically—occurred in history in the long term remains an academic construction, viewed in social-historical terms; evidence for it depends on the plausibility of the underlying theory. Any theoretically based statement must submit to methodological control by the sources in order to claim past actuality, but the reality of long-term factors cannot be sufficiently justified on the basis of individual sources. (Koselleck, 2002, p. 33)

See also Koselleck (2002), pp. 100–130. On "the need of theory for the discipline of history", see ibid., pp. 1–19. On the question of theory in the field of Chinese history, see, for example, Duara (1998) and Dirlik (2001). On the limitations of "social histories from below" and the potentials of "epistemological histories of possibilities", see also Singy (2004).

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