
Epistemic Modernity and the Emergence of Homosexuality in China

Howard Chiang

In 1950, the Time Bookstore in Shanghai published a book titled *Sexual Science* by Zhang Mingyun.¹ In nine chapters, the book summarises contemporary scientific research on animal and human sexuality, including perspectives from psychology, biomedicine, ethnology and sociology. Although the book provides no biographical information about the author, Zhang's familiarity with the history of sexual sciences outside China is demonstrated by his eloquent discussion of their developments in Japan, the part of Asia where the writings of European sexologists had made the deepest impression since the late nineteenth century.² Zhang clarifies his authorial intention in the opening chapter: 'Especially in the east (such as in China and Japan), people have yet to fully appreciate sexual science. So the author has decided to compose this book: providing Chinese people with a reliable understanding of sexology is precisely the intent of the author'.³ According to Zhang, because the scientific study of sex was so underdeveloped in China, it was high time for the introduction of sexology to Chinese experts and laypersons.

Zhang's assertion, nonetheless, overlooked an entire generation of thinkers and cultural commentators who promoted sexological studies in the aftermath of the New Culture movement (1915–19). Among the famous May Fourth iconoclastic intellectuals, some not only translated texts and adopted methodological rigour from European sexology, but they also developed their own theories of human sexual behaviour and desire. They frequently engaged in heated debates over the meaning, principles and boundaries of a science of sexuality. Questions of competence, credentials, expertise and authority preoccupied those of the 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'.⁴

This article 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 regarded Zhang's commentary on proper heterosexual conduct as a key feature of his sexological enterprise, especially as it was stamped by his controversial theory of the 'third kind of water'.⁵ 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.⁶ Less well studied, however, is their discussion of same-sex desire.⁷ From the early 1920s, Zhang and Pan also debated vociferously about each other's legitimacy as a scientist of sex. Frequently joined by an extended cast of sex educators, such debates reflected the complexity of their sexological manoeuvres. 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 modernising elites did not fully grasp or reproduce European concepts of sexual 'perversions', including homosexuality.⁸ More recently, in response to Dikötter, other scholars such as Tze-lan D. Sang and Wenqing Kang have exposed the ways in which selected May Fourth intellectuals – through various ideological debates – actually contributed to the increasing awareness of foreign categorisations of human sexuality in Chinese mass culture.⁹

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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹

Sang's analysis, too, seems to support the claim that no effect similar to the European 'individualisation' 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'.¹²

In this article, 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 sex 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 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. 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 Michel 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.¹³ Contrary to previous studies, I argue that from the 1920s to 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 during the post-socialist era, my historicisation suggests that both have deeper roots that can be traced to an earlier epistemic turning point – in the Republican period.¹⁴

Part of my disagreement with previous studies stems 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 modernisation 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 into homosexuality in the Republican period itself marked a condition of modernisation, rather than a condition that permits 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 modernisation and nationalisation – are more immediately relevant to the formation 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.¹⁵

In order to differentiate the two levels of truth production on which sexological claims operated, this article proposes and develops the analytic idea of ‘epistemic modernity’. My application of ‘epistemic modernity’ in this article refers to an apparatus in the Foucauldian sense that characterises a historical moment during which a new science of sexuality gained epistemological grounding in Chinese culture. In the next section, I make even more explicit the historiographical rationale for implementing this theoretical neologism, including an operational definition appropriate for the purpose of this study. The main body of this article consists of three interrelated sections, each of which features 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 organisational 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 paradigm of same-sex desire.

Historiographical rationale

The rich history of male homoeroticism in traditional China has been a topic of in-depth scholarly discussion.¹⁶ 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 in formal legislation in China only in the late imperial period. During the eighteenth-century Yongzheng reign (1723–35), 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 organising 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.¹⁷ But whether someone who engaged in same-sex behaviour was criminalised due to his disruption of a social order organised 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.

The relationship between forms of experience and systems of knowledge thus occupies a central role in this historical problem, if not 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.¹⁸ 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 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'.¹⁹ 'Indeed', Davidson claims, 'sexuality itself is a product of the psychiatric style of reasoning'.²⁰ 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 behaviour alone, but 'seems to depend on the unstable conjunction of all three'.²¹

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 characterised by an increasingly conspicuous struggle to reconcile the existing canon of traditional Chinese medicine with foreign western biomedical knowledge. This preoccupation with bringing together two co-existing but often competing systems of medical epistemology was overwhelmingly articulated within a larger socio-political project conceived in terms of nationalism. Ideas and practices of nation-making would come to acquire the centre stage in Chinese political and cultural discourses, especially following the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–95).²²

Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that, unlike its western counterpart, the Chinese context of sexual knowledge does not represent a somewhat epistemologically sealed situation 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 modernising thinkers like Zhang Jingsheng, Pan Guangdan and others use western sexological ideas rather than traditional Chinese medical theory as a way to pathologise same-sex desire? What are the broader historical implications? The relationship between systems of knowledge and notions of modernity in East Asia requires problematisation as we historicise the concept of homosexuality itself. In order to carefully account for the historical condition under which homosexuality became a meaningful category in China, we need to complicate the epistemological and historiographical issues that we wish to address concerning 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 mobilised 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'.²³ The emergence of homosexuality in early twentieth-century China reflects a parallel moment of contingent historicity.

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 the discursive apparatus that governs the implicit status of knowledge or truth claims about 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 multiply in space-time and can be surveyed from specific sites'.²⁴ 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 (for example, Chinese or western medicine) and modalities of power (for example, biopower) in yielding specific forms of experience (for example, sexuality) or shaping new categories of subjectivity (for example, homosexual identity).

By treating traditionality and authenticity as not ontologically given but constructed as such through the ongoing modernising 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 article is to show that, in the context of early twentieth-century China, homosexuality was precisely one of these categories; sexology exemplifies this kind of discourse; and the articulation

of a western psychiatric style of reasoning about sexuality represents 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 defined by public health campaigns) were mediated by the discursive apparatus of epistemic modernity in the historical transition from late imperial to national Republican China.²⁵

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-orientalisation, by which I mean an intentional project that continually defers an 'alternative modernity' and essentialises non-westernness (including Chineseness) by assuming the genealogical status of that derivative copy of an 'original' western modernity is somehow always already hermeneutically sealed from the historical apparatus of westernisation.²⁶ Now that studies in the history of sexuality in non-western regions have begun to mature,²⁷ historians should be even more cautious of any effort to view the broader historical processes of epistemic homogenisation as being less significant than forms of local (or 'oriental') resistance.²⁸

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'. In other words, this is a study of 'how a concept [like homosexuality] – 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 [such as same-sex intimacy] 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'.²⁹ The rest of this article is devoted to examining closely the historical condition whereby 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 (for example, sexuality) and another concerning implicit claims about cultural indicators of traditionality, authenticity and modernity (for example, 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* flourished in the cultural context of Republican China.

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, modernising elites of the time discussed human sexual behaviour and desire predominantly in the language of biology and psychology. In doing so, they taught people how to think about sexuality in scientific terms. They typically received advanced academic degrees at European, American or Japanese institutions. Upon returning from abroad, many of them participated in

the sex education movement, which benefited from the broader cultural environment of the May Fourth intellectuals, by looking up to the British sexologist Havelock Ellis as a role model. They especially praised Ellis's seven-volume encyclopedic *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* as the epitome of scientific research on human sexuality. One of these modernising thinkers who emulated Ellis's work was China's own 'Dr Sex', Zhang Jingsheng (1888–1970).

A university professor and a sex educator, Zhang Jingsheng treated his own sexual treatise, *Sex Histories (Xingshi)*, as a Chinese adaptation of Ellis's *Studies*.³⁰ After earning his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Lyon, Zhang returned to China in 1920 and initially taught at the Jingshan Middle School in Guangdong. For being educated abroad, Zhang was very much part of the work–study movement promoted in the 1910s. Based on the close ties he had established in France with anarchists of the Guomindang party such as Wang Jingwei and Cai Yuanpei, 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.³¹

Zhang's participation in the association and the early work–study movement significantly shaped his intellectual outlook. 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 epicentre of the May Fourth movement. Throughout the second half of the 1910s, the Sino-French Education Association actively promoted the view that overseas study in France offered a rare opportunity for Chinese people to learn European science and humanist thinking without relying entirely on Japan. Adopting this vision, Zhang saw in Cai's offer to teach at Peking (at the peak of the May Fourth era) 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 organisation. Championing positive eugenics, Zhang even encouraged interracial marriage (and breeding) between Chinese people and those races that possessed strength where the Chinese race was weak, including the Europeans, Americans, Russians and even the Japanese.³²

Following these two well-received books, Zhang's publication of *Sex Histories* in 1926 earned him the popular title 'Dr Sex'. *Sex Histories* consists of 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 newspaper *Jingbao* in early 1926. This 'call for stories' asked young people to contribute stories and any other relevant information about their sex lives.³³ It also indicated that these stories would be 'psychoanalysed' and would help serve the purpose of 'hygienic' intervention.³⁴ 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 organised and presented their research finding.

Indeed, when Zhang published *Sex Histories*, he demanded that the book should be treated as 'a piece of science, because it documents facts'.³⁵ For Zhang, there was nothing obscene or inappropriate about his compilation of people's sexual thought and behaviour. '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.³⁶ 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 the *Studies* by Havelock Ellis.³⁷ In sum, 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.³⁸

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 lies a claim of another sort concerning referential points of tradition and modernity in Chinese culture. In Zhang's sexological project, knowledge about sexuality involves a modern phenomenon of narrating one's life history in a *truthful* manner. Whereas literature (fiction, poetry and so on) 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. 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 archived, investigated and explained.

By encouraging people to talk about their sexual experience, Zhang hoped to achieve more. As the 'call for stories' makes clear, narrators who were brave enough to speak up 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 sexual science with another epistemological tool: theoretical innovation. He did this by developing a coherent set of guiding principles in human sexual conduct based on concepts from the western biosciences.

His theory of a 'third kind of water' is 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.³⁹ At least one other self-proclaimed 'sexpert', Chai Fuyuan, author of *ABC of Sexology* (1928), supported Zhang's idea of female ejaculation.⁴⁰

Interestingly, besides portraying women as active agents in heterosexual intercourse (through such means as 'vaginal breathing'), Zhang also held them responsible for reducing male homosexual behaviour in China.⁴¹ 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 vaginas and used them properly for sex, such as by following his theory of the 'third kind of water'; the 'perverted', 'malodorous',

'meaningless' and 'inhumane' behaviour of anal intercourse among men could be ultimately eliminated.⁴² This example powerfully illustrates the subtle ways in which male same-sex practice was coming 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 were nonetheless understood as a key determinant of the prevalence of male homosexual conduct. Meanwhile, in prioritising western biology as a modernistic discourse for the cultural appreciation of female sexuality, his theoretical project implies the burden of 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. The stories he included in *Sex Histories* was a major step in this endeavour. In his capacity as the 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 an exclusive forum devoted to the voice of experts; it published readers' responses to not only its most controversial articles, but also any contemporary issues that seemed relevant to the scope of the magazine, including sexuality-related subjects.

Readers, presumably many of whom resided in urban areas where Republican 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 research"'.⁴³ 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?'⁴⁴ Others similarly maintained that *Sex Histories* 'definitely cannot be viewed as a pornographic piece of work. Its content is all valid research material on sexual activities'.⁴⁵

At the same time, the scientism of Dr Sex's advice did not seem problematic to all interested readers. 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 it slow, 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?⁴⁶

Though disagreeing with Zhang's initial advice, the author still regarded him as the ultimate authority on matters related to sex. In fact, the letter squarely conveys her desire to contribute to Dr Sex's science by providing a personal perspective, which bears a similar empirical value to the case studies collected in *Sex Histories*. Another reader, Xu Jingzai, even offered Zhang his own insight concerning the proper way of 'sexual breathing'.⁴⁷ Others similarly respected what Zhang had to offer, but either wanted to learn more about his theory of the 'third kind of water' from a male-centred perspective

or expressed frustration with its impracticality based on their own experience in the bedroom.⁴⁸

Several 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 behaviours, such as rape, homosexuality, illegal sex, masturbation, etc., could be eliminated'.⁴⁹ 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 any proper place in sex education'.⁵⁰ 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 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'.⁵¹ Zhang's response thus reminded his readers of the importance of knowing and practising 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.

Therefore, 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 (*Meishu yanjiuhui*) observed that 'due to the recent progress in academia, there is a new *independent* scientific field of study that surprises people. What kind of science is it? It's sexology'.⁵² In particular, Zhang Jingsheng's theory of the 'third kind of water' simultaneously biologised and psychologised sex. It biologised sex because it discussed people's erotic drives and motivations in the framework of the somatic functions of male and female reproductive anatomy. Zhang's theory psychologised sex by explaining people's sexual behaviour and activities in terms of what they thought and how they felt.

The methodological framework of these processes of knowledge production was consistent with the empirical approach of contemporary western sexology. Among the field's other founding fathers, Havelock Ellis, Sigmund Freud, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Iwan Block, Max Marcuse and Magnus Hirschfeld all discussed, classified, understood, theorised and, in essence, made knowledge claims about human sexuality by collecting and studying individual life histories. This approach bears little resemblance to the statistical–sociological method later adopted by Alfred Kinsey, the American sexologist who would assume an international reputation by the mid-century.⁵³ 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. In his attempt to enlighten the public with reliable and 'accurate' knowledge about proper heterosexual conduct, Zhang's sexological ethos gave true or false statements of homosexuality an unprecedented scope of conceptual comprehensibility in China.

Competing authorities of truth

As we have seen, the public dissemination of knowledge about sexuality was a hallmark of Zhang Jingsheng's 'utopian project', to borrow the phrase from Leon Rocha.⁵⁴ 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 theoretical 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 article extends the foregoing by highlighting another aspect of 'epistemic modernity' crucial to the epistemological grounding of *scientia sexualis* in Republican China: a public platform on which authorities of truth competed.

Whereas a great majority of the urban mass idolised 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' (*weikexue*) because Zhang 'does not even understand the most basic workings of human physiology'.⁵⁵ 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 the 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 modernisers of 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.⁵⁶

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 work in sexology. 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 inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa honour society upon his graduation from Dartmouth.⁵⁷ His educational experience in New York coincided with the peak of the American eugenics movement, the centre of which was located in the upper-class resort area of Cold Spring Harbor on Long Island. In 1904, the Station for Experimental Evolution was established there under the directorship of Charles Davenport with funds from the Carnegie Institution of Washington.⁵⁸ 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 types of inheritance data.⁵⁹ His *Research on the Pedigrees of Chinese Actors* (1941) is an exemplary outcome of his eugenics research.⁶⁰ Like the Anglo-American eugenicists who he tried to emulate, Pan also prioritised the making of an 'eugenic-minded' public.⁶¹ 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.⁶² 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.⁶³

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:

[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 with 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 kind of statistical evidence he relies on, if there is any at all. If he has none yet still speaks so confidently in these words, his intentions are dubious in making these unsupported claims.⁶⁴

Pan subsequently attacked Zhang's understanding of eugenics by directly citing the statistical data collected in the works of Charles Davenport and Francis Galton. Pan even accused Zhang of having overlooked Galton's work completely: 'Since the Englishman Francis Galton published his *Hereditary Genius* in 1869, the book has become 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 really cannot understand why someone would speak about eugenics so elaborately without some basic familiarity with these texts'.⁶⁵

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 teaching them how to release it'.⁶⁶ 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'.⁶⁷ 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, from the 1920s to the 1940s, 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, as in any other 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 empirically unsubstantiated 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 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 incomers to the field of sex science such as 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. This 'legitimacy' comprised a host of criteria, including academic credentials (whether someone is 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 regionalised global discourse marked by the trends and currents of 'epistemic modernity', reflected the broader stakes of scientific disciplinarity looming over Chinese culture at the time. 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 sorts, the growing currency of debates on scientism – itself a new marker of modernity – contextualised the gradual process by which the category of homosexuality absorbed the dominant frame of thinking about same-sex desire in twentieth-century Chinese culture.⁶⁸

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 endeavour: the consolidation of its disciplinarity through the translation and reinforcement of specialised 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 behaviour) that characterised western sexual science. The criticisms levelled against him, by Pan Guangdan and others, broadened the purview of such power dynamics. 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-contextualising the cultural authority of sexology, Chinese sex scientists accomplished more than 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 social domain, an unprecedented forum for intellectual debates that defined their project as culturally relevant, socially legitimate and disciplinarily independent.

At 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 popularising his 'theory of the third kind of water', and his critics, who increasingly viewed his work as narrow and unscientific. Again, this is 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 is considered by many 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'.⁶⁹ 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 Zhang Jingsheng had obviously missed.

Pan also translated more western sexological texts. While claiming that the facts and personal histories he solicited from readers formed the scientific basis of his sexological writing, Zhang translated a relatively modest quantity of foreign sexological works into Chinese. And even though Zhang frequently cited Ellis,⁷⁰ Pan translated at least three monograph-length studies by Ellis, including the entire manuscript of *Psychology of Sex: A Manual for Students*.⁷¹ 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'.⁷² For the Ming–Qing period, Pan listed twelve cases of male homosexuality and one case of female homosexuality.⁷³ 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 interest on the topic of same-sex affect.⁷⁴ This was an endeavour beyond the intellectual concerns of Dr Sex.

Apart from topical diversity and the actual number of translated texts, Chinese sex scientists also valued the role of historical information in their appropriation of the cultural authority of sexology. If the hallmark of sexology for Dr Sex was merely the

empirical understanding of sexual behaviour through compiling and collecting actual life histories, it also involved for Pan the rendition of historical data on sexual variations so as to illumine better 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 that of Greece) and discussing its implications for the modernisation and nationalisation of China.⁷⁵ 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's work, a project supplemented by his own historical, sociological and ethnological insights.

But besides Havelock Ellis, Pan also introduced Freud's ideas on human sexuality to the Chinese public. If American eugenicists like Davenport paid no attention to Freud,⁷⁶ Pan certainly embraced Freudian psychoanalysis wholeheartedly and used it as a legitimate scientific theory to explain sexual desire. For example, in his psycho-biographical study of the late Ming poetess Feng Xiaoqing (1595–1612), Pan psychoanalysed Feng's writings and concluded that she had narcissistic tendencies.⁷⁷ Other sinologists have viewed this effort as an early example of how psychoanalysis was transferred to China in the early twentieth century.⁷⁸ According to Haiyan Lee, for instance, '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'.⁷⁹

Indeed, Pan consistently used psychoanalysis in his writings as a modernising 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 a five-stage understanding 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".⁸⁰ Two years later, in an article called '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 realisation 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'.⁸¹ When his translation of Ellis's *Psychology of Sex* appeared in 1946, he would refer to this process of psychosexual development again in explaining the one case of female homosexuality he included in the appendix.⁸²

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*.⁸³

Therefore, it appears that, from the 1920s to the late 1940s, Pan had completely endorsed Freud's explanation of homosexuality. 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'.⁸⁴ Readers who found Pan's psychoanalytic explanations 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 of 'homosexuality' was in part enabled by the new conceptual 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 practising gynaecologist 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 are 'normally' developed would 'transit' (*guodu*) through homosexuality, but others would 'get blocked' (*zuai*) or 'bogged down' (*tingzhi*) in the process and express 'abnormal homosexuality' (*buputong de tongxing'lianai*). As Freud insisted as early as 1903, Gui did not think that homosexuality was necessarily 'treatable' or 'correctable'.⁸⁵ Unlike Zhang Jingsheng's somatic-oriented interpretations of sexuality, the importation of Freudian psychoanalysis in the 1920s and 1930s offered a strictly *psychogenic* way of explaining same-sex desire. Serving as a new conceptualising and modernising tool, psychoanalysis operated as another cultural technology 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 in 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 periodical *Sex Science* 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'.⁸⁶ The author presented homosexuality as one among the many existing types of sexual perversion (others included 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'.⁸⁷ Despite this explicit acknowledgement that no effective treatment of homosexuality was available, the article still construed same-sex desire and behaviour as undesirable, especially by emphasising their categorical similarity to other kinds of sexual perversion like sadism, fetishism and bestiality.

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 stigmatising 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’.⁸⁸ Elsewhere in the same issue, treatment methods for homosexuality such as surgical castration or psychological hypnosis were often cast in a highly suspicious light.⁸⁹

By and large, however, essays in this thematic issue of *Sex Science* emphasised the likelihood of homosexuality being 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 behaviour in unisex social settings, such as schools, dormitories, factories, military camps and prisons.⁹⁰ Yang Kai, a doctor who earned his 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 as he recognised that the main cause of this ‘perversion’ is ‘inherited’, Yang still attributed the high frequency of homosexual practice to ‘habits and the environment’.⁹¹ 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 was more prevalent in schools, the military and temples, and that the incidence of female homosexuality was especially high in the workplace and factories.⁹² 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 situation, 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.⁹³

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 were too strict and rigid, students might become ‘overly sensitive to sexual stimuli’, and this would lead to a situation in which students were actually ‘more likely to engage in masturbation and homosexuality’.⁹⁴ 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 behaviours are perhaps more correctable than assumed.⁹⁵

Correctable or untreatable, inborn or acquired, same-sex desire was now indisputably discussed via 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’.⁹⁶ Gui’s allusion to the famous Freudian association of male homosexuality with paranoia reveals 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 descended 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 modelled [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 . . . 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.⁹⁷

Unlike the western psychiatric style of reasoning about sexual disorders, this passage makes it evident that traditional Chinese medical thinking conceptualised sexual desire and activity in quantitative terms, conveying a general rubric of 'sexual economy'.⁹⁸ 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'.⁹⁹ To paraphrase Arnold Davidson, then, we can confidently say that as little as one hundred years ago, western psychiatric notions of sexual identity (for example, 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 modernising thinkers from the 1920s onwards 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 hinges on an intellectual landscape of sexological disciplinarity. Though priding itself on being 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* (*Xing zazhi*). Although there is no doubt that many modernising 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 opinion pieces in direct dialogue with one another. Like 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 specialised authority of sexology across culture. Its founding and circulation thus marked an important episode in the intellectual translation and disciplinary consolidation of *scientia sexualis* in Republican China.

East Asian *scientia sexualis* and the birth of a nationalistic style of argumentation

If Foucault was correct in asserting that western civilisation was 'the only civilization to practise a *scientia sexualis*', such practice had certainly spread to the East Asian world by the early twentieth century like never before.¹⁰⁰ But this article 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.¹⁰¹

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 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 the other concerning implicit claims about cultural markers of traditionality, authenticity and modernity (modes of narrating sex, theoretical frameworks 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 to make 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 endeavours gave rise to a radical reorganisation 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 *Sexual Science*, after documenting the prevalence of homosexual practice in different western societies, Zhang Mingyun concluded that 'the main social cause for

the existence of homosexuality is upper-class sexual decadence and the sexual thirst among lower-class people'.¹⁰² This, according to Zhang, should help shed light on 'the relationship between homosexuality and nationality'.¹⁰³ 'For the purpose of social improvement', according to another concerned writer, 'the increasing prevention of homosexuality is now a pressing task'.¹⁰⁴ Pan Guangdan expressed a similar nationalistic hostility towards the *dan* 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 morality. He explained that their lower social status prevented them from participating in the civil examination system, implying that a modernising nation in the twentieth century certainly had no place for them.¹⁰⁵ The physician Wang Yang, known for his expertise in human sexuality and reproduction, went so far as to identify homosexuality as 'a kind of disease that eliminates a nation and its races'.¹⁰⁶

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 characterises a *productive* historical moment.¹⁰⁷ When Republican Chinese sexologists viewed the *dan* actors and other cultural expressions of homoeroticism as signs of national backwardness,¹⁰⁸ they in essence domesticated the western psychiatric style of reasoning and turned it into a new *nationalistic style of argumentation* about same-sex desire.¹⁰⁹ 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 powerful symbols 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 hybrid embodiment of the traditionality and what Duara aptly calls 'the regime of authenticity' of Chinese culture.¹¹⁰

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.¹¹¹ 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. 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, '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 flavour 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.¹¹²

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 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.¹¹³

Let me now bypass roughly three centuries. 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.¹¹⁴ 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.¹¹⁵

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 that 'as long as [these] teenager[s] get married, the pathological feelings will disappear'.¹¹⁶ Only for certain teenagers whose 'lifestyle has become decadent' and who 'really start 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'.¹¹⁷

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 a member of the opposite sex while still passionately desiring someone of the same.¹¹⁸ 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 of cure 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 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 internal historical perspective, then, we can begin to reconstruct some of the polarised 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 helps to constitute the nationalistic style of argumentation. These polarities therefore characterise 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 labelled as 'the Sick Man of Asia' with growing intensity.¹¹⁹ 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 conceptualise 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 the Republican period, Chinese modernisers 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 as 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.¹²⁰

What I call 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*, 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.

Notes

This article was the co-recipient of the 2010 Gregory Sprague Prize from the American Historical Association's Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History. The author wishes to thank Benjamin Elman for his careful and insightful comments on an earlier version of this article, and Prasenjit Duara for his enthusiastic encouragement on the theoretical pursuit of this project at its inceptive stages. This article has especially benefited from the astute criticisms of Petrus Liu, Hongwei Bao and Wenqing Kang, and the meticulous reading of the journal's two anonymous reviewers. The author alone is responsible for any remaining flaws. Research for this project was supported by pre-dissertation research grants from the East Asian Studies Program, the Department of History, and the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies at Princeton University. The author also wishes to thank participants at various conferences, seminars and workshops for their perceptive and pointed questions.

1. Zhang Minyun, *Xing kexue* (Shanghai: Shidai shuju, 1950).
2. See Gregory M. Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male–Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600–1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Sabine Fröhstück, *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).
3. All translations in this article are mine, unless indicated otherwise. Zhang, *Xing kexue*, p. 2.
4. 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 my cue from Ian Hacking and use 'truth' in this essay as a formal (as opposed to a strictly realist) concept. See Ian Hacking, *Scientific Reason* (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2008), pp. 1–48.
5. Charles Leary, 'Sexual Modernism in China: Zhang Jingsheng and 1920s Urban Culture' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Cornell University, 1994); Hiroko Sakamoto, 'The Cult of "Love and Eugenics" in May Fourth Movement Discourse', *Positions: East Asia Cultures and Critique* 12 (2004), pp. 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), pp. 99–129; Wang Xuefeng, *Jiaoyu zhuanxing zhi jing: Shiji shangban shi zhongguo de xingjiaoyu sixiang yu shijian* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2006), pp. 249–65; Leon A. Rocha, 'Zhang Jingsheng (1888–1970): Love, Sex, Aesthetics, Eugenics, Utopia' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2010). Leary's and Rocha's studies are the most detailed and comprehensive treatments of Zhang's life and work to date.
6. 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' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Cambridge, 1996); Yuehsen 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; Thomas S. Mullaney, 'Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification and Scientific Statecraft in Modern China, 1928–1954' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 2006); Haiyan Lee, *Revolution of the Heart: A Genealogy of Love in China, 1900–1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), pp. 186–217. The only published biographies of Pan to date are Lü Wenhao, *Pan Guangdan tuzhuan* (Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 2006); Wang Yanni, *Guangdan zhihua* (Wuhan: Changjiang wenyi chubanshe, 2006).
7. 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.
8. 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. 143–5.
9. See Sang, *Emerging Lesbian*; Kang, *Obsession*.
10. 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, *Emerging Lesbian*, pp. 7, 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 Vittorio Lingiardi and Jack Drescher (eds), *The Mental Health Professions and Homosexuality: International Perspectives* (New York: Haworth, 2003), pp. 117–43.

11. Kang, *Obsession*, pp. 42–3.
12. Sang, *Emerging Lesbian*, p. 118.
13. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction*, tr. Robert Hurley (1976; New York: Vintage, 1990).
14. Dennis Altman, *Global Sex* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Lisa Rofel, *Desiring China: Experiments in Neoliberalism, Sexuality, and Public Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Judith Farquhar, *Appetites: Food and Sex in Post-Socialist China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002). See also Loretta Wing Wah Ho, *Gay and Lesbian Subculture in Urban China* (London: Routledge, 2010); Travis Kong, *Chinese Male Homosexualities: Mamba, Tongzhi, and Golden Boy* (London: Routledge, 2010); Joanne Mcmillan, *Sex, Science and Morality in China* (London: Routledge, 2006); James Farrer, *Opening Up: Youth Sex 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 (2010), in press.
15. For important examples in the history of the French life sciences, see Toby A. Appel, *The Cuvier–Geoffroy Debate: French Biology in the Decades before Darwin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); John Farley and Gerald L. Geison, 'Science, Politics and Spontaneous Generation in Nineteenth-Century France: The Pasteur–Pouchet Debate', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 48 (1974), pp. 161–98.
16. Robert H. van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China* (Leiden: Brill, 1974); Xiaomingxiong, *Zhongguo tongxing'ai shilu* (Hong Kong: Fenhong sanjiao chubanshe, 1984); 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), pp. 559–71.
17. 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), pp. 109–33, reprinted in Wayne R. Dynes and Stephen Donaldson (eds), *Asian Homosexuality* (New York and London: Garland, 1992); Vivian W. Ng, 'Ideology and Sexuality: Rape Laws in Qing China', *Journal of Asian Studies* 46 (1987), pp. 57–70; Vivian W. Ng, 'Homosexuality and State in Late Imperial China', in Martin B. Duberman, Martha Vicinus and George Chauncey (eds), *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (New York: New American Library, 1989), pp. 76–89.
18. I distinguish 'styles of argumentation' from 'styles of reasoning' more carefully in the conclusion. See also note 109.
19. Arnold I. Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 36.
20. Davidson, *Emergence of Sexuality*, p. 37.
21. David M. Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 131.
22. See e.g., 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: Duke University Press, 2002); Karl Gerth, *China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); Tsu, *Failure, Nationalism, and Literature*.
23. Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), pp. 3, 6 n. 6.
24. Tani E. Barlow, 'Introduction: On "Colonial Modernity"', in Tani E. Barlow (ed.), *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 1–20, here p. 6.
25. See Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity*.
26. For a recent reflection on the problem of Chinese self- or re-orientalisation, see Chu Yiu-Wai, 'The Importance of Being Chinese: Orientalism Reconfigured in the Age of Global Modernity', *Boundary 2* 35 (2008), pp. 183–206. For an informative set of essays dealing with the problem of 'alternative modernity' in the context of modern Chinese history, see Madeleine Yue Dong and Joshua Goldstein (eds), *Everyday Modernity in China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006).
27. In addition to the works cited above, other notable examples include 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).
28. See e.g., Dennis Altman, 'Rupture or Continuity? The Internationalization of Gay Identities', *Social Text* 14 (1996), pp. 77–94; Dennis Altman, 'Global Gaze/Global Gays', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 3 (1997), pp. 417–36; Peter Drucker, 'Introduction: Remapping Sexualities', in Peter Drucker (ed.), *Different Rainbows* (London: Gay Men's Press, 2000), pp. 9–42; Linda Garber, 'Where in the World Are the Lesbians?', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14 (2005), pp. 28–50; Afsaneh Najmabadi, 'Beyond the Americas: Are Gender and Sexuality Useful Categories of Analysis?', *Journal of Women's History* 18 (2006), pp. 11–21; Evelyn Blackwood, 'Transnational Discourses and Circuits of Queer Knowledge in Indonesia', *GLQ* 14 (2008), pp. 481–507; Peter A. Jackson, 'Capitalism and Global Queering: National Markets, Parallels among Sexual Cultures, and Multiple Queer Modernities', *GLQ* 15 (2009), pp. 357–95; and my reappraisal of similar issues in Howard Chiang, 'Empire of Desires: History and Queer Theory in an Age of Global Affect', *Critical Studies in History* 1 (2008), pp. 50–71, reprinted in *InterAlia: A Journal of Queer Studies* 3 (2009).
 29. Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, tr. A. M. Sheridan Smith (1969; New York: Pantheon, 1972), p. 190.
 30. The edition that I rely on for this article is Zhang Jingsheng, *Xingshi 1926* (Taipei: Dala, 2005).
 31. Paul Bailey, *Reform the People: Changing Attitudes towards Popular Education in Early 20th Century China* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p. 236.
 32. Zhang Jingsheng, *Meide renshengguan*, in Jiang Zhongxiao (ed.), *Zhang Jingsheng wenji*, vol. 1 (Guangzhou: Guangzhou chubanshe, 1998), pp. 24–138; Zhang Jingsheng, *Meide shehui zuchifa*, in Jiang (ed.), *Zhang Jingsheng wenji*, vol. 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), pp. 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.
 33. Zhang Jingsheng, 'Yige hanjia de zuihao xiaoqian fa', reprinted in Zhang, *Xingshi*, pp. 24–7.
 34. Zhang, *Xingshi*, p. 26.
 35. Zhang, *Xingshi*, p. 31.
 36. Zhang, *Xingshi*, p. 31.
 37. Zhang, *Xingshi*, p. 27.
 38. See Hsiao-Yen Peng, 'Sex Histories: Zhang Jingsheng's Sexual Revolution', in Peng-hsiang Chen and Whitney Crothers Dilley (eds), *Critical Studies: Feminism/Femininity in Chinese Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), pp. 159–77.
 39. See Zhang Jingsheng, 'Disanzhong shui yu luanzhu ji shengji de dianhe yousheng de guanxi', *New Culture (Xin wenhua; hereafter XWH)* 1/2 (February 1927), pp. 23–48. Zhang claims that there is even a 'fourth kind of water' produced inside the uterus/womb. See Zhang, 'Disanzhong shui', p. 26; Zhang Jingsheng, 'Xingyu tongxin', *XWH* 1/2 (February 1927), p. 111.
 40. Chai Fuyuan, *Xingxue ABC* (Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1928), p. 42.
 41. On 'vaginal breathing', see e.g., Zhang Jingsheng, 'Xingbu huxi', *XWH* 1/4 (May 1927), pp. 21–32; Zhang Jingsheng, 'Xingbu yu dantian huxi', *XWH* 1/5 (July 1927), pp. 1–23.
 42. Zhang, *Xingshi*, pp. 110–11.
 43. Konggu, 'Tongxun', *XWH* 1/1 (January 1927), p. 49.
 44. Zhengyi, 'Tongxun', *XWH* 1/1 (January 1927), p. 47.
 45. Shifen, 'Tongxun', *XWH* 1/1 (January 1927), p. 51.
 46. He Zhifen, 'Xingyu tongxin', *XWH* 1/2 (February 1927), p. 100.
 47. Xu Jingzai, 'Xingyu tongxin', *XWH* 1/3 (March 1927), pp. 59–63.
 48. On requests for a 'male-centered perspective', see Nan Xi, 'Xingyu tongxin', *XWH* 1/3 (March 1927), pp. 66–7; Zhi Jun, 'Xingyu tongxin', *XWH* 1/3 (March 1927), p. 73. For examples of frustration with the impracticality of Zhang's theory, see Chang Xuan, 'Xingyu tongxin', *XWH* 1/3 (March 1927), pp. 69–70; Kuang Sheng, 'Xingyu tongxin', *XWH* 1/3 (March 1927), p. 71.
 49. Su Ya, "'Xing" zhishi pupian le jiu meiyo "qiangjian"', *XWH* 1/2 (February 1927), p. 104.
 50. Miss Qin Xin, 'Tongxing lian'ai taolun', *XWH* 1/3 (March 1927), pp. 63–6, here p. 63.
 51. SSD, 'Xingyu tongxin', *XWH* 1/3 (March 1927), pp. 71–3.
 52. Tang Hao, 'Lian'ai yu xing de jiqiao zhi meishuhua', *Sex Magazine (Xing Zazhi; hereafter XZZ)* 1/2 (June 1927), pp. 1–6, here p. 1 (my emphasis).
 53. 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 (2008), pp. 300–18.
54. 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).
 55. Han, 'Wuhu! Zhang Jingsheng de luanzhu', *XZZ* 1/1 (April 1927), pp. 1–3, here p. 2. Another writer for the periodical devoted twelve pages to a discussion of '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, 'Disan zhongshui de yanjiu', *XZZ* 1/2 (June 1927), pp. 1–12, here p. 10.
 56. See e.g., Zhang Jingsheng, 'Da Zhou Jianren xiansheng "Guanyu Xingshi de jiju hua"', *Ordinary (Yiban)* (November 1926), reprinted in Jiang (ed.), *Zhang Jingsheng wenji*, vol. 2, pp. 420–22; Zhou Jianren, 'Da Zhang Jingsheng xiansheng', *Ordinary* (November 1926), reprinted in Jiang (ed.), *Zhang Jingsheng wenji*, vol. 2, pp. 423–6; Yang Guanxiong, *Xing jiaoyu fa* (Shanghai: Liming shuju, 1930), pp. 150, 166. The only biography of Zhou to date is in Chinese: see Yang Dexian, *Zhou Jianren pingzhuan* (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1991).
 57. Lü, *Pan Guangdan tuzhuan*, p. 46.
 58. Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), p. 45.
 59. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, pp. 45–6.
 60. Pan Guangdan, *Zhongguo lingren xieyuan zhi yanjiu* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1941), reprinted in *Pan Guangdan wenji*, vol. 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, 'Lujiang Huangshi de yinyuecai', *Eugenics Monthly (Yousheng yuekan)* 2/2 (15 February 1932), reprinted in *Pan Guangdan wenji*, vol. 8, pp. 409–10. See also the impressive series of pedigrees that he constructed in 1937 and 1938: Pan Guangdan, *Cunren xuwu lishi renwu shixi biaogao*, reprinted in *Pan Guangdan wenji*, vol. 4.
 61. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, p. 60.
 62. For Pan, individual and social health depended first and foremost upon heredity and not behaviour. 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 modernisation during the Republican period. See Dikötter, *Discourse of Race in Modern China*; Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity*, pp. 225–53. See also Chung, *Struggle for National Survival*.
 63. Frank Dikötter, 'Eugenics in Republican China', *Republican China* 15 (1989), pp. 1–17.
 64. Pan Guangdan, 'Jinri zhi xingjiaoyu yu xingjiaoyuzhe', *Shishi Xinbao Xuedeng* (5 May, 14 June, 24 June 1927), reprinted in *Pan Guangdan wenji*, vol. 1, pp. 401–12, here pp. 402–3.
 65. Pan, 'Jinri zhi xingjiaoyu', p. 406.
 66. Zhang Jingsheng, 'Youchu yige guaitou', *XWH* 1/4 (May 1927), pp. 126–8, here p. 126.
 67. Zhang, 'Youchu yige guaitou', p. 127.
 68. 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*; Wang, *Jiaoyu zhuanxing zhi jing*, pp. 267–74. On scientism in Republican China, see e.g., Wang Hui, 'Scientific Worldview, Culture Debates, and the Reclassification of Knowledge in Twentieth-Century China', *Boundary 2* 35 (2008), pp. 125–55.
 69. Yang Youtian, 'Tongxing'ai de wenti', *Beixin* 3/2 (1929), pp. 403–39, here p. 403.
 70. 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 (tr.), 'Nü xuesheng de tongxing ai', *XWH* 1/6 (1927), pp. 57–74. But in general, Zhang's effort in translating Ellis's work was neither as comprehensive nor as extensive as Pan's.
 71. Pan Guangdan (tr.), *Xing xinli xue* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1946), reprinted in *Pan Guangdan wenji*, vol. 12, pp. 197–714.
 72. For an extensive study of this appendix, see Kang, *Obsession*, pp. 52–8.
 73. Pan, *Xing xinli xue*, p. 701.
 74. See e.g., Hu Buoken (tr.), *Women de shenti* (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1933); Zhang Xishen (ed.), *Xindaode taolunji* (Shanghai: Liangxi tushuguan, 1925); Zhu Jianxia (tr.), *Xing zhi shengli* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1928), esp. pp. 108–13.

75. My sources are replete with examples of this sort. See e.g., Cheng Hao, *Jiezhi shengyu de wenti* (Shanghai: Yadong tushuguan, 1925), pp. 148–53; Zhang Dongmin, *Xing de chongbai* (Shanghai: Beixin shuju, 1927), pp. 46–7; Bin (tr.), ‘Tongxing’ai’, *Sex Science (Xing kexue)*; hereafter *XKX* 1/2 (January 1936), pp. 92–4; Zhou Guangqi, *Xing yu fanzui* (Shanghai: Zhenzhong shuju, 1936), p. 58.
76. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, p. 53.
77. 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 material in 1929 after returning from the United States. Pan Guangdan, *Feng Xiaoqin: Yijian yinglian zhi yanjiu*, reprinted in *Pan Guangdan wenji*, vol. 1, pp. 1–66.
78. 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 East Asia Program 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).
79. Lee, *Revolution of the Heart*, p. 189.
80. Pan Guangdan (tr.), *Xing de Jiaoyu* (Shanghai: Qinnian xiehue shuju, 1934), reprinted in *Pan Guangdan wenji*, vol. 12, pp. 1–99, here p. 98.
81. Pan Guangdan, ‘Xingai zai jinri’, *Huanian* 5/45, 5/49, 5/50 (21 November, 19 December, 26 December 1936), reprinted in *Pan Guangdan wenji*, vol. 9, pp. 370–87, here pp. 375–6.
82. Pan, *Xing xinli xue*, pp. 705–6.
83. Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, tr. and ed. James Strachey (1905; New York: Basic Books, 2000), pp. 10–11 n. 1.
84. Pan Guangdan, ‘Xingai zai jinri’, p. 376.
85. Gui Zhiliang, *Nüren zhi yisheng* (Beijing: Zhengzhong shuju, 1936), pp. 63–6. 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, *Xiandai jingshen bingxue* (Shanghai: Xinyue shudian, 1932). On Freud’s view, see Henry Abelove, ‘Freud, Male Homosexuality, and the Americans’, in Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale and David M. Halperin (eds), *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 381–93; Davidson, *Emergence of Sexuality*, pp. 66–92.
86. Chang Hong (tr.), ‘Biantai xingyu yu qi liaofa’, *XKX* 2/1 (May 1936), pp. 3–7, here p. 4.
87. Chang, ‘Biantai xingyu’, p. 6.
88. Jian (tr.), ‘Zhenzheng de tongxing’ ai keyi zhiliao ma?’, *XKX* 2/4 (November 1936), pp. 4–8, here p. 6.
89. Mo (tr.), ‘Tongxing’ ai de yanjiu he fangzhi’, *XKX* 2/4 (November 1936), pp. 15–26, esp. pp. 23–4.
90. See Ping (tr.), ‘Jiachong huo xide de tongxing’ ai de tezhi’, *XKX* 2/4 (November 1936), pp. 9–11; Hong (tr.), ‘Nüxing de tongxing’ ai he xing de biantai’, *XKX* 2/4 (November 1936), pp. 13–15. On sexuality in the prison environment, see also Xi Tuo (tr.), ‘Meiguo qiufan de xing shenghuo’, *XKX* 4/1 (July 1937), pp. 51–7.
91. Yang Kai, ‘Xing de diandaozheng – tongxing’ ai’, *XKX* 2/4 (November 1936), pp. 11–13, here p. 12.
92. Chai, *Xingxue ABC*, p. 117.
93. Mo, ‘Tongxing’ ai de yanjiu’, p. 23.
94. Kong Kongzhang (tr.), ‘Xuesheng jian tongxing’ ai yu fumu shizhang de jiaoyu’, *XKX* 2/4 (November 1936), pp. 2–4, here p. 3.
95. There is evidence that the readers of these sexological writings very much shared this view. See e.g., Miss Qin Xin, ‘Tongxing lian’ ai taolun’, pp. 64–6.
96. Gui, *Xiandai jingshen bingxue*, p. 32.
97. Translated and cited in Nathan Sivin, *Traditional Medicine in Contemporary China* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1987), p. 98.
98. This is the phrase that Ruth Rogaski uses to characterise discussions of sex in traditional Chinese medicine. See Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity*, pp. 37–40.
99. 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, here p. 6 (emphasis added). See also Paul Goldin, *The Culture of Sex in Ancient China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002).
100. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, 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* 2/1 (2009), pp. 33–53, reprinted as 'The Historical Formation of Sexuality: Europe, China, and Epistemic Modernity Global', *Critical Studies in History* 2 (2009), pp. 2–18; 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), pp. 401–30.
101. 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), pp. 334–64.
 102. Zhang, *Xing kexue*, p. 78.
 103. Zhang, *Xing kexue*, p. 75.
 104. Yang, 'Tongxing ai de wenti', p. 436.
 105. Pan, *Xing xinli xue*, pp. 708–9. See also Pan, *Zhongguo lingren xieyuan zhi yanjiu*, pp. 255–8.
 106. Wang Yang, *Fufu xing weisheng* (Shanghai: Zhongyang shudian, 1935), pp. 49, 53.
 107. Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity – China, 1900–1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995); Lydia Liu (ed.), *Tokens of Exchange: The Problem of Translation in Global Circulations* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).
 108. 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 Fran Martin and Larissa Heinrich (eds), *Embodied Modernities: Corporeality, Representation, and Chinese Cultures* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), pp. 42–59.
 109. 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), pp. 109–18.
 110. Prasenjit Duara, 'The Regime of Authenticity: Timelessness, Gender, and National History in Modern China', *History and Theory* 37 (1998), pp. 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 Martin and Heinrich (eds), *Embodied Modernities*, pp. 79–97; Joshua Goldstein, *Drama Kings: Players and Publics in the Re-Creation of Peking Opera, 1870–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).
 111. 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).
 112. Zhang Dai, *Tao'an mengyi* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1982), pp. 35–6, as translated [with my own modifications] and cited in Cuncun Wu, *Homoerotic Sensibilities in Late Imperial China* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), pp. 42–3.
 113. 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. See Sophie Volpp, 'Classifying Lust: The Seventeenth-Century Vogue for Male Love', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 61 (2001), pp. 77–117; Sophie Volpp, 'The Discourse on Male Marriage: Li Yu's "A Male Mencius's Mother"', *Positions* 2 (1994), pp. 113–32; Sophie Volpp, 'The Literary Circulations of Actors in Seventeenth-Century China', *Journal of Asian Studies* 6 (2002), pp. 949–84. In many ways, Volpp supports Timothy Brook's argument that male homoeroticism was fashionable only among a small class of male literati elites. See Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 229–33. In contrast, Giovanni Vitiello argues 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* 2/2 (2000), pp. 207–58, here 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. To me, whether same-sex behaviour was only practised among a small class of male elites or was much more culturally pervasive in late imperial China remains an interesting debate. I should emphasise, 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 article has been to study the *epistemological* reconfiguration of same-sex desire in China.

- On a related note, historian Wenqing Kang 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 discourse of persons' to show that indigenous Chinese understandings shared a comparable internal contradiction in the conceptualisation 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'. 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 decontextualised from other types of refined human desire. Treating the discursive nature of discourse seriously necessitates paying closer attention to how old words take on a new meaning (and a new life) in a different historical context, rather than imposing later familiar notions on earlier concepts. Kang, *Obsession*, p. 21. For Sedgwick's original formulation, see Eve K. Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). 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 sides, on the genealogy of homosexuality in western culture. For Halperin's response to Sedgwick, see Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*.
114. Harriet Evans, *Women and Sexuality in China: Female Sexuality and Gender since 1949* (New York: Continuum, 1996), p. 206.
115. Lu Huaxin, *Shaonan shaonü xingzhishi* (Hong Kong: Xuewen shudian, 1955), p. 53.
116. Lu, *Shaonan shaonü xingzhishi*, p. 53.
117. Lu, *Shaonan shaonü xingzhishi*, p. 54.
118. I am being careful and specific when discussing 'marriage to a member of the opposite sex', because other scholars have unearthed the popularity of same-sex 'marriages' in eighteenth-century China, especially in the region of Fujian. See Michael Szonyi, 'The Cult of Hu Tianbao and the Eighteenth-Century Discourse of Homosexuality', *Late Imperial China* 19/1 (1998), pp. 1–25.
119. Larissa Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images: Translating the Pathological Body between China and the West* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).
120. In *Obsession*, Kang has 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. But, again, I would argue 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 (see note 113). Despite how Pan Guangdan's condemnation of the homosexuality of *dan* actors (and 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 stigmatising terms. Therefore, Chinese sexologists' establishment of an epistemic continuity between the foreign concept of homosexuality and earlier examples of homoeroticism does not undermine the kind of Foucauldian epistemological rupture this article substantiates, but actually exemplifies it.