

## Archiving Peripheral Taiwan

### The Prodigy of the Human and Historical Narration

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Taiwan, the Republic of China, is a small island and has been without official nation-state status since 1971, the year in which Taiwan lost over to the People's Republic of China its membership in the United Nations. As such, scholarship on Taiwanese history and culture has been shaped by diverse political interests, a problem further amplified and complicated by the island's multiple colonial pasts as well as its highly contested relationship to a growing superpower. Even Taiwanese literature emerged as an institutionalized discipline only in the twenty-first century, now bearing an uneasy tension with the field of Chinese literature in Taiwanese academia. In light of these reasons, the literary scholar Shu-mei Shih has commented on the *illegibility* of Taiwan studies as an area of critical inquiry in the West:

Studying Taiwan is an *impossible* task. I say "impossible" because Taiwan is always already written out of mainstream Western discourse due to its *insignificance*. Taiwan, when any attention is given to it at all, is most often reduced to an object of empirical political analysis, and has been systematically dismissed as a worthwhile object of critical analysis in cultural and other humanistic studies with theoretical import. Taiwan is too small, too marginal, too ambiguous, and thus too insignificant. Taiwan does not enjoy the historical accident of having been colonised by a Western power in the nineteenth or twentieth century; instead it was colonised by other Asian powers: Japan (1895–1945) and the exiled Chinese Nationalist government (1945 to the late 1980s) respectively. If it had been colonised by Britain, Taiwan would have

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been able to share in the fashion of postcolonial theory. If it had been colonised by France, Taiwan would be part of Francophone studies. Colonisation by Japan and another ethnic Chinese regime effectively ghettoised Taiwan within the realm of “Asian studies,” where it is further marginalised within so-called Sinology or Chinese Studies.<sup>1</sup>

Shih further points out that due to its connections to the American Right in the Cold War period, Taiwan has been strategically neglected by academics in North America. Studying Taiwan suggests that one is not sufficiently familiar with China and thus not worthy of being hired in the field of Chinese / East Asian studies. If only Taiwan had been a communist or socialist regime, then leftist scholars in the West could at least share some ideological sympathy with the region or hold it as a logical object of comparative analysis. The lingering effects of these prejudices—haunting scholarly interest in Taiwan’s culture and history—motivated Shih to edit the special issue “Globalisation: Taiwan’s (In)Significance” for the journal *Post-colonial Studies* in 2003.<sup>2</sup>

Although more than a decade has passed since the publication of the issue, the insignificance of Taiwan prevails in mainstream Western academic thought, and Taiwan’s significance remains hidden under the threatening shadow of China. This article aims to extend debates on the place of Taiwan on our scholarly canvas not by reinforcing or elevating Taiwan-centrism but by foregrounding its unique status as situated at the intersections of various margins—geopolitical, sociocultural, and historiographical.<sup>3</sup> As such, it joins the recent work of Petrus Liu that reassesses and resituates the “peripheral realism of two Chinas”—a project that attends to the rich peripheral ontologies of mainland China and Taiwan in tension with the West or in relation to the world. By giving Taiwan’s (however paradoxical) interdependence and competition with China their due, the literary inflection of the East Asian economic miracle explored by Liu “exhibits a realism that opens up the critical space for uncoupling peripheral aesthetics from the motions of history while insisting on their mutual referentiality.”<sup>4</sup> Similarly, this study would not have been possible without the recent insight of Shih in developing the concept of the Sinophone, which enriches our theoretical vocabulary to investigate the historically embedded and politically contested relationships between China, Taiwan, and other Sinitic-language communities and cultures worldwide beyond the framework of diaspora.<sup>5</sup> By looking from the outside in via competing angles of marginality, our grounding of Taiwan (more precisely, our appreciation of what it means to “be Taiwan”) promises to denaturalize itself continuously.

Focusing on the immediate postwar years, this article zooms in on a period during which the island earned for itself all the social and cultural weight of the postcolonial condition vis-à-vis Japanese imperialism. At the same time, this was the same volatile political context in which Taiwan underwent an increasingly vio-

lent acquisition by Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist regime.<sup>6</sup> Using press reports of *renyao* (人妖, a category of transgenderism for which the best English translation is perhaps "human prodigy") as the foci of analysis, this article supersedes existing scholarly readings that tend to emphasize the lifting of martial law in 1987 as the turning point that enabled the flourishing of queer cultures and politics in late-capitalist Taiwan.<sup>7</sup> In light of the centrality of post-martial law political activism to dominant interpretations of the development of Taiwan's sexual modernity, we can therefore locate accounts of gender transgression and sexual diversity in the 1950s as yet another one of the multiple peripheries from which the theoretical power of situating Taiwan in the present derives.

Specifically, this article engages with the practice of *archiving* as a way of making visible the significance of Taiwan's historical ontology. In effect, this is in direct dialogue with recent endeavors in literary and historical studies to enrich, problematize, or challenge the role of the archive in contemporary scholarly approaches to the past.<sup>8</sup> At the core of these debates lies a leading theoretical and empirical preoccupation with questioning (or confirming) the existence of proof, the verifiability of evidence, and the most suitable styles of argumentation emanating from the mining of available sources. Despite the explosion of "archive fever" (to borrow Jacques Derrida's phrase), or precisely because of it, the archive has nonetheless "emerged as *the* register of epistemic arrangements, recording in its proliferating avatars the shifting tenor of debates around the production and ethics of knowledge."<sup>9</sup> Anjali Arondekar, in her erudite study of the relationship between sexuality and the colonial archive in India, urges us to acknowledge the simultaneous excess and limits of archival evidence as mutually coconstitutive, so that our reading practice produces subjects of futurity as it acknowledges the way it is circumscribed by the configurations of our source object.<sup>10</sup> According to Ann Laura Stoler, (colonial) archives are "sites of the expectant and conjured—about dreams of comforting futures and forebodings of future failures."<sup>11</sup> If our approach to archival comprehension does not presume a complete, definitive, or successful disclosure of validity, then a queer *unknowing* of sorts proves to be conducive to a much richer set of possible answers, whatever our initial questions about the past may be.<sup>12</sup> In effect, it is at the moment when we surrender to a conviction about the ultimate truth measure of the archive—the moment that we privilege a form of satisfaction with what we have or have not uncovered—that our historicist sight becomes most blinded by our presentist complacency.<sup>13</sup> This article takes up the kind of generative reading practices advanced by Arondekar, Stoler, and others, but I also move in a slightly different direction with what I call archiving.

The move from probing the archive to the exercise of archiving bears conceptual symmetry to the divergence between executing the production of knowledge and knowing itself. Despite the recent rise of transnational, interregional, and global history, many historians continue to situate the stakes of their work comfort-

ably within the confinement of nation-states. One of my main arguments is that by “archiving peripheral Taiwan,” we could register a more acute awareness of the mutating nature of our analytic categories, especially with respect to the ways in which their interactions have evolved over time. One such naturalized category that has been rendered unproblematic time and again is the nation-state. In the case of Taiwan, this category raises immediate concern because for decades Taiwan has not (or never?) been fully considered as a true nation-state. Other imbricated categories include historical gender and sexuality, especially since the 1950s has not been generally understood as a decade of visible gender and sexual variance in the dominant narratives of Chinese or Taiwanese history (or the history of Europe or America for that matter).<sup>14</sup> As my archiving of Zeng Qiu Huang (曾秋皇), arguably the most famous *renyao* in the 1950s, will demonstrate, even the category of the human fails to capture the range of meanings associated with human expression, the boundaries of humanhood, and the archival terms under which such epistemological configurations are collected and recalled. What the postwar discourse of *renyao* reveals and captures is the reciprocal chimera effect whereby the margins of sexuality and the periphery of “China” and “Chineseness” converge into the mimetic recalcitrant traces of the past: the prodigy of the human—*renyao*—configures the basis of archival imagination on which the prodigy of historical na(rra)tion—Taiwan—emerges with distinctive tempos and visibility from the seemingly authentic repertoire of empirical retrieval, recovery, and access.

The act of archiving renders the task of the historian as much about producing the past as about engaging with it. Yet this is achieved neither by anchoring on the categorical imperative of the historiographical canon (e.g., China, the nation-state, the hu-man, woman) nor by treating the archive merely as a repository of knowledge about the past; rather, the past is produced from the viewpoint of instantiating the habitus of archiving, and by extension exposing, the very parameters around which the centric nodes can be transformed from multiple—sometimes competing, other times overlapping—margins. In archival studies, there is a long-standing wisdom that separates the task of the archivist (overseeing the repository of information) from the work of the historian (accessing and producing knowledge about the past). As Carolyn Steedman once put it optimistically, “The Archive then is something that, through the cultural activity of History, can become Memory’s potential space, one of the few realms of the modern imagination where hard-won and carefully constructed place can return to boundless, limitless space.”<sup>15</sup>

My following analysis brackets this distinction between the Archive and History by suggesting that *the act of history writing itself is a form of archiving*. In construing the historian as the archivist as such, or, more specifically, the production of the history of the human prodigy as an example of queer archiving, my aim is twofold. First, I provide an overview of the historiography of *renyao*. In doing so, I hope to demonstrate the various historical differentials of this concept that

are available in an existing scholarly body of knowledge about the historicity of the term. Presenting the historiography of *renyao* thereby exemplifies the very practice of archiving—a mode of queering archival categories of legibility and knowledge. Second, I offer a detailed analysis of the narratives about Zeng that had surfaced in the postwar Taiwanese press. This exercise aims to enunciate the excessive and limited “traces” of *renyao*, thereby destabilizing but also making apparent the productive potential of this queer category.<sup>16</sup> The historian’s desire for the past is thus routed not through attachments to a particular form of information but through a commitment to a strategy of knowledge production that accommodates, and even vindicates, stories of different shapes and memories.

### **The Historical Differentials of *Renyao***

In engaging with an existing archive of knowledge, the act of archiving inevitably also transforms it, because it creates the possibility of unsettling the hegemonic normativization of archival rubrics. In the historiography of Chinese gender and sexuality, the category of *renyao* has been a subject of close scrutiny by scholars adopting various thematic, chronological, and methodological orientations. The major thematic components according to which *renyao* has been indexed in the current literatures include gender dislocation, sex transformation, same-sex relations, the boundaries and meaning of humanism, and prostitution. The chronological depth of this existing body of research spans from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) to the Cold War period, and the sources on which these studies are based include official records, anecdotal notations (筆記, *biji*), literary sources, medical treatises, mainstream journalism, and urban tabloid presses. This section of the article provides an overview of the various ways in which the concept of *renyao* has operated as a meaningful signifier for different strands of critical inquiry. It aims to expose and pull together the multiple historical differentials enabled by the modern understanding of *renyao* as have been parsed out in recent scholarship. Focusing on Zeng, the article’s second half shows the ways in which *renyao*, as a category of marginal subjectivities, encompasses all of these definitional layers but also subverts them on an individual basis in the context of mid-twentieth-century Taiwan.

One of the earliest lenses through which scholars have studied the history of *renyao* is gender dislocation. Judith Zeitlin in her seminal study of Pu Songling’s *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* (聊齋誌異, *Liaozhai zhiyi*; written in the early Qing dynasty) proposes that the best translation of *renyao* is “human prodigy.” *Strange Tales* comprises nearly five hundred marvel stories (written in classical Chinese starting in the Tang dynasty), in which the boundaries between reality and the odd are blurred and a whole cast of ghosts, foxes, beasts, and spirits is introduced to contrast and thus call into question the status of the human, as exemplified by the more conventional characters of scholars, court officials, and husbands and wives. One of these stories is precisely titled “*Renyao*,” in which a man disguised as

a woman in order to seduce another woman is ultimately castrated by the woman's husband and becomes his concubine. As Zeitlin acknowledges, the most important message of this story concerns the ways that castration helps reinstate normative social order: "The important thing is not a search for truth and revelation but a search for rehabilitation and order."<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the removal of the protagonist's gender dislocation "can thus be seen as a perverse Confucian 'rectification of names,'" because "the prodigious has [now] been cut off from the human prodigy; what remains is merely the human being" (102). Castration therefore becomes "the means for [the protagonist's] reintegration into normal human society—as a concubine, he becomes a permanent member of the family and is even buried by the family tomb. The 'monster' is domesticated" (103).

In historicizing *renyao*, Zeitlin explains that the author Pu is drawing on an existing tradition of Chinese historiography that interprets social anomalies such as dislocations in gender as implicative of moral disruption in the broader political cosmos:

The Chinese term *renyao* (human prodigy) originally denoted any human physical anomaly or freak. It was first employed in the philosophical writing of *Xunzi* (third c. B.C.), where it designated "human prodigies or portents" as implicitly opposed to "heavenly prodigies or portents" ([天妖] *tianyao*). Alongside this general meaning of human freak or monster, the term came to acquire an additional, more specialized usage: an impersonator of a member of the opposite sex. It was first used in this sense in the *History of the Southern Dynasties* ([南史] *Nan shi*) to criticize a lady named Lou Cheng who for years masqueraded as a man and held official post. The historians considered her an evil omen of a subsequent rebellion, for in their words, "you cannot have yin acting yang." Their interpretation follows the tradition of meticulously correlating irregularities in gender with specific political disasters. (104)

In this historiographical tradition, correlative thinking—the linking of natural to social (dis)order based on interrelated cosmological foundations—determines the epistemic filtering of *renyao* through the historical differential of gender dislocation.

Another related definitional coordinate of *renyao* is sex transformation. Charlotte Furth's essay "Androgynous Males and Deficient Females: Biology and Gender Boundaries in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century China" stands as the classic reference on the topic. In mining through a series of male-to-female and female-to-male sex reversal cases that cropped up in the medical tracts, official notices, and informal writings of the Ming dynasty, Furth suggests that many of these should be more properly understood as examples of "hermaphroditism" according to the modern standard of Western biomedicine.<sup>18</sup> Furth also makes the interesting observation that starting in the second half of the Ming dynasty, female-to-male changes attracted a lesser degree of social hostility than transformations

in the opposite direction: “Significantly, narratives of female-to-male changes were marked by a total suppression of the sexual in favour of the social . . . the transition to male gender was presented as a psychologically unproblematic shift of role. Thus the discourse about transformations of sex subtly genderized the different protagonists’ relationship to their bodily changes.”<sup>19</sup> Building on this insight, Zeitlin suggests that stories of female-to-male transformations in the Ming-Qing period probably had a lesser impact on Pu’s imagination.<sup>20</sup> Instead, both Furth and Zeitlin agree that the most obvious source for the “Ren Yao” story in *Strange Tales* was none other than the famous case of Sang Chong.<sup>21</sup> An orphan, Sang Chong of the Taiyuan prefecture in Shanxi was raised as a girl with bound feet during the Chenghua reign (1465–88). Although Sang Chong stayed predominantly in women’s quarters, his bodily biology was eventually discovered after a failed attempted rape by another man. According to Furth, “exposed, physically inspected and hauled before the magistrate’s court, [Sang Chong] was pronounced a male ‘monster’ (*yao* [*r*]en [or prodigious human])—one who treacherously manipulated his genitals to appear female to the world, but male to the girls he lived to debauch.”<sup>22</sup> In contrast to other accounts of the Sang Chong case that often ended with the public prosecution of the human prodigy, Pu’s narration defies a strictly demonic view of this scandal of sex transmutation.<sup>23</sup>

Adding to the historical residues of gender dislocation and sex transformation in the historiographical interpretation of *renyao* is the theme of same-sex relations. Building on the works of Zeitlin and Furth, Wenqing Kang extends the investigation of *renyao* into the Republican period (1911–49). In *Obsession*, Kang argues that “in China during the first half of the twentieth century, men who were engaged in same-sex relations, especially those who were assumed to play the passive sexual role, and particularly male prostitutes, were sometimes called *renyao*.”<sup>24</sup> Indeed, Kang brings forward a number of examples in which male prostitutes and especially the *dan* (male actors playing female roles) of Peking opera (including the notorious Mei Lanfang) were called *renyao* in the tabloid presses, as found in the Tianjin-based *Heavenly Wind* (天風報, *Tianfengbao*) and *Crystal* (晶報, *Jingbao*).<sup>25</sup> But he also notes that the category of *renyao* did not apply only to men: “During the first half of the twentieth century, the prevalent understanding of *renyao* was one of men and women who appeared as the opposite gender, representing a potential threat to society and a bad omen for the country.”<sup>26</sup> In many of the examples that Kang provides in his book, the label of *renyao* applied to both women and intersex individuals.<sup>27</sup> It is therefore rather surprising that Kang makes the following conclusion: “On the one hand, *renyao*, men who had sex with other men, were considered to be male, and to the extent that they were considered male, they had transgressed existing sexual and gender norms. On the other hand, because of their transgression, they were viewed as having lost their masculinity, and thus becoming women. This conceptual incoherence correlated with the internal contradiction between gender

separatism and gender transitivity in the modern homo/heterosexual definition analyzed by [Eve Kosofsky] Sedgwick.”<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps Kang has forced Sedgwick’s gender separatism versus transitivity model onto Republican-era discourses of *renyao* too hastily by looking from the viewpoint of male homosexuality alone. In fact, one could argue that it is precisely due to the polyvalent nature of the concept of *renyao* that its historicity cannot be limited to an understanding rooted solely in examples of men (or male same-sex relations). For instance, as Jin Jiang’s study of Yue opera actresses in Shanghai has shown, in the 1930s and 1940s, while the general move in the theatrical arts was to gender-straight acting (a trend that even Peking opera could not escape), the rise of all-women Yue troupes evolved in a decidedly different direction, making room for a variety of gender arrangements.<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, homosexual relations or homoerotic sisterhood also existed in Yue opera circles.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, Tze-lan D. Sang’s study of lesbianism in twentieth-century Chinese literature provides ample evidence for male elites’ concerns with gender inversion in women starting in the early twentieth century.<sup>31</sup> In other words, Sedgwick’s gender separatism versus transitivity model applies as much to female same-sex intimacy as to an androcentric notion of *renyao*. Still, to the extent that Kang’s study sheds light on male social outcasts, at least in the cases of male prostitutes or *dan* actors being directly labeled as *renyao*, male same-sex sexuality was foregrounded as a major conceptual component of the popular understanding of this category as it appeared in the tabloid presses of the Republican period.

Since *renyao* refers to a combination of opposing ideas concerning the natural (*ren*) and the supernatural worlds (*yao*), some scholars have probed its lexical significance within the broader horizon of humanness. In “Trangenderism as a Heuristic Device,” for example, Alvin Ka Hin Wong demonstrates the fruitful endeavor of subjecting the signifier of *renyao* to cross-historical investigation. To contest the modern transphobic usage of this compound word, Wong analyzes the ways in which the *renyao* conceptual configuration transmutes across the literary and cultural texts of different periods: from Feng Menglong’s *Legend of the White Snake* written in the late Ming to the short story “Renyao” written by the May Fourth writer Yu Dafu in 1923, from the Hong Kong writer Li Bihua’s perverse adaptation of the *Legend* in her 1986 novel *Green Snake* to the TV series adaptation *New Legend of Madame White Snake* that aired in Taiwan in 1992.<sup>32</sup> In many ways, the direction of Wong’s cross-historical study resembles the broader trajectory of the formation of Sinophone modernity in Taiwan: a centrifugal flow of Sinitic-language cultural forms and structural underpinnings from continental China to their peripheral localization.<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps the most innovative part of Wong’s analysis comes from his critical contextualization of Yu’s “Renyao,” a short story that has received limited scholarly attention to date. In situating Yu’s story within a longer trajectory of Chinese



transgender literary production surrounding the human-demon divide, Wong highlights the limits and boundaries of humanism as pivotal to debates raging among May Fourth literary circles. In contrast to the themes of gender dislocation, sex transformation, and same-sex sexuality picked up by other scholars, Yu's rendition of the *renyao* figure squarely puts him alongside a cast of iconoclastic intellectuals, including Hu Shi, Chen Duxiu, Lu Xun, Zhou Zuoren (Lu's brother), Ba Jing, among others, who vehemently questioned traditional (often dubbed Confucian) Chinese culture and pitched it as a ground of feudalism, against which modernism, scientism, and the very optimism of human existence were juxtaposed.<sup>34</sup> However, rather than view *renyao* subjects as embodying a nonhuman condition of social pathology, Yu's "literary representation of the *renyao* figure work[s] against the assumption of nonhumanity by questioning what constitutes a human subject, narrated from the perspective of a young male who embraces feminine qualities."<sup>35</sup>

In the story, the male protagonist pursues transgender embodiment by making explicit the gender ambiguity of his own body and the bodies of other characters (including, most notably, an opera actress whom he stalked). The threshold of humanity, then, is made explicit with the continual deferral of any straightforward reading of the genderness of the characters, thereby always suspending and never resolving the tensions accumulated concerning the polarity of gender fictiveness and reality. By mapping the boundaries of human existence onto the metaphysical realms of gender expression, Yu's short story leaves behind another historical differential in the historiography of *renyao*: the meaning of being human.

After Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist regime went into exile in Taiwan, where the Republic of China reclaimed its sovereignty, the group of social actors most frequently depicted in the mainstream press as *renyao* were male sex workers. In *Queer Politics and Sexual Modernity in Taiwan*, Hans Tao-Ming Huang explores the connections established by mainstream Taiwanese writers between the notion of *renyao* and male prostitution in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>36</sup> What Huang illuminates in his book is that in the two decades following the Nationalist defeat in the civil war, the concept of *renyao* appeared in the Taiwanese press as a descriptor mainly for male sex workers, especially those based in the Wanhua district or the New Park in Taipei.<sup>37</sup> In this initial wave of press reports, *renyao* was never described in a psychologized language, such as the kind that anchored the concept of sexuality (性心理, *xingxinli*) and was advanced by the mental hygiene movement, which first took root in mainland China in the 1930s and subsequently rerooted in Taiwan in the 1950s.<sup>38</sup> The psychologization of *renyao* and cut-sleeve *pi* (癖, obsession) was consolidated only in the 1970s, when mental health experts and news reporters simultaneously adopted "homosexuality" (同性戀, *tongxinglian*) as a discursive concept in Taiwan.<sup>39</sup> By the 1980s, the stigmatization of male same-sex relations took a decisive turn as AIDS was "homosexualized" in the media.<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile, the "glass clique" (玻璃圈, *boli quan*) label that alluded to prostitution remained the central

trope for the imagination of a male homosexual community in Taipei. But when the *tongzhi* (同志, “comrade” or gay) movement took off in the 1990s, homosexuality was finally dissociated from its conceptual attachment to prostitution.<sup>41</sup> Central to Huang’s argument is the recuperation and celebration of Pai Hsien-yung’s 1983 novel, *Crystal Boys* (孽子, *Niezi*), by the *tongzhi* movement in the 1990s, by which point the original broader context in which the novel was written no longer determined the contours of Taiwan’s sexual mores.<sup>42</sup> Henceforth, from *renyao* to *tongzhi*, the role of prostitution in shaping the cultural imagination of nonnormative sexualities and individuals evolved from a centripetal to a centrifugal vector.

### Zeng Qiu Huang’s Irruptions

If the linguistic connotation of *renyao* in Chinese has been understood variously as a historical indicator of gender dislocation, sex transformation, same-sex relations, the meaning of being human, or (male) prostitution, in this section I show the potency and incompleteness of each of these historical differentials by focusing on a widely reported case of *renyao* in postwar Taiwan: Zeng.<sup>43</sup> To exemplify the exercise of archiving that I have been proposing, I document the various stories about Zeng—with all their shifting and intertwined multiplicities—that appeared in major Taiwanese newspapers such as the *United Daily News* (聯合報, *Lianhebao*), *China Times* (中國時報, *Zhongguo shibao*), and *Evening Independent* (自立晚報, *Zili wanbao*) throughout the 1950s. The archiving of Zeng that follows demonstrates that each new episode of Zeng’s press coverage renders the category of *renyao* subversive to its historical differentials to varying degrees and that such contestation of a fixed configuration of how they interacted itself changed over time. As such, by making explicit the excessive and limited trace of *renyao*, the different stories not only denaturalize the historicism of the very category of *renyao* itself but also bring into sharper focus its guarantee to robust productive futurity. Offering a detailed reading of this underappreciated chapter of Taiwan’s history vis-à-vis Zeng is therefore a scholarly undertaking not predetermined by a singular form of information but one that is deeply invested in a mode of knowledge production that enables stories of different shapes and memories to configure one another in a mutually generative fashion. Archiving *renyao* in 1950s Taiwan unveils the region’s significance in the historical narration of otherwise uncontested historical nations, under the banner of “China” or otherwise, because it throws a seemingly peripheral location into the center of the heteroglossiac spotlight on a form of historically marginal experience.

In the first wave of press reports in 1951, the public was captivated by Zeng’s *renyao* status primarily because of the ease with which he switched between male and female genders as he committed criminal offenses. Born in Taichung, Taiwan, Zeng was forty-two years old when the public first learned about him. According to one report, he had committed a series of crimes since autumn 1950. In mid-

October, he defrauded Zhong Zengmi and Zhong Linbing of \$160 in Xizhou township, Taichung; in February 1951, he swindled \$120 from Xu Zhenlin in Yuanlin township of Zhanghua county; two months after, in April, he deceived Lu Chenyun multiple times, for which he took away \$874 in total and, among other items, a skein of gray yarn, a pair of underwear, and a watch. All four victims subsequently reported to the Taichung District Court and filed charges against Zeng. After a number of judicial hearings, the judges found him guilty of committing a series of fraudulent offenses (詐欺之罪) and sentenced him to three and a half years of imprisonment plus two years of forced labor. However, Zeng expressed great resentment toward the decision and appealed. On October 18, the Taiwan High Court ruled in Zeng's favor and struck down the initial sentence. Instead, Zeng would spend one year in prison after which he would then serve an additional two years of forced labor administered by the Department of Labor.<sup>44</sup>

The public's fascination with Zeng was largely driven by the rapid dissemination of information about his gender androgyny in the media. Due to his appeal to the initial decision reached by the Taichung District Court, he was transferred to the north on September 22, 1951, in order for his case to be heard by the Taiwan High Court in Taipei. On the following day, *United Daily News* announced "the arrival of *renyao* in Taipei" and offered a thorough description of Zeng's unusual appearance:

Zeng Qiuhuang wore a pair of white pants. His hair was long. He looked like a man but not a real man; he looked like a woman but not a real woman [似男非男·似女非女, *sinan feinan, sinü feinü*]. Zeng Qiuhuang had been married to a woman and had kids, but then [he] subsequently remarried to two husbands and committed fraudulent offenses based on these marriages, for which [he] has been the subject of at least two legal charges.<sup>45</sup>

On the day before his case was heard before the Taiwan High Court, journalists described the crimes he committed as both "obscene" and "fraudulent" (色情詐欺案) in nature.<sup>46</sup> They also discussed the puzzlement in which Zeng put the police officers in Taipei: "When Zeng Qiuhuang was assigned to a holding cell in Taipei, the police guard did not know whether to assign him to a cell with male or female inmates, due to his legendary status as being a neither-man-nor-woman [不男不女, *bunan bunü*]."<sup>47</sup> The *Evening Independent* also seized this opportunity to dramatize the sexual ambiguity of Zeng's body, explaining that the term *renyao* does not mean "three-headed chimera with six arms" but refers instead to an individual with "an artificial and affected manner" (忸怩作態, *niuni zuotai*).<sup>48</sup>

After the Taiwan High Court delivered its verdict, the newspapers described Zeng as being very pleased about the success of his appeal. However, even here, the reports were often cloaked in a language that further staged Zeng as the object of

forensic spectacle based on his transgression of gender roles.<sup>49</sup> For example, one writer claimed that the most surprising aspect of Zeng's trials was not the series of crimes for which he was found guilty. Rather, "the most surprising part is that he was married to a woman with five children, and he still cross-dressed as a woman in order to commit swindling, for which he cohabitated with men and sold his body for sex."<sup>50</sup> The comment highlighted Zeng's cross-gender appearance, noting that "although Zeng Qiu Huang dresses like a man, his voice and the way he walks [cause him to] bear [a] striking similarity to woman. When he found out about the success of his appeal, he covered the smile on his face with a handkerchief" (fig. 1).<sup>51</sup>



Figure 1. Photograph of Zeng Qiu Huang printed in an article about the success of his appeal (*United Daily News*, October 23, 1951).

In this initial wave of journalistic sensationalism, the public awareness of Zeng's gender dislocation, sex transformation, homosexuality, nonhumanness, and implied prostitution all came together to administer the intelligibility of his *renyao* label. Zeng was a human prodigy because he appeared as someone who crossed genders, changed sex, engaged in romantic relationships with members of the same sex, committed crimes, used his malleable sexual appearance for illicit monetary gains, and, by implication, fell outside the legal parameters of being human. From the outset, the story of Zeng demonstrates that each of the historical differentials of *renyao* is both sufficient and limited in governing its conceptual historicity in the context of postcolonial Taiwan.

Soon after Zeng completed his labor service, he was arrested again. This time, however, the arrest was for stealing a chicken rather than for committing fraudulent offenses. News broke in December 1954, exactly three years after he was released from the prison. Upon visiting a lady named Miss Su in Yuanlin township of Zhanghua county, Zeng came across a chicken in the front yard of Su's residence. Since he did not see anyone in sight, the idea of stealing the chicken sprang to his mind, and he quickly grabbed the chicken and tried to run away with it. Alarmed by the noises coming from the scene, Su rushed to her front yard to see what was going on and witnessed Zeng's attempt to steal the chicken. She intervened successfully, and Zeng was faced with the accusation of theft. The Taichung District Court sentenced Zeng to nine months of imprisonment plus one year of forced labor. Zeng

appealed again, and the Taiwan High Court removed the one-year forced labor requirement, but Zeng still had to serve the nine-month imprisonment, which the High Court ruled to be final, leaving no room for appeal.<sup>52</sup>

Not unlike three years earlier, the media seized the stories behind his unusual gender persona and sexual ambiguity to dramatize the news. This second round of media coverage publicized aspects of Zeng's personal information to an unprecedented extent. Living at No. 93 on Yongjing Street in Zhanghua county, Zeng's real name was Zeng Xiuqin (曾秀琴), reported to be forty-four years of age. Ten years prior, he had always dressed in female attire, and he had been married to a man named Su Tianci for seven years. According to the reporter, they were eventually separated "due to [his] neither-man-nor-woman status." After the divorce, he became more "masculine inclined" (男性傾向較濃, *nanxing qingxiang jiaonong*) and "started to wear men's clothes." By taking over the identification card of his deceased brother, he became Zeng Qiuhuang and married a woman. However, he ran into similar problems in the bedroom, so he got remarried to another man. This time, unlike his first marriage, his fraudulent status was discovered, and after the court found him guilty of such charges, he went to prison for committing those offenses. When he was released in December 1952, Zeng decided to pursue a career in theater, so he joined the Zhanghua Theater Troupe (彰化藝華劇團, Zhanghua yihua jutuan). He was frequently assigned to play the role of *qingyi* (青衣), the virtuous lady, which was fitting for Zeng because, according to the reporter, "even though he had turned from a woman into a man, his manners remain[ed] effeminate [娘兒態, *niang'ertai*]." Zeng later left the troupe to attend to his mother, who was ill, and due to the resulting financial hardship, he stole the chicken that led to his imprisonment. As before, the issue of which gendered cell he most appropriately belonged to resurfaced. Zeng admitted that "when he was allocated to an all-male prison, his cellmate would always touch his face and make sexual advances." As a result, the guard was forced to put him in a single-bed cell by himself.<sup>53</sup>

By 1954, the idea of human sex change had already circulated widely in Taiwan due to the nationwide publicity showered on the male-to-female transsexual Xie Jianshun (謝尖順). Xie was frequently dubbed "the Chinese Christine," a direct reference to the American ex-GI transsexual celebrity of the time, Christine Jorgensen.<sup>54</sup> In the shadow of the glamor of the two Christines, Zeng made it clear to reporters for the first time his determination to undergo sex reassignment. As Zeng told reporters: "After he finishes serving his nine-month prison sentence, he would most certainly opt for a surgery that could turn him into a real healthy woman, but since he does not have the money to cover the related medical expenses, he welcomes any hospital that is willing to use him as an experimental subject for this particular kind of operation." Moreover, Zeng offered a detailed explanation for why he preferred to be a woman: "When he assumed the role of a wife earlier, even though he could not satisfy his husband [sexually], he could always get on with an easy life.

However, his subsequent decision to become a ‘man’ led him into a destitute and troubled life.” Zeng claimed that he graduated from an all-girls junior high and had been a nurse before. To justify his feminine inclination, Zeng claimed that he “possessed a greater degree of biological femaleness,” so that he “always crouched to pee” and his “period comes seasonally” rather than monthly. However, because his identification card identified him as male, the judges still referred to him as a man in finalizing their decision.<sup>55</sup>

In this second wave of press coverage, sex transformation became the leading conceptual coordinate in defining Zeng’s *renyao* status. In the historiography of *renyao*, the category has often been assigned to individuals who changed their sex especially in the late imperial period. However, what distinguished the context of post–World War II Taiwan was the emergence of the “transsexual” (變性人, *bianxingren*) as an available identity category, whose wide currency was mediated by the sex-change stories of Xie, the Chinese Christine. As such, even though Zeng’s potential homosexual relations with other prison inmates, inclinations to put himself beyond the legal norms of being human, and ability to cross the borders of gender easily were all made readily apparent, the theme of sex change—more precisely, his desire for sex-reassignment surgery—was an unprecedented force in shaping the public understanding of his *renyao* embodiment in this second journalistic upsurge.<sup>56</sup> This example demonstrates once again that the excesses and insufficiencies of the various historical differentials of *renyao* are never fixed but reconfigure themselves according to the pertinent variables of a particular historical context.

Despite the overwhelming emphasis the media had placed on Zeng’s criminal behavior, the reasons for his development into a distinct object of social ostracism stemmed unambiguously from his atypical gender orientation. This was made nowhere more evident than during the third stream of Zeng’s media exposure. In November 1955, Zeng was identified as a member of a team of bicycle thieves.<sup>57</sup> In an article titled “Suspect Zeng Qiu Huang Has Both Sexes: Being Both Male and Female and Married to Either Sex,” he was described as “wearing female attire at the time of arrest” but later switched to “a complete male outfit by wearing a white shirt, a pair of blue pants, and a pair of white sneakers. His breasts are not very well developed, and his hairstyle is neither masculine nor feminine [非男非女, *feinan feiniu*]. He speaks in a bashful manner [扭扭捏捏, *niuniu nienie*] with extremely feminine facial expressions.”<sup>58</sup> In September 1956, Zeng was brought to the police station again. The newspaper reporting the incident called him a cross-dressing “yin-yang freak” (陰陽怪人, *yinyang guairen*) and offered engrossing details of his androgynous presence: “His hair was permed like a lady; he wore a green silk dress, a laced undershirt, and a breast-holding bra; his face was powdered, and he penciled his eyebrows, wore lipstick, and was in a pair of high-heel sandals; he completely dressed like a woman, except for his rough skin tone; he spoke like a woman, smiled, and coquetted frequently, but his voice sounded like a man.” As before, the police

found it difficult to assign him to a gendered cell, so they ended up, once again, putting him in a room by himself. However, the newspaper did not stop there; it went a step further to offer a brief capsule of Zeng's life story in the aftermath of his capture. Most notably, the story highlighted his hidden intersexuality, which was revealed to the police and the journalists for the first time. Zeng was born with both sets of male and female genitalia, but because his "female attributes predominated," his parents raised him as a girl. He even got married to a man. His intersexuality was not the only factual detail uncovered in this interaction with the police and journalists; concerning the rumor that he was remarried to a woman subsequently, he clarified that "she was my sister-in-law!"<sup>59</sup>

Interestingly, unlike what happened in 1951 and 1954, Zeng was furious about the arrest this time. The *United Daily News* reported: "[Zeng] indicates that he did not commit any crime, so on what basis could the police officer arrest him and keep him in custody? Even the act of putting on unconventional attire due to a psychological abnormality does not justify restraining someone in handcuffs overnight. He points out that the police officer even attacked him with the handcuffs, leading to two bruises on his head. He expresses his intention to file charges against the police officer." In contrast to previous instances in which he was arrested for actual fraudulent offenses or stealing, Zeng's statement suggests that he was arrested this time not merely because of his gender-transgressive presentation but also due to people's stereotyped biases against his prodigious fame. The reporter ended the article with a brief explanation for this incident: On the evening of September 23, while he was visiting a friend in Taichung, he was stopped by a male acquaintance who he knew from prison. Although he could not recall the name of the individual, who sexually courted him but was rejected by him, the individual decided to file a "false accusation" (誣告, *wugao*) of fraudulent offense against Zeng.<sup>60</sup>

Evidently, in this third wave of press coverage, gender dislocation replaced sex transformation as the defining epistemic frame of Zeng's *renyao* status. Significantly, this was the only time that Zeng's exposure in the media did not result from his having committed an actual offense or crossed the legal boundaries of human order. Rather, this series of interrogations about Zeng's irregular gender presentation and sexuality emerged from a "false accusation" charged by someone who pursued (but was also turned down by) Zeng for homosexual favors. Therefore, same-sex relations and the legal parameters of humanism remained latent historical differentials in the determination of Zeng's *renyao* public persona this time. His unusual gender attributes, however, captured the media spotlight as reporters contributed to his unfortunate fate of being treated unfairly by the police and the media due to unjust prejudices.

The final surge of media coverage came in summer 1957, when Zeng was arrested again, but this time journalist accounts focused on Zeng's attempt to dis-

guise as a ghost rather than as the opposite sex. At 2 a.m. on August 5, seventy-one-year-old Wang Chendui, a resident in the Huatan township of Zhanghua county, was robbed of \$114 after a strange event. She had passed out after being hit on the head by a stick. It was not until the afternoon of that same day that she reported the occurrence to the police, after a community security guard found her in front of her house. According to Wang, at the time of the incident, she was already asleep, but she suddenly heard a weird noise coming from outside her house. She claimed that the sound was unusually freaky and made the hair stand up on the back of her neck. Wang spoke up: "I have lived my life for seventy-one years, and I am definitely not afraid of ghosts. If you are a human who is trying to put on a supernatural show, please leave immediately. However, if you are a real ghost, please stop making that noise; the Ghost Festival [中元節, *Zhongyuanjie*] is around the corner, and I will offer you some food." As soon as she finished her sentence, her head was hit by a stick and cold water was poured down on her head. The \$114 that she had with her was taken away. When she reported the incident to the police, she explained that the voice of the ghost thief sounded husky and "neither masculine nor feminine." Since her house had no electric lights, all of this took place in the dark, and so she was unable to take a good look at the thief. According to one reporter's explanation, Zeng deceived Wang by pretending to be a ghost because his "female impersonation" was "no longer convincing." He therefore transformed himself "from a prodigy into a ghost" (由妖變鬼, *youyao bianguai*), but "as soon as he went back to committing crimes again, he got arrested" (fig. 2).<sup>61</sup> On August 26, the prosecuting attorney considered Zeng to have violated the penal code's article 85 concerning robbery offenses (掠奪罪, *luiduozui*), so he recommended that the judges intensify the severity of punishment by one-half of what Zeng originally deserved.<sup>62</sup> The court eventually reached its verdict, sentencing him to prison for three years and nine months for robbery (搶奪財物罪, *qiangduo caiwuzui*).<sup>63</sup>

Not surprisingly, the press used this opportunity to explode Zeng's *renyao* status again, focusing on the difficulty of putting him in a cell that would be most appropriate for his gender. According to one article, "Given that this is the fourth time Zeng has been detained, the staff in the district prosecutor's office and the detention office in Taichung are anxious and puzzled every time they see his face."<sup>64</sup>



Figure 2. Photograph of Zeng printed in an article about his transformation from "prodigy" to "ghost" (*United Daily News*, August 7, 1957).



Previously, the jail guards had left Zeng in a separate cell by himself. However, this convention of single-celling apparently still caused them trouble:

When this *renyao* is assigned to a prison cell with other male inmates, he would self-identify as a woman in front of these *tongzhi*, leading to the offense of public indecency [傷風敗俗, *shangfeng baisu*], but when he is put in a cell with other women inmates, he would make a move on them as well. . . . However, putting him in a single cell by himself is also not a real solution. The reason is that the detention office is responsible for the health of the individuals in the remand, so the jailed individuals are not allowed to be kept in the cell twenty-four consecutive hours each day. Rather, it is required to release the single-cell inmates from their cells for exercise purposes for at least one hour per day. It is during these brief periods that the *renyao* starts to play games. He would babble excessively and incoherently like a mad man, attracting the attention of all the other inmates and causing disorder. This actually brings the guards further trouble.<sup>65</sup>

In this final episode of media exposure, Zeng's *renyao* status becomes elusive with respect to the existing historical differentials of the category. Of course, the themes of gender dislocation, sex transformation, same-sex relations, and the legal boundaries of human behavior remain lurking in the popular imagination of Zeng's prodigious nonhumanity. However, what sets this episode apart from earlier ones is his explicit attempt to disguise himself as a ghost, to supervene the possible present, thereby opening up for the historical figuration of *renyao* a corridor to the supernatural world. By crossing the boundaries of human lifehood, Zeng has essentially left a trace of himself as a queer ghost in the archiving of *renyao*.

### **Coda: Queer Archiving**

This article began with the illegibility of Taiwan studies, and it concludes with the instability of *renyao* as a category of historical analysis, linking these two disparate modes of historiography through the processes of archiving. As the continuation of Zeng's media presence throughout the decade makes clear, he was perhaps the most widely reported *renyao* in the 1950s. In spite of his considerable celebrity, the discursive usage of the term *renyao* ultimately escapes a permanent epistemic closure from the world of the natural. To capture the transformation of this archival nature, we have established a scholarly canvas on which Taiwan's peripheral historical setting appears from the vexed adherence of various intersecting coordinates of marginal subjectivity, especially given that these differentials embody long-standing linguistic histories from the Ming-Qing period if not earlier, even as the epistemic congruity of *renyao* itself becomes more hyperbolic over time. As a "Chinese" category, *renyao* has genealogical roots in mainland China, but its most pronounced and elaborate conceptual articulations in the mid-twentieth century transpired in

Taiwan. The *minor historicity* of *renyao* as a metaphoric materialization of Taiwan's global marginality emerges out of relational histories, relational at least in part because of the volatile competition and interdependence between the peripheral ontologies of the Republic of China and continental China after 1949.<sup>66</sup> Herein lies the very queerness of archiving a prodigy of historical na(rra)tion through the prodigy of the human: archival remnants promise futurity as they preemptively reserve the impossible determination of the historical desire for archiving and its absent presence.

### Notes

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1. Shu-mei Shih, "Globalisation and the (In)Significance of Taiwan," *Postcolonial Studies* 6, no. 2 (2003): 144.
2. Shu-mei Shih, ed., "Globalisation: Taiwan's (In)Significance," special issue, *Postcolonial Studies* 6, no. 2 (2003).
3. Two important role models for my thinking on the historiographical significance of Taiwan have been Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); and Xiaojue Wang, *Modernity with a Cold War Face: Reimagining the Nation in Chinese Literature across the 1949 Divide* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013). See also the essays in Shu-mei Shih and Ping-hui Liao, eds., *Comparatizing Taiwan* (New York: Routledge, 2014).
4. Petrus Liu, "The Peripheral Realism of Two Chinas," *Modern Language Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (2012): 398.
5. Shu-mei Shih, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Shu-mei Shih, Chien-hsin Tsai, and Brian Bernards, eds., *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).
6. See, e.g., Steven E. Phillips, *Between Assimilation and Independence: The Taiwanese Encounter Nationalist China, 1945–1950* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).
7. On the emergence of queer cultures in post-martial law Taiwan, see Fran Martin, *Situating Sexualities: Queer Representation in Taiwanese Fiction, Film, and Public Culture* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003); and Jens Damm, "Discrimination and Backlash against Homosexual Groups," in *Politics of Difference in Taiwan*, ed. Tak-Wing Ngo and Hong-zen Wang (New York: Routledge, 2011), 152–80. For a succinct analysis of the discourse of same-sex desire in Taiwan in the two decades preceding the lifting of martial law, see Jens Damm, "Same-Sex Desire and Society in Taiwan, 1970–1987," *China Quarterly* 181 (2005): 67–81.
8. See, e.g., Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Carolyn Steedman, *Dust* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001); Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Burton, ed., *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Charles Merewether, *The Archive* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006); Anjali Arondekar, *For the Record: On Sexuality*

- and the Colonial Archive in India (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009); and Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).
9. Derrida, *Archive Fever*; Arondekar, *For the Record*, 2.
  10. Arondekar, *For the Record*.
  11. Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 1.
  12. My notion of queer unknowing takes a cue from recent scholarly approaches to queering failure and problematizing success. See, e.g., Judith Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); and Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).
  13. For a compelling defense of historicism as a queer scholarly intervention, see David Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
  14. For revisionist accounts of gender and sexuality in the 1950s in the United States and Europe, see the essays in Joanne Meyerowitz, ed., *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945–1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994); and Heike Bauer and Matt Cook, eds., *Queer 1950s: Rethinking Sexuality in the Postwar Years* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
  15. Carolyn Steedman, “The Space of Memory: In an Archive,” *History of the Human Sciences* 11, no. 4 (1998): 78.
  16. On trace, see Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); and Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (New York: Routledge, 1978).
  17. Judith Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 102.
  18. Charlotte Furth, “Androgynous Males and Deficient Females: Biology and Gender Boundaries in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century China,” *Late Imperial China* 9, no. 2 (1988): 19.
  19. *Ibid.*, 18.
  20. Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange*, 107.
  21. Furth, “Androgynous Males and Deficient Females,” 22–24; Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange*, 109–16.
  22. Furth, “Androgynous Males and Deficient Females,” 22.
  23. *Ibid.*, 23; Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange*, 114.
  24. Wenqing Kang, *Obsession: Male Same-Sex Relations in China, 1900–1950* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 33.
  25. *Ibid.*, 36–38. Interestingly, the labeling of Mei as a *renyao* reappeared in the context of Cold War Taiwan. See “Suzu wenhua yishutuan fangwen youhaoguo jia [速組文化藝術團體訪問友好國家]” (“Formation of Culture and Arts Group for Visiting Friendly Countries”), *Lianhebao* (聯合報), May 27, 1956.
  26. Kang, *Obsession*, 34.
  27. *Ibid.*, 35–36.
  28. *Ibid.*, 38. On Sedgwick’s original formulation, see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 1–65.
  29. Jin Jiang, *Women Playing Men: Yue Opera and Social Change in Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 51–59.
  30. *Ibid.*, 205–8.
  31. Tze-lan D. Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

32. Alvin Ka Hin Wong, "Transgenderism as a Heuristic Device: On the Cross-Historical and Transnational Adaptations of the *Legend of the White Snake*," in *Transgender China*, ed. Howard Chiang (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 127–58.
33. On the formation of queer Sinophone modernity, see Howard Chiang, "(De)Provincializing China: Queer Historicism and Sinophone Postcolonial Critique," in *Queer Sinophone Cultures*, ed. Howard Chiang and Ari Larissa Heinrich (New York: Routledge, 2013), 19–51.
34. For a more in-depth discussion of the polarizing debates on literary humanism in the New Culture period, see Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900–1937* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 239–58. On related accounts of humanism and monstrosity in Chinese literary modernity, see Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); David Der-wei Wang, *The Monster That Is History: History, Violence, and Fictional Writing in Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). On scientism as a dominant intellectual trend in early twentieth-century China, see D. W. Y. Kwok, *Scientism in Chinese Thought: 1900–1950* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965); and Wang Hui, "Scientific Worldview, Culture Debates, and the Reclassification of Knowledge in Twentieth-Century China," *boundary 2* 35, no. 2 (2008): 125–55.
35. Wong, "Transgenderism," 137.
36. Hans Tao-Ming Huang, *Queer Politics and Sexual Modernity in Taiwan* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), 53–81. Although Huang discusses the media blitz on Zeng briefly (54–55), the next section of this article offers a much more contextualized reading of the details of not only the initial press coverage of Zeng's trial but also the subsequent stories about him to which the Taiwanese public was introduced. See also Antonia Chao, "Fengnan shuonü, fengnü shuonan—renyao zhapianshi [逢男說女·逢女說男人妖詐騙史]" ("A History of *Renyao* Fraud"), *Zili zaobao* (自立早報), October 22, 1997.
37. *Ibid.*, 55–59.
38. *Ibid.*, 57. On the Chinese mental hygiene movement in Republican China and postwar Taiwan, see Geoffrey Blowers and Shelley Wang, "Gone with the *West Wind*: The Emergence and Disappearance of Psychotherapeutic Culture in China (1936–1968)," in *Psychiatry and Chinese History*, ed. Howard Chiang (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2014), 143–60; Huang, *Queer Politics and Sexual Modernity*, 31–52; and Wen-Ji Wang, "West Wind Monthly and the Popular Mental Hygiene Discourse in Republican China," *Taiwanese Journal for Studies of Science, Technology and Medicine*, no. 13 (2011): 15–88.
39. Huang, *Queer Politics and Sexual Modernity*, 59–66. On "cut-sleeve pi" as a descriptor of male homoromance in premodern China, see Bret Hinsch, *Passions of the Cut Sleeve: The Male Homosexual Tradition in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). On the discursive deployment of *tongxinglian* in Republican China, see Howard Chiang, "Epistemic Modernity and the Emergence of Homosexuality in China," *Gender and History* 22, no. 3 (2010): 629–57.
40. Huang, *Queer Politics and Sexual Modernity*, 73–81.
41. *Ibid.*, 66–73. On the queering of *tongzhi*/comrade in postsocialist China, see Hongwei Bao, "Queer Comrades: Transnational Popular Culture, Queer Sociality, and Socialist Legacy," *English Language Notes* 49, no. 1 (2011): 131–37. On the politics of the term, see also Wah-shan Chou, *Tongzhi: Politics of Same-Sex Eroticism in Chinese Societies* (New York: Routledge, 2000).
42. Huang, *Queer Politics and Sexual Modernity*, 113–42.
43. I use masculine pronouns to refer to Zeng throughout this essay. I do so not to "force" a

- male identity onto Zeng but only for the sake of consistency. This practice adheres to Zeng's normative gender label in the contemporaneous press, and in light of Zeng's intersexuality, a strict application of feminine pronouns would arguably be no less problematic.
44. “Ren Yao zhaqi'an zuofupan Zeng Qiuhuang gaichuxing yinian [人妖詐欺案昨覆判 曾秋皇改處刑一年]” (“The Case of Human Prodigy Reheard Yesterday: Zeng Qiuhuang Resentenced to One Year”), *Lianhebao* (聯合報), October 23, 1951.
  45. “Ren Yao jiedi Taibei: Gaoyuan zuowenxun [人妖解抵台北 高院昨問訊]” (“The Human Prodigy Arrived in Taipei and Was Interrogated by the High Court Yesterday”), *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 23, 1951.
  46. “Ren Yao Zeng Qiuhuang wushi Zeng Chaodong mingri fenbie shousheng [「人妖」曾秋皇「舞師」曾朝東 明日分別受審]” (“The ‘Human Prodigy’ Zeng Qiuhuang and the ‘Dance Teacher’ Zeng Chaodong to be Investigated Individually Tomorrow”), *Lianhebao* (聯合報), October 17, 1951.
  47. “Ren Yao Zeng Qiuhuang nanweile kanshou [人妖曾秋皇 難為了看守]” (“The Human Prodigy Zeng Qiuhuang Gave the Guard a Hard Time”), *Lianhebao* (聯合報), October 18, 1951.
  48. “Ren Yao Zeng Qiuhuang an gaoyuan shengxun zhongjie [人妖曾秋煌案 高院審訊終結]” (“The Investigation of the Case of the Human Prodigy Zeng Qiuhuang by the High Court Concluded”), *Zili wanbao* (自立晚報), October 18, 1951.
  49. “Ren Yaoan fusheng xuanpan [人妖案複審宣判]” (“The Appeal of the Human Prodigy Case Was Ruled”), *Zili wanbao* (自立晚報), October 22, 1951.
  50. “Ren Yao zhaiqi'an zuofupan.”
  51. *Ibid.*
  52. “Aile zhongnian bunan bunü hunpei liangdu yifuyiqi [哀樂中年不男不女 婚配兩度亦夫亦妻]” (“The Mid-Aged Intersex Married Twice to a Husband and a Wife, Respectively”), *Lianhebao* (聯合報), December 24, 1954.
  53. *Ibid.*
  54. On Xie, see Howard Chiang, “Christine Goes to China: Xie Jianshun and the Discourse of Sex Change in Cold War Taiwan,” in *Gender and Health in Modern East Asia*, ed. Angela Leung and Izumi Nakayama (forthcoming). On Christine Jorgensen, see David Harley Serlin, “Christine Jorgensen and the Cold War Closet,” *Radical History Review*, no. 62 (1995): 137–65; Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (Berkeley, CA: Seal, 2008); and Emily Skidmore, “Constructing the ‘Good Transsexual’: Christine Jorgensen, Whiteness, and Heteronormativity in the Mid-Twentieth-Century Press,” *Feminist Studies* 37, no. 2 (2011): 270–99.
  55. “Aile zhongnian bunan bunü.”
  56. On the role of sex-reassignment surgery in shaping the concept of gender in the United States, see Bernice Hausman, *Changing Sex: Transsexualism, Technology, and the Idea of Gender* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995).
  57. “Yiyiwang dajin quanan jiangyisong fayuan [已一網打盡 全案將移送法院]” (“Completely under Control: The Entire Case Is Now Being Delivered to the Court for Investigation”), *Zhongguo shibao* (中國時報), November 14, 1955.
  58. “Congfan Zeng Qiuhuang jianliangxing yinanyintü quqijiaeren [從犯曾秋皇 兼兩性 亦男亦女 娶妻嫁人]” (“Suspect Zeng Qiuhuang Has Both Sexes: Being Both Male and Female and Married to Either Sex”), *Zhongguo shibao* (中國時報), November 14, 1955.
  59. “Qiankun hunyuan yiti cixiong jingneng liangquan [乾坤混元一體 雌雄竟能兩全]” (“Male

- and Female Hybridized into One: Maleness and Femaleness Can Functionally Coexist”), *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 25, 1956.
60. Ibid.; “Zeng Qiuhuang yijie Yuanlin [曾秋皇 移解員林]” (“Zeng Qiuhuang Released in Yuanlin”), *Lianhebao* (聯合報), September 26, 1956.
  61. “Laoyu yugui jingcha qinyao [老嫗遇鬼 警察擒妖]” (“Old Woman Ran into a Ghost: The Cops Caught the Prodigy”), *Lianhebao* (聯合報), August 7, 1957.
  62. “Renyao Zeng Qiuhuang beitiqi gongsu [人妖曾秋煌 被提起公訴]” (“Charges Filed against the Human Prodigy Zeng Qiuhuang”), *Lianhebao* (聯合報), August 26, 1957.
  63. “Yinyangren Zeng Qiuhuang chuxing sannian jiuyue [陰陽人曾秋皇 處刑三年九月]” (“The Yin-Yang Person Zeng Qiuhuang Received a Three-Year-and-Nine-Month Sentence”), *Zhongguo shibao* (中國時報), September 14, 1957.
  64. “Zhuoyao rongyi jingyaonan Zeng Qiuhuang nanyu anpai [捉妖容易禁妖難 曾秋煌難於安排]” (“The Prodigy Is Easy to Catch but Hard to Keep: The Difficulty of Allocating Zeng Qiuhuang”), *Lianhebao* (聯合報), August 8, 1957.
  65. Ibid.
  66. My notion of minor historicity is adapted from the idea of “minor literature” developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).