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We Need to Talk about the Penis¹

ZAIRONG XIANG

Abstract: What does epistemic decolonization mean for contemporary rethinking of the body, gender/sexuality, and knowledge in feminist and queer scholarship? Through a close reading of Chinese medicine's classical text *Huang Di Nei Jing (Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon)*, this essay proposes a "body-of-orifices" in which the penis like the vagina and the anus is but another orifice among other more visible bodily openings. In feminist and queer theorization, the penis has been almost only accounted for as something else, as the metaphoric pen, the psychoanalytic phallus, as anything other than the organ itself. Meanwhile, in pornographic, cinematic, and other visual representations, the Asian man's member(ship) is largely denied, nowhere to be seen. This invisibility mirrors the overrepresentation of white male philosophers in much of queer theory's theoretical foundation. Engaging closely with feminist and queer re-readings of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis while delving deeply into the philosophical and cosmological concepts of Chinese medicine, the essay also argues that the body-of-orifices entails a different heuristic model for a less hegemonic practice of knowing based on cultivation of passivity and receptiveness, which is very different from the colonial/modern model of knowledge-acquisition as mastery, penetration, and possession.

Keywords: Body-of-Orifices, the Penis, Sexual In/difference, the Inner Canon, Decolonial Queer Theory, Apophatic Knowing, *kaiqiao*

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT THE penis, "that much shamed organ."²

Many years ago, the saleswoman of the photo album for my parents' thirtieth wedding anniversary asked me in private when we found ourselves in the elevator alone, slightly embarrassed, "Can I ask you something? Your mom said you just finished an MA in gender studies, right?" "Yes?" I said. "A friend of mine, he has had this cyst on his penis for a while. Is that serious?" Gender studies,

which sounds like the study of sex or sexuality in Chinese, is, I told her, more like sociology—the study of society (which was not really what I studied, but more understandable than if I had said critical theory). So, I could not provide adequate medical advice, but in any case, if her friend had a cyst on his penis—or anywhere really—he should consult a doctor. I sincerely hope his penile cyst was cured.

This comic misunderstanding reminded me of a mean joke that a literature professor told us in a literary theory class when I was doing my BA in Beijing: He asked his son why he quit linguistics abruptly after the first semester of college. The son replied, “I thought I was going to study language!” The literary scholar’s bashing of linguistics as being too invested in scientism and therefore too far away from poetics was repeated by the saleswoman. She turned the joke on me, even though unintendedly, which suddenly exposed the absurdity of the ever-increasing division of knowledge. She rightly assumed that someone who had an MA in gender studies (and sex/uality) should have something to say about the penis.

Unfortunately, this is not the case. We know very little about the penis, and I am not even referring to medical knowledge that could shed light on the saleswoman’s friend’s swollen member. In gender studies—broadly construed to include feminist, queer, and trans theory among others—the penis has been almost only accounted for as a phallus, if at all. That is to say, the penis is almost exclusively featured as something else—the function of the signifier *par excellence*—something other than the organ itself. Indeed, “the organ itself” has also become increasingly an impossible notion.³

Of course, the phallus that the penis has been made to signify or conflated with is not exactly always the master signifier in Lacanian psychoanalytic terms (why ought it be?), but more often than not, it is the “phallus” as in “phallocracy” or “phallogentrism” that we feminist and queer theorists preoccupy ourselves in debating, deconstructing, and destroying. The rule of the phallus (phallocracy) for example doesn’t really mean the rule of the penis, which is only used as metonymy. Phallocracy is a society ruled by men, and men tend to have a penis; or more precisely having a penis makes it fit for rule according to, well, phallocracy. Where the penis stands is even less obvious in the case of “phallogentrism” or “phallogentrism.” The closest one could get is the famous sentence from *Madwoman in the Attic*, posed as a hypothesis: “if the pen is a metaphorical penis.”⁴ Again, the penis is used as a metaphor for something else. It is in this sense more than often conflated with, if not understood as the phallus itself, with its function (its “phallic function”?) as a signifier in spite of itself. What is more, as I will show in this article, critical efforts to highlight the convoluted relation between the phallus and the penis serve often to erase the penis and salvage the phallus. The dominance of the phallus persists in content and form.

Besides the overrepresentation of psychoanalysis that does feature the penis, albeit mentioned and erased (through castration in Sigmund Freud) or rendered

erasable (as in Jacques Lacan where the phallus, rather than the penis, is the focus), the only few exceptions that have had a theoretical investment in the penis are porn studies and medical history or anthropology where the penis-organ either performs well or poorly from a visual or medical perspective.⁵ Most theoretical discussions on gender/sexuality almost automatically relegate the penis to something backward, heteronormative, sexist, cis-gendered, unradical, phallic, and indeed “much shamed.”⁶ In this collective effort, the penis has carried most charges that should have been aimed at the phallocratic and phallo(go)centric *phallus*. What is more, as Iain Morland argues, it “isn’t a question of having a penis; it’s a question of having a genital that means ‘penis,’ and so *is* a penis, when judged by the phallic standard of size.”⁷ The meaning-making of the genital readable as “penis” is in fact already trapped in the phallic economy. The call to debase or redirect “genitalized” heteronormative sex (and its alleged mimesis notably in gay sex) to explore new erotogenic zones, to resignify the phallus with other body parts, or to celebrate the revolutionary anus or heroic fist-fucking, all share a common enemy: the penis.

The penis has been scapegoated. The bodily organ that cannot speak for itself as it is (prohibited by discursive determinism and phallic principles) has been rendered, paradoxically, a very subaltern bodily organ. Hiding (or quickly brushing off) the penis from the representational and critical spotlights impedes us from approaching the overly-symbolized organ otherwise. This article will engage first and foremost with a bodily model that is epistemologically situated outside colonial heteromodernity, notably the psychoanalytic account of the morphogenesis of the body out of a phallic contour. In theorizing the penis decidedly through a different theoretical lens than the usual suspects of critical theory, the essay aims to show what decolonial approaches, that is, different cosmologies, taken seriously could genuinely enable.⁸

In close examination of different cultural coding, in this case, that of Traditional Chinese Medicine anchored in non-modern thought as theorized in the *Simple Questions of the Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon*, we will start with one crucial difference between the penis and the phallus, and also between the penis and the other allegedly more radical substitutions: The penis is penetrable. In the war rushed against the penis, the supposed radical alternatives, as I hope to show in this essay, have gone through a process of purification and arrived at a stage of being purely phallic: The alternatives are impenetrable but only penetrating and concomitantly “re-signifying freely.” No matter how many resignifications one could attribute to these substitutes, they remain mostly impenetrable/phallic compared to that poor piece of meat between my legs.

STILL LOOKING FOR MY PENIS

Unlike the anus (or the fist for that matter), the penis hasn’t had an easy life in feminist and queer theories. It has either been seen as a tabooed organ, as if it

itself carried the recipe for domination and therefore is simply unnamable or quickly censored; or, it has been made to stand for something else, namely the phallus. Those invested in Lacanian psychoanalysis, for example, have been busy rebutting the conflation of the penis and the phallus, which leads Judith Butler in her provocative “lesbian phallus” to ask “why it is assumed that the phallus requires that particular body part [the penis] to symbolize, and why it could not operate through symbolizing other body parts.”⁹ The answer to these two questions is this: “the phallus might symbolize body parts other than the penis” which is compatible with the Lacanian scheme in which “insofar as it [the phallus] symbolizes the penis, [it] retains the penis as that which it symbolizes; it is not the penis.”¹⁰ The introduction of the lesbian into the phallus through Butler’s theoretical exercise leads therefore to a series of promising openings:

When the phallus is lesbian, then it is and is not a masculinist figure of power; the signifier is significantly split, for it both recalls and displaces the masculinism by which it is impelled. And insofar as it operates at the site of anatomy, the phallus (re)produces the specter of the penis only to enact its *vanishing*, to reiterate and exploit its perpetual vanishing as the very occasion of the phallus. This opens up anatomy—and sexual difference itself—as a site of proliferative resignifications.¹¹

“Penis” in this text and context is symptomatic of many similar occasions where the penis is invoked and immediately erased in order to be distinguished from the phallus—which, despite its constant critique (notably as the central component of phallogocentrism), emerges from these theoretical gymnastics to be “partial, decentered and substitutable,” that is to say, undominating, flexible, and almost strangely desirable, so much so that it could and should be rescued from the penis and attached to the lesbian.¹² By introducing the lesbian to the phallus, Butler’s deconstructive approach aims to “offer the occasion (a set of occasions) for the phallus to signify differently, and in so signifying, to resignify, unwittingly, its own masculinist and heterosexist privilege,” and since “the phallus signifies the penis as its privileged occasion,” the penis becomes precisely where the phallus’ “masculinist and heterosexist privilege” rests.¹³ That is to say, the penis has been made thinkable only insofar as it could stand in as a signifier of not only the phallus but also its most problematic aspect, its privilege. Otherwise, why would one want to be bothered to resignify the phallus, especially if one is a lesbian (or gay Asian for that matter), whose penis is nowhere to be found in the phallic visual field of representation, in mainstream gay pornography, or even Hollywood cinema at large.¹⁴

Besides resignifying the phallus, the entire thesis of Butler’s “lesbian phallus,” therefore, can also be said to aim at rescuing the phallus from the penis. Put differently, it is still perfectly conceivable and indeed theoretically meaningful to ruminate about a “Lesbian Phallus” through a deconstructive resignification, which Butler agilely demonstrates. It is however, nearly impossible to have

much to think about, say, a “gay phallus” or “gay penis,” which sounds almost redundant if not “profoundly incorrect and especially unpopular,”¹⁵ not to mention a “lesbian penis,” which would no longer be a productive contradiction but a straightforward mistake.

Surveying queer theories of the body like Butler’s now-classic theory of performativity leaves a penis-owner and penis-lover to still look for my penis. I am of course, referring to Richard Fung’s now-classic essay of 1991 that takes us through a variety of representations of Asian gay men in (North American) pornography to reveal the deeply entrenched anti-Asian racism. The Asian man has been reduced literally to an ass. His penis is nowhere to be found or only rarely glimpsed by the camera that assumes its spectators to be majority white gay men.¹⁶

This is a classic example of what I have analyzed elsewhere, the Asianphobe’s internalized homophobia.¹⁷ It works like this: The racist idea of Asian men’s quintessential effeminacy becomes a symbol of what the homophobe’s displaced misogyny actively tries to suppress. This is not unlike female impersonators, whom Esther Newton identifies as “professional homosexuals” because “they represent the stigma of the gay world.”¹⁸ Asian gays haunt the world of the “straight-acting” gay man, intensify his stigma of his internal(ized) homophobia to the extent that an eradicating dictum “No Asians!” (often with an exclamation mark) is one of the few lines on his dating app’s self-introduction.

Following Fung, Tan Hoang Nguyen shares the terror of living under this constant, unsolicited hatred in the “gay community.” Nguyen delves deeply into this assumed Asian form: bottomhood. In his insightful research on *A View from the Bottom*, Nguyen inverts the question: Instead of looking for (the representations of) the Asian penis, it could be more productive, he argues, to ask what’s wrong with being a bottom, even/especially an Asian bottom/buttock? Nguyen’s solution is an “affirmative reading of bottomhood,” which seeks empowerment in “what is already there, overwhelmingly present in all its contradictory effects and thrilling potentialities” instead of “bemoaning Asian men’s absence ‘down there.’”¹⁹ Nguyen situates his work in a broader arena of theory invested in the “revolutionary anus” (Guy Hocquenghem’s word). As lesbian theorist Sally Munt reminds us, the anus is “the marker of sexual *indifference*” and therefore “has the potential to undermine the ‘edifice of gender differentiation intrinsic to heterosexuality.’”²⁰

Even in straight coupledness, Nguyen has shown, the Asian man often only shows his ass. The answer to Richard Fung’s question “where is my penis?” is an emphatic “you don’t have one.” Nguyen takes the path of “anal empowerment” while cautioning against a facile celebration of anality, because “[f]or those already relegated to the lowest rung of the sexual and social ladder, an unqualified embrace of powerlessness only leads to an amplification of their subjugation and lowly position.”²¹ Indeed, anality might be a relief for those who have enjoyed (and therefore also can be taken to task for) much phallic powers in dating apps

and/or metonymically “citational rates.” Now, besides the penis/phallus that one could flaunt anyway, they also have an anus to bring down phallogocentrism. This is how you can have the dick and eat it too. Let me seize the opportunity to put it out there: Queer theory (and theory at large) has a daddy issue with French and German dicks from Foucault to Heidegger. And let me also confess that I am writing this from the position of insider, lest my theoretical resources in this text be mistaken for some exotic exteriority of its author. Having lived most of my adult life in Europe and working in the field of contemporary theory means I have adequate experience and in fact also enjoyed these penile/phallic powers (European carnal and citational dicks if you will). And it is in this conjuncture that I am calling for a decolonization of queer theory on both ends.

Let us look at the more familiar and seemingly promising *end* first, the anus. If deconstructing or even destructing a binary gender system has been an important mission of feminist, queer, and trans theorists and activists, we could see from the gender/sex distinction, to *écriture féminine*, from intersectional analysis to queer deconstruction a consistent attempt at subjecting the body’s alleged gender/sexual fixity to thorough reexaminations and contestations. In the history of queer theory, anality has been taken up by theorists as a privileged site of disruption. Besides Nguyen’s empowering racialized bottomhood, the anus has had a fruitful life in queer theorization. In fact, it had already drawn considerable attention from Sigmund Freud and notably from his disciple Lou Andreas-Salomé. The “anal tradition” so to speak, continues in one of queer theory’s peripheral origins.²² French gay Marxist activist and theorist Guy Hocquenghem claims that “the anus does not practice sexual discrimination” and analyzes how capitalist bourgeois sociality represses anal desire which homosexuality is primarily concerned with.²³ He therefore ascribes revolutionary characteristics to the anus. The “revolutionary anus” has been taken up continuously by other theorists like Leo Bersani and Jennifer Nash.²⁴ Paul B. Preciado, in their post-script to Guy Hocquenghem’s Spanish translation, writes about an “anal terror” through which “the traditional system of gender/sex shits itself.”²⁵

What attracts these theorists is the anus’ *indifference* towards gender/sexual differences. It is a shared organ regardless of one’s sex or gender, or race for that matter. This observation is no small deal when it is further expanded to a wide range of problematics and promises. Hocquenghem talks about the anus’s privatization in capitalism, which is disrupted by the homosexual (“queer” if he had the word) desire which “challenges anality-sublimation because it restores the desiring use of the anus.”²⁶ Preciado, taking a cue from Hocquenghem, argues that the suppression of anal pleasure is the precondition for the social to emerge. And since “[h]omosexuality primarily means anal homosexuality, sodomy,” the suppression of anal pleasure, in other words, homophobia, is the precondition of the *erection* of the (homophobic) state.²⁷ Writing at the height of the AIDS pandemic and against the lethal indifference of the Reagan government, Bersani strongly criticized how sexual behavior especially anal sex among male homosexuals has

been “targeted, in representations of AIDS, as the criminal, fatal, and irresistibly repeated act.”²⁸

If the anus were to be revolutionary, it would need to be different, differently conceived. In the numerological account of queer theory’s troubled history with the couple (form), we have taken the metaphoric, anal zero to ruminate about “a *two* that coexist without synthesizing into a *third* element, a *two* that share (the pleasure and the burden of) the *zero* without positivizing it into *one*.”²⁹ In other words, the revolutionary anus should not be positivized into a *one* fist (or fists) rising in the air—which could be seen as a sign or a *Pathosformel* of uprising.³⁰ The erectile and phallic imagery in this image/gesture of *up*-rising cannot be overstated.

The anal revolution needs to look different, if visible at all. To start with, as many who have drawn on anality have demonstrated, a hole does not discriminate. It is privatized and hardly visible, let alone visibly rising up to protest in public. The anus does not prioritize itself over the allegedly normative penis/vagina—how can a genital be normative? By ascribing revolutionary potential to the “morphological sameness” of the anus, queer theory of anality risks inaugurating a quasi-penis-envy of the anus. In fact, anality has been “sublimated” to assume a certain sense of militancy or even heroism often attributed to masculinity and the phallus. Barebacking gay pornography stages performatively the possibility of such an anal heroism pulsating in some of these progressive accounts of the ass. Tim Dean aptly illustrates this: “through its commitment to no-excuses submission and no-limits endurance, however, bareback subculture conversely embraces masochism as proof positive of masculinity. That is to say, by remasculinizing masochism, barebackers have made self-loss into a confirmation rather than an effacement of manhood.”³¹ Attaching masculinity to anality is no longer a productive let alone a progressive paradox that gay men once had the privilege of inhabiting. Bottomhood *per se* can hardly be said to have anything to do with stigma and shame anymore. A butch bottom stays quite high on the food chain of a gay male culture constantly seen with “the slogan ‘no fats, no femmes, no Asians’ [which] epitomizes the ‘masc 4 masc’ gay culture that is now hegemonic.”³² Indeed, feminine gay men, even if they are a top, a penetrator, “have ‘become historical,’ redolent of homosexualities of yore, yet deprived of even a single affirmative term to identify them, much less articulate a positive desire for them.”³³

In the succinct critique of contemporary gender identity including presumably progressive ones such as “nonbinary,” which has had a wide popular purchase, Kadji Amin diagnoses a binary governing logic of “the liberal Western fantasy of self-determining ‘tautological’ selfhood.” Yet, as the author further points out, the core binary logic is “less that between binary and nonbinary than that, foundational to Western thought, between the tautological sovereign individual and the unchosen genealogical bonds of the social,” for example the ascription of the social bonds to the racialized and Indigenous peoples.³⁴ In theory, this ascription

could disregard one's specific sex role; however, the femme is ultimately signified by the bottom or the "passive" role, historically racialized by the Asian man.³⁵

Similarly, the privileging of anality over the genitals to overcome the binary of sexual difference (in both a biological and psychoanalytic sense) further reinforces a binary logic inherent to that sexed/gendered difference. This binary logic resides not only on the etymological level of "sex," which we are reminded, stems "from the Latin *secare*, meaning 'to cut,'" a quintessential mechanism of *phallogocentric* epistemology, but also the "either/or" logic steeped in colonial modernity.³⁶

Much of the thesis on anal repression and therefore possible resignification is premised on the idea that the anus produces a useless and even shameful waste ("deathly excretion" whereas the genitals produce "vital secretions"). As a result, the anal zone is "turned into a symbolic representative of death, the genital area becomes the ambassador of life."³⁷ The muddied water of colonial modernity is further troubled not only by the domination of the phallus but in fact also by its underside. David Eng in his reflection on the recent English translation of Lou Andreas-Salomé's seminal "'Anal' and 'Sexual'" has sharply historicized the emergence of this anal psychoanalytic theory and argues that: "the chain of social idealization and pathologies traced out by Andreas-Salomé unfurls its own implicit developmentalism in relation to European Enlightenment and progress, one that not only banishes the 'dirty' figure of the homosexual but also the 'dark' figure of the primitive to the colonial peripheries of civilizational and racial degeneration."³⁸ Eng thus gives yet another reason, now with an embodied historical dimension, as to why anality alone does not automatically guarantee political usefulness or emancipatory potential. Without wanting to dismiss attempts at reimagining embodied desires within the rich tradition of psychoanalysis, a strong sense of dead-end can nonetheless be felt if we were to limit ourselves to this overrepresented bourgeois white mythopoeia of psychoanalytic cosmology. Things must look less pessimistic elsewhere.

Before moving to a radically different account of the body, that of the *Yellow Emperor's* hollow penis, a story stemming from a similar non-modern tradition might be illuminating. The Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi once asserted that the *dao*, the highest order of things, could be found in everything and everywhere. Dong Guozi challenges Zhuangzi to find the *dao* by listing a series of "lowly" instances such as the ant, the roof tile, and the wild grass. The Daoist master simply replied, "it is in the excretion and secretion, shit and piss" (在屎溺).³⁹

THE YELLOW EMPEROR'S PENIS

Decolonization does not mean only a critique of Eurocentrism (or phallogocentrism for that matter). It is a proposition: Learning to learn from cosmologies other than colonial modernity could "suggest angles of investigation we might not otherwise have thought to look for."⁴⁰ Looking for my (yellow) penis in the

white mythopoeia of mainstream gay porn or Eurocentric queer theory might be misleading from the starting point. Non-modern medical accounts of the body might indeed provide angles that are refreshing and new. *Huang Di Nei Jing* 黃帝內經 (*Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon*), the founding text of Chinese medicine dated to the warring states (475–221 BCE), as we will see below, provides precisely such an angle to think about the body otherwise.

The *Inner Canon* records a conversation between Qibo, an erudite doctor, and Huang Di, the mythical Yellow Emperor. Huang Di asks Qibo: “五臟應四時，各有收受乎？” (The five organs/depots correspond to the four seasons. Do all of them have [something specific] that they collect and receive?)⁴¹ Qibo's explanation of these correspondences revolves around connections between the five organs/depots with the cardinal directions, chromatic notes, and the nine bodily orifices. These conversations lay a theoretical foundation of Chinese medicine (later known as “Traditional Chinese Medicine” or TCM)⁴² which continues to exert influence on contemporary medical and paramedical practices.⁴³ In this dialogue recorded in Chapter 4 金匱真言 (“True Words From the Golden Closet”) of the volume 素問 *Su Wen* (*Simple Questions*) of the *Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon* (hereafter, *Inner Canon*), the human body is situated in a nexus of connections between 五臟 (the five inner organs/depots) and 九竅 (the nine orifices).⁴⁴

The cardinal point North is of particular interest in our search for the penis, yellow or otherwise. Qibo elaborates its “seasonal collection and reception” as such:

The North; black color.

Having entered it communicates with the kidneys.

It *opens an orifice* in the two yin [sites].

It stores essence in the kidneys.

Hence the disease [it brings forth] is in the ravines.⁴⁵ (emphasis mine)

The “kidney” opens its orifices at (開竅於) the “two yin [sites].” One might be tempted to infer that the two yin sites are the male and female genitals, penis and vagina, which determines sexed difference or the “biological given” that the well-known distinction made by feminists between gender and sex aims at divorcing. After all, in vernacular Chinese, genitals are referred to respectively as the yin passage (陰道, the vagina) and the yin stem (陰莖, the penis). However, in that case, the anus would have been left completely unmentioned. It is difficult to imagine that a bodily model that features its orifices as its primary and, in fact, only signs would have ignored a significant orifice of the body: the anus.

As we will see below, one of the two yin sites that are the open orifices that connect the kidney is, precisely, the anus. The two yin sites are the anus and the genitals whose gender/sex is undefined. In this case, how could we understand the gender or even sex(ualiti)es of these orifices? I call this bodily model the body-of-orifices. Not only the visible surface orifices, the body-of-orifices is a

body of profound connectivity, not only within different inner organs and within these organs and the orifices that open to the exterior but also with the cosmos beyond the individual immediacy. The body-of-orifices demands a genuinely different approach (or more precisely, apparatus) that does not take for granted these differences grounded in the perceived genital differences of the “sexes” as primary. Would the deemphasis of genital difference and the emphatic presence of the anus with its “profound corporeal sameness”⁴⁶ necessarily lead us to see this body as androgynous as the historian of Chinese medicine Charlotte Furth has suggested in her groundbreaking work?⁴⁷ None of these questions have a clear answer. The body-of-orifices poses ultimately a profoundly epistemological question that requires a suspension of the familiar mode of gendering/sexuation which is deeply rooted in colonial modernity and its overrepresentation of the “ethnaclass genre of the human [. . .] as if it were isomorphic with the human.”⁴⁸

Since the kidney regulates sexual matters according to Chinese medicine, it is likely to be a site where we could find clues for questions regarding gender/sexuality. We need to find out what “二陰” (two yin [sites]) refers to. “開竅於二陰”: the dark-north-kidney opens *orifices* at the two yin sites. In this passage regarding the kidney function and its correlated orifices (the “two yin sites”) in *Simple Questions of the Inner Canon*, Unschuld clarifies in the footnote that the “two yin [sites]” refers to “the outlets for urine and stool.”⁴⁹ In other words, the two yin sites point to the two yin openings (“outlets”) that belong to the lower body, one in the front (前陰 *qianyin*) and one at the back (後陰 *houyin*). The “two” here is not the two biological sexes (or genitalia) of the penis and the vagina, which are grouped together as the same frontal yin orifice. The two lower body orifices that connect to the kidney refer therefore respectively to the (sexually undifferentiated/indifferent) orifices at the front and the anus at the back.

Furth, in her examination of gender in Chinese medical history, asks the reader to consider the body-of-orifices (or what she calls the “Yellow Emperor’s body”) of the *Inner Canon* to be one that “has no morphological sex, but only gender.”⁵⁰ Indeed, the body-of-orifices is sexless. The genitals, like the anus, are also sexually *indifferent*. At this moment of the body’s situatedness between its microcosmic inner organs/depots and outer orifices connection, as well as the macrocosmic heaven-and-earth in the *Inner Canon*, I argue that the body-of-orifices does not have gender either. At least, it is irreducible or indifferent to the concept of gender, if by gender we mean a binary system that groups and naturalizes human beings into two oppositional (social) categories, man and woman, which spawn a series of fabricated “fictive opposites (heterosexual, cisgender, binary) [. . . and] further divergent identities.”⁵¹

It should also be clear now that the body-of-orifices I lay out with the help of the *Simple Questions of the Inner Canon* is not the Galenic one-sex model that Thomas Laqueur’s influential history of the Western body traces. The Galenic one-sex model takes the male body as the standard against which the female body is measured as its “less developed” version.⁵² The continuation of the one-sex

model could be found in much of the (psychoanalytic) theories surveyed in the previous section, simply because the entire Oedipus drama (penis-envy and castration anxiety, as well as Lacan's development based on this Freudian plot) is centered around the penis accompanied by its eminent disappearance (*déjà-vu*) or its having-already-lost (*déjà-disparu*). Nor is the Yellow Emperor's body-of-orifices an androgynous alternative if androgyny relies on an addition of male-andro and female-gyn, considering both their mythological and etymological provenance. The body-of-orifices is radically open and indifferent. It unfolds, ramifies, and undulates. Gendered, and in this case, sexed differences are an afterthought, not what it overcomes. The anus, that which many contemporary queer theorists have invoked as the genital's counterargument (relying, almost always exclusively, on psychoanalysis) is, in this case, homologous to the frontal yin "genitals" outlets.

The penis stands out (or rather, precisely does *not* stick out, with all its morphogenetic and psychic implications, but stays inward) as one of the corporeal holes that interface between the outside world, the bodily surface, and the inner cosmos. This hollow penis as one of the "two yin sites" is radically different from the penis that has been easily conflated with the master signifier, the phallus, or the one seen as categorically different from the vagina (the *opposite sex*) let alone the anus, as the "hard fact" of biology. What Andreas-Salomé attributes exclusively to the anus could be true of the penis, namely, it is "a reality and a symbol."⁵³ The *Yellow Emperor's* (metonymically "yellow" men's) absence down there is everyone's "absence." In an almost self-shattering mastery, the penis stubbornly resists its phallic symbolization, literally, from within. And if one could push this further, the bigger the penis, the more obvious its "orificity" and therefore penetrability. In *short*, once the penile orifice is the primary feature used to "represent" the "sexual organs" as an undifferentiated or not-yet differentiated one-hole, it is difficult to relegate it to any phallic bearing unless we grossly overlook it, hide it, or even erase it at the very moment of its (alleged) phallicization, which as I have shown, has been its unfortunate fate in queer theory, psychoanalysis, and pornography when attached to the Asian ethnic supplement.

KAIQIAO, OR EMBODYING HEURISTIC OPENNESS

Let me summarize: We couldn't find the yellow penis in antiquity. This turns out to provide an unexpected angle to reexamine this overrepresented organ, an angle or perspective that an overreliance on the white pen(is) in colonial modernity would not be able to provide. The penis does not have an identity of its own for the Yellow Emperor's body-of-orifices. Together with the vagina and the homologous anus, they are all lower yin body orifices. The entire body as conceived in the *Simple Questions* is emphatically porous. What this Yellow Emperor's body opens up is manifold.⁵⁴ This essay is an invitation to rethink morphogenesis against the overrepresentation of Western, secular, bourgeois Man as well as

its overrepresentation in/as the psychoanalytic phallus. “Overrepresentation of Man,” as we have seen, is symptomatic in the gay mainstream and most tellingly in its overrepresentation as theoretical father figures of queer theory, which is supposed to debunk the hegemony of heteromodernity, where one rarely finds the “yellow” body outside of her strictly smothered ethnic supplementarity. In the last section of this essay, I will examine the entangled implications that the Yellow Emperor’s body-of-orifices has to offer for the joint effort of de-straightening the body and decolonizing knowledge in colonial heteromodernity.

First of all, Yellow Emperor’s body-of-orifices relativizes vision. What it enables us to look at is not one of an obvious presence, one, for example, of the dick, ready to stick out, catches the sight, and provokes anxiety and/or envy in Freud’s viewers depending on if one possesses or not the piece of presence between their legs. The Lacanian subject-formation which moves beyond the carnal organ-specific penis-spotting game of Freud remains primarily a visual drama, now even more individualized through a play of *visual* identification of one’s reflection in the mirror (stage) than the Freudian bourgeois family nucleus of papa and mama (sometimes also sister).⁵⁵ Redirecting vision to the hollow absence (which is not a lack because a lack anticipates a proto-presence, a “should have been there” signified by the phallus in Lacanian terms) allows us to undo or bypass the logic of colonial modernity built upon a phallic ocularcentrism (from the Renaissance perspectivism’s intimate connection to European colonialism to Du Bois’ “Color Line,” from racism as phenotype to the camera as phallic captivity of women).⁵⁶

In her attempt at resignifying and therefore deconstructing the Lacanian phallus, Butler identifies the relation Lacan establishes between phallus and knowledge: “the morphological scheme which becomes the epistemic condition for the world of objects and others to appear is marked as masculine, and hence, becomes the basis for an anthropocentric and androcentric epistemological imperialism.”⁵⁷ Several issues we aim to tackle through the Yellow Emperor’s body-of-orifices are in fact already connected in her astute critique: visibility, epistemology, and coloniality. The site of disturbance and disruption lies, in our case, unlike Butler’s, in a bodily model not retrospectively inaugurated through the specular Gestalt. This allows us to see a fundamental aspect of the body, its profound porosity, which has been almost completely overlooked due to the overrepresentation of the modern/colonial phallus (including its critique).

More specifically, according to Butler, Lacan’s analysis of the narcissistic imaginary suggests that the world of objects becomes known or knowable as having “an anthropomorphic and androcentric character” which is phallic or phallogocentric.⁵⁸ The root of the problem, Butler points out, is that Lacan has taken “male morphology as the only possible figure for the human body”: “precisely *because* it is an idealization, one which no body can adequately approximate, the phallus is a transferable phantasm, and its naturalized link to masculine morphology can be called into question through an aggressive reterritorialization.”⁵⁹ The “aggressive reterritorialization” offered here, as we reviewed earlier in this

essay, is the “Lesbian Phallus.” By now it should be clear to us that the “male/masculine morphology,” by which the authors (Lacan and Butler) mean the penis, is in fact much less certain about its ready-translatability to that of the phallus, the imaginary effect “reified as the privileged signifier of the symbolic order.”⁶⁰ The hollow penis, a yin orifice, no different than the vagina or anus, is hardly an exclusive domain of the masculine morphology. However, if psychoanalysis is after all steeped in a colonial modernity whose organizing principle is a phallic ocularcentrism, which like a mirror produces the delirium of a phallogocentric body and epistemological imperialism, the penis would have never been apprehended as an orifice. Leo Bersani, who pioneers this in a critical reexamination of the anus, towards the end of his fruitful and exquisite exegesis of psychoanalysis, which continues to reinscribe white mythopoeia of the “homo” at the same time, comes very close to a model similar to the Yellow Emperor’s body-of-orifices, which he calls “the receptive body.”⁶¹ In his examination of sexuality and sleep, “two of the body’s most intimate experiences of receptivity,” he meditates on the opening of the body in penetration and directs our attention to the genital penetration in which “the invasive organ is itself ‘occupied’ by the alien space and surfaces it has entered” which renders categories of “active and passive [. . .] not useful.”⁶² The dialectics of passivity/activity is made explicit through the act of fellatio, where simply “the serviced partner passively receives the mouth that envelops his penis, thus obscuring (if not erasing) the dominant-submissive opposition from this transaction.”⁶³ The penis, here, against all odds, becomes as vulnerable and “penetrable” (by being wrapped by the anus, vagina, or mouth) as its alleged counterparts. Bersani’s theoretical pursuit is still more ambitious. It points beyond penetrative sexuality itself: “the duality intrinsic to a broad scale of human activities—respiration, penetrative sexuality, philosophical dualism—collapses in the unitary self-receptiveness of orgasm.”⁶⁴ One could only wish that Bersani had not strictly limited himself to the White Daddy “Western” genealogy.⁶⁵

Perhaps, we do need to halt for a second the rush (often with unquestionable moral righteousness) to erase or replace the penis with “other body parts” such as “an arm, a tongue, a hand (or two), a knee, a thigh, a pelvic bone” for alternative phallic symbolization or completely ignore (or shall we say, suppress) the penis by all these “other body parts,” for example by the (revolutionary or empowered/ing) anus.⁶⁶ The replacement precisely reproduces a phallic economy of either/or. The receptive body offered by the late Bersani or the body-of-orifices I try to delineate here tries to move *below* this dichotomy.

In actuality, passivity (symbolized by anal penetration) has long moved beyond the rectum-as-grave homophobia (as we have seen above, in Tim Dean’s account of barebacking hypermasculine bottomhood).⁶⁷ The “passive role,” a misnomer, could be put to rest in its attempt to be sublimated into a possible alternative, a resignified phallus if you will. If Butler is right in pointing out that the “bodily ego produced through identification is not *mimetically* related to a preexisting

biological or anatomical body” and that “the mirror [. . .] produces that body as its delirious effect,” this delirium cannot be the only way with “which we are compelled to live” as she nonetheless pessimistically suggests.⁶⁸ A decolonial approach to queer theorizing, that is to say, an emphatic insistence on *other* worlds, *other* cosmologies, *other* conceptual resources than the overrepresentation of French theory, German philosophy, and English literature, might indeed move us elsewhere.

If at the root of Lacanian psychoanalysis is a visual identification with the (falsely or illusionary) specular contour of the phallic body, what determines the primacy of the hole in the *Inner Canon's* account of the body as body-of-orifices needs to be laid out. Taking the connection that concerns sexual organs (or the yin orifices) and the kidney as an example: The concept of 開竅 *kaiqiao*, the very word that establishes the inner-outer connectivity between the five inner organs/depots and the nine bodily orifices, means “open—*kai* orifice(s)—*qiao*.” Just like in English, 開 *kai* (open) here could be both a verb (transitive)—to open—and an adjective (intransitive)—that the orifice is unblocked, opened, or *kaiqiao*-ed. Connection here is imaged not in a phallic economy of possession but primarily through permeability, pervasion, and porosity, rather than a joining-together of separated realities and discrete entities.⁶⁹ 竅 *qiao*, the word for orifice, is polyvalent and polysemic. *Shuowen Jiezi* 說文解字, the second-century dictionary that explains the composition and “etymologies” of Chinese characters, registers *qiao* as, “空也, 从穴敷聲” (emptiness, it connotes a cave (穴 *xue*) and bears the sound of 敷 *jiao*). It is used in the *Inner Canon* primarily to designate the nine bodily orifices listed above while retaining the etymological signification of the cave.

One figure stands out prominently: the cave or grotto. In the etymological explication of 竅 *qiao*, the word and also its upper radical 穴 *xue* (cave) are highlighted. 穴, which is also frequently used in both philosophical and religious Daoism, is 洞 *dong* (cave). The very nature that is emphasized here of the *dong* (cave) is its cave-ness, cavity, and cavernosity, that is to say, its transitive, unblocked, and pervasive penetrability, namely, its (near-homophone) 通 *tong*.⁷⁰ Besides the visible ones, 穴 *xue* is also used to refer to the acupoints, cavities that are needled in acupuncture, permeated in moxibustion, or simply massaged—cavities that provide therapeutic access to the interior of the body.

The homophonous characteristics of the Chinese language enable the establishment of connections through puns based either on homophones or neighboring sounds or characters that share in one way or another a resemblance that points to mystical dimensions of the pervasive connectivity (if not connection) of the ten thousand things (萬物相通). That is to say, phonetic porosity is also epistemological. It is not a coincidence but forms part of a long philosophical, mystical, and medical tradition that meditates, conceptualizes, and practices this cosmographic porosity and cosmological connectivity.⁷¹ The resonance between bodily orifice (孔 *kong*),⁷² cave (洞 *dong*), and emptiness (空 *kong*) is therefore not only a pun based on phonetic resemblance but also made possible by a cosmology of permeability and pervasion (通 *tong*), one that ponders deeply on and

practices diligently through “the fundamental relationship between cosmic vitality and sexual vitality.”⁷³ This cosmology of 通 *tong* is widely deployed in Chinese medicine and can be “read in a transitive manner, as the ‘openness’ and, by extension, ‘unblocking’ of the conduits and networks; [. . . and] read intransitively, [as] unhindered physiological process and activity of any kind.”⁷⁴

Now, if we return to reexamine the question of what enables the emergence of a bodily model based on its orifices, we could ask a general question, according to the *Inner Canon* and its related Daoist tradition: How do we get to know something? If the *key* to knowledge (and also self-knowledge) is an illusory mirror image (*méconnaisance*) or indeed a key-like phallic imago/bodily contour that the mirror instigates, the body-of-orifice’s epistemic relation is activated instead by a key-hole (not a key)-like *open orifice*. The heuristic state in which one is open to the access by/of knowledge is described as *kaiqiao* (open orifice), the same verbal phrase that denotes the bodily and cosmic connections. When one is “kaiqiao-ed,” one is ready to learn, to comprehend the world, to let the world in. Yellow Emperor’s morphogenesis therefore gives shape to a heuristic model based on apophatic openness. Kaiqiao is the ultimate heuristic state one desires to be, and the “acquisition” of knowledge is attained not through mastery or property-grasping (therefore “acquisition”) but through an active cultivation of passivity. This active passivity could be intuited in the indeterminacy of the possible English rendering of *kaiqiao* as “opening/ed orifice.”

AN OPEN CONCLUSION

Vision has been determined by the overrepresentation of the colonial/modern phallic ocular. The body-of-orifices extrapolated from the *Inner Canon* is but only one of the many ways that the body has been and could be thought about and approached differently beyond or below vision, in different cultures, temporalities, and histories. It is my hope that this essay has adequately shown the difference a different cosmology can make, for decolonization is not a metaphor, and the master’s anus cannot always dismantle the master’s phallus.⁷⁵

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NOTES

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2. Leo Bersani, *Homos* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 103.
3. See Jordan Osserman's new book for a study of the "organ itself." In particular, it offers a fascinating historical study and theoretical analysis of circumcision. *Circumcision on the Couch: The Cultural, Psychological, and Gendered Dimensions of the World's Oldest Surgery* (New York, NY and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022). See also David M. Friedman's *A Mind of Its Own: A Cultural History of the Penis* (New York: Free Press, 2001).
4. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 3.
5. See for example: David Andrew Griffiths, "Queering the Moment of Hypospadias 'Repair,'" *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 27, no. 4 (October 1, 2021), pp. 499–523, from a medical perspective; and in porn studies, the classic Richard Fung, "Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Video Porn," in *How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video*, ed. Bad Object-Choices (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991), pp. 145–68; Tim Dean, *Unlimited Intimacy: Reflections on the Subculture of Barebacking* (Chicago and London: University Of Chicago Press, 2009); Hoang Tan Nguyen, *A View from the Bottom: Asian American Masculinity and Sexual Representation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).
6. Bersani, *Homos*, p. 103.
7. Iain Morland, "Thinking with the Phallus," *Psychologist* 17, no. 8 (2004), p. 450.
8. I have called for a "decolonial learning to learn from non-modern/non-Western cosmologies" in *Queer Ancient Ways: A Decolonial Exploration* (Earth: Punctum Books, 2018).
9. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 51.
10. Butler, p. 51.
11. Butler, p. 56.
12. Butler, p. 51.
13. Butler, p. 56.
14. Fung, "Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Video Porn," in Nguyen, *A View from the Bottom*.
15. Bersani, *Homos*, p. 103.
16. Fung, "Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Video Porn."
17. Zairong Xiang, "Fragments in the Dark," in *Dark Rooms: Räume Der Un/Sichtbarkeit*, ed. Marietta Kesting and Sophia Kunze (Berlin: Neofelis Verlag, 2017), 164.
18. Esther Newton, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* (University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 3.

19. Nguyen, *A View from the Bottom*, p. 149.
20. Nguyen, p. 144.
21. Nguyen, p. 19. See also: Kathryn Bond Stockton, *Beautiful Bottom, Beautiful Shame: Where "Black" Meets "Queer"* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).
22. By "peripheral origins," I mean queer theory avant-la-lettre, closely related to, yet unaccountable/ed in the "Queer Theory proper," that is, its institutionalization through a purified genealogy of genesis dated exactly to 1991 with the publication of the special issue of the journal *differences* edited by Teresa de Lauretis, a story of origin repeatedly told and endorsed while surprisingly overlooked by many queer theorists versed in Foucauldian genealogy.
23. Guy Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, trans. Daniella Dangoor (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 101.
24. Leo Bersani, *Is the Rectum a Grave?: And Other Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); J. C. Nash, "Black Anality," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 20, no. 4 (January 1, 2014), pp. 439–60.
25. Beatriz Preciado, "Terror Anal," in *El Deseo Homosexual de Guy Hocquenghem* (Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Editorial Melusina, 2009), p. 133.
26. Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, p. 98.
27. Los chicos-de-los-anos-castrados erigieron una comunidad de la que llamaron Ciudad, Estado, Patria, de cuyos órganos de poder y administrativos excluyeron a todos aquellos cuerpos cuyos anos permanecían abiertos: mujeres doblemente perforadas por sus anos y sus vaginas, su cuerpo entero transformable en cavidad uterina capaz de albergar futuros ciudadanos, pero también cuerpos maricas a los que el poder no pudo castrar, cuerpos que reniegan de lo que otros consideran evidencia anatómica y que hacen de la mutación una estética de vida. Beatriz Preciado, "Terror Anal," in *El Deseo Homosexual de Guy Hocquenghem* (Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Editorial Melusina, 2009), p. 137. "The boys-of-castrated-anus established a community of what they called City, State, Fatherland, whose power and administrative authority excluded all those bodies whose anus remained open: women are doubly perforated as a result of their anuses and vaginas [with] their entire body transformable into a uterine cavity capable of housing future citizens; however also the bodies of faggots, which the power was not able to castrate; bodies that repudiated what others would consider anatomic evidence and that create an aesthetic of life from this mutation." (Translation mine.)
28. Bersani, *Is the Rectum a Grave?: And Other Essays*, p. 18.
29. S. Pearl Brilmyer, Filippo Trentin, and Zairong Xiang, 'The Ontology of the Couple, or, What Queer Theory Knows about Numbers,' *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 25, no. 2 (April 1, 2019): 247.
30. See: Georges Didi-Huberman, *Uprisings*, ed. Nicole Brenez et al. (Paris: Gallimard, 2016); Georges Didi-Huberman, "Conflicts of Gestures, Conflicts of Images," *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics* 55–56 (2018), pp. 8–22.
31. Dean, *Unlimited Intimacy*, p. 55.
32. Kadji Amin, "We Are All Nonbinary," *Representations* 158, no. 1 (May 1, 2022), p. 112.

33. Amin, p. 106.
34. Amin, p. 116.
35. Studies on the feminization of Asian masculinity are numerous. An example from popular culture might exemplify better this widely spread racial stereotype. During the “mini-competition” of RuPaul’s Drag Race (Session 8), both the participants and the audience were (positively) surprised when the only Asian man named Peter revealed himself to be the only top among all the hunky muscular pit crew members. The drag queen Kim Chi of the same season shared the stigmatized life experience of being not only Asian but “fat and femme.” See: Ray Crawford, “Ry’s Ru-minations: Rigged RuPaulitics,” in *Queer Space Magazine*, 2016, <https://queerspacemagazine.com/rys-ru-minations-rigged-rupaulitics/> [Last access on September 8, 2022].
36. Alexander R. Galloway, “The Gender of Math,” *Differences* 32, no. 3 (December 1, 2021), p. 6.
37. Lou Andreas-Salomé, “Anal’ and ‘Sexual,’” *Psychoanalysis and History* 24, no. 1 (April 2022), p. 29.
38. Eugenie Brinkema et al., “Responses to “Anal” and “Sexual,”” *Psychoanalysis and History* 24, no. 1 (April 2022), p. 56.
39. 東郭子問於莊子曰：「所謂道，惡乎在？」莊子曰：「無所不在。」東郭子曰：「期而後可。」莊子曰：「在螻蟻。」曰：「何其下邪？」曰：「在稊稗。」曰：「何其愈下邪？」曰：「在瓦甓。」曰：「何其愈甚邪？」曰：「在屎溺。」東郭子不應。（Dong-guo Zi asked Zhuangzi, “Where is what you call the Dao to be found?” Zhuangzi replied, “Everywhere.” Dong-guo Zi said, “specify an instance of it. This way, it will be more satisfactory.” “It is here in this ant.” “Give me a lower instance.” “It is in this wild grass.” “Give me an even lower instance.” “It is in this roof tile.” “Is it as low as it gets?” “It is in the excrement.” To this Dong-guo Zi could not reply.) Chapter 6 “Zhibeiyou” of *Zhuangzi* 《莊子》外篇-知北遊. Translation mine.
40. David Graeber and D. Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*, First American edition (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021), p. 102.
41. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine. Unlike modern biomedical understanding of the bodily organs based on discrete anatomy, the word “臟,” often translated as organ or depot, contains both meanings of a bodily organ but also where different energy is stored. More discussion on this, see: Paul U. Unschuld, “Yin-Yang Theory, the Human Organism, and the Bai Hu Tong: A Need for Pairing and Explaining,” *Asian Medicine* 5, no. 1 (2009), pp. 19–38.
42. For a discussion on the formation of “Traditional” Chinese Medicine, see: Eric I. Karchmer, *Prescriptions for Virtuosity: The Postcolonial Struggle of Chinese Medicine*, First edition (New York: Fordham University Press, 2022) and Kim Taylor, *Chinese Medicine in Early Communist China, 1945–63: A Medicine of Revolution*, Needham Research Institute Studies (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005).
43. Judith Farquhar and Qicheng Zhang, *Ten Thousand Things: Nurturing Life in Contemporary Beijing* (New York: Zone Books, 2012).

44. Schematically these correlations can be summarized as: **Liver**—East—Green/Blue—**Eyes**; **Heart**—South—Red—**Ears**; **Spleen**—Centre—Yellow—**Mouth**; **Lung**—West—White—**Nostrils**; **Kidney**—North—Black—**Two Yin [Sites]**.
45. Paul U. Unschuld, Hermann Tessenow, and Jinsheng Zheng, trans., *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen: An Annotated Translation of Huang Di's Inner Classic—Basic Questions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), p. 93.
46. Andreas-Salomé, “‘Anal’ and ‘Sexual,’” p. 28.
47. Charlotte Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History, 960–1665* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
48. Sylvia Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument,” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (2003), p. 329.
49. See Unschuld, Tessenow, and Zheng 2011 (footnote 2), p. 97.
50. Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History, 960–1665*, p. 46.
51. Amin, “We Are All Nonbinary,” p. 117.
52. See: Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990). For the refutation of Laqueur's now canonic “one sex-model,” see: Brooke Holmes, “Let Go of Laqueur: Towards New Histories of the Sexed Body,” *EuGeStA: Revue sur le genre dans l'Antiquité* 9 (2019), pp. 136–75.
53. Andreas-Salomé, “‘Anal’ and ‘Sexual,’” p. 24.
54. For a proposition to think about the question of discursive construction and material embodiment in the trans debate, see: Zairong Xiang, “Transdualism: Towards a Materio-Discursive Embodiment,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (2018), pp. 421–38.
55. Of course, the “individual” as Lacan's theory of the mirror stage brilliantly shows is precisely the one that is split from within, thanks to the *méconnaissance* of the self in the other-mirror reflection.
56. The correlation between the camera which captures the world through image and the penis-as-phallus as disembodied word is explicit in Mulvey's classic “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” which has recently been expanded by Filippo Trentin into an “‘anal theory’ of looking.” Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” *Screen* 16, no. 3 (September 1, 1975), pp. 6–18; Filippo Trentin, “The Queer Underside of La Dolce Vita: Towards an ‘anal Theory’ of Looking,” *Screen* 61, no. 4 (2020), pp. 545–67.
57. Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”*, p. 42.
58. Butler, p. 46.
59. Butler, p. 53.
60. Butler, p. 54.
61. For a thorough critique of the implicit racism or even “the white supremacism beneath the liberationist rhetoric” in Bersani's work, see Stephen P. Knadler, “Leo Bersani and the Nostalgia for White Male Radicalism,” *Minnesota Review* 47, no. Fall (n.d.), pp. 169–76. For the exploration of possible alliances queer of color

critique might find in Bersani's account of sexuality, see Bobby Benedicto, "Agents and Objects of Death," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 25, no. 2 (April 1, 2019), pp. 273–96. "Bersani here speaks a desire queers of color come to know all too well—namely the desire to have the difference indexed by one's skin not matter, to have it mean nothing, to have it not mean," p. 284.

62. Leo Bersani, *Receptive Bodies* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), pp. 86–87.
63. Bersani, p. 87.
64. Bersani, p. 88.
65. I am both paraphrasing the chapter heading "The Gay Daddy" of Bersani's book *Homos* and referring to the largely unquestioned theoretical monoculturalism of much of queer theory (what I call earlier in the text the white "citational dicks" that this essay aims to critique).
66. Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, p. 55.
67. See also: Daniel Penny, "#Milosexual and the Aesthetics of Fascism" <https://bostonreview.net/articles/daniel-penny-milosexual/> [accessed on September 1, 2022].
68. Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, p. 57.
69. It is interesting to note that "atomic," the adjective form that derives from the word "atom," has been proven to be not only separable but itself consists of infinite openness in recent development of modern physics. "We must be clear that, when it comes to atoms, language can be used only as in poetry. The poet, too, is not nearly so concerned with describing facts as with creating images and establishing mental connections." Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and beyond Encounters and Conversations*, trans. Arnold J. Pomerans (London: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971), p. 41.
70. Franciscus Verellen, "The Beyond Within: Grotto-Heavens (Dongtian) in Taoist Ritual and Cosmology," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 8, no. 1 (1995), pp. 265–90.
71. Certainly, the disciplinary boundaries between these three naturalized in modern science are of course profoundly permeable.
72. 孔 refers to both a small cave and a bodily orifice. *Shuowen Jiezi* simply puts, "孔, 通也" (*kong*, that is, *tong*, pervasion and unblockedness).
73. James Miller, *China's Green Religion: Daoism and the Quest for a Sustainable Future* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), p. 87.
74. Volker Scheid, "Promoting Free Flow in the Networks: Reimagining the Body in Early Modern Suzhou," *History of Science* 56, no. 2 (June 2018), p. 139.
75. Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983), pp. 94–101; Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012), pp. 1–40.

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