In late 1930, renowned German sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld embarked on a world lecture tour that took him to, among other places, India. Speaking to English-educated Indian middle-class audiences, he proposed that sexual science was “not only a medical science, but an important social science as well” and that the time had come “to give this science its due place in human knowledge.” In advocating the value of a scientific approach to sexuality, Hirschfeld often expressed dissatisfaction with what he saw as Indian backwardness in sexual matters. At the same time, he praised the *Kamasutra* as the world’s first sexological *ur*-text. According to Hirschfeld, India (as well as other parts of the world) needed to mobilize indigenous knowledge on sex alongside a modern scientific framework in order to experience a sexological renaissance.¹

Writing roughly around the same time, but unacknowledged by Hirschfeld, a western Indian spiritual figure named Swami Shivananda published a series of books in Marathi—with editions of several thousand copies each—in which he enumerated the sexual practices that married couples needed to follow in order to produce healthy offspring. Shivananda acknowledged sexual scientists such as Havelock Ellis, Marie Stopes, and William J. Robinson while he cited Ayurvedic medical texts, the *Kamasutra*, and other Hindu sources. He put forward a eugenic philosophy, insisting that the key to the reproduction of robust offspring and the generation of a strong nation was the practice of *brahmacharya* (sexual self-restraint).²

While the views of Hirschfeld and Shivananda differed significantly—Hirschfeld would have certainly regarded Shivananda’s insistence on the
importance of semen retention for producing healthy, energetic offspring as being without a scientific foundation—both illustrated the extent to which thinking about sexual matters had become a global phenomenon. Hirschfeld’s trip was designed as a vehicle to impart European sexual science to various Asian societies. However, he felt it important to recognize the Kamasutra’s foundational character. Shivananda believed it critical to acknowledge European canonical sexologists, yet he also forged a logic grounded strongly in Ayurvedic principles. Both claimed that their tenets were based in “scientific” principles, and that sexual science was critical to achieving what they viewed as modernity. Both used modern mass media to disseminate their views. In sum, both Hirschfeld and Shivananda forged their perspectives in light of exchanges of knowledge that flowed back and forth between Europe and India; each transformed these forms of knowledge in the context of his own unique intellectual concerns.

Sexual science, then, was a global formation that simultaneously emerged in multiple sites and that took multiple shapes. Moreover, by the beginning of the twentieth century, scientific exchanges on sexuality were often circular in nature. In 1902, during a sojourn in Berlin, the Japanese writer Sueo Iwaya published an article on masculinity and homosexuality in traditional Japanese culture in the German-language *Yearbook for Sexual Intermediaries.* His writing, itself influenced by European scholarship, shaped how German sexologists like Hirschfeld and Benedict Friedländer came to conceive of topics like masculinity and the “erotic exotic” (i.e., the nexus between “Others,” empire, and sexual desire), and became an ideological touchstone for the ways in which different factions of the gay rights movement defined themselves. Thus the perspectives Hirschfeld took with him to India—and that Shivananda engaged—had significant roots in Japan, and reflected a transculturated, deterritorialized global form of knowledge on sexual matters couched in aspirations for modernity.

Iwaya’s, Hirschfeld’s, and Shivananda’s writings and their circulations exemplify a few of the many global conversations that intimately linked sexuality and modernity. This volume explores these and numerous other circuits within the global field of sexual science as it developed between 1880 and 1960. We aim to spark serious reconsideration of the interactions between discourses of sexual science in and outside of Europe and to engage scholars with the important global dimensions of sexual science and its relationship to modernity. (Modernity here is understood as it was already self-consciously formulated at the time, as a series of fundamental shifts—e.g., in conceptions
of knowledge, in ideas of the self, in aesthetic radicalism, in technological progress, and in urban development.) The core contentions of this volume are: (1) that European sexual science was constituted on the basis of conceptions of Others considered outside of “modernity”; (2) that actors outside of Europe became important interlocutors in a globalizing sexual science through “unruly appropriations” of the field’s emergent ideas; and (3) that ideas of sexual science circulated multidirectionally through intellectual exchange, travel, and internationally produced and disseminated publications. In order to develop these arguments, this volume necessarily includes essays by regional specialists, who wrote their articles in dialogue with each other. We thereby promote an understanding of sexological projects as inherently global rather than bounded by local or national frames. Similarly, because sexual science engaged with a wide range of subjects from its very beginnings, this volume is interdisciplinary and involves historians, historians of science, anthropologists, and humanities scholars working in such areas as literature, gender studies, and cultural studies. Our three key arguments ultimately emerged only in these intense collaborations across regional areas of expertise and disciplines.

European and North American scholars and activists sought inspiration outside the “West,” and tried to cultivate an international audience for their views. Their theories found enthusiastic supporters in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, while also drawing hostile opposition among other constituencies. By the first decades of the twentieth century, advocates of sexual science had emerged in many regions of the world. They engaged in global conversations while also using sexual science as a tool to address local concerns. Sexual science both informed a new kind of European and North American “civilizing” mission in the context of decolonization—for instance, in the movement for birth control—and became central to projects of modernity everywhere. Advocates built social and professional networks with each other, communicated directly and through publications, and made frequent references to each other’s works and activities. All claimed that sexual knowledge needed to be based on “scientific,” “rational” principles, and that doing so was critical to attaining modernity. For these diverse agents around the globe, modernity was an aspirational, if unruly, phenomenon that they claimed derived from “universal” principles; yet, in truth, it was always locally contingent and experienced. Such self-conscious claims usually were new wherever they were taken up and frequently involved sharp critiques of conceptions of sexual matters deemed “traditional.” Sexual science became embroiled in
local political struggles of women and other subordinated groups, and it shaped projects of political regeneration taken up by nationalist leaderships and newly assertive states. Its advocates in places like Shanghai, Mexico City, Tokyo, Bombay, Windhoek, Santiago, Casablanca, Tel Aviv, and Buenos Aires often reinterpreted “foreign” sexological notions in light of prevailing ideas of sexuality, preexisting social concerns, and new preoccupations with achieving modernity. Thus, what was “scientific,” “rational,” or “modern” was defined differently in distinct contexts and by different individuals; there was no tendency toward intellectual homogenization in the views put forward. Nevertheless, these notions ricocheted, and sexual science became a truly global formation that played an influential role in producing knowledge about sexuality, the body, and gender that has proved foundational for our current world.

HISTORY, TERMINOLOGY, INTERDISCIPLINARITY, AND CONTINUITY

Sex—understood here in broad strokes that predate the modern distinction between sex, sexuality, and gender—has long been a central preoccupation for human societies. Sex featured in ancient Hindu texts on lovemaking, defined power hierarchies in ancient Greece, and inspired poets and essayists throughout the centuries. Prophets and pundits have warned of its temptations and treachery, artists have made fortunes selling it, and societies have devised elaborate systems of social control, marriage, and inheritance related to its practice. Sex has informed and shaped law codes that have stigmatized and liberated individuals and groups for a variety of interests and aims. Sex, in other words, has been central to the history of humankind.

Yet it was mainly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that actors in different parts of the world began to insist that sexual knowledge must be based on a “scientific” foundation. From its inception, sexual science was an interdisciplinary field produced and maintained by specialists who codified and catalogued sexual interactions in all their myriad expressions—from the scale of the kiss or caress, to perceived “perversities” found among social groups, to the impact of disease, prostitution, and population control on regional, national, and global scales. Sexual science took as its starting point and field of interest both the individual and society at
large, operating in beds, homes, jails, cities, nations, and circuits of global exchange. Thus, sexual science (or sexology) came to be one of the most influential scientific and intellectual developments in modern cultural and social history.

The terms “sexual science” and “sexology” are often used interchangeably, but they can bear different meanings, intellectual contexts, and historical genealogies. Sexual science might be best understood as a direct translation of the German *Sexualwissenschaft*. This notion derives from the notion of *Wissenschaft*, which while inclusive of the Anglo-American idea of “science,” also encompasses the humanities and social sciences as classifiable forms of knowledge. In the diverse approaches characteristic of the first generation of scholarship on sexual science, the field thus encompassed more than the narrow understanding of “science” that might be familiar to readers (i.e., one limited to primarily empirical or medical methods and outlooks). Instead, it constituted a truly interdisciplinary field, interlinking the professionalizing disciplines of human psychology, psychoanalysis, endocrinology, ethnography, biotypology, anthropology, criminology, and physiology, as well as knowledge produced in literature, art, folk practices, and social activism. Viewing sexual science through the lens of these translations of knowledge enables a better understanding of constructions of “enlightened rationality” that Michel Foucault and others have described as the basis for the epistemic shift of modernity. Yet this lens also illuminates the ways in which considerable continuity of seemingly “irrational” social constructs, “traditional” notions of sexuality, and invented histories could persist in the new field.6

In contrast, the term “sexology”—in use since the early 1900s—often evokes the post–World War II period’s emphasis on medicalization. It is frequently used in connection with the clinical institutionalization of the study of sexuality—in particular, sexual pathology. But sexology often also denotes a particular type of popularization of scientific knowledge on sexuality made famous in different parts of the world by Alfred Kinsey, A. P. Pillay, and Takahasi Tetsu, among others.7 Modern mass media, the institution of the sex-advice columnist, and the emergence of scientists as public intellectuals and sex researchers as media stars drove the establishment of the term “sexology” from the 1960s onward. As will become evident, there is much slippage in this terminology and its translations: most contributors in this volume use “sexual science” and “sexology” interchangeably, following the cues of the historical context with which they engage.
Historians of Europe and North America have studied sexual science for some time, often within broader histories of sexuality, often highlighting the work of key figures like Hirschfeld, Kinsey, Havelock Ellis, Marie Stopes, and Margaret Sanger. They have examined how their findings entered into larger popular conceptions of sexual knowledge, and into informed understandings of marriage and love, human nature, human freedom, and law. Foucault’s work looms large in the field, and this volume implicitly and at times explicitly addresses its possibilities and limitations. In his foundational work, *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault offered a genealogy that situated sexuality as a discourse, a “hermeneutics of the self,” and an institution that produced subjectivities that distinguished modernity from its antecedents. For Foucault, modern sexual science represented an epistemic break from pre–nineteenth century notions of the self. Forged through the modes of confession and categorization, modern sexual science located the self in medicalized, disciplining discourses—sexuality—about the body’s character.

While recognizing the importance of Foucault, scholars such as Harry Oosterhuis and Jennifer Terry have critiqued his premises in European and American cases, while Ann Stoler has challenged Foucault through her work on colonial empires. Transnational approaches have offered some of the richest critiques, and Anne McClintock and Chiara Beccalossi (a contributor to this volume) have already paid significant attention to the transnational character of sexual science within Europe. Most significantly for this volume, Foucault and his followers overlooked the role of Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans in forging sexual science. In his works, the sexual subject/self was situated as “Western” and “modern” without a recognition of how global interactions were necessary for its emergence. In Foucault’s Eurocentric treatment, perspectives about sex created outside Europe constituted an unscientific *ars erotica* that contrasted with the West’s *scientia sexualis*. This binary undoubtedly was itself a product of Orientalist understandings of sexuality in the “East” that emerged in the late nineteenth century. It has seriously limited an appreciation of how conceptions of sexuality developed outside of Europe and the ways in which those conceptions became critical to sexological understandings in Europe. Of course, there has been important work since Foucault by specialists on particular regions outside Europe,
covering such subjects as birth control, homosexuality, prostitution, and eugenics. While most of these works make sophisticated individual contributions to their respective regional historiographies, they usually have been read in isolation, and they have so far played only a small role in constituting an understanding of sexual science as a global formation.

An important exception to this generalization is Howard Chiang’s pioneering scholarship. Chiang, who has contributed this volume’s afterword, set his research on twentieth-century Chinese sexuality in an ambitious theoretical frame that accounts for the historical, global dimensions of sexual science. Adapting a Foucauldian approach but distancing himself from Foucault’s characterization of non-European approaches to sexual matters as an *ars erotica*, Chiang argues that *scientia sexualis* from its inception must be placed in an “adequate framework of translational economy and global circulation.” He stresses the “double alterity” of sexual science—that is, not only the way in which the “scientification” of sexual understandings and the emergence of the concept of sexuality itself stemmed from new methodologies of investigation in Europe, such as those found in the medical clinic and asylum, but also from Orientalist scholarship and ethnology. In discussing Iwan Bloch’s work, for example, he suggested that “places of a distanced Other now [came to] play a decisive role in the way sexual anomalies are articulated in the European sexological imagination.” China and India thus “performed an important epistemic function in shaping the historical-intellectual contours of this scientification process.” By the early twentieth century, Chiang demonstrates, when nationalist conceptions of modernity took hold, Chinese scholars began to themselves play an active role in the development of sexual science. In other words, China shifted from an imagined Other against which Western sexology was defined to a site that absorbed “the globally circulating discourse of sexology, category of homosexuality, and practice of articulating a psychiatric style of reasoning.”

Chiang’s productive deployment of the Foucauldian concept of the episteme, the historically defined and defining condition for the possibilities and limits of scientific knowledge, has been foundational to the arguments of some of this volume’s participants. Their essays develop Chiang’s arguments about the ways Orientalist scholarship became critical to the construction of European sexual science. These essays suggest that sexual science participated in an ongoing engagement with wider understandings of Asia and Africa. At the same time, other essays depart from Chiang and analyze the divergent ways in which figures in Asia, Africa, and Latin America transformed...
notions of sexual science in different cultural and political contexts. They suggest that Chiang’s focus on a single Foucauldian epistemic break between pre-twentieth-century understandings of sex and modern “scientific” notions of sexual science derived from the West limits our appreciation of the creative, dynamic, and continuous character of these transformations that acquired their shape through mutually constitutive global interactions. Several contributors also insist on the importance of social-historical evidence—derived from case studies, police reports, newspapers, memoirs—in order to complicate the cultural and intellectual approaches Chiang advances on the history of sexual science.

Another very recent exception to the narrative of sexual science as a “Western-derived” discipline is a volume of essays, Sexology and Translation, edited by Heike Bauer.18 Bauer’s work focuses on “translation,” which it defines as “in the broadest sense the dynamic by which ideas are produced and transmitted” across cultures and which was one of the crucial mechanisms by which actors outside the “West” contributed to shaping the contours of the field. The essays in our volume also discuss translational processes but extend the global history of sexual science beyond translation in a number of directions: by highlighting the multidirectional flows of knowledge between different world regions; by recognizing the importance of Asian, African, and Latin American inputs to the formation of European sexual knowledge as well as vice versa; and by seeking to appreciate the contexts of local intellectual politics and social histories into which ideas of sexual science were appropriated and transformed.

ARGUMENTS AND STRUCTURE OF THE VOLUME

This volume thus seeks to advance a number of novel arguments about how sexual science should be placed in a global history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and more generally, how global processes are crucial to the formation of scientific disciplines. We view global history as related to, but not synonymous with, fields such as world history and transnational history. Many “worlds”—bounded regions in which there is an intensity of political, sociocultural, and economic interactions such as the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds—exist within truly globally operating systems and networks. At the same time, numerous transnational flows—of people or ideas, for example—cross borders and frontiers in ways that challenge
national integrity. The stress on appreciating connections, flows, migrations, appropriations, and reciprocal influences also distinguishes our approach from what could be called *comparative world history*, which typically examines particular phenomena in different national or regional contexts without exploring in depth the ways in which international connections contributed to their constitution. This volume is global without claiming to cover every region, topic, or period identically. It is not—nor could it be—exhaustive geographically or linguistically, and it reflects the interests of the fellows who participated in the research institute on which it is based. It is our hope that the book will thus serve as a foundation for further research in the global history of sexual science.

Our conception of global history is informed theoretically by recent scholarship that questions what Daniel T. Rodgers has called “old containers of place,” particularly national boundaries. The essays here address questions about how the “local” and the “global” have mutually constituted each other at different geographic scales and through both locally specific and broader socioeconomic, cultural, and political processes. The volume thus highlights histories of particular “cultures in motion”—circuits of exchange, movements of ideas, practices, and peoples, and the translation/transmission of sexual science generally. Sexual science, we suggest, was a “traveling culture” that resulted in collisions and contestations on a variety of scales through translations, appropriations, and misunderstandings.

Our work is situated more specifically in relation to the so-called transnational turn and/or global turn in sexuality studies. Global sexual science could be described in the words of Elizabeth Povinelli and George Chauncey as a key force in the “dense, variegated traffic in cultural representations, people, and capital [that] characterizes the social life of people around the world.” Such “traffic,” in turn, influenced sexual science, its aims, and its deployments. We see sexual science and its advocates in various world regions as “mediating figure[s] between the nation and diaspora, home and the state, the local and the global”—to borrow a characterization that Arnaldo Cruz-Malave and Martin F. Manalansan have used to describe queer cultures.

Despite the global focus of our work, we do not view sexual science as evidence of an emerging homogenous global culture, but instead as an interactive *formation* that was never fully within the control of any single group of advocates. Tom Boellstorff’s anthropological theory of “dubbing culture” has influenced our thinking: as a consequence of interactions and contestations,
sexual science was given alternative “tracks” of meaning by local actors who learned about the field through global networks, often in a fragmentary way, and who redeployed sexual science at home and through these same networks. Anthropologist Anna Tsing’s discussion of how universalizing discourses become transfigured in new contexts also provides a valuable model for appreciating the movement of sexological knowledge across cultures. According to Tsing, so-called universals “never fulfill their promise of universality.” To be effective in “specific historical conjunctures,” they must become “engaged” in contexts far different from those in which they originated. In these conjunctures, universals become transfigured through friction, “the awkward, unequal, unstable and creative qualities of interactions across difference,” as the advocates of these principles seek to gain support for their ideas. As the theories of Boellstorff and Tsing both would suggest, local, regional, and global ideas find voice in new contexts and applications, old ideas are displaced as new ones are adopted, and new power centers are forged as old ones are dismantled. Hybrid and even transcultural disciplines, sociocultural practices, and politics are created, which in turn produce modern citizens, nations, and universals in locally contingent ways, as well as subjectivities that both embrace and reject these formulations. Put another way: sexual science helped both to enable and to contest (bio)power regimes across interlinked local and global scales.

In sum, we contend that theoretical approaches to the movements of people and ideas that have proven so valuable in studies of queer globalizations, migrations, and frictions; postcolonial relationships; global feminisms; and the development (and dismemberment) of identities have their underexplored historical counterparts—and even foundations—in the histories of sexual science explored in this volume. By delving into processes that date back to the late nineteenth century, we extend our discussion beyond sexuality studies’ current, presentist focus on the relationship between globalization and sexuality in a context of commodity exchange and global capital. Moreover, while we bring conceptions of globalization and global history to bear on the history of sexual science, we feel that the study of the subject has much to contribute in turn to the understanding of globalization and modernity more broadly. Building upon J. K. Gibson-Graham’s feminist view, we argue that sexual science can be described neither as a “masculinist entity” imposing itself through global systems nor as a product of a powerful active “West” acting on the passive “rest,” but instead, as part of a globalization founded on
contingencies and interlocking interactions. Instead, the essays in this volume seriously engage the call by scholars—among others, the historians Heidi Tinsman and Ulrike Strasser—to integrate the study of sexuality and gender in regions outside a narrowly construed West into global history rather than presenting them as niche narratives of peripheries outside of European and North American “universals.” Ultimately, the analysis of constantly shifting multidirectional global circuits of knowledge could serve to break with established notions of regional studies. As the anthropologist and major theorist of globalization Arjun Appadurai wrote, “[W]e need an architecture for area studies that is based on process geographies.” Thinking about “ethnoscapes” and the “world of flows” historically precipitates an understanding of regions not as “permanent geographical fact,” but as “problematic heuristic devices for the study of global geographic and cultural processes.”

In what follows, we advance our theoretical and methodological commitments through three interrelated parts: (1) “Evolution, Sexual Science, and the Anthropology of the Other”; (2) “Science by the Book and Unruly Appropriations”; and (3) “Mobility, Travel, Exile, and the Circuits of Sexological Knowledge.” These sections derive from our volume’s three core arguments. First, from a very early moment in the history of sexual science, understandings and imaginings of exotified Others—represented by Asian civilizations; indigenous peoples in Asia, Africa, and Latin America; and other societies considered outside the modern “West”—were crucial to the development of the field in northwestern Europe and North America. Second, protagonists in Asia, Africa, and Latin America—scientists, state actors, local intellectuals, and political activists of various kinds—became critical participants in this field of knowledge through a variety of unru  

appropriations of sexual science. Third, the circulation of knowledge in sexual science’s global formation became increasingly intense and multidirectional over time. The organization of this book reflects these key arguments rather than a topical, geographical, or temporal approach to the history of sexual science. By eschewing the approaches found in many previous edited collections—that is, by offering interconnected essays rather than a collection of essays that focus on various world regions in theoretical isolation from each other—our volume offers a distinct opportunity to understand the important ways in which sexual science shaped the modern world. In each of the subsequent sections, we demonstrate how the individual essays serve to elucidate the larger arguments of this volume.
1. Evolution, Sexual Science, and the Anthropology of the Other

The first part of this volume explores how sexual science, empire, Orientalist scholarship, and anthropology proved mutually constitutive, and how interactions with peoples and societies beyond Europe fundamentally oriented the development of the field, as well as its social, political, and cultural applications. Because they have overlooked these processes of mutual constitution, previous works on European and North American sexual science are, to borrow a phrasing Dipesh Chakrabarty used in another context, “indispensable but inadequate” in explaining how sexual science was created and disseminated globally. For instance, they do not account for the important ways in which European ideas of sexuality relied on the study of sexual practices and ideologies elsewhere and the ways in which encounters with Others helped to construct the idea of “civilization.” As the essays in this section demonstrate, what was to be considered civilized and whether civilization in itself was desirable was being debated with the emergence of sexual science. Was Western modernity—rooted in urbanization—civilized and evolving, or was it barbaric and devolving? These questions carried weight in debates in the traditionally defined West, but also in Latin America. Prominent nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century liberal figures, like Domingo Sarmiento in Argentina, urged their audiences to accept urban European culture as civilization and to view indigenous African and Eastern cultures as barbaric. On the other hand, other Latin American writers would lament that cities enabled the destabilization of sociocultural and sexual mores in ever accelerating ways.

Influenced by scholarship on these debates, Pablo Ben’s chapter works to explain the simultaneous emergence and similarity of the so-called cities of sin. These cosmopolitan centers emerged as part of rapid processes of modernization and became incubators of a sexual science in which the evolution or devolution of human society was debated in sexual terms and described as a fact of daily life. His essay illuminates how prostitution and homosexuality were rendered visible in a spectrum of tensions present in the historical literature: between civilization and barbarism, past and present, and chaos and order.

Such tensions shaped the way in which sexual science accounted for the world outside Europe. As the chapters by Jana Funke and Kate Fisher and by Ralph Leck argue, anthropology became a central field of inquiry in which Others provided the means for developing sexual science as a liberationist field for white Europeans themselves. Indeed, Funke and Fisher show how British...
and German scholars sought to escape the narrow medical focus of early sexology—in which sexual deviance and criminality had figured prominently—in order to embrace cultures outside of Europe as having value for the expansion of sexual civil rights. Leck, in turn, shows how Edward Westermarck, a Finnish/British scholar who wrote extensively on Morocco, expressed views grounded in emerging conceptions of anthropology that sometimes challenged earlier imperial tenets. The integration of anthropology with sexual science allowed for a more interdisciplinary, less medical view of sexuality, meaning that insights gleaned from anthropological study helped challenge ideas of deviant sexuality in Europe itself—something that Ellis, Westermarck, and Hirschfeld all found appealing. In this sense, to speak again with Chakrabarty’s terms, the idea of Europe was “provincialized,” even as the tension between seeing the foreign as potentially liberational and degradational remained.33

The decentering of the European imaginary had important consequences for the ideological foundations of sexual science. For instance, in her chapter Angela Willey connects the idea of monogamy in the works of Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Ellis with their view of “Islamic” societies. Both claimed that monogamy marked the superiority of European societies—either because it was rooted in Christianity or because it was “natural.” Willey rejects sexual science’s analytic binary of “liberation” and “pathologization” and describes them instead as concomitant by revealing the racialized, imperial nature of these superiority claims. Furthermore, she traces their ongoing, unacknowledged discursive legacies that persist even today—notably, in how Christian ideas of marriage were detached from their discursive origins and secularized as normative.

In the section’s final essay, Rebecca Hodes also rejects the liberationist claims made by sexual science. Her case study on South Africa shows how racial science played a key role in the sexual scientific readings of the “Hottentot apron,” a perceived elongation of the labia claimed to have been a characteristic of Khoisan women. The systemic study of perceived genital anomalies became a means for South African whites and scholars in Europe to render visible who was civilized or barbaric, in effect physically drawing this boundary on women’s bodies. Hodes’s essay shows how ideas of racial and sexual superiority emerged in multidirectional flows directly related to contact with Others in and outside of Europe. Sexual science, she asserts, was simultaneously global and local, mobile and adaptable, and already out of the control of its proponents in Europe, even as they marshaled it to support their ideas of empire.
2. Science by the Book and Unruly Appropriations

The second section focuses on the “unruly appropriations” of sexual science globally—that is, on how actors in Asia, Africa, and Latin America constantly generated new interpretations of sexual science as they drew upon them in novel contexts. We use the term “appropriation” here in a sharp contrast to the notion of “Western influence”; rather than assume a smooth flow of ideas from Europe, this concept emphasizes the active, selective, and locally contingent nature of adaptation. Through the word “unruly” we stress the ways in which the transformations of meaning often consistently escaped the intentions and logic of the field’s canonical figures. Actors in Asia, Africa, and Latin America claimed to be partners rather than followers in global sexological debates. They significantly shaped the contours of sexual science and integrated (or helped to integrate) it into numerous modernizing projects. These projects included challenges to “traditional” mores associated with patriarchal, religious, and colonial authorities; attempts to promote nationalism through eugenics; and state efforts to develop alternative disciplinary regimes. As sexual science was invoked to serve these projects, European and American concepts were given novel meanings and the field was reconfigured. This section highlights how sexual science as a field of knowledge that made particularly strong claims to universalism was transfigured to reflect the circumstances where it was applied.

Two interrelated key points cut across this section’s essays: the role of sexual science in fostering state power and, in turn, the use of sexual science in local contexts to contest power—a dynamic that makes the process “unruly.” In their chapters, both Robert Deam Tobin and Ryan M. Jones explore cases in which the disciplinary mechanisms of state power and sexual science converged. Tobin, for instance, explores the case of Victor van Alten, who was tried for “indecent conduct contrary to nature” after making sexual assaults on several African men in German Southwest Africa. Tobin shows that colonial prosecutors drew heavily upon ideas by psychiatrists such as Krafft-Ebing and Karl Westphal to pursue a conviction. Van Alten’s defense in turn called upon the testimony of Hirschfeld and Bloch to claim pathology and thus mental incompetency. The invocation of sexual science in a trial located in a colony far removed from European centers of sexological discussion clearly indicates its global reach and the way the discipline was reshaped in politically distinct situations. The trial in turn likely affected key statutes under which individuals were prosecuted for sexual deviance back in Berlin.
Ryan M. Jones similarly highlights a criminological site in his analysis of a 1930s Mexican legal case. In the medical and sexological discourse surrounding this murder trial, long-held popular models of homosexuality, which was believed to be legible through “anatomical truths” and psychological signs, were fused with newer sexological approaches. This case, Jones suggests, was a key example of the “Freudianization” and “Lombrosianization” of Mexican sexology as local jurists drew upon sexual science to selectively appeal to assumed universals. Over time, the stated official goal of solving the “problem” of homosexuality shifted from the criminalization of sexual deviance toward normative bodily reconfiguration through sex-reassignment surgery—an approach that became influential internationally and to which Mexico contributed greatly.

In contrast, other essays in this section stress how sexual science was used to contest dominant assumptions of power. In their chapter on R. D. Karve, a sexual scientist and birth-control advocate in western India during the first half of the twentieth century, Shrikant Botre and Douglas E. Haynes show how the invocation of sexual science became relevant to Karve’s radical critique of prominent nationalist theories of brahmacharya (sexual self-constraint), a practice believed to be essential to the regeneration of Indian masculinity and the nation. Karve’s rejection of Indian conceptions of sexual science and his embrace of the work done by iconic figures in Europe and the United States at first suggests he was a wholesale Westernizer. However, Karve was instead highly selective in drawing ideas from European sexual science that served his iconoclastic critique of the place of religion in Indian society.

In her chapter on theories of male-female difference and female identity in 1910s and 1920s Japan, Michiko Suzuki also focuses on the subversive deployment of sexual science and connects histories of sexual science with histories of gender politics. Sexologist Ogura Seizaburō and feminist Hiratsuka Raichō drew upon European conceptions of sex difference, particularly those developed by Ellis, to present new ideas about female characteristics and sexuality. Suzuki argues that while theories of sex difference have more commonly supported a maternalist ideology, their use also served other purposes, including the prioritizing of sex over racial difference—useful for Japanese feminists to position themselves as coeval modern subjects within global frameworks.

The tension between claims to universal translatability and practices of unruly or subversive appropriations comes also distinctly to the fore in Rachel Hui-Chi Hsu’s chapter on the changing character of a series of
translations of Ellis’s work into Chinese between the 1920s and the 1940s. While building on Chiang’s discussion of many of the same translators, she departs from his analysis by stressing the significance of the differences between the translations and thus the reinterpretation of Ellis’s writing in China over time. Shifts in interpretation over time are also central to Mark McLelland’s essay on the career of Takahashi Tetsu, one of Japan’s most prominent post–World War II sexual scientists. McLelland places Takahashi’s thought on sexual matters in the context of changing Japanese political regimes, from prewar Japan to the postwar American occupation and beyond. Takahashi’s mobilization of Kinsey’s work and the work of other Western sexual scientists in the early 1950s and his attempts to synthesize that with what he saw as an indigenous Japanese approach provided a powerful counternarrative to intensifying state efforts to set standards for sexual practice.

Overall, these essays demonstrate how even when advocates in Asia, Africa, and Latin America insisted on making sure that Western sexual science be applied in a “pure form,” they exercised considerable selectivity in choosing aspects most relevant to their particular agendas. They also illustrate ways in which the advocates of sexual science created hybrid philosophies through creative juxtapositions of what they framed as European notions with indigenous principles—for example, Hsu’s discussion of Zhang Jingsheng’s sexual theories makes clear that he was read by Chinese audiences in light of locally familiar literary traditions, including Taoism, alchemy, and pornography; McLelland stresses how Takahashi emphasized the recovery of historical Japanese sexual practices; and Jones discusses the ways in which Roman Catholic images of bodily stigmata meshed with sexological research in Mexican legal reasoning on homosexuality.

The “unruly” character of transformations of European sexual science is demonstrated most dramatically in Ishita Pande’s contribution, which explores early-twentieth-century “global/Hindu sexology.” This North Indian literature, which often advocated “traditional” principles of sexual self-constraint even as it promoted theories of sexual satisfaction for women within marriage, claimed the compatibility of “ancient” Hindu wisdom on sexual matters with the theories of modern sexual science. Hindu sexology put forward a body of sexual knowledge that was to be applied in the context of the modern ideal of conjugalilty and was “fundamentally global in its subscription to a standardized biosocial temporality captured in the image of the body as a clock.” In this way, Pande implicitly engages the ongoing debates

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on time launched by queer-studies scholars like Judith Halberstam and Lee Edelman, showing the frictions over appeals to universals and their limits: “time” itself could be appropriated in “unruly” ways.

3. Mobility, Travel, Exile, and the Circuits of Sexological Knowledge

While power differentials and language differences influenced how ideas traveled globally, in many other cases ideas generated in the so-called periphery strongly affected beliefs and practices in the “metropole.” Sexual science increasingly became a product of global interactions, migrations, and circulations of people and ideas. Sexual scientists disseminated views in letters and publications, traveled, fled, resettled, and moved between the urban hubs of sexual science. These centers of intellectual exchange shifted significantly. As sexual scientists became persecuted by the Nazis in Berlin, one of sexual science’s most important early centers, places like Bombay (where the most important English-language sexual science journal was published during the 1930s), Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Shanghai, and Tokyo developed into critical cosmopolitan nodes where ideas were appropriated, transformed, and retransmitted. Similar shifts can be seen in language. While much of the most important sexological literature was published in Italian, German, and French until early in the twentieth century, English became the field’s dominant language by 1950. Nevertheless, important scholarship appeared in Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, and other languages that found regional and international audiences. Many contributions in this section focus on what we came to recognize as particular transnational “circuits” of sexological exchange. These include the “Latin/Hispanic” circuit, a “German/Japanese/Korean” circuit, and another circuit linking various English-speaking regions—to name three. These circuits were often grounded in common language and cultural heritage and based on the particular biographies or research interests of individual sexual scientists or activists. They were facilitated through publications, travel, and education.

By illuminating the multidirectionality of knowledge flows and circuits in the global formation of sexual science, this section also offers alternative perspectives on issues raised in the two previous sections. For instance, in their chapters Chiara Beccalossi and Kurt MacMillan tackle the complex relationships between sexology, state power, and liberational discourses; both explore how sexologists mobilized medical and natural scientific approaches
through the positivist and empiricist frames that ended up dominating the field by midcentury, although to differing ends. As Beccalossi elaborates, criminal anthropology stood at the beginning of a particular “Latin” version of sexual science that incorporated insights from southern European endocrinology and eugenics, and thus could ultimately be put into the service of fascist Italy—for example, by the biotypologist and endocrinologist Nicola Pende. It also held great appeal in Argentina, where a sizable Italian immigrant population lived and where preoccupations with racial purity proved potent. “Latin” sexual science, though, did not simply emanate from Italy or Spain to service repressive regimes; it involved generative interplays across the Atlantic. As Kurt MacMillan describes in his chapter, Alejandro Lipschütz, a Latvian-Chilean scholar, established new transatlantic links in conversation with the Spanish sexologist Gregorio Marañón, while rejecting the totalizing efforts of Europeans that rested on legacies of imperial power and racism by supporting Chile’s indigenista movement. Lipschütz asserted in ways very different from those of his interlocutors in Europe that sexual science was necessary to ensure a healthy nation, while also making Chile an important site within both Latin and central European circuits of exchange. In addition, MacMillan, like Jones, points out the crucial role of sexual science in the emergence of sex-change surgeries, which were on their way to become a globally widespread practice.

In contrast, the close relationship between sexual science and radical, globally circulating social movements of the early twentieth century, particularly feminism, comes to the fore in Sanjam Ahluwalia’s and Veronika Fuechtner’s contributions. In the pages of the International Journal of Sexual Science, which A. P. Pillay ran from Bombay in the 1940s and 1950s, contributors from the United States, Europe, and India participated in a heated global conversation on the “authenticity, normality, abnormality, of women’s orgasms.” While some participants were sexual scientists, the public, especially women themselves, also weighed in in the form of letters and commentary. Ahluwalia’s discussion of the female orgasm—like Willey’s on monogamy—reveals the historicity of sexological categories while also showing their inherent connection to the “internally fractured heteropatriarchal imaginative” and how this imaginative was contested.

Informal challenges to this scientific imaginative from the sidelines also played a crucial role in the debates on birth control and the sexual politics of anticolonialist and communist groups, as the case of the Berlin-based American journalist Agnes Smedley exemplifies. Shuttling between North
America, Asia, and Europe, Smedley might be called a “Western unruly appropriator” of sorts as she and her Indian revolutionary interlocutors negotiated new definitions of masculinity, femininity, and sexuality emerging from a global circulation of sexual science, radical politics, and psychoanalysis. Fuechtner thus shows how these personal negotiations of scientific debates reveal another critical side of the disciplinary hybridity—addressed earlier by Leck and Willey—of sexual science itself.

Rainer Herrn’s chapter especially deepens this issue of formal and informal sources such as interviews, letters, and even gossip as the material basis for a growing global, hybrid sexual science. It also shows how sexual ethnography became an important field of sexual science as it served to delineate ideological differences between European scientists and activists—for example, vis-à-vis the “masculinist” theories on homosexuality. More important, the multidirectionality and circularity of the flow of ideas is evident in the interactions between Japanese and German sexual science. Herrn shows how, as cited earlier, Iwaya’s interventions became foundational for sexual science in Germany. And Hirschfeld in turn used Iwaya’s writings and personal guidance in Japan to frame his experiences and studies of sexuality that subsequently became globalized once more.

Broadly speaking, this section expands our understandings of global circuits of knowledge and also complicates a narrow version of the “West” as directing sexual science and disseminating it elsewhere. Latin Americans, for example, considered themselves to be “Western,” and while their view may not have been shared by some Europeans who considered them to be Others, MacMillan’s and Beccalossi’s essays provide evidence that major European sexologists like Lombroso, Pende, and Marañón actively sought interactions with their counterparts in the Americas and incorporated their ideas into their own works, much in the same way that Hirschfeld and Iwaya facilitated such interactions between Germany and Japan. This means that schools of thought long considered Italian, Spanish, or German were also necessarily Latin American and Japanese. Such schools were thus global rather than bounded by nations, and operated through networks of political, cultural, and linguistic affinities.

Yet, globalized circulations did not always succeed in every place. Kirsten Leng’s chapter raises the necessary question of why particular versions of sexual science, be they medically oriented or methodologically hybrid, translated well into some contexts and why others failed to take hold. Leng discusses the case of the prominent sexual scientist Max Marcuse, who
emigrated to Palestine and who, unlike Lipschütz in Chile, was unable to connect to local debates on sexuality because his approach did not connect to Zionist visions of biology, community, and sexuality. His case shows how situational these global transfers were—cosmopolitan, yet highly local—and how sexual science was, as Leng writes, “a form of embodied knowledge that traveled not just in texts.”

**CONCLUSION**

All of this volume’s contributions illuminate various circuits, nodes, and modes through which sexual scientific knowledge traversed the globe. Yet they also show how various actors engaged with sexual science, making apparent the frequently complex subject positions of many of the field’s early protagonists. Many influential European sexual scientists, especially those writing in German, were Jews, including Hirschfeld, Lipschütz, and Marcuse. They were often professionally disadvantaged in more-established fields like medicine and psychiatry, they had to work with a scientific language that pathologized Jewishness, and their experiences of Jewishness found their way into the theoretical frames and language they developed. Similarly, several sexual scientists engaged in (or are believed to have engaged in) same-sex relationships. At the same time, they participated in the scientific project of defining homosexuality—in a variety of ways and without revealing their personal investment in this issue—as pathology, choice, or circumstance. Likewise, some proponents of sexual science self-identified as racial Others—Smedley, for one—or were seen as racially Other and/or as colonial subjects by the European and North American scientific establishment, as Pillay, Iwaya, and Jingsheng also were.

Each of these sexual scientists had to navigate a field in which foundational texts—such as those by Ellis, Krafft-Ebing, and the criminal anthropologist Cesare Lombroso—closely connected theories of sexuality with late-nineteenth-century understandings of evolution, racial hierarchies, crime, and social degeneration. Sex and sexual science thus were intimately entwined with the emerging self-referential, imperial, and exclusionary definitions of the “West” from the so-called rest. This status—the “double bind” of being both a subject and an object of a field in which a biased scientific language predominated—echoes Chiang’s description of “double alterity.” While Chiang’s first notion of alterity, based on arguments by Foucault and
the historian of sexuality Arnold I. Davidson, referred to the moment in Europe when a transition from an “anatomical” style of scientific reasoning shifted to a “psychiatric” style, the second alterity referred to what Chiang called the “geospatial alterity of a distanced Other” outside of Europe. The fact that these Others in large part created and participated in expanding sexual science—which our contributors make clear in this volume—gives an additional, more internal dimension to this alterity. Of course, writing from a subject position of self-styled or imposed marginality did not necessarily mean writing against the grain. Each case played out quite differently; consider, for example, the differences between Westermarck’s, Marcuse’s, and Lipschütz’s experiences. But the fact that many protagonists of sexual science considered themselves or were considered to be Others, wrote from Other places, or often challenged established notions of the West makes sexual science a unique and important case for understanding early-twentieth-century modernity and global interactions.

Tracing histories of sexual science’s global mobility, its particular geographic or linguistic circuits, and its appropriations, transformations, and particular geographic nodes is crucial to answering the question of where sexual science is today. Sexual science has affected sexual attitudes and behaviors; notions of the body and health; conceptions of marriage, love, and the family; ideas about human freedom and citizenship; disciplinary policies of modern states; and theories of race and eugenics. The ideas of European sexual scientists like Hirschfeld, Freud, Ellis, and Marañón influenced modernist literature, art, architecture, and film—which, in turn, shaped societal understandings of sexuality thereafter. New voices appeared in subsequent decades, and American sexologists like Alfred Kinsey, William Masters, and Virginia Johnson would become deeply connected with the sociocultural transformation of US society at midcentury and beyond.

Yet, sexual science is no longer represented as a formal field in universities, medical schools, or other institutions in its former centers in Europe and the United States. It has dissipated in psychology, forensic psychiatry, social work, and medicine, even as political debates rage on sexual issues, such as recent laws regulating how the transgender community uses public restrooms. Nevertheless, it remains an important global phenomenon. For instance, in Mexico and Argentina, sexology remains a prominent discipline tied to human rights initiatives, as well as to fields like anthropology and psychoanalysis. The opening of El Armario Abierto (“The Open Closet”) sexology shop in Mexico City and its community was a watershed moment in Mexican
sexual rights, and sexological works continue to be published in both countries. In popular culture, public fascination with sexology in its disciplinary heyday remains strong. Recent films on Hirschfeld and Kinsey, the Oscar-winning film The Danish Girl, the Showtime series Masters of Sex and the Amazon series Transparent are examples. Popular programs also incorporate at times questionable sexological notions, such as in a recent “test” to see if a straight male could be orally stimulated to orgasm by a gay male that appeared on the Japanese TV show Orgasm Wars. The institution of the resident newspaper, magazine, radio, or TV sexologist (NBC’s Dr. Ruth or MTV’s Dr. Drew in the United States, the Mumbai Mirror’s Mahinder Watsa in India, or Bravo’s Dr. Sommer in Germany) remains worldwide a strong reminder of the field’s origins as a source of knowledge for an interested public.

In these examples, the global reach of sexual science continues to unfold. Activists of whatever political stripe and state actors alike turned to sexual science in order to effect societal change. Today, sexual science informs the debates on sex education that adolescents receive from parents and schools; the understandings of sexual pleasure and sexual dysfunction that we obtain from visual media and advertisements; medical discourses linked to social reform and citizenship; the formation of sexual identities; and debates over abortion, gay marriage, and birth control—to name just a few. Sexual science has become central to the way we understand societies abroad and at home—for instance, in discussions of population control, the AIDS epidemic, international women’s rights, immigration, human rights, and LGBTQ activism. The essays in this volume tell the history of these discussions. And they tell the story of how sexual science became a global phenomenon that organized the societies and subjectivities of the globalized world in which we now live, even if the origins of its legacy have largely been forgotten.

NOTES


2. Shivananda’s ideas are discussed in Shrikant Botre and Douglas E. Haynes’s chapter in this volume.

3. Sueo Iwaya’s pen name was Sazanami. In this particular German publication, he is referred to, in the earlier style of Romanization, as Suweyo Iwaya.
4. The history of this exchange is analyzed in Rainer Herrn's chapter in this volume. We use the term “Other” in the following without quotation marks. It denotes the imagination of radical alterity, which is simultaneously loaded with rejection and fascination.


7. Kinsey’s familiar work has, of course, been amply discussed. We are referring here to _Sexual Behavior in the Human Male_ (1948) and _Sexual Behavior in the Human Female_ (1953). The oeuvre and impact of Takahashi and Pillay are discussed in the chapters by Sanjam Ahluwalia and Mark McLelland in this volume.


12. Chiara Beccalossi, _Female Sexual Inversion: Same-Sex Desires in Italian and British Sexology, 1870–1920_ (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2012); Anne
McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest (New York: Routledge, 2005).


16. Ibid., 44.

17. Ibid., 47.


23. Cruz-Malave and Manalansan, Queer Globalizations, 2.

26. One notable exception to this presentist focus, Anjali Arondekar’s *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009) rethinks how colonial archives could be used to discuss the limits of visibility of sexual and racial alterity.
32. Domingo Sarmiento, *Facundo: Civilización y barbarie* (Santiago: Imprenta del Progreso, 1845).
34. Ishita Pande first used the term “unruly appropriations” during the 2013 institute at Dartmouth.