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On Not to Be Gay: Writing the Body and Affect in Reparative Therapy

In the 1980s, a medical treatment to turn gay people straight, *shudao jiaozheng xinli zhiliao* (guided corrective psychological therapy), was developed in Nanjing, China. Over the ten years from the 1980s to the 1990s, 1,000 gays and lesbians were treated with an alleged success rate of 13.5% (Liu and Lu, 2005). The treatment was essentially a combination of reparative therapy (by injecting apomorphine) and psychological counselling. During the treatment, the patients were required to keep a diary, reflecting on the progress and drawbacks of the treatment. Some of these diaries were published in mainland China in 2005. In this paper, through a reading of the published diaries, I examine how the transformation of subjectivities from gay to straight was made possible by such ‘self-technologizing’ practices as writing and communication. I also consider the centrality of the body and affect in the process of subject (trans)formation, and ask how a new, coherent and authentic ‘self’ (*ziwo*) was fabricated through bodily and affective experiences.