The Dragons of the Tàipíng Guǎngjì: A Queer Ecocritical Approach

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Introduction

420.10 “Zhānrán River”[1]

Xuánzōng 玄宗 was going to make offerings on Mt. Tài 泰山,[2] and entered and stayed near the Zhānrán River 旃然河 in Xíngyáng 滎陽. His Majesty saw a black dragon, called for his bow and arrow, and personally shot it. As soon as the arrow was released, the dragon died. From then on, the Zhānrán 旃然 flowed underground. To now, it’s been over one hundred years. Note:[3] The Zhānrán 旃然 is [also called] the Jì 濟水. When the Jǐ 濟 emerges, it’s called the Xíng 滎, and thus is called the Zhānrán 旃然.[4] When the *Zuǒzhuàn* 左傳 says, “The General of Chǔ 楚師[5] crossed the Zhānrán 旃然,” it’s this Zhānrán 旃然.

From *Record Relaying the Truth of the Kāi[yuán] and Tiān[bǎo Reign Eras]*.

旃然

玄宗將封泰山。進次滎陽旃然河，上見黑龍，命弓矢。親射之。矢發龍滅。自爾旃然伏流。於今百餘年矣。按旃然即濟水也。濟水溢而為滎，遂名旃然。《左傳》云。楚師濟於旃然是也。

出《開天傳信記》

420.8 “The Dragon of the Xīngqìng Pool”

Táng Xuánzōng 唐玄宗 once hid a dragon in the Xīngqìng Palace 興慶宮.[6] When he ascended to the throne, a little dragon once wandered out of the Xīngqìng Pool 興慶池 and left the palace in the waters of a channel that went through the Imperial Park. It had an unusual, serpentine shape, having the shape to soar leisurely. Among the maids and servants in the palace, there was not one who did not see it.

Afterward, Xuánzōng 玄宗 visited Shǔ 蜀,[7] and the night before his carriage was about to depart, his dragon rode out of the pool on white clouds, leaping across the sky,

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[1] A general note to readers: though I do include translations throughout the text of this dissertation, I do not include all of the footnotes that accompany the translations. I only include footnotes relevant to the discussion at hand.

[2] A sacred mountain in China. Emperors made Fēng and Shàn sacrifices there. The exact details and significance of these sacrifices are debated. Xuánzōng made his in 726 CE.

[3] This note occurs in the original text and seems to be an explanatory note from the author/recorder, Zhèng Qǐ 鄭綮.

[4] *Zhānrán* can also be an adverb meaning *showing forth*, which also makes sense with the river emerging from the ground.

[5] Likely referring to Chéng Déchén 成得臣 a general of the State of Chǔ in the Spring and Autumn period.

[6] The grammar of this is ambiguous. In the TPGJ, there are instances in which an emperor prior to their ascension to the throne is “hiding like a dragon;” and *qiánlóng* 潛龍 is used as a two-character compound term. Alternatively, the two characters can be understood as a verb and object, and the sentence could be read as “He once hid a dragon.” There is clearly a literal meaning of a dragon in the pool and a metaphor for Xuánzōng’s power at play in this tale.

[7] Emperor Xuánzōng left Cháng’ān on July 14, 756 CE, when rebel forces under Ān Lùshān were about to seize the capital. The following day, the guards that accompanied him killed one of his advisors, Yáng Guózhōng 楊國忠, whom they held responsible for inciting Ān Lùshān to rebellion, and then forced the emperor to kill Prized Consort Yáng.

looking toward the southwest, it left. All of those gathered around [the emperor] saw it. When His Majesty had traveled to the Jiālíng River 嘉陵江, he boarded a boat and was about to cross, [but] he saw the little dragon flying beside the boat. The ministers accompanying the emperor all saw it. A tear trickled down His Majesty's face. Looking to his left and right, he said, "This is my dragon from the Xīngqìng Pool 興慶池." He ordered that wine be poured out as a libation, and His Majesty personally blessed it. The dragon then left the waters, shaking its mane.

From *Annals of the Declaration Room*.

興慶池龍

唐玄宗嘗潛龍於興慶宮。及即位，其興慶池嘗有一小龍出遊宮外御溝水中。奇狀蜿蜒，負騰逸之狀。宮嬪內豎，靡不具瞻。

後玄宗幸蜀，鑾輿將發，前一夕，其龍自池中御素雲，躍然亘空，望西南而去。環列之士，率共觀之。及上行至嘉陵江，乘舟將渡，見小龍翼舟而進。侍臣咸覩之。上泫然泣下，顧謂左右曰：「此吾興慶池中龍也。」命以酒沃酹，上親自祝之，龍乃自水中振鬣而去。

出《宣室志》

The two tales from the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì* 太平廣記 (*Extensive Records of the Tàipíng [Xīngguó] Reign Era*, hereafter TPGJ) above both tell of important events in the life of Emperor Xuánzōng of the Táng Dynasty 唐玄宗 (658-762, r. 713-56) and describe the presence of dragons, *lóng* 龍, in both of them. The first tale occurs in 726 when Emperor Xuánzōng made the *fēng* 封 and *shàn* 禪 offerings to heaven and earth (respectively) on Mount Tài 泰山, one of the most sacred rites emperors could perform. Given that dragons tend to be auspicious symbols of imperial power (as seen in the second tale), it is unusual that he would shoot the dragon. With the association between the death of the dragon and the change in the course of the river, it would seem that this is meant to show his power over the natural realm. Regardless, this tale clearly suggests a tie between important cultural/political events, dragons, and nature.

The second tale begins with Xuánzōng and the image of a hidden dragon. Given the significant political upheaval during the reigns of his grandfather, Zhōngzōng 中宗 (r. 684 and 705-10), and father, Ruìzōng 睿宗 (r. 684-90 and 710-2), and the fact that he was the third son, his ascension was certainly not guaranteed. However, much as the dragon in the tale, he became well-known which eventually led to his ascension.

The main events of this tale occurred in mid-July 756 after the forces of the rebelling general Ān Lùshān 安祿山 approached the Táng capital, causing Emperor Xuánzōng and his entourage to flee from the capital to Chéngdū 成都. Once again it seems as though this dragon is associated with his imperial power, at first accompanying him, then leaving him. This dragon too is associated with a river, seemingly a boundary marking the emperor's entrance into exile. Though very different from the first tale, this too ties cultural/political events, dragons, and nature together. Throughout this dissertation, I explore the ways in which the dragons of the TPGJ represent both something we might call "nature" and something we might call "culture." This combining of "nature" and "culture" constitutes a kind of queerness examined by the emerging field of queer ecology. Indeed, queerness is an apt descriptor for Chinese dragons which are marked by their resistance to simple definition and the ability for nearly limitless change.

My overarching argument for this introduction is that a themed study of the fascicles of the TPGJ on dragons through the lens of queer ecology both serves to explore the political/cultural/epistemic concerns of Táng and Sòng China and fills several gaps across multiple fields of scholarship. Recent English language scholarship on the TPGJ and/or mid-

Imperial tale literature generally does not sufficiently consider the social, political, or epistemological implications of the tales of the TPGJ. English language scholarship tends to focus on (1) discussion of generic labels; (2) textual history, source texts, and authorship; and (3) selections of privileged texts. Some scholarship in Chinese better addresses the aforementioned concerns, but these studies often do not receive much attention and tend to be quite short. Regardless of language of publication, the study of the TPGJ is by no means a simple task; it is a volume of over one million Chinese characters containing over seven thousand tales drawn from several hundred source texts throughout several hundred years of Chinese history. These source texts cannot even be counted accurately because many have been lost or damaged over the intervening millennium plus. To combat these challenges, I suggest a thematic study of any one portion of the TPGJ can provide a better, more literary discussion of the text. The section on dragons, however, very specifically addresses the concerns of the authors and editors from the Táng and Sòng—namely re-defining their identities and ideologies in the face of political and cultural uncertainty.

A sense of political instability began with the Ān Lùshān Rebellion in the mid 750s and prompted literate men to redefine what constituted Confucianism. Roughly concurrently, a very similar set of literate men wrote many of the source texts that contributed to the TPGJ. This sense of political instability, the questions of redefining Confucianism (and the related concerns for the stability of a concept of a Chinese empire), and the practice of writing these strange tales all continued up to—and well after—the compilation of the TPGJ. Thus the TPGJ represents a collection of past knowledge and/or literary productions written by authors

attempting to define themselves and their society and was compiled at the behest of an emperor attempting to secure his rule.

This, perhaps rather oddly, is a perfect set of ingredients for the queer practice of cultural redefinition and amalgamation defined by Eve Sedgwick in *Touching Feeling*. In a discussion of reparative reading, camp, and cultural production, Sedgwick defines a community practice of attempting to reconcile disparate cultural resources to redefine an identity. This practice is often marked by "startling, juicy displays of excess erudition… passionate, often hilarious antiquarianism, the prodigal production of alternative historiographies; the 'over'-attachment to the fragmentary, marginal, waste or leftover products; the rich, highly interruptive affective variety;… [and] the disorienting juxtapositions of present with past, and popular with high culture."[8] This community practice of cultural redefinition very closely resembles the process of these authors, politicians, and scholars from the Táng and Sòng who decided to base their redefined culture on the idea of combining elements from "the natural realm in which heaven-and-earth brought things into being and the historical realm in which humans created institutions."[9] This desire to redefine their own culture by re-examining the relationship between nature and culture suggests that literature from this period must be read through the theoretical lens of queer ecology—that which concerns itself exactly with this tense nature-culture relationship.

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[8] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 149–50. Exactly what to call this practice is open to debate. As Sedgwick calls this practice camp, in some places I have referred to it as such. However, this definition of camp is admittedly very different from the common, non-academic use of the word. To avoid confusion on the part of readers less familiar with this definition of camp in the context of reparative reading, I have attempted to remove the term.

[9] Peter Bol, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 2.

A detailed examination of the social, political, and epistemological implications of the editorially pre-defined section of the TPGJ dedicated to dragons (fascicles 418-25) provides a particularly rich way consider the interactions of nature and culture as well as the integration of disparate cultural resources—these key concerns of the Táng and Sòng literati. Dragons in the TPGJ are intimately tied to water, varying from rain giving gods to aquatic monsters that drown passersby. Simultaneously, dragons also exhibit a clear understanding of human cultural norms, often being portrayed as more humane than humans. Additionally, with the growth of Buddhism in China throughout the mid-Imperial period, the Indian *nāga* became part of the Chinese understanding of *lóng* 龍, dragons. These creatures that embody both nature and culture and were influence by both "traditional" "Chinese" *lóng* and "foreign" "Buddhist" *nāga* very much encompass the political and social concerns of the literate men of ninth and tenth century China. Limiting our study to this one section of the TPGJ—with a few excursions into related texts on fish and snakes, close relatives of dragons—allows us to examine these concerns without relying on a historically constructed canon of pieces that already receive the lion's share of the academic attention.

Defining Queerness

At this juncture, it is worth providing an initial set of definitions for the term *queer*. As the field of queer studies is a large and dynamic field, no singular definition or even set of definitions could capture all of what *queerness* means. For the purposes of beginning this dissertation, however, these will suffice.

1. Of or relating to non-normative gender, sex, or sexuality. Desiring and feeling attraction toward members of the same sex (or of multiple sexes, or no one at

all), performing or identifying with a gender different than the one assigned at birth, or engaging in sex with people of the same sex or multiple sexes are all queer.

2. Of or relating to people who experience non-normative gender, sex, and sexuality. Men who love men, women who love women, people of any gender who love people of multiple genders, people who experience no attraction to any sex or gender, men who were born with vaginas, women who were born with penises, people who perform various genders on various occasions, these folx and many others are queer.
3. Of or relating to queer people, our histories, experiences, and cultures. One can think of queer history as the history of queer people, queer experience as the experience of queer people, and of queer culture as the culture of queer people.
4. Of or relating to the perspective of queer people. While queer history can be the history of queer people, how do queer people understand the "normal" cis-het history they are taught? While queer people may have our own unique culture preserved in our own queer spaces, how do queer people experience "normal" cis-het culture? While queer scholars can study queer history or queer culture or queer people, how do queer scholars study non-queer subjects differently than our cis-het counterparts? While queer authors can write about explicitly queer themes, how do queer authors write about non-queer themes differently than our cis-het counterparts?

It is in this final definition of queerness that most of our discussion, and I would suggest, much of queer theory resides. For example, queer ecology is not only the ecology of queer people, where we live and how we interact with the environment. Queer ecology is also how a queer worldview (perhaps the understanding that sex and gender are different and that neither is a binary) influences a queer person's understanding of nature (finding a queer kinship with fish that change sex at will or "male" ginkgo trees that suddenly have one "female" branch that produces fruit). Of particular concern to this dissertation is a queer mode of interaction with majoritarian culture. Queer people are often told that our love is not real love, our families are not real families, or that our culture is not real culture. In response to these pressures, queer people must continuously re-examine what we think love, family, or culture is. What parts of "normal" culture can a queer people keep? What parts can we discard? What parts of culture

can we substitute with those of our own creation? At some point, however, this discussion of queer cultural production transcends any individual or group of queer people and simply exists as its own uniquely queer entity, regardless of the identities of the person performing this mode of cultural production.

In the following pages, we will soon see that Táng and Sòng literary culture was very concerned with re-evaluating which pieces of the received cultural tradition needed to be kept, discarded, or exchanged. A large component of this was a re-evaluation of how culture did or did not reflect a mid-Imperial Chinese understanding of "nature." Although we ultimately cannot know how any of the mid-Imperial scholars who wrote the pieces we will soon read identified (or would have identified if they had the same vocabulary), their ways of thinking and re-evaluating both culture and its relationship to nature fall into the fourth definition of queerness above.

As a brief example, the first chapter begins with the tale of Zhāng Lǔ's 張魯 daughter. The titular daughter is impregnated by mist, her father disowns her, she gives birth to two dragons, and dies. After her death, the dragon children continuously mourn her. When read as a commentary on what constitutes "real family," the idea that the human family she was born into disowned her but the dragon children she never knew maintain a mourning practice takes a very queer tone. We do not know who wrote the tale or any of their identities, nor does the tale contain any explicit themes about gender or sexual identity. However, the way of questioning and re-evaluating what family really is and how that intersects with the relationships between humans and non-human entities like mist and dragons embodies the fourth definition of queerness above.

Con-texts: Queer Epistemes

The TPGJ is admittedly a very strange literary creation. On one hand, it was ordered by Emperor Tàizōng of the Sòng Dynasty 宋太宗 (939-997, r. 976-997) and is marked by his intent and political interests. On another hand, it was compiled by a team of early Sòng academics working at the Emperor's behest and is also marked by their hands. On a third hand, the text of the TPGJ was drawn from several hundred source texts[10] dating from the Hàn 漢 Dynasty (202 BCE-220 CE) all the way to the founding of the Sòng in 960—with a skew toward later texts, especially from the Táng 唐 Dynasty (618–907 CE) or even after the Ān Lùshān 安祿山 Rebellion in the middle of the Táng (755–63 CE).[11] These texts obviously also bear the marks of the people who wrote them. How should one approach a literary work that spans several centuries and in the creation of which so many different people have been involved? In short, my answer is that the TPGJ must be understood as a profound expression of *episteme*—the relation between knowledge and power. This literary project was simultaneously a political one in which an emperor commanded state-employed scholars to assemble, sort, and re-contextualize knowledge from the past. This relationship between the emperor, scholars, knowledge, and the past is a lasting through line that connects this project to many others

[10] The exact number is quite debatable. Most editions of the TPGJ will have a list of only 140 or so source texts. Zhāng Guófēng's 張國風 2004 *Tàipíng Guǎngjì Bǎnběn Kǎoshù* 《太平廣記》版本考述 (*An Examination of the Editions of the TPGJ*) (see literature review below) suggests that this is far too simple as many texts are misattributed or the source text does not contain the quote provided. He spends 268 pages (p. 113–380) discussing exactly what contents can be reliably attributed to what texts. He does not provide an exact number but suggests that most reasonable scholars agree on there being over 400 source texts. (p. 114).

[11] Of the 94 dragon tales, 86 belong to source texts that can be dated with any modicum of reliability. Of those 86, 10 are pre-Táng, and 76 are from the Táng or later. More specifically, 10 are pre-Táng, 6 are pre-Ān Lùshān Táng, 4 are roughly concurrent with the Ān Lùshān rebellion, 45 are post-Ān Lùshān but before the end of the Táng, and 21 are post-Táng. Given the complexity of the texual histories of the source texts, however, this can only be a rough approximation.

throughout Chinese history and very specifically to intellectual concerns of the late Táng and early Sòng.

To bind these disparate elements together, one must note that the individual authors who wrote the stories eventually collected in the TPGJ and the editorial team that compiled it largely belonged to a class of scholar-officials who either had or hoped to take the imperial examinations on the Confucian Classics in order to be granted a government position. Throughout the Táng and Sòng the relationship between these scholar-officials, the government, and the emperor as head of the government fluctuated greatly. In all of this, the state ideology that can arguably be called *Confucianism*[12] played a key role. Specifically, in the wake of the Ān Lùshān Rebellion, the scholar-officials very much debated what constituted Confucianism, its relationship to literature, and the relationship between scholars, scholarship, and the government.[13] As these scholar officials were of the same class as the authors and readers of these texts—some of them authoring and appearing in the tales of the TPGJ itself[14]—these are immediate concerns of the texts themselves. With this understanding of the TPGJ as a work imbricated in the mutually constituting realms of scholarship and statecraft, let us focus on Emperor Tàizōng of the Sòng, his political and academic projects, and clear but surprising predecessors of the TPGJ.

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[12] See Bol, 15-31.
[13] These social, political, and epistemological changes are often discussed in conjunction with the *Gǔwén Yùndòng* 古文運動 (*Ancient-style Prose Movement*) of which Hán Yù 韓愈 (who is discussed below) was a major proponent. For more information on the *Gǔwén Yùndòng* see William H. Nienhauser Jr. (ed), *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 494–500. (Hereafter, *Companion*.)
[14] For example, Hán Yù appears in 466.15 “Hán Yù” 韓愈 excerpted from *Xuānshì Zhì* 宣室志 by Zhāng Dú 張讀 (c. 834-882).

Emperor Tàizōng of the Sòng Dynasty ascended to the throne shortly after the untimely and suspicious death of his brother. Tàizōng's ascension occurred despite the fact that his predecessor had an adult son (his own nephew) who could have been coronated. Before a year had passed, Tàizōng ordered the compilation of both the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì* 太平廣記 (TPGJ), and the *Tàipíng Yùlǎn* 太平御覽 (Imperial Reader of the Tàipíng [Xīngguó Reign Era (976-83 CE)] hereafter TPYL). The TPGJ was completed first, with its compilation in mid 978, only 18 months after the commission. The TPYL took significantly longer, not fully compiled until 982. Interestingly, after the compilation of these two compendia, Tàizōng ordered a third to be made, the *Wényuàn Yīnghuá* 文苑英華 (Elite Flowers of the Garden of Literature, hereafter WYYH)—ordered in 982 and completed in 986.[15] Why would a newly coronated emperor order the compilation of three massive literary compendia? One theory is that, given the intrigue-filled circumstances of his brother's demise and his own ascension to the throne, Tàizōng meant to rebrand himself as a literary ruler both to legitimize his rule and to distance himself from the military prowess of his deceased brother.[16] Another theory is that Tàizōng truly was a bibliophile of the highest order obsessed with reading and consuming arcane knowledge.[17] Of course, these are not mutually exclusive. A bibliophile who murdered their brother to seize power could then attempt to legitimate their rule through literary pursuit. Given Confucian understandings of the place of the emperor and the importance of knowledge production,

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[15] *Companion*, 897–8.
[16] Johannes Kurz, "The Politics of Collecting Knowledge: Song Taizong's Compilations Project," *T'oung Pao* 87 (2001): 289–316. See also his longer work (in German), Johannes Kurz, *Das Kompilationsprojekt Song Taizongs (reg. 976-997)* {The Compilation Project of Song Taizong} (Bern, Germany: Peter Lang, 2003).
[17] John Haeger, "The Significance of Confusion: The Origins of the *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan*", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88 (1986): 401–10. particularly p. 407.

however, it is clear that—whatever Tàizōng's motivation may have been—the compilation of three massive compendia of knowledge at the beginning of his reign would serve to legitimate the rule of the emperor. In fact, Emperor Sòng Tàizōng had a clear precedent for large compilation projects commissioned by the emperor.

The second Emperor of the Táng Dynasty, also called Emperor Tàizōng 唐太宗 (598-649, r.626-649) commissioned the *Wǔjīng Dìngběn* 五經定本 (*The Decisive Edition of the Five Classics*), completed in 633; and the *Wǔjīng Zhèngyì* 五經正義 (*Correct Meanings of the Five Classics*), completed in 651. The Five Classics defined here are the *Yì Jīng* 易經 (*The Book of Changes*), *Shàng Shū* 尚書 (*The Exalted Documents*), *Shī Jīng* 詩經 (*The Classic of Poetry*), *Lǐ Jì* 禮記 (*The Record of Rites*), and the *Chūnqiū* 春秋 (*The Spring and Autumn Annals*).[18] These two works both defined the Confucian classics for the dynasty and helped to promote further discussion of them.[19] The influence of Táng Tàizōng's editing of the classics did not end in the Táng, however. Sòng Tàizōng re-issued editions of those same Five Classics in the late 980s. Throughout the rest of his reign, Sòng Tàizōng also commissioned projects editing, compiling, and/or commenting on a range of other Confucian "classics" (The Gǔliáng 穀梁 and Gōngyáng 公羊 commentaries on the *Chūnqiū* 春秋, the *Yí Lǐ* 儀禮 (*Ceremonies and Rites*), the *Zhōu Lǐ* 周禮, the *Xiàojīng* 孝經, the *Analects* 論語, and the *Ěryǎ* 爾雅). In addition to Confucian texts, Sòng Tàizōng also ordered editions of the Buddhist *Tripitaka* and the Daoist Canon.[20] These

[18] McMullen (see next footnote) specifically highlights that it was not only the *Chūnqiū*, but the *Zuǒzhuàn* 左傳, a commentary on the *Chūnqiū*, was also selected and commented upon.
[19] For further discussion, see David McMullen, *State and Scholars in T'ang China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 71–82. His point that these choices are closely tied to Suí dynasty scholarship is well made.
[20] Bol, 152. These were not the only texts that Emperor Tàizōng ordered editions/commentaries on, simply the most important.

massive undertakings clearly meant to show Sòng Tàizōng as a literary ruler who could actively define and shape the cultural legacy he had inherited. The TPGJ must be read with this context in mind, as something intimately tied to the politics and intellectual interests of Sòng Tàizōng and the scholars of his court.

There is one other work that Sòng Tàizōng ordered; in 1011, he ordered an edition of the *Mencius* 孟子. Later in the Sòng, the famous Neo-Confucian scholar, Zhū Xī 朱熹 (1130-1200), wrote commentaries on a "new" set of Confucian "classics": The *Dàxué* 大學 (*The Great Learning*), *Zhōngyōng* 中庸 (*The Doctrine of the Mean*), *Lùnyǔ* 論語 (*The Analects*), and *Mèngzi* 孟子 (*The Mencius*). Though originally fringe and controversial, Zhū Xī's commentaries would eventually become orthodox and the basis for the imperial examinations. The change Zhū Xī wrought in Chinese intellectual history is so profound that most modern readers cannot interact with a passage of one of those four works without being influenced by Zhū Xī's thought. Though we moderns all follow Zhū Xī in calling Mencius the "Second Sage" after Confucius himself, I very much hesitate to include *Mencius* in with the works of Confucian classics ordered by Sòng Tàizōng for just that reason. In fact, the status of *Mencius* represents a key intellectual concern that once again binds together the authors of the source texts in the late Táng, the editors of the TPGJ, Emperor Sòng Tàizōng, and the Sòng readership of the TPGJ.

Most scholars will trace the origin of the concept of Mencius being the Second Sage—though not the phrase itself—to Hán Yù 韓愈 (768-824 CE), a Táng Dynasty writer, poet, and scholar-official. His essay "Dú Xún" 讀荀 ("On Reading Xúnzi") suggests that Mencius (in the text referred to as Mr. Mèng) is the only pure and worthy heir of the Confucian tradition, and

that Yáng Xióng 揚雄 (53 BCE-18 CE) of the Hàn Dynasty was also respectable for his attention to Mencius.

"I thought that the followers of Confucius had ceased. Of those who honored the Sage, there was Mencius and no more. Only late did I receive Yáng Xióng's book and respect and believe in Mr. Mèng all the more. Because of Xióng's book, Mr. Mèng has been respected all the more. Thus Xióng is also a follower of the sages! The path of the sages has not been passed on to the world. [After] the decline of Zhōu, those fond of affairs each used their persuasions to interfere with the lords of the times: pell-mell, helter-skelter, in conflict with each other. The Six Classics[21] and the persuasions of the Hundred Schools were mixed and jumbled. Yet the Old Teachers and the Great Scholars were still present. They had been burned in Qín and [obstructed by] Huáng-Lǎo [Daoism] in the Hàn. Those that maintained and kept them unadulterated was Mr. Mèng Kē, and then it stopped; Mr. Yáng Xióng, and then it stopped."

以為孔子之徒沒。尊聖人者，孟氏而已。晚得揚雄書益尊信孟氏。因雄書而孟氏益尊。則雄者亦聖人之徒歟。聖人之道不傳于世。周之衰。好事者各以其說干時君。紛紛藉藉相亂。六經與百家之說錯雜。然老師大儒猶在。火于秦黃老于漢。其存而醇者孟軻氏而止耳。揚雄氏而止耳。[22]

Though this passage from Hán Yù does certainly place high emphasis on Mencius, he was not the only thinker of his time to do so. A number of very high ranked officials are recorded speaking of Mencius to various Táng emperors, and throughout the Táng the number of references to Mencius gradually increased in both poetry and prose.[23] It is little surprise, then, that references to Mencius are rather common in at least the dragon tales of the TPGJ—especially those that date to latter half of the dynasty when Hán Yù lived.

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[21] The same as the Five listed in the discussion of Táng Tàizōng's compilation projects, but with the Yùejīng 樂經, which had been lost by the Táng, included.

[22] Wáng Jìnxiáng 王進祥 ed., *Hán Chānglí Wénjí Jiàozhù* 韓昌黎文集校注 (*The Collected Works of Hán Chānglí, Edited and Annotated.*) (Táiběi 台北: Hànjīng Wénhuà Shìyè Yǒuxiāngōngsī 漢京文化事業有限公司, 1972), 20–1. Hán Chānglí is Hán Yù's courtesy name.

[23] For more specific information, see: Sòng Dōngméi 宋冬梅 and Jiě Guāngyú 解光宇, "Hán Yù Zūn Mèng yǔ Mèngxué de Fùxīng" 韓愈尊孟與孟學的復興 ("Hán Yù Exalts Mencius and the Renaissance of Mencian Learning"), *Jiānghuái Lùntán* 江淮論壇 (2019): 94–99, esp. 95-6.

This late Táng emphasis on Mencius was part of a broader movement that was interested in re-defining Confucianism and literary practice in response to political difficulties and the rise of Buddhism and Daoism in the mid and late Táng. This desire to re-define Confucianism and in so doing re-define scholarship and the relation between scholars, the government, and the emperor stretches through much of the Táng and Sòng. David McMullen's 1988 *State and Scholars in T'ang China*[24] clearly suggests that even from the beginning of the Táng the definition of Confucianism and the relationship between state and scholars—an adroitly alliterative expression of episteme—had been changing. Peter Bol's 1992 *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*[25] builds off of McMullen's earlier project and attempts to tie this Táng revision of Confucianism to later Sòng Neo-Confucianism. Charles Hartman's 1986 *Han Yü and the T'ang Search for Unity*[26] posits that Hán Yù, despite some of his more polemical writings, was essentially attempting to unify many of the disparate cultural threads of the Táng Dynasty in the wake of the Ān Lùshān 安祿山 Rebellion. In this, Hartman suggests that Hán Yù is perhaps a bridge from the Táng to the Sòng and could be called proto-Neo-Confucian. In response to this, David McMullen put out a review of Hartman's book in 1989 titled "Han Yü: An Alternative Picture"[27] in which he politely but aggressively lambastes Hartman for suggesting that Hán Yù was a proto-Neo-Confucian, persuasively arguing that one should read Hán Yù as a product of his own time and not anachronistically drag him into the late Sòng.

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[24] David McMullen, *State and Scholars in T'ang China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
[25] Peter Bol, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).
[26] Charles Hartman, *Han Yü and the T'ang Search for Unity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).
[27] David McMullen, "Han Yü: An Alternative Picture," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 49, no. 2 (1989): 603–57.

As to whether or not there is such a thing as proto-Neo-Confucianism, what it would entail, and whether or not Hán Yù falls into this questionable category; I am agnostic. Certainly McMullen is right to assert that Hán Yù was questioning traditional understandings of Confucianism and the relationship between various ways of thought in his own time for his own reasons. Hartman, however, also has a point in suggesting that this kind of questioning and re-examination did not end in the Táng but continued on for quite some time and is perhaps similar to what caused the beginnings of Neo-Confucianism.

In the end, for this dissertation, Hán Yù himself is perhaps not all that important. The central issue to take from him and others in his school of thought, is that in the face of political instability after the Ān Lùshān rebellion; philosophical uncertainty with the clashing of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism; and even ethnic tension between the "Chinese" people of the Táng and "foreign" people of central Asian descent; key scholars of the mid and late Táng were re-evaluating their relationship to traditional Confucianism and other schools of thought.[28] In all of this, Mencius played a key role specifically because several portions of *Mencius* also question the actions of traditionally revered Confucian figures.[29]

Given these large-scale intellectual transitions throughout the time the texts of the TPGJ were written, when the volume was compiled, and the early readership—such as the growing emphasis on Mencius as ***the*** inheritor of the Confucian tradition—how should readers approach the TPGJ? What does this mean for the texts, our reading, and this dissertation? I would like to

[28] For further discussion of this, see McMullen, *State and Scholars*, p. 81-2.
[29] In chapter 9 (or 5A), Mencius's disciple Wàn Zhāng 萬章 asks the master many complicated questions about seemingly questionable behavior on the part of revered emperors of China's legendary past: Yáo 堯, Shùn 舜, and Yǔ 禹. Hán Yù discussed this portion of *Mencius* while considering questions of succession in the Táng. See McMullen, "Alternative Picture," 607–8.

suggest that this change in intellectual culture represents questioning tradition and reimagining the relationship between scholarship, knowledge production, the government, and political power. In short, I would call this epistemological queerness: a re-examination of tradition and episteme. Given that late Táng and early Sòng elites were both the authors of the TPGJ and the thinkers who were actively changing the fundamental definition of Confucianism, it is not surprising that the two would intermingle.

How then does this concept of queer epistemes emerge in the TPGJ? For the sake of brevity, allow me to provide examples and short commentary here—more detailed discussion of these tales occurs throughout the dissertation.[30] In 469.17 "The Long-beard Country" 長鬚國,[31] a human scholar goes to the court of a dragon king to beg him to reduce his consumption to benefit a community of shrimp under the dragon king's care. This bears a surprising resemblance to the first chapter of *Mencius* in which a scholar, Mencius, asks King Huì of Liáng 梁惠王 to reduce his consumption to benefit the people beneath him.[32] As a more aggressively anti-normative example of the interest in combining/redefining religious/philosophical schools in the Táng and Sòng, consider 420.2 "Shì Xuánzhào" 釋玄照.[33] In this tale, dragons thank the titular character for teaching Buddhism and ask to compensate him in some way. He asks them to end a long-lasting local drought. The dragons are willing and able to do so, but state that

[30] Further discussion in chapter two.
[31] Set in the Dàzú 大足 Reign Era of the Táng 唐 (701 CE). From *Yǒuyáng Zázǔ* 酉陽雜俎 by Duàn Chéngshì 段成式 (803-863).
[32] Further discussion in chapter three on the environment.
[33] From *Shénxiān Gǎnyù Zhuàn* 神仙感遇傳 by Dù Guāngtíng 杜光庭 (850-933). Though there is a received edition of this text, portions have been lost to time and this tale is not in the received edition. If this text is truly by Dù Guāngtíng, an influential Daoist, a range of possible understandings may arise. For more information on Dù Guāngtíng, see *Companion*, p. 821–4.

such action would counter the orders of *Tiān* 天 (perhaps best understood as a concept of nature given agency but not personhood). The dragons and Shì Xuánzhào then enlist the help of a Daoist hermit, Sūn Sīmiǎo 孫思邈, to protect them. In this tale the Daoist, Buddhist, and dragons work together to fight against the orders of Heaven/nature/Tiān which seem to be portrayed as unjust and cruel.[34]

Exactly how to interpret these tales and others like them is left for later chapters. The point, at the moment, is that the examination of *Mencius* and the strange but humorous discussion of the three teachings certainly appealed to the authors of these texts; and the political/intellectual concerns of the late Táng and early Sòng suggest that these tales should have been of great interest to the scholars/officials of the day.

In addition to the place of *Mencius* and the interweaving of the three teachings, Bol suggests that a key concern of Táng and Sòng scholars was the interaction between "culture" and "nature." From the introduction of his book, he says, "Heaven and antiquity or 'heaven and man,' the natural realm in which heaven-and-earth brought things into being and the historical realm in which humans created institutions, came to stand for the two greatest sources of normative values. This Culture of Ours could stand for the idea of a civilization that combined the two, a civilization based on both the models of the ancients and the manifest patterns of the natural order. But T'ang and Sung scholars also saw that at moments of political crisis This Culture could perish. To save it, and to save the times, scholars could always return to antiquity and the natural order as the grounds for shared norms."[35] This tense but not mutually exclusive

[34] Further discussion of this tale occurs in chapter two.
[35] Bol, 2.

relationship between social norms based on tradition and culture and those based on nature can be seen in *Mencius*, in "The Long-beard Country," and in "Shì Xuánzhào."

In *Mencius*, the philosopher suggests that the King Huì's extravagance is leading to an upset of nature: the fat meat in his kitchens and the fat horses in his stables are contrasted to the starvation experienced by the common people which is related to famines and the behaviors of wild animals. The implication is that if the philosopher's human argument can convince the king to reduce consumption, nature may return to normal. "The Long-beard Country" parallels this when the scholar walks into the king's kitchens and sees massive cauldrons of shrimp—who are his adopted family—about to be cooked for the king's dinner. The dragon king says that what he eats "is given in accordance with Heaven" 禀天符, but that he will reduce his consumption per the scholar's request. The interaction between nature and human culture here is similar. In this instance, I would suggest that eating in accordance with "Heaven" is the king's "natural" behavior. Indeed, it is "natural" that a great dragon would eat small shrimp. The scholar's diplomatic mission on behalf of the shrimp king could be understood as a human/cultural endeavor to change this "natural" behavior—much as Mencius attempted to change the King Huì's behavior. In "Shì Xuánzhào" humans of different stripes and non-human dragons band together to fight against the unjust orders of Heaven. The dragons clearly take on human form and understand the human concept of gratitude, yet they seek to express their human gratitude through super-human intervention into the workings of nature. When they are prevented from doing so, they revert into animal form and require human protection. All of these texts clearly consider the relationship between nature, culture, human intervention, and power—reflecting the Táng and Sòng intellectual concerns of the

continuation of a political and cultural entity based on the combination of cultural norms from antiquity and norms derived from nature.

This core tension between nature and culture is exactly the concern of queer ecology. Any adequate reading of the texts of the TPGJ that seeks to place it into the intellectual culture of its time must place in prime importance the tension between history/society/culture/humanity on one side and nature/environment/ecology/animality on the other. In this, queer ecology and the intellectual culture of the time agree and must be understood together.

Scholarship on the TPGJ since 1900

Much scholarship on the TPGJ has not adequately addressed the very complicated relationships of the episteme of the TPGJ outlined above: relationships between knowledge and power; text and contexts; literature and governance; scholar-officials, state ideology, and emperors. This neglect is perhaps due to an overbearing concern for discussions of genre and an incessant regurgitation of a binary between *zhìguài* 志怪 and *chuánqí* 傳奇. The modern obsession with these two terms can certainly be traced to Lǔ Xùn 魯迅 (1881-1936) and his 1923 *Zhōngguó Xiǎoshuō Shǐluè* 中國小說史略 (*A History of Chinese Xiǎoshuō*) in which he proposed that *chuánqí* are longer, more linguistically complex, and consciously created fiction.[36] After Lǔ Xùn's work, nearly every serious scholar of this kind of literature has rehashed

[36] There is of course, a much longer history to this and many implications to these assertions. See any of the below for more detail.

this narrative and taken sides as to how true or useful this distinction is.[37] I most agree with Glen Dudbridge that "such categories as these mislead and hinder our efforts to read Tang narrative sensitively… to do justice to these interesting works we should let them stand alone, not pack them into pigeon holes."[38] This dead horse has been beaten to paste.

A more legitimate reason that insufficient work has been done on the epistemological contexts of the TPGJ is the sheer size of the text. At over 7,000 stories and 1.5 million Chinese characters, no work can adequately contend with the volume as a whole. This issue of scope combined with Lǔ Xùn's assertion that some tales are better than others has led a number of scholars in both China and "the West" to publish selections of "good," "famous," or "important" pieces. Once again Lǔ Xùn may be to blame for beginning this trend. His 1927 anthology *Táng Sòng Chuánqí Jí* 唐宋傳奇集 is the first "modern" work to establish this pattern.[39] Wāng Bìjiāng's 汪辟疆 1978 *Tángrén xiǎoshuō* 唐人小说[40] also samples a few tales, as does Wáng Mèng'oū's 王夢鷗 1983 *Tángrén xiǎoshuō jiàoshì* 唐人小說校釋.[41] Cài Shǒuxiāng's 蔡守湘 2002 *Tángrén Xiǎoshuō Xuǎnzhù* 唐人小說選注 continues the theme.[42] Lǐ

[37] Nienhauser, *Tang Dynasty Tales* v.1 , p. xiii-xiv; Huntington, *Alien Kind*, p. 14–24; Dudbridge, *Books, Tales and Vernacular Culture*, p.10–14, 192–213; Luo, *Literati Storytelling in Late Medieval China*, p. 8–9; Campany, *Strange Writing*, p. 28–9; Lǐ, *Tángqián Zhìguài Xiǎoshuō Shǐ*, p. 10–1; Dewoskin, *Sou-shen-chi & the Chih-kuai Tradition*, p. 1–2.

[38] From Glen Dudbridge's "A Question of Classification in Tang Narrative: The Story of Ding Yue," Originally published in Alfredo Cadonna, ed., *India, Tibet, China: Genesis and Aspects of Traditional Narrative* (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1999), 151–80. Reprinted in a 2005 collection of Dudbrige's works *Books, Tales and Vernacular Culture: Selected Papers on China* (Boston: Brill, 2005), 192–213.

[39] Lǔ Xùn 魯迅, *Táng Sòng Chuánqí Jí* 唐宋傳奇集, (1927; Rprt. Hong Kong: Xīnyì Chūbǎnshè 新藝出版社, 1967).

[40] Wāng Bìjiāng 汪辟疆, *Tángrén Xiǎoshuō* 唐人小說 (Shànghǎi 上海: Shànghǎi Gǔjí Chūbǎnshè 上海古籍出版社, 1978).

[41] Wáng Mèng'ōu 王夢鷗, *Tángrén Xiǎoshuō Jiàoshì* 唐人小說校釋 (Táiběi 台北: Zhèngzhōng Shūjú 正中書局, 1983).

[42] Cài Shǒuxiāng 蔡守湘, *Tángrén Xiǎoshuō Xuǎnzhù* 唐人小說選注 (Táiběi 台北: Lǐrén Shūjú 里仁書局, 2002).

Jiànguó's 李劍國 2015 *Táng Wǔdài Chuánqí Jí* 唐五代傳奇集 expands the sampling of tales considerably.[43]

Several English translations have followed a similar pattern. Yáng Xiànyì 楊憲益 and Gladys Yang's 1954 *The Dragon King's Daughter: Ten Tang Dynasty Stories* translated a selection of 10 tales.[44] This was followed by significant expansions in Karl Kao's 1985 *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic*,[45] William Nienhauser's 2010 and 2016 *Tang Dynasty Tales: A Guided Reader* (volumes one and two),[46] and Ditter et al.'s 2017 *Tales from Tang Dynasty China*.[47]

These works on their own are fine works of scholarship. Many have detailed footnotes and explanations that have been immensely useful in this project. My argument, however, is that due to the number and popularity of this kind of study, a small set of only approximately 100 tales has been repeatedly studied while the vast majority of the TPGJ has been relatively untouched.[48]

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[43] *Lǐ Jiànguó* 李劍國, *Táng Wǔdài Chuánqí Jí* 唐五代傳奇集 (Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 2015).
[44] Yáng Xiànyì 楊憲益 and Gladys Yang, *The Dragon King's Daughter: Ten Tang Dynasty Stories*. (Běijīng 北京: Foreign Languages Press, 1954).
[45] Karl Kao, ed., *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic: Selections from the third to the tenth century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).
[46] William H. Nienhauser, Jr., (ed)., *Tang Dynasty Tales: A Guided Reader*. (New Jersey: World Scientific, 2010). William H. Nienhauser, Jr., (ed)., *Tang Dynasty Tales: A Guided Reader Volume 2*. (New Jersey: World Scientific, 2016).
[47] Alexei Kamran Ditter, Jessey Choo, and Sarah Allen, eds., *Tales from Tang Dynasty China: Selections from the Taiping Guangji*. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2017).
[48] Exactly quantifying what tales have been repeatedly studied requires a somewhat arbitrary definition of "repeated study." I have tabulated the total number of tales that occur in the texts above. Altogether, 234 unique tales are mentioned and/or annotated/studied at least once. Only 82 have been included in more than one text (being in two texts does constitute *repeated*, and one can round up from 82 to 100). 30 tales have been included in 5 or more of the above texts. That set of 30 tales contains most of those I would argue truly receive most scholarly attention. Whatever the figure, it is very small when compared to the total 7,175 in the TPGJ.

To combat this issue of scale, scholars have taken a number of other approaches. Perhaps the most holistic study of the TPGJ is Zhāng Guófēng's 張國風 2004 *Tàipíng Guǎngjì Bǎnběn Kǎoshù* 《太平廣記》版本考述 (*An Examination of the Editions of the TPGJ*) in which he describes the various editions of the TPGJ that have come into existence during the millennium since the compendium's compilation. This work takes the TPGJ as a whole and attempts to trace the development of that whole. Though the work is admirable for addressing the text as a whole, it does so in a surprisingly non-textual way. Zhāng pays little attention to what the text actually says or what themes it contains or what social/cultural issues it addresses. While the work is certainly valuable, it only addresses textual history.

Other scholars interested in the tales of the TPGJ have studied the source texts from which they come. Indeed, this does give an idea of a whole, but it is not the whole of the TPGJ. DeWoskin and Crump's *In Search of the Supernatural* examines the *Sōushén Jì* 搜神記.[49] Dudbridge's 1995 *Religious Experience and Lay Society in T'ang China: A Reading of Tai Fu's Kuang-i Chi* provides an excellent reading of the *Guǎngyì Jì* 廣異記.[50] Reed's 2003 *A Tang Miscellany: An Introduction to the Youyang Zazu* introduces both the text of the *Yǒuyáng Zázǔ* 酉陽雜俎 and its author.[51] Though these works do, to varying degrees, contain parts that are found in the TPGJ, they do not address the whole that is the TPGJ. These works and the many like them often are interested in the specifics of the authors that wrote the individual works and the circumstances of their lives. While these are not un-related to the concerns of the TPGJ,

[49] Kenneth DeWoskin and J.I. Crump, *In Search of the Supernatural: The Written Record* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).
[50] Glen Dudbridge, *Religious Experience and Lay Society in T'ang China: A Reading of Tai Fu's Kuang-i Chi* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[51] Carrie Reed, *A Tang Miscellany: An Introduction to the Youyang Zazu* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003).

they are only partially, liminally related.[52] While these are more literary than Zhāng's work, they do not really address the TPGJ.

Another way to manage the size of the TPGJ is to perform a thematic study. Unfortunately, thematic studies of the TPGJ itself are rather rare. More common are thematic studies of "tale literature" or some similarly broad term in which authors consider a wide range of texts—often the source texts from which the TPGJ was compiled. Manling Luo's 2015 *Literati Storytelling in Late Medieval China* is perhaps the work which best addresses epistemic concerns in these tales.[53] Her key thought of reading these tales as a community practice through which literati created their identities is fundamental to this present study. Additionally, the four methodological turns she outlines are worth repeating. First, she abandons questions of fictionality entirely as it is impossible to know whether or not something is consciously created fiction. Second, she adopts a cross-genre approach extending further than even the subgenres of *zhìguài* and *chuánqí*. Third, she "shifts attention from textual histories of individual stories and collections to the dialogic relations among them." Finally, she moves away from reading these tales as direct references to historical events and instead focuses on the "desires, anxieties, and perspectives of late medieval scholar officials."[54] I very much approve of these methodological shifts and vastly appreciate Luo's work. I do, however, have one methodological shift of my own to add. Although I do fundamentally agree with the

[52] There are more works than can possibly be listed in this category. For most of the source texts, there have been efforts to provide modern, punctuated, annotated editions in Chinese. Fewer of these have been investigated in English. I highly encourage other scholars to pursue studies of these many works, the ones already in print have been massively helpful. This is simply not my project at the moment. For a fuller biography of the source texts relevant to this section of the TPGJ, see the appendix.
[53] Manling Luo, *Literati Storytelling in Late Medieval China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015).
[54] Luo, 10-11.

concept of shifting attention from individual tales or source texts to the interactions between them, this does allow for the potential criticism that the scope of the project and the texts to be considered are inadequately defined. I believe that reading a section of the TPGJ as defined by the compilers provides a unique opportunity consider dialogues between texts while maintaining a clearly defined corpus.

Another key thematic work on a broader concept of "tale literature" is Sarah Allen's 2014 *Shifting Stories: History Gossip, and Lore in Narratives from Tang Dynasty China*. The excellent point that Allen makes in this piece is that these stories were told, heard, borrowed, changed, and retold many times over so that the same core story could be repurposed by different storytellers for different audiences who could then re-tell a version of the story themselves. This work, I believe, ultimately supports many of the methodological shifts proposed by Luo. If the same story appeals to and is told by multiple authors to multiple audiences, one must consider concerns broader than those of any one individual instance of that tale. Only then is one able to adequately discuss the finer differences between the versions of the tale that may be due to the specific authors.

Thematic studies of the tales of the TPGJ itself, not a broader "tale literature" are relatively few. Birthe Blauth's 1996 *Altchinesische Geschicthen über Fuchsdämonen: kommenierte Übersetzung der Kapitel 447 bis 455 des "Taiping Guangji"* provides translations and relatively minor commentary on the fascicles of the TPGJ on foxes. In Chinese, there are more such studies available, though often quite short and receiving little scholarly attention. Most relevant to this study are a few that deal directly with dragons. Though most of these are

very short studies published by students of one university in one relatively minor journal, their direct relevance to the study at hand warrants close discussion.

Liú Shūpíng's 劉淑萍 2003 master's thesis, *A Research on Fox, Dragon and Tiger in* TaiPingGuangJi 《太平廣記》狐類龍類虎類研究,[55] begins many of the trends seen below. For the section on dragons, Liú focuses heavily on the Buddhist origins of the dragons of the TPGJ. She suggests that dragons generally in the TPGJ, specifically dragonesses (*lóngnǚ* 龍女) and dragon kings (*lóngwáng* 龍王), and the concept of dragons living in palaces are all influenced by Buddhist dragon lore. In her final point she suggests that the idea of dragons controlling rain is both "traditionally" Chinese and Buddhist.

Xǔ Shūyǐng's 許舒穎 2012 "Dragons of the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì*" 《太平廣記》中的龍 builds off of Liú's work.[56] Xǔ's study has four main points. (1) Dragon-related objects such as pearls or magical food are commonly recognized by non-Chinese "foreigners" (*húrén* 胡人). (2) Dragons are often portrayed as being five colored, which relates to the five phase theory (*wǔ xíng* 五行). Xǔ suggests that the emperor is represented by the color yellow, minor "kings" (*wáng* 王) are represented by the other colors (white, green/blue (*qīng* 青), black, and red)—meaning that the five colors of the dragon represents political stability and unity. (3) Dragons and snakes are closely related and exist on a gradated scale in which dragons are higher and

[55] Liú Shūpíng 劉淑萍, *A Research on Fox, Dragon and Tiger in* TaiPingGuangJi《太平廣記》狐類龍類虎類研究. Master's thesis, Shǎnxī Shīfàn Dàxué 陝西師範大學 (2003). English title as given in English-language abstract of paper.

[56] Xǔ Shūyǐng 許舒穎, "Dragons of the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì*"《太平廣記》中的龍, *Journal of the Púyáng Vocational and Technical College* 濮陽職業技術學院學報 25, no. 2 (2012): 6–8.

have more positive associations and snakes are lower and viewed negatively. (4) Dragon stories in the TPGJ have been influenced by the arrival of Buddhism in China.

Qín Qióng's 秦瓊 2012 "Special Natures of the Dragons of the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì* and their Buddhist Origins" 《太平廣記》中龍的特殊性及其佛教淵源 seems to be a direct response to/extension of Xǔ's study.[57] Qín also makes four points. (1) Qín adamantly asserts that the dragons of the TPGJ are inauspicious and thus a direct contrast to "traditional" "Chinese" understandings of dragons. (2) Dragons are lowly creatures on a gradated scale, often portrayed as beasts of burden that stink and have small areas of control. (3) The difference between dragons and snakes is unclear. (4) Qín suggests that the blurring of snakes and dragons is due to the influence of Buddhism and translation issues of the term *nāga* (magical water snakes) in Buddhist scriptures.

Zhāng Xiǎoyǒng's 張曉永 2013 "Dragons of the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì*"《太平廣記》中的龍 generally aims to balance Xǔ and Qín above.[58] Zhāng suggests that the dragons of the TPGJ are a combination of "traditional" "Chinese" dragons, Buddhist dragons/nāga, and the Sinicization of Buddhist dragons. To support this Zhāng notes that dragons in the TPGJ (1) are both positive and negative, (2) can transform into a number of creatures/objects, (3) have a degree of affinity and understanding with humans even if not completely the same. Zhāng ends with a short section discussing the legend of a carp leaping over the dragon gate in the TPGJ.

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[57] Qín Qióng 秦瓊, "Special Natures of the Dragons of the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì* and their Buddhist Origins"《太平廣記》中龍的特殊性及其佛教淵源, *Journal of the Púyáng Vocational and Technical College* 濮陽職業技術學院學報 25, no. 6 (2012):3–5+23.

[58] Zhāng Xiǎoyǒng 張曉永, "Dragons of the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì*"《太平廣記》中的龍, *Journal of the Púyáng Vocational and Technical College* 濮陽職業技術學院學報 26, no. 6 (2013):9–11+30.

Zhāng Yuán's 張媛 2014 "Elementary Analysis of the Symbol of the Dragon in the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì*" 《太平廣記》龍形象淺析 seems to follow Zhāng Xiǎoyǒng in asserting that dragons in the TPGJ are complicated multi-cultural phenomena.[59] Zhāng Yuán suggests that (1) there are many different kinds and descriptions of dragons, (2) dragons often reflect many different human emotions (gratitude, anger, mistrust), (3) dragons can be both positive and negative portents, and (4) that dragons are tied to both Buddhism and Daoism. The closest tie between Zhāng Xiǎoyǒng and Zhāng Yuán is in the second portion in which Zhāng Yuán provides more detail on what constitutes a "traditional" "Chinese" dragon, what Buddhist dragons are like, and what the combination may be.

Lǐ Tíng's 李婷 2015 "Stories of Taking Treasures from Dragon Palaces in the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì* and their Cultural Meaning"《太平廣記》中龍宮取寶故事及其文化內涵 is concerned not with dragons themselves, but with the idea of a dragon palace and dragon royalty.[60] Lǐ suggests that all instances of dragon palaces are influenced by the arrival of Buddhism in China. Lǐ then goes on to describe the positions of dragon palaces in remote, unreachable places and the kinds of treasures to be found there—jewels or medicines. Lǐ then concludes by asserting that these tales reflect (1) the influence of Buddhism, (2) attempts to explain the inexplicable, (3) the dreams of low status literati who wish for more luxurious lifestyles.

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[59] Zhāng Yuán 張媛, "Elementary Analysis of the Symbol of the Dragon in the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì*"《太平廣記》龍形象淺析, *Journal of the Púyáng Vocational and Technical College* 濮陽職業技術學院學報 27, no. 1 (2014):5–8+12.

[60] Lǐ Tíng 李婷, "Stories of Taking Treasures from Dragon Palaces in the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì* and their Cultural Meaning"《太平廣記》中龍宮取寶故事及其文化內涵, *Journal of the Púyáng Vocational and Technical College* 濮陽職業技術學院學報 28, no. 6 (2015):4–8.

Finally, Yáng Yuányuán's 楊媛媛 2021 "Dragon Stories in the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì* and their Implications for *Wū* Culture" 《太平廣記》中的龍故事及其巫文化內涵 focuses on the concept of *wū* (巫) and *wūshù* (巫術).[61] *Wū* is often translated as *shaman*, and consequently *wūshù* would be *shamanistic techniques*. In Yáng's piece, however, *wū* is a very general term beyond what I understand *shamanism* to be and I would suggests that more general terms such as *magic* or *superstition* might be more relevant. Yáng focuses on three kinds of magical workings related to dragons: (1) spells (*zhòu yǔ* 咒語), (2) imitation magic (*mónǐ wūshù* 模擬巫術),[62] and (3) contact magic (*jiēchù wūshù* 接觸巫術).[63] In the end, however, Yáng suggests that these three are not mutually exclusive or entirely separate. She also notes that foreign monks (read *Buddhists*) often appear in workings of these magics and represent an intermixing of the two cultures (Indian and Chinese).

There are several relevant through lines in the above studies. One is the "Chineseness" of the dragons in the TPGJ. To be certain, the dragon stories of the TPGJ have been influenced by the arrival of Buddhism in China. This does play a direct role in a few tales, but I would agree with Zhāng Xiǎoyǒng that overemphasizing either the Buddhist or the "native Chinese" elements of dragon tales is unhelpful. I would also note that Zhāng Yuán's inclusion of Daoist elements and Yáng's inclusion of "*wū*"—perhaps representing local popular religion beyond categorization—suggests a more complicated story than even just a binary between Buddhist

[61] Yáng Yuányuán 楊媛媛, "Dragon Stories in the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì* and their Implications for *Wū* Culture" 《太平廣記》中的龍故事及其巫文化內涵, *Journal of the Púyáng Vocational and Technical College* 濮陽職業技術學院學報 34, no. 4 (2021):1–3+36.

[62] That is, magic involving a representation of a dragon such as a statue or painting. Yáng suggests that praying to a statue is both a form of a spell and a form of imitation magic.

[63] Magic involving the body of a dragon. Yáng gives examples in which someone kills a dragon to prevent flooding and in which someone makes ointment out of the flesh of a dragon for medicine.

dragons and "Chinese" dragons. Moreover, the inclusion of "foreigners" (*húrén* 胡人) in both Xǔ's and Yáng's studies further emphasizes the idea of dragons as both present in China but better understood by outsiders. This unclear, nebulous, ambiguous existence as both Chinese and not Chinese clearly reflects the intellectual concerns of the elite literati in the Late Táng who were concerned with defining "Chinese" "Confucianism" in contrast to "foreign" "Buddhism." Entities like these dragons that simultaneously exist inside and outside of a privileged in-group display one kind of queerness.

Another common thread in the above is the status of dragons on some kind of gradated scale. Multiple authors use the term *děngjí* 等級 (grade, rank, class, status) to refer to the distinction between dragons and snakes or between powerful dragons and less powerful ones. In chapter two, I discuss Mel Chen's *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* in which they assert that crossing through gradations on this kind of scale constitutes another form of queerness. [64]

Finally, the through line of transformation and indeterminacy while maintaining some form of continuity provides yet another understanding of queerness. Zhāng Xiǎoyǒng put it best. After describing the many different things that dragons can turn into (or that can turn into dragons), Zhāng notes, "That which is noteworthy is, anything that a dragon has transformed into will all have characteristics or abilities that are different from normal or extraordinary" 值得注意的是，凡是龍所變化都會有異於常的、非凡的特徵或本領. If ever there were to be a

[64] Mel Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

definition of queerness, something that can transform into anything and yet somehow remains marked and different must be it.

I think it worth adding one final piece to bring these ideas together. Throughout the above works of scholarship, one of the key ideas is that *lóngnǚ* 龍女 (dragon woman/daughter, dragoness) is/are inherently Buddhist. The Buddhist person of Lóngnǚ is an attendant of the bodhisattva Guānyīn 觀音菩薩 who is introduced in the Lotus Sutra. The Lotus Sutra was translated into Chinese in the early 400s, before most of the tales of the TPGJ were written.[65]

> "There is the daughter of the nāga king Sāgara who is only eight years old. She is wise; her faculties are sharp; and she also well knows all the faculties and deeds of sentient beings. She has attained the power of recollection. She preserves all the profound secret treasures taught by the buddhas, enters deep meditation, and is well capable of discerning all dharmas. She instantly produced the thought of enlightenment and attained the stage of nonretrogression. She has unhindered eloquence and thinks of sentient beings with as much compassion as if they were her own children. Her virtues are perfect. Her thoughts and explanations are subtle and extensive, merciful, and compassionate. She has a harmonious mind and has attained enlightenment."[66]

After the dragoness/daughter nāga speaks herself, another disciple of Buddha replies:

> "You say that you will soon attain the highest path. This is difficult to believe. Why is this? The female body is polluted; it is not a fit vessel for the Dharma. How can you attain highest enlightenment? The buddha path is long. One can only attain it after diligently carrying out severe practices, and completely practicing the perfections over immeasurable kalpas. Moreover, the female body has five obstructions. The first is the inability to become a great Brahma. The second is the inability to become Śakra. The third is the inability to become Māra, and the fourth is the inability to become a universal monarch (cakravartin). The fifth is the inability to become a buddha. How can you with your female body quickly become a buddha?"[67]

Unperturbed by this sexism, the *nāga* daughter defends herself and then takes center stage.

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[65] Tsugunari Kubo and Akira Yuyama, trans, *The Lotus Sutra* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2007), xiii.
[66] Kubo, 183. For an alternate translation, see Burton Watson, *The Lotus Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) 187–9.
[67] Kubo, 184

> "Then the assembly there all saw the daughter of the nāga king instantly transform into a man, perfect the bodhisattva practices, go to the vimalā world in the south, sit on a jeweled lotus flower, and attain highest, complete enlightenment, become endowed with the thirty-two marks and eighty excellent characteristics, and expound the True Dharma universally for the sake of all sentient beings in the ten directions. Then the bodhisattvas, śrāvakas, eight kinds of devas, nāgas, and so on, humans and nonhumans of the sahā world, all saw in the distance that the daughter of the nāga king had become a buddha and was universally teaching the Dharma for the sake of the humans and devas in that assembly. They rejoiced greatly and honored her from afar."[68]

In this Buddhist scripture from the early fifth century, there are clearly ideas of gender roles and limitations: women suffer from five obstructions that prevent them from attaining high status. This text also includes a very early understanding of the instability of a gender binary. The Lóngnǚ instantly transforms herself into a man and then a buddha. After this transition has occurred, however, it seems as though she maintains a female gender as she is still called "the daughter of the *nāga* king."

This understanding of Lóngnǚ and the text itself have clear parallels in the TPGJ. In 420.1 "The Country of Jùmíng" 俱名國,[69] a traveling merchant sees someone who has caught a dragon. He buys the dragon and releases her. She then transforms into a human and takes him back to her home to repay him.

> The merchant saw that the palace was imposingly decorated with treasure. He said, "If you are so rich, why do you want to accept the ways of the bodhisattva?"
>
> She replied, "The way of a dragon has five bitter things."
>
> "Which five?"

[68] Kubo, 185

[69] From *Fǎyuàn Zhūlín* 法苑珠林 (668) by a monk Dàoshì 道世 (c.600-683). This source text is very clearly Buddhist oriented. It is worth noting that this particular tale is the single tale with the most difference between the TPGJ and an extant source text. Although none of the changes are major enough to change this level of reading, there are a few extra lines of dialogue and context worth considering.

"When birthing, when sleeping, when indulging,[70] when raging, and when dying. Within one day we shed skin and flesh three[71] times and hot sand sticks to our bodies."

The merchant asked, "What do you want to do about that?"

She replied, "I wish to live among humanity. Living as an animal is painful because they do not know the Dharma. I want to pledge myself to Buddha and become a nun."

商人見龍宮中，寶物莊嚴飾宮殿。即問：「汝有如是莊嚴。因受菩薩何為。」

答言：「我龍法有五事苦。」

「何等為五。」

謂：「生時、眠時。婬時。嗔時、死時。一日之中，三過皮肉落地，熱沙簇身。」

商言：「汝欲何求耶。」

答言：「人道中生，為畜生苦不知法，故欲就如來出家。」

Whether or not this lóngnǚ is ***the*** Lóngnǚ who attends Guānyīn is unclear. This story, however, is clearly influenced by Buddhism and the Lotus Sutra. Note that in the Lotus Sutra, it is women who are afflicted by five obstructions and these obstructions prevent them from attaining high levels of Buddhist enlightenment. In this tale, however, it is dragons that suffer from five bitter things and this actually prompts the dragoness to pursue Buddhism further. There are also clear discussions about the status of dragons as opposed to humans. Although the dragoness suggests that dragons are animals who do not know the Dharma and are thus inferior to humans, she herself provides the counterpoint to her own claim. This suggests that dragons both can and cannot pursue the Dharma and both are and are not inferior to humans.

[70] In sexual pleasure.

[71] In Classical Chinese, *three* can occasionally mean *many*. As this passage does not make a clear distinction, I have opted for the more literal meaning.

In contrast to this clearly Buddhist-inflected lóngnǚ, consider 420.4 “The Girl from Rippling Pond” 凌波女,[72] in which a lóngnǚ appears to Emperor Xuánzōng of the Táng 唐玄宗 as he sleeps in his palace. She asks him to play music for her, and the emperor obliges. She leaves, he awakes, and then he attempts to remember the song he played. When he remembers the tune:

> He then invited all of the officials who accompanied him to the palace by Rippling Pond. Next to the pond, he played the new tune, and the ripples in the pond swelled up and then settled down again. A goddess appeared from the center of the ripples, the same girl from the previous night. Only after a good while did she sink back beneath the waves.
>
> Thus he established a temple there and made sacrifices every year.
>
> 遂宴從官於凌波宮，臨池奏新曲。池中波濤湧起復定。有神女出於波心，乃昨夜之女子也。良久方沒。
>
> 因遣置廟於池上，每歲祀之。

Even though this dragoness is also a lóngnǚ, I do not believe this story has any meaningful connection to Buddhism. I do, however, think it worth noting that this dragoness is then called a goddess. Above, the dragoness asserted that dragons are animals who do not understand Dharma. In this tale, however, this dragoness is a goddess who can make requests of the emperor himself.

These two tales about lóngnǚ demonstrate many of the points discussed in the thematic works of scholarship on the dragon tales of the TPGJ. In some cases, these tales truly are very much influenced by Buddhism. In some cases, I do not see any noteworthy connection.[73] In some cases, dragons are lowly creatures barely distinguishable from animals, in others they are

[72] From *Yìshǐ* 逸史 (eighth month of 847) by Lú Zhào 盧肇 (818-882)

[73] For instance, the dragon daughter in “Liǔ Yì” is at one point called a *lóngnǚ*. Even though she is the daughter of dragon royalty and there is a palace-like setting, I do not see any particular need to emphasize Buddhism in the tale. Some of the Chinese scholarship cited above is overzealous in suggesting that all lóngnǚ tales are Buddhist in origin.

majestic goddesses. They are also capable of radical transformation from dragon women to human men to buddhas. In these three ways, I would assert that dragons show varying definitions of queerness.

Dragons: Queer Culture, Queer Animacy

Returning to Sedgwick's discussion of queer cultural production as bringing together seemingly disparate and irreconcilable parts to form a surprisingly cohesive whole that provides a source for creating or re-creating an identity could not be more apt for a discussion of Chinese dragons.

Perhaps the most commonly cited definition of a dragon is attributed to an Eastern Hàn thinker, Wáng Fǔ 王符 (c. 85-163 CE).[74] Wáng suggested that a dragon had "nine resemblances" 九似 (*jiǔ sì*). These nine resemblances are a general description of what a dragon is supposed to look like. The head is supposed to resemble that of a camel, the horns of a deer, the eyes of a ghost, the ears of a cow, the neck of a snake, the stomach of a clam,[75] the scales of a fish, [76] the talons of an eagle, and the palm of a tiger.[77] The very idea of a camel-deer-ghost-cow-snake-

[74] Unfortunately, I can't seem to find exactly where this occurs in Wáng Fǔ's work. Both the Sòng Dynasty *Ěryǎ Yì* 爾雅翼 and the Míng Dynasty *Běncǎo Gāngmù* 本草綱目 attribute this information to Wáng Fǔ. The *Ěryǎ Yì* explains that Wáng's commentary is on practices of how dragons were painted in his time. This certainly would have influenced how the authors of the source texts and the editors of the TPGJ would have visualized their dragons. His most famous work, *Qiánfū Lùn* 潛夫論, does not contain this information.

[75] This is debatable. Most authoritative dictionaries will list this both as a large clam and as a mythical monster in some way related to the *jiāo* 蛟 (arguably a kind of dragon, discussed in chapter two.) As most of the other creatures in the list are natural creatures, I've followed that pattern.

[76] Interestingly, there is a slight misquote in the Běncǎo. It says the dragon's scales resemble those of a carp, while the Ěryǎ Yì says the scales are those of a fish.

[77] Modern online fora have a great number of variations on this. As none of them cite their sources (or incorrectly cite one of the two discussed here), I assume that is due to the unreliable nature of online discussion fora. The Běncǎo and the Ěryǎ Yì both agree on the nine resemblances, with the exception of the fish vs. carp and the order of the resemblances. (The Běncǎo lists head, horns, eyes, ears, neck, stomach, scales, talons, palm—as listed above. The Ěryǎ Yì lists horns, head, eyes, neck, stomach, scales, claws, palm, ears.)

clam-fish-eagle-tiger hybrid is a bewildering juxtaposition that borders on the unimaginable. What could such a thing possibly look like? Yet the image of the dragon is one of the most common in China and has long held unique significance to China.[78]

Roughly contemporaneous to Wáng Fǔ was the *Shuōwén Jiězì* 說文解字, one of China's earliest dictionaries (compilation 100-121 CE). It defines a dragon as "the chief of scaled worms.[79] It can be obscure, it can be illuminated, it can be thin, it can be gigantic, it can be short, it can be long. In spring[80] it climbs to the heavens; in fall it dives to the depths." 鱗蟲之長。能幽，能明，能細，能巨，能短，能長；春分而登天，秋分而潛淵. In addition to being a fairly early, authoritative definition, this one is appealing because it explains some of the key elements of dragons that appear in the TPGJ and some of the later definitions—they can change both size and shape and can be found either in the skies or waters.

The ambiguity and dynamism of the *Shuōwén* definition and the amalgamative eclecticism of Wáng Fǔ's definition mirror the "disorienting juxtapositions" of Sedgwick's queer cultural production. These definitions all play out in the dragon tales of the TPGJ: many involve dragons changing size, flying into the sky, swimming in the waters, or transforming between

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[78] Arguments about the dragon representing an idea of "Chinese" identity have a very long history. My argument would be that, based on the Chinese scholarship on dragons of the TGPJ, one could certainly argue this point for these texts. Much of this discourse has been influenced by the idea of a dragon as a "totem" in which the various elements are combined from different "tribes" to form a unified people group. This idea seems to originate with Wén Yīduō 聞一多, "Fúxī Kǎo" 伏羲考, *Wén Yīduō Quánjí* 聞一多全集, Sūn Dǎngbó 孫黨伯 and Yuán Jiǎnzhèng 袁謇正, eds. (Wǔhàn 武漢: Húběi Rénmín Chūbǎnshè 湖北人民出版社, 1993).

[79] This term for worm is difficult to pin down. It can refer to insects and worms, or other small creepy-crawlies. *The Record of Rites of the Elder Dài* 大戴禮記 notes that all animals are grouped into five categories of "worms." The first, winged worms, refers to birds. The second, hairy worms, are all walking, hairy animals. The third, insects, refers to all animals that have shells, including insects and turtles. The fourth, scaled "worms," refers to animals that have scales, including fish, snakes, and dragons. The fifth, "working worms," refers to hairless, scale-less animals, including humans and frogs. In this case, the dragon is the head of all scaled "worms" (perhaps best understood as a generic term for *creatures*). See Gāo Míng 高明, *Dà Dài Lǐ Jì Jīnzhù Jīnyì* 大戴禮記今註今譯 (Rprt. Táiběi 臺北: Táiwān Shāngwù Yìnshūguǎn 臺灣商務印書館, 1975).

[80] This could alternatively be translated as *mid-spring* or *on the spring equinox* and likewise for fall.

many forms. In the TPGJ, many of the characters stumble upon fish or snakes that are then revealed to be dragons. While these are the most common, there are also humans, dogs, pigs, leaves, zither strings, and stones that all turn out to be dragons. Dragons change and transform, they cannot be defined with any one stable definition—they are constantly betwixt and between. Despite this definitive indetermination, several monograph length studies of the Chinese dragon have attempted to define it.

First, let us consider two generalist books on dragons in Chinese culture: *Lóng yǔ Zhōngguó Wénhuà* 龍與中國文化 (*Dragons and Chinese Culture*), published in 1999 by Liú Zhìxióng 劉志雄 and Yáng Jìngróng 楊靜榮, and *Zhōngguó Lóng Wénhuà* 中國龍文化 (*China's Dragon Culture*), published in 2007 by Páng Jìn 龐進. Both of these works discuss the origin of dragons, dragons in pre-historic Chinese culture, changing depictions of dragons over time, and dragons in religious contexts. One of the main questions modern Chinese dragonology discusses is the origin of dragons. Liú and Yáng helpfully break this into two large categories: living creatures and weather phenomena. Páng tacitly follows their paradigm by listing his potential sources in this order but does not explicitly state this dichotomy. All together, these two works compile a whole host of potential origins for dragons: snakes, alligators, fish, lizards, salamanders, pigs, horses, hippopotami, cows, deer, tigers, bears, dogs/wolves, eagles, pine trees, lightning, clouds, rainbows, constellations, cyclones, and dinosaurs/fossils. While trying to divine which elements of the natural world influenced the creation of dragons in the minds of humanity, there is little way of answering what the earliest humans used to create these mythological monsters. Both of these texts also consider the earliest archaeological traces of dragons in Chinese culture as well as later developments in fine arts and material culture. While

these early instances of dragons can provide useful insight into later trends (for instance, that even from the earliest uses, dragons have been associated with divinity and with water[81]), this focus on material culture does not examine the literary manifestations of dragons. When these texts do include discussion of textual sources, it tends to be very brief and without systematic rigor.[82]

Next, consider Zhao Qiguang's 1992 work *A Study of Dragons, East and West*. While Zhao Qiguang is credited[83] with bringing attention to the study of Chinese dragons (and dragons generally), his global approach to dragonology necessarily limits the amount of detail and precision his work attains. In attempting to classify all dragons as either Eastern or Western, Zhao elides much detail by equating Middle Eastern and Mediterranean dragons with those of Europe and by largely subsuming the Indian naga into Chinese tales of Buddhist origin.[84] Furthermore, any attempt to take a complicated multi-cultural phenomenon and reduce it to a simple binary is, put lightly, reductive.

Penultimately, consider M.W. de Visser's 1913 *The Dragon in China and Japan* and Jean-Pierre Diény's 1987 *Le Symbolism du Dragon dans la Chine Antique*. Though de Visser's study is by no means recent, his approach of considering various thematic elements through the lens of specific texts is admirable. He carefully discusses dragons in the classics, as omens, as bringers of weather, in connection with the Emperor, and in transformation. Though he also chooses selections from a wide range of texts without much methodological justification, his study is

[81] Liú and Yáng, 116–30
[82] By this I mean that they quote indiscriminately from early texts without much consideration for the genre, period, or author of that text. They also tend to quote very briefly, without giving necessary context.
[83] In Dragan's thesis, see below.
[84] To his credit, he does state that these are something of a bridge between the East and West (p. 33), but his overall treatment suggests an equivalence with Eastern dragons.

generally sound. Diény's study is also worthy of commendation. The first half of his study is simply categorized[85] translations in French of classical Chinese texts about dragons. The second part of his study highlights the dragon as a symbol of water, of the celestial, and of "universal dynamism." Like de Visser, Diény considers a broad range of early Chinese texts with minimal justification for his choices.

Finally, Dragan's 1993 dissertation, *The Dragon in Early Imperial China*, follows largely in the same vein as de Visser and Diény. He considers dragons in texts from the Han dynasty and earlier, largely following and expounding upon much of the commentary that Diény provides. For example, his discussion of the dragon in terms of *yīn* and *yáng* strongly echoes Diény's "universal dynamism." As with both de Visser and Diény, Dragan's dissertation is thorough and sound. The study does, however, end with the Han dynasty.

Though I am certainly no archaeologist nor am I an expert in "early" Chinese texts, I am struck by the fact that the archaeologists are interested in the origins and factuality and physicality of dragons and that those who consider early Chinese philosophical texts find dragons to be philosophically interesting. Choosing to look at dragons in *xiǎoshuō* generally and the TPGJ specifically is not simply an extension of other projects. Changing the textual form will necessarily change the content and meaning. Also noteworthy is that these prior studies have struggled with the dynamic, instable, clashing elements of dragons. Queerness, though perhaps in line with Diény's "universal dynamism," also opens the door for the vast world of theoretical

[85] Broken into the categories of dragons' locations, behaviors, and relationship with gods and men.

work done in queer theory and an expansion and clarification of the kind of delightfully undefinable phenomena that are dragons.

Though I disagree with many of the above authors in categorizing different kinds of dragons, throughout my study it is apparent that dragons throughout different tales and even within the same tale can exhibit varying degrees of power. Some dragons are independent god-like entities to be worshipped. Some seem to be servants of higher divinities. Others are surprisingly human. Some, finally, are little more than animals to be seen in the wild. That dragons cannot easily be broken into either the divine, the human, or the animal suggests a kind of queerness based on Mel Chen's 2012 *Animacies*—occupying multiple levels of animacy makes something queer.[86]

Tying It Together: Queer Ecology

We now have discussed multiple kinds of queerness and how they can relate to dragons, to the TPGJ, and to the concerns of Táng-Sòng intellectual life. Dragons are queer because of their multivalent existence on an animacy hierarchy. In the way that various pieces have been curiously amalgamated and thus open the door for the critique of incoherence, dragons, the TPGJ, and the intellectual work of Hán Yù all display a the mode of queer cultural production Sedgwick identifies. To provide greater context to these various forms of queerness and to anchor our discussion in one particular subfield, let us note a surprising resonance between the following two quotes.

> "This Culture of Ours could stand for the idea of a civilization that combined the two, a civilization based on both the models of the ancients and the manifest patterns

[86] Chen states their understanding of queerness in relationship to animacy most clearly on page 11.

> of the natural order. But T'ang and Sung scholars also saw that at moments of political crisis This Culture could perish. To save it, and to save the times, scholars could always return to antiquity and the natural order as the grounds for shared norms."[87]
>
> "Queer environments are thus those in which the boundaries between "nature" and "culture" are shown to be arbitrary, dialectical, mutually-constitutive. These are places where "unnatural" and "uncivilized" combine to produce questionable, shady, suspect, characters who are not comfortable inhabiting existing bifurcations."[88]

Peter Bol, well respected for his work on Táng and Sòng literary culture suggests that the scholars of the period were vested in the desire to utilize both norms based on cultural precedent and on natural law. Catriona Sandilands' piece "Lavender's Green?: Some Thoughts on Queer(y)ing Environmental Politics" in the May 1994 edition of *UnderCurrents: Critical Environmental Studies*, which arguably birthed queer ecology, set the tone for the entire field to examine the boundaries of culture and nature. Dragons being gods that control nature, animals that are part of nature, and human-esque creatures that understand the intricacies of human culture also exemplify the kind of questionable, undefined characters that do not comfortably exist solely as cultural or as natural. The tales of these creatures, both natural and cultural, written by intellectuals concerned with combining natural laws and cultural norms, must be read with a theoretical framework that can both accept some division of nature and culture while also questioning it. That framework is queer ecology.

What exactly is queer ecology?

As this is likely less familiar to my main audience than the works above, allow me to provide more detail on the following pieces.

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[87] Bol, 2.
[88] Catriona Sandilands, "Lavender's Green?: Some Thoughts on Queer(y)ing Environmental Politics," *UnderCurrents: Critical Environmental Studies*, (May 1994): 22.

As stated above, this field arguably began with the May 1994 edition of *UnderCurrents: Critical Environmental Studies*. Both Catriona Sandilands' "Lavender's Green?: Some Thoughts on Queer(y)ing Environmental Politics" and Caffyn Kelly's "Queer/Nature: Be Like Water" address the relationship of queerness, the environment, and politics. It is worth noting that both of these pieces eschew normative definitions of scholarship. Sandilands' piece is a list of 16 points that are campy, performative, political, and personal—certainly not standard scholarship. Kelly's piece also engages with political, personal, and even very emotional material—far from the dispassionate, disinterested, objective standard of normative scholarship.

Sandilands begins with an image of a song with a hand drawn musical staff. Other points include common queer rights slogans re-written to include environmental messaging, decontextualized observations about gender or sexual variance in animals, and even poetry. More prosaic entries include meditations on how one understands the relationship between queer people and naturalness, how queers/queerness should be included in environmental discourse, and what results may ensue. In point 8, Sandilands suggests that queers are both attacked for being unnatural (not reproducing via heterosexual penetration) and being uncivilized degenerates and thus being closer to nature.[89] This sets up an unstable binary between queerness and nature that continues through the piece. Eventually, Sandilands questions how queers should be included in environmental discussion. Point 10, from which the quote was taken above, is here given in its entirety:[90]

[89] Sandilands, 21.
[90] Sandilands, 22.

> Perhaps we are asking the wrong question. The inclusion of "queer" into environmental politics must involve not so much a noun as an adjective and verb. Rather than enumerate some series of points where lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgenderists [sic] can carve out some sort of unique "position" in relation to environmental issues, perhaps the point is to "queer" nature itself, to create "queer" environments.
>
> To queer nature is to question its normative use, to interrogate relations of knowledge and power by which certain "truths" about ourselves have been allowed to pass, unnoticed, without question. It is a process by which all relations to nature become de-naturalized, by which we question the ways in which we are located in nature, by which we question the uses to which "nature" has been put. To queer nature is to "put out of order" our understandings, so our "eccentricities" can be produced more forcefully.
>
> Queer environments are thus those in which the boundaries between "nature" and "culture" are shown to be arbitrary, dialectical, mutually-constitutive. These are places where "unnatural" and "uncivilized" combine to produce questionable, shady, suspect, characters who are not comfortable inhabiting existing bifurcations.

Also consider point 14[91]

> A politics that would have us celebrate "strangeness" would place queer at the centre, rather than on the margins, of the discursive universe. It is not that we encounter "the stranger" only when we visit "wilderness," but that s/he/it inhabits even the most everyday of our actions. To treat the world as "strange" is to open up the possibility of wonder, to speak also with the impenetrable spaces between the words in our language.
>
> Such a project lies at the core of refiguring both human relations to nonhuman nature, and human relations to each other. It involves both a certain humbleness, and, in William Connolly's words, a certain generosity. "Not a generosity growing out of the unchallengeable privilege of a superior social position and moral ontology, but one emerging from enhanced appreciation of dissonances within our own identities." Not a rigid boundary between Self/knowledge, and Other/fear, but movement in the world through a multitude of queer environments.

Sandilands' discussions of both the unstable relationship between nature and culture and the ways in which "we" meet "strangers" in quotidian wonder speaks directly to some key themes in the TPGJ. Many tales in the TPGJ are written following the perspective of a more-or-less normative scholar who wishes to succeed in imperial examinations and pursue a political

[91] Sandilands, 23.

career. These scholars will often encounter "strangers" in the "wilderness" as they travel to or from imperial examinations. In other stories, however, the un-natural/super-natural characters appear in the normal characters' everyday lives. Some entries in the TPGJ even resemble Sandilands' strange notes on odd characteristics of animals. This literary work demands to be read with this theory.

Caffyn Kelly's piece begins with an incredibly personal reflection on the deaths of the author's friends from AIDS and suicide. As Kelly considers the grief and violence experienced by queer people across the globe, she comes to more philosophical points. One, addressing the subtitle of the piece states, "I live by a river that flows into the sea, and this is the water of life to me. It is my dream and my philosophy. I think homosexuality is like a river. At all times, in all conditions, we persist in our loving. We die; we are murdered. But we continue, despite them. Like water, we have no beginning. We have no end."[92] Continuing the theme of queer waters, she says, "Trees, after all, make air to breathe in. Rains replenish the river. The river nourishes the sea, where light transforms into life, and the food we eat begins. In the face of all the mercy in the world, it seems the least I can do is love you." And later, "We have a kinship with all life, like water. Love invents us. At all times, in all conditions, we persist in our loving. What does not change is this." In defining the kind of queer love Kelly wants, she suggests, it should be "Love that is as gracious as a drag queen, fierce as a bulldagger, and just as astonishing as a women-loving-woman, a man-loving-man."[93] Kelly ends the piece with the incredibly emotional:

> With love, this is my prayer for us, and for the friends I've said good-bye to:
> *Be kind.*
> *Be my kind.*

[92] Caffyn Kelly, "Queer/Nature (Be Like Water)," *UnderCurrents: Critical Environmental Studies*, May 1994, 43.
[93] Kelly, 43–4.

Do not end.
Be like water.
Stay close to the ground.
Persist.

Amen. Kelly clearly does not shy away from speaking directly to her audience, involving emotional pleas, or blurring boundaries between literary and scholarly genres. Queer Scholarship. This piece also questions the boundaries between people and nature, suggesting an intimate tie between queer people and water. Queer Nature.

It is worth noting that the performative nature of these pieces serves a distinct political goal. Kelly suggests that "Homosexual oppression might be the matrix of all oppressions. Revealing the preposterous quality of sexual difference, we show the coercion masked by it. And we show the lie inside the heterosexual fact at the core of nature: the one that lends credence to the vilest institutions of humanity, from motherhood to the cutting down of thousand-year-old trees for apple crates."[94] This idea of the centrality of queerness to all political oppression is taken up again in Greta Gaard's 1997 "Toward a Queer Ecofeminism."

> At the root of ecofeminism is the understanding that the many systems of oppression are mutually reinforcing. Building on the socialist feminist insight that racism, classism, and sexism are interconnected, ecofeminists recognized additional similarities between those forms of human oppression and the oppressive structures of speciesism and naturism.[95]

Drawing on Sandilands, however, Gaard asserts that simply adding queers to ecofeminism is not enough "it is time for queers to come out of the woods and speak for ourselves."[96] Gaard ends the piece with a resounding call for a

[94] Kelly, 44.
[95] Greta Gaard, "Toward a Queer Ecofeminism," *Hypatia* Winter 1997, 114.
[96] Gaard, 115.

> Genuine transformation of Western conceptions of the erotic as fundamentally opposed to reason, culture, humanity, and masculinity. A queer ecofeminist perspective would argue that liberating the erotic requires reconceptualizing humans as equal participants in culture and in nature, able to explore the eroticism of reason and the unique rationality of the erotic. Ecofeminists must be concerned with queer liberation, just as queers must be concerned with the liberation of women and of nature; our parallel oppressions have stemmed from our perceived associations. It is time to build our common liberation on more concrete coalitions.[97]

Throughout these pieces there is the concept that queer ecology is far beyond simply including LGBTQ+ individuals in environmental discourses. Indeed, the claim is that the oppression of queers is rooted in discourses about nature as are many other forms of oppression. Queering discourse on nature—intentionally creating alternative narratives of what nature is and how it should be understood—then benefits not only the LGBTQ community but also many other marginalized groups while also acting to preserve nature.

All of queer theory, including queer ecology, was shooketh by Lee Edelman's 2004 *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. This incredibly influential piece asserted that the core of what it means to be political is to perform actions for one's children. In effect, all politics are for heterosexual reproductive futurity. "We" must do everything for "our" children. Who "we" are and what kind of future "we" want for "our" children is crucial to what kind of politics arise from this ideational pattern. White supremacists famously assert that "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children" in David Lane's Fourteen Words. "We" queers must not only oppose the racism inherent in that particular version of reproductive futurity; but, following Edelman, queers have no future as we do not have any children. We cannot wish to secure a future for "our" children because we do not have

[97] Gaard, 132.

children. This is particularly difficult for a discussion of queer environmentalism as many environmentalists think of preserving the earth for "our" children. This rather explosive piece has garnered much attention from every possible angle and nearly every work of queer theory since has addressed Edelman in one way or another.

Drawing heavily on the work of the preceding authors, Timothy Morton's 2010 "Guest Column: Queer Ecology"[98] marginally attempts to overcome the hurdles of Edelman's antisocial turn. This piece is oft cited perhaps because it gives an overview of previous works of queer ecology or ecofeminism while drawing on a wide array of theorists from Marx, to Darwin, to Derrida, to Freud. Morton argues that nature is antiteleological (a way of combatting Edelman's reproductive futurity) because—in Morton's understanding of Darwin—sex and sexuality does not exist for the aim of securing a future for our children but based on pleasure received by aesthetic displays in mating rituals. If we understand sex as performance and aesthetic, perhaps we can sidestep Edelman's issues of reproductive futurity. Whether or not this sidestep is successful and, more broadly, whether or not there is any acceptable counterargument to Edelman has been an ongoing debate for quite some time.

Nicole Seymour's 2013 *Strange Natures: Futurity, Empathy, and the Queer Ecological Imagination* is perhaps more successful in combatting Edelmania than Morton's earlier work. Towards the end of the introduction, Seymour says, "I agree that the value set of normative, reproductive heterosexuality establishes strict, moralized limits to futurity, but I refuse the idea that it has a monopoly on futurity, or on environmental ethics rooted in futurity. I propose, in

[98] Timothy Morton, "Guest Column: Queer Ecology," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 125, no. 2 (2010): 273–82.

fact, that any kind of environmentalism that does not operate within those limits—that is, that does not operate out of immediate or extended self-interest—is 'queer.'"[99] Throughout the work, Seymour delicately discusses what queerness is, what nature is, and how certain texts are or are not queer or natural. Interestingly, though this work is much more traditionally academic than the pieces in *UnderCurrents*, Seymour is also invested in non-traditional academics as well. She states that her project makes "unique contributions to queer ecology, to contemporary literary, filmic, political, and cultural studies more broadly, and to non-academic areas such as social justice and environmental activism."[100] What exactly makes social justice and environmental activism non-academic is unclear to me. What is clear, however, is that to ignore political implications of literature with queer, ecological ties would be a great disservice to that literature.

Perhaps the best summary of queer ecology comes from Seymour's 2018 "Queer Ecology."[101] At a mere three pages, the text handily summarizes the largest questions of queer ecology, internal debates, and potential new horizons of study. The very first suggestion that Seymour gives for a new direction is an expansion of place. Seymour rightly states that queer ecology has largely been developed by white scholars reading American, British, or Canadian texts and that scholarship outside of these areas might yield new insights. This project, considering texts from both temporally and spatially distant China, aims to answer this call.

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[99] Nicole Seymour, *Strange Natures: Futurity, Empathy, and the Queer Ecological Imagination* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 12.
[100] Seymour, *Strange Natures*, 22
[101] Nicole Seymour, "Queer Ecology," *Companion to Environmental Studies*, Noel Castree, Mike Hulme, and James D. Proctor, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2018).

Conclusion and Chapter Outline

The dragon tales of the TPGJ provide unique insights into the intellectual, social, and cultural concerns of mid-Imperial China. Faced with political instability and the ascendance of both Buddhism and Daoism, the literati of the late Táng were very interested in redefining Confucianism and what constituted "this Culture of Ours." The result was one that drew from multiple sources—specifically human culture and institutions and natural patterns and rhythms. As Chinese dragons are themselves drawn from many traditions and represent both nature and culture, they represent these concerns with unique clarity. In both of these, dragons exhibit forms of queerness. As literary creations drawing from multiple natural creatures and multiple cultural resources, dragons certainly fulfill Sedgwick's definition of queer cultural practice. As creatures that represent both nature and culture and exist on multiple levels of a gradated hierarchy of animacy, they prompt discussions of queer ecology.

The overarching aim of this project is to suggest a way to meaningfully work with the TPGJ—maintaining a reasonable scope while not relying on the already constructed set of most researched tales. In order to do this, I argue one can follow the sections already present in the TPGJ. This particular case study considers the section on dragons and seeks to show how dragons relate to nature, how dragons are queer, and how various features of these tales can be understood as either queer, ecological, or both.

In chapter 1, I seek to build a definition of queer ecology from three sources. First and foremost, I am concerned with queer ecology as presented by these tales and the dragons in them. Secondarily, I contrast this with normative understandings of the relationship between humans and nature in classical texts that were familiar to scholars of Táng and Sòng educated

in the Confucian tradition. Finally, I do consider queer ecology and the scholarly tradition from which it comes.

Chapter 2 considers the queer, fluid, liminal status of dragons on a hierarchy of different kinds of animate beings: the divine, the human, the animal, and the object. Dragons certainly appear at all levels of this hierarchy. They also transform and move across them: existing as animals one minute then gods the next. This defies a number of normative statements about the purported distance between gods and humans or between humans and animals.

In chapter 3, I look through the environmental changes of mid-Imperial China from roughly 400 CE to 1,000 CE and suggest that dragon tales are very closely tied to the aquatic environments of the time. Not only do dragons represent the environment, they are also used by humans to control it—clearly blurring the boundaries between humans, dragons, and nature.

Penultimately, the fourth chapter focuses on moments of revelation in the text, considering the epistemic ramifications of dragons in non-dragon form revealing themselves. This revelation is a key concern of the texts: readers, who know that a dragon should appear sooner or later, are waiting for the moment when that dramatic tension is resolved. These moments are also often connected with a change in animacy status—what was formerly thought to be a normal person, animal, or object transforms into a dragon. This concept of revelation is also a cornerstone of queer theory—the idea of coming out and revealing one's sex, sexuality, or gender is arguably definitional to the queer experience.

Finally, the conclusion returns to the original question of how to read the TPGJ. The combined reading of the dragon section leads to an understanding of dragons as queerly

questioning normative Confucian statements about the relationship between gods, humans, and animals, and a concept of “nature.” These are philosophical questions of the highest order that were of prime concern to the literati who authored these tales. This way of readings returns to the political, social, literary, and epistemological needs that spurred the creation of the TPGJ. Additionally, though we moderns live in a very different world, these foundational questions about where humanity fits into a larger cosmological framework have lost none of their potency. In short, reading a large section of the TPGJ leads us to not only better understand the tales and the world that produced them, but also suggests a way that are still relevant a millennium later.

Disruptions & Dragons
A Mid-Imperial Chinese Queer Ecology

Early Chinese texts make it clear that there is an order to the universe. Heaven originated all things and set them in order. The sage kings of the earliest dynasties understood the Heaven ordained order of nature and codified that into ritual. This ritual became the basis for the Empire with the emperor maintaining stability and order in his unique role as the Son of Heaven. The ministers under him were responsible for knowing and understanding the historical construction of rituals and to guide and even correct him when his actions were not in line with Heaven and Ritual. Philosophers make it clear that the security of the Empire was dependent not only on the emperor, but also on the people—read *men*—who were meant to keep their families in order by cultivating their own understanding of nature and history, Heaven and Ritual. This order—reliant on ritual differences and all people fulfilling their Heaven ordained roles—is the only thing that separated the Empire from the chaos of animals and the barbarism of ethnic others.

This universal order; this assemblage of relationships between rulers and ministers, between fathers and sons, between men and women, between past and present, between humanity and animals, between culture and nature, between the Chinese and non-Chinese; this bears a striking resemblance to the interconnected issues of sexuality, race, gender, nation, class, and ethnicity that theorists of Queer Ecology ranging from Caffyn Kelly to Nicole Seymour have highlighted.[102] To be sure, the cultural context of early and mid-Imperial China is radically

[102] See Caffyn Kelly, "Queer/Nature (Be Like Water)," *UnderCurrents*, May 1994, 43–4. See also Nicole Seymour, "Queer Ecology," in *Companion to Environmental Studies*, eds. Noel Castree, Mike Hulme and James D. Proctor (New York: Routledge, 2018), 448–53. Many other theorists have posited similar structures. Further explanation of their proposed assemblages are discussed below.

different than the 21st century context Seymour addresses, yet the key elements of gender, class, race, and the relationship between humanity and nature remain strikingly consistent. Anything—a text, a person, a philosophy—that exposes the flaws in this oppressive regime deserves the label *queer*.

The Regime

The clearest statement of the relationship between order, Heaven, family, and personal growth is *The Great Learning* 大學,[103] a central text of Confucianism attributed to Confucius himself.

> The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious power[104] to *All Under Heaven* first governed their own states. Those who wished to govern their states first ordered their families. Those who wished to order their families first cultivated their selves. Those who wished to cultivate their selves first rectified their hearts.[105] Those who rectified their hearts first made their intentions sincere. Those who wished to make their intentions sincere first made knowledge complete. The completion of knowledge rests in the study of things.[106] After things are studied, knowledge is complete. After knowledge is complete, intentions are sincere. After intentions are sincere, hearts are rectified. After hearts are rectified, selves are cultivated. After selves are cultivated, families are ordered. After families are ordered, states are governed. After states are governed, *All Under Heaven* is at peace.
> 古之欲明明德於天下者，先治其國；欲治其國者，先齊其家；欲齊其家者，先修其身；欲修其身者，先正其心；欲正其心者，先誠其意；欲誠其意者，先致其知，致知在格物。物格而後知至，知至而後意誠，意誠而後心正，心正而後身修，身修而後家齊，家齊而後國治，國治而後天下平。

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[103] Translation mine, though close to Legge. Chinese text from James Legge trans., *The Chinese Classics Vol. 1: The Confucian Analects, the Great Learning, and the Doctrine of the Mean* (rprt. New York: Cosimo Classics, 2009), 357–9. After Zhū Xī 朱熹 (1130–1200) included the the *Dàxué* in his *Four Books*, every formally trained scholar in China has had some exposure to the text. Consequently, scholarship on the work is quite abundant. For more information, see Daniel Gardner, *Chu Hsi and the* Ta-hsueh*: Neo-Confucian Reflection on the Confucian Canon* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986). See also Andrew Plaks trans., *Ta Hsueh and Chung Yung: (The Highest Order of Cultivation and On the Practice of the Mean)* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2004).

[104] 德 dé can be either *virtue* or *power*. In this case, I believe the idea of promulgating one's own illustrious/benevolent/enlightened rule to the masses is understood as a kind of virtue.

[105] This could also be understood as *minds*.

[106] This term spans a range from living creatures to inanimate objects to all things.

This foundational text of Confucianism makes it very clear that *all under heaven*, everything in existence—one understanding of nature—all is reliant upon governed states, ordered families, and cultivated selves. In this, personal cultivation and relationships, particularly ordered relationships between family members who fulfil specific roles, are central to stable politics.

The Doctrine of the Mean 中庸, another foundational Confucian text attributed to Confucius, makes it clear that family, more specifically the relationships between family members, is both a moral issue—the definition of the Confucian virtue of humane-ness (*rén* 仁)—and central to defining humanity itself.

> To be humane is to be human. The greatest exercise of this is in being familial to family.
> 仁者人也，親親為大.[107]

The proper, orderly way of behaving as a family should (*qīnqīn* 親親) is the defining feature of humane-ness (*rén* 仁), one of the core Confucian moral values. The moral humane-ness in turn defines humanity (*rén* 人).

Mencius follows Confucius in arguing that humane-ness, which Confucius defines with family, is central to defining humanity and separating humanity from animals.

> Mencius said, "Being humane is being human. To bring these together and speak of it is the Way."
> 孟子曰：「仁也者，人也。合而言之，道也。」[108]

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[107] Translation mine. Original text, Legge, *Chinese Classics Vol. 1*, 405. Similar to the *Dàxué* above, the *Zhōngyōng* was included in Zhū Xī's *Four Books* has received much attention. I might suggest readers consider Christian Soffel, *Cultural Authority and Political Culture in China: Exploring Issues with the Zhongyong and the Daotong during the Song, Jin and Yuan Dynasties* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2012).

[108] *Mencius* 14:16. Translation mine. Original text, Yáng Bójùn 楊伯峻 ed., *Mèngzi Yìzhù* 孟子譯注 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2012), 365. Zhū Xī's commentary on this suggests that the Way is to bring together the principle of humaneness with the physical body of the human—literally to embody the principle—and to speak of it.

> Mencius said, "That by which humans are different from birds and from beasts is very little. The common people discard it, [but] *jūnzi*[109] preserve it. [The Sage-Emperor] Shùn was clear [in his understanding of] the many things and detailed [in his understanding of] human relations. He conducted himself from [a place of] humane-ness and righteousness. He did not conduct himself [towards] humane-ness and righteousness."
> 孟子曰：「人之所以異於禽於獸者幾希，庶民去之，君子存之。舜明於庶物，察於人倫，由仁義行，非行仁義也。」[110]

In addition to separating humans from animals, this text suggests that humane-ness can be lost and that humane-ness helps to separate different classes of humans: the commoners and those of noble virtue. This suggests that beyond just a matter of family and relationships, the very status of being human is a matter of morals and personal cultivation which carries a distinct implication of class.

Xúnzi 荀子, following this Confucian tradition,[111] makes the relationship between humanity, family, gender, social status, and politics indisputable.

Continuing the theme of the former texts, analysis of *Mencius* is abundant. I would point readers toward Chun-chieh Huang, *Mencian Hermeneutics: A History of Interpretations in China* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2001). This text both makes the common deconstructionist point that any reading of *Mencius* is that of the reader and also argues for a "*harmonia mundi*" that expresses "homo-mundane" and "anthropo-ecological" unity. I suggest that homo-mundane (human and world) and anthropo-ecological (man and nature) unity is just an awkward expression of queer ecology.

[109] Men of high Confucian morals and learning.

[110] *Mencius* 8:19. Translation mine. Original text, Yáng, *Mèngzi Yìzhù* 孟子譯注, 207–8.

[111] Whether or not Xúnzi should be understood as Confucian is open to debate. I would argue that this particular passage can be understood as following the passages of Confucius and Mencius above. Indeed, even if one claims that Xúnzi is a Legalist and not a Confucian, this particular text follows Confucian logic. (This debate on whether or not Xúnzi is properly a Confucian at least dates back to Hán Yù's 韓愈 essay "Dú Xún" 讀荀 ("On Reading Xúnzi") (Wáng Jìnxiáng 王進祥, 20–1) in which Hán suggests that Xún is mostly a follower of Confucius, but has minor flaws (*dà chún ér xiǎo cī* 大醇而小疵 *largely pure yet slightly blemished*). This same language is used in Zhū Xī's preface to his annotation of *Mencius*, "Mèngzi Xùshuō" 孟子序說. Alternatively, Xú Píngzhāng (Xú Píngzhāng 徐平章, *Xúnzi yǔ Liǎng Hàn Rúxué* 荀子與兩漢儒學 (Yǒnghé 永和:Wénjīn Chūbǎnshè 文津出版社 1988), 127.) suggests that in the Hàn all philosophical schools were in some ways influenced by Xúnzi. Xú suggests that the phrase "outwardly Confucian and inwardly Legalist" 陽儒陰法 can describe both the politics of the Hàn dynasty and Xúnzi. For more information on Xúnzi generally, see Eric Hutton ed., *Dao Companion to the Philosophy of Xunzi* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2016). I'd specifically recommend the chapter "Xunzi: An Early Reception History, Han Through Tang" by Michael Nylan.

> What is it that makes a human human? I say it is that there are distinctions. When we are hungry, we desire food; when we are cold, we desire warmth; when we are tired, we desire rest. We are fond of benefits and despise harm. These are what humans have at birth—they are thus without waiting. These were common to both Yǔ and Jié.[112] Yet that which makes a human human is not that we are unique in having two feet and no hair—it is that [we are unique] in having distinctions. Now, the form of apes also has two feet and no hair; yet *jūnzi* drink their soup and eat their meat. Thus that which makes a human human is not that we are unique in having two feet and no hair—it is that [we are unique] in having distinctions. The birds and beasts have fathers and offspring,[113] but they do not have the closeness of fathers and offspring. They have female and male, but do not have the differences between men and women. Thus the ways of humanity, none lacks distinction. [In creating] distinctions, nothing is greater than station.[114] [In creating] station, nothing is greater than ritual. [In creating] ritual, nothing is greater than the sage-kings. There are hundreds of sage-kings, whose method shall I [emulate]? Thus it is said that cultures exist for a long time and then extinguish; rhythms exist for a long time and then cease.
> 人之所以為人者，何已也？曰：以其有辨也。飢而欲食，寒而欲煖，勞而欲息，好利而惡害，是人之所生而有也，是無待而然者也，是禹桀之所同也。然則人之所以為人者，非特以二足而無毛也，以其有辨也。今夫狌狌形狀亦二足而無毛也，然而君子啜其羹，食其胾。故人之所以為人者，非特以其二足而無毛也，以其有辨也。夫禽獸有父子，而無父子之親，有牝牡而無男女之別。故人道莫不有辨。辨莫大於分，分莫大於禮，禮莫大於聖王；聖王有百，吾孰法焉？故曰：文久而滅，節族久而絕。[115]

Xúnzi very clearly states that the sage kings of the past define *ritual*. Ritual in turn creates station, social status. This social status can be gendered as suggested in this text or classed as other portions of the same chapter make clear. This station, this social status in turn creates distinction—between men and women, between fathers and offspring, and (implicitly)

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[112] The first and last rulers of the Xià 夏 Dynasty. Yǔ being a good, virtuous ruler and Jié being bad one.

[113] Many translators would choose to translate *zǐ* as *son* in this context. The term *zǐ*, however, can refer to a wide range of child-related concepts including semen and chicken eggs. This term is certainly not gendered, though Xúnzi likely was thinking of male children.

[114] This character can be read *fēn*, meaning to separate; or *fèn* meaning station or one's lot in life (the second reading of *fèn* is common in the chapter "Lǐyùn" 禮運 of the *Lǐjì* 禮記 which says that men are to have station/occupation and women are to have places to return to 男有分，女有歸. See Wáng Mèng'ōu 王夢鷗, *Lǐjì Jīn Zhù Jīn Yì* 禮記今註今譯, 2 vols. (Táiběi 臺北: Táiwān Shāngwù Yìnshūguǎn 臺灣商務印書館, 1970), 1:290). Given that it is between distinction and ritual, both meanings are clearly in play.

[115] Translation my own. Original text from Yáng Mùzhī 楊牧之 ed., *Xúnzi* 荀子 (Chángshā 長沙: Húnán Rénmín Chūbǎnshè 湖南人民出版社, 1999), 104–6. For more context, see Eric Hutton trans., *Xunzi: The Complete Text* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 32–9.

between classes. These distinctions are part and parcel of gender roles and the emotion of family that separate humanity from animals.

Shockingly, Xúnzi clearly understands the difference of what we today term *sex* and *gender*. He also differentiates between the biological lineage and emotionally close family. He knows that animals have female and male (*pìnmǔ* 牝牡), but that is not the same as having ritual, social differences between men and women (*nánnǚ* 男女). Though Xúnzi does not state this explicitly, the terms for male and female non-human animals are clearly related to physical sex characteristics and also have surprising environmental ties. *Pìn*, referring to a female non-human animal, is also a term for a gorge or valley and suggests a vagina. *Mǔ*, a non-human male, can also be a term for a hill or bulge and suggests a penis. These can also be terms for a keyhole and key—surprisingly similar to contemporary terms for male and female electrical components. These terms and Xúnzi's use of them make it clear that he can distinguish between biological sex, which even animals have, and the social/ritual gender unique to humans. Additionally, Xúnzi also establishes a difference between biological family and emotional/social/chosen family. Xúnzi knows that animals have biological fathers and children (*fùzǐ* 父子), but they do not have the relational bond or emotional closeness (*qīn* 親) that makes true family. Surprising though it may be, Xúnzi, from the third century BCE, was arguing that definitions of gender, family, and humanity are culturally constructed.

To give broader context, this excerpt is taken from the chapter "Against Physiognomy" *fēixiàng* 非相, which begins with Xúnzi's censure of the practice of measuring a person's fate or character from external appearance. He then turns to the passage cited above suggesting that definitions of humanity, family, and gender should not be based on external characteristics, but

on social roles and ritual. After this critical turning point, Xúnzi discusses the continuation of cultures and how *jūnzi* 君子, men of moral and philosophical cultivation, should act. The over-arching argument is that whether or not one is a *jūnzi* cannot be told by charlatans pretending to read one's external features, but only by one's actions. The strange but undeniable inclusion of species and gender in this discussion very much suggests that what makes a creature human or animal and a human a man or woman is not their external features, but their actions in society.

In reverse, Xúnzi is suggesting that the actions and writing of the sage kings of antiquity are the basis for ritual *lǐ* 禮—one of the most important and over-defined terms in early Chinese philosophy—and that "ritual" then defines social status. Social status in turn defines difference (perhaps not dissimilar to a Derridean *différance*). This includes differences between men and women, human and non-human, and father and child. In short, Xúnzi, from the third century BCE, was arguing that the definition of humanity is culturally constructed based on cultural constructions of status, gender, and family. Moreover there is also the suggestion that which sage kings—and subsequently which culturally constructed definitions of status/gender—one follows will determine what culture persists and is passed on.

Bringing these early philosophical texts together, one begins to understand that the political stability of the state rests upon social order—with the family playing a key role in maintaining that order. Social order is dependent on gender, emotional family, and station or social status. Observance of these social roles is all that separates humans from animals and must be preserved at all costs. As all of these issues are inextricably linked, a text that questions any one portion questions the whole structure.

As mentioned above, these interlinked issues form an assemblage similar to one familiar to readers of modern Queer Ecology. Caffyn Kelly, writing an early, experimental piece, claimed that oppressions based on gender, race, and human/non-human status are all interlinked.

> "The economy counterposes male and female, black and white, human and nature. But we are everywhere.
>
> Homosexual oppression might be the matrix of all oppressions. Revealing the preposterous quality of sexual difference, we show the coercion masked by it. And we show the lie inside the heterosexual fact at the core of nature: the one that lends credence to the vilest institutions of humanity, from motherhood to the cutting down of thousand-year-old trees for apple crates."[116]

Kelly is suggesting that social differences—differences between male and female, black and white, human and nature—are central to maintaining human institutions from family structure to the economy—motherhood and the production of apple crates. Furthering this interpretation, Kelly asserts that "fact" of the "natural" differences between sexes is a lie and that this lie is used to stabilize oppressive institutions. Though clearly interpreting from a very different perspective, Kelly's analysis of the importance of "nature" to social difference (*lǐ* 禮) and the structures of power is surprisingly similar to Xúnzi.

Nicole Seymour's later and more traditionally "academic" piece focuses more directly on the alignment between the oppression of queers and nature.

> "Much queer ecology work proceeds from the insight that 'the queer' and the 'natural' have been opposed in cultural scientific, and political discourses. More specifically, 'the natural' is typically associated with reproductivity, health, futurity—and, of course, heterosexuality—whereas 'the queer' is associated with urbanity, disease, and death. Queer ecology both challenges the discriminatory implications of these associations and argues that queers/sexuality and nature/the environment/animals actually have much in common. To wit: both sets of entities have been subject to biopolitical control and surveillance; both have been objects of scientific

[116] Kelly, 44. (Kelly organizes her essay into a collection of seven points. The text above is part of point six.)

> scrutiny; both have been positioned on the low end of the sociocultural hierarchies; both are understood to exceed standards of human civility and decency; and both have been feared, pathologized, fetishized, and commodified."[117]

Though these texts come from a time and cultural context radically different from those of Xúnzi, Mencius, or Confucius, there is a surprising agreement. Xúnzi suggests that social order is based upon differences (of class, race/ethnicity, or gender), and that these differences are what separate humans from animals. Queer ecology largely agrees: Seymour also suggests that a difference (between "the queer" and "the natural") can be understood as a fundamental component to society and is intimately related to sociocultural hierarchies. The crucial difference, however is that Xúnzi wishes to maintain the distance between humans and nature in order to preserve some idea of "culture." Seymour makes it clear that the distance between humanity and nature is fallacious and attempting to create a society on this delusional distance generates oppressive regimes. Strangely enough, there are queer texts from mid-Imperial China that seem to agree with Seymour's assessment that the separation between humans and nature is not nearly as well defined as one might expect and that Táng and Sòng culture built upon that illusory difference creates—if not systemic oppression outright, then at least injustice.

The *Tàipíng Guǎngjì*

All of the aforementioned early Chinese philosophical texts as well as the ideas they contain—heaven and man, nature and culture, and the security and stability of the Empire—all were discussed by elite literati of the late Táng and early Sòng. In fact, in the political instability of the second half of the Táng and the machinations to establish the Sòng, these texts and ideas

[117] Seymour, 449.

were the most pressing issue—an issue of culture, of scholarship, of philosophy, and of national security.

> "Heaven and antiquity or 'heaven and man,' the natural realm in which heaven-and-earth brought things into being and the historical realm in which humans created institutions, came to stand for the two greatest sources of normative values. This Culture of Ours could stand for the idea of a civilization that combined the two, a civilization based on both the models of the ancients and the manifest patterns of the natural order. But T'ang and Sung scholars also saw that at moments of political crisis This Culture could perish. To save it, and to save the times, scholars could always return to antiquity and the natural order as the grounds for shared norms."[118]

Mid-Imperial literati who avidly read the philosophical texts above with an eye towards the social issues of their own time would have liked to assert that both nature and historical culture demand certain social roles based on gender, sex, class, race, or ethnicity. When people fulfil these roles, nature and culture are in harmony, a stable political system can be built, and then this system, handed down from antiquity, can be preserved and passed on to the next generation.

It should be no surprise, then, that these texts and concepts can be found in the *Tàipíng guǎngjì*, as the majority of the texts were written by the same class of scholar-officials in the Táng and compiled by the same class in the Sòng. In fact, if Bol is right that this relationship between nature and humanity was the most pressing issue of the day, this is where any good reading of the TPGJ must start. If one is to do a reading of the TGPJ concerned with nature and culture, one absolutely must start with the tales on dragons. Dragons have long been associated with heaven and the emperor as key bringers of culture and order, yet they are also deeply connected to nature as spirits of water and rain.

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[118] Peter Bol, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 2.

Unfortunately for Confucius, Mencius, Xúnzi, and the mid-Imperial scholars who would use them to continue their own interpretations of proper social norms, the dragons of the TPGJ are continuously in an anti-normative stance that questions the definition of family, the stability of gender roles, and the classed relationship between humans and the environment. What happens when the harmonious alignment between the natural realm of created things and the historical realm of cultural institutions disintegrates? Specifically, what happens when dragons, as both representations of nature and of culture, interrupt the normal operation of cultural institutions?

This is precisely the point of a mid-Imperial Chinese Queer Ecology.[119] The dragons of the TPGJ, perhaps because of their queer nature as both "natural" and "cultural," time and again question the normative institutions in place at the time. These texts are queer in that they question social structure and occasionally explicitly suggest political reform. These texts/dragons are ecological in that they both very directly discuss nature and—perhaps more importantly—the relationship between humans and nature. Indeed, these dragon tales specifically highlight changes that need to be made in this overarching system of social roles, nature, culture, politics, and temporality.

Below we will examine three dragon tales from the TPGJ that all question the interaction between humans, social status, and nature. The first tale problematizes definitions of biological family and suggests that humans and dragons can be part of the same family. The second features a wedding between a human and a dragon that very specifically challenges

[119] For a useful definition of ecology, see Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 5.

normative wedding ceremonies and the associated gender roles. Finally, the third tale directly looks at normative class relations and their impact on the environment. Though there is perhaps a slight gap between family and weddings on one hand and class relations on the other, it is crucial to remember that both are part of the same overarching system. Both family/gender and class are part of the distinctions that the Confucian tradition suggests separates humans from nature.

Zhāng Lu's Daughter

The dragons in 418.03 "Zhāng Lǔ's Daughter" 張魯女[120] very directly question the separation between humanity and non-human nature based on emotionally close family (*qīnqīn* 親親, *fùzǐ zhī qīn* 父子之親) in the writings of Confucius, Mencius, and Xúnzi.

> Zhāng Lǔ's 張魯[121] daughter once washed clothing at the foot of the mountain. White mist surrounded her body and from this she became pregnant. Humiliated by this, she committed suicide. About to die, she said to her servant girl, "After I die, you can open my abdomen and see [what's inside]." The servant girl did as she said and found a pair of young dragons, which she thereupon sent to the Hàn 漢 River. The woman was buried in the mountain. Thereafter, dragons often went there; and in front of her tomb, a path was formed.
>
> 張魯之女，曾浣衣於山下，有白霧濛身，因而孕焉。恥之自裁。將死，謂其婢曰：「我死後，可破腹視之。」婢如其言，得龍子一雙，遂送於漢水。既而女殯於山。後數有龍至，其墓前成蹊。

A parallel of this text appears in the 52nd fascicle[122] of the *Tàipíng Yùlǎn* 太平御覽—another of Emperor Sòng Tàizōng's compilation projects.

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[120] From *Miscellaneous Daoist Records*, *Dàojiā zájì*, 道家雜記.

[121] Zhāng Lǔ, (?–216CE) was the third leader of a Daoist sect, the Celestial Masters, as well as a warlord who was in control of the Hànzhōng 漢中 region until it was taken over by Cáo Cāo 曹操 in 215.

[122] This fascicle is on rocks *shí* 石, which may explain the focus on the mountain's name.

> Mistress Mountain in Liángzhōu. Zhāng Lǔ's daughter washed clothes on a stone. The daughter then became pregnant. Lǔ said it was evil and obscene and then abandoned her. Later she bore two dragons, and then the daughter died. When they were about to bury her, the hearse suddenly soared and jumped, ascending this mountain. She was then interred there. The clothes-washing stone beside the water is still there. They call it the Mistress Mountain.
>
> 梁州女郎山，張魯女浣衣石上，女便懷孕，魯謂邪淫，乃放之。后生二龍，及女死，將殯，柩車忽騰躍昇此山，遂葬焉。其水旁浣衣石猶在，謂之女郎山。

Together, these two texts tell a troublesome tale. An unnamed woman is impregnated without her consent via actions that arguably constitute sex. This woman is then "abandoned," or disowned, by her father and commits suicide. Even as she dies abandoned by her family, she maintains curiosity about what has happened to her and asks the only remaining human companion she has to dissect her corpse for the sake of information. The unnamed serving girl then finds two dragon children and sends them to the river. As the woman's human family prepares to complete funerary rites, something—readers are left to assume it is the dragons—changes the trajectory of this funeral. Afterwards, the dragons maintain a long-lasting mourning practice that changes the face of the earth itself.

Though Zhāng Lǔ was a real historical figure who lived in the early third century CE and was a key figure of Celestial Master Daoism (*tiān shī dào* 天師道) and even had one daughter[123] whose marriage to Cáo Yǔ 曹宇 (d. 278), styled Péngzǔ 彭祖, son of the infamous Three Kingdoms general Cáo Cāo 曹操 (155-220) was quite noteworthy, I do not believe this story has anything to do with the historical personage of Zhāng Lǔ. It seems as though this text was given his name either as a coincidence of history or as a way of adding a sense of veracity (he was a

[123] Later, this daughter has been given the name Zhāng Qíyīng 張琪瑛, though, as far as I can tell that is a modern invention, likely due to the popularity of the stories of the Three Kingdoms era.

real person), historicity (he lived in a given time and place), or familiarity (readers may have heard his name before). As this text is often given in relationship to the mountain on which it is supposed to have taken place, it may well be that he was simply a famous person of the region.

Far more important to this story than who the father was is that he was a father. As stated, Confucianism puts great emphasis on proper behavior between family members. Relationships between fathers and daughters are not nearly as frequently discussed as the relationships between fathers and sons. The common discussions of famous men and their daughters often involve the fathers giving them in marriage to secure political alliances. This was certainly the case between the unnamed daughter of the historical Zhāng Lǔ and Cáo Yǔ. Separating history from this tale, the Zhāng Lǔ in this narrative seems quite uncaring towards his daughter. Once she is found to be pregnant, he casts her aside, which results in her suicide.[124]

This uncaring relationship seems to be placed in stark contrast to the continuing visits to the grave made by the dragon-children after her passing. Confucius placed great emphasis on mourning one's parents. In *Analects* 17:21 Confucius decries one of his own disciples, Zǎiwǒ 宰我, as not humane (bù rén 不仁) because he questions the necessity of the mandatory three year mourning period after the death of one's parents. Confucius explains that "[After] a child has been born for three years, only after this can he leave his father and mother's bosom. Thus the three years of mourning is the common mourning [practice] of All Under Heaven." 子生三

[124] There is a long tradition of miraculous, mysterious, and sometimes devastating births in the Chinese tradition, as with many other mythological traditions worldwide. Perhaps the oldest is from the *Shījīng* 詩經 poem "Shēng Mín" 生民 ("Birth to the people") Máo #245 in which a barren woman treading in the footprint of a god results in the birth of a new people. See Waley, *The Book of Songs* 243–7.

年，然後免於父母之懷。夫三年之喪，天下之通喪也.[125] By observing this long-lasting mourning ritual, it seems that the dragons, in their own way, are attempting to honor and have a relationship with their deceased mother.

In the version of the text found in the TPYL, this contrast is made even more apparent. As someone—likely the daughter's human family—is about to bury her body, something—likely the dragons—change the course of the funerary proceedings.[126] One can imagine a conflict implied. Who has the right to decide where and how the woman is buried? The human family that caused her death submits to the desires of the dragons whom she bore. This could even be understood as correct mourning ritual as it is the responsibility of the husband's family and the children to mourn a wife and mother, not the responsibility of her family of origin.

At its core, this tale suggests that the dragons' surprisingly human ability to mourn their mother redefines both humanity and family. That is queerness. In fact, the idea of definitions of family and the right to mourn has a painful past for queers. Since the beginning of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s, queers have become all too familiar with death. As Ronald Reagan remained silent, thousands of queers—most frequently gay men—died. To add trauma to massacre, these queers' chosen families were often not able to mourn them. In Douglas Crimp's 1989 "Mourning and Militancy," he recounts the funeral of a man not named Bruno.[127] After "Bruno" died of AIDS, his birth family gave him a funeral in which no mention was made of the disease from which he died and two of "Bruno's" former lovers were not allowed to express the depths

[125] Yáng Bójùn 楊伯峻 ed., *Lúnyǔ Yìzhù* 論語譯注 (Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 2012), 262–3
[126] The verbs used for the movement of the hearse are often used to describe the soaring, jumping motions of dragons in the sky.
[127] Douglas Crimp, "Mourning and Militancy." *October* 51 (1989): 3–18.

of their grief so as to not embarrass the parents. Even when an attendee of the funeral wrote about the event, "Bruno's" father asked him not to use his real name. Crimp repeatedly suggests that this story is commonplace: gay men forced to watch as their friends and lovers are buried by people who did not really know them and who deny their true identity even as they are being interred.

> "The violence we encounter is relentless, the violence of silence and omission almost as impossible to endure as the violence of unleashed hatred and outright murder. Because this violence also desecrates the memories of our dead, we rise in anger to vindicate them."[128]

This violence, unfortunately, did not stop in the 1980s. In 2019 Atalia Israeli-Nevo published "May Her Memory Be a Revolution" in which she recounts the suicide of one of the members of her chosen family—a family built not upon genetic relationships but on mutual love, respect, and understanding.[129] After the death of DanVeg, a trans woman, two funerary rites were held. One was held primarily for her family by a local rabbi. The rabbi addressed the deceased demanding that she remember her name. Yet the rabbi addressed her with the wrong pronouns and the wrong name—profoundly erasing her memory. After this blasphemous, desecratory funeral, DanVeg's chosen family members—none biologically related to her or each other—decided to hold a *shiva*, a Jewish wake.

> The *shiva* gave a voice to a lot of queer people and provided them with a place to gather and mourn jointly; some knew DanVeg or one of us personally, while others knew of her life and activism and came to pay their respect, as well as process the pain and loss themselves.[130]

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[128] Crimp, 8–9.
[129] Atalia Israeli-Nevo, "'May Her Memory Be a Revolution': Rethinking Queer Kinships through Mourning and Trans Necropolitics." *Lambda Nordica* 2, no. 3 (2019): 173–90.
[130] Israeli-Nevo, 179.

Israeli-Nevo suggests that this rite of mourning in which the true name of the deceased was spoken and her life truly remembered defined them as her kin: "the *shiva* and the support from the wider queer community strengthened the bonds between DanVeg and us."[131] In some ways, this funeral defines DanVeg's chosen family as her only true family. This kind of queer mourning practice in which the true name, gender, and story of the deceased is told redefines family. These practices are "a terrifying ghost to 'natural' kinship [that will] keep on haunting the guarded gates of the nuclear family's kinship."[132]

These dueling funerals are surprisingly similar to the events of "Zhāng Lǔ's Daughter." It is not that the dragons hold a separate funeral for their mother as Israeli-Nevo did—more disruptively, the dragons interrupt the funeral her family of origin had planned for her and relocate her body without consulting the humans.

Though the context of a third century Chinese funeral is indisputably different from the contexts of funerals of AIDS victims in the 1980s or the dueling funerals of DanVeg's chosen and biological families, the idea of defining family through mourning is a clear binding theme from ancient China to the present. Moreover, as Zhāng Lǔ's daughter commits suicide because her family disowns her because of unusual sexual activity, the tie to queerness is stronger still.

There are several other stories in the TPGJ in which a human mother figure adopts a dragon child—often with an element of mourning after the mother's passing.[133] Though "Zhāng Lǔ's Daughter" is a particularly rich example of dragons being more human and better family

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[131] Israeli-Nevo, 184.
[132] Israeli-Nevo, 187.
[133] These are: 418.04 "A Grandma from Jiānglíng" 江陵姥, 424.04 "Old Lady Wēn" 溫媼, 424.11 "The Old Lady of the Fén River"汾水老姥, and 425.14 "A Woman of Chángshā"長沙女 (it is worth noting that this last example has a human mother and filial *jiāo* children, which breaks down a recurring concept that *jiāo* are always evil tricksters).

than humans—and thereby simultaneously assaulting multiple points of the normative social scheme laid out in the classical philosophers above—it is certainly not the only such example. This tale embodies queer ecology in that it suggests that humans and dragons can be family, erasing the normative divide between humans and nature and questioning a political and cultural system that attempts to maintain an orderly separation between the two.

Liŭ Zĭhuá

Moving on from mourning, the single most crucial event in which both political and cultural forces define gender roles and determine how families are made is indisputably marriage. Even in the Táng dynasty there were clear laws in which the state decided what marriages were and were not valid.[134] Long standing cultural traditions dictated how marriages were supposed to be performed with a particular eye to both political implications and gender roles. In 424.05, "Liŭ Zĭhuá" 柳子華,[135] there is a rather humorous description of a non-normative marriage.

> Liŭ Zĭhuá 柳子華[136] was the Magistrate of Chéngdū 城都 during the Táng 唐.[137] One day, at exactly noon, there was suddenly an ox-cart surrounded by women riders leading it down the path and into the courtroom. One of the messengers introduced

[134] Johnson Wallace, *The T'ang Code, Volume II: Specific Articles* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 152–77.

[135] The origin of this tale is complicated. The Zhōnghuá editors note that though no source is given in their base version, a Míng edition attributes it to *Jù Tán Lù* 劇談錄 (895) by Kāng Pián 康駢 (c. 870). I do not see this text in modern editions of *Jù Tán Lù*, but do see it in modern editions of *Lùyì Jì* 錄異記 by Dù Guāngtíng 杜光庭 (850-933).

[136] As stated in regards to Zhāng Lŭ above, I believe that historical figures are often included not necessarily for anything to do with them personally, but to give historical setting and for reader familiarity. There was, however, a historical Liŭ Zĭhuá who did serve as prefect of Chéngdū in the mid 8th century. Zĭhuá was the elder brother of Liŭ Zĭwēn 柳子溫 and thus the uncle of two important Tang officials, Liŭ Gōngchuò 柳公綽 and Liŭ Gōngquán 柳公權. See Liú Xù 劉昫, *Jiù Táng Shū 舊唐書* (Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 1975), f. 165, p. 4300–13. and Ōuyáng Xiū 歐陽修, *Xīn Táng Shū 新唐書* (Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 1975), f. 163, p. 5019–31. (Hereafter these are referred to as JTS and XTS respectively.)

[137] This character is mistaken in the original and does, in fact, refer to the present Chéngdū.

> [them] to Liǔ, saying, "The Dragoness is about to come." Presently, [The Dragoness] got down from the cart and, holding onto guards on the left and right, ascended the stairs to meet Zǐhuá. [She] said, "It is predestined that we become a married couple," and then stayed there. [She] them to drink and enjoy themselves to the fullest, completed the [wedding] ceremony, and then left.
>
> From then on, she went back and forth frequently; and those near and far all knew of this. [When] Zǐhuá quit his post, no one knew where he went. It was commonly said [that he] "entered the dragon palace and became an aquatic immortal."[138]
>
> 柳子華，唐時為城都令。一旦方午，忽有犢車一乘，前後女騎導從徑入廳事。使一介告柳云：「龍女且來矣。」俄而下車，左右扶衛昇階，與子華相見。云：「宿命與君合為匹偶。」因止。命酒樂極懽，成禮而去。
>
> 自是往復為常，遠近咸知之。子華罷秩，不知所之。俗云：「入龍宮，得水仙矣。」

Suffice it to say that a parade of women marching into a man's official place of work to declare a predestined marriage was not the norm in premodern China. In fact, this could be seen as an intentional perversion of the final step in the marriage rite, *qīnyíng* 親迎, in which the groom would go to the bride's home and then bring her back with him.

Arguably the most essential text on defining ritual practice in premodern China, the *Record of Rites* (Lǐjì 禮記), has the following on the practice of *qīnyíng*.

> When a man performs *qīnyíng*, the man goes before the woman, [following] the principle of the strong and the weak. Heaven goes before the earth and the ruler goes before the minister—these are the same principle. Presents are exchanged in order to meet each other—presented to mark differences. There is difference between men and women, and then there is closeness between fathers and children. Fathers and children have closeness and then principle is born. Principle is born and then ritual is made. Ritual is made and then the myriad of things is at peace. Without differences there is no principle—this is the way of **birds and beasts**.
>
> The groom [stands] close to the carriage and hands [the bride] the reins to show closeness. Having that closeness, he is close to her. Reverence and closeness are how the former kings were able to control all under heaven.
>
> Going through the great gate he goes first. The man leads the woman. The woman follows the man. The principles of husband and wife begin here. The wife is the one who follows people. When young, women follow their fathers and older brothers;

[138] One could interpret this as a general saying. *It was a common saying that [one] enters a dragon palace and becomes an aquatic immortal*. However, given the context, this is meant to explain where Zǐhuá has gone.

when married, she follows her husband; when her husband dies, she follows her son. To be a husband is to support others. A husband leads by his wisdom.

男子親迎，男先於女，剛柔之義也。天先乎地，君先乎臣，其義一也。執摯以相見，敬章別也。男女有別，然後父子親，父子親然後義生，義生然後禮作，禮作然後萬物安。無別無義，禽獸之道也。

婿親御授綏，親之也。親之也者，親之也。敬而親之，先王之所以得天下也。

出乎大門而先，男帥女，女從男，夫婦之義由此始也。婦人，從人者也；幼從父兄，嫁從夫，夫死從子。夫也者，夫也；夫也者，以知帥人者也。[139]

Clearly, this initial definition of the practice of *qīnyíng* very much follows the Confucian ideology outlined above. The idea of distinctions between men and women being that which separates humanity from animals is remarkably similar to the text of Xúnzi. Additionally, the inclusion of rulers and ministers in this passage once again makes it clear that there is a connection between gender and marriage, politics, and the difference between humans and non-humans.

However, in "Liǔ Zǐhuá" there is a very specific queering of this marriage practice. Instead of the man entering the woman's domestic space and leading her out, she enters his place of work—a government court no less—and eventually leads him back to her home. Even the detail that he quits his job and goes to live with her is a very specific disruption of gender and marriage expectations. The *Record of Rites* also famously notes that men are to have jobs and women are to belong to the households of men.[140] This text simultaneously switches gender roles, queers a marriage ceremony,[141] and blurs the boundary between human and non-

[139] Translation mine. Original text, Wáng Mèng'ōu 王夢鷗, *Lǐjì Jīn Zhù Jīn Yì* 禮記今註今譯, 2 vols. (Táiběi 臺北: Táiwān Shāngwù Yìnshūguǎn 臺灣商務印書館, 1970), 1:349.

[140] As mentioned in an earlier footnote, this occurs in the chapter "Lǐyùn" 禮運 of the *Lǐjì* 禮記 which says that men are to have station/occupation and women are to have places to return to 男有分，女有歸. See Wáng, v. 1 p. 290.

[141] On a similar theme, I would suggest that the marriage between dragons in 424.13"Méngyáng Marsh" 濛陽湫 produces a similarly humanizing effect, even if not as humorously or queerly as "Liǔ Zǐhuá."

human. This could not be queerer. Additionally, by creating family between humans and non-humans and directly countering the idea that humans are unique for their social distinctions, this tale embodies queer ecology.

Zhōu Hán

422.03 "Zhōu Hán" 周邯[142] puts a much sharper political edge on the discourse of queer ecology. Much as those above, this tale does indeed attack the established political/cultural system and seeks to redefine the relationship between humanity and non-humanity/nature. Though perhaps the queerness of the tale is less immediately recognizable than the two above, I will remind readers that queerness is not strictly related to sex, gender, and family. Queerness can also be as broad as an anti-normative political stance that centers equality for all people. This tale takes multiple political stances that can be read as queer, environmental, or both. Moreover, the tale most certainly exhibits queer ecocriticism by encouraging a re-examination of the relationship between humans and the environment.

> During the Zhēnyuán 貞元 Reign Era (785-805), there was a scholar without position[143] named Zhōu Hán 周邯, a scholar of grand and eminent literary talent. Then there was an Yí 彝 person[144] selling a slave, [who was] fourteen or fifteen years old. Looking at his appearance, he was very intelligent and shrewd. [The seller] said that [the slave was] good at entering water, like walking on level ground.[145] If ordered to submerge himself,

[142] Attributed to both *Chuánqí* 傳奇 by Péi Xíng 裴鉶 (c. 860) and *Yuán Huà Jì* 原化記 (836-47 CE) by a Mx. Huángfǔ 皇甫氏 (c. 825).
[143] The translation of the term *chǔshì* 處士 is difficult. It can refer to a talented scholar who chooses not to take a government position for any reason. This can also refer to a scholar who has not yet taken office. Whether Zhōu Hán has chosen not to take official position or simply has not been offered one is unclear.
[144] An ethnic group by this name still exists in southwestern China today.
[145] It is also possible that the slave said this of himself.

> even if time moved and a day passed, in the end, he wouldn't find it difficult. He said, "The streams, ravines, pools, and caves of Shǔ 蜀,[146] there are none I haven't visited."
> 貞元中，有處士周邯，文學豪俊之士也。因彝人賣奴，年十四五。視其貌甚慧黠。言善入水，如履平地。令其沉潛，雖經日移時。終無所苦。云：「蜀之溪壑潭洞，無不屆也。」

Zhōu Hán buys a slave who may or may not be of the Yí ethnicity and changes his name to *Water Sprite* 水精. A parallel text, 420.05 "Táo Xiàn 陶峴,"[147] says that the slave is from Kūnlún 崑崙, a mountain associated with many legends located somewhere to the southwest of China. There are several events in which Zhōu orders Water Sprite to dive and search for treasure, sometimes in monster infested waters. Water Sprite's efforts make Zhōu rich.

> Several years later, Hán had a friend, Wáng Zé 王澤 who served as prefect of Xiāngzhōu 相州.[148] Hán went to Héběi to call on him. Zé was very pleased and gave him tours and took him to banquets [so that] there were no free days. Together they went to the eight-pointed well in the northern corner of the prefect. It had been built out of natural boulders in an eight-pointed shape. It was a little more than three *zhàng* wide. At daybreak and at twilight, lush mist and fog tendriled out of the well and spread out, inundating over one hundred paces. In the dark of night, light as red as fire would lance out for one thousand *chǐ*- shining on things like the daytime.
> 後數年，邯有友人王澤，牧相州，邯適河北而訪之。澤甚喜，與之遊宴，日不能暇。因相與至州北隅八角井。天然盤石。而甃成八角焉。闊可三丈餘。旦暮煙雲蓊鬱。漫衍百餘步。晦夜，有光如火紅射出千尺，鑒物若晝。

> An age-old legend said that there was a golden dragon submerged in its depths. Sometimes, when the *yáng* was overbearing,[149] they would pray to it, which was also very effective.
> 古老相傳云，有金龍潛其底，或亢陽禱之，亦甚有應。

> Zé said, "This well should have extremely valuable treasures, but there is no way to investigate and see if that's the case."

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[146] Generally referring to the Southwest of China.
[147] From *Gānzé Yáo* 甘澤謠 (868) by Yuán Jiāo 袁郊.
[148] Near modern Ānyáng 安陽 in Hénán.
[149] Whenever the weather was excessively hot, sunny, and dry.

澤曰：「此井應有至寶，但無計而究其是非耳。」

Hán laughed and said, “That’s incredibly easy,” and ordered Water Sprite, “If you dive into this well, all the way to the bottom, for me, and see what strange thing is there, Zé should also have a reward [for you].”
邯笑曰：「甚易。」遂命水精曰：「汝可與我投此井到底，看有何怪異。澤亦當有所賞也。」

Water Sprite hadn’t dived for a long time already, so he happily took off his clothes and submerged himself. After a good while, he came out and said to Hán, “There’s an enormous yellow dragon with scales like gold holding several pearls as it soundly sleeps. Water Sprite wanted to steal them, but I had no blade in my hand. Afraid that the dragon would suddenly wake up, I didn’t dare to touch it. If I can get a sharp sword, [even] if the dragon wakes up, I can behead it without fear.”
水精已久不入水，忻然脫衣沉之。良久而出，語邯曰：「有一黃龍極大，鱗如金色，抱數顆明珠熟寐。水精欲劫之，但手無刃。憚其龍忽覺，是以不敢觸。若得一利劍，如龍覺，當斬之無憚也。」

Hán and Zé were greatly pleased. Zé said, “I have a sword that is an extraordinary treasure; you can take it down and rob it.” Water Sprite took a drink of alcohol, grasped the sword and dove in.
邯與澤大喜。澤曰：「吾有劍，非常之寶也。汝可持往而劫之。」水精飲酒伏劍而入。

For a while, watchers formed a wall on all sides. Suddenly, [they] saw Water Sprite leaping several hundred paces from the surface of the well. Then a golden dragon,[150] also several hundred *chi* long, and with sharp and pointed talons seized Water Sprite from the sky and went back into the well. [The people] to the left and right trembled in fear and didn’t dare to look any closer. However, Hán grieved for his Water Sprite and Zé regretted losing his precious sword.
移時，四面觀者如堵。忽見水精自井面躍出數百步。續有金龍亦長數百尺。爪甲鋒頷。自空拏攫水精。却入井去。左右懾慄。不敢近覩。但邯悲其水精，澤恨失其寶劍。

In an instant, an old man wearing a dark brown fur coat and with a very old-fashioned, simple appearance came to Zé and said, “I am the god of this territory. Why has the governor so easily made light of his people? The golden dragon from this cave is a messenger of the Mystery Above. Governing its costly jade, it has benefited the region. How could you have trusted in such a tiny thing? Taking advantage while it slept, you were going to rob it. The dragon was suddenly furious. It used divine power to shake the Heavenly Pass and rock the earth’s axis, to hammer the mountains and shatter the

[150] The original version has hand instead of dragon, which also makes sense. The Chén version makes this change.

> hills. One hundred *li* have become rivers and lakes, and ten thousand people have become fish and turtles. How can you protect your bones and flesh? The ancient Zhōnglí 鍾離[151] didn't love his treasures, and Mèng Cháng 孟嘗 personally returned his pearls. You don't imitate them but indulge your avaricious heart. Even though [Water Sprite was] a disciple of slyness and resilience and went to obtain the jewels without fear, [the dragon] has now eaten him and hammered the pearls." Zé blushed with shame and regret and had no words with which to reply. [The old man] spoke again, "You must immediately repent and pray to [the dragon] to prevent it from becoming exceedingly angry." The old man suddenly was gone, and Zé then prepared sacrifices and offerings and made them.
> 逡巡有一老人，身衣褐裘，貌甚古朴。而謁澤曰：「某土地之神，使君何容易而輕其百姓。此穴金龍，是上玄使者。宰其瑰璧，澤潤一方。豈有信一微物，欲因睡而劫之。龍忽震怒，作用神化，搖天關，擺地軸，搥山岳而碎丘陵，百里為江湖。萬人為魚鼈。君之骨肉焉可保。昔者鍾離不愛其寶。孟嘗自返其珠，子不之效，乃肆其貪婪之心。縱使猾韌之徒，取寶無憚。今已啗其軀而鍛其珠矣。」澤赧恨，無詞而對。又曰：「君須火急悔過而禱焉，無使甚怒耳。」老人倏去。澤遂具牲牢奠之。

This ending monologue by the local deity delivers a very specific environmental and political point. Taking the dragon's pearls in this tale is likened to the overharvesting of literal pearls in the Hàn Dynasty. The governor Mèng Cháng 孟嘗 actively restored pearl beds to their former strength for the benefit of the people under his care. This could no be further from the actions of Wáng Zé who attempts to extract pearls from this dragon, a manifestation of nature. This causes the dragon to drown ten thousand—a figurative great number of—people. The story is painfully clear that the powerful and wealthy, Wáng Zé and Zhōu Hán, extract wealth from nature at the expense of the common people and slaves. Further discussion of this story is taken up in chapter three. The environmental element of this tale needs little explanation. Though this dragon's pearl is presented in a fantastic fashion, the parallel to Mèng Cháng's

[151] Zhōnglí is one of the few two-character surnames of China. This is a reference to the first person to claim this surname, Bóyì 伯益, a mythological figure who helped Yǔ the great control the floods.

literal pearls makes it clear that they are meant to be understood in parallel to real world pearls.

Understanding the queerness of this tale requires more nuanced consideration. As we have defined queerness as anything that exposes flaws in the mutually constructed system of politics, marriage, family, gender, and the separation of humans from non-humans as queer, there are at least three elements that lend queerness to this tale. The most obvious is the biting criticism of the political figure whose actions in pursuit of his own material gain end in the deaths of his constituents. There is a clear implication that this political system is broken and needs to be changed. Second is the lack of separation between humans and non-human representatives of nature. Wáng Zé, Zhōu Hán, and even Water Sprite to a degree imagine themselves with uni-directional distance from nature. They imagine they can enter these aquatic spaces and extract from them what they will. Nature, however, is imagined as distant and inanimate. This imagined distance collapses when the dragon pulls Water Sprite back down into the waters and when the local deity scolds Wáng Zé. The third way to understand queerness in this tale is the animacy status of the dragon. A more nuanced description of *animacy* is offered chapter two. For the moment, however, let us simply observe that the dragon is first mentioned as a deity that responded to prayers for rain. In the eyes of Wáng Zé, Zhōu Hán, and Water Sprite, however, the dragon becomes little more than an animal-like guardian. In the end, this dragon is revealed to be a kind of subservient divinity that is a "messenger of the Mystery Above" 上玄使者. The claim that it feels anger could even be seen as humanizing. These multiple levels of animacy underly the surprising close of the human-nature gap at the climax of the tale and give the dragon a kind of queerness. This tale puts the

direst emphasis on the lack of separation between humanity and dragons as non-human representatives of nature. Where the former tales display familial kinship between humans and dragons, this one shows that the actions of humans can anger these natural entities—ultimately to the detriment of the humans, not of nature.

Conclusion

What benefit is there in reading "Zhāng Lǔ's Daughter," "Liǔ Zǐhuá," and "Zhōu Hán" together? In all cases, these texts question the difference between humans and non-humans/animals/nature that Xúnzi and the other early philosophers suggested. There is, however, a wide range in how these tales embody this truth of queer ecology, this odd proximity between humans and non-humans. "Zhāng Lǔ's Daughter" evenly balances discussion of queerness and ecology. The tale places clear importance on redefining family and pushes the boundaries of sex with her impregnation via mist. Moreover, the mourning of humanized non-humans that changes the surface of the earth suggests a very direct tie between sex, family, emotion, and nature. "Liǔ Zǐhuá" takes a very different affective stance while still addressing many of the same issues. The odd gaiety of a parade of dragonesses marching into a magistrate's office to claim a human husband is a strange foil to the dragon children mourning their human mother. Though both do certainly suggest porousness in the human non-human boundary, the affective stances are drastically different. In "Liǔ Zǐhuá," however, the ecological element is more muted than in "Zhāng Lǔ's Daughter." To be sure, the dragoness still maintains her tie to nature and Liǔ goes to liven in her palace, becoming an aquatic immortal. "Zhōu Hán," on the other hand, allows the environmental discussion to move to the foreground: the

actions of the rich and powerful disproportionately affecting the common people is striking. This text, however, does not front queerness as clearly. It certainly does perform the familiar QE work of questioning the distance between humans and nature as well as human's superiority to nature. Additionally much as the dragoness in "Liŭ Zĭhuá" maintains an inherent connection to nature by value of being a dragon, so too does the dragon of "Zhōu Hán" maintain a definitional queerness.

In these three tales, readers can see a range of how queer ecocriticism presents itself. In some cases, the queerness is more pronounced; in others, the environment may be. These tales also display a range of emotional tenor from mournful to humorous to didactic. Regardless of how queerness and ecology combine or what emotional tone is present, there is a persistent theme that humans and non-humans and/or humans and nature are much less distant, more entangled, and more intimate than one might expect.

Moving Forward

If queer ecology is an investigation of the relationships between humans, non-humans, and something called "nature," where do dragons fall? The examples above clearly illustrate that dragons do not neatly fall on one side or the other of a human/non-human divide. In the next chapter, I propose a gradated scale spanning the supernatural, the human, and "nature" to include multiple categories of non-humanity. Dragons span the entire scale from deities, to subservient divinities and demons, to humans, to animals and objects. Dragons that are simultaneously both gods and animals call into question the stability of these categories. The simultaneous construction of boundaries between these categories as well as

explorations of the porousness of said boundaries suggests queerness. That the only constant throughout these changes is a connection to water and its use suggests ecocriticism.

Queer Animacy: Warping Ritual

Consider what kind of creature plays the central role in 423.13, "The Línhàn Pig" 臨漢豕,[152] from the dragon section of the TPGJ.

In the Línhàn District of Qióng Prefecture 邛州臨漢縣 is a marsh. People often see a female **pig** coming and going, so they call it Sow Dragon Marsh 母猪龍湫. In the fourth year of the Tiānfù 天復 Reign Era (901-904) of the Táng Dynasty, there was a severe drought in the cities of Shǔ 蜀, which caused officials to personally go to [places with] spiritual vestiges and pray for rain. At that time, the elder of the fief had prepared sacrificial animals and sweet wine. He ordered the officials of the fief to accompany him to offer them. When they had finished offering libations three times, they spread out a feast beside the marsh that the **god** might bless the visitors. Sitting under the scorching sun, they spread out the banquet mat with the marsh taking the place of honor. [They passed] the wine in rounds, and every time it arrived at the marsh, they offered the cup to the marsh.

[They were determined to] wait until there was enough rain to soak their feet, and only then would they take the feast away. They sang and played music until they were merrily drunk. Suddenly, they saw black mist on the surface of the marsh, like a cloud, and the heavy vapors rose up. Wild lightning blazed like fire. The black clouds suddenly grew darker and rain and hail immediately fell. With boosted morale, the magistrate and the officials abandoned their shelter, heading back wet from the rain.

The next day, [they found that] there had been enough rain in this one area; but other villages still had barren land. Thus, the utmost sincerity of **humanity** can even move a **dragon**, an **animal**. Enjoying the virtue [of the villagers, the dragon] rescued them from the drought. One cannot call [the dragon] unintelligent.

邛州臨漢縣內有湫。往往人見牝豕出入。號曰母猪龍湫。唐天復四年，蜀城大旱，使俾守宰躬往靈跡求雨。於時邑長具牢醴。命邑寮偕往祭之。三奠迨終，乃張筵於湫上，以神胙客。坐於烈日，鋪席。以湫為上，每酒巡至湫。則捧觴以湫。

俟雨沾足，方撤此筵。歌吹方酣。忽見湫上黑氣如雲，氛氳直上，狂電燁然，玄雲陡闇，雨雹立至。令長與寮吏，鼓舞去蓋，蒙濕而歸。

翌日，此一境雨足，他邑依然赤地焉。夫人之至誠，則龍畜亦能感動。享德濟旱。勿謂不智。

[152] From *Běimèng Suǒyán* 北夢瑣言 by Sūn Guāngxiàn 孫光憲 (d. 968 CE). The text itself places these events in 904 CE.

What creature is involved in the above text? Is it a pig? Is it a dragon? It is called an animal. It is also called a god. That it can understand human emotion is certainly highlighted in this text. Though perhaps an extreme example, this question is one central to what dragons are and central to understanding the queerness of dragons. Throughout the tales of the TPGJ, dragons display a wide range of power and intelligence: in some cases they are nothing more than rarely seen animals; in some cases they maintain an animal form but seem to possess surprising intelligence; in some cases, they are nearly human; in other cases, they are god-like divinities. In the case above, this entity maintains an animal form, possesses both surprising human-like emotional intelligence and understanding of ritual propriety, and displays divine ability to control the rain.

Animacy Hierarchies and Queer Affect

A number of scholars have suggested that dragons exist on some kind of gradated scale. Multiple authors use the term *děngjí* 等級 (grade, rank, class, status) to refer to the distinction between dragons and snakes or between powerful dragons and less powerful ones.[153] A simple gradated scale, however, does not seem to fully encompass the complexity of dragons—indeed the entity in the tale above cannot be limited to one particular rank on such a scale. Before we go too much further in deconstructing such a hierarchy, let us first construct what it might look like. Throughout the dragon tales of the TPGJ, dragons can be:

1. Divinities in their own right who aid or harm humans
2. Subservient divinities who aid humans, harm humans, or seek aid from humans at the command of higher divinities (or occasionally counter to them)

[153] Xǔ Shūyǐng 許舒穎, "Dragons of the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì*"《太平廣記》中的龍, *Journal of the Púyáng Vocational and Technical College* 濮陽職業技術學院學報 25, no. 02 (2012), 6–8. See also, Qín Qióng 秦瓊, "Special Natures of the Dragons of the *Tàipíng Guǎngjì* and their Buddhist Origins"《太平廣記》中龍的特殊性及其佛教淵源, *Journal of the Púyáng Vocational and Technical College* 濮陽職業技術學院學報 25, no. 06 (2012), 3–5 & 23.

3. Demon-like tricksters who deceive and harm humans
4. Approximately equal to humans and/or reliant on human aid
5. Animalistic, lesser than human, and/or harmed by human actions
6. Objects to be viewed or written about (and still often harmed by humans)

Once again, this hierarchy is by no means meant to be definitive or non-porous. Dragons exist in all of them, and some dragons clearly move between categories or occupy positions not cleanly fitting into any one category.

This kind of hierarchy closely resembles what linguists call an *animacy hierarchy*. A number of linguists have studied how language imparts animacy to specific categories of being. For instance, languages with split ergativity[154] where the ability of the subject to affect change can be grammatically highlighted, entities imagined to be less animate are more likely to be grammatically highlighted when they act as a subject for a transitive verb.[155]

In an attempt to explain this in English, an accusative (not ergative) language, consider the phrase *the hikers that the rocks crush*. This phrase is uncomfortable for most native speakers of English. The oddity of rocks, inanimate objects, crushing hikers, animate beings, is highlighted by the relative clause. If the phrase were *the hikers who crush the rocks*, we would feel no discomfort. If English had split ergativity, most speakers would likely mark the word *rock* in the phrase *the hikers that the **rocks** crush* as if to tell listeners that the rocks are indeed crushing the hikers.[156]

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[154] In accusative languages like English, the object of a transitive verb is marked with a special objective case. *I* ate the lion vs. The lion ate *me*. In ergative languages, however, subjects are marked based on whether the verb is transitive or intransitive. This does not occur in English, but in ergative languages the *I*s in the following sentences would be declined differently. *I* ate the lion (transitive) vs. *I* panicked (intransitive). Languages with split ergativity allow speakers to grammatically mark these subjects as different or to choose not to.

[155] Mel Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 25–6.

[156] This example is taken directly from Chen, p. 2.

By looking at which kinds of nouns are grammatically marked in split-ergative languages, one can empirically, linguistically determine what kinds of nouns are imagined to be more or less animate.[157] A cross-linguistic study[158] of many languages from radically different families[159] suggested a composite animacy hierarchy of

1. Humans
2. Animals
3. Inanimates (objects)
4. Incorporeals (concepts)

which does align, if imperfectly,[160] with the hierarchy present in the dragon stories.

Though these concepts of animacy and animacy hierarchies were originally conceived as linguistic concepts, Mel Chen's 2012 work, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*, suggests that animacy "conceptually arranges human life, disabled life, animal life, plant life, and forms of nonliving material in orders of value and priority. Animacy hierarchies have broad ramifications for issues of ecology and environment, since objects, animals, substance, and spaces are assigned constrained zones of possibility and agency by extant grammars of animacy."[161] Chen also conceives of animacy as a queer concept. Throughout their book

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[157] There are a number of other linguistic ways of marking this. It very much depends on the specific grammars of languages. For instance Kwon Nayoung, Ong Deborah, Chen Hongyue, Zhang Aili, "The Role of Animacy and Structural Information in Relative Clause Attachment: Evidence From Chinese," in *Frontiers in Psychology* v. 10 (2019), 1576 used multiple relative clauses using 的 in modern Chinese to see what native speakers thought was more "grammatically correct." For instance, native speakers were asked to rate 在泄漏機密 [**的記者的報社**] 旁有許多可疑的人物出現 and 在泄漏機密 [**的報社的記者**] 旁有許多可疑的人物出現. On a Likert scale to indicate perceived correctness. (Beside **the newspaper agency of the reporter** that leaked the secret, many suspicious characters appeared vs. Beside **the reporter of the newspaper agency** that leaked the secret, many suspicious characters appeared.) This particular study only found marginal preferences based on the methods used.
[158] Performed by a John Cherry. See Chen, 26 note 10. It is worth noting that this particular study also goes into the specifics of class, ability etc.
[159] Swahili, English, Navajo, Shona, Chinook, Algonquian, Hopi, Russian, Polish, and Breton.
[160] One could debate whether dragons in these tales exist as concepts. In a few, dragons certainly take on metaphorical meaning, but they are also physical animals. As these tales are few and unclear, I am not including such a discussion here.
[161] Chen, 13.

queerness "refers to animacy's veering-away from dominant ontologies and normativities they promulgate… Queering is immanent to animate transgressions, violating proper intimacies (including between humans and nonhuman things)."[162] To restate: concepts of how things exist (ontologies) create expectations about how different kinds of things should interact (normativities). For instance, the ontological difference between humans and animals usually allows humans to eat animals, but not other humans. Animacy, however, makes people re-evaluate those choices. For instance, much vegan propaganda relies on imparting animacy to animals usually regarded as food sources.[163] Discussions of the intelligence of pigs, cows, or chickens, their ability to feel pain, and their ability to form social bonds all serve to confer higher levels of animacy to these animals and in so doing cause the viewership/readership to question the assumed norm that humans can/should eat these animals.

This speaks to the concept of *affect* that Chen uses throughout their work and in the title. *Affect*, the experience of emotion or emotional ties—that is emotion both within a singular individual or between multiple individuals, often implies animacy.[164] This idea of affect and its relationship to an animacy hierarchy becomes exceedingly clear in the end of the story above. Recall the final sentences.

> Thus, the utmost **sincerity** of humanity can even **move** a dragon, an animal. Enjoying the virtue [of the villagers, the dragon] rescued them from the drought. One cannot call [the dragon] **unintelligent**.

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[162] Chen, 11.

[163] I do not here intend *propaganda* to be used as a value judgment. I simply mean that these videos or advertisements attempt to use both facts and appeals to emotion to convince viewers/readers to change their behavior and/or subscribe to a particular ideology.

[164] See Chen, 11. Chen highlights a concern that affect/emotion be not only perceived as corporeal and limited to one individual (affect is not strictly chemicals in the brain of one person), but can be much less tangible and diffuse between multiple entities (a feeling in a room). In this, the lines between *affect* as related to emotion and *affect* as related to cause-and-effect become blurred.

夫人之至誠，則龍畜亦能感動。享德濟旱。勿謂不智。

In this instance, the perceived categorical differences (normative ontology, if you like) between humans and animals are bridged by the affect's affecting the dragon. That is, sincerity (*chéng* 誠), an affective stance, emotionally moves (*gǎndòng* 感動) the dragon. This grants the dragon a degree of intelligence (*zhì* 智). The commenter's perception of the affective ability of the dragon causes it to become more human/alive/animate than it previously had been before. This then places the dragon unsettlingly between human and animal. In effect, affect affects understandings of animacy and in so doing queers existing ontological hierarchies.

Below I follow this kind of gradated animacy hierarchy to discuss many different ways that dragons appear in the tales of the TPGJ. This certainly complicates the idea that dragons are all high or low on such a scale.[165] I would also, however, resist the idea that an individual dragon exists on only one particular rung. Though certain stories do portray dragons on different levels, these stories are told from the perspective of the humans who encounter the dragon. The human storytellers may experience a particular dragon in a particular way during one particular interaction, but the dragon may well change its behavior just before or after the interaction with the storyteller begins or ends. These short-term interactions may take place with a dragon who is mostly exhibiting signs of one particular level, but the constant presence

[165] Qín, 3, proposes just such an oversimplistic view. "The dragons of the TPGJ are most certainly not cultured, refined, kindhearted 'gods.' They are also no longer some 'auspicious symbol.' Rather, they are demons that willfully kill humans for their own personal desires. This completely overturns the commonly known image of the dragon in Our Country's traditional culture." 《廣記》中的龍絕不是溫文爾雅、心地善良的「神仙」，也不再是什麼「祥瑞之兆」,而是為了一己私慾隨意殺人的惡魔，完全顛覆了我國傳統文化中廣為人知的龍的形象。

of dragons in transformation very much suggests that all dragons can move through these various levels. Though I am, in a way, suggesting a categorizational scheme, the boundaries between these categories are very porous and dragons queerly flaunt any attempt to create rigid definitions of them.

1. Deities

At their most powerful, the dragons of the TPGJ are independent deities that are often associated with bringing rain. Historically, the association between dragons and rain bringing begins incredibly early. A fragment of Shāng Dynasty (1600- 1046 BCE) oracle bone involves shamans, dragons, rain, and fields. Multiple scholars[166] agree that this relates to some kind of rain-bringing ritual involving the dragons, though the exact details of said ritual are unclear. However, by the Spring and Autumn period (ca. 722-403 BCE), records of sacrifices offered to dragons in order to request rain are much clearer.[167] Regardless of when exactly the idea of a dragon as a rain god first arose, it was certainly in place well before the tales of the TPGJ were written.

The clearest example of dragons as independent divinities occurs in 425.08 "Dreaming of a Servant" 夢青衣.[168] The Empress Dowager of Later Shǔ has maintained a temple to a dragon-god in her palace for a while. One day, she dreams of a servant who says that the

[166] See Páng Jìn 龐進, *Zhōngguó Lóng Wénhuà 中國龍文化* (Chóngqìng: Chóngqìng Chūbǎnshè, 2007), 194; Liú Zhìxióng 劉志雄, Yáng Jìngróng 楊靜榮, *Lóng Yǔ Zhōngguó Wénhuà 龍與中國文化* (Běijīng: Rénmín Chūbǎnshè, 1996), 246.
[167] Jí Chéngmíng 吉成名, *Zhōngguó Chónglóng Xísú 中國崇龍習俗* (Tiānjīn: Tiānjīn Gǔjí Chūbǎnshè, 2002), 171. (Jí also here discusses the aforementioned oracle bones, but his discussion of it is quite short.)
[168] From *Yěrén Xiánhuà* 野人閑話 by Jǐng Huàn 景煥 (Northern Sòng, 960-1127)

dragon-god wants to leave the palace, so she builds another temple outside and performs a ritual to send the god from the first temple and another ritual to welcome the god to the second temple. Once the dragon-god is resituated in the new temple, it rains. The tale ends with an assertion that the dragon-god leaving the temple is inauspicious and the historical note that shortly after this event, the dynasty ended.

Though this tale is more concerned with protection and the stability of the short-lived dynasty than rain-bringing per se, the idea of a powerful dragon-god is clear. This dragon may well be the most powerful divine dragon as it has a servant that appears in the Empress Dowager's dreams to enact its bidding. In this tale and others like it,[169] dragons are either the most powerful entity in a hierarchy or are singular entities that operate on their own and are seemingly not related to a larger cosmological framework. These tales are also the ones in which ritual as such plays the clearest role: dragons are worshipped in rituals and those rituals define them as gods.

2. Subservient Divinities

When dragons are incorporated into a larger cosmological framework, they often play the role of a divine middleman, subservient to "Heaven." The concept of *tiān* 天 (*Heaven*) includes both **divinity** (*tiān* is often portrayed as having a will and/or deciding fate) and **nature** (*tiān* is also just a term for the sky and is associated with things naturally being the way they

[169] I would argue that 418.01 "Azure Dragons" 蒼龍, 420.04 "The Girl from Rippling Pond" 凌波女, and 423.03 "The Píngchāng Well" 平昌井 all feature dragons that are more-or-less independent divinities. The clearest example of a rain-bringing dragon-god is 423.05 "Fǎxǐ Temple" 法喜寺, but as that tale also involves a dragon-as-object, it is saved till the end.

are).[170] In these tales, a divine Heaven gives dragons orders regarding bringing or not bringing rain, a natural phenomenon, that, most often, the dragons cannot carry out or go against. In the narrative space of these tales, then, defying orders of this polysemous *Heaven* allows for two understandings: (1) rebelling against a divine heaven and defying social/ritual norms or (2) rebelling against a natural heaven and defying "nature." This ambiguity between divinity and nature very much highlights the importance of animacy and agency in a queer, ecological reading of these tales. Additionally, there is a distinct suggestion that Heaven's orders or nature's laws are unjust, and the way the texts highlight the punishments Heaven doles against these dragons suggests a very queer anti-normative anti-authority stance in the tales. We can see all of this in the tale 418.14, "Lǐ Jìng" 李靖.[171]

In this story, the titular character[172] chances upon the dwelling of a family of dragons. While he stays with them, a messenger comes and announces that

> "An order from heaven commands that the master make it rain for the 700 *lǐ* around the mountain. [If the rain falls for] one night, that should be enough: not so much as to cause standing water or a violent storm."
> 天符，報大郎子當行雨。周此山七百里，五更須足。無慢滯，無暴厲。

Clearly, the dragons are being given a very specific order from a divine, sentient Heaven. This order, however, is about rain, adding the element of nature. This ritual/natural order serves as the instigating event for the main conflict of the tale. Although Heaven has ordered the dragons to make it rain, all of the male dragons have left the house; and the female dragons cannot take

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[170] The debate between these two understandings of *tiān* is addressed more fully in the conclusion. Suffice it to say, Táng philosophers/authors were actively debating whether or not *tiān* was sentient (divine) or simply a collective term for all that exists (nature).

[171] From *Xù Xuánguài Lù* 續玄怪錄 by Lǐ Fùyán 李复言 (c. 800)

[172] Lǐ Jìng (571-649) is in fact a historical figure who eventually became a powerful general. At the end of the tale, the dragons give him a servant that helps him become a general. Full biographies of Lǐ Jìng can be found in *JTS* 67 and *XTS* 93.

up this task. This clearly brings in gender roles. They consider asking the male, dragon servants; but they then decide "The servant boys don't have the sense to take on this task" 僮僕無任專之理: suggesting a classist element. A maid then suggests they ask Lǐ Jìng to aid them specifically because he is abnormal. "Go see the guest in the chamber, he's not a normal human" 適觀廳中客，非常人也. Lǐ expresses trepidation as he is "a common human, not one who rides clouds" 俗人，非乘雲者. The dragonesses convince him to help and explain how to make rain, but Lǐ does not follow instructions precisely and accidentally causes a flood. Because of this misstep, Heaven exacts punishment on the matron of the family who tells Jìng

> "I have already received punishment and been beaten with 80 rods." Jìng only looked at her back, and it was full of bloody wounds. "My sons have also been implicated and received the same punishment."
> 「妾已受譴，杖八十矣。」但視其背，血痕滿焉。「兒子亦連坐。」

This tale has a clear theme of the dragon's responsibility. As subservient divinities, they must carry out the orders of Heaven. Because of the gender of the dragons present at the time, however, they cannot carry out these orders. Both the giving of orders and the gendered nature of the difficulty imply a degree of ritual propriety, *lǐ* 禮. One could also argue that dismissing the male, dragon servants may imply a *lǐ*-related class distinction as well. Alongside these discussions of *lǐ* related roles and responsibilities of dragons is the discussion of species that occurs with asking Lǐ Jìng to cause rain. There "should" be a "natural" species-related difference between dragons who can create rain and humans who cannot. In order to fulfill their *lǐ* related obligations, the dragons break the boundaries of "natural" differences. All of this is centered around the fact that Lǐ is an abnormal person (*fēi cháng rén* 非常人). These questions of normalcy, Heaven-mandated roles, gender roles, the conflict between culture and

nature very much speak to a queer, ecological reading. That the tale ends with the brutal punishment of the dragon woman and her absent sons seems to suggest that Heaven is, if not explicitly cruel, demanding and unforgiving. Queerly defying both divine Heaven and nature seems reasonable.

A theme of defying divine Heaven continues in 420.2, "Shì Xuánzhào" 釋玄照.[173] In this tale, three dragons wish to give a gift to a pious Buddhist named Shì Xuánzhào. He selflessly asks them to bring rain to end the drought that has brought a country-wide famine. The dragons acknowledge that they have the power to do so;

> However, the ban on rain is incredibly strong. The punishment for not obeying orders and acting on one's own is certainly not a trifle when one worries about [keeping their] head on their body.
> 但雨禁絕重，不奉命擅行，誅責非細，身首為憂也。

Once again, Heaven's orders seem to be very cruel. The implication seems to be that Heaven has mandated the drought and intentionally caused the famine. Though these dragons have the power to make it rain, the fact that they must fulfill their roles as defined by ritual/Heaven means that they cannot do so without fear of retribution. As seen above, this too suggests Heaven as the source of both cultural and natural laws is unjust.

The dragons suggest that the Buddhist seek out the aid of a Daoist hermit, Sūn Sīmiǎo 孫思邈,[174] who may be able to help. When the Buddhist finds the Daoist, he explains the situation again.

> Yesterday I met three dragons and ordered them to make it rain. They all said that it would go against the order of The Highest Deity. Those who act on their own and send

[173] From *Shénxiān Gǎnyù Zhuàn* 神仙感遇傳 by Dù Guāngtíng 杜光庭 (850-933)
[174] (541-682) a historical figure known as a medical doctor. The borderline between medicine and Daoist alchemical proscriptions for long life is thin.

rain will be heavily punished. Only your respected virtue and great contribution can save them from this fate.
貧道昨遇三龍，令其致雨。皆云，不奉上帝之命，擅行雨者，誅罪非輕。

The hermit agrees to help. Interestingly, in this tale, dragons, a Buddhist, and a Daoist work together against the "Highest Deity" (*shàngdì* 上帝),[175] the clear antagonist of the story. After the dragons have made it rain, Sūn intervenes when a being comes to bind the dragons—presumably to lead them to their punishment per divine orders.

On the agreed upon day, it rained, and the precipitation covered a great area.
於是如期汎灑，澤甚廣被。

The following day, Xuánzhào called upon Sīmiǎo. While the two were talking, a person of unusual appearance[176] walked directly toward the bank of the lake behind them. He angrily shouted and roared.
翌日，玄照來謁思邈。對語之際，有一人骨狀殊異，徑往後沼之畔，喑啞叱咤。

In a moment, the water froze into ice. Then three otters, two grey and one white, came out of the pond. The man bound them with a red rope and was about to take them away.
斯須。水結為氷。俄有三獺，二蒼一白，自池而出。此人以赤索繫之，將欲挈去。

Sīmiǎo called to him and said, "The guilt of the three creatures not even death can atone for. However, their disobedience yesterday was all my idea. I hope that you'll release them and truthfully relay this to your superiors. Forgive their great trespass."
思邈召而謂曰：「三物之罪，死無以贖。然昨者擅命，是鄙夫之意也，幸望脫之。兼以此誠上達，恕其重責也。」

The person accepted this explanation and immediately cut the ropes, releasing them. He then left with the ropes in hand.

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[175] In modern Chinese, this term is used to name the Christian god. During the Táng, however, that would not have applied.
[176] This text very literally means his "bones were in a strange shape." A similar term for the shape of one's bones (gǔxiàng 骨相) can be a more general term for *appearance*. In this case, I suspect the text intends to use this departure from normative body standards to highlight the entity's non-human status.

此人受教，登時便解而釋之，携索而去。

Once again, the liminal status of dragons as powerful beings who can bring rain but are subservient to a higher power serves as the main conflict for the tale. A seemingly unjust god wishes to execute the dragons for ending a drought and famine. It is only through Sūn Sīmiǎo's intervention that they are saved. The idea of humans and dragons working together to defy the will of heaven to provide rain to end a drought is certainly a fascinating look at the animacy of dragons and their relationship to heaven, divinity, nature, and humanity. Their liminal status between divine and human allows them great power to aid humans, but also puts them at risk of heaven-sponsored violence. Natural issues—droughts and rain bringing—combine with questions of the natures of dragons—as liminally divine—to suggest a clear connection to queer ecology.

As a slight deviation from this theme, in 425.12, "Wáng Zhí," 王植,[177] the interest of the story is not in the conflict between dragons and higher divinities. Instead, the not quite god but not quite human status provides an air of mystery. In this tale, the titular character is travelling with his friend, Zhū Shòu 朱壽, when they come upon two strangers. Quickly after introductions, they say:

> "We, in truth, are neither ghosts or gods nor are we human. Today we coincidentally spoke with Your Excellencies, this was caused by heaven." They again spoke to Zhí, saying, "Tomorrow this bank will have Lǐ Huán 李環 and Dài Zhèng 戴政, both merchants. They exploit all people for profit, and their greed has no end. The Highest Deity is angry and wishes to punish their sins within three days. Your Excellencies, do not moor here. Be cautious of this." When they had finished speaking, they submerged into the river. Although Shòu and Zhí were startled by this and thought it strange, they had not yet figured out what kind of oddity it was.

[177] From *Jiǔjiāng* Jì 九江記 about which little is known. The text itself places these events in 304 CE.

> 我實非鬼神，又非人類。今日偶與卿談，乃天使也。又謂植曰：「明日此岸有李環、戴政，俱商徒，以利剝萬民，所貪未已。上帝惡，欲懲其罪於三日內。卿無此泊。慎之。」言訖，沒於江。壽、植但驚異之，未明何怪也。

After the flood does indeed come and destroys the two merchants, Wáng Zhí and Zhū Shòu, as strangers to the area, ask others for clarity on what has happened. A local explains that

> "The two people Your Excellencies saw in azure clothes, I'm afraid that these flood dragons were efficacious and were serving the will of the Highest Deity"
> 卿所見二人青衣者，恐是此蛟有靈，奉上帝之命也。

Quite different from the tales above, the conflict in this tale is not that the dragons are not following Heaven's orders. However, there is still a distinct suggestion that Heaven is violent and does not care if people other than the exploitative merchants are harmed. The dragon's warning not to moor where they were suggests that the punishing flood would have killed Wáng and Zhū too. There is an additional focus on Wáng and Zhū's ability to understand what the dragons are and what has happened, suggesting a theme of seeking understanding. Nevertheless, the theme of dragons being servants of Heaven with power over the weather remains constant.

This idea of a sentient heaven forbidding dragons from bringing rain or ordering them to cause floods may seem quite distant from modern discourses on environmental concerns. Indeed, in the 21st century we tend to discuss the environment as a scientific issue with statistics and measurements: degrees of warming, inches of sea level rise, days of extreme heat, area lost to wildfires, etc. However, in attempting to give a more literary treatment of nature, it is understandable to personify nature to a degree. We moderns will often discuss

Mother Nature or Mother Earth and claim that disasters are signs of our Mother's anger. Of course, the histories of the concepts of Mother Earth/Mother Nature and *tiān* (Heaven)天/ *shàngdì* (the Highest Deity)上帝 are quite different. In their roles as sometimes-sentient manifestations of the environment, however, they function quite similarly. What may be unique about *tiān*/*shàngdì* is the idea that this force has underlings and is able to assign responsibilities to them and—relatedly—that it also assigns roles/fate to humans as well.

2.1 "Queer" Subservient Divinities

Following that *tiān*/*shàngdì* assigns roles, "ritual" or social expectations, one must also note that there is a cluster of stories that show dragons suffering in these roles and implies that this is due to an unusual inability to fulfil their roles as subservient rain-bringers. These dragons are unwilling to follow the ritually proscribed role and rebel against them. The most apt term for entities that disobey ritually/socially proscribed roles is *queer*.

The clearest example of this sub-theme is 425.2, "Guō Yànláng."[178] This tale does not begin by immediately providing the time, location, and main character's background as many tales do. This one, instead, begins with an explanatory note to the readers.

> [Previous] generations say that there are **queer** dragons who suffer from bringing rain; and though most flee and hide, they are caught by the Thunder God. Some hide in ancient wood or inside of pillars; but if in the wilderness with no place to hide, they will enter a cow's horn, or the body of a shepherd boy. They are often afflicted by this creature and are shaken to death.[179]
>
> 世言乖龍苦於行雨，而多竄匿，為雷神捕之。或在古木及楹柱之內，若曠野之間，無處逃匿，即入牛角或牧童之身。往往為此物所累而震死也。

[178] From *Běimèng Suǒyán* 北夢瑣言 by Sūn Guāngxiàn 孫光憲 (d. 968 CE)

[179] As is often the case in Classical Chinese, the subject of most of these clauses has been omitted. Throughout the passage, I have assumed the subject to be the queer dragons. Here, however, I assume that the subject has changed and the creatures shaken to death are the cows and/or shepherd boys.

The term above translated as *queer* is *guāi* 乖. The *Hànyǔ Dà Cídiǎn* 漢語大辭典[180] defines *guāi* as *different* (chāyì 差異), *unalike* (bùtóng 不同), *abnormal* (fǎncháng 反常), *mistaken* (miùwù 謬誤), *evil* (xié'è 邪惡), or *deceitful* (jiānhuá 奸滑). As these dragons are not doing what they have been instructed, one could translate the term as *disobedient*; however, on the sentence-level, the implication is that there is some difference that causes them to suffer in their ritually defined roles. Additionally, the dragons above who did not obey the orders of Heaven did not suffer from bringing rains as these dragons do. The exact nature of this difference is not clearly explained—but the idea the disobedience and rebellion against their heaven-assigned role due to this nebulous difference screams queerness. That the powers that be—the Thunder God—hunts them down and, presumably, forces them to perform this suffering-inducing role speaks disturbing volumes to the idea of state violence against those who rebel from social roles.

This information provides revelatory light for another tale, 418.13, "Cài Yù" 蔡玉. This tale begins with the titular character's trip to a local temple. As the officials are about to make an offering, a dark cloud suddenly appears.

> They saw two boys in scarlet clothing and two boys in dark clothing descending from the cloud. The boys in red clothing first went to the pillar at the southwest corner of the temple and pulled a white snake over a *zhàng* long from under it. They hurled it into the cloud.
> 見兩童子赤衣，兩童子青衣，俱從雲中下來。赤衣二童子先至殿西南角柱下。抽出一白蛇身長丈餘。仰擲雲中。

[180] Luó Zhúfēng 羅竹風, ed., *Hànyǔ Dà Cídiǎn* 漢語大辭典 (Shànghǎi: Hànyǔ Dà Cídiǎn Chūbǎnshè 漢語大辭典出版社, 1990), v. 1 p. 658.

> The sound of thunder gradually grew louder and came down. In a short while, the aforementioned white snake came straight down from the cloud and returned to the pillar from whence it came.
> 雷聲漸漸大而下來。少選之間，向白蛇從雲中直下，還入所出柱下。
>
> Then the cloud shifted lower, closer to the ground. The boys in the dark clothes then came down and approached a pillar. One grabbed onto the pillar of the temple with both hands and lifted it several *cùn* off the ground. The other boy pulled out another white snake, about two *zhàng* long and hurled it into the cloud. Then the four boys simultaneously flew up into the cloud and disappeared. The cloud gradually rose and dispersed into the sky.
> 於是雲氣轉低着地。青衣童子乃下就住，一人捧殿柱，離地數寸。一童子從下又拔出一白蛇長二丈許，仰擲雲中。於是四童子亦一時騰上，入雲而去。雲氣稍高，布散遍天。
>
> When night came, thunder and rain fell in a great storm that didn't clear up until late in the night.
> 至夜。雷雨大霆，至晚方霽。
>
> Afterwards [people] looked at the base of the temple's pillar and found that it was not in its original place, it was off by half a *cùn* or so. The monks of the temple said that the center of the pillar was hollow. They bored into the middle, and, just as they said, it was hollow. A dragon had hidden there.
> 後看殿柱根，乃蹉半寸許，不當本處。寺僧謂此柱腹空。乃鑿柱至心，其內果空，為龍藏隱。

Without the explanation from "Guō Yànláng," this tale does not make much sense. Who are these boys, and why are they pulling snakes out of the pillars of temples? Why do snakes/dragons need to hide the pillars of temples? However, with the previous explanation, it seems that these are likely "abnormal"/queer dragons who do not want to continue their work as rain-bringers. They then hide in these pillars until representatives of Heaven come and find them.

Consider briefly the difference of human involvement in "Cài Yù" and "Shì Xuánzhào." In "Cài Yù," the humans are merely spectators who view and record the event—bystanders who do nothing to help the dragons. In "Shì Xuánzhào," however, the humans actively prevent

heaven from taking and harming the dragons. If we accept the idea of dragons who do not fulfil their roles as defined by heaven as queer dragons, these characters can be understood as an important critique of allyship. Those who passively stand by and do nothing are of no help to the queer dragons in "Cài Yù." Only those who actively get involved in conflict—potentially putting their own lives on the line—like Sūn Sīmiǎo in "Shì Xuánzhào" can be counted as real allies.

All told, these tales seem to present a complete description of dragons' subservience to Heaven. In "Wáng Zhí," readers are presented with two flood dragons who dutifully fulfill the orders of Heaven. In "Lǐ Jìng," an unfortunate family of dragons attempt to fulfill Heaven's orders. Due to circumstances, however, they are unable to do so and are heavily punished for this. In "Guō Yànláng" and "Cài Yù," we see dragons who attempt to flee from the orders of Heaven and are forced to return and serve. Finally, in "Shì Xuánzhào," we see three dragons who actively defy the orders of Heaven and are only saved by human intercession. Even within this one animacy category, dragons already display variance in power and deviation from heaven-mandated roles. Those "different," "abnormal," "disobedient," dragons that do defy divine roles can quite comfortably be called queer. "Guō Yànláng," "Cài Yù," and "Shì Xuánzhào," all show violence from heaven against queer dragons and the latter two strongly show the importance of allyship.[181]

[181] As the dragon in 422.03 "Zhōu Hán" 周邯 is called "a messenger of the Mystery Above" 上玄使者, one could argue that dragon belongs here as well. As the dragon is endangered by humans, however, it is also arguably more of an animal.

3. Tricksters, Demons, Hellions

On a level of power similar to dragons as subservient deities, in some tales, dragons act as dangerous creatures that attempt to harm humans via trickery or enticement. These dragons are not acting on the orders of Heaven, nor are they embodying the trope of a wrathful deity sending floods. Instead, these dragons seem to play the role of trickster or hellion.[182]

Now, some readers familiar with Chinese canon may be surprised by the idea of a dragon (*lóng* 龍) being a trickster—dragons often have positive associations. Such readers may expect that trickster dragons are jiāo 蛟 (which I have rendered either as *jiāo* or as *flood dragons*). Generally speaking, these dragons are associated with floods (hence the translation of *flood dragon*) and are sometimes portrayed as filling the trickster role. Thus one might posit that there should be a simple binary: dragons in trickster roles are all jiāo, and lóng do not take on this role.[183] Unfortunately, as with most binaries, this one does not stand up to scrutiny. In fact, in the section above on subservient divinities, all of the lóng defied the orders of Heaven and it was only the jiāo in "Wáng Zhí" that obediently followed Heaven's orders.[184]

Additionally there is linguistic unclarity in the separation of jiāo and lóng. Jiāo are most commonly referred to as *jiāolóng*—combining these two ideas. It could be argued that this term is simply suggesting that these jiāo are part of the lóng family and calling them as such. However, 425.9, "Emperor Wǔ of Hàn and the White Jiāo,"specifically notes that a jiāo is not a

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[182] I use the term *hellion* to mean three things. Firstly, a hellion is a creature that is mischievous or troublemaking, much a synonym of the term *trickster*. However, I want to use a term that means some demonic that figure that causes harm to people without necessarily tricking them. Finally, I find the relation to *hell* useful as a contrast to that of heaven (although Chinese conceptions of hell are nothing like the current Christian idea).

[183] For instance, consider Schafer's *Divine Woman*, p. 20. His treatment of jiāo (which he translates as *kraken*) is completely negative.

[184] One could argue that the fact that they cause harm to humans fits with the idea of jiāo as tricksters. This however, forgets the god-like lóng that send floods out of wrath. (See 420.7, "Black River in Shāzhōu.")

lóng. For context, the emperor catches a jiāo and decides that it can be eaten because it is not a lóng. This suggests that there is some kind of ritual, hierarchical difference between jiāo and lóng: lóng are benevolent and auspicious and should not be eaten, jiāo are not highly esteemed and can be eaten. Thus our corpus has several instances of individual creatures that are called *jiāolóng* as well as a text specifying that jiāo and lóng are different creatures entirely. For the purpose of further discussion I will follow the editors of the TPGJ and group all of these together as *dragons*. However, for clarity's sake if the term used is something other than *lóng*, I will note that in the text.

Now then, accepting that dragons (be they jiāo, lóng, or jiāolóng) can take on the role of tricksters, the next question to ask is how dragons function in this role. Generally, there are two main tropes that can intersect. The first trope is that of seduction—a dragon takes on the form of an attractive, generally female, human and lures a human, generally male, into her lair. The second trope is that of vampirism—in these tales dragons often drink human blood.

I would like to suggest that both the seductive femmes fatales and the bloodsucking monsters are tied to queer ecology. The key factor motivating the dragon femme fatale trope is one of queer animacy. The unsuspecting men believe they see a beautiful human woman and are surprised when the entity displays the ability to overpower him, take a serpentine shape, drown him, and/or drain his blood. The change in animacy from human woman to treacherous dragoness is crucial to the tale. Similarly, themes of eating and consumption and a dragon's ability to either eat humans or be eaten by humans very much relies on the queer animacy of dragons.

Perhaps the most representative of these tales is 425.19, “Old Flood Dragon.” After some introduction, the main text of the tale reads

> “There was a youth passing by who saw a beautiful woman bathing in the water. She asked whether or not he would play (in the water) with her, and thus came forward and lead and pulled him. The youth then removed his clothes and entered. Thus he drowned to death. Only after several days did his corpse float out, and his body was completely withered. Under it (the temple mountain) there must be an old flood dragon’s sunken cave. She seduces people in order to suck their blood. His (the youth’s) fellow travelers relayed his condition.”
> 有少年經過，見一美女，在水中浴。問少年同戲否，因前牽拽。少年遂解衣而入，因溺死。數日，尸方浮出。而身盡乾枯。其下必是老蛟潛窟，媚人以吮血故也。其同行者述其狀云。

This tale embodies the quintessential jiāo-as-trickster narrative. The jiāo takes on the form of a beautiful woman and, like the sirens of ancient Greece, lures the man to a watery death so that she can feast upon him.

Interestingly, 425.15, “Sū Tǐng” 蘇頲 has just the opposite of this trope, wherein a flood dragon actually saves a man from drowning.

> The water was too deep to be measured, and in it were flood dragons, male and female,[185] that had troubled the people for generations. Tǐng, emboldened by drunkenness, [got out of the boat and] walked. Coming back from the Camel Bridge 駱駝橋,[186] by chance the bridge broke and he fell into the water all the way to the bottom of the pool. In the water was an order for someone to lift the Minister out [of the water]. Then he gradually made his way to the surface of the water. Tǐng then was rescued.
> 此水深不可測，中有蛟螭，代為人患。頲乘醉步行。還自駱駝橋。遇橋壞墮水，直至潭底。水中有令人扶尚書出，遂冉冉至水上。頲遂得濟。

The sex of this flood dragon is uncertain, but that the author is subverting the expectation that jiāo drown and drink the blood of humans is clear. Moreover, the use of Sū Tǐng’s (680–737)

[185] These two terms are to be read as a pair. The first is the one that has been used for flood dragons all along, *jiāo*. The second is *chī*, which Kangxi Dictionary explains as either a hornless flood dragon or a female flood dragon.
[186] Still extant today. In modern Húzhōu 湖州, just south of Tàihú

official title (*Minister, shàngshū* 尚書) in conjunction with the order to rescue him implies that jiāo is saving him out of respect for his official status.[187] This in turn suggests that the jiāo understands and respects human social mores, further disrupting the animacy hierarchy.

Now then, the element of female jiāo who attempts to drown men can be seen multiple times in 425.20, "The Wǔxiū Pool." These instances do not involve vampirism, but do provide further instantiation of the theme of seduction. This particular tale begins by introducing a Company Commander Bái 白 who

> went to the Wǔxiū Pool 武休潭, he saw a woman coming, floating on the water. Thinking she was drowning, he ordered a manservant to hook her to the shore. Suddenly, she transformed into a great snake and sank into the pool. Mr. Bái[188] thought this inauspicious and thus became ill. I then recited Cén Shēn's 岑參[189] *Rhapsody on Beckoning a Northern Guest* 招北客賦[190] and said, "To the east of Qútáng 瞿塘,[191] there is a thousand year old flood dragon in the depths. She transforms into a woman with dazzling clothes and beautiful makeup and swims near the water's edge." Only when Mr. Bái heard this did he realize that it was a flood dragon. He quickly recovered from his illness.
>
> 至武休潭，見一婦人浮水而來，意其溺者。命僕夫鉤至岸濱。忽化為大蛇，沒於潭中。白公以為不祥，因而致疾。愚為誦岑參《招北客賦》云：「瞿塘之東，下有千歲老蛟。化為婦人，炫服靚粧，游於水濱。」白公聞之，方悟蛟也，厥疾尋瘳。

[187] It is also worth noting that Sū Tǐng would become a Grand Councilor (*zǎixiàng* 宰相) of the Táng Dynasty. It is possible that this is more out of respect for his future status than his current status.
[188] Although this line refers to the main character as Bái Gōng 白公, which would frequently be translated as Duke Bai, the author has already informed us that this man is not a Duke, but some kind of general. Thus the assumption is that he is using 公 as a generic honorific because he has forgotten Mr. Bái's given name.
[189] 715-770 CE. A poet from the Táng known for his frontier poems.
[190]Cén Shēn has four *juàn* in the *Complete Tang Poems* 全唐詩 (*juàn* numbers 198-201) and there is also a seven *juàn Collection of Cén Jiāzhōu's Poetry* 岑嘉州集 neither of these contain a poem by this name or with this content. Either this poem has been lost or was an invention for this tale.
[191] One of the three famous gorges.

In the main tale involving Commander Bái, there is one female jiāo who entices a man. In the poem, which seems to have been invented for this tale, there is another female jiāo who attempts to entice men.

To this, the author of the tale appended another anecdote about multiple female jiāo who entice men.

> Additionally, the eunuch[192] Sòng Yùzhāo 宋愈昭 himself said that two or three women on a riverbank in Liǔzhōu 柳州[193] had beckoned him. The villagers called out and stopped him. They were also flood dragons. The words of Cén's *Rhapsody* should be enough to serve as evidence.
> 又內官宋愈昭，自言於柳州江岸，為二三女人所招，里民叫而止之，亦蛟也。岑賦所言，斯足為證。

In this one tale there are four or five female jiāo that all attempt to seduce men. Although no vampirism is mentioned, the fact that Commander Bái becomes ill seems to fulfill a similar function in the story. Also, since the jiāo was unsuccessful in tricking him into the water, it does make sense that she would not be able to drink his blood.

As an instance of the dragon that sucks blood but does not use seduction, consider 424.10, "The Chicken-Expending Master." This particular tale is quite long involving multiple episodes that are seemingly unrelated. The last of these states that

> In the past, when people or horses drowned in the river, [only after] a long time would the bodies float up, and they would be all white. Their bodies would only rise when their blood had already been sucked out completely.[194]
> 往時人馬溺於其間，良久尸浮皆白，其血被吮吸已盡，而尸乃出焉。

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[192] This term has two potential and vaguely related meanings. Firstly, it may be understood that Sòng Yùzhāo is a eunuch serving in the imperial court. Alternatively, starting around Sòng Dynasty (slightly after this tale's date), the term came to refer collectively to all imperial guards. As this refers to one person and is before the Sòng, I believe the first interpretation is better.
[193] Still called by this name today. Located in northeastern Guǎngxī Province.
[194] Another instance of vampiric dragons

Interestingly, the text implies that the creature doing the blood sucking is a lóng, not a jiāo providing one instance of this unusual behavior that applies to lóng. However, there is little or no trickery involved here. Regardless, the image painted by this tale is one of a dragon harming humans in a way that does not suggest a god-like status. This lóng, though perhaps not a trickster per say, is still within the realm of a harmful hellion.

Along a similar vein, consider 422.1, “Xǔ Hànyáng.” This tale is particularly fascinating because it plays these multiple tropes, including those of seduction and vampirism against each other in a new and unusual way. At the beginning of the tale, the titular character gets lost as he travels by boat, enters a side stream, and eventually stops in a lake. On the shore, he sees two young serving girls who lead him two a pavilion wherein he meets six or seven beautiful women. To this point, this narrative seems to be following two common motifs in tale literature: the encountering utopia tale in which a traveler gets lost and discovers a forgotten utopian society (for example, consider “Táohuā Yuán Jì” 桃花源記 “A Record of the Peach Blossom Spring”) and the encountering a goddess tale in which a man chances upon a goddess, has a brief but perfect love affair with her, and then departs (consider “Gāotáng Fù” 高唐賦). By resonating with these motifs, the author of “Xǔ Hànyáng” leads readers to expect that the titular character will encounter divine women, have a fantastic encounter with them, likely including wine, the exchange of poetry, and sex. Indeed there is ample wine, and the women ask him to write down the poetry they have composed (but do not allow him to contribute his own). No sex is explicitly mentioned, and there often is not, but the author does once again nod to the goddess-encountering trope by mentioning the sorrow that both parties feel at their parting.

This perfectly magical and enchanting evening is ruined when Hànyáng sees a commotion on the shore of the lake. A local tells him that four people had drowned nearby. One fortunately survives and relays that the women were dragons (lóng, not jiāo) that had captured the men to make wine from their blood. Hànyáng then comes to the horrifying realization that his magical dream-like night was actually a vampiric nightmare and then vomits up a vast quantity of human blood.

Clearly, this story capitalizes on the role of dragons as hellions. In this case, the beautiful, female lóng are both seductresses and vampires. However, it also plays on the underlying queerness of the role of the dragon. Even though readers are certain that these women are dragons (the poem they write mentions several bodies of water famous for their connection to dragons), one cannot expect the ending because dragon women can and do take on aspects of wish fulfillment (consider "Liú Yì"). The key to the surprise and horror that both the readers and the protagonist feel is the dragon's ability to cross through rungs of the animacy hierarchy.

To this point, we have only discussed tales that involve female dragons seducing and tricking human men. While this is the most common manifestation of this trope, consider 425.17, "A Daughter of the Hóng Clan," as a counterexample. In this tale, a Miss Hóng and a Mr. Lí have gotten engaged but have not yet set their wedding date. One day, a jiāo takes on the form of Mr. Lí and then marries Miss Hóng. Somehow it takes Mr. Lí more than a month to realize that his fiancée has been tricked into marriage by a jiāo. He then goes and slays the jiāo, rescuing his fiancée (and dog). A storm suddenly arises, both his fiancée and dog transform into jiāo. The winds blow Mr. Lí a great distance and it takes him several years to return home.

Although this instance does involve a male jiāo seducing someone who is believed to be a female human, the center of the narration still rests on the conflict that the human male experiences. The problem is not so much that the woman has been tricked, but that the man's wife has been taken away from him.

Now then, so far we have only discussed tales in which dragons (both jiāo and lóng) take on human form (both male and female) to cause harm to humans by tricking them and/or sucking their blood. There are, however, two more stories that do involve dragons as hellions but do not involve the dragon taking on human form. The first of these is 424.3, "General White." The titular general takes his horse to a river to wash it. At one point, he sees that the horse has a white "belt" on its leg which the general orders removed and then a vast quantity of blood flows from the wound. Interestingly, as the story continues, a character pronounces that this blood-sucking "belt" is certainly a lóng, suggesting once again that lóng can be malevolent entities.

Finally, 425.21, "Felling a Flood Dragon," takes on the theme of jiāo drinking blood but also includes some unusual information. In this tale we have a jiāo, not lóng, that attaches itself both to horses and to humans to suck their blood. The truly unusual element of this tale is that it uses the character 蝹. This character only appears this one time in the TPGJ. According to the dictionary, it is usually read yūn and describes the appearance of a dragon. In context, however, it is clear that this is supposed to be some kind of a dragon. In this case, the character should be read ǎo, which the Kāngxī dictionary says "often eats human brains below the earth" 常地下食人腦. Unfortunately, there is no supporting text in the TPGJ to corroborate that this definition holds true in tale literature. Regardless, both the blood-sucking jiāo and the brain-eating ǎo

both fall into the harmful, hell-like vision of a dragon.[195] Throughout these tales the common narrative is that dragons—both lóng and jiāo—are able to defy expectations of both animacy and gender to seduce or harm human men. In this case the entanglement between ideologies of gender, species, and consumption clearly points to the co-construction of queerness and ecology.

4. Human Dragons

In several tales, dragons are not at all god-like, but seem quite human. As previously discussed, the importance of family in defining humans as distinct from animals could not be clearer. That dragons can have families, governments, and engage in a whole range of worldly affairs suggests a queering, a blurring of the boundaries between human and non-human. Undoubtedly the most familiar tale of this sort is 419 "Liǔ Yì" 柳毅.[196] In this tale, the titular scholar meets a dragoness who has been maltreated by her husband and in-laws. She sends him with a letter to deliver to her family who are dragon royalty.[197] Her uncle murders (and eats) her husband and brings her home. There is a large celebration. Eventually Liǔ Yì and the dragoness marry, have a son, and permanently live with her family in their palace in a lake. As "Liǔ Yì" is a very long, complicated tale with many dragons exhibiting many different kinds of behavior, a whole range of arguments could be made. Taking the broadest understanding,

[195] To this list of trickster dragons, I would add 418.11 "Liú Jiǎ" 劉甲 (lóng), 421.3 "Liú Guàncí" (lóng), 424.08 "The Pool of the Five Peaked Mountain"五臺山池 (lóng), 424.09 "Elder Zhang" 張老 (lóng), and 425.10 "Xúnyáng Bridge" 潯陽橋 (jiāo).

[196] From *Yìwén Jí* 異聞集 by Chén Hàn 陳翰 (c. 874)

[197] It is worth noting that this is one of the few occurrences of dragon royalty in the TPGJ. However, the term used in this tale is *lóngjūn* 龍君 (*dragon lord*), and not *lóngwáng* 龍王 (*dragon king*). Though *lóngwáng* are much more prevalent in later literature, they are not a significant factor in the TPGJ.

however, having governments, families, marriages, and children are all very human traits that make up the core of the tale.

Similarly, 418.09, "Zhènzé Cave" 震澤洞,[198] involves a group of people who attempt to make contact with a dragon king. Much of the story focuses on either preparing gifts and bribes for dragon guards/officials or finding appropriate weaponry to defend against them. In the end, the king's daughter who is in charge of the treasury gives them several magical jewels, to the delight of Emperor Wǔ of Liáng 梁武帝. He is pleased that the humans have succeed in opening a line of diplomatic exchange (*pìntōng* 聘通) with the dragons. Once again, the idea of having kings, daughters, treasuries, or engaging in diplomacy are all very human ideas.

In 425.18 "Hóng Zhēn" 洪貞,[199] the titular character becomes the student of a *jiāo* that has taken on the form of a Daoist. Hóng Zhēn and the Daoist visit several mountains and discuss which is an appropriate for the Daoist/*jiāo* to live. Eventually the student recognizes that the master is not human and simply leaves. Eventually, there is a flood, but it is unclear how that is connected to the *jiāo*. Throughout the majority of this tale, the *jiāo* is entirely human and his student-teacher relationship with Hóng Zhēn serves to cement that further.

Thus in these tales, and several others[200] dragons may display a degree of humanity by engaging in relationship networks like those of humans. Diplomacy, trade, marriage relations, and student-teacher relations all suggest that dragons are very much capable of interacting with humans on a human level. It is also worth noting that there is a clear gender distinction in

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[198] From *Liáng Sìgōng Jì* 梁四公記 by Zhāng Yuè 張説 (667-730 CE)
[199] From *Shù Yì Jì* 述異記 補遺 Zǔ Chōngzhī 祖沖之 (429-500)
[200] I would suggest that 418.12 "Sòng Yún" 宋雲, 421.05"Rèn Xù" 任頊, 424.07 "Duke Zhāng's Cave"張公洞, and 425.11 "Wáng Shù" 王述 all fall into this category.

these tales. In the tales that focus on families, women are much more prominently featured. In some cases, like "Liŭ Yì" or "Liŭ Zǐhuá" the woman is a dragoness who marries a human. In others like "Zhāng Lŭ's Daughter" the woman is human. Regardless, these instances are rather different than those in which more diplomatic or business-oriented relationship arise. In these cases, all parties—both human and dragon—are male. That family-related tales portray female gender and diplomatic/business-related tales portray male gender is hardly surprising. However, that these tales use gender roles to show the humanity of dragons once again speaks volumes to the interconnection between definitions of gender and (non)humanity which themselves are tied to queerness and ecology.

5. Animals

In direct contrast to the human tales above, dragons also appear as dragons. On one hand, this is no surprise. Dragons tend to appear as serpentine/lizard-like animals and Wáng Fŭ's nine resemblances suggest that the image of the dragon was taken from a host of animals (the head of a camel, the horns of a deer, the eyes of a ghost, the ears of a cow, the neck of a snake, the stomach of a clam, the scales of a fish, the talons of an eagle, and the palm of a tiger).[201] On the other hand, since the Confucian texts in the previous chapter clearly define humans through their status as not-animals, that dragons can be both human and animal is quite perplexing. Indeed, in the TPGJ the dragon tales are placed at the beginning of the section

[201] Unfortunately, I can't seem to find exactly where this occurs in Wáng Fŭ's work. Both the Sòng Dynasty *Ěryă Yì* 爾雅翼 and the Míng Dynasty *Běncăo Gāngmù* 本草綱目 attribute this information to Wáng Fŭ. The *Ěryă Yì* explains that Wáng's commentary is on practices of how dragons were painted in his time. If the attribution is correct and the Sòng editors of the *Ěryă Yì* still thought this description of dragons worth citing, it is possible that this influenced how the authors of the source texts and the editors of the TPGJ would have visualized their dragons. His most famous work, *Qián Fū Lùn* 潛夫論, does not contain this information.

on animals, suggesting that they are part of the animal class, but first among them. Consider now how dragons are related to animals in these tales.

As dragons are very closely tied to water and have a reptilian form, they are often associated with fish, snakes, and turtles. For one such example, see 420.06 "Qí Huàn" 齊澣,[202] in which a number of officials have been tasked with organizing the digging of a canal. The laborers strike a "Dragon Palace" as they dig.

> At first, when they opened it, they said it was an ancient tomb, but it was shaped as though newly built, clean and tidy. Looking around, under the north wall, there was a five-colored hibernating dragon that was more than a *zhàng* long. By its head were five or six carp, each over a *chǐ* long. There were also two spirit-tortoises,[203] one *chǐ* two *cùn* long with eyes nine *fēn* long, like a normal turtle. Yī reported this to the censor opening the canal, Wū Yuánchāng 鄔元昌, who [in turn] wrote a letter [explaining these things] to Qí Huàn. Huàn ordered that they move the dragon into the Huái River and that they get the turtles and take them into the Biàn. Yī moved the dragon and the fish more than 200 *lǐ* to the banks of the Huái. Several million white fish jumped out to greet the dragon. [All these fish jumping] made the water [look as if it were] boiling.
>
> The clouds and mist made it dark and [the dragon] was never seen again. At the beginning, when they were going to move it, and Censor Yuán Xī 員錫 pulled out one of its whiskers.
>
> Yuánchāng dispatched [people with] nets to send the tortoises to Sòng 宋. They came across a lake, and the great tortoises repeatedly stretched their necks toward the water. The people with nets pitied them and placed them in the water for a short while. The water was [only] several *chǐ* across, and not more than five *cùn* deep, but they lost the tortoises. They dried up all of the water to find the tortoises, but they still didn't find them. A waste of a trip to send tortoises!
>
> 初開謂是古墓，然狀如新築淨潔。周視。北壁下有五色蟄龍長丈餘。頭邊鯉魚五六枚。各長尺餘。又有靈龜兩頭，長一尺二寸。眸長九分 如常龜。禕以白開河御史鄔元昌。狀上齊澣。澣命移龍入淮，取龜入汴。禕移龍及魚二百餘里。至淮岸，白魚數百萬跳躍赴龍，水為之沸。
>
> 龍入淮噴水，雲霧杳冥，遂不復見。初將移之也。御史員錫拔其一鬚。

[202] From *Guǎngyì Jì* 廣異記 by Dài Fǔ 戴孚 (c. 757)
[203] Tortoises used for divination.

> 元昌差網送龜至宋，遇水泊，大龜屢引頸向水。網戶憐之，暫放水中。水闊數尺，深不過五寸，遂失大龜所在。涸水求之，亦不獲。空致龜焉。

Clearly, this dragon is very much considered to be of a kind with these turtles and fish. That the fish greet the dragon when it arrives at its new home suggests that it may be slightly more powerful or of a higher status than the fish, but the piece as a whole seems to suggest that this dragon is an animal.

One can also consider 420.09 "The Well Dragon" 井龍,[204] in which a Chinese dragon is contrasted with a lion from "the West"—likely meaning central or western Asia.

> At the end of the Kāiyuán 開元 Reign Era (713–741), a country from the West offered a lion as tribute. When it had reached the streets of Ānxī 安西, it was tied to a tree at a relay station. When it neared the well, the lion roared, as though it were not at ease. In a moment, great winds and lightning came; and a dragon came out of the well and left.
>
> 開元末，西國獻獅子，至安西道中，繫於驛樹。近井，獅子吼，若不自安。俄頃，風雷大至，有龍出井而去。

There is certainly a metaphorical meaning that the lion, symbolizing a tributary state, is uneasy in its relationship to China, the dragon accepting tribute. This metaphor, however, is still predicated on the idea that a parallel can be drawn between the lion and the dragon because they are both animals.

Similarly, in 425.16 "Fighting a Flood Dragon" 鬬蛟,[205] a *jiāo* fights an ox, suggesting both are similarly animalistic.

> At the end of the Tiānbǎo 天寶 Reign Era (742-756 CE) of the Táng in Shèzhōu 歙州 an ox and a flood dragon fought. At first, the flood dragon in the water killed a great many people and animals. Because this ox went to drink, it was ensnared by the flood dragon. It went directly into the water at the bottom of the pool and then they made

[204] From *Guó Shǐ Bǔ* 國史補 by Lǐ Zhào 李肇 (c. 813)
[205] From *Guǎngyì Jì* 廣異記 by Dài Fǔ 戴孚 (c. 757)

contact. After several days, the ox came out and the water in the pool was red. At the time, the people said that it had been killed by the flood dragon.

唐天寶末。歙州牛與蛟鬬。初水中蛟殺人及畜等甚衆。其牛因飲，為蛟所繞，直入潭底水中，便爾相觸。數日牛出，潭水赤。時人謂為蛟死。

It is not only that dragons can be similar to animals: living with them, scaring them, or fighting them. Indeed, the dragons of the TPGJ often take the form of snakes or fish and are only revealed to be dragons later. For example, consider 422.05 "Wéi Sīgōng" 韋思恭, in which the titular scholar and two of his friends are living and studying in a temple that has a large stone water basin.

The three people lived there starting in the Spring, until, [one day] in the seventh month, the three took advantage of some free time to go and draw water. When the road arrived at the stone basin, there was a great snake, several *zhàng* long and black as pure lacquer with white markings like brocade. It was wriggling and writhing in the basin. The three men saw it and were startled. After observing it for a good while, Wáng and Dǒng conferred, saying, "That one could be taken and eaten."

Wéi said, "No it can't. Of old, the bamboo of Gé Lake 葛陂,[206] the shuttle of Father Fisherman,[207] and the sword of the Léi Family 雷氏,[208] these are all from dragons. How do you know that this famous mountain and great town [isn't of dragons]? Couldn't it be that [this is a] dragon hiding its form? Moreover, this snake's scales are very different from normal ones. This could serve as a warning." The [other] two men didn't accept his words and threw a rock at the snake, hit it, and it died. They coiled it up, went back, and cooked it. The two men both chastised Scholar Wéi for feigning propriety.

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[206] This is a reference to the hagiography of Sire Gourd *Hú Gōng* 壺公 in the *Traditions of Divine Transcendents* Shénxiān Zhuàn 神仙傳. In this tale, Sire Gourd, a Daoist immortal, is attempting to teach Fèi Chángfáng 費長房 the way of immortality. Fèi, however, is not up to the task and returns home via a piece of bamboo that Sire Gourd gives him. Upon his return, he throws the bamboo into Gé Lake (modern day Hé'nán); and it becomes a dragon. For the complete tale and commentary, see Robert F. Campany, *To Live As Long As Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 162-4.

[207] This is likely a reference to Táo Kǎn 陶侃 in the first *juàn* of the *Garden of Marvels* Yì Yuàn 異苑. One day, while fishing, he pulls a weaving shuttle out of the water. Upon returning home, he hangs it on the wall, but shortly thereafter a thunderstorm comes and the shuttle turns into a scarlet dragon which then flies away. Robert Campany's *A Garden of Marvels: Tales of Wonder from Early Medieval China* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2015) does have some tales from this volume, but unfortunately leaves out this one.

[208] This is a reference to the story of Zhāng Huá 張華 in the 36th *juàn* of the *Book of Jìn* (Jìnshū 晉書). Zhāng Huá and Léi Huàn 雷煥 obtain a stone box containing two swords. Eventually, these two die and the swords pass on to Léi Huá 雷華, Léi Huàn's son. One day, the swords jump out of his belt and into a lake. He orders someone to go and get them, but the person cannot find the swords and only sees two dragons. There do not seem to be any well-known translations of the *Book of Jìn* into English.

Before long, it was announced that the place with the basin once again had a snake. The two men went to the place with the basin wishing to strike again. Scholar Wéi admonished them and would not allow it. When the two men were about to raise rocks to throw, the snake leapt into the air and left.

三人者自春居此，至七月中，三人乘暇欲取水。路臻於石盆。見一大蛇長數丈，黑若純漆，而有白花，似錦。蜿蜒盆中。三子見而駭，視之良久。王與董議曰：「彼可取而食之。」

韋曰：「不可。昔葛陂之竹，漁父之梭，雷氏之劍，尚皆為龍，安知此名山大鎮，豈非龍潛其身耶。況此蛇鱗甲，尤異於常者。是可戒也。」二子不納所言，乃投石而扣蛇且死，縈而歸烹之。二子皆咄韋生之詐潔。

俄而報盆所又有蛇者。二子之盆所，又欲擊。韋生諫而不允。二子方舉石欲投，蛇騰空而去。

After this, heaven takes revenge on the two scholars who killed the snake/dragon, but spares Wéi Sīgōng who attempted to protect it.

Though stories in which dragons appear as fish or snakes are the most common, dragons also appear as a number of other animals. Consider 425.03 “Wáng Zōngláng”王宗郎[209] below.

In the Gēngwǔ 庚午 year of Shǔ 蜀,[210] the Prefect of Jīnzhōu 金州,[211] Wáng Zōngláng 王宗郎,[212] presented a memorial to the emperor saying that in Xúnyáng District 洵陽縣[213] on the edge of the Xún River 洵水 is the Dark Smoke Temple 青煙廟. For several days, smoke formed dark clouds above the temple. Night and day music played. Suddenly, one morning, the waves soared and leapt, and a group of dragons came from the surface of the water and went into the Hàn River 漢江. The large ones were several *zhàng*, the little ones, over a *zhàng*. [There were those whose colors were]

[209] From *Lùyì Jì* 錄異記 by Dù Guāngtíng 杜光庭 (850-933)

[210] China has a sexagenary cycle in which ten heavenly stems and twelve earthly branches combine in rotation to form a 60 year way of reckoning dates. Assuming this would be the Former Shǔ, then the relevant gēngwǔ year would be 910 CE.

[211] In modern day Shǎnxī Province in what is now called Hànbīn Qū 漢濱區, roughly directly south of Xī’ān and directly east of Hànzhōng City 漢中市.

[212] An important general of the Former Shǔ. He was an adoptive brother of the second and final emperor of the Former Shǔ, Wáng Yǎn 王衍 (899-926 CE, r.918-925CE). In 919, however, he was judged guilty of crimes and was stripped of power and of this name, reverting to his birth name, Quán Shīláng 全師郎.

[213] Now called Xúnyáng District 旬陽縣, just to the northeast of the aforementioned Hànbīn Qū.

> like the colors of the five directions,[214] there were those who had shapes like cows, horses, donkeys, and goats. The large and the small together made 50. Again and again they retraced their steps going into the Hàn River and passing by the place of the temple going back and forth several *lǐ*, sometimes hidden, sometimes visible. After three days, they then stopped.
>
> 蜀庚午歲，金州刺史王宗郎奏洵陽縣洵水畔有青煙廟。數日，廟上煙雲昏晦，晝夜奏樂。忽一旦，水波騰躍，有群龍出於水上，行入漢江。大者數丈。小者丈餘。如五方之色，有如牛馬驢羊之形。大小五十，累累接迹，行入漢江，却過廟所。往復數里，或隱或見。三日乃止。

It is worth mentioning that even though these dragons appear as cows, horses, donkeys, and goats, they are still connected to the river and thus to water. Clearly, dragons have a tie to animals ranging from snakes and fish to turtles to horses and goats, just to name a few.[215]

The dragons of the TPGJ are clearly human—most crucially they have family that they treat as family (*qīnqīn* 親親). However, the dragons of the TPGJ are also clearly animal—they live with fish or turtles and transform into snakes. Early classical texts—Xúnzi being the most explicit—define humans in contradistinction to animals. If one is human, one is not animal. Yet the dragons of the TPGJ are both. It is tempting to suggest that some of the dragons are human and some are animal—concluding that one could draw a line between human dragons and non-human ones. However, texts like that which began this chapter suggest that, even in an animal

[214] The five directions (East, South, Center, West, and North) each correspond to a color (Celadon, Red, Yellow, White, Black, respectively)

[215] Other stories in which dragons seem to be animals include: 420.03 "Wáng Jǐngróng"王景融, 420.05 "Táo Xiàn" 陶峴, 420.08 "Dragon of the Xīngqìng Pool" 興慶池, 420.10 "Zhānrán River" 旃, 422.02 "Liú Yǔxī" 劉禹錫 (In which a dragon appears as a turtle), 423.01 "Lú Jūnchàng" 盧君暢 (In which two dragons appear as dogs), 423.02 "Yuán Yìfāng"元義方, 423.14 "Burning Dragon"燒龍, 424.03 "General White"白將軍 (In which a dragon behaves like a leech), 424.10 "The Chicken-Expending Master"費雞師, 424.12 "Lǐ Xuān"李宣, 425.05 "The Fish from the Well"井魚, and 425.09 "Emperor Wǔ of Hàn and the White *Jiāo*"漢武白蛟.

state, dragons still exhibit human abilities. Rather than attempting to create some scheme to separate human dragons from animal dragons, I suggest that these texts directly expose the flaws in defining humans in distinction to animals. This is fundamental to understanding these dragon tales and is also one of the fundamental concepts of queer ecology.

6. Objects

In the next rung down the animacy hierarchy, dragons can appear as objects. These can be natural objects like stones or leaves or man-made objects like zither strings—once again drawing attention to the boundaries of "natural" and "human." In this category, I also include the idea of objects for study: things to be viewed and written about. In some cases, the boundary between an object seen and reported on and an animalistic dragon is quite thin. For example, one could easily argue that "Wáng Zōngláng" above is treating the dragons appearing as cows, horses, donkeys, and goats as objects to be viewed rather than as animals. Let us first consider clearer cases of dragons-as-objects before considering objectified animal dragons.

Let us first consider 422.11 "A Son of the Shǐ Family" 史氏子,[216] in which a dragon appears as a leaf.

> There was a son of the Shǐ family 史氏, who, during the Yuánhé 元和 Reign Era (806-820) of the Táng Dynasty, once traveled to Mount Huà 華山 with Daoists. At the time, it was very hot, They stopped at a small stream. There was suddenly a leaf as large as the palm of a hand. It was a lovely dark red and was following the stream down. Of his own accord, Shǐ caught it and put [the leaf] near his chest. After sitting for the amount of time it takes to eat a meal, his chest felt very cold. He furtively pulled out [the leaf] and looked at it. Scales were shaking and rising from it. Shǐ was alarmed and afraid. He left it[217] in the forest and then told everyone, "This must be a dragon; we should leave quickly."

[216] From *Yǒuyáng Zázǔ* 酉陽雜俎 by Duàn Chéngshì 段成式 (803-863)
[217] *Yǒuyáng Zázǔ* specifies that he left the leaf in the forest.

> In a flash, white smoke came from the forest, and completely spread through the valley. Shǐ went down the mountain, but before he had made it halfway down, great winds and rain arrived.
>
> 有史氏子者。唐元和中。曾與道流遊華山。時暑甚。憩一小溪。忽有一葉大如掌，紅殷可愛，隨流而下。史獨接得，寘於懷中。坐食頃，覺懷中冷重。潛起觀之，其上鱗栗栗而起。史驚懼。棄林中。遂白衆人。「此必龍也，可速去。」
>
> 須臾，林中白煙生，彌布一谷。史下山未半，風雨大至。

Somehow, this leaf transforms into a dragon; or, perhaps, was a dragon hiding in leaf form the entire time. It is worth noting that the leaf was found in a river and that it eventually summons a rainstorm—even in this unusual form, the tie to water is quite clear.

Similarly, in 424.06 "Striped Stone" 斑石,[218] a stone turns out to be a dragon's egg.

Much as the above, it is also tied to a sudden rainstorm.[219]

> There was a scholar in the capital city, who, while hiking a mountain, picked up a stone egg. It had multiple hues of green and red and was about the size of a chicken's egg. He thought it very strange. He kept it in a cloth [lined] box for five or six years. Thereupon, he gave it to his baby to play with, it was lost. After a few days, the daytime suddenly became dark with wind and rain. Under the trees in front of the courtyard, water fell incessantly as strong as a waterfall. Everyone wondered about the cause of this. When the wind and rain stopped, under the trees they suddenly saw that this stone was already broken. The middle was like a shell from which a chick has emerged. They then knew that this was a dragon's egg.
>
> 京邑有一士子，因山行，拾得一石子。青赤斑斕，大如雞子。甚異之。置巾箱中五六年。因與嬰兒弄，遂失之。數日，晝忽風雨瞑晦，庭前樹下，降水不絕如瀑布狀。人咸異其故。風雨息，樹下忽見此石已破，中如雞卵出殼焉。乃知為龍子也。

In 422.09 "Wéi Yòu"韋宥,[220] a dragon takes on the most delightfully bizarre form of all—a silk zither string.

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[218] From *Yuán Huà Jì* 原化記 (836-47 CE) by a Mx. Huángfǔ 皇甫氏 (c. 825)

[219] 424.15 "Yǐn Hào" 尹皓 follows a very similar pattern in which a stone turns out to be a dragon egg.

[220] From *Jíyì Jì* 集異記 by Xuē Yòngruò 薛用弱(c. 825)

During the Yuánhé 元和 Reign Era (806-820) of the Táng Dynasty, the Commandant Wéi Yòu 韋宥 came to govern Wēnzhōu 溫州.[221] He was frustrated and unhappy—the river seemed eternally long, and the boat was hot and humid. One day, in the evening, it was cooler, so he mounted a horse and went ashore, travelling with the boat. Suddenly [he came upon a place with] loose sand, an eddying current, and emerald reeds. Thus he let go of the reins and allowed the horse to drink. Some of the reeds brushed against the saddle, and as Yòu was lazily leading the horse, he carefully looked at them. He suddenly saw a new silk zither string wrapped around the heart of the reed. Yòu immediately collected the reed and stretched out the string. It was two *xún* long.[222] He tried releasing it, but it responded by wrapping itself up again. Yòu was surprised and astonished. Yòu placed [the string] near his chest and traveled to the next inn on the river. All his family had already moored the boat and gone into the building. Thus Yòu was a fifth wheel.[223]

The family had performing girls, [so Yòu] immediately handed [the string] to the zither performer and said, "I got it from the heart of a reed, it's rather new and quite tight. But that was on a sandbank on the edge of the river. Where does this thing come from? I think it's incredibly unusual. Try putting it on the instrument and listen to its sound."

The performing girl was about to affix it [and found that] it replaced the others with no great difference. It was only two or three *cùn* shorter. Just then, the food came out, and the performing girl put it down. It then curled back up into its original shape. When they had finished eating, [the performing girl] looked at it, and it was wriggling and shaking. The performing girl was frightened and told everyone. They fought their way over to look at it, and a pair of eyes became evident.

Yòu was astonished and said, "Could it be a dragon?" He then called for his clothes and hat and burned incense to pay respects. They put it in the waters of a basin and threw it into the river. As soon as it reached the middle of the stream, the wind blew and the waves surged. Steam clouded about and thunder came. Very near to twilight, there was suddenly a one hundred *chǐ* white dragon that clawed its way and rose up into the sky. Everyone in the crowd saw it, and only after a good while did it vanish.

唐元和，故都尉韋宥出牧溫州，忽忽不樂，江波修永，舟船燠熱。一日晚凉，乃跨馬登岸，依舟而行。忽淺沙亂流，蘆葦青翠，因縱轡飲馬。而蘆枝有拂鞍者。宥因閑援熟視，忽見新絲箏絃，周纏蘆心。宥即收蘆伸絃，其長倍尋。試縱之，應乎復結。宥奇駭，因寘於懷。行次江舘。其家室皆已維舟入亭矣。宥故駙馬也。

[221] In the southeast of Zhéjiāng.
[222] 16 feet or 5 meters.
[223] The actual phrase is an *extra horse*. But as his family doesn't need him at the moment, I chose the most appropriate phrase in English.

家有妓。即付箏妓曰：「我於蘆心得之，頗甚新緊。然沙洲江徼，是物何自而來。吾甚異之。試施於器，以聽其音。」

妓將安之，更無少異，唯短三二寸耳。方饌，妓即置之，隨置復結。食罷視之，則已蜿蜒搖動。妓驚告衆。競來觀之，而雙眸瞭然矣。

宥駭曰：「得非龍乎。命衣冠，焚香致敬。盛諸盂水之內，投之于江。纔及中流，風浪皆作，蒸雲走雷，咫尺昏晦。俄有白龍百尺。拏攫昇天。衆咸觀之。良久乃滅。

These stories clearly show dragons as less animate than even animals. They take the forms of inanimate objects from leaves to stones to zither strings. In the first two tales, readers never see the dragons in animal form—we are left to infer this from the arrival of rain. In the last one, however, the dragon does indeed transform from an object into a dragon in animal form. In all cases, despite the fact that these dragons appear as objects that are handled by humans, they possess divine power to summon wind and rain.

7. Objectification and Commodification

The stories above have suggested that dragons can be objects found in nature—from leaves to zither strings. However, dragons can also be objects used for specific purposes. Consider and 421.01 “Xiāo Xīn” 蕭昕, in which the titular minister is tasked with ending a drought that has caused pestilence. He asks a Buddhist master if he can summon rain.

> The Tripitaka Master said, “That is easy. However, I fear summoning dragons to incite clouds and rain will bring great shocks of wind and thunder and will harm the sprouting plants. How would that help in sowing and reaping?”
>
> Xīn said, “Rapid lightning and heavy rains really cannot help multiply the 100 grains. [We need] just enough to clear the heat and dispel the commoners’ sicknesses. I hope you won’t refuse this.”
>
> The Tripitaka Master had no choice, and thus ordered his disciples to bring a piece of birch bark about one *chǐ*. He then drew a little dragon atop it and then placed

an incense burner, a small bowl, and some perfume before it. The Tripitaka Master then started chanting, shaking his tongue and crying out blessings.

He prayed for about the amount of time it takes to eat a meal. He then gave Xīn the dragon on the bark, saying, "You may now throw this into the Qǔ River 曲江. After throwing it, return immediately. Do not risk the wind and the rain."

Xīn threw the dragon as he had been instructed. Soon there was a white dragon just a *chǐ* long. It came out of the water waving its mane and shaking its scales. Soon, its body was several *zhàng* long. Its shape was like fluttering white silk. Very suddenly, it stretched through the sky. Xīn whipped his horse, urging it swiftly on. After only a few tens of steps, the color of the clouds was pitch black and a torrential rain rushed down. When he had arrived in Yǒngchóng 永崇, the water in the streets was already as if a dam had burst.

三藏曰：「易與耳。然召龍以興雲雨，吾恐風雷之震，有害於生植，又何補於稼穡耶。」

昕曰：「迅雷甚雨，誠不能滋百穀，適足以清暑熱，而少解黔首之病也。願無辭焉。」

三藏不獲已，乃命其徒。取華木皮僅尺餘。纘小龍於其上，而以爐甌香水置於前。三藏轉咒，震舌呼祝。

咒者食頃，即以纘龍授昕曰：「可投此於曲江中，投訖亟還，無冒風雨。」

昕如言投之。旋有白龍纔尺餘。搖鬣振鱗自水出。俄而身長數丈，狀如曳素。倏忽亘天。昕鞭馬疾驅，未及數十步，雲物凝晦，暴雨驟降。比至永崇里，道中之水，已若決渠矣。

In this text, the master draws the image of a dragon, and it then transforms into a real one that can bring rain. Though this is an object used for the purpose of bringing rain, the transformation from drawing to reality suggests that this animacy hierarchy is very much instable and that dragons freely transform across these boundaries.[224]

[224] I would suggest that the dragons in 418.05 "Gān Zōng" 甘宗, 420.11 "The Dragon Gate" 龍門, 421.04 "Miss Wéi" 韋氏, 421.06 "Zhào Qísōng" 趙齊嵩, and 423.07 "The Dragon Raiser"豢龍者, all fall under this category. In the last two, the titular characters use dragons as means of transportation. Whether riding a dragon makes it more of an object used for a purpose or an animal is debatable. Indeed the boundaries between animals and objects are often unclear. I would also suggest that many of the tales in the TPGJ that mention dragons as vehicles for the gods fall in this category between animal and object.

Finally, beyond being objects found in nature or objects used by humans, I would also like to suggest that dragons are objects of study and inquiry to be seen and written about.

In 423.08 "Kǒng Wēi" 孔威, the titular character submits a memorial along with a dragon skeleton to the emperor. Both the idea of sending a skeleton and submitting a written document suggest the idea of dragons being objects or objectified. According to the memorial, a pair of dragons had fought to the death in the courtyard of a commoner. One of the dragons died and remained in his courtyard.

> When they cut it open and analyzed it, they found a large ulcer in its throat. The whole dragon was over 10 *chǐ* long, with the body and the tail each taking up a half. The root of its tail was thin and narrow, and its scales and mane[225] were like that of a fish. Its whiskers alone were two *zhàng* long. Its feet had a red membrane covering them. Its two horns were each two *zhàng* long, and its abdomen was misaligned with itself.[226]"
>
> At the time, they sent an official with a large moving storehouse to send it to the prefecture. [However,] because the flesh was heavy, they couldn't lift it all [at once], so they slashed it into several tens of sections and took it to the governmental official.
>
> 剖之，喉中有大瘡。凡長十餘尺。身尾相半。尾本褊薄。鱗鬣皆魚。唯有鬚長二丈。其足有赤膜翳之。雙角各長二丈。其腹相自齟齬。
>
> 時遣大雲倉使督而送州。以肉重不能全舉，乃剸之為數十段，載之赴官。

Though in this case, the act of studying the dragon does not harm it, the idea of analyzing the remains, dissecting them for more information, further cutting the body apart to ship it, and then submitting the entire skeleton to the emperor certainly suggests a degree of interest in dragons that reduces them to objects of study. Unfortunately, the study of dragons in these texts are not always as benign as the above. In 422.04 "The Dragon from Zīzhōu" 資州

[225] The Chinese here can refer either to the mane of a lion or horse or to a fish's gill covers. As most depictions of Chinese dragons feature a mane, I have chosen to use the term.

[226] The image given here is that of unaligned teeth. One might suppose that the scales of the dragon's underbelly have some kind of irregular pattern, like unaligned teeth, but it's unclear. The Ming version says that it's misaligned with the light, but that doesn't make any more sense.

龍,[227] human study of the dragon is the cause of its death, and the narrator/commenter implies that this may be met with retribution.

> In the final years when Wéi Gāo 韋皐 was stationed in Shǔ 蜀, Zīzhōu 資州 offered [him] a dragon. Its body was over a *zhàng* long, and its scales were complete. Gāo stored it in a wooden box, coiled and bent inside. Then, on the first day of the lunar year, he placed it atop the hall of the Temple of Great Compassion 大慈寺. The people all passed this on. They freely looked at it for two or three days, but it died from inhaling the smoke from the incense. *The National History* 國史 lacks a record of this. What kind of omen is this?
>
> 韋皐鎮蜀末年。資州獻一龍。身長丈餘。鱗甲悉具。皐以木匣貯之。蟠屈於內。時屬元日，置於大慈寺殿上，百姓皆傳，縱觀二三日，為香煙薰死。《國史》闕書。是何祥也。

In some cases, the act of observing a dragon as an object brings benefit to the human observer without harming the dragon involved. This would include many instances in which dragons are seen and reported with the understanding that seeing a dragon is an auspicious event. For instance, in 418.02 “Cáo Fèng” 曹鳳,[228] the titular character sees a dragon, reports it to the emperor and is rewarded.

> During the Jiànwǔ 建武 Reign Era (25-56CE) of the Latter Hàn 後漢, Cáo Fèng 曹鳳, styled Zhònglǐ 仲理, served as the Governor of the North. The political changes he implemented were surprisingly outstanding. A yellow dragon was seen from the high sentry box at 9 *Lǐ* Valley. Its horns were two *zhàng* long, ten *wéi* in circumference, and over 10 *zhàng* from tip to tip. The Son of Heaven praised him and gave him 100 *pī* of silk and added 2,000 *shí* to his salary.
>
> 後漢建武中，曹鳳字仲理，為北地太守。政化尤異。黃龍見於九里谷高岡亭，角長二丈，大十圍。梢至十餘丈。天子嘉之，賜帛百匹，加秩中二千石。

[227] From *Jì Wén* 紀聞 by Niú Sù 牛肅 (c. 800)
[228] From *Shuǐ Jīng Zhù* 水經注 by Lì Dàoyuán 酈道元 (466-527)

The above tales suggest a distressing continuity between objectification—in which a dragon becomes object-like by observation—and commodification—in which a dragon is used as an object to gain favor. In "Kǒng Wēi" the dragon is measured and observed—objectified—but is also cut into pieces and those very literal objects are sent to the emperor—commodification. In "The Dragon from Zīzhōu" the opposite happens, the dragon as a whole, live, commodified object is sent as a gift to Wéi Gāo. It is only after this dragon is given as a present that it is observed—objectified—and then dies. "Cáo Fèng" is less dire in that the tale does not involve the death of a dragon. However, that reporting the detailed sighting of the dragon gains him imperial favor once again suggests a tie between the measurements—objectification—and gifts and favor—commodification.

One core claim of queer ecology is that "queers/sexuality and nature/the environment/animals actually have much in common. To wit: both sets of entities have been subjected to biopolitical control and surveillance; both have been objects of scientific scrutiny…both have been feared, pathologized, fetishized, and commodified."[229] These dragons are both subjected to quasi-scientific scrutiny—they are measured and dissected—and used as objects to curry favor. These dragons embody queer ecology: they are objectified and commodified while simultaneously fulfilling definitions of queerness—an unclear position on the animacy hierarchy—and environmentality—bringing rain and being (arguably) animals.

The reflexive, metatextual objectification in these texts perhaps prompts a larger discussion of the relationship between the texts, authors, and readers. In reading texts such as

[229] Nicole Seymour, "Queer Ecology," in *Companion to Environmental Studies*, eds. Noel Castree, Mike Hulme and James D. Proctor (New York: Routledge, 2018), 449. Also consider Dana Luciano and Mel Y. Chen, "Has the Queer Ever Been Human?" in *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 21, 2–3 (2015), 182-207.

those above, the readers are, in fact, observing characters observing dragons. In this way the text itself also acts as an objectifying force on its own. By relaying specific details, such as the length and circumference of the dragon's horns above, the text itself makes the dragon an object; and the audience is drawn into the role of the observer.

There is a distinct subset of texts that very actively objectify dragons for the readership. These quasi-scientific texts give detailed descriptions or even measurements of dragons and in so doing make the reader's gaze an objectifying one.

Perhaps the simplest text of this type, 422.10 "Chǐmù" 尺木,[230] is a simple description of a part of a dragon.

> On dragons' heads is a thing shaped like Mt. Bó 博山,[231] called a *chǐmù* 尺木. If a dragon doesn't have a *chǐmù*, it cannot rise into the skies.
> 龍頭上有一物如博山形，名尺木。龍無尺木，不能昇天。

Thus we have seen that dragons can be objects in many ways. First, and perhaps most directly, dragons can take the form of a number of objects from leaves to zither strings. Second, dragons can be objects put to use by humans—as ingredients in spells to bring rain. Finally, dragons can be objects to be measured, studied, and viewed—characters in the texts may view and measure the dragons, or the texts may cause readers to become the objectifying force ourselves.[232]

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[230] From *Yǒuyáng Zázǔ* 酉陽雜俎 by Duàn Chéngshì 段成式 (803-863)

[231] This refers to a *bóshānlú* 博山爐, a hill-shaped censer used to burn incense. For both images of these censers and their history, see Susan Erickson, "Boshanlu–Mountain Censers of the Western Han Period: A Typological and Iconological Analysis," *Archives of Asian Art*, vol. XLV (1992), 6–28.

[232] In this idea of dragons as objects to be viewed/studied, I would also include: 418.06 "The Country of Southern Xún" 南鄠國, 418.07 "Dragon Field" 龍場, 418.08 "Five Colored Stone" 五色石, 422.06 "Lú Yuányù" 盧元裕, 422.08 "Lǐ Xiū" 李修, 423.04 "Tiger Skull"虎頭骨, 423.06 "Dragon Shrine" 龍廟, 423.11 "Golden Dragonlet"金龍

Breaking Boundaries

From the examples thus far it should be clear that dragons exist across many rungs of an animacy hierarchy: deities, subservient divinities, tricksters, humans, animals, and objects. It should also be clear that the boundaries between these levels are quite porous. In some tales, however, the boundaries are nigh on non-existent. The introductory tale in this chapter, 423.13 "The Línhàn Pig" 臨漢豕, was just one such example in which the text highlighted the intelligence of a pig/dragon that made it seem simultaneously divine and human.

423.05, "Fǎxǐ Temple" 法喜寺,[233] is arguably even queerer than "The Línhàn Pig" because the dragon goes from object to deity, jumping further than the pig-god leap. In this tale, a monk dreams of a dragon visiting the temple multiple times. Every time he has this dream, it rains the next day.

> The monk called together workers and they assembled earth to make an image of a dragon. He carefully told them the shape, and they placed it at the pillars to the west of the hall. Their work was finished, and they had deeply attained the appearance of [a real dragon] among the clouds. It had a serpentine shape, scales and a mane, and was curled in a deeply clever way. Even if they had the skills of a painter, it would have added nothing.
>
> When the beginning of the Chángqìng 長慶 Reign Era (821-824) arrived, a person who lived at the temple was lying at the external door, and he saw a creature coming straight out of the western veranda with a light and airy look like the shape of a rising cloud. It speedily flew out of the temple and went towards the Wèi River. Only as night was about to come did it return to the western veranda. Carefully looking at it, it turned out to be a white dragon. The following day, he told the monks of the temple. The monks thought this odd.
>
> Several more days passed, and every last monk went to receive alms[234] from a meeting of the villagers and didn't return until noon. Then, as they went into the hall,

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子, 424.01 "Dragons of Jambu"閻浮龍, 424.14 "Salt Well Dragons" 鹽井龍, and 425.04 "The Dragon of Xīpǔ"犀浦龍.

[233] From *Xuānshì Zhì* 宣室志 by Zhāng Dú 張讀 (c. 834-882). The text places these events toward the end of the Yuánhé 元和 Reign Era (806-820) through the beginning of the Chángqìng 長慶 Reign Era (821-824).

[234] The verb here translated as *to receive alms* can also have the meaning of *fasting*. However, as they came back at noon, it would hardly seem that an entire temple of monks would go to fast with the villagers for only a few hours.

they looked and saw that the image of a dragon had already disappeared. The monks of the temple sighed and thought this strange. They looked at each other and said, “It’s a dragon. Even though it was fake and made of earth, it can still transform without limits. When it leaves, we don’t know where it goes; and when it comes, we can’t find out where it comes from. It must be a spiritual creature.”

As evening arrived, a dark cloud rose from the Wèi River and presently pressed towards the halls of the temple. Suddenly, a creature leapt out of the cloud, pointed toward the western veranda and entered. The monks of the temple were afraid and startled; and as they looked after it, they saw that the image of the dragon was already at the western pillar. They approached and observed it. The dragon’s mane, whiskers, scales, and horns were all as if they were wet.

From then on, they bound it with an iron lock. Thereafter, if there was a drought or a flood in the neighborhood, they would pray to it; and it would respond very effectively.

僧召工，合土為偶龍，具告其狀，而於殿西楹置焉。功畢，甚得雲間勢，蜿蜒鱗鬣，曲盡其妙，雖丹青之巧，不能加也。

至長慶初，其寺居人有偃於外門者，見一物從西軒直出，飄飄然若升雲狀，飛馳出寺。望渭水而去。夜將分，始歸西軒下。細而視之。果白龍也。明日因告寺僧。僧奇之。

又數日，寺僧盡赴村民會齋去。至午方歸。因入殿視，像龍已失矣。寺僧且歎且異，相顧語曰：「是龍也，雖假以土，尚能變化無方。去莫知其適。來莫究其自。果靈物乎。

及晚，有陰雲起於渭水，俄而將逼殿宇。忽有一物自雲中躍而出，指西軒以入。寺僧懼驚，且視之，乃見像龍已在西楹上。迫而觀之，其龍鬐鬣鱗角，若盡沾濕。

自是因以鐵鎖系之。其後里中有旱澇，祈禱之，應若影響。

This dragon is clearly an object—the monk orders the building of the sculpture and readers are aware of the building process. Even though it is a man-made object, it comes to life and is called a “spiritual creature” (*língwù* 靈物) and the monks pray to it for rain—suggesting that it is some kind of divinity. Yet even though the monks pray to this living statue, they still bind it with an iron lock, suggesting that it needs to be controlled like an animal. The entire

point of this tale is the oddity and wonder of the boundary defying transformation of the dragon. This dragon is very queer.

Another example of a tale meant to relay the queerness of dragons and their transformation is 421.02, "Lost Ruler Pond" 遺尺潭.[235] In this very short tale, a jade ruler transforms into a dragon and then transforms into a pond.

> The Lost Ruler Pond 遺尺潭 in the Kūnshān District 崑山縣 originated in the middle of the Dàlì 大曆 Reign Era (766-779). A woman from the settlement became the first wife of the Emperor's son and lost a jade ruler, which became a dragon. It has now become a pond.
> 崑山縣遺尺潭，本大曆中，村女為皇太子元妃，遺玉尺，化為龍，至今遂成潭。

This ruler—a manmade object—transformed into the animal shape of a dragon which then transformed into a body of water. Tales such as these[236] that highlight the strange transformations of dragons provide one definition of queerness via Mel Chen's animacy.

Throughout all of these levels of hierarchy, there are a few constants. In nearly every case dragons maintain a connection to nature—whether they are gods who bring rain, human creatures who live in lakes, or animals. Additionally, on every level except the very top there is possibility for oppression, exploitation, and suffering. As subservient deities, some dragons are forced to perform labor they find painful and are hunted down when they escape. On the threshold between subservient deities and humans, dragons with power to bring rain are often

[235] From *Zhuàn Zǎi* 傳載 (c. 825) unknown

[236] Other such boundary-breaking stories include: 420.07 "Black River in Shāzhōu" 沙州黑河, 422.07"Lú Hàn" 盧翰, and 423.09 "Huáyīn Marsh"華陰湫.

prevented from doing so by an antagonistic Heaven. As animals, dragons are killed, eaten, and have their habitats destroyed. Finally, dragons are objectified and commodified: observed, measured, dissected, and given as gifts. These tales very much embody the idea that queer entities and nature have much in common "both sets of entities have been subjected to biopolitical control and surveillance; both have been objects of scientific scrutiny…both have been feared, pathologized, fetishized, and commodified."[237] The next chapter considers this connection between dragons and nature/the environment more closely.

[237] Nicole Seymour,"Queer Ecology," in *Companion to Environmental Studies*, eds. Noel Castree, Mike Hulme and James D. Proctor (New York: Routledge, 2018), 449. Also consider Dana Luciano and Mel Y. Chen, "Has the Queer Ever Been Human?" in *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 21, 2–3 (2015), 182-207.

Watery Environs

In 421.05 "Rèn Xù" 任頊,[238] a dragon is endangered by a Daoist who wishes to eat him. He asks for the help of the titular character, a Confucian scholar. The Daoist attacks the dragon by draining the marsh in which he lives, and the Confucian saves him through the power of his words. The dragon then gives Rèn Xù a divine pearl. Continuing from the previous chapter, one must note the queerly animate status of dragons in this tale: they display very human emotions, they are attacked as animals, and they use divine power. Turning from the animacy hierarchy, however, let us consider how these dragons relate to their environment. Specifically, consider how the Daoist attacks the dragon—not by attacking the dragon directly, but by attacking the marsh.

> At the beginning of the Jiànzhōng 建中 Reign Era (780-783) of the Táng, there was Rèn Xù 任頊 from Lè'ān 樂安.[239] He was fond of reading and did not enjoy the ordinary affairs of the mundane world. He lived deep in the mountains and had the ambition of dying there.
> 唐建中初，有樂安任頊者，好讀書，不喜塵俗事，居深山中，有終焉之志。
>
> One day, he closed his doors in the middle of the day and sat. An old man came to visit and knocked on his door. He was clothed in yellow clothes and was very handsome. He had come dragging a walking stick. Xù invited him to sit and talk.
> 嘗一日，閉關晝坐。有一翁叩門來謁，衣黃衣，貌甚秀，曳杖而至。頊延坐與語。
>
> After a while, Xù was surprised to find his words burdened and his expression dejected. [There was clearly] some deeply unhappy matter. He thus asked the old man, saying, "What has happened that your expression is dejected? Do you have some worry? If not, is it that there is someone in your family who is sick and you worry about them deeply?"
> 既久，頊訝其言訥而色沮，甚有不樂事。因問翁曰：「何為而色沮乎。豈非有憂耶。不然，是家有疾而翁念之深耶。」

[238] From *Xuānshì Zhì* 宣室志 by Zhāng Dú 張讀 (c. 834-882)
[239] Near modern Xiānjū 仙居 in central Zhéjiāng 浙江 (on the southeastern coast of China).

The old man said, “It really is as you say. I have been worriedly waiting for a long time for you to ask that. Actually, I’m not human, but a dragon. If you go one *lǐ* west, there is a large marsh that has been my home for several hundred years. Now, it is endangered by someone and the disaster is imminent. Without you I cannot escape death. Thus I have come to present this to you. I am fortunate that you asked me now, so that I can tell you.”

老人曰：「果如是。吾憂俟子一問固久矣。且我非人，乃龍也。西去一里有大湫，吾家之數百歲，今為一人所苦，禍且將及。非子不能脫我死，輒來奉訴。子今幸問我，故得而言也。」

Xù said, “I am a mundane person. All I know is the *Poetry*, *Documents*, *Rites*, and *Music*. I know no other skills. Thus what do I have to help you escape this calamity?”

頊曰：「某塵中人耳，獨知有詩書禮樂，他術則某不能曉。然何以脫翁之禍乎。」

The old man said, “But listen to my words, and you will not need to rely on any other skill. I’ll only put you to the trouble of saying a few tens of words.”

老人曰：「但授我語，非藉他術，獨勞數十言而已。」

Xù said, “I’m willing to receive your instruction.”

頊曰：「願受教。」

The old man said, “Two days from now, I hope that you will arrive at the marsh in the morning for me; and at noon, a Daoist priest will come from the west. This is the one I have been saying will cause me harm. The Daoist will drain the water from my marsh and kill me. You wait for the water to dry up and then, in a stern voice, cry out, ‘There is an order from Heaven that those who kill yellow dragons die!’ When you finish speaking, the marsh should be full [again]. The Daoist priest will certainly work his magic again, and you thus need to shout that out again. Do this three times, and I will be saved. I will heavily reward you and will be fortunate to have nothing else to cause me anxiety.” Xù agreed to this; and the old man thanked him very earnestly, only leaving after a great while.

翁曰：「後二日，願子為我晨至湫上。當亭午之際，有一道士自西來者，此所謂禍我者也。道士當竭我湫中水，且屠我。子伺其湫水竭，宜厲聲呼曰：「天有命，殺黃龍者死。」言畢，湫當滿，道士必又為術，子因又呼之。如是者三，我得完其生矣。必重報。幸無他為慮。」頊諾之。已而祈謝甚懇。久之方去。

Two days later, Xù traveled west of the mountain, and there was indeed a large marsh. He then sat next to the marsh and waited. At exactly noon, a cloud slowly drooped down from the western sky onto the marsh. A Daoist priest came down out of the middle of the cloud. He was long and tall, about a *zhàng* or more. He stood on the bank of the marsh. From his sleeve, he pulled out several ink-black talismans and threw them into the marsh. After a short while, the marsh was completely dry. A yellow

dragon appeared, stuck lying in the silt. Xù then shouted in a stern voice, “There is an order from Heaven that those who kill yellow dragons die!” When he finished saying this, the marsh was completely full again.

後二日，頊遂往山西，果有大湫，即坐於湫旁以伺之。至當午，忽有片雲，自西冉冉而降於湫上。有一道士自雲中下，頎然而長。約丈餘。立湫之岸，於袖中出墨符數道投湫中。頃之，湫水盡涸，見一黃龍，帖然俯於沙。頊即厲聲呼：「天有命，殺黃龍者死。」言訖，湫水盡溢。

The Daoist priest was angry and immediately pulled several talismans with brick-red characters from his sleeve and threw them. The marsh’s water was once again gone. Xù thunderously shouted the same words as before, and the marsh was full of water again. The Daoist priest was very angry and instantaneously pulled out about ten scarlet talismans. He tossed them into the air, and they all became red clouds and entered the marsh. The marsh’s water was then gone. Xù called out the same words as before, and the marsh was full of water again.

道士怒，即於袖中，出丹字數符投之。湫水又竭，即震聲呼，如前詞。其水再溢，道士怒甚。凡食頃。乃出朱符十餘道。向空擲之，盡化為赤雲，入湫。湫水即竭，呼之如前詞。湫水又溢。

The Daoist priest looked at Xù and said, “It took me ten years to catch this dragon to eat. Why would you, a scholar, save this thing so different from you?” After angrily scolding him, he left.

道士顧謂頊曰：「吾一十年始得此龍為食，奈何子儒士也，奚救此異類耶。」怒責數言而去。

Xù also [left and] returned to the mountains. That night, he dreamed that the old man from before came to him and said, “I have relied upon you to save me. Without you, I would have died in the hands of the Daoist priest. I am deeply and sincerely thankful, even with ten million words, [I couldn’t express it all]. Now I offer you a pearl, you can come get it from the banks of the marsh. I hope it expresses the deep thanks of my heart.”

頊亦還山中。是夕，夢前時老人來謝曰：「賴得君子救我。不然，幾死道士手。深誠所感，千萬何言。今奉一珠，可於湫岸訪之，用表我心重報也。」

Xù went to look for it and found a pearl, a *cùn* in diameter, amidst the grass on the marsh’s shore. It was dazzlingly brilliant and clear, with an inestimable value. Afterwards, Xù especially went to the market at Guǎnglíng 廣陵. A foreigner saw it and said, “This really is the treasure of The Black Dragon,[240] and no one in the world can get it.” The foreigner bought it for several tens of millions.

[240] The Black Dragon here mentioned is also an allusion to a story in the *Zhuāngzi* in the chapter “Liè Yǔkòu.”

頊往尋之，果得一粒徑寸珠。於湫岸草中。光耀洞澈，殆不可識。頊後特至廣陵市，有胡人見之曰：「此真驪龍之寶也，而世人莫可得。」以數千萬為價而市之。

This dramatized, magical battle to protect a wetland habitat for the benefit of the creature that resides within is surprisingly environmental in tone. The image of the dragon stuck in the bed of the marsh that has been intentionally drained is quite striking. The tie between the dragon, his habitat, and his continued wellbeing could not be clearer. Throughout the dragon tales of the TPGJ, there is a very clear tie between dragons and water, as we have already seen; sometimes, as in this example, the dragons are creatures who live in the water—other times, however, they are capable of controlling rain or rivers.

Additionally, the giving of the valuable pearl—in and of itself a tie to aquatic creatures—as well as the Daoist's wish to consume the dragon speak to the related themes of consumption and monetary gain. While the economic systems of Táng and Sòng China were very different from those today, there was an indisputable awareness of the toll economic activity could take on the environment. This tale also suggests an awareness of the benefits to be had from protecting the environment—Rèn Xù is rewarded for his efforts.

This tale structures the chapter quite well. First, let us consider the relationship between dragons and water—specifically focusing on controlling water for crop production. This also includes some of the environmental history of mid-Imperial China. Second, let us examine the use of pearls in dragon tales and include the very economically focused criticism of early Chinese pearl harvesting. Finally, let us expand to themes of consumption more broadly—though the Daoist in the example above is very literal in his desire to consume the dragon, I

would suggest that his desire as well as other similar discussions of literal consumption throughout the 94 dragon tales can be understood in an environmental and economic light.

Rain, Drought, Flooding, and Farming

Approximately 10,000 years ago, when humans first invented farming, we released enough greenhouse gases to prevent an ice age. It is only because our ancestors released unprecedented amounts of greenhouse gases by farming that human society exists as it does. Over the past 10,000 years, that has not changed. We have not only continued to change the composition of gases that make up our atmosphere and determine our climate but have also made innumerable smaller changes that have had direct effects on other elements of our environment.[241]

Once a human society relies on farming for food production, access to and control of water becomes essential for survival. If crops are not watered, they die and so do the people who eat them. If, however, there is even a little too much rain, crops can drown, and the result is much the same. When large numbers of northern Chinese aristocracy fled south during a number of political and military episodes including the Rebellions of the Eight Princes (*bāwáng zhī luàn* 八王之亂, also translated as *The War of the Eight Princes*) from 291 to 306 CE, the invasion of Luòyáng 洛陽 in 311 CE, and the invasion of Cháng'ān 長安 in 316 CE, the importance of water for food production became much more salient. The plains of northern China were much drier than the southern climes. Northerners had to shift from farming millet

[241] Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin, *The Human Planet: How We Created the Anthropocene* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018). Not only has this work contributed the above information to my project, it is also a very well written work by scientists for the general public. I highly recommend it.

and wheat on dry ground to rice in wet paddies. Wet-rice agriculture depends on the quality and control of water. Where more traditional agriculture relies on soil quality, rice plants get most of their nutrients from the water in which they grow. While a shift in cereal crop may seem relatively minor, this transition changed nearly every aspect of the lives of these migrants. Farming rice paddies is more labor intensive, and the northern aristocrats who were used to owning and farming massive tracts of land had to grow accustomed to renting paddies to independent farmers. Additionally, rice paddies require standing water, and standing water attracts mosquitos. The northerners who moved south then encountered malaria for the first time and had to learn cures from indigenous southern populations. In order to reduce mosquito populations and control aquatic weeds, rice farmers often intentionally put fish into their paddies—a kind of aquaponic growth system. All of this served to draw the northern Chinese aristocrats, including the early writers of these tales, closer to the water and aquatic creatures. Thus water, and means of controlling it, became absolutely crucial in this new environment.[242]

Among those who fled northern Luòyáng during the Rebellions of the Eight Princes was Gě Hóng 葛洪 (283- c.343), who is best known for Daoist oriented philosophy and for early Chinese medical texts.[243] Among those medical texts is an herbal remedy for malaria that has

[242] Robert Marks, *China: Its Environment and History* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 106–16.

[243] Gě Hóng was actually born near modern Nánjīng 南京, which usually is considered part of the south. However, he then traveled to Luòyáng before fleeing to Guǎngzhōu, much further south—and environmentally very different from his birthplace. Gě gives an account of his own life in the final chaper of *Bàopǔzǐ* (see Gě Hóng 葛洪, *Bàopǔzǐ* (Shànghǎi: Shànghǎi Gǔjí Chūbǎnshè 上海古籍出版社, 1990), 329–338.) For more information on this autobiography, see Matthew Wells, "Self as Historical Artifact: Ge Hong and Early Chinese Autobiographical Writing," in *Early Medieval China*, 2003:1, 71-103.

been confirmed by modern science.[244] Gě Hóng also penned one of the dragon tales, 418.5 "Gān Zōng" 甘宗.

> An emissary of Qín 秦, Gān Zōng 甘宗 presented a memorial to the emperor on the things of the Western Regions, which said, "Among the *fāngshì*[245] from other countries, there are those who can invoke the gods. They approach a river, walk like Yǔ 禹,[246] and blow a breath of air. A dragon immediately surfaces. When it first comes out, [the dragon] is still tens of *zhàng* long. [However,] the *fāngshì* blows on it, and for each breath the dragon shrinks a bit, until it's no more than a few *cùn* in length. [The *fāngshì*] then picks it up and puts it in a pot. He nourishes it with a little water. Foreign countries often suffer droughts, thus whenever the *fāngshì* hears that there is[247] a dry region, he takes the dragon to present it and then sells it. One dragon is worth tens of *jīn* of gold. The entire country will gather and look at it. In the end, they take the dragon out of the pot and place it in the depths. Once again, the *fāngshì* walks like Yǔ 禹 and blows on it. It once again grows to be ten *zhàng* long and immediately the rains come from the four corners."
>
> From *The Writings of the Master Who Clings to Simplicity*.
>
> 秦使者甘宗所奏西域事，云：「外國方士能神呪者。臨川禹步吹氣，龍即浮出。初出，乃長數十丈。方士吹之，一吹則龍輒一縮。至長數寸，乃取置壺中，以少水養之。外國常苦旱災。於是方士聞有旱處。便賫龍往。出賣之。一龍直金數十觔。舉國會斂以顧之。直畢，乃發壺出龍，置淵中。復禹步吹之，長數十丈。須臾雨四集矣。
>
> 出《抱朴子》

Now, why might Gě Hóng—writing *Bàopǔzǐ* in the first decades of the 300s CE—choose to retell a government report of the Qín—which ended in 206 BCE,[248] over 500 years prior?[249] It

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[244] Marks, 111-2.

[245] The term *fāngshì* 方士 is a difficult one to translate. All dictionaries will list it as *alchemist*; but, for modern Western readers, that adds history to the term that does not apply. In the Chinese context, they were often people who practiced a Daoist art, frequently attempting to find a pill for immortality. In this case, it seems to be a generic magician, though the ritual used does tie to Daoist practices.

[246] A kind of Daoist prayer ritual, still practiced today. Theoretically invented by the legendary Yǔ (c.2200-2100 BCE) who conquered flooding and established the Xià Dynasty (c.2070-1600 BCE).

[247] *There is* 有 was originally *and* 而 the Zhōnghuá editors changed this following the Míng and Chén editions.

[248] This is assuming that the *Qín* mentioned is the Qín Dynasty. While there were other entities throughout dynastic history that called themselves *Qín*, the only ones that predated Gě Hóng were they dynasty and its predecessor in the Warring States Era that eventually became the dynasty.

[249] Gě Hóng does often provide his own commentary and rational for including information in *Bàopǔzi*. Unfortunately, this text is not preserved in our received editions of the text. This is not, however, grounds for dismissal of the text's relation to Gě Hóng. This same text (with minor variation) is found in the TPGJ, TPYL (*juàn*

may be that, given the upheaval he had personally faced and his new relationship with water and aquatic life, he was looking through history, rumor, legend, and lore to see how previous governments had attempted to control water. While this is somewhat speculative, that he was one fleeing from environmental and political catastrophe and wrote a piece connecting dragons and the environment cannot be denied.

"Gān Zōng" and the personal history of its author are the clearest historical ties between a change in an author's environment, rain, crops, and dragons. As Gě Hóng and the generation that fled from the north to the south were among the first writers/recorders of these tales, it is reasonable to imagine that this north-south shift drew attention to water and farming that remained salient wherever the authors were from. Indeed, this theme becomes a lasting trope and occurs repeatedly in the tales under consideration.[250] Below I have chosen just a few of the most prominent, different, or unusual ones. While reading through the examples below, note the tie between rain, drought, or flood; crops; dragons; and humans. That these are related becomes clearly manifest after the first tale or two. What is more dynamic, however, is **how** these are related. In every instance, a human's actions in some way cause a dragon to take an action regarding rain, flooding, or grain. The relationship between the human and dragon and the kind of actions taken vary greatly, but with an underlying logic.

736), and YWLJ (*juàn* 96, compiled around 624) all of which attribute it to *Bàopǔzi*. This is also collected in Jīnlǒuzi 金樓子 (*juàn* 12, compiled around 554) without attribution. Additionally, Yán Kějūn 嚴可均 (1762–1843), a Qīng dynasty scholar, suggested that as much as half of the text of *Bàopǔzi* has been lost. This text is likely authentically attributed to Gě Hóng and his work, but unfortunately further knowledge of why he included this piece is unattainable.

[250] 47 of the 94 tales include dragons creating weather of some kind. 41 of the 94 include dragons bringing rain. 7 specifically state that this weather creation is to the benefit of people/crops and 9 that it is destructive. These boundaries, however, are not clean. Many of the texts that include the creation of weather do not specifically say that they bring rain; but that clouds, thunder, and lightning are present. Additionally texts that tell of rain/weather do not necessarily specifically state that crops are helped or harmed, but suggest generic benefits or harm to the people.

The actions are based upon and reveal where the human character places the dragon on the animacy hierarchy discussed in the previous chapter. For instance, in “Gān Zōng” above the human performs a ritual that enables him to manipulate the dragon like an object.

In 418.14, “Lǐ Jìng” 李靖,[251] the dragons are very human and the relationship between them and the titular character is rather friendly. The story begins with Lǐ Jìng lost in the wilderness. He happens upon a dragon’s house; and while he is there, the dragons receive

> “An order from heaven commands that the master make it rain for the 700 *lǐ* around the mountain. [If the rain falls for] one night,[252] that should be enough: not so much as to cause standing water or a violent storm.”
>
> 天符，報大郎子當行雨。周此山七百里，五更須足。無慢滯，無暴厲。

Unfortunately, the men of the household are gone, and the women dragons must rely on Lǐ to fulfill heaven’s order. He is given a magical bottle that contains rain and is shown to a magical horse that can fly. He is told to drip a single drop from the rain bottle whenever the horse whinnies.

> After a while, a bolt of lightning created an opening in the clouds, and he saw the settlement where he had rested before. He thought to himself, “I have caused this settlement so much trouble and probably have no way to repay them. It’s not rained for so long that the grain is about to wither, and I have rain in my hand. How could I not give it?” Guessing that one drop was not enough even to make the fields damp, he then dripped twenty drops in a row.
>
> 既而電掣雲開，下見所憩村。思曰：「吾擾此村多矣。方德其人，計無以報。今久旱，苗稼將悴。而雨在我手，寧復惜之。」顧一滴不足濡，乃連下二十滴。

[251] From *Xù Xuánguài Lù* 續玄怪錄 by Lǐ Fùyán 李复言 (c. 800)

[252] The term used here is actually *five watches*. In ancient China, the night was divided into five two-hour watches. The implication here is that it should rain all night long. This could alternatively read, “By the fifth watch the rain should be enough.”

Unfortunately Lǐ does not realize that each drop becomes a foot of rain.[253] Through his disregard for the instructions he was given, Lǐ Jìng inadvertently drowns the village he wanted to help. He returns to find that the dragon women have all been severely punished—having received 80 strokes of a cane. He, however, is granted the choice between two servants. He chooses an angry-looking servant and the text suggests that this gift and his choice result in him becoming a famous general. From this tale it is quite clear that the dragons have the ability to control the rain as well as the ability to confer that control onto others. Moreover, this text links this rain giving ability with the drought and the withering grain. Though the relationship between the dragonesses and Lǐ is cordial and they are presented as much more human than those in "Gān Zōng," Lǐ's choice to ignore their instructions suggests a degree of mistrust, misunderstanding, or even stupidity. Despite this, however, Lǐ is still rewarded for his actions and the dragons present him with a gift. Though not perfect, the human and dragons end on good terms and the human benefits from it.

420.2, "Shì Xuánzhào" 釋玄照,[254] a close parallel to the introductory tale, also takes up the theme of relating dragons to rain and crops. In this tale, three dragons feel that they owe the titular character a debt of gratitude for his Buddhist sermons. They ask what he would like; and he says,

[253] The text specifies each drop becomes one *chǐ* 尺. In the Táng, a *chǐ* was very nearly equivalent to our 12 inch foot. (Roughly 30 cm)
[254] From *Shénxiān Gǎnyù Zhuàn* 神仙感遇傳 by Dù Guāngtíng 杜光庭 (850-933)

> "The weather as of late has had far too much *yáng* energy which has resulted in a famine across the country. You could give sweet rain to end this horrible drought and save the people. That is the wish of this humble monk."
>
> 今愆陽經時，國內荒饉，可致甘澤，以救生靈。即貧道所願也。

The dragons are willing to do so but warn that this action will be against the orders of Heaven. After a few plot twists, the dragons do indeed cause a sufficient amount of rain to fall over a large area and the crops are saved. When an emissary of Heaven comes to punish the dragons, Shì Xuánzhào manages to save them.

Once again, the dragons clearly have the ability to bring rain and aid in crop production—consistent with the previous tales. More dynamic, however, is the characterization of the relationships between humans, dragons, and nature/Heaven. "Gān Zōng" focuses on the mechanics of how humans can magically manipulate dragons—with little concern for the repercussions of doing so. "Lǐ Jìng" featured mutual cordiality between dragons and humans working to follow the orders of Heaven. Any deviation from those orders would end in disaster for all. "Shì Xuánzhào" takes a much more anti-normative (read *queer*) stance. In this tale, the dragons are prevented from bringing rain by an uncaring Heaven and then rely on human intervention to protect them from Heaven's wrath. In each of these cases, the dragons both have supernatural powers to command rain (placing them above humans on an animacy hierarchy) and yet find themselves subservient to or reliant upon humans (and thus below them). This queer animacy status is what allows these tales of rain bringing to function.

420.7, "Black River in Shāzhōu" 沙州黑河,[255] takes a slightly different position in regard to dragons, water, and crops.

> To the Northwest of Běitíng 北庭,[256] there is [a river called] Black River in Shāzhōu 沙州.[257] It's deep enough to drive boats, and its waters always overflow its banks, washing away houses and pooling in open fields. Because of this, all of the crops in the Northwest are gone, and the area had become an incurable wasteland. The residents also moved far away in order to escape the catastrophic flood. All those who serve as officials at Shāzhōu in Běitíng first prepared sacrifices and tributes, planning to offer them on the river's banks. Only then did they dare conduct governance. If not [they were afraid that] it would rain torrentially for months on end or the great waters might shoot up and ruin the city and all the people within a *lǐ* would become the family of fish.[258]
>
> 北庭西北沙州有黑河。深可駕舟，其水往往汎濫，蕩室廬，瀦原野。由是西北之禾稼盡去，地荒而不可治，居人亦遠徙，用逃墊溺之患。其吏於北庭沙洲者，皆先備牲酎，望祀於河滸，然後敢視政。否即淫雨連月，或大水激射，圮城邑，則里中民盡魚其族也。

When a new governor is assigned to Běitíng, he decides to set a trap for the dragon and kill it. He succeeds, and the text praises him for ridding the people of a scourge, and the emperor awards him the dragon's tongue for his service.

Where both "Lǐ Jìng" and "Shì Xuánzhào" suggested that dragons could send rain to end droughts and provide for the people, this tale shows an angry dragon that manipulates water to cause floods and kill crops. Additionally, the outright adversarial relationship between the people and the dragon is starkly different from earlier tales. The perverse use of ritual to trick

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[255] Unfortunately, no information on sources is provided by the editors of the TPGJ. Zhāng Guófēng's edition suggests that this may come from *Xuānshì Zhì* 宣室志 by Zhāng Dú 張讀 (c. 834-882), though the text is not in the received edition of the text nor have editors included it in texts likely lost over time. The text itself places these events in the Kāiyuán 開元 Reign Era (713–741).

[256] Referring generally to a large section of Northwestern China.

[257] In modern day Gānsū near Dùnhuáng

[258] This is likely a euphemistic phrase similar to "sleeping with the fishes."

and ensnare the dragon also deviates from those above. Nevertheless, the connection between dragons, controlling water, and crops is indisputable.

421.1, “Xiāo Xīn” 蕭昕, takes a stance somewhere between “Lǐ Jìng” and “Shì Xuánzhào” on one hand and “The Black River in Shāzhōu” on the other. In this story, there is a drought, and the titular character, a government official, requests that a Buddhist use his magical powers to summon a dragon to bring rain.

> The Tripitaka Master said, “That is easy. However, I fear summoning dragons to incite clouds and rain will bring great shocks of wind and thunder and will harm the sprouting plants. How would that help in sowing and reaping?”
>
> Xīn said, “Rapid lightning and heavy rains really cannot help multiply the 100 grains. [We need] just enough to clear the heat and dispel the commoners’ sicknesses. I hope you won’t refuse this.”
>
> 三藏曰：「易與耳。然召龍以興雲雨，吾恐風雷之震，有害於生植，又何補於稼穡耶。」
>
> 昕曰：「迅雷甚雨，誠不能滋百穀，適足以清暑熱，而少解黔首之病也。願無辭焉。」

Unfortunately, the Buddhist is proven right and summoning the dragon does bring too much rain—causing more harm than good. The ritual the Tripitaka master uses to magically manipulate the dragon is more reminiscent of “Gān Zōng” than any of the others. The dragon in this tale is an object to be manipulated by humans, and that human manipulation brings disaster.

An unusual deviation from the theme of dragons using their power of rain and water to influence crops occurs in 423.3, "Píngchāng Well" 平昌井,[259] in which a dragon is in control of grain directly, without the intervening mechanism of rain.

> At the temple, there is a divine dragon living in the rice granary. If a slave comes to get rice, the dragon will retreat. If the slave often comes for rice, however, the dragon won't give it. If the rice in the granary is used up, the slave bows to the dragon and the granary is filled and overflowing.
>
> 寺有神龍住米倉中。奴取米，龍輒却。奴若常取米，龍即不與。倉中米若盡，奴向龍拜，倉即盈溢。

Despite the lack of rain, there is still some connection to water. Though never made explicit, the well referred to in the title must be the granary in which the dragon lives. Granaries do not contain water, but the residence of a dragon must be aquatic—even if only in name. It may well be that the author thought the connection between dragons, water, and crops so strong that he elided the discussion of rain and directly equated dragons and crops. Here the relationship between the human and dragon is clearly one of supplication. The slave shows subservience to the dragon and is rewarded with grain. Additionally, the dragon here also takes on something of an environmental role. The dragon regulates how much grain the slave can take—urging a measured consumption of the grain.

Over and over and over again these texts show a preoccupation with humans interacting with–controlling, beseeching, slaying—dragons to control water. These texts are clearly a meditation on humanity's relationship with the environment. Humans depend on

[259] From *Wàiguóshì* 外國事 by Zhīsēngzǎi 支僧載 (4th century CE)

water for crops and for life and have no control of it. Embodying the environment in the form of a dragon allows humans to communicate with it and to attempt to control it. Who actually wields this power over water? In each instance though the dragon has power over water, it is humans who manipulate it. In "Gān Zōng," it is the *fāngshì* who uses magic to draw the dragons out of rivers and to release them at later points in time to bring rain. In "Lǐ Jìng," it is the titular character who uses the rain bottle to cause tremendous rains that flood the village. In "Shì Xuánzhào," it is the monk who asks the dragons for their aid in ending the drought. In "Black River in Shāzhōu," it is the new governor who decides to kill the dragon and end flooding. In "Xiāo Xīn," it is the Tripitaka master who performs a ritual to summon the dragons to bring rain. Even in "Píngchāng Well" it is the slave who bows the dragon to refill the granary. In each and every case there is a human instigator for the changes in rain, drought, and flooding. Though the dragons possess the ability, it is humans who prompt them to use it. As stated at the beginning of this section, since humanity invented farming, we have found ways to bend the natural world to our will. Even though the dragon stories of the *TPGJ* contain elements of the magical and fantastic, they still reflect that core truth.

Pearl Harvesting

People of mid-Imperial China did not only rely on water for agriculture. Pearl harvesting was a crucial industry, especially for southern China. Interestingly, there is a history of the

overharvesting of pearls leading to economic downturn and distress for residents of the southern coast going back at least to the Hàn Dynasty.[260]

The *Hòu Hàn Shū* 後漢書 biography of Mèng Cháng 孟嘗, a governor of Hépǔ 合浦 on the southern coast, addresses the issue of pearl bed collapses and their importance to local economies.

> In previous times, the stewards and governors had mostly been greedy and corrupt: demanding people gather and search [for pearls] without knowing bounds. Consequently, the pearls gradually migrated to the border of Jiāozhǐ Commandery. From then on, travelers did not come, people and creatures were without resources, and the poor starved to death in the streets. When Cháng took up his office, he reformed and changed the previous corrupt [policies] and sought what would benefit the people in their infirmity.[261] Before a year had passed, the departed pearls returned again, the common people all went back to their occupations, and merchants and goods freely flowed. [The people] praised him as divinely wise.
>
> 先時宰守並多貪穢，詭人採求，不知紀極，珠遂漸徙於交阯郡界。於是行旅不至，人物無資，貧者餓死於道。嘗到官，革易前敝，求民病利。曾未踰歲，去珠復還，百姓皆反其業，商貨流通，稱為神明。[262]

These events were not merely preserved in the histories of the Hàn, several poems written in the Táng praise Mèng Cháng. Additionally, the pearl industry of the Táng also frequently encountered problems from over harvesting. In 742 the Táng government

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[260] Edward Schafer, "The Pearl Fisheries of Ho-p'u," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 72, no. 4 (1952): 155-168.

[261] This particular phrase is ambiguous. In a character-for-character gloss it reads *sought people illness profit* (qiú mín bìng lì 求民病利). As translated above, I understand that Mèng Cháng sought what would profit the people in their illness, with the understanding that this may not be explicitly physical illness, but a state of financial and personal insecurity. Alternatively, it could be understood that Mèng "sought to cause the people to view profit as an illness." Regardless of the exact interpretation of the phrase, it is clear from context that Mèng is attempting to solve the people's financial and environmental problems.

[262] Fàn Yè 范曄, *Hòu Hàn Shū* 後漢書 (Běijīng: Zhōnghuá Shūjú, 1965), 2473. Translation mine, though made in consult with Schafer, "Pearl Fisheries."

established an office to control pearl harvesting and protect the environment. This effort was, in fact, successful, and the oyster beds eventually returned to previous strength.[263]

Due to the Chinese dragon's close tie to water and the importance of pearls to Imperial China, there is a longstanding trope of dragons having pearls. These pearls can be real, literal pearls, but in some cases, they seem to be metaphorical—round objects of rare power or value. In the tales of the *TPGJ*, these are often awarded to people who help the dragons in some way. For instance, in 424.11, "The Old Lady of the Fén River" 汾水老姥, after the titular old lady aids a dragon, it gives her a "pearl" that later serves as medicine to heal her ill son. However, there are two tales in this set that show a clear connection between dragons, real pearls, and concerns about taking them too readily.

In 422.3, "Zhōu Hán" 周邯, the titular character buys a slave, Water Sprite, whom he then sends to dive into various bodies of water to retrieve treasure. In the final episode, he sees that

> "There's an enormous yellow dragon with scales like gold holding several shining pearls as it soundly sleeps. Water Sprite wanted to steal them, but I had no blade in my hand. Afraid that the dragon would suddenly wake up, [I] didn't dare to touch it. If I can get a sharp sword, [even] if the dragon wakes up, I can behead it without fear."
>
> 有一黃龍極大，鱗如金色，抱數顆明珠熟寐。水精欲劫之，但手無刃。憚其龍忽覺，是以不敢觸。若得一利劍，如龍覺，當斬之無憚也。

Unfortunately, when he tries to take the pearls, the dragon does indeed wake, but Water Sprite is unable to behead it and dies a rather gruesome death. After the slave's death, a local deity

[263] Marks, *China: Its Environment and History*, 127, citing Schafer, *Vermilion Bird*, p. 160-2.

comes to admonish Zhōu Hán, the slave owner, and his friend, Wáng Zé 王澤, who supplied the blade.

> In an instant, an old man wearing a dark brown fur coat and with a very rustic appearance came to Zé and said, "I am the god of this territory. Why has the governor so easily made light of his people? The golden dragon from this cave is a messenger of the Mystery Above. Governing its treasure, [264] it brought benefit to the whole area. How could you have trusted in such a tiny thing?[265] You desired to exploit the fact it was asleep to rob it. The dragon was suddenly furious. It used divine power to shake the Heavenly Pass and rock the earth's axis, to hammer the mountains and shatter the hills. One hundred li have become rivers and lakes, and ten thousand people have become fish and turtles. How can you protect your bones and flesh? The ancient Zhōnglí 鍾離[266] didn't love his treasures, and **Mèng Cháng 孟嘗** personally returned the pearls. You don't imitate them but indulge your avaricious heart.
>
> 逡巡有一老人，身衣褐裘，貌甚古朴。而謁澤曰：「某土地之神，使君何容易而輕其百姓。此穴金龍，是上玄使者。宰其瑰璧，澤潤一方。豈有信一微物，欲因睡而劫之。龍忽震怒，作用神化，搖天關，擺地軸，搥山岳而碎丘陵，百里為江湖。萬人為魚鼈。君之骨肉焉可保。昔者鍾離不愛其寶。孟嘗自返其珠，子不之效，乃肆其貪婪之心。

In this, the greed of a few people—Zhōu Hán and Wáng Zé—have endangered the many. When the god says that "One hundred *lǐ* have become rivers and lakes, and ten thousand people have become fish and turtles," the implication is that the dragon has taken revenge and drowned a large number of people. This seems to be a clear environmental allegory in which the greed of the few causes environmental damage (mass flooding) that impacts the many. Specifically, note the reference to Mèng Cháng—the same Mèng Cháng from the Hàn dynasty—

[264] Very close readers will notice that this literally translates to *jade annulus*. This text has clearly been talking about pearls to this point. There is a very similar story in the *TPGJ* in which a slave owner tosses a jade annulus into bodies of water and makes his slave dive to retrieve it. In that version, the slave also encounters a dragon, attempts to fight it with a sword, and dies. The textual confusion here seems to be due to this parallel narrative. Where along the history of this text the corruption occurred is uncertain.

[265] What exactly is meant by this "tiny thing" *wēiwù* 微物 is open to debate. Most likely, it refers to the sword, an actual object small in comparison to the dragon. Alternatively, however, it could refer to Water Sprite.

[266] Zhōnglí is one of the few two-character surnames of China. This is a reference to the first person to claim this surname, Bóyì 伯益, a mythological figure who helped Yǔ the great control the floods.

who was remembered for restraining the greed of the powerful and allowing the environment to repair itself. To be certain, there is a supernatural element to all of this. Overharvesting pearls will not directly cause flooding.[267] This, however, is exactly the purpose of the dragon. It allows writers to give form and life to the environment in a satisfyingly literary manner.[268]

In 424.9, "Elder Zhāng" 張老, a dragon offers a pearl to a monastery under duress; but a wise monk, Elder Zhāng, warns them against accepting it.

> Elder Zhāng said, "Monks, can you refuse the pearl that this dragon has offered? This dragon is very poor and only has this pearl. By nature, it is both miserly and vicious. If you accept this pearl now, at another time it will be too late to regret it."
>
> 張老曰：「和尚莫受此龍獻珠否。此龍甚窮，唯有此珠。性又悭惡。今若受珠，他時悔無及。」

When the monks accept the pearl, the dragon causes a storm to come, destroys the monastery, and reclaims the pearl. Though this dragon offers the pearl, Elder Zhāng's warning that it is the last or only one suggests the idea of taking too much—overharvesting. When pearls are plenty, there is no harm in taking a few; but when there are only a few, more caution should be taken. Clearly, both of these instances suggest that taking pearls when one is not supposed to can lead to heavy consequences, perhaps mirroring the laws put in place to restore oyster beds in the Táng or even earlier examples of pearl industry collapse.

Philosophical Origins of Literary Responses

[267] Oyster beds, do however, occasionally serve as breakwaters that prevent storm surges.
[268] See Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016). Ghosh's main argument is that modern people have failed to act on climate change because we cannot tell good stories about it.

Generally, most theorists of environmental elements in literature tend to focus on modern works. This seems reasonable as human impact on the environment has reached a critical juncture since the European Industrial Revolution. However, humans have dramatically impacted the environment throughout the past 10,000 years and the Chinese canon has had environmental elements since very early on in the tradition. Consider the following quote from *Mencius*:

> "If the seasons of agriculture are not transgressed, the grain will be more than can be eaten. If finely [woven] nets do not enter deep ponds, the fish and turtles will be more than can be eaten. If the axes and hatchets enter the mountain forests according to the seasons, the timber will be more than can be used."
>
> 「不違農時，穀不可勝食也；數罟不入洿池，魚鼈不可勝食也；斧斤以時入山林，材木不可勝用也。」[269]

Mencius has long been held as the second most important figure in Confucianism after Confucius himself. The text of his book was likely written during or just after his lifetime in the 4th century BCE, but the text that we now have was edited during the Hàn dynasty (202 BCE-9 CE). As discussed in the introduction, the status of Mencius and the relationship between human institutions and nature was of prime importance to the late Táng authors of the source texts and the early Sòng editors of the TPGJ.

This Mencian quote comes from the first chapter of *Mencius* in which the philosopher goes to King Huì of Liáng to advise him toward benevolent, Confucian rule. In the lines immediately following those above, the king asks for Mencius' advice.

> Mencius replied, "Killing a person with a club and with a blade, is there a difference in these?"
>
> He said, "There is no difference in these."
>
> "With a blade and with governance, is there a difference in these?"

[269] Yáng Bójùn 楊伯峻 (ed), *Mèngzi Yìzhù 孟子譯注* (Běijīng: Zhōnghuá Shūjú, 2012), 5-6. Translation, mine.

He said, “There is no difference in these.”

[Mencius] said, “In your kitchen there is fat meat; in your stables there are fat horses. But your people have the look of starvation, and in the wilds there are those who have died of hunger. This is leading on beasts to devour men…what shall become of him who causes his people to die of starvation?'

孟子對曰：「殺人以梃與刃，有以異乎？」

曰：「無以異也。」

「以刃與政，有以異乎？」

曰：「無以異也。」

曰：「庖有肥肉，廐有肥馬，民有飢色，野有餓莩，此率獸而食人也。。。如之何其使斯民飢而死也？」[270]

Interestingly, this Mencian dialogue between scholar and king has a parallel in 469.17, “Long Beard Country” 長鬚國.[271] In this tale, a human scholar is transported to a land where all the people, including the women, have whiskers on their faces. He lives a full life, marrying a princess and having children with her. One day, however, his father-in-law, the king, is distressed and claims that only the scholar can save them all. The scholar is told to seek out the Sea Dragon King and ask for his aid. The scholar is transported to the dragon kingdom and seeks out the aid of the Dragon King. At first, the king does not understand what the scholar is asking of him and seems unaware of the plight of his own subjects. Upon the scholar’s insistence, however, he sends a servant to look into the issue.

After the time it takes to eat a meal had passed, the emissary came back and said, “The shrimp of this island together provide the Great King’s food for this month. The day before last they were already caught.”

The Dragon King laughed and said, “Our guest was bewitched by shrimp! Although I am a King, all that I eat is given to me in accordance with Heaven. I do not eat rashly. Now, for a guest, I will reduce what I eat.” He then ordered the guest be led to look at it.

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[270] Yáng, p. 9. Translation, mine.

[271] From *Yǒuyáng Zázǔ 酉陽雜俎* by Duàn Chéngshì 段成式 (803-863). The text itself places these events c. 701. This story is technically in the section of the TPGJ on aquatic creatures, not dragons. As a dragon appears, however, I have included it here.

> He saw several tens of iron cauldrons as (big as) a room, and they were filled inside with shrimp. There were five or six that were red colored and as large as an arm. When they saw the guest, they leapt and jumped as if they were crying for help. The one who led him said, "This is the shrimp king." Without thinking, the scholar wept in grief. The Dragon King ordered that the cauldron with the shrimp king be released and ordered two envoys to see the guest back to the Middle Kingdom.
>
> 經食頃，使者返曰。此島鰕合供大王此月食料。前日已追到。」
> 龍王笑曰。客固為鰕所魅耳。吾雖為王，所食皆禀天符，不得妄食。今為客減食。」乃令引客視之。
> 見鐵鑊數十如屋。滿中是鰕。有五六頭，色赤，大如臂，見客跳躍，似求救狀。引者曰。此鰕王也。士人不覺悲泣。龍王命放鰕王一鑊。令二使送客歸中國。

In *Mencius* the philosopher approaches King Huì of Liáng 梁惠王 to make him aware of the issues facing the common people. Mencius contrasts their starvation with his luxurious lifestyle and admonishes him to cut back on his own luxury. In this story, the scholar approaches the Dragon King who is unaware of the suffering of his subjects. The Dragon King's consumption is the cause of the shrimps' impending demise. Even more specifically, Mencius highlights the rich meat in King Huì's kitchen and the unnamed scholar is shown cauldrons of shrimp in the Dragon King's kitchen. Whether intentional or not, these texts resonate with a similar tune: a king is being told to reduce his own consumption to benefit the commoners, the "shrimp" under him.

Although this tale is not directly environmental, the ties to Mencius and consumption provide a level of environmental commentary. As stated, the line immediately preceding the Mencius' dialogue with the king takes a clear environmental tone and urges restraint in using the resources of grain, fish, and wood. This warning against over consumption of environmental resources mirrors the Dragon King's consumption of shrimp and King Huì's indulgent diet—not to mention overharvesting of pearls in the Táng.

Clearly this dragon tale along with many above take on environmental tones. Mencius certainly provides an early philosophical backing for pre-modern Chinese environmentalism and this very same text influenced at least this one dragon tale.

What kind of environmentalism is seen in Mencius, "Long Beard Country," and the earlier tales? Mencius and "Long Beard Country" both take a specific stance on class. It is the king—and, by minimal extension, those with power—who have placed others in jeopardy. These tales also urge a reduction of consumption as the main means of minimizing loss. This also mirrors the history of Mèng Cháng and his appearance in "Zhōu Hán." The governors who preceded Mèng Cháng exploited pearl beds—finite natural resources—and caused economic damage to the people under them. Similarly Zhōu Hán and Wáng Zé, wealthy and powerful men, sought to steal a pearl which resulted in the deaths of many commoners. This suggests an understanding of environmentalism where it is those with the greatest wealth and power who bear the greatest responsibility for environmental catastrophe. It is they who must reduce their consumption so that those under them can survive.

Queer, Environmental Dragons: Flipping Scripts of Consumption

The current resurgence in the popularity of the phrase "eat the rich," attributed to Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), suggests an understanding of a metaphorical meaning of eating as relating to both economic activity as well as social inequality. As seen in both the section of Mencius above and "Long Beard Country" there is a similar idea of eating as tied to economics and social inequality, but the presence of dragons in "Long Beard Country" and environmental

discourse in *Mencius* provocatively suggests a connection between the three. In the following tales, dragons are both eaters and the eaten. The queer unclarity of their status creates a unique opportunity for environmental commentary that provokes readers to consider their own consumption.

In the introductory tale for this chapter, the Daoist's desire to eat the dragon was the inciting event for the story and was the cause of the environmental issue: the draining of the marsh. More than just this one Daoist, several of the 94 dragon tales exhibit a fixation with eating dragons. In 420.01 "The Country of Jùmíng," 俱名國 [272] the unnamed protagonist only meets the leading dragoness because she has be captured by a Licchavi—a member of an Indian clan—who habitually eats dragons and he saves her. In 422.05 "Wéi Sīgōng" 韋思恭,[273] two of the titular character's friends kill and cook a snake/dragon, but before they can eat it, heaven rains fire on them and they disappear. In 423.10 "Cuī Dàoshū" 崔道樞,[274] the titular character and his brother-in-law catch and cook a magical fish/dragon and an otherworldly court sentences them to death for it. In 425.01 "Zhāng Wēn" 張溫,[275] the titular character catches a fish/dragon and intends to cook and eat it, but is prevented from doing so by inauspicious changes in weather. Finally, in 425.09 "Emperor Wǔ of Hàn and the White *Jiāo*,"[276] the emperor catches a *jiāo* and decides that because it is not a *lóng*, it can be eaten.

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[272] From *Fǎyuàn Zhūlín* 法苑珠林 (668) by a monk Dàoshì 道世 (c.600-683)

[273] From *Bóyì Zhì* 博異志 also known as *Bóyì Jì* 博異記. Author's pen name is Gǔ Shénzi 谷神子, often identified with Zhèng Huángǔ 鄭還古 (c. 830 CE)

[274] Unfortunately, no information on sources is provided by the editors of the TPGJ. However, later editions suggest this comes from *Jù Tán Lù* 劇談錄 (895) by Kāng Pián 康駢 (c. 870).

[275] From *Běimèng Suǒyán* 北夢瑣言 by Sūn Guāngxiàn 孫光憲 (d. 968 CE)

[276] From *Shíyí Jì* 拾遺記 also known as *Shíyí Lù* 拾遺錄 also known as *Wáng Zǐnián Shíyí Jì* 王子年拾遺記 by Wáng Jiā 王嘉, courtesy name Zǐnián 子年 (d.390)

Clearly, this theme highlights a rule of nature based on animacy: normal fish and snakes (animals) can be eaten. Dragons, regardless of the form they are in, cannot. “Emperor Wǔ of Hàn and the White *Jiāo*” seems to suggest that *jiāo* can be eaten and are thus closer to animals, though the distinction between *jiāo* and *lóng* is not always maintained throughout the TPGJ.

Interestingly, the theme of consumption is not limited to humans eating (or nearly eating) dragons/*jiāo*/snakes/fish. There is an equal and opposite theme of dragons consuming people. Several examples of this occurred in chapter 2 on Animacy, considering how dragons can play the role of hellions—malevolent and sometimes tricky entities. Of these, 425.19, “Old Flood Dragon” 老蛟, most clearly suggests the theme of dragons consuming people.

> “There was a youth passing by who saw a beautiful woman bathing in the water. She asked whether or not he would play (in the water) with her, and thus came forward and lead and pulled him. The youth then removed his clothes and entered. Thus he drowned to death. Only after several days did his corpse float out, and his body was completely withered. Under it (the temple mountain) there must be an old flood dragon’s sunken cave. She seduces people in order to suck their blood. His (the youth’s) fellow travelers relayed his condition.”
> 有少年經過，見一美女，在水中浴。問少年同戲否，因前牽拽。少年遂解衣而入，因溺死。數日，尸方浮出。而身盡乾枯。其下必是老蛟潛窟，媚人以吮血故也。其同行者述其狀云。

One must note that this dragoness does not simply overpower and consume the youth—as a tiger or wolf might. She appeals to his sexual drive—the animalistic side of human nature—and uses this to ensnare him.

In these tales there is a contrasting juxtaposition between dragons as animals being eaten by humans and dragons using the animal instinct of humans to devour them—dragons simultaneously being predator and prey—is the perfect explanation of the coincidence of queerness and ecology in these dragon tales. That dragons can both be higher and lower than

humans on the animacy hierarchy is what enables them to both prey upon and be preyed on by humans. This in turn invites examination into the ecological impact of human consumption—a theme salient since the time of Mencius. It is clear, however, that this examination of consumption is not simply about eating. Through their citations of the philosophy of *Mencius* and the history of Mèng Cháng, mid-Imperial authors of these tales display a clear understanding that this consumption is a display of power that has society-wide implications.

Throughout this chapter we have also seen many instances of dragons in transformation, moving between animacy categories to defy the permeable boundaries between them. In the next chapter, we will further investigate such moments of transformation. Specifically, in texts that feature dragons in human form, the story often builds to the revelation that the dragon is indeed a dragon. As these revelatory moments are key features of these texts, one must duly consider how these moments are structured, how they tie into the themes of queerness and ecology, and how these might relate to the mid-Imperial context.

Episteme:
Tying Animacy and Ecology

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I presented an argument for the use of the framework of queer ecology in mid-Imperial Chinese tales. After reading through the ninety-four dragon tales of the TPGJ, there are clear themes of how humanity relates to nature, how humanity's relationship to nature impacts relationships between humans, and how dragons' liminal status as quasi-divine, quasi-human, and quasi-animal fundamentally complicates the imagined separation of these categories. In the second chapter, I suggested that the concept of an animacy hierarchy, a chain of being from divinities to subservient divinities to humans to animals to objects, provides a clearer framework for classifying dragons. Even so, there were clear examples in which dragons blurred boundaries between those classes or shattered them entirely. In the third chapter, I focused on the relationship between dragons and the environment. I showed that dragons are directly connected to water, and the main environmental concern of these tales is the relationship between rain, flooding, and crop production. In short, I proposed the idea of queer ecology (chapter one), explained what makes dragons queer (chapter two), and examined what makes dragons ecological (chapter three). Now the questions before us are (1) what connects the queerness of dragons to the environmental nature of dragons and (2) what explanatory power does the queerly environmental nature of dragons offer readers of mid-Imperial Chinese tale literature. In this penultimate chapter we are primarily concerned with the first of these two questions: how to bring together queerness and ecology. However, the answer to this question will necessarily inform how we answer the next.

So, what binds together dragons' unclear status on an animacy hierarchy and humans' preoccupation with dragons' control of rains, floods, and crop production? To answer this question, let us consider a tale that actually appeared both in chapter two (on queerness and animacy) and in chapter three (on the environment). In 421.01, "Xiāo Xīn" 蕭昕, the titular minister is tasked with ending a drought that has caused pestilence. He asks a Buddhist master if he can summon rain.

> The Tripitaka Master said, "That is easy. However, I fear summoning dragons to incite clouds and rain will bring great shocks of wind and thunder and will harm the sprouting plants. How would that help in sowing and reaping?"
>
> Xīn said, "Rapid lightning and heavy rains really cannot help multiply the 100 grains. [We need] just enough to clear the heat and dispel the commoners' sicknesses. I hope you won't refuse this."
>
> The Tripitaka Master had no choice, and thus ordered his disciples to bring a piece of birch bark about one *chǐ*. He then drew a little dragon on it and then placed an incense burner, a small bowl, and some perfume before it. The Tripitaka Master then started chanting, shaking his tongue and crying out blessings.
>
> He prayed for about the amount of time it takes to eat a meal. He then gave Xīn the dragon on the bark, saying, "You may now throw this into the Qǔ River 曲江. After throwing it, return immediately. Do not risk the wind and the rain."
>
> Xīn threw the dragon as he had been instructed. Soon there was a white dragon just a *chǐ* long. It came out of the water waving its mane and shaking its scales. Soon, its body was several *zhàng* long. Its shape was like fluttering white silk. Very suddenly, it stretched through the sky. Xīn whipped his horse, urging it swiftly on. After only a few tens of steps, the color of the clouds was pitch black and a torrential rain rushed down. When he had arrived in Yǒngchóng 永崇, the water in the streets was already as if a dam had burst.
>
> 三藏曰：「易與耳。然召龍以興雲雨，吾恐風雷之震，有害於生植，又何補於稼穡耶。」
>
> 昕曰：「迅雷甚雨，誠不能滋百穀，適足以清暑熱，而少解黔首之病也。願無辭焉。」
>
> 三藏不獲已，乃命其徒。取華木皮僅尺餘。纘小龍於其上，而以爐甌香水置於前。三藏轉咒，震舌呼祝。

> 咒者食頃，即以纘龍授昕曰：「可投此於曲江中，投訖亟還，無冒風雨。」
>
> 昕如言投之。旋有白龍纔尺餘。搖鬣振鱗自水出。俄而身長數丈，狀如曳素。倏忽亘天。昕鞭馬疾驅，未及數十步，雲物凝晦，暴雨驟降。比至永崇里，道中之水，已若決渠矣。

The dragon in this piece is queer because it breaks through multiple layers of the animacy hierarchy. It goes from an object that is drawn to a real animal with a mane and scales. It then moves from simply an odd serpentine animal to a divine creature that can summon wind and rain. The dragon in this piece is environmental precisely because it is used to bring rain with the hope of ending a drought, dispelling pestilence, and aiding in grain production. How then do the environmental component and the queer component of this tale interact?

First, allow me to assert that this dragon controlling, rain summoning ritual was a failure. By telling us that the rain is torrential and that there is flooding in the street, the narrator is attempting to communicate that the Tripitaka master's fears have come true: though rain was successfully summoned, they were not able to gain sufficient control over the dragon and limit the amount of rain it brought. The inability to gain mastery over this dragon seems to be very directly tied with its transformation. At the beginning, the Tripitaka master is in complete control over the dragon—indeed it is a drawing that he himself creates. The Tripitaka master and Xiāo Xīn together use ritual to give this object life. By the end, however, the dragon has transformed into a divine entity and neither the Tripitaka master nor Xiāo can control it. The flooding is directly due to the fact that they cannot control the dragon they have created. They cannot control it because it has transformed across the animacy hierarchy. The questions of environment and animacy, of queerness and ecology, are directly related.

With this concrete example in mind, I would like to now suggest an underlying principle to connect the animacy/queerness with rain/environment. In short, animacy and queerness are questions of categorization and knowledge. The animacy hierarchy is a categorizational scheme that attempts to organize different kinds of beings. In consistently defying the boundaries of this scheme, dragons are not merely suggesting that a new categorizational scheme needs to be created, instead they are questioning whether or not any categorizational scheme could ever contain them. The queerness of dragons is that they are fundamentally beyond categorization and, to a degree, beyond understanding. On the other hand, the environmental aspect of dragons is often one of control. Through force, ritual, or supplication humans in these tales often attempt to make dragons produce the environmental conditions they would like. Unfortunately, as in the example above, dragons are often beyond human control. The inability to categorize and understand dragons mirrors the inability to control them. A failure in knowledge produces a failure in control. The connection between queerness and the environment in these tales is the connection between knowledge and power. In a word, *episteme*.

Giving a comprehensive definition of episteme could well be the subject of many dissertations. The term is usually tied to Michel Foucault's 1966 *Les mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines* (usually cited in English as *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* following the 1994 translation by Alan Sheridan). In short, the central argument is that power and knowledge are intricately tied in a mutually reinforcing loop. It is the people in power who determine what constitutes "real knowledge." This inevitably influences what methods of inquiry can be used and even what questions can be

asked. Once a group of powerful elites define these rules for knowledge production, they then use the knowledge that is produced by their own rules to give themselves more power. With the power that they gain from the knowledge that was legitimated by the rules that they established with the power that they had, they are better able to reify the rules of knowledge production that they instated. On and on the cycle goes.

This idea of epistemology has always been very closely associated with queerness. Indeed, Michel Foucault's own 1976 *L'Histoire de la sexualité* (*The History of Sexuality*, translated by Robert Hurley in 1978)[277] suggests that sexuality only becomes a pathologized categorical identity when there is scientific interest in the term. Eve Sedgwick's 1990 *Epistemology of the Closet*, arguably **the** foundational text of queer studies, explicitly builds off of Foucault, but argues that a stable binary between the terms *homosexual* and *heterosexual* is far too simplistic. Both Foucault and Sedgwick were explicitly interested in the epistemological implications of "coming out of the closet," the act of revealing one's sexual identity—Foucault even going so far as to suggest that the epistemological act of revealing one's sexual preferences is what transforms sexual practice into sexuality. In Sedgwick we find the roots of the idea that queerness is not simply a synonym for homosexuality, it is in fact the crystallization of the instable binary between *homosexual* and *heterosexual*. In short, queerness runs athwart a given epistemological scheme. Queerness neither follows episteme precisely nor disagrees with it entirely, but by its very nature points to the inadequacy of episteme.

[277] It should be noted that there are actually four volumes of this work that were published at different times. The dates given here are for the first volume, *La volonté de savoir* (The Will to Knowledge), which contains the ideas I am about to discuss.

Moments of revelation or "coming out" are central to many of the dragon tales of the TPGJ. Indeed, as one reads through the TPGJ, one knows that some strange event will certainly happen and often times is waiting to know what kind of oddity the story will contain. Even if someone is reading through a specific category of TPGJ and knows that the story will contain a specific creature—a dragon or fox or tiger—there is still a sense of anticipation until the creature is seen. The tales build to a reveal.

These revelations are inherently epistemological–they can reveal information to both readers and characters within the tales. The revelations also often relate to dragons' queer ability to transform across the animacy hierarchy and involve their close relationship to nature. In this chapter, I would like to refine our understanding of the use of episteme in these tales as a way to bridge queerness and ecology.

There are three categories of revelation that largely coincide with levels on the animacy hierarchy. The first category contains tales in which humans discover dragons in animal form. In this category, the revelation or lack thereof can often lead humans to harm dragons, sometimes with supernatural judgement on the humans. The second category contains tales in which dragons take on human form and directly "come-out" to other humans—that is they directly reveal themselves to be dragons. In this case, responses are stunningly minimal. If dragons reveal their identities of their own volition, the humans seem to take it in stride. The third category is tales in which dragons in human form do not reveal themselves. This category often takes the form of a cautionary tale in which humans are told to be suspicious of other seemingly human entities as they might be dragons who wish to do them harm. It should be noted that each of these categories contains multiple variations, and in some cases, the

variance of one category begins to verge on the variance of another. No clear defining boundaries can be drawn and this certainly does not cover the entirety of the dragon tales of the TPGJ. This is, however, a useful structure for discussing a key element of many of them.

As stated, these categories roughly coincide with some sections of the animacy hierarchy discussed in the second chapter—dragons as animals, dragons as humans, and dragons as tricksters. That animacy plays a role in how the revelation of information is processed is not surprising. Indeed, one of Chen's main points is that animacy "conceptually arranges human life, disabled life, animal life, plant life, and forms of nonliving material in orders of value and priority. Animacy hierarchies have broad ramifications for issues of ecology and environment, since objects, animals, substance, and spaces are assigned constrained zones of possibility and agency by extant grammars of animacy."[278] Subsequently, this chapter combines a key feature of these texts—revelation—with the concept of animacy hierarchy discussed previously. As revelation is a function of episteme—the structure of power and knowledge in a society—and animacy hierarchy combines queerness and ecology, this is a potent combination wherein the queer statuses of dragons in the "natural" realm influence how society reacts to the revelations of the dragons' identities. Indeed, if these dragons were not queerly capable of transforming between animals, humans, and gods–and thereby fundamentally reframing their relationship with nature–there would be no need for revelation. Nature, queerness, knowledge, and power all intersect.

And the Category Is: Animal Reveals

[278] Chen, 13

Within this category, a human comes upon a snake or fish that displays some kind of unusual behavior, shape, or markings. These unusual elements are meant to suggest that this animal is not merely an animal, but a fully sapient dragon. Occasionally, there is an additional human who is knowledgeable about dragons who interprets these strange features to warn the others that they should not harm the animal because it is likely a dragon in disguise. The humans might harm the animal because they are afraid of it or because they desire to consume it; alternatively, they may heed the warnings and leave it alone. If they harm it, supernatural or divine judgment often results.

1: "Cuī Dàoshū" and "Zhāng Wēn"

As an example, consider the pair of tales around recognition and failure to recognize dragons in other forms: 423.10 "Cuī Dàoshū" 崔道樞[279] and 425.1 "Zhāng Wēn" 張溫.[280] In the first tale, Cuī finds a magical golden fish in a well. Everyone acknowledges that this is a special fish that must not be eaten, and they agree to return it to a river. Later Cuī and his cousin from the Wéi family cook and eat it. Both Cuī and Wéi are summoned to a supernatural court wherein they are sentenced to death for the crime of killing a dragon. In contrast, in "Zhāng Wēn," the titular character catches a golden fish and the weather quickly changes. Like Cuī and Wéi, Zhāng is also warned that he should not harm the fish; but he sensibly releases it—avoiding disaster.

Epistemological

[279] Unfortunately, no information on sources is provided by the editors of the TPGJ. However, later editions suggest this comes from *Jù Tán Lù* 劇談錄 (895) by Kāng Pián 康駢 (c. 870).
[280] From *Běimèng Suǒyán* 北夢瑣言 by Sūn Guāngxiàn 孫光憲 (d. 968 CE)

If these stories about revealing information are inherently epistemological, where might we see the relationship between knowledge and power in these tales? For this set, the most epistemologically interesting section may be in "Cuī Dàoshū" when the titular character and his cousin Wéi are summoned to an infernal/supernatural hearing for their crime of eating the dragon. There is key emphasis placed on the ability to recognize dragons and that both Cuī and Wéi are not ignorant (fēi yúmèi 非愚昧). It seems as though the official's exercise of power in assigning guilt hinges on the ability to know and distinguish dragons.

> The official said, "This was a rain dragon, if it was lurking near the banks of rivers, seas, and marshes, even if it were eaten by a human, it could be argued on those [grounds]. However, yesterday you caught it in a well. Mr. Cuī and you are certainly not ignorant, [yet] you killed and ate it. It will be difficult to obtain absolution. However, for the time being, go back and attempt to perform great acts of Buddhist and Daoist service and virtue with Master Cuī. It might slightly reduce his guilt. From now I will give you a full ten days and then summon you again."
>
> All of the sudden, Wéi woke up and relayed the whole message to his relatives and ordered Dàoshū to completely describe the events. Even though Dàoshū's chest was full of worry and urgency, he still did not yet deeply believe.
>
> 吏曰：「此雨龍也，若潛伏於江海湫湄，雖為人所食，即從而可辨矣。但昨者得之於井中，崔氏與君又非愚昧，殺而食之，但難獲免。然君且還，試與崔君廣為佛道功德，庶幾稍減其過。自茲浹旬，當復相召。」
>
> 韋忽然而寤，且以所說，話於親屬，命道樞具述其事。道樞雖懷憂迫，亦未深信。

It seems clear from this excerpt that even though the dragon does not reveal itself, there is an undercurrent of the mutual construction of power and knowledge. Cuī had the power to be informed but chose to kill the creature anyway. The official exerts their power to sentence Cuī based on his ability to know.

Interestingly, though "Zhāng Wēn" also hinges on the ability to distinguish between fish and dragons in fish form, the text suggests that the epistemological onus is shared between the

dragon and the human. In “Zhāng Wēn,” the titular character is wandering by a body of water on a very hot day and takes a swim.

> Thus he entered the water and raised a net, catching a fish over a chǐ long with fins and scales like gold. It splashed incessantly. Those who looked down from the bank all thought it strange.
>
> In an instant, it was dark as night and wind and rain suddenly came up. Wēn was frightened and startled and ran several lǐ, but the situation was as intense as before. Someone said, “The gold fish that you caught must be the pool’s dragon.” At this they knew that the dragon had put on the appearance of a fish and thus brought about its own misfortune. If the winds and rain hadn’t changed, it would have been difficult to escape the pot and cutting board. If fishing in the Dragon Pool, one must be appropriately cautious.

> 自入水舉網，獲一魚長尺許，鬐鱗如金，撥剌不已。俯岸人皆異之。
>
> 逡巡晦暝，風雨驟作。溷惶駭，奔走數里，依然烈景。或曰：「所獲金魚，即潭龍也。」是知龍為魚服，自貽其患。苟無風雨之變。亦難逃鼎俎矣。龍潭取魚，亦宜戒慎。

In some ways, this tale is a clear foil to “Cuī Dàoshū.” Instead of knowingly eating the fish and being punished for it, Zhāng Wēn recognizes the fish, releases it, and avoids trouble. However, there are two elements of this tale not seen in the former. Specifically, the idea that putting on the appearance of a fish “brought about its own misfortune” implies that dragons have some responsibility to make their identities known–partially sharing in the epistemic burden with the humans. Additionally, the statement that “if the winds and rain hadn’t changed, it would have been difficult to escape the pot and cutting board” serves as a very explicit tie between the ability to recognize and know dragons (epistemology) and their ability to control weather-related phenomenon (nature). This serves as a clear example of how epistemology combines dragon’s queer ability to transform (animacy) and their connection to nature (ecology).

Queer Ecology

The fundamental premise of both "Cuī Dàoshū" and "Zhāng Wēn" is that fish can be eaten and dragons cannot. The fundamental tension is that dragons can appear to be fish and are thus in danger of being mistaken for them. Why can't these characters eat dragons? What is the difference between the two? How do these premises come about at all?

The key to these fundamental questions is the queer animacy of dragons. The logic of these tales suggests that fish are understood to be less animate, less sentient than dragons—we humans are often more comfortable eating things we consider to be less animate and thus less likely to experience pain. This is, of course, open to debate in our present day; and with the introduction of Buddhism and its encouragement of vegetarian diets in mid-Imperial China, was a pressing concern of the time as well. Nevertheless, these stories seem to suggest that eating fish is not a crime punishable by supernatural execution, but that eating dragons is. That dragons are queer shapeshifters who transgress boundaries of animacy makes them particularly vulnerable to and aware of dangers that face the less animate—in this case fish.

After Dana Luciano and Mel Chen limn the field of queer inhumanism in their 2015 piece, "Has the Queer Ever Been Human,"[281] they give the following summary:

> The question of whether the queer, for queer theory, has ever been human must, then, be answered, not equivocally but deliberately, yes and no. *Yes*, because this sustained interrogation of the unjust dehumanization of queers insistently, if implicitly, posits the human as standard form, and also because many queer theorists have undeniably privileged the human body and human sexuality as the locus of their analysis. But *no* because queer theory has long been suspicious of the politics of rehabilitation and inclusion to which liberal-humanist values lead, and because "full humanity" has never been the only horizon for queer becoming. We might see the

[281] Luciano, Dana and Mel Y. Chen. "Has the Queer Ever Been Human?" in GLQ, 2015, Vol.21 (2-3), p.183-207. pgs. 186-9 have a great summary of queer inhumanism/nonhumanism/unhumanism that branches into the related field of queer ecology. I highly recommend it.

> "yes/no" humanity of the queer less as an ambivalence about the human as status than as a queer *transversal* of the category. The queer, we could say, runs across or athwart the human. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick reminds us, "The word 'queer' itself means across—it comes from the Indo-European root -*twerkw*, which also yields the German *quer* (transverse), Latin *torquere* (to twist), English *athwart*."[282] To say that queer transverses the human is to understand their relation as contingent rather than stable: it needs to be read up from particular situations, not proclaimed from above.[283]

I would like to emphasize the phrase *unjust dehumanization of queers*. The assertion of this sentence is that some strains of queer theory are concerned that queer people are often dehumanized and taken to be lower on the animacy hierarchy than they truly are. These strains then aim to prove that queer people really are people in order to prevent the violence done to queers. The assertion in the tales above that dragons need to be distinguished from less animate fish follows the same logic to much the same conclusion. If everyone knows that a dragon is a dragon and that dragons are more animate and should not be eaten, then violence will not befall dragons. As Luciano and Chen point out, the relationship between queerness and humanity is not quite that simple—but that is the strain of thought relevant to this particular tale.

More representative of Luciano and Chen's ideology might be the idea that prioritizing the "fully human" is unjust. Even if the queer is not fully human, all beings, including the queer and the inhuman, should be respected. In the tales of the TPGJ, Buddhist stories of compassion for all creatures often take on a similar tone. Due to the complexity of dragons and their relationship to animacy, it is difficult to suggest that there is any one specific dragon tale that distinctly includes a non-human dragon that receives respect. The next tale, however, is

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[282] In the original text, there is a footnote explaining that this is from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), xii.
[283] Luciano and Chen, 188-9

perhaps the closest argument one sees, that non-human or partially inhuman creatures who are not shown respect are protected and avenged by Heaven.

2: "The Chicken-Expending Master"

When read as a queer tale of revealing identity, 424.10, "The Chicken-Expending Master" 費雞師[284] is perhaps the most disturbing of all tales. In this story, a group of humans discover that a snake is not quite what they expected and then brutally beat it to death.

> In Shǔ 蜀 and Chuān 川[285] there is a Chicken-Expending Master[286] who is good at knowing what will happen in the future and can also perform sacrifices to save people. He is frequently at Qióngzhōu 邛州[287] and the people of Shǔ all regard him as a god.
>
> Once there was a monk who said that of old in the Bǎotáng Temple 保唐寺 in Shuānglíu District 雙流縣[288] there was a Second Master Zhāng 張二師. Because he was patrolling the buildings of the monastery, he saw that there was an empty courtyard and was about to move in. When he ordered his household members to sweep and anoint it, they found a little bottle atop a pillar. Second Master looked at it and saw a snake in the bottle. He upended the bottle to get it out. It was about a *chǐ* long. It was patterned in multiple colors, having all five colors. He touched it with a staff, and it grew with his touch. Everyone was amazed. Second Master ordered [someone to get him] something to pick it up and send it out of the temple. As he picked it up to move it out, the more he touched it, the more it grew. It grew to over a *zhàng*, like the rafters of a house. It then took two people to lift it, and they were overcome with fear. The observers followed; and as they went, more joined. They were about two or three lǐ from the temple, and where they were then started to shake. The snake grew endlessly. The crowd became even more afraid and beat it until it died.
>
> The following day, there was a double rainbow in that temple courtyard. At noon it came down into the temple.
>
> A monk had business that took him to Qióng where he met with Chicken Master and told him of this. The Chicken Master said, "You killed a dragoness. Second Master

[284] From *Róngmù Xiántán* 戎幕閑談 by Wéi Xuàn 韋絢 (c. 840). It is worth noting that this is only a portion of a longer entry. However, the other portion of the entry is about other events in the Chicken-Expending Master's life and are unrelated to these events.
[285] Today's Sichuan
[286] In fascicle five of *Miscellaneous Morsels from Yǒuyáng*, there is another account of the Chicken-Expending Master. This account suggests that the master would have been around seventy in the early 820s, (meaning he would have been born in 750, give or take). (Wiebe pg. 13-14)
[287] A southwestern part of Chéngdū.
[288] This temple still stands today. It is located in Zīzhōng Xiàn 資中縣 near Chéngdū.

Zhāng and everyone in your temple, they're all going to die." Later, they all died, just as he said. His accurate predictions cannot all be recorded, but what[289] technique he used is unknown.

蜀川有一費雞師者，善知將來之事，而亦能為人禳救。多在邛州。蜀人皆神之。

時有一僧言，往者雙流縣保唐寺，寺有張二師者，因巡行僧房，見有空院，將欲住持，率家人掃灑之際，於柱上得一小瓶子。二師觀之，見一蛇在瓶內。覆瓶出之，約長一尺，文彩斑駁，五色備具。以杖觸之，隨手而長。衆悉驚異。二師令一物挾之，送於寺外。當携掇之際，隨觸隨大。以至丈餘。如屋椽矣。二人擔之方舉，送者愈懼，觀者隨而益多。距寺約二三里，所在撼動之時，增長不已。衆益懼。遂擊傷，至於死。

明日。此寺院中有虹蜺。亭午時下寺中。

僧有事至臨邛。見雞師說之。雞師曰：「殺龍女矣。張二師與汝寺之僧徒。皆當死乎。」後卒如其言。他應驗不可勝紀。竟不知是何術。

The implication of the end of the tale is that a divine force has taken retribution for the death of the snake and killed an entire temple full of people. That whatever divine force seems to have sympathy for the snake/dragon over the lives of humans is striking. Much as the supernatural court of "Cuī Dàoshū" found him guilty for the death of the fish/dragon, so too the divine powers at work here find the humans guilty for the death of the snake/dragon. Once again, in this tale, the moment of revelation–epistemological change–serves as a catalyst to bring queerness and ecology together.

Before delving into how the moment of revelation operates in the tale, we must first find exactly when the revelation occurs. So, when is the moment of revelation; or, more concretely, when do the humans of the temple know that something is amiss with the snake? The very first clue comes when Second Master Zhāng first touches the snake with his staff and it grows. Interestingly, though, the implied crowd is amazed (*jīngyì* 驚異, surprised at the oddity). It isn't until the snake/dragon becomes too large for one person to handle that the

[289] The word *what* is missing in the original. The Chen version adds it.

humans experience fear (*jù* 懼), though only those actually touching it are afraid. Once the snake is removed from the temple, the earth quakes, and the snake grows endlessly, only then does the entire crowd experience fear. The gradual change from relatively neutral surprise to fear limited to those in direct contact to general fear in the crowd suggests that the revelation slowly dawns across the humans. However, the moment when the majority of the crowd understands that this entity is far more than just a snake is when the queer size transformation is accompanied by a natural phenomenon–an earthquake. It is also worth noting that this moment of revelation occurs when the text notes the distance the snake has been removed from the temple. One perhaps can imagine the human characters wanting to put an animal, the snake, back where it belongs in "nature." The earthquake and transformation both suggest that this snake is not just an animal and perhaps does indeed "belong" in the temple. In short, the queer change in size and nature's response the snake's removal both cause the humans to realize that something is wrong. This realization prompts the humans to change their understanding of their relationship with the creature in question.

Unfortunately, the change in the relationship is not the correct one. The humans react negatively to the revelation and beat the innocent creature to death. Heaven condemns them for their actions and kills them in retribution. The text perhaps suggests that the humans should have either left the snake alone, or even recognized it as a divine entity belonging to the temple. In this tale, the dragon's queer ability to change form and size prompts responses both from humans and nature. The story as a whole prompts a queerly ecological reconsideration of the relationship between humanity, nature, and unusual creatures.

I'm Coming Out

In the above examples, humans found a fish, snake, or other animal/object that was later discovered to be a dragon. These revelations were often quite dramatic and could lead to harm to the dragon and retribution meted out against those who had harmed it. In this second category, however, dragons appear in human form and then reveal their identities to humans. This kind of revelation is not nearly as dramatic or devastating as those discussed above. If anything, these are remarkable for being quite boring. When the dragons say that they are dragons, the human listeners often do not respond to that revelation at all. Though these tales have direct speech acts of revelation, akin to the queer practice of coming out, both the revelations and the reactions to them are extremely muted. It is also worth noting that tales of this kind are often among the more complicated tales because the text must create a human-presenting character, have that character reveal that it is really a dragon, and then provide the responses to this revelation.

For a simple example, let us return to 421.05 "Rèn Xù" 任頊,[290] with which the previous chapter began. In the opening scene, a man comes to the home of the titular character and after they have spoken for a while, reveals that he is a dragon.

> At the beginning of the Jiànzhōng 建中 Reign Era (780-783) of the Táng, there was Rèn Xù 任頊 from Lè'ān 樂安.[291] He was fond of reading and did not enjoy the ordinary affairs of the mundane world. He lived deep in the mountains and had the ambition of dying there.
>
> 唐建中初，有樂安任頊者，好讀書，不喜塵俗事，居深山中，有終焉之志。

[290] From *Xuānshì Zhì* 宣室志 by Zhāng Dú 張讀 (c. 834-882)

[291] Near modern Xiānjū 仙居 in central Zhéjiāng 浙江 (on the southeastern coast of China).

One day, he closed his doors in the middle of the day and sat. An old man came to visit and knocked on his door. He was clothed in yellow clothes and was very handsome. He had come dragging a walking stick. Xù invited him to sit and talk.

嘗一日，閉關晝坐。有一翁叩門來謁，衣黃衣，貌甚秀，曳杖而至。頊延坐與語。

After a while, Xù was surprised to find his words burdened and his expression dejected. [There was clearly] some deeply unhappy matter. He thus asked the old man, saying, "What has happened that your expression is dejected? Do you have some worry? If not, is it that there is someone in your family who is sick and you worry about them deeply?"

既久，頊訝其言訥而色沮，甚有不樂事。因問翁曰：「何為而色沮乎。豈非有憂耶。不然，是家有疾而翁念之深耶。」

The old man said, "It really is as you say. I have been worriedly waiting for a long time for you to ask that. Actually, I'm not human, but a dragon. If you go one *lǐ* west, there is a large marsh that has been my home for several hundred years. Now, it is endangered by someone and the disaster is imminent. Without you I cannot escape death. Thus I have come to present this to you. I am fortunate that you asked me now, so that I can tell you."

老人曰：「果如是。吾憂俟子一問固久矣。且我非人，乃龍也。西去一里有大湫，吾家之數百歲，今為一人所苦，禍且將及。非子不能脫我死，輒來奉訴。子今幸問我，故得而言也。」

Xù said, "I am a mundane person. All I know is the *Poetry*, *Documents*, *Rites*, and *Music*. I know no other skills. Thus what do I have to help you escape this calamity?"

頊曰：「某塵中人耳，獨知有詩書禮樂，他術則某不能曉。然何以脫翁之禍乎。」

After this opening scene, Rèn Xù helps the dragon avoid death at the hands of a Daoist. What should be noted here is the lack of a reaction on the part of Rèn. He does not seem bothered that this being is a dragon in human form, he simply accepts the information and asks how he can help. It is also worth noting that this revelation of the dragon's queer ability to present as human only comes because of the potential damage to the dragon's natural habitat. Once again the epistemic revelation combines the dragon's ability to cross the animacy hierarchy and the environmental concerns of the tale.

The most emotional and complicated example is 419, "Liǔ Yì" 柳毅.[292] As in most cases, when the dragon in human form reveals that she is a dragon, the story moves on from this revelation without comment or emotional reaction.

In "Liǔ Yì," the titular scholar has failed the imperial examinations and comes upon a woman crying beside the road. When he asks her about this, she reveals her dragonhood by saying, "I am the youngest daughter of the Dragon Lord of Dòngtíng 洞庭" and then continues to explain how she has been trapped in an abusive marriage. Liǔ does not question or react to the revelation that she is a dragon but is indignant at her mistreatment and volunteers to help. He takes a message from her to her dragon family who then rescue her and kill her husband. For his help in the matter, the men of the family offer Liǔ her hand in marriage, but he refuses because he feels pressured into taking her as his wife and he is unwilling to marry a woman so soon after he has inadvertently caused the death of her former husband. He then returns to the human realm where he marries two wives who die in quick succession. His third wife, however, lives long enough to bear him a son. After their son is a year old, this third wife reveals to him:

> "I **am** the daughter of the Lord of Dòngtíng… I only told you today because I know that you love me.[293] [The status of a] wife is meager and insufficient to guarantee favor and perpetual love. Thus I entrust my life[294] on your love for your son. I don't know what you're thinking. Worry and fear both fill my heart, and I cannot resolve this myself… Do not think that because I am a different kind,[295] I do not have a heart."

[292] From *Yìwén Jí* 異聞集 by Chén Hàn 陳翰 (c. 874). There are five other similar tales including: 418.14 "Lǐ Jìng" 李靖, 420.02 "Shì Xuánzhào" 釋玄照, 420.04 "The Girl from Rippling Pond" 凌波女, 421.03 "Liú Guàncí" 劉貫詞, and 425.12 "Wáng Zhí" 王植.

[293] The original says that she knows that he loves her, but both the Ming and Chen versions say that he loves their son. This, in turn, would affect the interpretation of the earlier statements.

[294] Both the Ming and Chen versions replace *my life* with *my lowly quality* 賤質.

[295] Not human

> 余即洞庭君之女也。。。今乃言者。知君有感余之意。婦人匪薄，不足以確厚永心。故因君愛子，以託相生。 未知君意如何，愁懼兼心，不能自解。。。勿以他類，遂為無心。

One can only imagine the mental process of the Dragon Lord's daughter. For more than a year of living with her husband, she had concealed her identity both as someone he had met previously and as a dragoness. She is clearly concerned about rejection, likely compounded by the abuse she suffered at the hands of her first husband. The parallel to queer youths who reveal their identities to their families is striking. Queers often are worried whether or not their families will continue to love and accept them. In coming out speeches, there are also frequent discussions that even though the queer person is revealing something new, they are still the same person at their core. This seems parallel to the dragoness' concern that Liŭ Yì not think her heartless.

Throughout the discussion between the dragoness and Liŭ Yì, she questions why he did not pursue her when they met earlier. He reveals that her uncle, Qiántáng 錢塘, had suggested a marriage, but he refused to accept because he felt that marrying a woman after causing the death of her former husband was inappropriate. Regardless, the dragoness remains concerned that Liŭ Yì will think of her as something less than human and despise her because of it. This line of thought, that dragons are less than human and will be treated the worse for it, seems highly reminiscent of the discussion of animacy in the tales of animal transformation above. There the concern was that dragons need to be understood and recognized as more animate than fish or snakes so that they are not eaten. Here, the concern seems to be that dragons need

to be understood as approximately equally animate as humans, with a full range of emotional abilities.

In fact, when Qiántáng attempted to pressure Liǔ Yì into marrying the dragoness in the first place, readers are given a clear view that Liǔ Yì is acutely aware of the queer animacy of dragons.

> If I had come upon you amidst the floods and waves, or among the mysterious mountains, [and if you] drummed your scales and feelers and covered [yourself] with clouds and rain and [even if] you forced me to death, **I would have looked at you as an animal**. So how could I hate you? Now your body is covered with clothing and a hat. We sit discussing ritual and righteousness, have finished [discussing] the intention and nature of the Five Constants,[296] and have borne [through discussing] the minute purposes of the Hundred Virtues. **Even among the worth and outstanding people in the world of men, there are those that cannot compare [to you]. How much more so for a numinous being from streams and rivers!** However, you wish to use your brutish body and brazen nature, to take advantage of alcohol and false airs to force other people. Does this approximate appropriate behavior? Additionally, my quality is insufficient to cover the space of one of Your Majesty's scales. However, I dare to triumph over Your Majesty's unvirtuousness with my unbending heart.
>
> 若遇公於洪波之中，玄山之間，鼓以鱗鬚，被以雲雨，將迫毅以死，毅則以禽獸視之。亦何恨哉。今體被衣冠，坐談禮義，盡五常之志性，負百行之微旨。雖人世賢傑，有不如者，況江河靈類乎。而欲以蠢然之軀，悍然之性，乘酒假氣，將迫於人。豈近直哉。且毅之質，不足以藏王一甲之間。然而敢以不伏之心，勝王不道之氣。

In this exchange Liǔ Yì makes it clear that he would have first viewed Qiántáng as an animal, but after talking with him, it is clear that his intellect places him among the wisest of humans. Liǔ Yì also notes his superior, supernatural powers. In this Liǔ Yì highlights that dragons simultaneously exist as animals, humans, and gods—transgressing the animacy hierarchy. He

[296] Five virtues of Confucianism, namely: benevolence rén 仁, righteousness yì 義, proper ritual behavior lǐ 禮, wisdom zhì 智 and integrity xìn 信.

uses this in an attempt to shame Qiántáng for trying to convince him to marry the dragoness. Liŭ's core assertion is that Qiántáng's humanity enables him to understand appropriate human behavior, but that his animality and divinity allow him to exert unfair influence and terror on Liŭ. In the midst of this, Liŭ seems to assert that Qiántáng must allow his human understanding of proper behavior to guide his actions.

In both Liŭ Yì's reaction to his wife's revelation and in his analysis of Qiántáng's actions, it is clear that he maintains a very deep and adept understanding of the animality, humanity, and divinity of dragons. On one hand, his wife is concerned that after she reveals that she has used her ability to transform across the animacy hierarchy to be with him, he will change his opinion of her and think of her as sub-human. On the other hand, his discussion with Qiántáng makes it clear that even in relating to so complicated a being that can control the weather like a god, debate ethics like a human, and rage and slaughter like an animal, Liŭ Yì is capable of distinguishing between these different natures within the same character and engaging with all of them appropriately. Indeed, Liŭ Yì exemplifies the call to adjust and reassess one's relationship to entities as they cross the animacy hierarchy.

Alien vs. Predator

In the first category, dragons in animal form were discovered to be dragons due to unusual characteristics. These dragons were often in danger of being harmed by humans. In the second category, dragons in human form "came out" and told people around them that they were dragons. Very little harm was done to anyone since the humans usually took the dragons' announcements in stride. In this final category, dragons in human form do not tell humans that

they are in disguise and instead are depicted as demonic tricksters lurking in the waters to harm unsuspecting passersby.[297]

Consider the following excerpt from 425.19 "Old Flood Dragon"[298]

> During the Yǒngtài 永泰 Reign Era (765-6 CE) of the Táng, there was a youth passing by who saw a beautiful woman bathing in the water. She asked whether or not he would play [in the water] with her, and thus came forward and lead and pulled him. The youth then removed his clothes and entered. Thus he drowned to death. Only after several days did his corpse float out, and his body was completely withered. Under it [the temple mountain] there must be an old flood dragon's sunken cave. She flatters people in order to suck their blood. His (the youth's) fellow travelers relayed his condition.
>
> 唐永泰中，有少年經過，見一美女，在水中浴。問少年同戲否，因前牽拽。少年遂解衣而入，因溺死。數日，尸方浮出。而身盡乾枯。其下必是老蛟潛窟，媚人以吮血故也。其同行者述其狀云。

In this tale, a flood dragon (*jiāo* 蛟), takes on the form of a beautiful woman to seduce a young man and drain his blood. On the surface, this tale could be understood as a cautionary tale. The message readers are meant to take away is that they should be suspicious of women in bodies of water as they might secretly want to drown them and drink their blood. On a slightly deeper level, one might suggest this is an example of the *femme fatale* archetype in which a woman seduces a man to extract something from him—in this case lifeblood. If one accepts this as a *femme fatale* story, a whole realm of social critique becomes available. Stories written by men for men about the dangers of women naturally raise unanswerable questions

[297] There are six other tales that follow a similar structure: 422.01 "Xǔ Hànyáng" 許漢陽, 425.15 "Sū Tǐng" 蘇頲, 425.17 "A Daughter of the Hóng Clan" 洪氏女, 425.18 "Hóng Zhēn" 洪貞, 425.19 "Old Flood Dragon" 老蛟, and 425.20 "The Wǔxiū Pool" 武休潭. It is also worth noting that though most of these harmful entities are *jiāo*, the creatures in "Xǔ Hànyáng" are clearly *lóng*.

[298] From *Tōngyōu Jì* 通幽記 (c. 800) by Chén Shào 陳劭/邵. This is the second half of the tale. The first half is generally about dragon-related happenings on a mountain near Sūzhōu. I believe this story is supposed to happen there, but otherwise the events are unrelated.

about authorial intent and readerly response. If we continue in this vein, we must underscore the fact that this is not just a woman, but a trans-special woman who has used the powers at her disposal to transform herself into a human. In short, this is a narrative written by men for men about how they should fear being harmed by a transformed woman while bathing. It would seem that the key anxiety is that a moment of intimacy: bathing and "playing" with a woman leaves one vulnerable. In this vulnerable state, one is very susceptible to being surprised or even attacked by something/someone that is not as simple as it/she appears on the surface.[299] In short, this narrative suggests that a revelation taking place in a moment of vulnerability can be deadly.

The majority of these stories where dragons disguise themselves and prey on humans involve dragons in female form harming men and fall into the umbrella of the femme fatale trope discussed above. There is, however, an exception to this rule. In 425.17 "A Daughter of the Hóng Clan" 洪氏女,[300] a dragon takes on male form to deceive a woman.

> In the Qímén District 祁門縣[301] of Shèzhōu 歙州 [there is a] flood dragon pool. It is commonly told that in the countryside of Wǔlíng 武陵[302] there is a woman whose maiden name was Hóng 洪. She was promised in marriage to someone from the Lí 黎 clan of Póyáng 鄱陽.[303] As [the man of the Lí clan] was about to take her in marriage, but the auspicious day had not yet been set, a flood dragon turned into a man whose appearance was like that of her husband. He prepared all of the rituals and married her. More than a month later, Mr. Lí first arrived and knew that she had been taken in

[299] This is a startlingly strong analog to transphobic narratives of the dangers of allowing trans women to use women's bathrooms—with the key anxieties being much the same. These narratives, however, are false. See A. Hasenbush, A.R. Flores, and J.L. Herman, "Gender Identity Nondiscrimination Laws in Public Accommodations: a Review of Evidence Regarding Safety and Privacy in Public Restrooms, Locker Rooms, and Changing Rooms" *Sexuality Research and Social Policy* 16 (2019): 70–83.

[300] This tale is taken from the *Shèzhōu Tújīng* 歙州圖經, about which I can find no information.

[301] Still called by this name today. Part of Ānhuī's Huángshān City 黃山市.

[302] Modern day Chángdé City 常德市 to the northwest of Chángshā.

[303] Still called by this name, located to the north of Chángshā.

marriage by a flood dragon and then went to the flood dragon's nest to search for her. On the road, he met the flood dragon who had changed into a person whose appearance was uniquely beautiful. The husband suspected that it was the flood dragon. He looked and saw the flood dragon snickering and then killed it. Thus it returned to its flood dragon form. He once again advanced to the flood dragon nest. He saw his wife and a dog by his wife's side. He then took his wife and the dog and returned.

They started to board a boat, but violent winds and rains came. Wood and stone flew and soared. His wife and dog both turned into flood dragons and left. The husband was blown by the vicious wind to Yúyáo 餘姚[304] and after several years returned there.[305]

After this, a Daoist, Xǔ Jīngyáng 許旌陽,[306] once again beheaded a flood dragon there and used boards to stop up its nest. Now, if the sky is clear and the sun bright, it is almost as if you can still see it.

歙州祁門縣蛟潭。俗傳武陵鄉有洪氏女，許嫁與鄱陽黎氏。將娶，吉日未定，蛟化為男子。貌如其壻。具禮而娶去。後月餘。黎氏始到，知為蛟所娶，遂就蛟穴求之。於路逢其蛟化為人，容貌殊麗，其婿心疑為蛟。視，見蛟竊笑，遂殺之。果復蛟形。又前到蛟穴，見其妻。幷一犬在妻之旁。乃取妻及犬以歸。

始登船，而風雨暴至，木石飛騰，其妻及犬，皆化為蛟而去。其壻為惡風飄到餘姚。後數年歸焉。

其後道人許旌陽又斬蛟于此，仍以板窒其穴。今天清日朗。尚有彷彿見之。

Perhaps the most startling revelation in this story is not that the first flood dragon took on human form to marry the human woman, but that the woman and the dog have somehow also become flood dragons. It is unclear if they have always been flood dragons, if their time with the first flood dragon transformed them, or if they were killed and flood dragons took their form to deceive the man. The text does not answer these questions and leaves even the most ardent readers mystified.

[304] Present day Yúyáo City 余姚市 to the northwest of Níngbō.
[305] In the Chinese this is ambiguous, however, I believe this to mean it takes him several years to travel back to Póyáng.
[306] This Daoist is better known as Xǔ Xùn 許遜 (239-374). Belief in him as a deity started to be popular in the Táng.

Another interesting but unfortunately unanswerable question is the gender of the first flood dragon. It takes on the form of a human male to marry the woman we presume to be human. Later, however, the human husband comes across this same dragon and we are told that its "appearance was uniquely beautiful" (róngmào shūlì 容貌殊麗). That particular phrase as well as broader uses of "uniquely beautiful" (shūlì 殊麗) are almost universally used to describe women. [307] It would appear, then, that this dragon has taken on the form of a human male to marry the woman, but that it also later takes on the form of a human woman to meet the man. This dragon is not only capable of crossing the boundaries between human and dragon form but can also take on multiple human forms of different genders. How queer.

Finally, allow us to end with the most shocking reveal of the entire set of 94 dragon stories, 422.1 "Xǔ Hànyáng" 許漢陽.[308]

The story begins when the eponymous scholar is travelling by boat and gets lost. As he wanders through a system of side-streams and lakes, he stumbles upon a building and servants. This beginning is clearly reminiscent of the "Táohuā Yuán Jì" 桃花源記 (A Record of the Peach-Blossom Spring) by Táo Qián 陶潛 (365-427), arguably one of the earliest examples of this

[307] This exact phrase occurs to describe a woman in TPGJ 364.9 "Jīn Yǒuzhāng" 金友章, which is the only other time this phrase is used in the TPGJ (and on CText). The similar phrase *róngsè shūlì* 容色殊麗 occurs more often and also describes women. This phrase occurs in 287.3 "The Old Man of Xiāngyáng"襄陽老叟, 333.7 "Péi Huī" 裴徽, 334.1 "Yáng Zhǔn" 楊準, 338.2 "Wáng Chuí" 王垂, 448.8 "Adjutant Lǐ" 李參軍, and 449.3 "Lǐ Yuángōng" 李元恭. Another similar phrase, *róngzhì shūlì* 容質殊麗 is used to describe a woman in 345.8 "Zhèng Shào" 鄭紹. Yet another variant, *zīróng shūlì* 姿容殊麗 appears in 361.13 "A Person of Tàizhōu" 泰州人. Finally, the term *shūlì* 殊麗 appears on its own to describe a group of women in 81.4 "The Four Dukes of Liáng" 梁四公.

[308] From *Bóyì Zhì* 博異志 also known as *Bóyì Jì* 博異記. Author's pen name is Gǔ Shénzi 谷神子, often identified with Zhèng Huángǔ 鄭還古 (c. 830 CE).

genre of literature, in which a fisherman gets lost among a system of streams and then finds a hidden paradise. Xǔ Hànyáng moors his boat, greets the servants, and is led into the building.

> The servants invited him up onto the first level of the pavilion, where there were six or seven more servants. They saw him[309] and all bowed down in a line. They once again invited him to climb up to the second level, [310] where he finally saw the mistresses [of the palace], six or seven women, like his eyes had never seen. They all bowed and asked where he was from.[311]
>
> 青衣引上閣一層，又有青衣六七人，見者列拜。又引第二層，方見女郎六七人。目未嘗覩。皆拜問所來。
>
> Hànyáng completely described how he had come there unwittingly. When the mistresses had finished greeting him and sitting down,[312] the servants set out food and drink. Everything they used is not seen in the human world. When they finished eating, they ordered wine.
>
> 漢陽具述不意至此。女郎揖坐訖，青衣具飲食，所用皆非人間見者。食訖命酒。
>
> Among them was a strange tree, several *zhàng* tall.[313] It had a trunk and branches like a parasol tree[314] and leaves like a hardy banana[315] tree.[316] The entire tree was covered with red flowers that had not yet blossomed; they had wide bodies and small openings like an *àng*[317] 盎.[318] This tree was facing the place where they were drinking.
>
> 其中有奇樹高數丈，枝幹如梧，葉似芭蕉，有紅花滿樹未吐。盎如杯，正對飲所。
>
> One of the mistresses held her wine[319] and ordered a servant to bring a parrot-like bird and place it on the railing before the drinking [party]. It chirped once, and all the flowers on the tree opened at once. The fragrance washed over the people, and a beautiful woman about a *chǐ* tall emerged from each flower with a graceful and beautiful appearance. Their clothes were pulled up to one side, and each had her own quality. They each had an instrument, stringed and woodwinds were all there.

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[309] BYZ specifies this is Hànyáng 漢陽

[310] BYZ has *They once again invited him up to the second level* 又引上二層.

[311] BYZ uses slightly different grammar 相拜問來由.

[312] Before this phrase, the BYZ adds a line of dialogue. *The mistresses greeted him, sat down, and said, "The guest can stay here for the night, there should also be a little alcohol. We hope you will pursue pleasure."* 女郎揖坐云：「客中止一宵，亦有少酒，願追歡。」

[313] BYZ reads *Among them was one tree, more than several* zhàng *tall* 其中有一樹高數丈餘,

[314] *Firmiana simplex*

[315] *Musa basjoo*

[316] BYZ reads *It had a trunk like a parasol tree and leaves like a hardy banana tree* 幹如梧桐，葉如芭蕉.

[317] A kind of ancient cup used for drinking alcohol with a bulbous bottom and a smaller mouth.

[318] With slightly different grammar, the BYZ discusses the size instead of the shape of the flowers. *It was as large as a one-dǒu àng* 大如斗盎.

[319] BYZ adds *in greeting* 相揖

一女郎執酒，命一青衣捧一鳥如鸚鵡，置飲前欄干上。叫一聲，而樹上花一時開，芳香襲人。每花中有美人長尺餘。婉麗之姿，掣曳之服，各稱其質。諸樂絃管盡備。

These people[320] each bowed again; the mistresses raised their wine; and the music started. It sounded like the sighing of the wind and the babbling of water, carrying the scent of the immortals.[321] After just one round, it was already dark,[322] and the moonlight was once again bright. Everything that the mistresses discussed was not of the human world and were all things Hànyáng had never thought of. At the time, because Hànyáng argued these things as human affairs, none of the mistresses were able to respond [to him].[323]

其人再拜。女郎舉酒。衆樂俱作。蕭蕭泠泠。窅如神仙。纔一巡，已夕，月色復明。女郎所論，皆非人間事，漢陽所不測。時因漢陽以人事辯之。則女郎一無所酧答。

When they had joyously drunk until the second watch,[324] the feast was already over,[325] and the flowers from the tree fell petal by petal into the pond. The people [from inside the flowers] also fell and disappeared.

歡飲至二更，筵宴已畢，其樹花片片落池中，人亦落，便失所在。

A mistress took a scroll and showed it to Hànyáng. Upon reading it, it was a fù 賦 styled poem on rivers and seas. The mistress ordered Hànyáng to read it; and when he had read it once, the mistress asked for it and read it once again. She ordered a servant to take it.

一女郎取一卷文書以示，漢陽覽之。乃江海賦。女郎令漢陽讀之，遂為讀一遍。女郎又請自讀一遍，命青衣收之。

Once the servant takes the scroll, the mistress composes a poem—also on aquatic themes—and, because she cannot write, asks Hànyáng to serve as her scribe. Hànyáng obliges, but when

[320] BYZ has the bird bowing to start the music, not the tiny women.
[321] BYZ oddly reads *darkly entering the immortals* 杳入神仙.
[322] BYZ reads *this night* 此夕 instead of *already night* 已夕.
[323] BYZ says that Hànyáng *intermixed* 雜 human affairs into the discussion. This might be relevant to his later desire to add his own poetry to theirs. 時因漢陽以人間事雜之。則女郎亦無所酬答。
[324] 9–11pm
[325] BYZ reads *They joyously drank until the second watch had already come and then ended it* 歡飲至二更已來, 畢.

he asks to add his own poem, he is not permitted to. Here the text also plays with the trope of "encountering the goddess" in which a man of the mundane world meets a beautiful woman in the wild and the two have a passionate tryst, such as the tale of Liú Chén 劉晨 and Ruǎn Zhào 阮肇.[326] In these stories, the mundane man and the goddess often exchange poetry to express the depth of their affection as well as their literary ability. In "Xǔ Hànyáng," however, the mysterious mistresses compose poems not about their affection to Hànyáng, and then prevent him from writing his own. This serves as an odd departure from established norms of the genre.

> The fourth watch[327] had already come, and [the mistresses] ordered [the servants] to clean everything[328] up. In the haste that followed, a servant said,[329] "You can go back to your boat now." Hànyáng then stood up.
> 四更已來，命悉收拾。揮霍次，一青衣曰：「郎可歸舟矣。」漢陽乃起。
>
> All the mistresses said, "We're happy that you anchored here and came in, this trip. We're sorry not to have been attentive enough." Sadly, sadly they parted.
> 諸女郎曰：「忻此旅泊接奉，不得鄭重耳。」恨恨而別。
>
> He returned to his boat, and suddenly there was a large wind. The clouds abruptly became dark;[330] and after going no more than a pace, everything was black.
> 歸舟忽大風，雲色陡暗，寸步黯黑。
>
> When dawn came, he saw the place where he had come and drunk. It was only an empty forest. Hànyáng untied the mooring rope and went [to the place where he had met] people on the bank at the mouth of the stream the night before. He saw more than ten people there, as if something were out of the ordinary. He thus[331] anchored his boat and asked what had happened.

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[326] See Karl Kao, *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., 1985), 137–139.
[327] 1:00-3:00 am
[328] BYZ reads *[the mistresses] ordered [everyone] to set out and clean up*. 命發收拾
[329] BYZ has two servants.
[330] BYZ reads 斗暗
[331] BYZ reads 故 instead ofzh 因 and then changes the punctuation.

至平明，觀夜來飲所，乃空林樹而已。漢陽解纜。行至昨晚灪口江岸人家。見十數人，似有非常。因泊舟而訊。

Someone said, “At the mouth of the river,[332] four people drowned to death. We weren’t able to pull them out of the water until the second watch of the night. Three were already gone; but the other one, although he looked like he was dead, he wasn’t quite.[333] A witch sprinkled water over him with a willow branch and chanted. After a long time, he could speak and said, ‘the Dragon King of the Waters,[334] all his daughters, their aunts and sisters, six or seven of them returned to Dòngtíng. They had an evening feast[335] here. They took us to make wine. Fortunately, there weren’t many guests, and they didn’t drink much, so I was able to escape.’”

人曰：「江口溺殺四人，至二更後，却撈出。三人已卒，其一人，雖似死而未甚。有巫女以楊柳水灑拂禁咒，久之能言曰：「昨夜水龍王諸女及姨姊妹六七人歸過洞庭，宵宴於此，取我輩四人作酒。掾客少，不多飲，所以我却得來。』」

Hànyáng thought this strange and asked, “Who were the guests?”

漢陽異之，乃問曰：「客者謂誰。」

He said, “Only one worthless scholar. I don’t remember his name.” He continued, “A servant said that all the young women deeply love human script but can’t do it themselves. They frequently invite a worthless scholar to write something down and do nothing else. I asked her where he was, but he had already left in his boat.”[336]

曰：「一措大耳，不記姓名。」又云，青衣言，諸小娘子苦愛人間文字，不可得，常欲請一措大文字而無由。又問今在何處，已發舟也。

Hànyáng then thought of all of the things from the previous night and his tenfold emotions, he could understand them all now. Hànyáng was silent and then returned to his boat. His stomach felt uneasy. He then threw up several *shēng* of blood. He then knew that all of the wine had been made from human blood. Only three days later did his stomach settle.

漢陽乃念昨宵之事，及感懷之什，皆可驗也。漢陽默然而歸舟，覺腹中不安，乃吐出鮮血數升，知悉以人血為酒爾。三日方平。

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[332] BYZ reads *stream* 濡

[333] BYZ reads *although one seemed as if he were alive, it was as if he was drunk* 雖似活而若醉.

[334] BYZ reads *Dragon King of the Sea* 海龍王.

[335] BYZ omits *feast* 宴

[336] BYZ reads 過 instead of 舟 (effectively omitting *boat*)

The reason that this particular revelation is so shocking is the stark contrast between the expectations of the encountering the goddess trope, with the beauty and splendor, and the sudden turn to the vampiric dragons lurking in the night to harm passersby. This all ultimately relies on playing with the dragon's location on the animacy hierarchy and the ecological relationships between humans and those various animacy rungs. At first, Xǔ Hànyáng assumed these women to be delightful, benevolent, goddess-like creatures and expected to have one particular kind of relationship with them. In the end, however, it is revealed that they occupied quite a different rung on the animacy hierarchy–that of the trickster–and that they had a very different relationship to humans. They were not kind goddesses that provide pleasure to men, but rather predators that consume them. Once again a moment of revelation has relied on dragon's queer status on the animacy hierarchy and has resulted in changing the relationship between these non-human creatures and the human characters of the story. Additionally, Xǔ Hànyáng himself has been unknowingly transformed into a blood-drinking predator. In short, the text masterfully produces maximum contrast between different cultural or literary norms to highlight the constructed nature of a reader's horizon of expectations. This in turn causes a queer questioning of cultural practice.

Conclusion

Given the mutual construction of power and knowledge created by the definition of episteme, we know that a revelation of knowledge can drastically shift power structures. Throughout this chapter we have investigate multiple types of revelation stories—accounting for how information is revealed and what kind of harm is done to whom. Dragons in animal

form are often discovered by humans and are at risk of harm coming to themselves. Dragons in human form that reveal they are dragons seem to be at no risk to themselves and pose no risk to the humans. Dragons who take on human form and hide their identity are often portrayed as dangerous creatures wanting to harm humans. In all of these cases the epistemic revelation relies upon a dragon's queer ability to transform across an animacy hierarchy and changes the relationship between these transformational creatures and humans–in a phrase, queer ecology. Now that we have explained the queerness of dragons through the animacy hierarchy, investigated the environmental elements of dragons, and discussed the way in which revelations as a function of episteme serve to combine the two, let us turn to the conclusion of this dissertation in which these concepts are connected to a larger framework of mid-Imperial Chinese literature, philosophy, and politics.

Conclusions:
Whence, Why, and Whither

Whence:

We began this dissertation with a brief discussion of the multi-leveled creation of the TPGJ and the unfortunate penchant for modern English-language scholarship to focus on a narrow set of tales or questions of genre. Following both Glen Dudbridge's suggestion that focusing on genre can "mislead and hinder our efforts to read Tang narrative sensitively… to do justice to these interesting works we should let them stand alone, not pack them into pigeon holes"[337] and a small body of thematically centered scholarship in Chinese, I proposed that reading the section of the TPGJ focusing on dragons through the lens of queer ecology presents a new way to approach these tales without relying either on a predetermined selection of "best" tales or falling into the question of genre. In the first chapter, I presented a brief background on early Chinese philosophers and their questioning the boundaries between humans and nature and/or animals. I followed this with three examples of dragon stories which invite us to reconsider definitions of humanity and family and the relationship between humans and nature. In the second chapter I established that dragons can both inhabit multiple levels on an animacy hierarchy and can queerly move through these boundaries. In the third chapter I highlighted the strong connection between dragons and water, specifically emphasizing the relationship between humans, dragons, water, and crop production. Finally, in the fourth chapter, I looked at moments of revelation in the texts and how these key moments both rely

[337] From Glen Dudbridge's "A Question of Classification in Tang Narrative: The Story of Ding Yue," Originally published in Alfredo Cadonna, ed., *India, Tibet, China: Genesis and Aspects of Traditional Narrative* (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1999), 151–80. Reprinted in a 2005 collection of Dudbrige's works *Books, Tales and Vernacular Culture: Selected Papers on China* (Boston: Brill, 2005), 192–213.

on dragons' queer ability of transformation and reveal how that changes humans' understanding of our relationship to nature. All of this serves to prove the utility of queer ecology in reading these tales; though certainly an unusual theoretical framework for Táng and Sòng tales, this literary theory enables readers to process both the importance of nature and the importance of anti-normative, transgressive boundary-crossing in these tales.

Why:

If, as I have argued, these tales are primarily re-considerations of humanity's relationship with nature or even assertions that humans should change their understanding of said relationship, why do these texts focus on this issue? Of course, these 94 dragon tales were collected from 51 different source texts and the authors of those texts would likely all have different authorial intentions. Additionally, authorial intention is notoriously impossible to assess. However, given that the majority of these texts were written in the mid-to-late Táng and then collected in the early Sòng, we can begin to think about external influences that may have prompted such reflections.

The ascent of China's only female emperor, Emperor Wǔ Zhào 武曌 (better known as Wǔ Zétiān 武則天), was certainly one event to prompt discussion of the relationship between politics and nature (asking whether it is "natural" for a woman to rule). Indeed, Emperor Wǔ Zhào is the second most storied person in the entire TPGJ.[338] Consider tale 461.34, "Empress Tiān" 天后.[339]

[338] Wǔ Zhào appears in 125 tales in the TPGJ. This is only beaten by her grandson, Emperor Xuánzōng 唐玄宗 who appears in 161 tales.
[339] Unfortunately, no source text is listed for this tale.

> After the Wénmíng 文明 Reign Era had ended (684 CE), the female chickens presented by all of the prefectures under Heaven that transformed into males were incredibly numerous. Some of them had half already transformed, half not yet transformed. This was an omen that Zétiān 則天 would properly take the throne.
>
> 唐文明已後，天下諸州，進雌雞變為雄者甚多，或半已化，半未化，乃則天正位之兆

This tale, in all of its brevity, suggests that these impossible sexual transformations indicate heaven's foreknowledge of the coming rule of a female emperor. If one interprets the *zhèngwèi* 正位 as *properly take the throne*,[340] this could be provocatively read as heaven's support for the rule of a female emperor. This one tale strongly implies that the unprecedented and never repeated crowning of a female prompted some degree of meditation on the relationship between gender, politics, humanity, nature, and heaven.

Although Emperor Wǔ is unique as the only female emperor in Chinese history, her reign was not one to generate tales in the TPGJ relating nature, politics, and the divine right to rule. Her grandson, Emperor Xuánzōng 玄宗 is the most frequently appearing character in the anthology. The first two tales from the very beginning of the introduction focus on Xuánzōng and also show that nature and dragons as part of nature are very responsive to political affairs and human choices. Consider 420.10 "Zhānrán River" 旃然.

> Xuánzōng 玄宗 was going to make offerings on Mt. Tài 泰山,[341] and entered and stayed near the Zhānrán River 旃然河 in Xíngyáng 滎陽. His Majesty saw a black dragon, called for his bow and arrow, and personally shot it. As soon as the arrow was released, the dragon died. From then on, the Zhānrán 旃然 flowed underground. To now, it's been over one hundred years…

[340] Alternatively, one could interpret this as *formally take the throne*.
[341] A sacred mountain in China. Emperors made Fēng and Shàn sacrifices there. The exact details and significance of these sacrifices are debated. Xuánzōng made his in 726 CE.

玄宗將封泰山。進次滎陽旃然河，上見黑龍，命弓矢。親射之。矢發龍滅。自爾旃然伏流。於今百餘年矣。。。

The backdrop of the rituals performed on Mt. Tài highlight Xuánzōng's status as emperor. Yet it seems to be his personal decision to kill this dragon that prompts this change in the flow of the river. In 420.8 "The Dragon of the Xīngqìng Pool" 興慶池龍, a dragon follows Xuánzōng through most of his political career until the moment that he flees the capital during the Ān Lùshān 安祿山 Rebellion.

> Táng Xuánzōng 唐玄宗 was once hiding as a dragon in the Xīngqìng Palace 興慶宮.[342] When he ascended to the throne, a little dragon once wandered out of the Xīngqìng Pool 興慶池 and left the palace in the waters of a channel that went through the Imperial Park. It had an unusual, serpentine shape, having the shape to soar leisurely. Among the maids and servants in the palace, there was not one who did not see it.
>
> Afterward, Xuánzōng 玄宗 visited Shǔ 蜀,[343] and the night before his carriage was about to depart, his dragon rode out of the pool on white clouds, leaping across the sky, looking toward the southwest, it left. All of those gathered around [the emperor] saw it. When His Majesty had traveled to the Jiālíng River 嘉陵江, he boarded a boat and was about to cross, [but] he saw the little dragon flying beside the boat. The ministers accompanying the emperor all saw it. A tear trickled down His Majesty's face. Looking to his left and right, he said, "This is my dragon from the Xīngqìng Pool 興慶池." He ordered that wine be poured out as a libation, and His Majesty personally blessed it. The dragon then left the waters, shaking its mane.
>
> From *Annals of the Declaration Room*.

唐玄宗嘗潛龍於興慶宮。及即位，其興慶池嘗有一小龍出遊宮外御溝水中。奇狀蜿蜒，負騰逸之狀。宮嬪內豎，靡不具瞻。

[342] The grammar of this is ambiguous. In the TPGJ, there are instances in which an emperor prior to their ascension to the throne is "hiding like a dragon;" and *qiánlóng* 潛龍 is used as a two-character compound term. Alternatively, the two characters can be understood as a verb and object, and the sentence could be read as "He once hid a dragon." There is clearly a literal meaning of a dragon in the pool and a metaphor for Xuánzōng's power at play in this tale. In this introductory sentence, however, the more figurative meaning is likely more accurate.

[343] Emperor Xuánzōng left Cháng'ān on July 14, 756 CE, when rebel forces under Ān Lùshān were about to seize the capital. The following day, the guards that accompanied him killed one of his advisors, Yáng Guózhōng 楊國忠, whom they held responsible for inciting Ān Lùshān to rebellion, and then forced the emperor to kill Prized Consort Yáng.

> 後玄宗幸蜀，鑾輿將發，前一夕，其龍自池中御素雲，躍然亘空，望西南而去。環列之士，率共觀之。及上行至嘉陵江，乘舟將渡，見小龍翼舟而進。侍臣咸覩之。上泫然泣下，顧謂左右曰：「此吾興慶池中龍也。」命以酒沃酹，上親自祝之，龍乃自水中振鬣而去。
> 出《宣室志》

The same supernatural animal appears near water at both the moment of his ascension to the throne and at the moment he is forced to leave his seat of power. Once again the political events of the Táng dynasty have prompted a reflection on the relationship between politics, nature, and humanity.

The contemplation of the confluence of the personal, the political, the human, and the natural in the Táng was not limited to tales of the strange. Indeed, these concepts made incredibly explicit in a number of brief philosophical works exchanged between Hán Yù 韓愈, Liǔ Zōngyuán 柳宗元, and Liú Yǔxī 劉禹錫. Let us consider only the first portion of the last piece to be written, which summarizes the debate nicely.[344] In short, part of the debate is over the definition of the term *tiān* 天, heretofore rendered as *Heaven*. The crux of the debate is essentially whether *tiān* is sentient (thus being translated as heaven), or simply a collection of things that exist as they are, the self-thus *zìrán* 自然 (translatable as nature).

> Of those in the world who discuss *tiān*, there are two paths. Those who are captured by the brightest brightness thus say, "*Tiān* and humanity are truly like [light] and shadow, [sound] and echo. Calamity certainly befalls [people] due to sin, and blessing certainly comes because of goodness. The poor and destitute who call out, [*tiān*] can certainly hear; those in secret pain who pray, [*tiān*] can certainly answer—as though there were something clearly in control." Thus the discourse of hidden charity has risen.

[344] See "*Tiān* Lùn" 天論 in Liú Yǔxī 劉禹錫, *Liú Yǔxī Jí 劉禹錫集* (Shànghǎi 上海: Shànghǎi Rénmín Chūbǎnshè 上海人民出版社).

> Those mired in the darkest darkness thus say, "*Tiān* and humanity are truly sharply different. If thunder strikes livestock or trees, it is not because [*tiān*] is concerned with sin. If spring rains [moisten] violets or thistles, it is not because [*tiān*] has selected the good. [Robber] Zhí and [Zhuāng] Qiāo[345] were as they were, and yet [people] followed them. Confucius and Yán [Huí][346] were as they were, and yet they met distress. [*Tiān*] is unclear and there is nothing in control." Thus the discourse of self-thus[347] has risen. My friend, the Explicator of Hédōng, Liŭ Zĭhòu, wrote the "Discussion on *Tiān*" to refute the statements of Hán Tuìzhī. His patterned writing was truly beautiful, but he probably said this with much excitement. He did not completely [examine] the boundaries between humanity and *tiān*. Thus I have written "A Discourse on *Tiān*" to complete his argument.
>
> 世之言天者二道焉。拘於昭昭者則曰：『天與人實影響：禍必以罪降，福必以善來，窮阨 而呼必可聞，隱痛而祈必可答，如有物的然以宰者。』故陰騭之說勝焉。泥於冥冥者則曰：『天與人實刺異：霆震于畜木，未嘗在罪；春滋乎堇荼，未嘗擇善。跖、蹻焉而遂，孔、顏焉而厄，是茫乎無有宰者。』故自然之說勝焉。余之友河東解人柳子厚作《天說》以折韓退之之言，文信美矣，蓋有激而云，非所以盡天人之際。故余作《天論》以極其辯云。

In this piece of philosophy, it is very clear that something–I would argue the political instability of the early to high Táng and the continued sense of loss thereafter—has prompted a larger discussion about whether *tiān* is just or not, whether *tiān* is sentient or not, and what the relationship between *tiān* and humanity truly is. Throughout the remainder of the piece Liú Yŭxī goes on to suggest that *tiān* is only natural (similar to the position taken by Liŭ Zōngyuán in "Tiān Shuō" 天說, and contrary to that of Hán Yù). He even goes so far as to suggest that,

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[345] [Robber] Zhí 盜跖 and [Zhuāng] Qiāo 莊蹻 were two famous bandits from Pre-Qín China. Both appear in the *Shĭjì* 史記, the *Hànshū* 漢書, the *Lŭshì Chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋, and the *Huáinánzi* 淮南子. Here they are used to suggest evil.

[346] The most famous philosopher of Chinese history and his favorite disciple. Here used to represent good. Although Confucius has clearly gained a following since his death, during his lifetime his politics and philosophy did not receive wide acceptance.

[347] *Zìrán* 自然. This two part compound very literally means *self* (zì 自) and *thus* (rán 然). In earlier philosophy, this has been used as a state of existence in which things just are as they are. They follow their own self-nature. In later texts, this idea has come to mean *nature* (in the sense of trees and rivers). This portion of this piece seems to suggest that *tiān* (all of existence (nature?)) just exists as it is (following its own internal character (nature?)).

humans are even able to surpass (*shèng* 勝) *tiān* through a common morality embodied in a legal code (*fǎ* 法). This ever further complicates the relationship between humans and *tiān*.

Clearly, the multiplicity of considerations of the relationship between humanity, heaven/nature/*tiān*, politics, cultural mores, and personal beliefs and emotions speaks to a phenomenon larger than just the 94 dragon tales, and even larger than the TPGJ itself. Indeed, the TPGJ and the strange tales about dragons transforming, creating rain, and revealing themselves in odd ways are situated in a much, much larger context of mid-Imperial Chinese history, literature, and intellectual history. This, it is my deepest hope, helps to move the conversation around Táng narrative beyond pedantic questions of genre and to some of the greatest questions humanity has ever asked.

Whither:

Whither the field? How this study contributes to the field largely depends upon what field is being discussed. The most obvious field is that of Chinese literature. From the beginning this study aimed to implement a methodology that both included a larger range of texts than usually discussed and shifted discussion away from questions of genre. My hope is that in the future similar studies could investigate other or larger portions of the TPGJ in a similar fashion and consider the work as part of the philosophical, intellectual, literary, and political systems of mid-Imperial China.

To the field(s) of queer ecology, which have been primarily focused on modern Euro-American history and culture, this project has aimed to answer Nicole Seymour's call in "Queer

Ecology" to expand discussions of queer ecology beyond the limits of a Euro-American worldview.[348] Beyond merely expanding the geographical scope of queer ecology, I hope it has been made clear that the questions of the mutual constructions of politics, gender, family, and nature are deeply rooted in the history, culture, and even language of China. Although a grandiose statement claiming this to be an inherent part of the human condition would be an overstatement, the resonances between the 21st century "West" and mid-Imperial China is striking nonetheless.

On the ecocritical side of queer ecology, though the extreme and immanent threat of the ongoing environmental catastrophe in the 21st century has rightly seized much attention, the awareness that humans have the power to change the environment–at least on a local scale–is nothing new. Looking to the past can certainly provide context to our current crisis. More empowering, however, is that, as we saw in chapter three, there are historical instances of direct, government-sponsored action that successfully improved environmental conditions. Whether or not we can reverse our present crisis is still hotly contested. If we can, however, we will need to use all of the resources at our disposal–including past examples of successful interventions–if we are to succeed.

On the queer side of queer ecology, finding queerness in the past is empowering. Anti-queer rhetoric often asserts that any divergence from heteronormative standards of sexuality, gender expression, or family formation is either unique to an individual, uniquely recent, or uniquely Western. This particular form of gaslighting attempts to manipulate queer individuals

[348] Nicole Seymour, "Queer Ecology," *Companion to Environmental Studies*, Noel Castree, Mike Hulme, and James D. Proctor, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2018).

(often times vulnerable members of the community who are young, exploring a new identity, or have recently come out) into believing that they are alone. In fact, non-normative sexualities, gender expressions, or family formations are common across both time and multiple cultures.[349] Indeed, the boundary defying dragons of the TPGJ cause readers to not only question the norms of sex, gender, and family in mid-Imperial China, they go further to question the definition of humanity itself and its separation from animals/nature.

To scholars in all fields mentioned above, the combination of a theory as recent and western-centered as Queer Ecology with Chinese literature this old may seem unusual. However, if a theory is to be of any use, it must be elastic–expanding and shifting as new information is included. I would suggest that the field of QE has much to learn from the mid-Imperial Chinese context, and that the field of Chinese Literature could benefit greatly from carefully considering how a range of newer theoretical frameworks could be applied (with great caution) to Chinese history. It is my greatest hope that this queer ecocritical reading of the dragons of the TPGJ can both encourage further studies into larger sections of the TPGJ with new theoretical frameworks adjusted for Táng and Sòng history and that scholars of literary theories might see the value of considering a mid-Imperial Chinese context.

[349] One might wonder exactly what norm I mean. In short, societies across time and space have created their own norms of gender, sexuality, and family. Individuals and undercurrents within those societies have often questioned the norms imposed. It is worth noting, however, that in the form of gaslighting mentioned above, the assertion is that only norms similar to those of modern Euro-America are valid. In fact, I would suggest that societies with a gender binary, strict heterosexuality, monogamous marriage between one man and one woman, and a family structure of a "nuclear family" are significantly less common than those that deviate from that in at least one way. If anything, this particular structure is uniquely recent and Western, despite its own claims to the contrary.

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Note: This bibliography does not include sources used only to construct the appendix (after the bibliography).

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Appendix:
Source Texts of the TPGJ

Below is an appendix of source texts from which the dragon tales of the TPGJ are taken. Ideally each source text would have a brief description of the text itself, a brief summary of the author's life, a list of tales taken from the text, and citations for modern editions of the text or other scholarship. However, as many of these texts have been lost to time and several of the authors are either unknown or poorly documented, many entries are necessarily incomplete. The appendix is organized alphabetically by the *pīnyīn* of the Chinese title. To aid readers who may be more familiar with my translations of the titles, I have included a table of translated English titles and the associated Chinese title.

For both future researchers interested in the source texts of the TPGJ, several of the resources used to create the appendix are likely to be helpful. By far the most helpful work is Liú Shìdé's 劉世德 2006 *Zhōngguó Gǔdài Xiǎoshuō Bǎikē Quánshū* 中國古代百科全書,[350] an encyclopedia of premodern *xiǎoshuō*. It contains a wealth of information on both the textual history and author's biography. The second most helpful resource is the *Quán Táng Xiǎoshuō* 全唐小說 by Wáng Rǔtāo 王汝濤 (hereafter QTXS).[351] This work not only provides full texts of many of the less common works listed below, but also contains a brief introduction to the text and author when possible.

[350] Liú Shìdé 劉世德, *Zhōngguó Gǔdài Xiǎoshuō Bǎikē Quánshū* 中國古代百科全書 (Běijīng 北京: Zhōngguó Dà Bǎikē Quánshū Chūbǎnshè 中國大百科全書出版社, 2006). Hereafter often referred to as simply *Liú*.
[351] Wáng Rǔtāo 王汝濤, *Quán Táng Xiǎoshuō* 全唐小說 (Jǐ'nán 濟南: Shāndōng Wényì Chūbǎnshè 山東文藝出版社, 1993).

Though those resources are an incredibly helpful place to start, these and all other works of modern scholarship eventually rely upon just a handful of mid-Imperial resources for their information. The bibliographical sections ("Yìwén Zhì" 藝文誌) of formal histories, including the *Xīn Táng Shū* 新唐書 and the *Sòngshǐ* 宋史, provide basic information (usually author, title, and number of *juàn*) on massive lists of premodern titles. Additionally, the northern Sòng *Chóngwén Zǒngmù* 崇文總目 provides similar information, occasionally documenting works not listed elsewhere. Occasionally, works that have been transmitted to the present will have a preface, often written by one of the author's personal friends, that will not only give the title and author, but information about when it was written and what the author intended to do with the work. These prefaces may also contain helpful biographical information. The other best sources for biographical information are, once again, the formal histories, including *Jiù Táng Shū* 舊唐書, *Xīn Táng Shū* 新唐書, and *Sòngshǐ* 宋史. Occasionally, there are extant epitaphs (*mùzhìmíng* 墓誌銘), often written by friends of the deceased, that will list both their political and literary accomplishments. If these sources do not contain the needed information, often the next best option is the contents of the tales themselves. Tales commonly contain specific dates and places, giving some context for the piece.

English Title	Chinese Title
Annals of Ample Difference	Bóyì Zhì 博異志
Annals of the Declaration Room	Xuānshì Zhì 宣室志
Annals of the Singularly Strange	Dúyì Zhì 獨異志
Chronicles of News	Jì Wén 紀聞
The Classic of Interactions	Gǎnyìng Jīng 感應經
The Classic of Pictures from Shèzhōu	Shèzhōu Tújīng 歙州圖經
Collections of Heard Strangeness	Yìwén Jí 異聞集
Continuing 'In Search of the Supernatural'	Xù Sōushén Jì 續搜神記
Continuing 'Records of the Mysterious and Strange'	Xù Xuánguài Lù 續玄怪錄
Events Outside the Country	Wàiguóshì 外國事
Gossip from Savage People	Yěrén Xiánhuà 野人閑話
Gossip from the Jade Hall	Yùtáng Xiánhuà 玉堂閑話
Great Book of Marvels	Guǎngyì Jì 廣異記
Idle Talk from Military Tents	Róngmù Xiántán 戎幕閑談
Lost Histories	Yìshǐ 逸史
[The Writings of] the Master Who Clings to Simplicity	Bàopǔzǐ 抱朴子
The Minister's Tales	Shàngshū Gùshí 尚書故實
Miscellaneous Daoist Records	Dàojiā Zájì 道家雜記
Miscellaneous Morsels from Yǒuyáng	Yǒuyáng Zázǔ 酉陽雜俎
Miscellaneous Records of the Great Táng	Dàtáng Zájì 大唐雜記
Notes Collecting Strangeness	Jíyì Jì 集異記
Notes from Xúnyáng	Xúnyáng Jì 潯陽記
Notes of the Three Wú	Sān Wú Jì 三吳記
Notes on the Water Classic	Shuǐ Jīng Zhù 水經注
Notes Recording Strangeness	Lùyì Jì 錄異記
Old Stories from the Zhǔ Palace	Zhǔgōng Jiùshì 渚宮舊事
A Pearl Forest in the Garden of the Dharma	Fǎyuàn Zhūlín 法苑珠林
Record of Two Capitals	Liǎng Jīng Jì 兩京記

A Record on Opening the Concealed	Tōngyōu Jì 通幽記
A Record Relating Strangeness	Shù Yì Jì 述異記
Recording and Chronicling	Zhuàn Zǎi 傳載
Records Examining Gods	Jī Shén Lù 稽神錄
The Records of Jiǔjiāng	Jiǔjiāng Jì 九江記
Records of Lost Stories from the Dàyè [Reign Era]	Dàyè Shíyí Jì 大業拾遺記
Records of Numerous Talks	Jù Tán Lù 劇談錄
Records of Primary Change	Yuán Huà Jì 原化記
Records of Strangeness from the Surface of Mountain Ranges	Lǐngbiǎo Lùyì 嶺表錄異
The Records of the Four Dukes of Liáng	Liáng Sìgōng Jì 梁四公記
Records of the Monasteries in Luòyáng	Luòyáng Qiélán Jì 洛陽伽藍記
Records of the Xiāoxiāng	Xiāoxiāng Lù 瀟湘錄
Records Relaying the Truth of the Kāi[yuán] and Tiān[bǎo] [Reign Eras]	Kāitiān Chuánxìn Jì 開天傳信記
Relaying Marvels	Chuánqí 傳奇
Retold Tales by Wáng Zǐnián	Wáng Zǐnián Shíyí Jì 王子年拾遺記
Supplements to the National History	Guóshǐ Bǔ 國史補
Supplements to the Records of the Táng Years	Tángnián Bǔlù 唐年補錄
Sweet Rain Rumors	Gānzé Yáo 甘澤謠
Tales in Response to Meeting with Immortals	Shénxiān Gǎnyù Zhuàn 神仙感遇傳
Trifling Words from Northern Dreams	Běimèng Suǒyán 北夢瑣言
United Records of the Court and the Commoners	Cháoyě Qiān Zǎi 朝野僉載
Annals of Ample Difference	Bóyì Zhì 博異志
Annals of the Declaration Room	Xuānshì Zhì 宣室志
Annals of the Singularly Strange	Dúyì Zhì 獨異志
Chronicles of News	Jì Wén 紀聞
The Classic of Interactions	Gǎnyìng Jīng 感應經
The Classic of Pictures from Shèzhōu	Shèzhōu Tújīng 歙州圖經
Collections of Heard Strangeness	Yìwén Jí 異聞集
Continuing ‘In Search of the Supernatural’	Xù Sōushén Jì 續搜神記

Continuing ‘Records of the Mysterious and Strange’	Xù Xuánguài Lù 續玄怪錄
Events Outside the Country	Wàiguóshì 外國事
Gossip from Savage People	Yěrén Xiánhuà 野人閑話
Gossip from the Jade Hall	Yùtáng Xiánhuà 玉堂閑話
Great Book of Marvels	Guǎngyì Jì 廣異記
Idle Talk from Military Tents	Róngmù Xiántán 戎幕閑談
Lost Histories	Yìshǐ 逸史
[The Writings of] the Master Who Clings to Simplicity	Bàopǔzǐ 抱朴子
The Minister’s Tales	Shàngshū Gùshí 尚書故實
Miscellaneous Daoist Records	Dàojiā Zájì 道家雜記
Miscellaneous Morsels from Yǒuyáng	Yǒuyáng Zázǔ 酉陽雜俎
Miscellaneous Records of the Great Táng	Dàtáng Zájì 大唐雜記
Notes Collecting Strangeness	Jíyì Jì 集異記
Notes from Xúnyáng	Xúnyáng Jì 潯陽記
Notes of the Three Wú	Sān Wú Jì 三吳記
Notes on the Water Classic	Shuǐ Jīng Zhù 水經注
Notes Recording Strangeness	Lùyì Jì 錄異記
Old Stories from the Zhǔ Palace	Zhǔgōng Jiùshì 渚宮舊事
A Pearl Forest in the Garden of the Dharma	Fǎyuàn Zhūlín 法苑珠林
Record of Two Capitals	Liǎng Jīng Jì 兩京記
A Record on Opening the Concealed	Tōngyōu Jì 通幽記
A Record Relating Strangeness	Shù Yì Jì 述異記
Recording and Chronicling	Zhuàn Zǎi 傳載
Records Examining Gods	Jī Shén Lù 稽神錄
The Records of Jiǔjiāng	Jiǔjiāng Jì 九江記
Records of Lost Stories from the Dàyè [Reign Era]	Dàyè Shíyí Jì 大業拾遺記
Records of Numerous Talks	Jù Tán Lù 劇談錄
Records of Primary Change	Yuán Huà Jì 原化記
Records of Strangeness from the Surface of Mountain Ranges	Lǐngbiǎo Lùyì 嶺表錄異
The Records of the Four Dukes of Liáng	Liáng Sìgōng Jì 梁四公記

Records of the Monasteries in Luòyáng	Luòyáng Qiélán Jì 洛陽伽藍記
Records of the Xiāoxiāng	Xiāoxiāng Lù 瀟湘錄
Records Relaying the Truth of the Kāi[yuán] and Tiān[bǎo] [Reign Eras]	Kāitiān Chuánxìn Jì 開天傳信記
Relaying Marvels	Chuánqí 傳奇
Retold Tales by Wáng Zǐnián	Wáng Zǐnián Shíyí Jì 王子年拾遺記
Supplements to the National History	Guóshǐ Bǔ 國史補
Supplements to the Records of the Táng Years	Tángnián Bǔlù 唐年補錄
Sweet Rain Rumors	Gānzé Yáo 甘澤謠
Tales in Response to Meeting with Immortals	Shénxiān Gǎnyù Zhuàn 神仙感遇傳
Trifling Words from Northern Dreams	Běimèng Suǒyán 北夢瑣言
United Records of the Court and the Commoners	Cháoyě Qiān Zǎi 朝野僉載

1. Bàopǔzǐ 抱朴子

[The Writings of] the Master Who Clings to Simplicity

This text is attributed to Gě Hóng 葛洪 (c. 283-343), a descendant of a prominent southern family who had a lasting interest in Daoism, immortality, and the strange. This text is one of the better studied in this list and most reference works provide ample detail. Notably, the text is divided into two halves: the wàipiān 外篇, "external chapters" that concern Gě's philosophical and political musings, and the nèipiān 內篇, "internal chapters" that concern esoteric practices of alchemy and transcendence.

Excerpted Texts:
418.05 Gān Zōng

Editions:
Wáng Míng 王明. *Bàopǔzǐ Nèipiān Jiàoshì 抱朴子內篇校釋*. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 1980.

2. Běimèng Suǒyán 北夢瑣言

Trifling Words from Northern Dreams

The *Sòngshǐ* 宋史 f.483 lists this text as being written by Sūn Guāngxiàn 孫光憲 and having thirty fascicles. However, the versions that have been transmitted to the present only have twenty fascicles. Fortunately, many of the texts found in the TPGJ exceed the twenty fascicles in the other version, meaning that at least some of the lost content can be recovered. Of the twenty fascicle received editions, the earliest two are from the Reign of the Wànlì 萬曆 Emperor (r.1572-1620 CE) of the Míng Dynasty, and there are also two from the Qīng Dynasty. A comparison of these early texts along with texts preserved as excerpts in the TPGJ—Zhōnghuá editors arrange these into four fascicles— provide a fairly complete text for modern scholars to use.

There is relatively little information on the author of this text. The History of Sòng notes that Sūn was a native of Guìpíng 貴平 in Língzhōu 陵州. He eventually rose to be the Prefect of Huángzhōu 黃州 and died in the sixth year of the Qiándé Reign Era (968 CE). Quite notably, the historian commends his erudition, noting that in his youth he was fond of study and as an adult he was versed in the classics, had accumulated a vast library, and was fond of writing.

Excerpted Texts:
423.13 The Línhàn Pig

423.14 Burning Dragons
424.12 Lǐ Xuān
424.14 Salt Well Dragons
425.01 Zhāng Wēn
425.02 Guō Yànláng
425.06 The Pacifying Heaven Dragon
425.07 Cáo Kuān
425.20 The Wǔxiū Pool
425.21 Felling a Flood Dragon

Editions:
Sūn Guāngxiàn 孫光憲. *Běimèng Suǒyán* 北夢瑣言. Jiǎ Èrqiáng 賈二強 (Ed.). Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 2002.

Full text with introduction, annotation, and appendices. Introduction serves to relate the basics of transmission and author's life. The appendices add extra detail and documentation. The notes are quite minimal, and every tale has been retitled by the editors.

All of the dragon-related texts are in the section for works not in the received 20 fascicle editions, but only found as excerpts.

3. Bóyì Zhì 博異志

Annals of Ample Difference

In the preface of this work, the author gives himself the pen name Gǔ Shénzi 谷神子. A Sòng critic, Cháo Gōngwǔ 晁公武 (1105-80), suggested that the author's given name is Huángǔ 還古 but that the surname had been lost. Based upon this, the Míng critic Hú Yìnglín 胡應麟 suggested that the surname was Zhèng 鄭, making the author of this text the Táng poet Zhèng Huángǔ. This theory has proliferated and there seems to be little reason to negate it. Early sources, including the XTS, all have this text named as such and with three fascicles. However, as time progressed some of this knowledge was corrupted with some Míng bibliophiles naming the text *Bóyì Jì* 博異記 (Records of Ample Difference) and only recording one fascicle. Some excerpts from the Bóyì Zhì have also been recorded as coming from the *Chuányì Jì* 傳異記 (Records Transmitting Strangeness).

Excerpted Texts:
421.06 Zhào Qísōng
422.01 Xǔ Hànyáng
422.05 Wéi Sīgōng

Editions:
Gǔ Shénzǐ 谷神子 and Xuē Yòngruò 薛用弱. *Bóyì zhì, Jíyì Jì* 博異志、集異記. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 1980.

The text includes an introduction, annotations, and an appendix, but all of these are fairly minimal.

4. Cháoyě Qiān Zǎi 朝野僉載

United Records of the Court and the Commoners

As this text was lost sometime in the Míng, all modern editions are reconstructions based on excerpts in the TPGJ. Early sources suggest that this was originally in twenty fascicles and that this version existed through the Sòng and even into the Yuán. Most later, reconstructed editions are in one or six fascicles, but some in ten or fourteen. Humorously, some commentators have suggested the contents of this volume can be broken into three kinds of material: valuable records of court happenings; records of divinings, augury, etc., and rumors, stories, tales, myths. Of course, deciding which of these are valuable, authentic records and which of these are just rumors is impossible and somewhat misses the point of the zhìguài/chuánqí genre(s).

The author Zhāng Zhuó 張鷟 (c. 658-730), is recorded in both JTS and XTS. There is also biographical material available in his work itself (though that, as always, should be treated with some degree of suspicion). He passed the jìnshì examinations in 675 and held several official positions through his life. One important note is that, as he died during Xuánzōng's reign, he would not have been able to record any events after Xuánzōng, nor would he have used Xuánzōng's posthumous title as the title Xuánzōng was not yet awarded. Several of the tales attributed to CYQZ occur after Zhāng's death or include the title Xuánzōng, suggesting that items were added or edited after his death or that these entries are misattributed.

Master Fúxiū 浮休子 is the name by which Zhāng Zhuó calls himself. The term fúxiū comes originally from Zhuāngzi and has taken on a meaning related to the brevity and impermanence of life. (Perhaps similar to the way English speakers use the idea of life being but a dream.)

Excerpted Texts:
420.03 Wáng Jǐngróng

Editions:
QTXS 1449–1544
Zhāng Zhuó 張鷟. *Cháoyě Qiān Zǎi* 朝野僉載. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 1979.

5. Chuánqí 傳奇

Relaying Marvels

Unfortunately, the full version of this text was lost to history. Early sources (XTS, *Chóngwén Zǒngmù 崇文總目*) indicate that the full text had three fascicles and was written by a person named Péi Xíng 裴鉶. Notably, this is the first instantiated use of the term chuánqí, which later came to be a genre label (with much dispute). As we have no full manuscript, the versions that are produced now are reconstructions based on excerpted texts in sources like the TPGJ. Altogether, the TPGJ lists twenty five excerpts from Relaying Marvels, the Lèishuō 類說 only lists twenty entries, but several of these are not in the TPGJ, and the Lèishuō does not list eight of the titles that the TPGJ attributes to Relaying Marvels. This kind of issue goes on with more anthologies listing or neglecting various tales. One reason for the confusion is the simplicity of the work's title. There is another work entitled Relaying Records, chuánjì 傳記 written by Liú Sù 劉餗. Due to the incredibly similar sound of the two titles, the records were often mixed. Additionally, there are attributions to a text called Relaying Accounts, chuánzǎi 傳載. Some sources list this title as being written by Péi Xíng, some list it as being written by Liú Sù, and some suggest there are two works by this name, one by Liú Sù and one by a Sòng Dynasty monk, Zànníng 贊寧. Fortunately, a quorum of scholars seems to agree that the text on hand was written by Péi Xíng and that it consists of thirty tales, ten tales per fascicle.

Excerpted Texts:
422.03 Zhōu Hán
424.08 The Pool of the Five Peaked Mountain

Editions:
Wáng Mèng'ōu 王夢鷗. *Tángrén Xiǎoshuō Yánjiū* 唐人小說研究. Táiběi Xiàn Bǎnqiáo 臺北縣板橋: Yìwén Yìnshūguǎn 藝文印書館, 1971.

Full edition with introduction and annotation. Introduction is excellent and detailed; the annotation is relatively sparse.

Zhōu Léngqié 周楞伽. *Péi Xíng Chuánqí* 裴鉶傳奇. Shànghǎi 上海: Shànghǎi Gǔjí Chūbǎnshè 上海古籍出版社, 1980.

Full edition with introduction, annotation, and very brief note after each entry. Annotation in this edition is more extensive than in Wang's edition. The introduction is written in a more accessible style, though the information is less extensive.

6. Dàojiā Zájì 道家雜記

Miscellaneous Daoist Records

Information on this text is unfortunately scarce. No edition of it survives to today, and no references are made to it in dynastic bibliographies. Common modern sources on these texts also have nothing to offer. The tale 418.03 Zhāng Lǔ's Daughter 張魯女 is the only text preserved in the TPGJ. Zhāng Lǔ (d. 216) was a Celestial Daoist Master following in the footsteps of his grandfather, Zhāng Dàolíng 張道陵 who often appears in zhìguài texts. Zhāng Lǔ had several daughters, one of whom married Cáo Yǔ 曹宇, son of the infamous Cáo Cāo of the Three Kingdoms Era. It is unclear, however, which of Zhāng Lǔ's daughters this tale refers to. Searching through the Sìkù, there is only one other reference to this tale. The *Shuǐjīng Zhù* 水經注 (Notes on the Water Classic) mentions that there is a "Mistress Mountain" 女郎山 (Nǚláng Shān) with a small stream that goes down to the Hàn river and a path on which no plants grow. The texts suggests that this generic mistress is sometimes identified as Zhāng Lǔ's daughter. This information roughly matches that given in this tale.

The *Shuǐjīng Zhù* is a commentary upon the older text, the *Shuǐjīng* which is unfortunately no longer extant. The *Shuǐjīng* was compiled approximately concurrently with Zhāng Lǔ's life. It seems likely that this text on Zhāng Lǔ's daughter may have been written in response to the materials in the *Shuǐjīng* and then recorded in the *Shuǐjīng Zhù*. This would then date the work to 220-527.

It is, however, also possible that this tale was only composed in response to the *Shuǐjīng Zhù* in which case it could post-date 527. Given that *Shuǐjīng Zhù* does suggest there were contemporaries identifying the unnamed mistress with Zhāng Lǔ's daughter, if the text does post-date the *Shuǐjīng Zhù*, I would imagine that these texts would be only slightly after 527.

Absent of any conclusive textual history, I hesitantly venture the guess that this text was composed in the first half of the sixth century.

Excerpted Texts:
418.03 Zhāng Lǔ's Daughter

7. Dàtáng Zájì 大唐雜記

Miscellaneous Records of the Great Táng

Unfortunately, very little is known about this source text. It is likely that *Dàtáng* was added to the title after the end of the Táng Dynasty, and that the original title was simply *Zájì* 雜記, which appears often in titles. The bibliographical section of the *Xīn Táng Shū* 新唐書 does list a text simply called *Zájì* 雜記 of 12 *juàn*, but gives no author. The *Chóngwén Zǒngmù* 崇文總目 also lists a title of *Zájì* 雜記, with only 6 *juàn*, and also no author. Additionally, the only excerpt in the TPGJ attributed to this title is 423.11 Golden Dragonlet,

which does not provide much information. Based solely on the title and the contents of 423.11, it appears that the source text was written near the end of the Táng and may contain information about the court.

Excerpted Texts:
423.11 Golden Dragonlet

8. Dàyè Shíyí Jì 大業拾遺記

Records of Lost Stories from the Dàyè [Reign Era]

This text is dubiously attributed to Yán Shīgǔ 顏師古 (581-645). Yán wrote a collection called *Nánbù Yānhuā Lù* 南部煙花錄 which, according to the Southern Sòng bibliographic record *Jùnzhāi Dúshū Zhì* 郡齋讀書志 by one Cháo Gōngwǔ 晁公武 (1105-80), was edited and retitled by a monk in the 840s. Naturally, this leaves the question of the authorship of this text open to debate. As for dating the text, most of the dates internal to the tales do occur within Yán's lifetime.

It is worth noting that though 418.13 Jade Cài is attributed to *Dàyè Shíyí Jì* 大業拾遺記, modern editions of both source texts agree that the tale belongs to *Wáng Zǐnián Shíyí Jì* 王子年拾遺記.

Excerpted Texts:
418.13 Jade Cài

Editions:
Yán Shīgǔ 顏師古. "Dàyè Shíyí Jì 大業拾遺記." in *Zhōngguó Wényán Xiǎoshuō* 中國文言小說: *Bǎi bù Jīngdiǎn* 百部經典. Shǐ Zhòngwén 史仲文 (Ed.). Běijīng 北京: Běijīng Chūbǎnshè 北京出版社, 2000. v. 11 p. 3833–8.

This is a large anthology that includes full texts of many of the less commonly printed titles used as source material for the TPGJ. Unfortunately, there are no introductions or appendices, and only minimal notes.

9. Dúyì Zhì 獨異志

Annals of the Singularly Strange

Usually attributed to a Lǐ Kàng 李伉. Several early bibliographies have variations on his personal name (Kàng 伉, Kàng 亢, Rǒng 冗, Yuán 元), but it seems that these are likely all variations on or mistakes for Kàng 伉. There is a Lǐ Kàng 李伉 who took official positions in 840

and 865, giving approximate dates for his life. This fits roughly with the last dated event in the text itself, occurring in 849.

Excerpted Texts:
424.02 The Person from Wúshān

Editions:
Lǐ Rǒng 李冗, Zhāng Dú 張讀. *Dúyì Zhì, Xuānshì Zhì* 獨異志、宣室志. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 1983.

10. Fǎyuàn Zhūlín 法苑珠林

A Pearl Forest in the Garden of the Dharma

This mid-Imperial encyclopedia of Buddhism was compiled by the monk Dàoshì 道世 (ca. 600-683) who wrote or edited many texts on Buddhism. The original preface by a Lǐ Yǎn 李儼 dates completion of text to 668. Interestingly, this text contains both translated Buddhist scripture and explicatory works that originate in China. The text excerpted in this section of the TPGJ belongs to texts of non-Chinese origin, clearly similar to the Lotus Sutra.

Excerpted Texts:
420.01 The Country of Jùmíng

Editions:
Zhōu Shūjiā 周叔迦. *Fǎyuàn Zhūlín Jiàozhù* 法苑珠林校注. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 2003.

420.01 The Country of Jùmíng 俱名國 can be found on page 2619. Though it has numerous slight differences, none significantly impact the tale.

11. Gǎnyìng Jīng 感應經

The Classic of Interactions

There are two texts by this name given in the "Yìwénzhì" 藝文志 of the *Sòngshǐ* 宋史. One by a Lǐ Chúnfēng 李淳風 (602–70), and the other by Dōngfāng Shuò 東方朔 (ca. 154 BCE – ca.93 BCE). Of the 19 excerpts attributed to this title in the TPGJ, most either reference events that happened after Dōngfāng Shuò died, or explicitly mention Lǐ Chúnfēng himself. We can thus reasonably assume that these tales are from the text by Lǐ. Lǐ is best known for inventing a

new calendar system. He wrote on astronomy, mathematics, and most intriguingly a book of prophecies.

Unfortunately, the text by Lǐ is no longer extant and only nineteen tales are preserved in the TPGJ. Many of these are very brief and often directly quote information found in other source texts. (These include *Bówù Zhì* 博物志, *Lùnhéng* 論衡, *Sōushén Jì* 搜神記, *Wáng Zǐnián Shíyí Jì* 王子年拾遺記, and *Yì Yuàn* 異苑.)

Excerpted Texts:
418.07 Dragon Field

Editions:
Lǐ Chúnfēng 李淳風. *Gǎnyìng Jīng: Sān Juàn* 感應經: 三卷. Shànghǎi 上海: Shāngwù Yìnshūguǎn 商務印書館, 1927.

12. Gānzé Yáo 甘澤謠

Sweet Rain Rumors

Written by Yuán Jiāo 袁郊 about whom fairly little is known. He was the son of a Grand Councilor, Yuán Zī 袁滋 (749-818). From his father's biographies in the Xīn Táng Shū, we know that Jiāo was a Hànlín Academician, a Prefect of Guózhōu 虢州, and a Director Ministry of Sacrifices 祠部郎中. Beyond that, nothing is known. From the text of Gānzé Yáo, we know that he wrote the tales as he lay ill in the spring of 868.

The earliest edition of the text is a Míng dynasty recreation based on the texts of the TPGJ. The editor and reconstructor, Yáng Yì 楊儀 took the eight texts attributed to Gānzé Yáo in the TPGJ and added 195.05 Niè Yǐnniáng 聶隱娘 even though that text is attributed to Chuánqí 傳奇. After this, all editions have followed Yáng, though not all have included 195.05 Niè Yǐnniáng.

Excerpted Texts:
420.05 Táo Xiàn

Editions:
Yuán Jiāo 袁郊. *Gānzé Yáo Píngzhù*《甘澤謠》評註. Běijīng 北京: Zhōngguó Shèhuìkēxué Chūbǎnshè 中國社會科學出版社, 2013.

13. Guǎngyì Jì 廣異記

Great Book of Marvels

This text is attributed to Dài Fú 戴孚. Unfortunately, there is no formal record of Dài Fú's life. A preface to the Guǎngyì Jì (GYJ) preserved in the *Wényuàn Yīnghuá* 文苑英華 states that he received his jìnshì in 757, the same year as the author of the preface, Gù Kuàng 顧況. Unfortunately, the text itself has been lost to time and only excerpts preserved in other texts remain. The TPGJ contains roughly 300 excerpts. Helpfully, Gù Kuàng's preface specifies that the original text was roughly 100,000 Chinese characters. The excerpts in the TPGJ also number roughly 100,000 Chinese characters, suggesting that most of the text has been preserved. The GYJ was rather influential for later writers, inspiring many famous later works.

Excerpted Texts:
420.06 Qí Huàn
425.15 Sū Tǐng
425.16 Fighting a Flood Dragon

Editions:
QTXS 420–577
Táng Lín 唐臨, Dài Fú 戴孚. *Míngbào Jì, Guǎngyì Jì* 冥報記、廣異記. Fāng Shīmíng 方詩銘, ed. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 1992.

14. Guóshǐ Bǔ 國史補

Supplements to the National History

Also called the Táng Guóshǐ Bǔ 唐國史補, written by Lǐ Zhào 李肇. Several editions have been independently transmitted. No information on Lǐ Zhào exists outside of his own preface to the work. In the preface, the author states that he has collected events from the Kāiyuán 開元 Reign Era (713-41) to the Chángqìng 長慶 Reign Era (821-4) that he feared would be left out of history. He also explicitly states that he has not included anything about [divine] retribution, gods and ghosts, or dreams and divination. He has only recorded true events, explorations into the working of the universe, discussions on confusing topics, records of local customs, or jokes.

Excerpted Texts:
420.09 The Well Dragon
420.11 The Dragon Gate

423.02 Yuán Yìfāng

Editions:

Lǐ Zhào 李肇. “Xīnjiào Táng Guóshǐ Bǔ 新校唐國史補.” *Táng Guóshǐ Bǔ Děng Bāzhǒng* 唐國史補等八種. Yáng Jiāluò 楊家駱, ed. Táiběi 臺北: Shìjiè Shūjú 世界書局, 1962.

Also contains *Xīnjiào Yīnhuà Lù* 新校因話錄 by Zhào Lín 趙璘, *Jí Yì Jì* 集異記 by Xuē Yòngruò 薛用弱, *Bó Yì Zhì* 博異志 by Gǔ Shénzǐ 谷神, *Xīnjiào Yúnxī Yǒuyì* 新校雲溪友議 by Fàn Shū 范攄, *Xīnjiào Jiàofāng Jì* 新校教坊記 by Cuī Lìngqīn 崔令欽, *Xīnjiào Běilǐ Zhì* 新校北里志 by Sūn Qǐ 孫棨, and *Chuán Qí* 傳奇 by Péi Xíng 裴鉶.

This edition includes the introduction included in the Sìkù and the original preface. Unfortunately, there are no textual notes or other explanatory material.

Lǐ Zhào 李肇. “Táng Guó Shǐ Bǔ 國史補.” *Zhōngguó Wényán Xiǎoshuō* 中國文言小說: *Bǎi bù Jīngdiǎn* 百部經典. Shǐ Zhòngwén 史仲文 (Ed.). Běijīng 北京: Běijīng Chūbǎnshè 北京出版社, 2000. v. 11 p. 3577–621.

This is a large anthology that includes full texts of many of the less commonly printed titles used as source material for the TPGJ. Unfortunately, there are no introductions or appendices, and only minimal notes.

15. Jī Shén Lù 稽神錄

Records Examining Gods

The preface to this work by Xú Xuàn 徐鉉 says that it contains 150 entries written over a twenty year span from 935 to 955. Interestingly, the TGPJ contains more than 150 entries, some of which slightly postdate 955. As Xú Xuàn was one of the editors of the TPGJ, and specifically asked Lǐ Fǎng 李昉, the head editor, for his work to be included, it is quite possible that entries Xú wrote after the preface were included in the anthology.

Excerpted Texts:

423.15 Old Man Liǔ

Editions:

Xú Xuàn 徐鉉. *Jī Shén Lù* 稽神錄. Shànghǎi 上海: Shāngwù Yìnshūguǎn 商務印書館, 1920.

Xú Xuàn 徐鉉. *Jī Shén Lù: Shíyí* 稽神錄：拾遺. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 1985.

Xú Xuàn 徐鉉, Zhāng Shīzhèng 張師正. *Jī Shén Lù; Kuòyì Zhì* 稽神錄；括異志. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 1996.

Xú Xuàn 徐鉉. *Jī Shén Lù* 稽神錄. Shànghǎi 上海: Shànghǎi Gǔjí Chūbǎnshè 上海古籍出版社, 2012.

16. Jì Wén 紀聞

Chronicles of News

Authored by Niú Sù 牛肅, about whom very little is known. Unfortunately, this text has been lost to time and all received editions have been reconstructed from the TPGJ. The editors of the TPGJ also attribute texts likely to have come from this work to the titles of *Jì Wén* 記聞 and *Jì Wén Lù* 紀聞錄. Some tales attributed to this text are repeated in other sections of the TPGJ and attributed to other sources (including *Cháoyě Qiān Zǎi* 朝野僉載 and *Xù Sōushén Jì* 續搜神記). It is worth noting that the origin of "Zīzhōu Lóng" is specifically questioned. As most of the entries reliably attributed to Jì Wén date to the reign of Emperor Xuánzōng (712-56) or earlier, "Zīzhōu Lóng," which dates to roughly 785-805, may be too late to reasonably come from this text.

Excerpted Texts:
422.04 The Dragon from Zīzhōu
422.07 Lú Hàn

Editions:
QTXS 276–353

17. Jiǔjiāng Jì 九江記

The Records of Jiǔjiāng

Unfortunately, there is no extant scholarship on this source text. The TPGJ records five excerpts, and the TPYL records two. Both of the texts that can be dated, 425.12 Wáng Zhí and 468.10 Gù Bǎozōng are set approximately in 420 CE, meaning that the text must date later than that, and may well be temporally close.

Excerpted Texts:
425.12 Wáng Zhí
425.13 Lù Shè'ér

18. Jíyì Jì 集異記

Notes Collecting Strangeness

The author of this text, Xuē Yòngruò 薛用弱, styled Zhōngshèng 中勝, was a prefect of Guāngzhōu 光州 during the Chángqìng 長慶 Reign Era (821–4 CE). In the beginning of the Dàhé 大和 Reign Era (827–35) he left his position as Director of the Section for Ministry Affairs 億曹郎 and became the prefect of Yìyáng 弋陽.

The text was originally three fascicles, but much of this was quickly lost and received versions have only a few entries. These are corroborated in the TPGJ, which has an additional 70 entries attributed to a text by this name. Unfortunately, from the Six Dynasties to the end of the Táng, there were two other texts with the same title: one by Guō Jìchǎn 郭季產, and one by Lù Xūn 陸勛. Some of the entries in the TPGJ clearly belong to one of the other works titled Jíyì Jì, but others are unclear. Still other entries seem to belong to none of the three and can be found in received editions of other texts (including Yǒuyáng Zázǔ and Shùyì Jì).

Excerpted Texts:
422.02 Liú Yǔxī
422.09 Wéi Yòu

Editions:
Gǔ Shénzǐ 谷神子 and Xuē Yòngruò 薛用弱. *Bóyì Zhì, Jíyì Jì* 博異志、集異記. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 1980.

This text includes a section of all of the other material attributed to the Jíyì Jì in the TPGJ. The editors note that many texts suggested to be from the JYJ are likely not from this text and have not included them (see page two for more detail). The text includes an introduction, annotations, and an appendix, but all of these are fairly minimal. (It should be noted that this text also includes the Bóyì Zhì.)

19. Jù Tán Lù 劇談錄

Records of Numerous Talks

Though most editions and mid-Imperial bibliographies attribute this text to a Kāng Pián 康駢, Liú p. 245 and Rénwù Suǒyǐn agree that this is a mistake for Kāng Píng 康軿 who attained jìnshì in 877 and completed this text in 895. Several editions have been transmitted to the present. Most commonly, Míng dynasty editions note this work is comprised of two *juàn*. Some Qīng works claim to have a third *juàn*, though, per Lǐ, these are no longer extant.
Lǐ Jiàn'guó's 李劍國 2017 *Táng Wǔdài Zhìguài Chuánqí Xùlù* 唐五代志怪傳奇敘錄 gives very extensive notes on the texts included in the volume. (v. 3 p. 1267–84)

Excerpted Texts:
423.09 Huáyīn Marsh
423.10 Cuī Dàoshū

Editions:
QTXS 1382–1408
Kāng Pián 康駢, Zhāng Gǔ 張固. *Jù Tán Lù, Yōujiān Gǔchuī* 劇談録、幽閒鼓吹. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 1991.

20. Kāitiān Chuánxìn Jì 開天傳信記

Records Relaying the Truth of the Kāi[yuán] and Tiān[bǎo] [Reign Eras]

The author of this text, Zhèng Qǐ 鄭綮 (d. 899), has biographies in both JTS and XTS. No date is given for his successful jìnshì exam, though he did pass and held several official positions. Emperor Zhāozōng 唐昭宗 promoted him to the rank of prime minister at the beginning of the Guānghuà 光化 Reign Era (898-901), but only three months into his tenure he fell ill and retired. He died shortly thereafter. A few editions of this text have been independently transmitted with no major differences between them. Oddly, both editors of the Sìkù and later scholars have felt it necessary to question the historical reliability portions of the text that contain supernatural elements.

Excerpted Texts:
420.10 Zhānrán River

Editions:
Cuī Lìngqīn 崔令欽, Lǐ Déyù 李德裕, Zhèng Qǐ 鄭綮, Duàn Ānjié 段安節. *Jiàofáng Jì, Cì Liǔshì Jiùwén, Kāitiān Chuánxìn Jì, Yuèfǔ Zálù* 教坊記、次柳氏舊聞、開天傳信記、樂府雜録. Wú Qǐmíng 吳企明, ed. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 2012.

21. Liǎng Jīng Jì 兩京記

Record of Two Capitals

Also listed as A New Record of Two Capitals, *Liǎng Jīng Xīn Jì* 兩京新記. This work by Wéi Shù 韋述, records events of the dual capitals of Cháng'ān 長安 and Luòyáng 洛陽. Unfortunately, the text itself has been lost to time and the versions now circulated are reconstructions based on the TPGJ and other texts. Interestingly, the work has apparently been largely regarded as historical source material and even in the Sòng prompted other writers to

record geographical/anthropological accounts of Hé'nán 河南 and Cháng'ān 長安. Xīn Déyǒng's 辛德勇 preface to his edition provides more specific detail on the transmission history of this work, including versions circulated in Japan. He also appends a translation of a significantly longer introduction to the work by Fukuyama Toshio 福山敏男, a Japanese scholar .

Excerpted Texts:
418.10 Empress Wǔ of Liáng

Editions:
Wéi Shù 韋述, Dù Bǎo 杜寶. *Liǎng Jīng Xīn Jì Jíjiào 兩京新記輯校; Dàyè Zájì Jíjiào* 大業雜記輯校. Xīn Déyǒng 辛德勇, ed. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 2020.

22. Liáng Sìgōng Jì 梁四公記

The Records of the Four Dukes of Liáng

The author of this work, Zhāng Yuè 張説 (667-731), was a well-respected official and literatus throughout the Táng Dynasty. He served as an official during the reign of Emperor Wǔ Zhào 武曌 (r.690-705) and as chancellor during both the second reign of Emperor Ruìzōng 睿宗 (r. 710-2) and Emperor Xuánzōng 玄宗 (r. 712-56). Full biographies can be found in both JTS 97 and XTS 125.

Unfortunately, this work itself has not survived and only the three texts preserved in the TPGJ (two on dragons) are extant. The four dukes of the title are Xié Chuǎng 蜀闖, Nóu Jié 黣傑, Shú Tuān 赎黯, and Zhǎng Dǔ 仉督, who all visited Emperor Wǔ of Liáng 梁武帝 (464-549 r. 502-49).

Excerpted Texts:
418.08 Five Colored Stone
418.09 Zhènzé Cave

Editions:
QTXS 213–9

23. Lǐngbiǎo Lùyì 嶺表錄異

Records of Strangeness from the Surface of Mountain Ranges

As this work is generally considered to be a geographical or anthropological work, it is not found in many of the resources dedicated to "literary" works. It largely records creatures,

customs, and culture from the southern portion of China and the Lǐngnán 嶺南 Circuit specifically. It is attributed to a Liú Xún 劉恂 about whom very little is known. (There is also a prince of the Three Kingdoms era by this name, but that is clearly not the correct person). Dates internal to the stories suggest that the text was written in the late ninth century.

Excerpted Texts:
424.04 Old Lady Wēn

Editions:
Liú Xún 劉恂. *Lǐngbiǎo Lùyì* 嶺表錄異. Chángshā 長沙: Shāngwù Yìnshūguǎn 商務印書館, 1941.
Liú Xún 劉恂. *Lǐngbiǎo Lùyì* 嶺表錄異. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 1985.
Liú Xún 劉恂. *Lǐngbiǎo Lùyì Jiàobǔ* 嶺表錄異校補. Nánníng 南宁: Guǎngxī Mínzú Chūbǎnshè 廣西民族出版社, 1988.

24. Luòyáng Qiélán Jì 洛陽伽藍記

Records of the Monasteries in Luòyáng

This work by Yáng Xuànzhī 楊衒之 was likely written around 547 and serves to document the city of Luòyáng 洛陽 after multiple episodes of political turmoil had destroyed much of the city. Interestingly, the work is often regarded as a factual work of geography or anthropology, and not of tall tales. Though the work theoretically focuses on the monasteries throughout the city, much of the work documents other buildings.

Excerpted Texts:
418.12 Sòng Yún

Editions:
Yáng Xuànzhī 楊衒之. *Luòyáng Qiélán Jì Jiàozhù* 洛陽伽藍記校注. Fàn Xiángyōng 范祥雍, ed. Shànghǎi 上海: Shànghǎi Gǔjí Chūbǎnshè 上海古籍出版社, 1978.
Yáng Xuànzhī 楊衒之. *Luòyáng Qiélán Jì Jiàojiān* 洛陽伽藍記校箋. Yáng Yǒng 楊勇, ed. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 2006.
Yáng Xuànzhī 楊衒之. *Luòyáng Qiélán Jì Yìzhù* 洛陽伽藍記譯注. Zhōu Zhènfǔ 周振甫, ed. Nánjīng 南京: Jiāngsū Jiàoyù Chūbǎnshè 江苏教育出版社, 2006.

25. Lùyì Jì 錄異記

Notes Recording Strangeness

Written by Dù Guāngtíng 杜光庭 (850-933), a famous Daoist of the late Táng and subsequent Five Dynasty period. He joined the court of Emperor Xīzōng 僖宗 (r. 874-88) and followed him into exile in 881 during the Huáng Chǎo 黃巢 Rebellion. His other works have very pronounced Daoist themes and messaging. He also authored another source text, *Shénxiān Gǎnyù Zhuàn* 神仙感遇傳, which contains an edition of his most famous work, 194.02 "The Curly Bearded Guest" 虯髯客. CWZM suggests that the original edition of this text existed in ten fascicles. All received versions have only eight.

Excerpted Texts:
423.12 Huáng Xùn
425.03 Wáng Zōngláng
425.04 The Dragons of Xīpǔ
425.05 The Fish from the Well

Editions:
Dù Guāngtíng 杜光庭. *Dù Guāngtíng Jì Zhuàn Shízhǒng Jíjiào* 杜光庭記傳十種輯校 (Ten Records of Dù Guāngtíng, Compiled and Edited). Luó Zhēngmíng 羅争鳴, ed. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 2013.

26. Róngmù Xiántán 戎幕閑談

Idle Talk from Military Tents

This text was authored by Wéi Xuàn 韋絢 (801– c. 870), son of Wéi Zhíyì 韋執誼 (764-812), a chancellor under both Shùnzōng 順宗 and Xiànzōng 憲宗(JTS 135 XTS 168). Little is known about him except for the information contained in this and his other work *Liú Bīnkè Jiāhuà Lù* 劉賓客嘉話錄, which is fortunately plentiful. He was the son-in-law of Yuán Zhěn 元稹 (779-831), well-known author of "Yīngyīng Zhuàn" 鶯鶯傳. In the late 820s and early 830s, he lived in modern Sìchuān, where he met Lǐ Déyù 李德裕 (787-850). In 831, he compiled Róngmù Xiántán from the stories told by Lǐ (theoretically while in military tents as Lǐ had been sent to the area to quell invasions from the southwest). Unfortunately, this text has long been lost and only excerpts in *Lèishuō* 類說, *Shuōfú* 説郛, and the TPGJ have survived.

Excerpted Texts:
424.10 The Chicken-Expending Master

Editions:
QTXS 2806–20

27. Sān Wú Jì 三吳記

Notes of the Three Wú

Unfortunately, there does not appear to be any scholarship in any language on this source text. There are four excerpts in the TPGJ that all have relatively early dates (the end of the Hàn to the beginning of the Liú Sòng 劉宋, roughly 200 CE to 427 CE) and are all located on the eastern coast of China near the Qiántáng River 錢塘江. Though not all categorized as such (one tale is in the section on retribution, one in dragons, and two in aquatic creatures), all four entries relate to aquatic creatures. It seems likely, then, that this was a Six Dynasties work by someone from the northern part of modern Zhéjiāng and that either the entire work was focused on waterways and aquatic creatures, which given the proximity to rivers and the ocean is possible, or that only a section on the topic was included in the TPGJ.

Excerpted Texts:
425.11 Wáng Shù

28. Shàngshū Gùshí 尚書故實

The Minister's Tales

According to the preface of the work itself, Lǐ Chuò 李綽 had gone to Pǔtián 圃田 (modern Zhèngzhōu 鄭州) to "avoid disaster" during the Guǎngmíng 廣明 Reign Era (880–1). (The disaster he was avoiding was almost certainly the Huáng Chǎo 黃巢 Rebellion). While there, he recorded discussions he had with a" Guest of the Imperial Scion, the Minister of Hédōng 河東, Lord Zhāng 張." Unfortunately, the name of this Minister Zhāng is never specified. However, after his name is given, he is called a member of "a great family of three [Grand] Councilors and the refined hope of four dynasties" 三相盛門，四朝雅望. The Jiù Táng Shū 舊唐書 does note that during the Táng there was a notable "Three [Grand] Councilor Zhāng Family" 三相張氏 because three members of this family all served as Grand Councilors. (The three relevant men are Zhāng Jiāzhēn 張嘉貞 who served as Grand Councilor for Táng Xuánzōng 唐玄宗, Zhāng Yánshǎng 張延賞 who served as Grand Councilor for Táng Dézōng 唐德宗, and Zhāng Hóngjìng 張弘靖 who served as Grand Councilor for Táng Xiànzōng 唐憲宗.) It is possible that the Lord Zhāng mentioned belongs to this family. It has been suggested that Zhāng Yànyuán 張彥遠 might be a likely candidate for the mysterious Lord Zhāng. Although there are a number of editions in circulation, unfortunately they do not all agree on what is authentically attributable to this source text and the origins of some editions are unclear.

Excerpted Texts:
423.04 Tiger Skull
423.07 The Dragon Raiser

Editions:
Lǐ Chuò 李綽 and Wáng Dìngbǎo 王定保. *Shàngshū Gùshí* 尚書故實*, Táng Zhíyán* 唐摭言. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 1985.

29. Shénxiān Gǎnyù Zhuàn 神仙感遇傳

Tales in Response to Meeting with Immortals

Written by Dù Guāngtíng 杜光庭 (850-933), a famous Daoist of the late Táng and subsequent Five Dynasty period (see entry for Lùyì Jì 錄異記). There is an edition of this text that has been preserved in the Daoist Canon 道藏. That edition, however, does have missing text. The TPGJ contains additional texts that are attributed to Shénxiān Gǎnyù Zhuàn, but some of these attributions are dubious. In particular, "Shì Xuánzhào" may not be authored by Dù. This text is also sometimes confused with *Shénxiān Shíyí* 神仙拾遺 and *Yúnjí Qīqiān* 雲笈七籤, both also attributed to Dù Guāngtíng.

Excerpted Texts:
420.02 Shì Xuánzhào

Editions:
Dù Guāngtíng 杜光庭. *Dù Guāngtíng Jì Zhuàn Shízhǒng Jíjiào* 杜光庭記傳十種輯校 (Ten Records of Dù Guāngtíng, Compiled and Edited). Luó Zhēngmíng 羅爭鳴, ed. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 2013.

30. Shèzhōu Tújīng 歙州圖經

The Classic of Pictures from Shèzhōu

Unfortunately, there is extremely little information about this text. The only extant scholarship that mentions this title actually concerns a Southern Sòng text, the *Xīn'ān Zhì* 新安志, by Luó Yuàn 羅願. In the preface to the work, Luó suggests that the Shèzhōu Tújīng was an inspiration for his own work. However, all of the references he makes are to passages in the TPGJ, and not to the Shèzhōu Tújīng itself. This suggests that even as early as the Southern Sòng the text was either no longer extant or difficult to find. There are a total of six excerpts from the

text in the TPGJ and, as expected, all are placed in or near Shèzhōu 歙州, near Huángshān 黃山 in southern Ānhuī 安.

Excerpted Texts:
425.17 A Daughter of the Hóng Clan

General Studies:

For information on the *Xīn'ān Zhì* 新安志 that references the *Shèzhōu Tújīng*, see Xiāo Jiànxīn 肖建新, "Xīn'ān Zhì Zhìyuán Kǎoshù"《新安志》 志源考述, *Zhōngguó Dìfāngzhì* 中國地方誌 10 (2008): 44–8.

31. Shù Yì Jì 述異記

A Record Relating Strangeness

Unfortunately, there are two works by this title; one from the Southern Qí Dynasty 齊 (479-502), accredited to Zǔ Chōngzhī 祖冲之 (429–500), and the other from the Southern Liáng Dynasty 南梁 (502–557), accredited to Rén Fǎng 任昉 (460–508).

Zǔ's work was originally 10 *juàn* and was documented in the bibliographical sections of the *Suíshū* 隋書, *Jiù Táng Shū* 舊唐書, and *Xīn Táng Shū* 新唐書. This work is no longer extant; and though Lǔ Xùn 魯迅 attempted a reconstruction, Lǐ Jiànguó 李劍國 has doubted the accuracy of Lǔ's reconstruction.

Rén's work was first documented in the Sòng dynasty Chóngwén Zǒngmù 崇文總目 at two *juàn*. There is a received edition of this text, though it is highly likely that some of the contents belong to Zǔ's earlier work and some entries in Rén's work are identical or nearly identical to items from *Bówù Zhì 博物志*.

Excerpted Texts:
425.18 Hóng Zhēn

Editions:
One can find Lǔ Xùn's 魯迅 reconstruction of Zǔ Chōngzhī's *Shù Yì Jì* in Lǔ Xùn 魯迅, *Lǔ Xùn Quánjí* 魯迅全集 (Běijīng 北京: Rénmín Wénxué Chūbǎnshè 人民文學出版社, 1973).

32. Shuǐ Jīng Zhù 水經注

Notes on the Water Classic

This text is an annotation of an earlier text, the Shuǐ Jīng 水經 Water Classic (SJ). SJ was likely written in the Three Kingoms Era (220-80 CE). The Suí Shū 隋書 History of the Suí Dynasty (581-618 CE) suggests that the SJ was annotated (注) by Guō Pú 郭璞 (276-324 CE). The JTS changes the annotated to authored, suggesting that scholars between the Táng and Sòng may have believed the text to be authored by Guō Pú. The XTS, however claims the text to be authored by Sāng Qīn 桑欽 (n.d.) of the Eastern Hàn Dynasty (25-220 CE). From the Sòng onward, the general consensus seems to be that Sāng Qīn authored the original Shuǐ Jīng. During the Northern Wèi Dynasty (386-534), Lì Dàoyuán 酈道元 (c. 466-527 CE) "annotated" the Shuǐ Jīng to create Shuǐ Jīng Zhù 水經注. Unfortunately, it appears as though Lì not only annotated but also expanded upon the original text. With the passage of time, however, it is difficult to tell what material is original to the SJ, what are truly annotations, and what are new contributions by Lì.

Excerpted Texts:
418.02 Cáo Fèng

Editions:
Lì Dàoyuán 酈道元. *Shuǐjīng Zhù Jiào* 水經注校. Wáng Guówéi 王國維, ed. Táiběi 臺北: Xīn Wén Fēng Chūbǎn Gōngsī 新文豐出版公司, 1987.

This edition contains the full text and both a preface and textual notes by Wáng Guówéi.

33. Tángnián Bǔlù 唐年補錄

Supplements to the Records of the Táng Years

Unfortunately, nearly no scholarship has been performed on this volume. The work has been lost for quite some time. References to it in the Yùhǎi 玉海 and the Chóngwén Zǒngmù 崇文總目 suggest that it may have existed into the mid or even late Sòng and was originally 65 *juàn*. The author, Jiǎ Wěi 賈緯 (d. 952), was one of the editors of the Jiù Táng Shū 舊唐書. There is also an extant epitaph for him, which provides some context for his life. Although only 15 excerpts are preserved in the TPGJ (this includes tales that are attributed to *Bǔlù Jìzhuàn* 補錄記傳 and *Tángnián Bǔlù Jìzhuàn* 唐年補錄紀傳, which are assumed to be subsections of this text), from the combination of the contents of those excerpts, the author's profession, and the title of the work, it seems as though the Tángnián Bǔlù as a whole was intended to record events that would not make it into the formal histories of the Táng dynasty.

Excerpted Texts:
423.08 Kǒng Wēi

General Studies:

Guō Guìkūn 郭桂坤. “Jiǎ Wěi jíqí Tángnián Bǔlù 賈緯及其《唐年補錄》” (Jiǎ Wěi and his Tángnián Bǔlù). *Journal of Historiography* 史學史研究 1 (2014): 25–32.

34. Tōngyōu Jì 通幽記

A Record on Opening the Concealed

Unfortunately, this work has been lost and only excerpts in the TPGJ survive. Nothing is known about the author Chén Shào 陳劭/邵. Of the twenty tales preserved in the TPGJ, the latest date to the middle of the Táng, giving a rough date for the composition and life of the author (c. 800).

Excerpted Texts:

425.19 Old Flood Dragon

35. Wàiguóshì 外國事

Events Outside the Country

Unfortunately, very little is known about this text and its author. The text is attributed to a Jìn dynasty monk, Zhī Sēngzài 支僧載 who was not Chinese and traveled to China to spread Buddhism. Of the text itself, there is one entry in the TPGJ and four in the *Shuǐ Jīng Zhù* 水經注. All of these do seem to document the monk’s travels. Some scholars have suggested the book was likely still extant in the Sòng or even the Yuán though others seem to think it was lost before the Suí.

Excerpted Texts:

423.03 The Píngchāng Well

General Studies:

Chén Liánqìng 陳連慶. “Xīnjíběn Zhī Sēngzài Wàiguóshì Xù 新輯本支僧載《外國事》序.” *Gǔjíi Zhěnglǐ Yánjiū Xuékān* 古籍整理研究學刊. 1985 no. 1 p. 19–21.

Yán Shìmíng 顏世明 and Liú Lánfēn 劉蘭芬. “Zhī Sēngzài Wàiguóshì Jíshì—Xùxiū Sìkù Quánshū Zǒngmù Tíyào Bǔzhèng Yìzé 支僧載《外國事》輯釋——《續修四庫全書總目提要》補正一則.” *Nánhǎi Xuékān* 南海學刊 2 no. 2 (2016): 42–50.

Yáng Qīng 陽清. “Zhī Sēngzài Jíqí Wàiguóshì Zōngyì 支僧載及其《外國事》綜議.” *Zōngjiàoxué Yánjiū* 宗教學研究 2016 no. 4 p. 111–5.

36. Wáng Zǐnián Shíyí Jì 王子年拾遺記

Retold Tales by Wáng Zǐnián

The common reception history is that this work was written by a Wáng Jiā 王嘉 *zì* Zǐnián 子年(d. 390) and originally had 19 *juàn*. Much of the text was lost over the next century and so a Prince Xiāo Qí 蕭綺 of the Liáng 梁 recompiled the text into 10 *juàn*. However, the Míng scholar Hú Yìnglín 胡應麟 suggested that the text was in fact a forgery by Xiāo Qí and not written by Wáng Jiā at all.

Readers should note that the TPGJ is especially inconsistent in referencing this work. Attributions can be to *Wáng Zǐnián Shíyí Jì* 王子年拾遺記, just *Shíyí Jì* 拾遺記, or the *Shíyí Lù* 拾遺錄. In total there are 98 excerpts in the TPGJ to this text (王子年拾遺記 66, 拾遺記 3, 拾遺錄 29).

Furthermore, readers should also note that there are other titles that contain the terms *Shíyí Jì* 拾遺記 or *Shíyí Lù* 拾遺錄, most commonly the *Dàyè Shíyí Jì* 大業拾遺記. Of particular note is that though 418.13 Jade Cài is attributed to *Dàyè Shíyí Jì* 大業拾遺記, modern editions of both source texts agree that the tale belongs to *Wáng Zǐnián Shíyí Jì* 王子年拾遺記.

Excerpted Texts:
418.01 Azure Dragons
418.06 The Country of Southern Xún
418.07 Dragon Field
425.09 Emperor Wǔ of Hàn and the White Jiāo

Editions:
Wáng Jiā 王嘉. *Shíyí Jì* 拾遺記. Qí Zhìpíng 齊治平(Ed.). Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 1981.

37. Xiāoxiāng Lù 瀟湘錄

Records of the Xiāoxiāng

Differing mid-Imperial bibliographies have either Liǔ Xiáng 柳祥 or Lǐ Yǐn 李隱 as the author of this text. Unfortunately, there is very little information on either of these figures. The original text has been lost, but approximately forty tales have been preserved in the TPGJ (there are 39 texts that are certainly attributed to the *Xiāoxiāng Lù*, one that some editions of the TPGJ do not attribute to any source but other editions attribute to XXL, and four that are attributed to a *Xiāoxiāng Jì* 瀟湘記.)

The entry in Liú has interesting hypotheses about the mental state of the author of this text. Specifically, it is suggested that the author of this source text was depressed and angry at the world and that they likely held strong Confucian views.

Excerpted Texts:
424.11 The Old Lady of the Fén River

Editions:
Lǐ Yǐn 李隱. "Xiāoxiāng Lù 瀟湘錄." In *Zhōngguó Wényán Xiǎoshuō* 中國文言小說: *Bǎibù Jīngdiǎn* 百部經典. Shǐ Zhòngwén 史仲文 (Ed.). Běijīng 北京: Běijīng Chūbǎnshè 北京出版社, 2000. v. 10 p. 3339–78.

38. Xù Sōushén Jì 續搜神記

Continuing 'In Search of the Supernatural'
Also commonly called Sōushén Hòujì 搜神後記

This text is often attributed to Táo Yuānmíng 陶淵明, though the text contains a few stories from after his death (427 CE). It is likely that these were simply appended after his death, though some argue that the entire work may not have truly been written by Táo. The received edition of the text is in ten *juàn* and contains 122 entries, six of which are restorations of excerpts found in various anthologies. As one would expect from any text by Táo, the work contains elements of both Daoism and Buddhism. Liú also notes an interest in caves in the text and ties it to Táo's famous "Táohuāyuán Jì" 桃花源記.

Excerpted Texts:
425.14 A Woman of Chángshā

Editions:
Wáng Gēnlín 王根林, Huáng Yìyuán 黃益元, and Cáo Guāngfǔ 曹光甫, eds. *Hàn Wèi Liùcháo Bǐjì Xiǎoshuō Dàguān* 漢魏六朝筆記小說大觀. Shànghǎi 上海: Shànghǎi Gǔjí Chūbǎnshè 上海古籍出版社, 1999.

This text contains Sōushén Hòu Jì 搜神後記 on pages 436–86. The editors provide a very brief discussion on the contested authorship of the text. Though the editors have done text-critical work, they do not note the changes they have made. This text also includes the Bówù Zhì and the Shíyí Jì, among many others. "Chángshā Nǚ" appears on page 484 under the title "Jiāozǐ" 蛟子.

39. Xù Xuánguài Lù 續玄怪錄

Continuing 'Records of the Mysterious and Strange'

The Xù Xuánguài Lù was written by a Lǐ Fùyán 李复言 about whom nothing is known. However, there is one source that lists a Lǐ Fùyán and says that he was born in the same year as Bái Jūyì 白居易 (772 CE) his style name was Liàng 諒. Sources for Lǐ Liàng are more numerous. Lǐ Liàng passed the jìnshì examination in 800, eventually became the Military Commissioner of Lǐngnán 嶺南節度使, and died in 833. The only issue with this is that Niú Sēngrú 牛僧孺, author of Xuánguài Lù 玄怪錄, was born in 780, passed the jìnshì in 805, and died in 849. All of these dates are later than Lǐ Liàng, which has caused commentators to question why someone would write a sequel to a book written by someone younger than them.
Another question is the length of this book. The XTS says that the text should be five fascicles, the CWZM suggests ten, the Sìkù has it listed as four. Unfortunately, the versions that have been transmitted to the present only have one or two fascicles. One potential reason for this is that, since the Sòng, the Xù Xuánguài Lù has always been appended at the end of the Xuánguài Lù, and some of the text originally in the sequel may have found its way into the original. Fortunately, as with many of the other texts discussed here, scholars have attempted to restore some of the content with the excerpts found in the TPGJ.

Excerpted Texts:
418.14 Lǐ Jìng
421.03 Liú Guàncí

Editions:
Niú Sēngrú 牛僧孺, Lǐ Fùyán 李复言. *Xuánguài Lù, Xù Xuánguài Lù* 玄怪錄，續玄怪錄. Chéng Yìzhōng 程毅中, ed. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 2006.

40. Xuānshì Zhì 宣室志

Annals of the Declaration Room

Early bibliographies attribute this text to Zhāng Dú 張讀 and states that it was comprised of 10 *juàn*. The earliest edition that has been transmitted to present is a Míng dynasty hand-copy that purports to be based upon a Sòng edition. The received text is certainly not complete, as an early bibliographer noted that the full edition had a preface that has not been transmitted to present. Additionally, many of the texts in the TPGJ attributed to the Xuānshì Zhì are not in the transmitted edition. Moreover, none of the texts present in the

transmitted edition are not found in the TPGJ and there is very little textual variation. This has led Lǐ Jiàn'guó 李劍國 to suggest that the received edition is likely merely a collection of excerpts based solely on the TPGJ. The latest tale in the collection dates to the Xiántōng 咸通 Reign Era (860–874), giving an approximate date of the compilation of the work. It is worth noting that the Declaration Room in the title is a reference to a story in the Shǐjì 史記 where Emperor Wǔ of Hàn 漢武帝 discussed tales of the supernatural in his declaration room.

The author, Zhāng Dú 張讀, was the great-great-grandson of Zhāng Zhuó 張鷟, author of Cháoyě Qiān Zǎi 朝野僉載, and grandson of Zhāng Jiàn 張薦, author of Língguài Jí 靈怪集. Exact dates of his birth and death are not recorded. However, he passed the *jìnshì* in 852 at the age of 19 (placing the date of his birth in 833). In 880, due to the fall of Cháng'ān 長安 in the Huáng Chǎo 黃巢 Rebellion, he followed Táng Xīzōng 唐僖宗 into Shǔ 蜀.

Excerpted Texts:
420.08 The Dragon of the Xīngqìng Pool
421.01 Xiāo Xīn
421.05 Rèn Xù
422.06 Lú Yuányù
422.08 Lǐ Xiū
423.01 Lú Jūnchàng
423.05 Fǎxǐ Temple
423.06 Dragon Shrine

Editions:
Lǐ Rǒng 李冗, Zhāng Dú 張讀. *Dúyì Zhì, Xuānshì Zhì* 獨異志、宣室志. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 1983.

A decent edition with prefaces, annotation, and appendices. Relevant texts only appear in the *jíyì* 輯佚 (p.188-192) section that the editors compiled using the TPGJ as a base. In the eight tales, only one character has been changed based on a parallel text from a different source.

41. Xúnyáng Jì 潯陽記

Notes from Xúnyáng

Unfortunately, there is very little information on this source text. There are two excerpts in the TPGJ, one of which lists a Zhāng Sēngjiàn 張僧鑒 as the author. Other than that he lived

during the Western Jìn, which does fit with the dates given in the excerpts, there is no information available on Zhāng.

Excerpted Texts:
425.10 Xúnyáng Bridge

42. Yěrén Xiánhuà 野人閑話

Gossip from Savage People
Also Written: 野人閒話

The text is attributed to a Jǐng Huàn 景煥 who appears in 459.19 Jǐng Huàn. In the *Yìwén Zhì of the Sòngshǐ 宋史藝文志*, the author's name is listed as Gěng Huàn 耿煥, perhaps to avoid the taboo on characters associated with the name of Sòng Tàizōng 宋太宗. Gěng Huàn 耿煥 was also called Yùlěi Shān Rén 玉壘山人 (The Man of Mt. Yùlěi). This Gěng was a person of Chéngdū who eventually became the District Magistrate of Báishí in Bìzhōu 壁州白石縣令. Unfortunately, the original text has been lost. The TPGJ preserves 31 excerpts, and the Shuōfú 說郛 preserves seven as well as an original preface dated to 965 CE. The preface states that the text records happenings in the court of the Later Shǔ 後蜀 Dynasty.

Excerpted Texts:
425.08 Dreaming of a Servant

43. Yìshǐ 逸史

Lost Histories

Several early bibliographies either state that they do not know who authored this work, or simply state that it was written by someone during the Dàzhōng 大中 Reign Era. Others are slightly more specific and state that it was written by a Master Lú 盧子 or a Mister Lú 盧氏. A few give the author's full name, Lú Zhào 盧肇. As Lú Zhào has the appropriate surname and lived during the Dàzhōng Reign Era, this is likely accurate. Lú was born 818, became *zhuàngyuán* in 843, and died in 882.

According to a preface preserved in the In Shuōfú 說郛, Lú completed the text in the eighth month of the first year of the Dàzhōng Reign Era (847 CE). Unfortunately, the text has been lost for quite some time and though there were manuscripts made as early as 1817, these are likely reconstructions based on excerpts preserved in anthologies. There are 77 texts preserved in the TPGJ.

Excerpted Texts:
420.04 The Girl from Rippling Pond
424.07 Duke Zhāng's Cave

Editions:
QTXS 812–73
Lú Zhào 盧肇. "Yìshǐ 逸史." In *Zhōngguó Wényán Xiǎoshuō* 中國文言小說: *Bǎibù Jīngdiǎn* 百部經典. Shǐ Zhòngwén 史仲文 (Ed.). Běijīng 北京: Běijīng Chūbǎnshè 北京出版社, 2000. v. 10 p. 3173–246.

44. Yìwén Jí 異聞集

Collections of Heard Strangeness

This text is attributed to a Chén Hàn 陳翰 about whom very little is known. However, historiography does list that he took positions in the middle of the ninth century, giving a very rough date for his life. Unfortunately, the original work has been lost. A number of texts are preserved in both the TPGJ and the *Lèishuō* 類說, however, the two works often disagree on the title or attribution of texts (ie. several texts that the Lèishuō attributes to the *Yìwén Jí* the TPGJ attributes to other sources or vice versa). Additionally, several of the most famous texts from this collection (ie. 487.01 "The Tale of Huò Xiǎoyù") do not provide an attribution, give a different author's name, or both. As one final layer of complication texts that may belong to the *Yìwén Jí* 異聞集 can also be attributed to the *Yìwén Lù* 異聞錄 or the *Yìwén Jì* 異聞記, which, unfortunately, are also source texts of their own.

Excerpted Texts:
419.01 Liǔ Yì

Editions:
Chén Hàn 陳翰. *Yìwén Jí Jiào Zhèng* 異聞集校證. Lǐ Xiǎolóng 李小龍, ed. Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 2019.

45. Yǒuyáng Zázǔ 酉陽雜俎

Miscellaneous Morsels from Yǒuyáng

This text was written by Duàn Chéngshì 段成式 (c. 800–63), who worked as a collator in the imperial archives. Though true of many of the sources of the TPGJ, the *Zázǔ* in particular records not only bizarre tales likely to be fictitious, but also rare and little-known knowledge.

The *Zázǔ* is an exemplar of quasi-scientific work that seeks to document all manner of unusual animals, human customs, and belief about the supernatural. Duàn also occasionally states uncertainty about the veracity of the information he has received.

The text is comprised of 20 main *juàn* a subsequent 10-*juàn* continuation, for a total of 30 *juàn*. There are extant editions from the Sòng and the Míng as well as several modern editions. It is worth noting that the TPGJ collects over 550 excerpts from this text. As there are only 7,000 total entries in the TPGJ, the *Zázǔ* comprises a surprisingly large 7.9% of the total count of these entries.

Excerpted Texts:
422.10 Chǐmù
422.11 A Son of the Shǐ Family
424.01 Dragons of Jambu
424.03 General Bái

Editions:
Duàn Chéngshì 段成式. *Yǒuyáng Zázú Jiàojiān* 酉陽雜俎校箋. Xǔ Yìmín 許逸民(Ed.). Běijīng 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 2015.

Full text with introduction, annotation, and appendices. Introduction serves to relate the basics of transmission and author's life. The appendices add extra detail and documentation. The notes are quite minimal, and every tale has been retitled by the editors.

46. Yuán Huà Jì 原化記

Records of Primary Change

Unfortunately, the only certain information for this source text is that the author is a Mx. Huángfǔ 皇甫氏. The two-character surname Huángfǔ 皇甫, while not the most common surname in China, is common enough to make guessing unwise. Additionally, the honorific *shì* 氏 can refer either to men (Mr.) or women (Ms.). Given that this text is written and literacy in mid-Imperial China was more common for men, this is likely a male author (Mr. Huángfǔ). However, there are notable examples of women authors throughout Chinese history and this may be one.

The text itself has not been transmitted, and only tales preserved in anthologies survive. The largest collection of tales from the Yuán Huà Jì is the TPGJ with approximately 60 tales. (Different editions of the TPGJ disagree on attributions for a number of tales related to the Yuán Huà Jì. Three tales are attributed to a *Yuán Xiān Jì* 原仙記, one is attributed to a H*uà Yuán Jì* 化源記, one is attributed to the *Zuǎn Yì Jì* 纂異記, and one tale is attributed to both *Lùyì Jì* 錄

異記 and *Chuánqí* 傳奇. With these variations, there are between 57 and 63 tales that can be attributed to the *Yuán Huà Jì*.)

The latest text in the TPGJ mentions the Dàhé 大和 Reign Era (827–835), and quite a few texts date to the reign eras immediately preceding. This suggests that the author likely lived and wrote the tales around that time. Many of the tales also feature the pursuit of Daoist Transcendence, Buddhist monks, and general magic.

Excerpted Texts:
421.04 Miss Wéi
424.06 Striped Stone
424.09 Elder Zhāng

Editions:
Huángfǔ Shì 皇甫氏. "Yuán Huà Jì 原化記." In *Zhōngguó Wényán Xiǎoshuō* 中國文言小說: *Bǎibù Jīngdiǎn* 百部經典. Shǐ Zhòngwén 史仲文 (Ed.). Běijīng 北京: Běijīng Chūbǎnshè 北京出版社, 2000. v. 11 p. 3739-98.

This is a large anthology that includes full texts of many of the less commonly printed titles used as source material for the TPGJ. Unfortunately, there are no introductions or appendices, and only minimal notes.

47. Yùtáng Xiánhuà 玉堂閑話

Gossip from the Jade Hall
Also written 玉堂閒話

The majority of mid-Imperial bibliographies list Wáng Rényù 王仁裕 as the author of this text. One does imply that a Fàn Zhì 范質 authored the text. As *yùtáng* is a metaphor for the Hànlín Academy 翰林院 and both Wáng and Fàn were employed at the Hànlín, either could theoretically be the author. However, as the majority does suggest Wáng, that seems more likely. (It is also worth noting that *Yùtáng Xiánhuà* contains 461.09 Fàn Zhì, which directly discusses Fàn Zhì. It is not uncommon for mid-Imperial writers to mention themselves in the third person on their writings (Duàn Chéngshì 段成式 does this frequently), but the way in which Fàn Zhì is described by his title in the tale may suggest that the work is not his.) Unfortunately, the text has been lost and only texts preserved in anthologies remain. The TPGJ collects approximately 155 tales (different editions of the TPGJ range from 152 to 157). However, some of these tales show evidence that they may have been edited or inserted after Wáng's death. Also, tales attributed to *Yùtáng Xiánhuà* may actually come from Wáng's other collection of short stories *Kāiyuán Tiānbǎo Yíshì* 開元天寶遺事。

Excerpted Texts:
424.15 Yǐn Hào

Editions:
Wáng Rényù 王仁裕. *Yùtáng Xiánhuà Píngzhù* 玉堂閑話評註. Pú Xiàngmíng 蒲向明, ed. Běijīng 北京: Zhōngguó Shèhuì Chūbǎnshè 中國社會出版社, 2007.

48. Zhuàn Zǎi 傳載

Recording and Chronicling

After the Táng Dynasty, later scholars added the characters *dà táng* 大唐 (Great Táng) to the beginning of the title to differentiate it from other records and chronicles in various dynasties. This book is now often called *Dà Táng Zhuànzǎi* 大唐傳載 (Records and Chronicles of the Great Táng). Liú suggests that attributions in the TPGJ to *Zhuàn Zǎi Lù* 傳載錄 (Records, Chronicles, and Journals) or *Zhuàn Zǎi Gùshì* 傳載故事 (Stories from Records and Chronicles) are also likely to have come from this source text.

Unfortunately, nothing about the author is recorded, but as the latest date of the tale is in the Dàhé 大和 Reign Era, it is likely that the author was alive during the mid-ninth century.

Excerpted Texts:
421.02 Lost Ruler Pond

Editions:
QTXS 1899

49. Zhǔgōng Jiùshì 渚宮舊事

Old Stories from the Zhǔ Palace

This work attributed to Yú Zhīgǔ 余知古 records events in region of Chǔ 楚, where the titular palace was located, throughout history. Of the 13 tales preserved in the TPGJ, the majority focus on the events of the Liú Sòng 劉宋 Dynasty. The original text is said to have contained ten *juàn*, but since the middle of the Sòng, bibliographies have had only five *juàn*, suggesting that a portion of the text was lost at that time.

Unfortunately, relatively little is known about the author's life. He was contemporaneous with Wēn Tíngyùn 溫庭筠 and Duàn Chéngshì 段成式, dating his life to the early to mid-ninth century.

Excerpted Texts:
418.04 A Grandma from Jiānglíng
418.11 Liú Jiǎ

Editions:
Yú Zhīgǔ 余知古. *Zhǔgōng Jiùshì Jiàoshì* 渚宮舊事校释. Yáng Bǐng 楊炳, ed. Wǔhàn 武漢: Wǔhàn Chūbǎnshè 武漢出版社, 1992.