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## Before Sexual and Normal: Shifting Categories of Sexual Anomaly from Ancient to Yuan China

### ABSTRACT:

This paper examines sexual anomaly as read about in Chinese texts from the first to the fourteenth centuries. The genres encountered include portent interpretations in Confucian exegeses and dynastic histories, Buddhist and Daoist stories of pious women turning into men, anecdotal and encyclopedic writings about human anomalies, and medical records of human bodies that were “neither-male-nor-female” and “dual-formed.” Through a critical reflection on modern categories of sexuality and normalcy, I investigate how the human body was conceptualized and norms established in these sources. I argue that the formation of sexual anomalies as a distinct category, occurring in the late-thirteenth century, was not simply a result of ethnic tension under Mongol rule nor intellectuals’ responses to perceived political turbulence. It was also a historical contingency, brought forth by a combination of several not necessarily related developments in areas like text production and genres. The present study is ultimately an alternative history of gender discourse that reconsiders how power works, where authority anchors itself, and what accounts for historical change in perceptions of bodily and sexual anomaly.

### KEYWORDS:

Sexual anomaly, sex change, normalcy, portent interpretation, Chinese medicine, Chinese religions

Almost thirty years after the Yuan conquest of South China, Ma Duanlin 馬端臨 (1254–1323) compiled *A Comprehensive Study of Authoritative Sources and Later Interpretations* (*Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考, completed in 1307; hereafter referred to as *Comprehensive Study*). In this large, overarching work, we find two incidents mentioned that concern sex transformation: in one a man became pregnant, and in the other a woman grew a mustache. The two records are placed side-by-side in the “Human Anomalies” subsection under “Investigation of Anomalies,” a section that one might say corresponds to the treatises on the Five

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EARLIER VERSIONS of this paper were presented at the Conference on Middle Period China at Harvard University in 2014, and at the Penn Humanities Forum in 2015. I thank all participants for their feedback, particularly Beverly Bossler, Christian de Pee, Anita Kurimay, Kadji Amin, Durba Mitra, Heather Love, and James English. My gratitude is due also to Paul Goldin, Ayako Kano, Nathan Sivin, Adam Smith, David Spafford, Guy St. Amant, and Brian Vivier for their meticulous readings. Their comments and suggestions helped to sharpen my arguments.

Phases as carried in quite a few dynastic histories.<sup>1</sup> The latter treatises usually consisted of lists of political portents (*zaiyi* 災異, literally, “catastrophes and anomalies”). Around the same time as Ma’s opus, another Southern Song scholar-official who had also survived the Song-Yuan transition, Zhou Mi 周密 (1232–1298), wrote in his *Miscellaneous Notes from Guixin Street* (*Guixin zazhi* 癸辛雜識; hereafter referred to as *Miscellaneous Notes*) an entry for “*renyao*” 人妖 (“human anomaly,” or “human demon”). It juxtaposes a number of references to sexual anomalies, takes them out of their original contexts, and for the first time “*renyao*” referred specifically and exclusively to *sexual* anomalies.<sup>2</sup> Slightly later, the physician Zhu Zhenheng 朱震亨 (1281–1358) wrote the first detailed discussion of sexually ambiguous bodies in Chinese medical history.<sup>3</sup> These were new ways of dealing intellectually with sexual anomalies, coming within a short time period during the Yuan dynasty.

In this paper, I examine records and discussions of sexual anomalies – including men turning into women, women turning into men, women or men growing physical traits of the other sex, individuals with both male and female genitals, and genital deficiencies – in Chinese texts from the first to the fourteenth centuries, and the intellectual, religious, and political contexts in which these records and discussions took place.<sup>4</sup> Such cases and references (some more likely products of imagination rather than results of empirical observation) were considered unusual and therefore *yi* 異 (“different; variant”) and/or *qi* 奇 (“strange”), but not necessarily problematic. Things different and strange can be treated in different ways – as entertaining, exotic, superior, outstanding, exceptional, divine, deviant, demonic, or pathological. The interpretation of anomalies was a “public field of contention,”

<sup>1</sup> Ma, *Wenxian tongkao* (*Shitong* edn. Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1987; hereafter, *WXTK*) 308, p. 2421B.

<sup>2</sup> *Guixin zazhi* (*Lidai shiliao biji congkan* edn. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), *qianji* 前集, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> *Danxi yiji* 丹溪醫集 (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 2000), p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> “Sexual anomalies” does not include transvestitism, which may be described as a *gender* anomaly or anomalous gender performance but not as a *sexual* anomaly. In traditional Chinese sources, from ancient to Song-Yuan times, transvestitism was never regarded as the same kind of phenomenon as the sexual anomalies discussed in this paper. In early *zaiyi* texts, for example, men turning into women and women turning into men are listed in the same category as resurrection but not cross-dressing. The “*fuyao*” 服妖 (sartorial anomaly) category often includes fashion trends but not cross-dressing. Furthermore, in the *zaiyi* system, anomalies of the human body (including the sexual anomalies under discussion) belong to the Water Phase, whereas sartorial anomalies fall under the Wood Phase. Buddhist, Daoist, and medical texts do not discuss transvestitism. There are quite a few occurrences of transvestites in *biji* anecdotes and *zhiguai* stories, but those incidents are never classified as being of the same kind as or related to bodily sexual anomalies.

to use Robert Campany's words.<sup>5</sup> I find in my sources not simply that there were multiple frameworks available for assigning meanings, but also that one case could be easily taken from one context to another. I examine how and when the different and the strange became meaningful in various ways, how the meanings changed in different contexts, and go into the technical issues that were involved. My sources indicate that various kinds of sexual anomalies were not organized into a distinct category until the late-thirteenth century, in Zhou Mi's *Miscellaneous Notes*. Zhou's interest in them and his concern for gender boundaries resonated with quite a few intellectuals under Mongol rule, such as Ma Duanlin, Zhu Zhenheng, and a certain "Lazy Old Man," whom I shall discuss more in what follows. I shall argue that the formation of sexual anomalies as a distinct category in Zhou Mi's work was not simply a result of ethnic tension or a response to perceived political turbulence. It was also a historical contingency, brought forth by a combination of several not necessarily related areas as genre development and text production. In order to understand these, a critical reflection on the modern concept of norm and normalcy is necessary.

#### ANOMALIES, THE NORMAL, AND THE NORMATIVE

"Anomaly by contrast establishes the normal. What is 'normal' easily becomes normative, in nature and for human beings as well." Charlotte Furth so opens her groundbreaking article on gender boundaries and the discourse of sexually anomalous bodies from late-imperial China.<sup>6</sup> But the "normal" does not naturally become the normative. It happens under distinct historical circumstances. One of those circumstances was nineteenth-century England, where a confusion of "statistical regularity derived from quantitative analysis" and "evaluative judgment attached to a model or type" occurred in the semantic history of the English word "normal."<sup>7</sup> Amy Hollywood points out that "[t]he

<sup>5</sup> Campany's characterization of anomaly accounts as "cosmography" is inspiring. He points out that, "[t]raditions and genres of cosmographic discourse should not be thought of as rigidly implying commitment to a single, particular worldview ... Rather, a single tradition or genre more often than not becomes a public field of contention on which individuals or groups play out conflicts and contend for power, using shared conventions of discourse about a single object or type of object to advance divergent ends." Robert Ford Campany, *Strange Writing: Anomaly in Early Medieval China* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY P., 1996), pp. 5–6.

<sup>6</sup> Charlotte Furth, "Androgynous Male and Deficient Females: Biology and Gender Boundaries in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century China," *Late Imperial China* 9.2 (1988), pp. 1–31.

<sup>7</sup> Karma Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies: Female Sexuality When Normal Wasn't* (Minneapolis: U. Minnesota P., 2005), p. 3. Chap. 1 provides a detailed examination of the relationship among statistics, eugenics, and sexology.

concepts of the norm, normalcy, normality, abnormality, and normativity as we now understand them first appeared in the nineteenth century and were tied to concrete developments in statistical analysis and its application to the social sciences.”<sup>8</sup> Lennard Davis argues that the French statistician Adolphe Quetelet (1796-1847)

noticed that the “law of error,” used by astronomers to locate a star by plotting all the sightings and then averaging the errors, could be equally applied to the distribution of human features such as height and weight. He then took a further step of formulating the concept of the “*l’homme moyen*,” or the average man. Quetelet maintained that this abstract human was the average of all human attributes in a given country.

For Quetelet, the “average man” was a combination of “*l’homme moyen physique*” and “*l’homme moyen morale*,” that is, “both a physically average and a morally average construct.”<sup>9</sup> As a result, the concept of “normal” in modern English is not established only in contrast to anomaly, or what is rare, but also to “abnormal,” which is deviant and pathological. At the core of this semantic transition is precisely the conflation of the normal and the normative, the taken-for-granted link between statistical norms based on numbers and evaluative ones dictating morality and hygiene.

*Zhengchang* 正常, the counterpart of “normal” in modern Chinese, a compound combining *zheng* (“correct; orthodox; just”) and *chang* (“common; constant”), reflects a similar kind of semantic conflation as that seen in the English word “normal.” The coinage *zhengchang* was likely the product of translating modern science and medicine into Chinese in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.<sup>10</sup> Prior to this, *zheng* and *chang* were usually used in different contexts and denoted separate notions. *Chang* in Classical Chinese denotes not simply “usual” or “common” in a spatial or commonsensical (if not “statistical”) sense but also “constant” in a temporal sense. *Chang* as “usual” or “com-

<sup>8</sup> Amy Hollywood, “The Normal, the Queer, and the Middle Ages,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10.2 (2001), pp. 174-75.

<sup>9</sup> Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (London; New York: Verso, 1995), p. 26.

<sup>10</sup> *Zhengchang* is not listed in either the “Sino-Japanese-European Loanwords in Modern Chinese” or “Sino-Japanese Loanwords in Modern Chinese” in Lydia Liu’s *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China 1900–1937* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1995). Appendix D, “Return Graphic Loans: *Kanji* Terms Derived from Classical Chinese,” does contain “normal” in the pedagogical sense [Jp.: *shihan*; Ch.: *shifan*]. *Zhengchang* has a Japanese counterpart, *seijō*. A preliminary search of early-20th c. Chinese texts turns up instances of *zhengchang* in several biological papers. I have not seen any study that identifies the exact origin of this compound.

mon” is an antonym to *yi* 異 (“different; unusual, uncommon; variant”); as “constant” it is often juxtaposed with *bian* 變 (“change; transformation”). The orthodox (*zheng*) was sometimes established on the rhetoric of “*chang*,” which almost always meant “constant” rather than “common” in those contexts.<sup>11</sup> “*Zhengchang*” or “normal,” however, does not carry the meaning of “constant.”

Studies on the history of gender and sexuality in both China and non-China fields have been productive in analyzing power and subjectivity in processes of knowledge construction. For instance, in a series of works, Charlotte Furth has challenged a romanticizing and Orientalist approach to ancient Chinese materials by revealing the complex entanglement of gender, sexuality, and power. Her aforementioned article, “Androgynous Males and Deficient Females: Biology and Gender Boundaries in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century China,” in fact insightfully points to another set of historical circumstances where some anomalies were considered more germane than others to the establishment of norms. Furth analyzes the “five non-males” and “five non-females” in Li Shizhen’s 李時珍 (1518–1593) *Compendium of Materia Medica* (*Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目, completed in 1578), compares the different treatments of men turning into women and women turning into men in other Ming-Qing sources, and reveals how “the social” surpassed “the sexual” in defining gender boundaries. Furth also points out that during the Ming-Qing transition, “a time when eunuchs and [male] homosexuals were unusually visible” to the elite, “the androgynous male body was the object of politically-charged discourse suggesting its unfitness to represent the Confucian moral order,” whereas along with the rise of the chaste widow cult, “the asexual female body escaped from the ascription of deficiency when offered up as an icon of Confucian virtue uncompromised.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> E.g., “*wuchang*” 五常 (Five Unchanging [Virtues]) denotes constant moral principles in the Confucian tradition. Constant principles are usually not in contrast to exceptions or deviations, but variations in time and space and flexible methods in applying the principles – as characterized by the duo of *changjing* 常經 (constant principle) and *bianquan* 變權 (changing expedient). Moreover, when Xunzi 荀子 (ca. 313–238 BC) describes the amoral and impersonal *tian* 天 (heaven/nature), he also uses “*chang*,” as in the opening sentence of “Tianlun” 天論: “There is a constancy to Heaven’s processes 天行有常.” *Xunzi* (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1979), *j.* 17, p. 362. Compare the translation of Paul R. Goldin, *Confucianism* (Durham, U.K.: Acumen, 2011), p. 81. A more in-depth discussion on the usage of *chang* would require a separate study. It is sufficient to say here that there is a disjunction between the notion of “normal” or *zhengchang* in the modern context and that of *chang* in pre-twentieth-century Chinese.

<sup>12</sup> Furth, “Androgynous Males and Deficient Females,” pp. 18, 24–25. For Furth’s criticism of Robert van Gulik, see idem, “Rethinking Van Gulik: Sexuality and Reproduction in Traditional Chinese Medicine,” in *Engendering China: Women, Culture, and the State*, Christina K. Gilmartin et al., eds. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1994), pp. 125–46.

In this paper, in addition to tracing the changes from ancient to Yuan times, I would like to depict a more nuanced picture of gender and sexuality in Chinese history by proposing several methodological turns: firstly, not separating the sexual from the social, but tracing when and how what we consider “sexual” today came to be classified under one rubric; secondly, not assuming that anomaly always establishes the “normal,” but examining the various meanings of anomaly and the different ways to establish norms; and lastly, looking as seriously at how and when gender differences matter as at how and when they do not. It is not a story of sexual classifications changing from more fluid to less, or of any particular tradition being stricter than others. It is a picture of dynamic processes of change in which different systems of meanings emerge, intertwine, and reorganize.

Furthermore, through tracing the development of the *zaiyi* tradition (mentioned above), and how people in different circumstances adopted, rejected, or maneuvered it, I take seriously the history and heterogeneity of the Confucian tradition.<sup>13</sup> Whatever was associated with Confucius was indeed a source of authority in imperial China, a major and powerful one, but it was not always *the* source of authority. As a source of authority, moreover, Confucianism was a field of contention. No one interpretation or one style of interpretation guaranteed currency. As a powerful source of authority, it was closely related to the “norm” (in the prescriptive rather than descriptive sense) in specific times and places in Chinese history. But we must account for how the “norm” was established and functioned in radically different ways in the premodern world.

#### SEXUAL ANOMALIES AS POLITICAL OMENS: THE *ZAIYI* TRADITION

Early interpretations of sexual anomalies appear in the *zaiyi* tradition.<sup>14</sup> *Zaiyi* is an interpretive system, a complex and heterogeneous one, that treats calamities and anomalous incidents in nature and in the human world as political portents. While such a tradition has its origins

<sup>13</sup> For critical reflections on scholarly uses of “Confucianism,” see Nathan Sivin, “On the Word ‘Taoist’ as a Source of Perplexity: With Special Reference to the Relations of Science and Religion in Traditional China,” *History of Religions* 17.3-4 (1978), pp. 303-30; Goldin, *Confucianism*, Introduction.

<sup>14</sup> A passage in *Shiji* 史記 implies a connection between female-to-male sex change and change of sovereignty, but does not give an explicit explanation. It records that a woman of Wei turned into a man in 322 BC, the same year the Qin took over two prefectures of Wei (Quwo and Pingzhou); *Shiji* (Jinling shuju edn. Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1981) 15, p. 730, and 44, p. 1849.

in the Warring States period (408–221 BC), *zaiyi* interpretations were not systemized until the early Western Han (202 BC–8 AD). But many of the specialist terms found in *zaiyi* texts were already used in pre-Han texts. One passage frequently quoted by historians of later periods is from the “Doctrine of the Mean” (“Zhongyong” 中庸, compiled ca. the late-third to early-second centuries BC) in the *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記):

When a state is about to rise, there must be auspices. When a state is about to perish, there must be *yao* 妖 (“anomaly; anomalous beauty”) and *nie* 孽 (“deviant growth; illegitimate birth”).<sup>15</sup> 國家將興，必有禎祥。國家將亡，必有妖孽。

*Zuo’s Commentary* (*Zuo zhuan* 左傳, compiled ca. the early-fourth century BC) defines *yao* and *zai* as follows:

*Yao* arises because of humans. If humans do not err, *yao* does not emerge of its own accord. When humans discard the constant, *yao* rises. For this reason, there is *yao*.<sup>16</sup> 妖由人興也。人無變焉，妖不自作。人棄常，則妖興，故有妖。

In heaven, what opposes the season is called *zai* 災 (“catastrophe”). On earth, what opposes [other] creatures is called *yao*. Among people, what opposes virtue is called *luan* 亂 (“disorder”). When there is *luan*, *yao* and *zai* emerge.<sup>17</sup> 天反時為災，地反物為妖，民反德為亂，亂則妖災生。

Scholars of the early-Western Han began to theorize *zaiyi* in various and sometimes conflicting ways. For example, Lu Jia 陸賈 (ca. 216–172 BC) in his *New Speeches* (*Xin yu* 新語) understands the *zaiyi* mechanism through the workings of *qi* and not a volitional Heaven: “Bad government breeds bad *qi*; bad *qi* breeds disasters and anomalies.”<sup>18</sup> Later, some scholars complicated such mechanisms with notions of *yin*, *yang*, and the Five Phases.<sup>19</sup> Others, on the other hand, attributed *zaiyi* to a

<sup>15</sup> *Da Dai Liji jinzhu jinshi* 大戴禮記今註今釋, Gao Ming 高明, ed. (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1984), j. 53, p. 895b. I translate *yao* and *nie* here by their archaic meanings.

<sup>16</sup> *Zuo zhuan* (SSJZS edn. Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), j. 9, p. 155b.

<sup>17</sup> *Zuo zhuan*, j. 24, p. 408b.

<sup>18</sup> *Xinyu jiaozhu* 新語校注, Wang Liqi 王利器, ed. (Xinbian ZZJC edn. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), j. 11, p. 155. Compare trans. of Paul R. Goldin “Xunzi and Early Han Philosophy,” *HJAS* 67.1 (2007), p. 148. Goldin points out Lu Jia’s continuity with Xunzi in defending a mechanistic heaven and Lu’s innovation in using *qi* to explain *zaiyi*.

<sup>19</sup> For recent studies on the relations among *yinyang*, *wuxing*, and *zaiyi*, see Aihe Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (Cambridge; Cambridge U.P., 2000), chap. 4; Goldin, “Xunzi and Early Han Philosophy”; Su Dechang 蘇德昌, *Hanshu wuxingzhi yanjiu* 漢書五行志研究 (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan daxue chuban zhongxin, 2013); Chen Kanli 陳侃理, *Ruxue, shushu yu zhengzhi: Zaiyi de zhengzhi wenhua shi* 儒學、數術與政治，災異的政治文化史 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2015). For the development of *yinyang*, *wuxing*, and *qi*, see Michael Nylan, “*Yin-yang*, Five Phases, and *qi*,” in Michael Nylan and Michael Loewe,

paternalistic Heaven's admonitions to the rulers.<sup>20</sup> Many also began to apply their *zaiyi* theories to Confucian exegesis, such as Dong Zhongshu's and others' writings about the *Gongyang Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan* 春秋公羊傳), the "Commentaries on the Five Phases in the Great Plan" ("Hongfan wuxing zhuan" 洪範五行傳),<sup>21</sup> and Jing Fang's 京房 (77–37 BC) commentaries on the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經).<sup>22</sup> In later dynastic histories, *zaiyi* records often serve as a means to demonstrate the failure of the former dynasty and to legitimize the new regime. However, when the systematic *zaiyi* philosophy emerged during early-Western Han, it was part of intellectuals' efforts to counterbalance the rising power of the monarchy.<sup>23</sup>

Scholars such as Liu Xiang 劉向 (77–6 BC), Jing Fang, and Liu Xin 劉歆 (50?–23 BC) developed and expanded the system of interpretation

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eds., *China's Early Empires: A Re-appraisal* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2000), pp. 398–414; Geoffrey Lloyd and Nathan Sivin, *The Way and the Word: Science and Medicine in Early China and Greece* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 2002), appendix, pp. 253–71.

<sup>20</sup> E.g., the *Han History* records that Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (176–104 BC) responded to emperor Wudi's question "What causes such variations as *zaiyi*?" by depicting a seemingly deified Heaven: "When the state is about to fall for its loss of Dao, Heaven first sends down catastrophes to reprimand it. [If the ruler] still does not reflect on himself, [Heaven] further sends anomalies to warn him. ... This shows that Heaven has a benevolent heart for the ruler and wishes to prevent his downfall 國家將有失道之敗，而天乃先出災害以譴告之。不知自省，又出怪異以警懼之。... 以此見天心之仁愛人君而欲止其亂也"; *Han shu* 漢書 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1986) 56, pp. 2496–98. Gu Yong 谷永 (d. ca. 9 BC) made a similar response to emperor Chengdi when a solar eclipse and earthquake occurred on the same day, "Your subject has heard that *zaiyi* is what August Heaven uses to reprimand a ruler's wrongdoing, just like a strict father's clear admonition 臣聞災異，皇天所以譴告人君過失，猶嚴父之明誡"; *Han shu* 85, p. 3450. In Dong Zhongshu's other memorials recorded in the *Han History*, however, we sometimes see a different rationale, one similar to Lu Jia's. See Goldin, "Xunzi and Early Han Philosophy," pp. 159–60. Michael Loewe points out that Dong might be aware of a conflict "between belief in the power of revelation through omens or by divination, and an explanation of the universe in rational terms according to the principles of the Five Phases"; Loewe, *Divination, Mythology and Monarchy in Han China* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1994), p. 135. Loewe also argues that Dong's three responses to emperor Wudi as recorded in Dong's biography in *Han shu* might have been significantly edited by Ban Gu; Loewe, *Dong Zhongshu, A 'Confucian' Heritage and the Chunqiu fanlu* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 86, 118.

<sup>21</sup> "Hongfan wuxing zhuan" is a chapter in *Shangshu dazhuan* 尚書大傳 (attributed to Fu Sheng 伏勝, annot. Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), reconstituted by Chen Shouqi 陳壽祺 (1771–1834)); one of the many *jinwen* 今文 ("New Text") classics from the early-Western Han.

<sup>22</sup> There were two men named Jing Fang in the Western Han, both scholars of the *Book of Changes*. Both Aihe Wang and Huang Qishu identify the younger one who lived between 77 and 37 BC as the person that *Han shu* refers to. See Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture*, p. 131, n. 2; Huang Qishu 黃啓書, "You Hanshu 'Wuxing zhi' lun Jing Fang Yixue de lingyi mianmao" 由漢書五行志論京房易學的另一面貌, *Taida zhongwen xuebao* 台大中文學報 43 (2013), pp. 69–120.

<sup>23</sup> Xiao Gongquan 蕭公權 (Kung-chuan Hsiao), *Zhongguo zhengzhi sixiang shi* 中國政治思想史 (Minguo congshu edn. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1948), p. 25. Hans Bielenstein, "An Interpretation of the Portents in the Tsien-Han-shu," *BMFEA* 22 (1950), p. 143. Xia Changpu 夏長樸 (Chang-pwu Hsia), *Liang Han ruxue yanjiu* 兩漢儒學研究 (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan daxue wenxueyuan, 1978), pp. 87–94.

in significantly different ways.<sup>24</sup> According to Huang Qishu's analysis, in the newly developing *zaiyi* theory, words such as *zai*, *yi*, *yao*, and *jiu* 咎 were taken out of their original semantic contexts and became specialist terms to denote different types of omens. As the system expanded, more categories and types were created to include more (factual or imaginary) occurrences, while at the same time the distinctions between each category and type became less and less clear.<sup>25</sup>

Most of those early *zaiyi* scholars' works are now lost. The "Treatise on the Five Phases" ("Wuxing zhi" 五行志) in the *Han History* (*Han shu* 漢書) preserves valuable fragments. The *Han History* was the first dynastic history to designate a "Treatise on the Five Phases" that systematically included anomalies as political portents. It was compiled in the late-first century AD when *zaiyi* scholarship was still at its peak. The earliest extant *zaiyi* interpretation of sex change, by Jing Fang, is preserved in the *Han History's* Treatise:

The *Records of the Grand Historian* records that on the thirteenth year of king Xiang of Wei (322 BC), "a woman in Wei turned into a man." Jing Fang's commentary to the *Book of Changes* states, "[When] a woman turns into a man, this means that *yin* is flourishing and a base person becomes the king. [When] a man turns into a woman, this means that *yin* is dominant. The omen is death."<sup>26</sup> Another [commentary] says: When a male turns into a female, [this means that] the use of castration as a punishment is excessive. [When] a female turns into a male, [this means that] governance by women is happening.<sup>27</sup> 史記：魏襄王十三年，“魏有女子化為丈夫。”京房易傳曰：“女子化為丈夫，茲謂陰昌，賤人為王；丈夫化為女子，茲謂陰勝，厥咎亡。”一曰，男化為女，宮刑濫也；女化為男，婦政行也。

<sup>24</sup> "Wuxing zhi" in *Han shu* opens with a succinct summary of the establishment and lineage of different branches of *zaiyi* scholarship. For an English translation of this passage and discussions, see Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture*, pp. 134–35.

<sup>25</sup> Huang, "You *Hanshu* 'Wuxing zhi' lun Jing Fang," pp. 94–97.

<sup>26</sup> According to Gao Jiyi 郜積意, this passage (and others in the "Treatise on the Five Phases" in *Han shu*) quoted by Ban Gu from "*Jing Fang Yi zhuan*" is not a part of the transmitted three-juan *Jing Fang Yi zhuan*. It is most likely from Jing Fang's other works that focus primarily on *zaiyi* interpretation such as *Yao zhan* 妖占; Gao Jiyi, "Lun sanjuanben Jingshi Yi zhuan, jianji Jing Fang de liuri qifen shuo" 論三卷本京氏易傳，兼及京房的六日七分說, *Zhongguo wen-zhe yanjiu qikan* 中國文哲研究期刊 33 (2008), p. 206.

<sup>27</sup> *Han shu* 27C, pt. 1, p. 1472. The Ming-era physician Li Shizhen's *Bencao gangmu* quotes this last sentence and attributes it to Jing Fang. However, several scholars agree that the phrase "*yi yue*" 一曰 ("another [commentary] says") indicates reference to a different source. In this case, "another commentary" may even be the opinion of the author(s) of the *Han shu* treatise. Li Shizhen's error was a common one and it caused many authors after the Han to misattribute sentences to Jing Fang. For the question of "*yi yue*" in this treatise, see Su, *Hanshu Wuxingzhi yanjiu*, p. 442; Huang, "You *Hanshu* 'Wuxing zhi' lun Jing Fang," p. 109.

During the Jianping reign (6–3 BC) of the [Han] emperor Aidi,<sup>28</sup> there was a man in Yuzhang who turned into a woman. He was [then] married as someone’s wife and gave birth to a son. Chen Feng of Chang’an said that this was [a case of] *yang* transforming into *yin*, a correspondingly generated sign that [the emperor] would no longer have an heir. Another [commentary] says: [A man] who marries as someone’s wife and gives birth to a son [means that the imperial lineage] would become extinct after one generation.<sup>29</sup> 哀帝建平中，豫章有男子化爲女子，嫁爲人婦，生一子。長安陳鳳言此陽變爲陰，將亡繼嗣，自相生之象。一曰，嫁爲人婦生一子 [者]，將復一世乃絕。

The first quotation, above, became the foundation of *zaiyi* interpretations of sex change that authors of later dynastic histories built upon and made reference to. Jing Fang’s interpretation does not make a real distinction between cases of women turning into men and men turning into women. Both groups of anomalies belong to the same category. “*Yin* flourishes” and “*yin* dominates” are virtually the same thing, as are “a base person becomes the king” and the death of the old regime. The structure of the two sentences also suggests that both kinds of phenomena belong to the same type of omen: the “*jiu*.” Conversely, “another commentary” distinguishes between the specific omens relevant to the two directions of sex change.<sup>30</sup> In the second passage, the additional interpretation further correlates the man’s giving birth to a son with the regime’s demise after one generation. But while interpretations varied and the system expanded, the *zaiyi* tradition consistently viewed both women turning into men and men turning into women as negative, if not fatal, political omens. Neither was considered better than the other. They both were the result of imbalanced *qi* in the cosmos caused by the subversion of existing political hierarchy.

Sex change incidents were not distinguished from other omens such as deformed births, resurrections, or, in one case, a young girl’s carrying a bow into the palace while rumors of a flood paralyzed peo-

<sup>28</sup> Emperor Aidi was the second to last emperor of the Western Han before Wang Mang’s court takeover established the Xin dynasty.

<sup>29</sup> *Han shu* 27c, pt. 1, pp. 1472–73. *Han shu* adopts “Hongfan wuxing zhuan” in classifying the portents. The two quotations are both in the section on “slippage of all Five Phases 五行皆失,” as caused by “the emperor’s not being at the highest position 皇之不極.” In the extant fragments of “Hongfan wuxing zhuan,” however, as reconstituted by the Qing scholar Chen Shouqi 陳壽祺 (1771–1834), there is no mention of either sexual ambiguity or change.

<sup>30</sup> But to interpret “a female turning into a male” as a sign for “governance by women” does not match the historical record as much as Jing Fang’s interpretation does. Perhaps it reflects the author(s)’ critique of Han politics, which were marked by several powerful empress-dowagers.

ple in the capital. Resurrection, in particular, carried the same meaning as women turning into men: Both were signs of “*yin* turning into *yang*” and “the lowly becoming the superior.” Deformities potentially related to sexual body parts (expressed as the reverse of the “upper” and the “lower body parts”) were neither singled out as a distinctive category nor assigned sexual meanings. The omen that pointed to the ruler’s sexual decadence was not an anomaly of a sexual body part but of “giving birth to a different kind.”<sup>31</sup> The way the human body was perceived and organized in Jing Fang’s *zaiyi* system did not create a separate category for the “sexual body” as we do today.

Furthermore, interpretations of omens related to sex change constituted only a very small part of the enormous body of *zaiyi* literature, and the anomaly itself was classified along with the majority of those considered “different from the usual (*yi yu chang* 異於常)” but “harmful to none (*wu suo hai* 無所害).”<sup>32</sup> As a form of political criticism, *zaiyi* philosophy, at least in its early stage, targeted the political problems that were believed to have caused the anomaly, especially those due to rulers and those who would replace them, rather than the anomalous phenomenon itself. Cases of sex change and sexual anomalies, along with other *zaiyi* incidents, were considered signs, rather than causes, of political disorder. Simple and brief reference to sex change is all we see in early *zaiyi* works, including those preserved in the *Han History*. In those early works, we see no interest in how and to what extent one sex changes into the other or the morality of the individual who undergoes the change – those aspects being irrelevant.

While the use of *chenwei* 讖緯 texts (*zaiyi*-style political predictions stated in the name of the ancient Confucian classics) was prohibited under several regimes after the Han, and although *zaiyi* scholarship gradually lost popularity among intellectuals after the fall of Wang Mang’s 王莽 (45 BC–23 AD) short-lived Xin dynasty (8–23 AD), dynastic histories continued the tradition of including compilations titled “Treatise on the Five Phases” that recorded such anomalies.<sup>33</sup> The Treatise placed in the

<sup>31</sup> *Han shu* 27c, pt. 1, pp. 1473–74.

<sup>32</sup> “Hongfan wuxing zhuan” states, “Those harmful are called *zai* (‘catastrophe’); those harmless and different from usual are called *yi* (‘anomaly’) 有所害，謂之災。無所害而異於常，謂之異。” This passage is quoted in *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽, not included in Chen Shouqi’s reconstitution of “Hongfan wuxing zhuan.” The same *Taiping yulan* chapter also quotes *Baihu tong* 白虎通 (compiled by Ban Gu in 79 AD), which in turn quotes *Chunqiu qiantanba* 春秋潛潭巴, “*Zai* means injury, which comes with misconduct as a reprimand. *Yi* means the bizarre, which [Heaven] makes happen prior to [*zai*]”; *Taiping yulan* (SBCK edn.), j. 874, pp. 4008b–9a; *Baihu tongdelun* (SBCK edn.), j. 4, p. 23a.

<sup>33</sup> Hubert Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 19; Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture*, pp. 131–32.

*Later Han History* (*Hou Han shu* 後漢書) reorganized the classification and yet did not give new meaning to sex change or anomalies related to the human body.<sup>34</sup> New kinds of sexual anomalies appeared in Shen Yue's 沈約 (441–513 AD) *Song History* 宋書 (of the Liu-Song dynasty, 420–479, to be distinguished from the later *Song History* of the Zhao-family Song dynasty). In addition to relating two cases of female-to-male sex change to the fall of Western Jin (266–316) and the rise of the Former and the Later Zhao dynasties,<sup>35</sup> the latter treatise records and comments on two cases of people with “both male and female body parts”:

In the first year of the Guangxi reign (306) of the Jin emperor Huidi,<sup>36</sup> Xie Zhen of Kuaiji begot a child, who had a large head, hair at the temples, two soles facing upwards, and both male and female body parts. [This baby] had the voice of a [mature] man. It died after one day. 晉惠帝光熙元年，會稽謝真生子，大頭而有鬢，兩蹠反向上，有男女兩體，生便作丈夫聲，經日死。

During the era of emperors Huidi (r. 290–306) and Huaidi (r. 307–313), in the capital Luoyang there was a person with both male and female body parts, who moreover was dually capable of [acting in] the human way. [The person's] character was particularly lewd. In my opinion, this anomaly was caused by disordered *qi*. Since the reign of Xianning (275–280) and Taikang (280–290), male courtesans flourished and even surpassed female ones. All gentlemen thought highly of this trend. The whole country imitated [this fashion], to the extent that there were cases of husbands and wives separating, men and women staying unmarried, and jealousy. Therefore the *qi* of men and women was disturbed and

<sup>34</sup> *Hou Han shu*'s “Treatise of the Five Phases” was authored by Sima Biao 司馬彪 (ca. 240–306). It includes four kinds of human-related portents – “human disorder” (*ren'e* 人病), “human transformation” (*renhua* 人化), “resurrection” (*sifusheng* 死復生), and “epidemic” (*yi* 疫) – all portents of “the lower attacking the higher.” “Human transformation” includes a woman turning into a turtle and a man turning into a woman. As in the *Han shu*, sex change is not distinguished in nature from other portents in the same section. *Hou Han shu* (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1981), j. 17, pp. 3341, 3348–49. For studies on *Hou Han shu*'s “Treatise of the Five Phases,” see B. J. Mansvelt Beck, *The Treatises of Later Han: Their Author, Sources, Contents and Place in Chinese Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), pp. 131–174; Huang Qishu, “Shilun Xu Hanshu ‘Wuxing zhi’ zhuanzuo ji qi tili ying zhi wentu” 試論續漢書“五行志”撰作及其體例因革之問題, *Zhengda zhongwen xuebao* 政大中文學報 15 (2011.6), pp. 197–230.

<sup>35</sup> *Song shu* quotes Jing Fang to interpret the first case and associates it with the rise of Liu Yuan (d. 310) and Shi Le (274–333), who founded the Former and the Later Zhao, respectively. The second case is left without explicit interpretation, but it is recorded to have occurred during the early reign of the Xiaowu emperor (r. 373–397) of the Eastern Jin, when the empress-dowager acted as regent, a situation considered ominous by historians of that time; *Song shu* (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1980) 34, pp. 1005, 1008.

<sup>36</sup> Emperor Huidi was the last emperor to reign over the Western Jin dynasty, before its military retreat to the South.

anomalous bodies emerged.<sup>37</sup> 晉惠、懷之世，京洛有人兼男女體，亦能兩用人道，而性尤淫。案：此亂氣所生也。自咸寧、太康之後，男寵大興，甚於女色。士大夫莫不尚之，天下皆相放效，或有至夫婦離絕、怨曠、妒忌者。故男女之氣亂而妖形作也。

Both accounts became incorporated into the *Jin History* 晉書, compiled by Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (578–648) in the early Tang.<sup>38</sup> The details of the omens as well as their interpretations diverge significantly from those found in earlier *zaiyi* literature. The second passage, in particular, displays a peculiar interest in the anomalous phenomenon itself, which is attributed to the sexual excessiveness of elite men and broken marriages among the gentry class rather than to the political failure of the ruler (or those who intend to usurp power), as commonly highlighted in previous *zaiyi* texts.<sup>39</sup>

The *Song History* also records two cases of women with mislocated genitals, and the *Jin History* associates them with Wang Dun's 王敦 (266–342) rebellion. Jing Fang is again cited as the theoretical basis for the interpretation, "When someone gives birth to a child and its genitals are on the head, [this means that] All-under-Heaven will be in chaos. [If its genitals are] on its belly, All-under-Heaven will have trouble. [If its genitals are] on its back, the Empire will be without an heir 人生子，陰在首，天下大亂：在腹，天下有事：在背，天下無後。" Both *Histories* include additional information on the two women's sexuality that is not seen in Jing Fang or early *zaiyi* works. One woman is said to be "very lewd in nature and infertile 性甚淫而不產，" and the other "also lewd in nature 性亦淫."<sup>40</sup> In sum, on the one hand, the *Song History* and the *Jin History* continue the tradition of recording sexual anomalies without distinguishing them in nature from other anomalies and of associating such incidents with political turbulence on the basis of early-Han *zaiyi* theories. On the other hand, they betray a particular interest in the bodies and sexual behavior of those sexually anomalous subjects, which

<sup>37</sup> *Song shu* 34, p. 1006. This is partly the translation of Bret Hinsch, *Passions of the Cut Sleeve: The Male Homosexual Tradition in China* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1990), p. 56, with two major adjustments: First, "male courtesans ... surpassed 甚於 female ones" instead of "as extensive as." Second, *yuan* 怨 and *kuang* 曠 are allusions to unmarried women (*yuan*) and men (*kuang*), as used in *Mencius* and the *Mao Commentary on the Book of Odes* 毛詩; they are rather more formulaic than specific comments of those women's and men's mental states.

<sup>38</sup> *Jin shu* 29, p. 908, which quotes "Hongfan wuxing zhuan" ("the emperor not being at the highest position" and "omens of the lower attacking the higher") to interpret the first case.

<sup>39</sup> For earlier examples where the cause of the offensive *qi* is the king and only the king, see Goldin, "Xunzi and Early Han Philosophy."

<sup>40</sup> *Song shu* 34, p. 1007; *Jin shu* 29, p. 909. There are also two cases of men with anomalous penises. No specific interpretation is given, but both are said to have occurred in the late years of the Eastern Jin (ca. 419–420); *Song shu* 34, p. 1008; *Jin shu* 29, p. 910.

is unseen in earlier *zaiyi* works. We do not know the original sources of these records, which may have derived from popular anecdotes or folktales. The interest in anomalous bodies was likely related to the development of *zhiguai* 志怪 (“records of the strange”) literature.<sup>41</sup> Other dynastic histories before Ouyang Xiu’s 歐陽修 (1007–1072) *New Tang History* (*Xin Tang shu* 新唐書) do not contain records of sexual anomalies as political omens.

During the Song dynasty (960–1279), the complicated *zaiyi* interpretation system had fallen out of fashion among the majority of the intellectuals, and most early *zaiyi* works had been lost, but the general concepts underlying *zaiyi* interpretation remained an integral part of popular culture and political rhetoric.<sup>42</sup> Official histories continued to include records of anomalies, but rarely made specific interpretations of them. Ouyang Xiu asserts in the beginning of the “Treatise on the Five Phases” in his *New Tang History* that the principle of *zaiyi* philosophy (the correlation between politics and the natural world) is true but interpretation is unstable. Most *zaiyi* interpretations, in Ouyang Xiu’s eyes, are overly subjective speculations and that is why “the Sage (i.e. Confucius) prudently refrained from speaking of it.” Ouyang points out that in composing the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, Confucius “recorded only the occurrences of *zaiyi* without noting their correlations in [human] affairs.”<sup>43</sup> There is only one reference to sex change in the *New Tang History* – that a young girl turned into a man and soon died in 886. Ouyang Xiu juxtaposes it with a story about resurrection and quotes the same passage of Jing Fang’s that the *Han History* used in interpreting female-to-male change.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> There is evidence of intertextual borrowings between *zhiguai* and *zaiyi* records in the dynastic histories, and between *zhiguai* and hagiographies, from as early as Gan Bao’s 干寶 (fl. 317–322) *Soushen ji* 搜神記. The latter has three accounts about sex change. One regards a cult leader Xu Deng and was later incorporated into the Daoist hagiography, as I shall discuss in the next section. The other two are both *zaiyi* records seen in dynastic histories – one is from *Shiji*; the other is seen in *Hou Han shu*. These cases are juxtaposed with other kinds of transformation, such as those between divine beings and humans, and those between humans and other creatures. Cases of sexual transformation are much fewer in number than other kinds of transformation, and are not distinguished as a separate sort. Robert Campany notes, “Much less is made of this boundary in the anomaly accounts than in certain other cultures’ cosmographic discourses, however”; Campany, *Strange Writings*, p. 253.

<sup>42</sup> The general concept of cosmo-political correlation and *zaiyi*-style interpretations of anomalies were still prevalent during the Song, but far fewer prominent intellectuals made efforts to study or expand the *zaiyi* system.

<sup>43</sup> *Xin Tang shu* (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1981) 34, p. 873.

<sup>44</sup> *Xin Tang shu* 36, p. 956. One intriguing phenomenon in this Treatise is that it contains much more incidents of multiple birth than do previous dynastic histories. Ouyang Xiu even gives his own interpretation of two cases of all male quadruplets, opining that “the *yin qi* flourishes and therefore the mother’s way is robust”; *Xin Tang shu* 36, p. 954. Ma Duanlin has a different interpretation of multiple births; see below.

Some Song-dynasty scholar-officials' reserved attitudes toward the use of *zaiyi* interpretations may have been related to the abuse of such interpretations in factional attacks, with some scholars experiencing the brunt of such attacks first hand.<sup>45</sup> The fact that one could still invoke *zaiyi* to attack political opponents suggests its continuing role in the political realm, even if it was no long popular in scholarship. In 1124, a case of a woman who grew a moustache was brought to the imperial court, and, according to Ma Duanlin's *Comprehensive Study*, emperor Huizong responded by having the woman ordained as a Daoist nun.<sup>46</sup> We do not know exactly how or under what circumstances this case was brought to the court, but Ma Duanlin treated it as a *zaiyi* incident in *Comprehensive Study* and listed it among other *zaiyi* records from previous dynastic histories. We also know that the year 1124 fell in the middle of a series of crises for the regime.<sup>47</sup> Huizong's response to this incident shows him at least favoring a Daoist interpretation over a *zaiyi* or Confucian one, if not consciously using Daoism as an alternative to transform the ominous into the auspicious in order to avoid potential political repercussions.<sup>48</sup> Sex change in the Daoist tradition will be explored in the next section.

There seemed to be a revived interest in *zaiyi* among some Chinese intellectuals during the Song-Yuan transitional period. Ma Duanlin was one of them. In *Comprehensive Study* he responds to Song scholars' skepticism of *zaiyi* interpretation and emphasizes the important role of *zaiyi* in constantly reminding the ruler of his imperfection and misconduct.<sup>49</sup> The "Investigation of Anomalies" ("Wuyi kao" 物異考) section is the equivalent of the "Treatise on the Five Phases" in dynastic histories. Ma's political interpretation is apparent: he criticizes previ-

<sup>45</sup> E.g., Lü Hui, Fan Chunren, and Lü Dafang accused Ouyang Xiu of simplifying the imperial sacrifice ritual and thereby causing a flood; *Song shi* 宋史 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1980) 321, pp. 10428–29.

<sup>46</sup> *WXTK* 308, p. 2421B. Much of *Wenxian tongkao*'s sources was incorporated into *Song shi*, including this record; *Song shi* 61, p. 1369.

<sup>47</sup> A series of military setbacks occurred between 1121 and 1125. These included the Fang La uprising, Song's failure to recapture Yanjing, and an extremely unstable relationship with the ambitious Jurchens. The year 1124 was just a year before Huizong abdicated the throne. See Patricia B. Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2014), pp. 395–448.

<sup>48</sup> Huizong's reign was marked by the emperor's patronage of Daoism and interest in auspices. For Huizong's patronage of Daoism, see Edward L. Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China* (Honolulu: U. Hawai'i P., 2001), chap. 2; Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong*, chap. 5. For Huizong's interest in auspices, see Peter C. Sturman, "Cranes above Kaifeng: The Auspicious Image at the Court of Huizong," *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990), pp. 33–68; Maggie Bickford, "Huizong's Paintings: Art and the Art of Emperors," in Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Maggie Bickford, eds., *Emperor Huizong and Late Northern Song China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), pp. 453–514.

<sup>49</sup> *WXTK* 295, pp. 2336B–38B.

ous dynastic histories for ignoring “rebellion” (*panni* 叛逆) as an important way to interpret *zaiyi* incidents. In the subsection on “Human Anomalies” (*renyi* 人異), therefore, he highlights omens that indicate “rebellion,” “the lower offending the higher” (*xia er fan shang* 下而犯上), and “subjects turning their backs on the lord” (*chen er bei jun* 臣而背君). Most of these omens occur during dynastic transitions.<sup>50</sup> The case of the mustachioed woman is first recorded here, along with another sex change incident:

In 1124, in the capital there was a man who sold fresh fruit. He became pregnant and gave birth. The midwife could not bring herself to take the child. [The newborn child] had changed hands through seven people, and only then was [the man] able to rid himself of [responsibility for the child] and run away. Another case: The daughter-in-law of wine vendor Zhu of the Fengle Tavern, who was in her forties and from Chuzhou (in present-day Jiangsu), suddenly grew a moustache. The moustache was only six or seven *cun* long, delicate and beautiful, and it made her appear like a man. [In response to this, emperor Huizong] specifically issued an edict to have her ordained as a Daoist nun.<sup>51</sup> 徽宗宣和六年，都城有賣青果男子，孕而誕子，蓐母不能收，易七人，始免而逃去。又有酒肆號豐樂樓，酒保朱氏子之妻，可四十餘，楚州人，忽生髭，長僅六七寸，疏秀而美，宛然一男子，特詔度為女道士。

Both accounts may have originated in anecdotes, first circulating orally and later also in writing. Ma, if not an earlier source, resituated them in the *zaiyi* tradition while preserving some anecdotal details. However, in line with the early *zaiyi* tradition, Ma also did not distinguish sexual anomalies from other omens. Ma’s interest in *zaiyi* and emphasis on the correlation between human anomalies and dynastic downfall was not unique among those Song intellectuals who had witnessed the end of the Southern Song and the founding of the Yuan. Zhou Mi was another. As I will show later, Zhou’s jotting-style, semi-encyclopedic entry for “human omens/demons” (*renyao* 人妖) delineated sexual anomalies as a distinct category for the first time in extant textual history.

The authors of the *Song History* (that concerning the Zhao-family dynasty [960–1279]), who were scholar-officials in the succeeding Yuan court, did not seem to be interested in *zaiyi*, either. The “Treatise on the Five Phases” in this *Song History* holds that there is no essential distinc-

<sup>50</sup> *WXTK* 308, p. 2417A.

<sup>51</sup> *WXTK* 308, p. 2421A.

tion between inauspicious omens (*yao*) and auspicious ones (*ruì* 瑞). If the ruler has virtue, no anomaly can pose harm; conversely, if he lacks virtue, any anomaly might be an omen.<sup>52</sup> The same work's entries for the "Human Disorder" (*ren'e* 人癘) section are largely taken from the corresponding "Human Anomalies" section in Ma's *Comprehensive Study*, including the two sex-change accounts discussed above.<sup>53</sup> However, this section is simply a long list of anomalous accounts related to the human body, and most of Ma's interpretive comments are removed.<sup>54</sup>

There is another noteworthy aspect of the two sex-change accounts in *Comprehensive Study* and the *Song History*. By including the two records in the "Investigation of Anomalies" and the "Treatise on the Five Phases," respectively, Ma Duanlin and the authors of the *Song History* situated them within the *zaiyi* tradition, thus classing them with earlier *zaiyi* descriptions of "men turning into women" and "women turning into men." But instead of complete sexual transformation, what the two records really describe is a man and a woman obtaining some physical traits of the opposite sex – a man becoming pregnant and a woman growing a moustache. The man might have continued to live as a man afterwards, and the woman was ordained as a Daoist *nun*. In the *zaiyi* tradition there is no need to investigate how and to what extent one sex has transformed into the other, whereas, as I will show, anecdotal and medical writers from the late-Southern Song and into the Yuan had a

<sup>52</sup> *Song shi* 61, p. 1318.

<sup>53</sup> The Yuan court commissioned the compilation of three histories for the three dynasties that it had conquered: the *Liao History*, *Jin History*, and *Song History*. Yuan historiographers put together official documents kept by the three courts as well as private records of different sorts. Among the three, sources for the *Song History* (*Song shi*) were the most voluminous and diversified, including literati's miscellaneous jottings and Ma Duanlin's *Wenxian tongkao*. See Hok-Lam Chan, "Chinese Official Historiography at the Yuan Court: The Composition of the Liao, Chin, and Sung Histories," in John D. Langlois, Jr., ed., *China Under Mongol Rule* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1981), pp. 56–106, esp. 82–83. The term "*ren'e*" comes from "Commentaries on the Five Phases in the Great Plan." In the original context, "*e*" refers to unspecified anomalies of the human body; as in most *zaiyi* texts, the focus is not placed on the anomalies themselves but the political problems that cause them. There is little physical description of the anomalies. In texts after the 2d c., terms such as "*e*" and "*yao*" deviate further from their original meanings. E.g., the "Treatise of the Five Phases" of the *Later Han History* classifies human-related anomalies into four kinds: "human disorder" (*ren'e*), "human transformation," "resurrection," and "epidemic" (see n. 34, above). "Human disorder" includes many anomalies that are not a kind of illness, while incidents of "men turning into women" are listed under "human transformation" rather than "human disorder." The "*Ren'e*" section in the *Song History* includes many references to multiple births, which are not considered a kind of disease but an (auspicious) sign of "people propagating."

<sup>54</sup> The only comment left in the *Song History*'s "Human Disorder" section is that multiple births are "manifestations of people propagating"; *Song shi* 62, p. 1369. This comment comes from *Wenxian tongkao*: "Some commentator says that [such incidents] are manifestations of peace in all under heaven and people propagating 說者曰, 天下安寧、人民蕃息之驗也"; *WXTK* 308, p. 2421A.

greater interest in such nuances. Sexual boundaries and the method of categorization varied to a large extent depending on the genre and the context of the discussion.

## SEX CHANGE IN DAOIST AND BUDDHIST TRADITIONS

Emperor Huizong's mandate to ordain the mustachioed woman as a Daoist nun had its doctrinal basis in the Daoist tradition. The Daoist as well as the Buddhist traditions differed from *zaiyi* in how sex change (especially women turning into men) could be understood. In Daoist literature, both in scriptures and in hagiographical accounts, women's transformations into men (or developing male secondary sexual characteristics) are marks of their success in approaching immortality. Unlike the "female alchemy" (*nüdan* 女丹) of later times,<sup>55</sup> during the Song such cases were not linked to long-term bodily cultivation, but rather associated with encountering deities or ingesting elixirs. Hagiographical narratives tend to emphasize devotion and religious piety, although they are heterogeneous in their textual origins. A Southern Song collection of Daoist hagiographies has two accounts of women turning into men and becoming immortals. The book is titled *Record of the Immortals of the Three Grottoes* (*Sandong qunxian lu* 三洞群仙錄), compiled by a Daoist priest, Chen Baoguang 陳葆光, in 1154. The section is titled "Xu Deng the Woman; Qiu Zeng the Man." The first account writes,

Xu Deng in Jin history was a native of Min (present-day Fujian). He was originally a woman and transformed into a man. Skilled in Daoist techniques, he was able to cast spells on men to make them sit still, on water to make it cease flowing, and on tigers and wolves to make them heel. He and Zhao Bing were companions beyond the mundane world. They practiced the Dao together, accomplished the practice and ascended to immortality.<sup>56</sup> 晉史徐登，閩人也。本是婦人，化爲丈夫。有道術，能禁人令坐而不起，禁水不流，虎狼伏地。與趙丙爲方外友，同行其道，道成登仙。

This story of Xu Deng and Zhao Bing appears in textual sources as early as Gan Bao's 干寶 (fl. 317–322) *Record of the Search for Immortals* (*Sou shen ji* 搜神記, a collection of stories about immortals and occultist

<sup>55</sup> For an introduction to *nüdan*, see Elena Valussi, "Female Alchemy: An Introduction," in Livia Kohn and Robin R. Wang, eds., *Internal Alchemy: Self, Society, and the Quest for Immortality* (New York: Three Pines Press, 2009), pp. 141–62.

<sup>56</sup> *Sandong qunxian lu* (HY 1238) (*Zhengtong daoze* edn. Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1985), vol. 54, j. 16, p. 532b. Xu Deng is not mentioned in the *Jin History*, but he supposedly lived through the end of the Eastern Han and the beginning of the Jin dynasty. (Here and below, "HY" refers to the number given in the 1935 Harvard-Yenching Index to the *Daoze*.)

practices) and Fan Ye's 范曄 (398–445) *Later Han History* (a privately compiled dynastic history). The two earlier sources include more details. They record that Xu Deng was senior to Zhao Bing and so Zhao served Xu as his master. After Xu died, Zhao went to Chang'an and attracted many followers there, before he was eventually executed by the magistrate of Chang'an for "misleading people" (*huo zhong* 惑眾). However, we are told that after Zhao died, "people erected a shrine for him in Yongkang; to this day, no gnats can enter the shrine."<sup>57</sup> The account further made its way into several other texts before eventually being incorporated into this Southern Song Daoist hagiography, which granted the sex-changed "woman" and the cult leader orthodox positions in Daoism.<sup>58</sup> In none of the earlier sources was Xu Deng or Zhao Bing explicitly identified as a Daoist. They became so only in Chen Baoguang's hagiography, which omits the record of Zhao Bing's leading a popular cult and his execution.

The second account following that of Xu Deng involves a sixteen-year-old woman named Aqiu Zeng 阿丘曾, the daughter of a dedicated Daoist. The story begins with her miraculous encounter with a high god while bathing.<sup>59</sup> She asks the god to turn her into a man, and the wish is granted. Later, she is assigned another high god as her mentor, from whom she receives several sacred scriptures.<sup>60</sup> According to Stephen Bokenkamp, the story of Aqiu Zeng first appears in one of the earliest Lingbao scriptures, *Jade Instructions in the Red Scripture of the Cavern-Mystery Numinous Treasure* (*Taishang dongxuan lingbao chishu yujue* 太上洞玄靈寶赤書玉訣), the title of which we find listed in Lu Xiujing's 陸修靜 (406–477) catalogue of Lingbao scriptures. And yet this story is a Daoist adaptation of a Buddhist tale about a woman named Longshi 龍施, recorded in Zhi Qian's 支謙 (222–280) *Sūtra of the Maiden Longshi* (*Foshuo Longshi nü jing* 佛說龍施女經). The notion of male rebirth also echoes that of a woman-less Pure Land in the *Amitābha Sūtra* (*Amituo jing* 阿彌陀經).<sup>61</sup> In

<sup>57</sup> *Xinjiao Sou shen ji* 新校搜神記 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1957) 2, pp. 12–13; *Hou Han shu* 82b, p. 2741. For an English translation of the full account in both sources, see Kenneth DeWoskin and J. I. Crump, Jr., *In Search of the Supernatural: The Written Record* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1996), p. 20; DeWoskin, *Doctors, Diviners, and Magicians of Ancient China: Biographies of Fang-shih* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1983), pp. 76–77.

<sup>58</sup> The story is also included in texts such as *Shuijing zhu* 水經注, *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, *Taiping yulan*, *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜, and *Tong zhi* 通志.

<sup>59</sup> The high god is identified as Yuanshi Tianzun 元始天尊 (Celestial Worthy of the Original Beginning).

<sup>60</sup> *Sandong qunxian lu* 16, pp. 532b–33a.

<sup>61</sup> Stephen Bokenkamp, "Sources of the Ling-Pao Scriptures," in Michel Strickmann, ed., *Tantric and Taoist Studies* (Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1983), pp.

both its Buddhist and Daoist versions, the girl actively and assertively appeals to the Buddha or the Celestial Worthy to make her a man. In one of the story's early versions, she even successfully confronts the Demon-King, who attempts to frustrate her ambitions by reminding her of the filial duties she owes to her father.<sup>62</sup>

If the story of Aqiu Zeng/Longshi seems more exceptional than exemplary, another early Lingbao scripture prescribes in general terms that “if a woman will, in solitude, contemplate this scripture, she will be transformed into a man 女子閑寂, 思念是經, 得轉身爲男.”<sup>63</sup> Likewise, the *Sūtra on Transforming the Female Form* (*Fo shuo zhuan nüshen jing* 佛說轉女身經) recounts ten sets of methods that enable women to “leave the female form and immediately become men 得離女身, 速成男子.”<sup>64</sup> In the *Sūtra of the Medicine Buddha* (*Yaoshi liuliguang rulai benyuan gongde jing* 藥師琉璃光如來本願功德經), the Medicine Buddha vows, “If there are any women who suffer from the hundred torments as a woman... and vow to abandon the female form, once they hear my name, all will be able to turn from female into male 若有女人, 爲女百惡之所逼惱... 願捨女身, 聞我名已, 一切皆得轉女成男.”<sup>65</sup>

In *Tales of the Lotus Sutra* (*Fahua zhuanji* 法華傳記) we read of two women who turned into men and another woman who dreamed she had done so.<sup>66</sup> In these texts, gender hierarchy is clear and rather fixed, but identity is not, nor is the physical body. At least in the scriptures, women are encouraged to become men and they can. While in

434–86. The earliest extant version of Aqiu Zeng's account is preserved in *Taishang dongxuan lingbao chishu yujue miaojing* 太上洞玄靈寶赤書玉訣妙經 (HY 352) (*Zhengtong daoze* edn.), vol. 10, j. xia, pp. 533b–34b. It is also included in *Wushang miyao* 無上秘要 (6th c., HY 30) and *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (11th c., HY 1023).

<sup>62</sup> Notably, Chen Baoguang's revision of this story in *Sandong qunxian lu* is much shortened, and eliminates the girl's confrontation with the Demon-King, her twist of filial piety, and the dramatic action of throwing herself into the fire.

<sup>63</sup> This is also from one of the earliest Lingbao scriptures listed in Lu Xiuqing's catalog, *Falun zuifu* 法輪罪福 (*Blame and Blessing of the Wheel of the Law*), now divided into four separate works. The passage can be found in *Taishang xuanyi zhenren shuo miaotong zhuan shen ruding jing* 太上玄一真人說妙通轉神入定經 (HY 647) (*Zhengtong daoze* edn.), vol. 10, p. 501a. The translation is according to Bokenkamp, “Sources of the Ling-Pao Scriptures,” p. 473; for details of this scripture, see *ibid.*, p. 482.

<sup>64</sup> *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 (*T*) no. 564, pp. 918–19. It may include sex change beyond one lifetime, that is, changing into a man at rebirth. The text was produced in China during the 6th c. See Stephanie Balkwill, “The *Sūtra on Transforming the Female Form*: Unpacking an Early Medieval Chinese Buddhist Text,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 44.2 (2016), pp. 127–48.

<sup>65</sup> *T*. no. 450, p. 405.

<sup>66</sup> *T*. no. 2068, pp. 76, 79–80. The text was written by Sengxiang 僧詳 in the first half of the 8th c. For an introduction to *Fahua zhuanji* and selected translations, see Daniel B. Stevenson, “Tales of the Lotus Sutra,” in Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., *Buddhism in Practice* (Prince-

the *zaiyi* system sex change is an anomaly, a symptom of disturbed *qi* and an omen of dynastic downfall, in Lingbao and Pure Land literature women are promised that they will become men upon achieving the Dao or entering the Pure Land. Female-to-male sex change as a manifestation of the divine power of religious devotion necessarily involves women's active participation. This stands in sharp contrast to those cases of women-turning-into-men in Ming-Qing anecdotes studied by Charlotte Furth, in which "[g]irls become male passively and modestly, like good girls."<sup>67</sup>

Diana Paul and Lisa Owen use another sutra, the *Sūtra of the Teaching of Vimalakīrti* (*Weimojie jing* 維摩詰經), to point out that sex change is not a condition of enlightenment, but a manifestation of the enlightened mind that sees through the emptiness of all phenomena – particularly, in this case, the illusory nature of sex and gender. This sutra describes how a goddess, upon being challenged by the eminent monk Śāriputra to change her female sex, refuses to do so for the reason that “woman” is simply an illusion. The goddess further turns Śāriputra into a female form and back into male again in order to enlighten him. Owen, in line with other feminist Buddhist scholars, including Rita Gross, considers that this sutra better represents the notion of emptiness in the Mahāyāna tradition, whereas the *Sūtra on Transforming the Female Form* is “evidence of the ‘massive institutional failure’ that occurred when Buddhism was translated into cultural (i.e. androcentric and patriarchal) terms.”<sup>68</sup>

Gross, Paul, and Owen have all made insightful critiques and contributed to reconstructing what Gross terms, an “accurate and useful past,” or a “feminist revalorization of Buddhism,” which seeks to “repair” the tradition, “bringing it much more into line with its own fundamental values and vision than was its patriarchal form.”<sup>69</sup> However, I wonder which one would have been more useful for women in dealing

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ton: Princeton U.P., 1995), pp. 427–51.

<sup>67</sup> Furth, “Androgynous Male and Deficient Females,” p. 18.

<sup>68</sup> Lisa Battaglia Owen, “Toward a Buddhist Feminism: Mahayana Sutras, Feminist Theory, and the Transformation of Sex,” *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 3.4 (1997), pp. 8–51. Diana Y. Paul, *Women in Buddhism: Images of the Feminine in the Mahayana Tradition* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1985), pp. 230–31. Rita M. Gross, *Buddhism after Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism* (New York: SUNY P., 1993), pp. 55–77.

<sup>69</sup> Gross, *Buddhism After Patriarchy*, pp. 3–14, 17–54. While their works are certainly useful for envisioning a feminist reform of the Buddhist institution, as criticized by scholars including Chandra Mohanty and Nirmala Salgado, this kind of scholarship can also be useful for colonial ambitions in the Third World and shift focus away from women's everyday lives. See Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” *Boundary 2* 12.3–13.1 (1984), pp. 333–58; Nirmala S. Salgado, *Buddhist Nuns*

with everyday realities and more subversive in, say, fifth-century China: a teaching about the constructedness of sex and gender, or a promise for the pious to physically become men. Pure philosophical discussions on the emptiness of the body, sex, and gender were far less dangerous or socially provocative than a woman turning into a man and inspiring a popular religious cult, as demonstrated by the case of Xu Deng and Zhao Bing. Studying the “apocryphal accretions” in the Chinese *Sūtra on Transforming the Female Form* (T 564), Stephanie Balkwill points out that it provides a different argument from other Mahāyāna texts for why a woman must become a man in order to become a Buddha. The argument is “much less philosophical in orientation” but “specifically address[es] what exactly are the problems of living life as a woman” in China during the Six Dynasties. The Chinese author of T 564 stresses that the problem of the female body is not in its inherent impurity but rather in the social context that often subjects the female body to abuse and makes it more difficult for women to practice.<sup>70</sup>

In line with Balkwill, then, a “useful past” for me is one that challenges assumptions and analytical categories, refocuses our lenses, and in turn produces a more nuanced, if not more accurate, understanding of the past. Therefore, unlike Gross, Paul, and Owen, I am not interested in determining which tradition or text is more “liberating” for women or renders gender boundaries more flexible. My point here, rather, is that “normal” as a combination of “what is right” and “what is common” has no place in such a worldview. The transformation from a female to a male (or sexless) body was never considered common or average; it was simply the right thing and a soteriological promise to *all* women who sought to enter the Pure Land. Furthermore, as products of a society where gender hierarchy was salient, even though those traditions and texts were no less misogynous than each other and equally powerful in creating gendered bodies and boundaries, they were fundamentally contradictory. In emperor Huizong’s response to the mustachioed woman and other anecdotal accounts that I will now discuss, no single system is dominant. In Song anecdotal accounts, cases of sexual anomalies were not treated as a single kind, and each was set down in its own distinct context.

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and *Gendered Practice: In Search of the Female Renunciant* (New York: Oxford U.P., 2013), especially pp. 21–31.

<sup>70</sup> Balkwill, “The *Sūtra on Transforming the Female Form*,” pp. 140–43.

## SONG ANECDOTES AND THEIR POLITICIZATION

Hong Mai's 洪邁 (1123–1202) *Record of the Listener* (*Yijian zhi* 夷堅志), a large collection of anecdotes compiled between 1161 and the end of the twelfth century, contains two cases of women who turned into men in settings where non-canonical Buddhist and Daoist figures played a role. In both accounts the women underwent a sex change after taking some elixirs given by an occult figure but did not become immortal. One woman was a Buddhist nun called Master Jin (Jinshi 金師) of the Dharma Transmission Nunnery in Pingjiang (in present-day Suzhou).<sup>71</sup> While giving food to an itinerant “man of the Dao” (*daoren* 道人),<sup>72</sup> she inquired about medicine to treat her chronic breathing problem. The *daoren* gave her an elixir, warned her not to attend funerals, and promised to come back after twelve years. After taking the elixir, Master Jin lost appetite for all food and eventually stopped eating. After fasting for a long time, she grew a mustache and a beard, both “black and glossy like a man’s.” Twelve years after taking the elixir, she attended a relative’s funeral, and her appetite returned. The *daoren* never came back, and Master Jin later died during the Jurchen invasion.<sup>73</sup>

The other case involves a twelve-year-old girl who had a miraculous dream in the year 1167. In it, a Daoist priest (*daoshi* 道士) gave her an elixir that he claimed could “reverse the mechanism of Heaven, usurp the shaping powers, transform *yin* to *yang* and vice versa, and change cold weather into hot 回天機, 奪造化, 易陰陽, 變寒暑.” The girl took it and woke up, with the fragrance of the elixir still lingering. She got up to go to the toilet and found that she had turned into a man.<sup>74</sup> The *Record of the Listener* also records another version of this second story, said to have taken place on the same date in the same location (Yongzhou) but with a different dream. In this version, the girl’s sex change was the result of a mistake by the netherworld’s reincarnation bureau. Two days before her wedding, the girl dreamed that she was brought to a court, told by the judge that her current sex is a mistake, and given a foul-smelling decoction to drink. Waking up from the dream, she became a man. Shocked by the transformation, her parents immediately informed the family to whom she was betrothed. The family suspected the situation to be a conspiracy and brought the case

<sup>71</sup> This Master Jin was said to have been a concubine of Zhang Dun 章惇 (1035–1105), a prime minister of the Northern Song.

<sup>72</sup> *Daoren* could refer to either a Buddhist or a Daoist practitioner during the Song.

<sup>73</sup> Hong Mai noted that this account was told by He Dexian, who claimed to have seen Master Jin with beard; *Yijian zhi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), *yi*, j. 11, p. 83.

<sup>74</sup> *Yijian zhi, zhijia*, j. 3, p. 730.

to the local court, where the former girl was examined and confirmed to be a man. The future husband's family then decided to marry this transformed man to their daughter instead.<sup>75</sup>

There are two other accounts that are not told in a religious setting. One concerns a bride with "two forms" (*er xing* 二形), also found in *Record of the Listener*, and the other is about a teenage girl who turned into a boy, recorded in the *Search for Anomalies* (*Kuoyi zhi* 括異志). The bride with dual body parts was the daughter of a Li family in the town of Jiande, Chizhou county (in present-day Anhui). Her father arranged for her to marry a man named Cai, a skilled craftsman who had just moved to this city in the same year, 1189. On the wedding night, Cai was shocked by the bride's body and accused the Li family of deceiving him. The matchmaker – an old woman – came in to look at the bride and confirmed that she had "two bodies." Yet the Li family "forced Cai to continue the marriage." We do not know whether or not the Li family knew of their daughter's situation beforehand. But Cai spent four months in the marriage before running away.<sup>76</sup>

The story in *Search for Anomalies* is about the daughter of a certain Xiao family of Guangzhou. She turned into a boy after the age of ten. Her family was not aware of it until he was eighteen and impregnated a maidservant. He was thereafter treated as a man, and associated with other elite men. Those who spent time studying together with him described him as having memorized almost the whole *Wen xuan* (a sixth-century anthology), adding that "although he had grown facial hair, he still had the bearing of a woman."<sup>77</sup> Another relevant account is a very brief one about a city clerk who grew breasts and secreted milk "like a wet nurse." No more information is given in this case.<sup>78</sup> None of the above cases was associated with political omens in the narrative, even if we know from other accounts that people of this time were not un-

<sup>75</sup> *Yijian zhi, bing*, j. 1, pp. 370–71. Charlotte Furth observes that in Ming-Qing anecdotes, female-to-male changes are often "subject to less questioning, scrutiny and skepticism" than male-to-female ones (Furth, "Androgynous Male and Deficient Females," p. 18). This Song case is quite different from the Ming-Qing pattern. It is a female-to-male change that has gone through skepticism, questioning, and (judicial) scrutiny.

<sup>76</sup> *Yijian zhi, sanji*, j. 9, p. 1373. The "two-formed" woman is not really the focus of this account. The focus is Cai's encounter with a ghost woman after running away from his marriage. The account is titled "The Woman in a Hut in Jiande," referring to the ghost woman whom Cai met on the outskirts of Jiande Town.

<sup>77</sup> *Kuoyi zhi* (*Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan* edn. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001), *buyi*, p. 713.

<sup>78</sup> *Houshan tancong* 後山談叢 (*Lidai shiliao biji congkan* edn. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), j. 3, p. 43.

familiar with the notion of *zaiyi* and its political implications.<sup>79</sup> Some were associated with a “*daoren*” or a “*daoshi*” but the contexts were quite different from canonical Daoist texts. Most importantly, each case was treated separately; they were not discussed as a kind.

When Hong Mai recorded the two sex-change stories and the “two-bodied” woman in his *Record of the Listener*, he did not associate them with *zaiyi*. Although, like other intellectuals of his time, Hong was familiar with the *zaiyi* tradition, he rarely mentioned it in the *Record*. In most cases he refrained from inserting personal comments into his anecdotes.<sup>80</sup> Some authors active after the fall of the Southern Song, however, read Hong’s *Record* in a different light. One “Lazy Old Man” (Ziyu Sou 皆窳叟, possibly a Jin or Southern Song survivor into the Yuan),<sup>81</sup> commenting on the *Record of the Listener* and its sequel, *Continued Record of the Listener* (*Xu Yijian zhi* 續夷堅志, by Yuan Haowen 元好問, 1190–1257), invoked the language of *zaiyi* to characterize the anomaly accounts given in the two collections, and associated them with the downfall of both the Northern Song and the Jin dynasties:

Master Zisi (Confucius’ grandson) says, “When a state is about to rise, there must be auspices. When a state is about to perish, there must be *yao* (demons) and *nie* (deviant growths).”<sup>82</sup> Many accounts in Hong Mai’s *Record of the Listener* are from the periods of Zhenghe (1111–1118) and Xuanhe (1119–1126),<sup>83</sup> and many in Yuan Haowen’s *Continued Record of the Listener* are from Taihe

<sup>79</sup> One example is the account of the “Anomalous Swine in Fuzhou” 福州異豬, in *Yijian zhi*. It records that, one night during Emperor Huizong’s reign, a sow gave birth seven piglets, six of which had heads and torsos like a human’s and hoofs like a horse’s. The family who owned the sow was frightened and buried the piglets behind the toilet. The neighbors found out and showed the monstrous piglets to the whole village. The magistrate “knew they were ominous and had them killed immediately.” The account notes, “It was a time when [the court] particularly upheld the auspicious, so [the magistrate] did not dare to report this to the court” (*Yijian zhi, bing, j. 13, p. 474*).

<sup>80</sup> I do not mean to say that there is no “discourse” in Hong’s records, but that there is not a single and overarching one. The voices in *Yijian zhi* deserve a separate study.

<sup>81</sup> The term “*ziyu*” comes from the “Biographies of the Usurers” in *Shiji*, used to describe people in the south and southeast (Chu 楚 and Yue 越), esp. in conjunction with “*tousheng* 偷生,” meaning barely surviving, or, living an unambitious life; *Shiji* 129, p. 3270. In later times, *tousheng* was often used to describe the lives of survivors of a previous dynasty. The commentator, Ziyu Sou, likely used this term as an allusion to his identity as a survivor of the Jin or the Southern Song.

<sup>82</sup> The present article has earlier pointed out this passage from the “Doctrine of the Mean.” It was traditionally attributed to Confucius’ grandson, Zisi (Kong Ji 孔伋). My translation of “*yao*” here differs from the previous occurrence, per my understanding of the way the Lazy Old Man uses the passage in this context.

<sup>83</sup> Both are reign titles of emperor Huizong, the last emperor *de facto* of the Northern Song.

(1201-1209) and Zhenyou (1213-1217).<sup>84</sup> These were different from peaceful times.<sup>85</sup> 子思子云：“國家將興，必有禎祥；國家將亡，必有妖孽。”洪景盧“夷堅志”多政、宣事，元好問“續志”多泰和、貞祐事，其視平世有間耳。

This comment marked a significant departure from the views taken by Hong Mai and Yuan Haowen regarding their own works. Like Ma Duanlin, this Lazy Old Man politicized those anomaly accounts that had been circulated and written for no political reasons. But the commentator also departed from the *zaiyi* tradition by taking an undifferentiated approach to anomalies – they were all “*yaonie*.” The ominous implication of those anomalies was simply based on the *frequency* of the homogenous *yaonie* incidents, rather than their specific form or type. Most accounts in the *Record of the Listener*, such as the accounts of the two women discussed above, are about humans’ interaction with the otherworld and are different in nature from the *zaiyi* worldview. The Lazy Old Man, however, did not leave any further explanation beyond this rather generalizing comment. Still, despite their very different approaches to anomalies, neither Hong Mai nor the Lazy Old Man classified sexual anomalies as a kind and distinguished it from other anomalies. It was not until Zhou Mi’s entry for “*renyao*” 人妖 (human-omen/demon) that a conceptual category was constructed exclusively for sexual anomalies.

<sup>84</sup> The Taihe reign was considered the turning point of the downfall of the Jin dynasty, and Zhenyou was the last reign title of emperor Xuanzong, the last Jin emperor. A reviewer of this article asked which problems during these years prompted Ziyu Sou’s comment. The downfall or demise of a regime was a most significant event, but the *zaiyi* tradition rarely points to specific political problems. E.g., Ma Duanlin writes in the “Human Anomaly” section of *Wenxian tongkao*, “In the fourth month of the first year of the [Song] Jiading reign (1208), the wife of a soldier in the reserve force in Zhenjiang gave birth to a son who had two heads and four arms. The Treatise [of the Five Phases] in the *Jin History* notes that the splitting apart of the Central Plain caused this kind of human disorder. A few years [after 1208], the Jin lost the Central Plain”; *WXTK* 308, p. 2421B. In most cases, there is simply a list of anomalies and their dates without any specification of corresponding political events at all. Ziyu Sou may have had specific incidents in mind, and different individuals would doubtless have had different explanations for the end of a dynasty. The available sources do not allow us to speculate as to what his explanation would be. But we can confidently say that a few intellectuals who survived the Jin-Yuan or Song-Yuan transition (including Ma Duanlin, Zhou Mi, and this Ziyu Sou) became more interested in *zaiyi* than their Song predecessors, and that that interest had much to do with the fall of their dynasties.

<sup>85</sup> This is one of the “original postscripts 原跋” included in the *Shilian’an huike jiu jinren ji* 石蓮齋彙刻九金人集 (1905) edn., reproducing a Yuan transcription by Wu Qi 吳起 in 1348. The latter was in turn based on a “jube woodblock edition of the North 北地棗本”; *Xu Yijian zhi* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1967), pp. 1150-52. The identity of this Ziyu Sou is unknown. But his comment is juxtaposed with other postscripts, which are all from the Yuan.

ENCYCLOPEDIC JOTTINGS AND  
 “RENYAO” AS A SEXUAL CATEGORY

The history of the term “*renyao*” tells interesting stories. It appears in textual sources as early as *Xunzi* 荀子 (3rd century BC), in which the thinker debunks a kind of correlative cosmology popular in his time. “*Ren Yao*” 人祲 in *Xunzi* refers to disasters caused by humans, disasters that he construed as direct social effects rather than cosmological symptoms of political failure. One should be fearful of disasters caused by humans and not “rare incidences” such as falling stars and eclipses, which essentially mean nothing to the human world.<sup>86</sup> The semantic structure of *Xunzi*’s “*renyao*” differs from that of *zaiyi* literature: The former is “*yao* (disasters; disorders) caused by humans”; the latter is “*yao* (anomalies) appearing in humans/human bodies.”

The old *zaiyi* literature adopted the word “*yao*” for one of its archaic meanings – anomalous or exceptional beauty (often used to describe women or plants and not always pejorative).<sup>87</sup> In some *zaiyi* texts, “*yao*” was taken out of its original semantic context and used as a technical term for one of the many omen categories (such as *zai*, *yi*, *yao*, and *jiu*). “*Ren Yao*” became a specialist term within the *zaiyi* literature, used interchangeably with “*ren’e*,” referring to anomalies seen in the human body.<sup>88</sup> That is not how *Xunzi* used the term. As I have shown earlier, sexual anomalies were not singled out as a separate category under the rubric of *renyao/ren’e* in the *zaiyi* tradition.

The semantic structure of “*renyao*” in later times basically followed that of *zaiyi* literature – anomalies appearing in humans or in human forms – while its usage went far beyond political omens. The “*Ren Yao*” section in the imperially commissioned encyclopedia, *Extensive Records of the Taiping Era* (*Taiping Guangji* 太平廣記, 978) contains seventeen accounts. Four concern women who cross-dressed (and three of them who passed) as men. None mentions physical sex change, sexual anomalies, or sexual transgression. There is also one account concerning anomalous birth (conjoined twins) and four about pregnant women giving birth through irregular parts of their bodies. The rest are stories of a mysterious old man who had gone missing for ten years and appeared hidden in another household; a very old woman who lived for three

<sup>86</sup> “Tianlun,” *Xunzi*, j. 17, p. 374. For *Xunzi*’s theory of omens, see Goldin, *Confucianism*, pp. 81–88.

<sup>87</sup> The original character is 夭. In most *zaiyi* literature, it is written as 妖, that is, with the 女 (female) radical.

<sup>88</sup> In *zaiyi* texts, there are also *fuyao* 服妖 (anomalous clothes), *caoyao* 草妖 (anomalous plants), *shiyao* 詩妖 (anomalous poetry), etc. See, e.g., *Shangshu Dazhuan*, j. 3, pp. 9a, 10a–b.

hundred years and was fed by her seventh-generation granddaughter; a man who, after recovering from a severe disease, was able to project his voice several miles away; a man who could laugh with half of his face and cry with the other half concurrently; a man who, after being beheaded, continued to live for another three to four years and even begot a son; an old monk whose snores followed an ancient musical rhythm; a man with two horns and no hair; and a woman with no legs.<sup>89</sup> A commonality between *renyao* in the *zaiyi* literature and in *Taiping guangji* is that both use the term to refer to human-related anomalies in general, rather than a sexual or gender-specific category. In *zaiyi* literature, however, *renyao* and *ren'e* do not include cross-dressing.

*Scribbled History* (*Yingshi* 程史, by Yue Ke 岳珂, 1183–1243), a collection of anecdotes, also has two accounts titled “*renyao*,” neither of which concerns sexual anomalies. One records a brother and a sister in Suzhou, both twelve feet tall, and a Buddhist apprentice child with eyebrows multiple feet long and worshiped as a “living arhat.” Yue Ke comments that those are all deviations from properly endowed features and physiques (*fei xiangmao fuxing zhi zheng* 非相貌賦形之正).<sup>90</sup> In the other account, *renyao* refers to a human figure that the treasonous general Wu Xi 吳曦 (1162–1207) saw in the moon (*yue zhong renyao* 月中人妖), which he wrongfully took as an auspicious sign for his military rising.<sup>91</sup> In sum, before Zhou Mi, the term *renyao* had been used beyond *zaiyi* contexts. As a product of early-Song encyclopedic writing, it became an all-inclusive category for human-related anomalies, humans with extraordinary traits, and beings that were half-human, half-demon. Zhou inherited that encyclopedic approach while narrowing the scope to sexual anomalies.

Zhou Mi wrote his *Miscellaneous Notes* around the same time as Ma Duanlin’s *Comprehensive Study*, and in a similar political atmosphere. It was after the Mongol conquest of South China in the late-thirteenth century when this former Southern Song scholar-official withdrew from officialdom. *Miscellaneous Notes* is a collection of jottings that includes contemporary anecdotes, miscellaneous bits of knowledge, and Zhou’s own philological and historiographical study notes.<sup>92</sup> Some accounts

<sup>89</sup> *Taiping guangji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008) 367, pp. 2920–25.

<sup>90</sup> *Yingshi* (*Lidai shiliao biji congkan* edn. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), j. 6, p. 70.

<sup>91</sup> *Yingshi*, j. 8, p. 90.

<sup>92</sup> In the preface to *Guixin zazhi*, Zhou indicates that many of the topics and materials of the book came from his casual conversations with friends – similar to the method of many Song anecdotal writings including *Yijian zhi* – and yet he criticizes *Yijian zhi* for prioritizing quantity over quality in a way that unavoidably results in false accounts; *Guixin zazhi* (*Lidai shiliao biji congkan* edn. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), p. 1.

are similar to encyclopedic entries, where Zhou puts together a number of historical references to a certain subject along with his own comments. The entry for “*renyao*” is a case in point, including references to sexual anomalies from multiple sources of different genres. The references are as follows.

Two contemporary anecdotes: One concerns a maidservant of Zhao Yuchou 趙與籌 (1179–1260, a member of the Song imperial clan). One of Zhao’s subordinates attempted to rape the maidservant and found that she was a man. The local court examined her and reported that she “had dual body parts,” and that “the deceptive shapes of the front and of the back are not of the same [sex].” She was therefore put to death. The other anecdote is about a young concubine who was bought as a virgin and who, after having sex with the master several times, “gradually grew the male body part.” Zhou comments that the reason one rarely sees such cases in conventional biographies from ancient to present times is because they would “pollute the brush and ink” (*huiwu bimo* 穢汗筆墨) and therefore are not recorded.

Two out of the “five kinds of non-male” (*wuzhong bunan* 五種不男) in Buddhist precepts: the “*bocha banzejia* 博叉半擇迦” that “can be a man in half of the month but not the other half of the month,” and the “*ban* 半” (half) and the “*bian* 變” (transformer) that have “two forms.”<sup>93</sup>

Two references from the *zaiyi* literature: The first is from the *Jin History*’s “Treatise on the Five Phases” that I introduced earlier. It is about the person who has “both male and female body parts.” The

<sup>93</sup> Li Qinqu has a detailed investigation into the textual history of the “five non-males” and the “five non-females” in Chinese sources. According to Li, the five “non-males” (“*buneng nan* 不能男” or “*wuzhong huangmen* 五種黃門”) come from the Buddhist precepts translated into Chinese in the 5th c., referring to the kinds of men with genitile defects who are thus not allowed to become fully ordained monks. The number varies from five to three and six. In Xuan Ying’s 玄應 *Yiqie jing yinyi* 一切經音義, the term for “non-males” is transliterated as “*banzejia* 半擇迦.” Fa Yun’s 法雲 (1086–1158) *Fanyi mingyi ji* 翻譯名義集 renders it as “*ban-tujia* 般荼迦” and elaborates on the five kinds of it: 1. *shanchuai* 扇搯 / *sheng* 生: born with deformed penises; 2. *liuna* 留拏 / *jian* 犍 / *ju* 劇: the castrated; 3. *yilishazhangna* 伊犁沙掌拏 / *du* 妒: aroused only by seeing others’ sexual acts; 4. *banzejia* 半擇迦 / *bian* 變: change of sex in one lifespan; 5. *bocha* 博叉 / *ban* 半: can be a man in half of the month but not the other half. These terms and categories only become visible in texts outside of Buddhist literature since the Song. The wordings and contents vary, but no reference to “two genital forms” is seen in Buddhist texts. Hong Mai’s *Rongzhai suibi* 容齋隨筆 is the earliest extant non-Buddhist source that makes reference to the five non-males by quoting Xuan Ying. The five “non-females,” however, are not seen in extant Buddhist texts. Its earliest textual appearance is in Zhou Mi’s *Zhiyatang zachao* 志雅堂雜鈔 and Xianyu Shu’s 鮮于樞 (1246–1302) *Kunxuezhai zalu* 困學齋雜錄. Li Qinqu speculates that the notion of “five non-females,” unlike “five non-males,” is not from any Buddhist sutra and does not have an Indian origin, but was created by Chinese authors from the late-13th c. in order to match the “five non-males.” Li Qinqu 李勤璞, “Yixue yu Fojiao: Han yi wubunü sixiang de xingcheng” 醫學與佛教, 漢醫五不女思想的形成, in *Yangsheng, yiliao yu zongjiao yantaohui lunwenji* 養生、醫療與宗教研討會論文集 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2000), pp. 1–57.

second is a quote from an unidentified *Classic of the Jade Calendar and Comprehensive Governance* (*Yuli tongzheng jing* 玉歷通政經), which says, “[possessing] both male and female body parts is a sign of [sexual] excessiveness and disturbance in the country.”

The two hermaphroditic deities in the Daoist illustration “True Forms of the Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions” (*Ershiba xiu zhenxing tu* 二十八宿真形圖): the Xin-Moon Fox (Xinyuehu 心月狐) and the Fang-Sun Rabbit (Fangritu 房日兔). They can “assume a female or a male form interchangeably when [sexually] interacting with men or women.”<sup>94</sup> He further quotes a certain *Record of Anomalies* (*Yiwu zhi* 異物志, possibly a *zhiguai* work) to associate the two deities with the raccoon-dog spirits (*lingli* 靈狸) that can “assume the *yin* or the *yang* form at will so as to enchant people.”

Finally, Zhou quotes a medical text, *Mr. Chu's Posthumous Works* (*Chushi yishu* 褚氏遺書, attributed to Chu Cheng 褚澄 of the fifth century, possibly written in the tenth century): “The neither-male-nor-female body [comes from] the dispersing of the essence and the blood”,<sup>95</sup> and, “[if the patient] reacts to women, it is a man's pulse that responds to [your touch]; [if the patient reacts] to men, it is a woman's that responds to [your fingers].”

In the end, Zhou comments that all of the above are the result of “deviant (non-*zheng*) *qi* in heaven and earth (*tian di buzheng zhi qi* 天地不正之氣).”<sup>96</sup> Like Yue Ke's comment on the brother and sister and the

<sup>94</sup> One painting titled “True Forms of the Five Planets and the Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions” is listed in the *Xuanhe Painting Catalog* (*Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜, completed 1120), under the section, “Daoist and Buddhist [Paintings].” This work attributes it to Zhang Sengyou (early-6th c.). The surviving part of this handscroll is now stored in Osaka Municipal Museum of Art, and contains images of the two deities. The original inscriptions next to the two deities include the sentence that Zhou Mi quotes here, “[they can] assume a female or a male form interchangeably when interacting with men or women.” This is likely the illustration that Zhou refers to. For more details of this painting, see Stephen Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), pp. 132–37. The iconography of the twenty-eight stellar deities from the Song-Yuan period varies, and the Xin and the Fang are not always presented as hermaphroditic. (In the ancient system of 28 Lunar Mansions, Xin 心 was the 5th of the seven eastern mansions, and Fang 房 the 4th.) The statues in the Temple of the Jade Thearch in Fucheng 府城玉皇廟 (Jincheng, Shanxi), for instance, do not depict the two deities in this way. For the iconography of the twenty-eight stellar deities, see Yang Yabei 楊雅琪, “Ershiba xingxiu zai Zhongguo huihua zhong de xingxiang zhuanbian: yi Yuandai Yonglegong bihua yu Mingdai Baoningsi shuiluhua weili” 二十八星宿在中國繪畫中的形象轉變, 以元代永樂宮壁畫與明代寶寧寺水陸畫為例, *Yiyi fenzi* 藝藝份子 10 (2008), pp. 33–56.

<sup>95</sup> Here Zhou Mi in fact misquotes Chu Cheng's original sentence, where “the dispersing of the essence and the blood” is to describe the cause of twins and triplets instead of the neither-male-nor-female. Chu Cheng's original passage will be translated in full and discussed in the following section.

<sup>96</sup> *Guixin zazhi, qianji*, p. 37. This judgment is Zhuo Mi's own, and does not appear in the original text of the *Chushi yishu* in any form.

“living arhat” with extraordinary features, Zhou attached an evaluative judgment to such anomalies. Labeling their anomaly accounts “non-*zheng*,” both Yue and Zhou seemed to imply a link between the unusual and the unjust or incorrect, although, still unlike the modern notion of “abnormal” or “*bu zhengchang* 不正常,” the link here was non-correlative. Such cases were non-*zheng* in themselves, not because they were rare, less frequent, or beyond the average. Zhou even commented that such cases only *seemed* rare because they were too obscene to be recorded.

To Zhou, sexual anomalies were no longer simply signs of political disorder that were harmless in themselves and not distinguished from many other signs, nor strange incidents that were fascinating, nor divine manifestations. Rather, they were licentious, polluting, demonic, and deviant. Most importantly, they became a distinct category and were closely tied to sexual transgressions. Zhou’s innovation reflects an ongoing transition in the meaning of “*renyao*,” which in turn is emblematic of the changing social concerns over sexual and gender transgressions. The “Human Disorder (*ren’e*)” entry in Shen Defu’s 沈德符 (1578–1642) *Records Acquired Out of Office during the Wanli Reign* (*Wanli yehuo bian* 萬曆野獲編) largely adopted the materials in Zhou’s *renyao* entry.<sup>97</sup> In later anecdotal and fictional accounts of *renyao*, transvestites committing sexual transgressions came to override physical sex change in the usage. Two examples are “A Case of *Ren Yao*” (*renyao gong’an* 人妖公案) in Lu Can’s 陸粲 (1494–1551) *Gengsi bian* 庚巳編 that Charlotte Furth studied,<sup>98</sup> and “*Ren Yao*” in Pu Songling’s 蒲松齡 (1640–1715) *Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋誌異, which both Furth and Judith Zeitlin analyzed.<sup>99</sup> *Ren Yao* in contemporary Chinese often refers to male transvestites or effeminate men. This definition emerged during the Ming-Qing period and departed significantly from both its original, non-sexually specific meaning and Zhou Mi’s classification of non-gender specific sexual anomalies.

Nevertheless, we should not read Zhou Mi’s construction of *renyao* as a sexual category simply as an effort to establish the “truth” about sex that served to regulate sexuality. It was indeed a critique of the perceived political disorder and reorganized social hierarchies including

<sup>97</sup> *Wanli yehuo bian* (*Lidai shiliao biji congkan* edn. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), j. 28, pp. 729–30.

<sup>98</sup> Furth, “Androgynous Male and Deficient Females,” pp. 22–23.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23. Judith T. Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1993), pp. 98–106. Both Furth and Zeitlin translate *renyao* as “(human) prodigy.” Here we see another interesting shift: in the “*renyao*” entry in *Taiping guangji*, the transvestites in the four cited cases are all women, while in the Ming-Qing accounts most are men.

that of gender, as was the case of Kong Qi's (ca. 1310–after 1365) gynophobia, studied by Paul Smith.<sup>100</sup> But what made Zhou's critique look this way in particular? The answer lies in genre. Let us compare Zhou Mi's "Ren Yao" in his *Miscellaneous Notes* with Ma Duanlin's "Ren Yi" (Human Anomalies) in *Comprehensive Study*. Zhou and Ma might have had very similar critiques of the failure of the Southern Song and resentment at their fallen status under the Mongol rule, but Zhou's "Ren Yao" created a discourse of sexual anomaly (that is, sexual anomaly as a recognizable category subject to regulation) while Ma's "Ren Yi" did not. It was not necessarily because Zhou was keener to regulate sexuality than Ma was. Rather, the genres and textual histories of both pieces help explain the difference: While *Miscellaneous Notes* marks a combination of opinionated short essays, philological-historiographical notes, and encyclopedic writing, *Comprehensive Study* adopts the organization of a "treatise" (zhi 志) in traditional dynastic histories and aims to collect raw materials for such a history. References to sexual anomalies in completely different contexts and genres that were previously unrelated to one another were put together organically by Zhou Mi in his "Ren Yao" entry because Zhou adopted an encyclopedic approach to his materials *in addition to* his concern with sexual/gender transgressions. Zhou Mi's "Ren Yao" could thus be seen as a contingent product of the development of encyclopedic writing in combination with Zhou's lament for a long-lost social and political order.

#### THE "DUAL-FORMED" AND THE DEFICIENT YIN

Chinese medical writings during this time provide more examples of how sex and the human body were constructed differently from the modern notion of normalcy. The discussion regarding the "neither-male-nor-female body" that Zhou Mi quotes from *Mr. Chu's Posthumous Works* is found in the section on the formation of the fetus, including the assignment of its sex:

When male and female conjoin, their physical natures have intercourse and harmonize. If the *yin* blood arrives first and the *yang* essence penetrates later, the blood opens up and encompasses the essence, the essence enters and becomes the core, and a male form develops. If the *yang* essence enters first and the *yin* blood perme-

<sup>100</sup> Paul J. Smith, "Fear of Gynarchy in an Age of Chaos: Kong Qi's Reflections on Life in South China Under Mongol Rule," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 41.1 (1998), pp. 1–95.

ates later, the essence opens up and encompasses the blood, the blood fills in and becomes the core [of the fetus], and a female form develops. ... If the *yin* [blood] and the *yang* [essence] arrive at the same time, [they develop into] a *neither-male-nor-female body*. *If the essence and the blood disperse*, that is a sign of twins or triplets.<sup>101</sup> 男女之合，二情交暢。陰血先至，陽精後衝，血開裹精，精入爲骨，而男形成矣。陽精先入，陰血後參，精開裹血，血實居本，而女形成矣。... 陰陽均至，非男非女之身。精血散分，駢胎品胎之兆。

According to this passage, the sex of the fetus is determined by the meeting and the movement of the *yang* essence of the father and the *yin* blood of the mother. A neither-male-nor-female fetus is one out of four possibilities, as is a male, a female, or twins and triplets. The author does seem to recognize the neither-male-nor-female and multiple births as anomalies, given that these births are attached to a lengthier discussion on male and female fetuses. But there is no indication in this passage or elsewhere in the text that these kinds of births require additional medical attention. The author might not consider a neither-male-nor-female fetus optimal, or he might not care – there is no way for us to know. What we can know for sure is that the text before us displays little interest in such bodies. Its concern, rather, is with the causes of weak male and female babies and the ways to fortify them.<sup>102</sup>

Extant medical texts from the Song do not depart from this tradition and generally take the same position as *Mr. Chu's Posthumous Works* when discussing the subject of fetus formation and sex determination. While the details vary from text to text (and even from passage to passage within one text), the principle of the movement of *yin* and *yang*,

<sup>101</sup> *Chushi yishu* (Zhengzhou: Henan kexue jishu chubanshe, 1986), p. 1. The italicized phrase indicates the sentences quoted by Zhou Mi.

<sup>102</sup> The passage following reads, “Young fathers and old mothers inevitably produce weak (*lei* 羸) daughters; vigorous mothers and feeble fathers inevitably produce weakling sons” (ibid.); compare trans. of Furth, “Androgynous Male and Deficient Females,” p. 4. Furth uses this passage to argue for gendered classifications of false males and false females, “the product of social assumptions about men and women,” that “an oversexed (‘overripe’) girl is produced by an excess of her youthful father’s ‘yang [qi]’” and that “[v]igorous mothers, if unchecked, weaken the sexual vitality of their sons” (p. 6). However, Furth mistranslates the key word *lei* (weak) as “overripe.” Instead of reflecting asymmetric gendered classifications, the two sentences in the original passage are in fact parallel: “Young” (*shao* 少) is comparable to “vigorous” (*zhuang* 壯); “old” (*lao* 老) is similar to “feeble” (*shuai* 衰); and “weak” (*lei*) is equal to “weakling” (*ruo* 弱). In other words, in accordance with the preceding passage, weak daughters are due to the lack of *yin* blood from mothers, not “an excess of youthful father’s *yang qi*.” And it is not the mother’s vigor that weakens the son’s “sexual vitality” but the father’s lack of *yang* essence. This passage is widely quoted in later medical texts, including *Nüke baiwen* 女科百問 and *Furen daquan liangfang* 婦人大全良方; it is commented on by Zhu Zhenheng 朱震亨 in his *Gezhi yulun* 格致餘論, and *Jiyin gangmu* 濟陰綱目 quotes both. Furth quotes from the *Nüke baiwen*.

blood and essence, stays intact. Two works on women's medicine from the Song – *One Hundred Questions on Women's Medicine* (*Nike baiwen* 女科百問, prefaced 1220) and *All-Inclusive Good Prescriptions for Women* (*Furen daquan liangfang* 婦人大全良方, prefaced 1237) – simply quote pre-Song texts in their discussion of this subject.<sup>103</sup> In extant Song medical texts, there is no mention of sex change or discussion of issues such as the “five non-males” and “five non-females.”<sup>104</sup>

By the thirteenth century, the only new theory of fetus formation and sex determination was elaborated by Li Gao 李杲 (1180–1251) of the Jin, who identified the decisive factor of the fetus's sex as whether the father's essence or the mother's blood was more vigorous at the time of intercourse. “One or two days after the blood reservoir (the womb) is purified (that is, one or two days after the end of each menstrual period), the essence is stronger than the blood, and the fetus will be male. Three, four, or five days after [the end of each menstrual period], the blood vessel has become vigorous, the essence is no longer stronger than the blood, and the fetus will be female.”<sup>105</sup> What if the essence and the blood happen to be equally strong? Would that produce a hermaphroditic body? Li Gao did not raise or answer this question. It was not until the writings of the Yuan physician Zhu Zhenheng that we see a growing medical interest in sexually anomalous bodies and an elaborated theory of their development.<sup>106</sup>

Zhu built on Li Gao's theory and proposed new explanations for deficient men and women and the “dual form” (*jianxing* 兼形). On the formation of the fetus and its sex, Zhu explicitly rejected Chu Cheng and endorsed Li Gao by quoting Li's passage above. Zhu further supplemented Li's theory with the different routes of *yin* and *yang*: the former

<sup>103</sup> *Nike baiwen* (*Xuxiu* SKQS edn.), *xia*, pp. 1a–b; *Furen daquan liangfang* 婦人大全良方 (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1992), *j*, 10, pp. 306–8.

<sup>104</sup> There were numerous recipes for changing the fetus's sex, especially before the third month of pregnancy, in Chinese medical texts since antiquity, but the rationale was that since the fetus was not fully formed before the third month, its sex could still be altered. See, e.g., *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaoshi* 諸病源候論校釋 (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1980), pp. 1145–46; *Furen daquan liangfang*, *j*, 10, pp. 317–18. Whether male or female, the babies resulting from such recipes were considered to be the same as other babies and not a kind of anomaly or sexual anomaly. See also Jen-der Lee, “Han Tang zhijian qiuzi yifang shitan: Jian lun fuke lanshang yu xingbie lunshu” 漢唐之間求子醫方試探, 兼論婦科濫觴與性別論述, *BIHP* 68.2 (1997), pp. 309–13.

<sup>105</sup> *Lanshi micang* 蘭室秘藏 (SKQS edn.), *xia*, pp. 69a–b.

<sup>106</sup> Zhu Zhenheng is known for being the last of the Four Jin-Yuan (Medical) Masters, both a *Daoxue* 道學 scholar and a physician. He incorporated Zhu Xi's cosmology and ethics into his medical theory and, to use Charlotte Furth's words, he “thereby achiev[ed] a medicalization of *Daoxue* with implications for meanings of the body and selfhood”; Furth, “The Physician as Philosopher of the Way: Zhu Zhenheng (1282–1358),” *HJAS* 66.2 (2006), p. 424.

moves rightwards while the latter moves leftwards. “When the essence is stronger than the blood, *yang* leads the way, and the *qi* lands on the left side of the womb and develops into a male form. When the essence is not stronger than the blood, *yin* leads the way, and the *qi* lands on the right side of the womb and develops into a female form.”<sup>107</sup>

Zhu further distinguished the cause of the “dual form” from that of sterility. According to Zhu, sterility in men and women is due to the inheritance of defective *yang* from the father and *yin* from the mother respectively: “Men who cannot become a father are those who inherit deficient *yang qi*; women who cannot become a mother are those who inherit congested *yin qi*.” On the other hand, the “dual-formed” only occurs in the female and is due to “the *yin*’s being overridden by hybrid *qi*” (*yin wei boqi suo cheng* 陰爲駁氣所乘). Zhu lists three variations of the “dual-formed” and classifies all three as female: 1. an individual who is “a wife when interacting with men and a husband when interacting with women,” 2. an individual who “can be a wife but cannot be a husband,” and 3. “a female possessing the complete form of a male” (*nü ju nan zhi quan* 女具男之全). The first and second are termed “a female encompassing [parts of] a male” (*yi nü han nan* 以女函男). The hybrid *qi* only affects female fetuses dominated by *yin*, which comes from the mother’s blood, because “*yin* is depleted in constitution (*yin ti xu* 陰體虛) and therefore easily overridden by hybrid *qi*.”<sup>108</sup>

While *Mr. Chu’s Posthumous Work* refers to the “neither-male-nor-female” as simply one of four possibilities without further comment, Zhu Zhenheng clearly considers the “dual form” a medical problem. In Zhu’s opinion, such a non-*zheng* condition is caused by a combination of the depleted *yin* (i.e. *yin* in its usual state; *chang*) and its encounter with the unusual “hybrid *qi*” (non-*chang*). The relationship between *zheng* and *chang* here is much more complicated than the modern medical usage of “normal” or “*zhengchang*.” An alternative translation of “*yin ti xu*” would be “the *yin* body is depleted,” a statement less sweeping than saying “*yin* is depleted in constitution” and yet still implying that the female body is intrinsically weaker. In other words, the *yin* aspect of the body is intrinsically prone to deviation. For Zhu Zhenheng, as for many premodern Chinese physicians, the optimal conditions for

<sup>107</sup> *Gezhi yulun, Danxi yiji*, p. 20.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* It is interesting to note that the category of “women with the complete forms of men” is equivalent to the “*bian*” category of Li Shizhen’s version of the “five non-males”; *Bencao gangmu* (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1975), j. 52, pp. 2971–72. While Zhu treated it as female, Li classified it as male.

the female body are not “average” conditions, but ones that require constant fortification and active medical intervention.

Two cases from medieval Europe studied by Karma Lochrie are worth mentioning for comparison. For the Lollards, who opposed priestly celibacy (as well as other medieval church institutions), “[t]he frailty and imperfection of women guarantees them an inexhaustible resource of sexual perversion” – that is, women are *naturally perverted*. Marriage as a solution to that problem is “not an intervention of heteronormativity” but “a socially viable way of correcting female sexuality.” In other words, women have to marry not because they normally desire men but because they need an institution to keep in check their innately perverted sexuality.<sup>109</sup> Heloïse shared a similar perception of female sexuality (that “women are most susceptible to seduction from each other”), and yet her solution was stricter monastic regulation for women.<sup>110</sup> The corruption of women outside marriage for the Lollards and women’s mutual attraction for Heloïse were problematic not because such behaviors were unusual, but precisely because they were common, natural defects in women.<sup>111</sup> Similarly, rather than an anomaly that by contrast establishes the normal, Zhu Zhenheng’s epistemology of the “dual form” is closer to the Lollards’ and Heloïse’s perception of female sexuality that is perverted by default and requires correction.

#### CONCLUSION: GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND NORMS IN PREMODERN CHINA

The aim of this paper is not to argue that we can no longer use terms such as “normal” or “sexual” when describing premodern cultures and societies. Rather, it is a critical reflection upon the pitfalls of studying history through modern lenses. Before we can recognize the significance of Zhou Mi’s “*renyao*” as a sexual category, we must first perceive that in the old *zaiyi* system sexual anomalies were not distinguished in nature from other anomalies. What we identify as “sexual” now was not always a self-evident category. In the Buddhist and Daoist traditions discussed above, the orthodox soteriology was not established on what was common or average. Nor was the medical view of optimal bodily

<sup>109</sup> Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, pp. 55–56.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>111</sup> For more scholarship that challenges heteronormative assumptions and presents new landscape of medieval Europe, see, e.g., Karma Lochrie, *Covert Operations: The Medieval Uses of Secrecy* (Philadelphia: U. Pennsylvania P., 1999); Glenn Burger, *Chaucer’s Queer Nation* (Minneapolis: U. Minnesota P., 2003); James A. Schultz, *Courtly Love, the Love of Courtliness, and the History of Sexuality* (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 2006).

conditions. The ways in which modern physicians, as well as ordinary men and women, see the body are closely tied to the modern construct of a normal “average man/woman” (“*l’homme moyen*”) based on statistical data. The ways in which premodern Chinese physicians saw the body, however, were different. For physicians in premodern China, optimal conditions were rarely the conditions that were the most common, or “average” in Quetelet’s sense. This is particularly true in the case of women’s medicine. As my sources indicate, women’s health depended upon changing or fixing their weak and depleted nature, rather than adjusting it towards a statistically average condition.

This is also true in premodern Chinese medical discussions of pregnancy and childbirth. To give a few examples: Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581–682) opens his chapters on “recipes for women” with a discussion of how women are generally weaker and more emotional (than men), how childbirth and menstruation inevitably damage women’s bodies, and how, as a result, women require more medical attention.<sup>112</sup> Sun describes all kinds of birth complications (*channan* 產難) or complicated births (*nanchan* 難產), the opposite of which, in his discussion, is “smooth birth” (*yichan* 易產). At no point does Sun imply that *yichan* is a common or average condition.<sup>113</sup> In Yang Zijian’s 楊子建 (fl. 1100) “Ten Topics on Birth” (“Shichan lun” 十產論), the optimal birth is called “*zhengchan*” 正產, listed before nine (or ten) complicated conditions.<sup>114</sup> There is nothing in the “Ten Topics” to suggest that *zhengchan* is common, average, or “*chang*.”

In other words, childbirth was considered extremely dangerous and detrimental. No Chinese medical text before late-imperial times ever claims that a smooth birth is optimal *and* common.<sup>115</sup> All physicians of *fuke* 婦科 (women’s medicine) tried to help women through childbirth, but none claimed that a woman could only be healthy (or healthier) if she had previously given birth. Quite to the contrary, they

<sup>112</sup> *Beiji qianjin yaofang* 備急千金要方 (Taipei: Zhongguo yiyao yanjiusuo, 1990), j. 2, p. 16a.

<sup>113</sup> I translate “*yichan*” as “smooth birth” instead of “easy birth” because it means free of complications but by no means easy.

<sup>114</sup> *Furen daquan liangfang*, j. 17, pp. 463–68. For a detailed study of Yang Zijian’s “Shichan lun,” see Margaret Wee Siang Ng, “Male Brushstrokes and Female Touch: Medical Writings on Childbirth in Imperial China,” Ph.D. diss. (McGill University, 2013).

<sup>115</sup> This is why Yi-Li Wu’s findings concerning Qing *fuke* is significant. Wu finds that in Qing, gentlemanly amateur writings (notably *Dasheng bian* 達生編), “easy birth” means “both attainable and normal”; Wu, *Reproducing Women: Medicine, Metaphor, and Childbirth in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: U. California P., 2010), p. 150. Wu also notes that such a new vision of “easy birth” as normal departed significantly from the old tradition of *fuke* that was dominated by lineage practitioners.

asserted that childbirth damaged women's bodies and was a threat to their lives. In premodern China, such a medical opinion did not serve to reinforce the patrilineal family's expectation for women to give birth – it is difficult to see how characterizing something as life-threatening and damaging to health would serve to reinforce it. Unlike in modern societies, the family system in premodern China never relied upon medical opinions as a source of its legitimacy. What such medical opinions actually bolstered, as Yi-Li Wu also argues, was the professional medical practitioners' authority and the popular demand for their service. This is one of the critical differences between modern medicine, which establishes statistical normalcy and dictates social norms, and premodern Chinese medicine, which served social demands but was not built upon a modern concept of normalcy.

Of course, the absence of the modern concept of “normal” does not mean that there was no construct of norm in premodern China. Two expressions seen in both classical and modern Chinese, *guifan* 規範 and *guiju* 規矩, are very similar to the original Latin word *norma*, from which the words such as “norm,” “normal,” and “normative” derive, meaning “a square used by carpenters, builders, and surveyors to obtain a right angle.”<sup>116</sup> These expressions have everything to do with what is considered right and nothing to do with what is in fact common or average. They are prescriptive rather than statistical norms, and are not built upon a descriptive average or defined in contrast to anomaly. It should come as no surprise that Yang Zijian calls optimal childbirths “*zhengchan*” rather than *changchan* 常產 or *zhengchangchan* 正常產. It should also be no surprise that *zhengchang* as a compound is not seen until the twentieth century.

This paper is also an attempt to write an alternative history of “discourse” – to reconsider how power works, where authority anchors, what accounts for historical change and the technicality of that change. The first step is to recognize that there often were (and still are) multiple “truths.” As demonstrated in this paper, a mustachioed woman could be regarded as a *zaiyi* sign forecasting dynastic downfall or a Daoist manifestation of the woman's *yang* power. Song emperor Huizong moved back and forth between the two incompatible systems at will, depending on which better suited his need. Scholar-officials of the Western Han, long before that, explicated and applied the theory of *zaiyi* in opposite ways. The Lazy Old Man understood the anomaly stories that Hong Mai collected as portents about the end of the North-

<sup>116</sup> Hollywood, “The Normal, the Queer, and the Middle Ages,” p. 176.

ern Song, even if most of the stories were told in settings completely irrelevant to *zaiyi*. The term “*renyao*” was originally a *zaiyi* category of all human-related anomalies that were symptoms of disturbed *qi* caused by political turbulence. Zhou Mi turned *renyao* into a category denoting specifically sexual anomalies, including references relevant and irrelevant to *zaiyi*.

The second step is to consider the emergence of new “truths” as sometimes a historical contingency, or I would call a “meaningful accident,” in addition to the mechanisms of power. While the emergence of a new sexual category derived from Zhou Mi’s reinterpretation of “*renyao*” was significant, there is no evidence indicating that Zhou was more interested in establishing a “truth” about sexuality in particular or regulating certain bodies than in showing off his erudition. The invention of such a new sexual category was an accident meaningful in multiple ways, some of which were relevant to Zhou himself and some not. It was meaningful in the context of former-Song intellectuals’ socio-political attitudes under Mongol rule, as well as in that of the development of philological-historiographical jottings. It was also meaningful because the term *renyao* continued to be used almost exclusively in referring to sexual anomalies and gender transgressors although the contents varied. The latter may seem highly relevant to historians of sexuality, but was perhaps less relevant to Zhou himself. Eventually, what we learn from such an alternative history is that the relations among power, discourse, and subject of regulation are not always linear.

#### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

WXTK      Ma Duanlin 馬端臨, *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考