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Speaking of Gods: The Discourse of the Extrahuman in early Chinese Texts

Justin Winslett

Abstract

Though contemporary scholarship on religiosity in early China has been abundant and fruitful in the past few years, much of the focus of this scholarship has been on issues pertaining to ritual and the socio-political role of religion. Few studies have looked at other issues under the rubric of religion- notably that of the extrahuman. This is interesting both from the perspective of religious studies, where most scholars define religion in some capacity with the extrahuman, and Chinese studies, where there have been traditions of scholarship that have discounted the presence of the extrahuman in early China.

This paper will, hence, look at the topic of the extrahuman in early Chinese texts, particularly how these texts intellectually engaged with the extrahuman. It will show that a rich discourse of the extrahuman existed in many texts in early China and that the subject was a vital one to the arguments presented by the texts. Despite the great diversity seen, this paper will argue that there existed two dominant approaches in the discourse of the extrahuman in early Chinese texts titled 'How' and 'What'. This paper will show that these two approaches are divided in time, with the intellectual discourse of the Eastern Han being different from that of the Western Han and Warring States. This paper will show that this change in discourse is a symptom of the changes in the societies and intellectual communities that constructed these texts.

Keywords: Early China, Extrahuman, Supernatural, Religion, Religiosity, Intellectual History

> 經傳所載，賢者所紀，尚無鬼神，況不著篇籍！世間淫祀非鬼之祭，信其有神為禍福矣。
>
> That which is held in the Classics and commentaries and that which is recorded by the worthies is but without deities, moreover they are not put forward in the scrolls and records!

> The heterodox sacrifices of the common lot are not sacrifices for ghosts; rather they believe that these gods make disaster and good fortune. (*Lunheng*, 1990: 77.1067)

The above quotation is from a text entitled the *Lunheng* 論衡 attributed to a man named Wang Chong 王充 in the 1st century CE. In this quote, taken from larger discussions on religious practices, Wang asserts an absence of extrahuman agents,[1] captured here by the terms deities *guishen* 鬼神, throughout the pages of earlier texts and records, commentaries and the much vaunted Classics that all serve to create the standard normative order of government and society and even the orthodox religious practices that would have informed Wang Chong's, and later generations', world (Lewis, 1999: 360, Nylan, 2001: 2). Whereas these lines illustrate the dramatic importance text and textuality played in the construction of the early Chinese world, they also illustrate an understanding that extrahuman agents were not an issue to the authors of these texts and that looking to them for information regarding what extrahuman agents were and how they behaved in early China is not possible.

Indeed, this assertion has some indirect resonance with an earlier statement found in the *Analects Lunyu* 論語, a text dated roughly 300 to 400 years earlier than the *Lunheng* and attributed as being the words of Confucius *Kongzi* 孔子. Analects 7.21 states that 'The Master does not speak of oddities, power, disorder and gods.' 子不語怪、力、亂、神. (*Lunyu*, 1990: 7.21.272) When interpreting this as an exemplary phrase that illustrates what is not Masterly-behaviour, those who then wish to emulate Masterly-behaviour would thus do well to avoid discussing these four topics, including the extrahuman.

Despite such assertions, it has been noted that the Master did speak of these subjects quite freely in many texts (Nylan and Wilson, 2010: 88-99),

[1] The term 'extrahuman' has been put forward by Agehananda Bharati who argued for its use rather than the term 'superhuman' given that the entities he was describing do not necessarily reflect anything 'above' humanity (See Bharati 1976), this is a use that both Poo Mu-chou and David Schaberg have adopted. (Poo, 1998: 5-6.) (See Schaberg 2001: 96-124) As this paper is concerned not with what these things are, but how intellectual communities of this time are speaking about what is not 'human', the term contains important resonance to denote this realm that is 'extra' to the communities' experience.

and a simple perusal of many of the transmitted texts from this period reveal that most early Chinese texts are littered with diverse representations of the extrahuman, such as gods *shen* 神, ghosts *gui* 鬼 and chthonoi (earth spirits) *qi* 祇 (Sterckx, 2007: 24-25, Winslett, 2010: 256-260).[2] In contrast to the *Lunheng's* assertion, extrahumans and the discussion of extrahumans are quite common in texts from before the Eastern Han.

But since this is the case, why does the *Lunheng* assert that these things are absent from these earlier texts? The *Lunheng* does not explain this; rather it uses this passage to derive legitimacy for its own, at times contradictory, arguments pertaining to extrahumans (Zufferey 1995: 260-261). In other words, it engages in a discourse on the extrahuman as too do the texts it discounts doing so. But then why does it reject these discourses? Why do such things appear in these texts? Is the way the *Lunheng* engages with the discourse of extrahumans in earlier texts different from those earlier texts, something that may explain why it discounts them? Indeed, what is the discourse on the extrahuman in early Chinese texts?

Given the vast period of time and great diversity of texts originating from early China, it is not unexpected that one finds great diversity in the ways in which these texts talk about matters concerning the extrahuman. However alongside this diversity, there are consistent patterns to how texts from early China talk about the extrahuman. Although consistent patterns can be seen in terms of the types of extrahumans discussed, gods are markedly more common than ghosts for example, and when naming specific deities, Heaven *tian* 天 is referenced most often (Winslett, 2010: 12-14), it is in the overall approaches that the texts take in discussing the extrahuman that remarkably consistent patterns emerge.

[2] The English translations of these terms are provided merely as a convenience for readers with little background in Chinese to make them aware that different words are employed in Chinese. Although all of these terms fall within the realm of the extrahuman, the semantic range of some of these terms, most notably *shen*, is broad and though can be argued to map somewhat onto the English term 'god' also has additional meanings which the English translation may not map onto well. A discussion of this and the other terms is outside the scope of this paper, but has been dealt with to a small degree by Sterckx 2007 and Winslett 2010.

It is these consistent patterns in discourse that concern this paper as it is through these patterns that light can be shed on what commonalities these diverse texts shared, despite being produced by intellectual communities that cover large spans of time and space. To this end, this paper will first illustrate and discuss two of the most common forms of discourse found in a diverse range of texts, which will be termed the 'How' and 'Why' discourses, and then proceed to analyse what may have contributed to these discourses seen in the texts provided and what they can tell us about the communities that constructed them. The texts that will be discussed in this paper are but a very small representative sample of the material available. They were primarily chosen for their historical and cultural significance. These two dominant approaches are in no way mutually exclusive to one another nor are they the only ways in which these discussions can be understood, but as will be seen, these approaches are very pervasive in a multitude of texts and reflect consistent rhetorical and argumentative strategies adopted by these texts in their discussions of the extrahuman. Further, these approaches are also informative providing strong insight and clues not only into how these texts understand the extrahuman but also the dynamic and changing intellectual worlds and cultures that produced these texts.

'HOW'

The 'How' approach reflects a discussion of the extrahuman where the primary way in which they are brought into the text is in the elucidation of how they act and behave. Texts that discuss the extrahuman in this way frame the extrahumans in terms of how they act and behave in sacrifice and ritual; indeed none of the texts that will be discussed allots a section to the extrahuman as a topic in itself, however not all texts are organized along the lines of topical sections and some organizational methods are artefacts of later stages in the development of these texts,[3] but rather most frequently discuss the extrahuman in sections devoted to sacrifice and ritual.

On one level, this underscores the importance sacrifice plays in the socio-political systems espoused in these texts as it serves as a powerful tool in

[3] For further discussions of how texts were composed in early China, see Boltz, 2005 and Kern, 2005.

socio-political legitimization and authority.[4] On another level, it highlights how these texts strongly associate the extrahuman with these topics and thus reinforces the need to understand how they behave in these systems.[5] As will be seen in the following passages, the discussions in these texts expand on issues pertaining to what roles the extrahuman play in the sacrificial systems by expanding on how the extrahuman operate with respect to the human, most notably the role of the sovereign. They spend time talking about the duties and proprieties of the extrahuman to the human, and in fact those of the human to the extrahuman.

Analects

> 子疾病，子路請禱。子曰：「有諸？」子路對曰：「有之。誄曰：『禱爾于上下神祇。』」子曰：「丘之禱久矣。」
>
> The master had fallen ill, and Zilu requested he pray. The Master said, 'Have you done this?' Zilu responded, 'I have. A eulogy says, "I have prayed for you to the deities of the high and the low."' The master said, 'My praying has been for a long time.' (*Analects*, 1990: 7.35.282-284)
>
> 季路問事鬼神。子曰：「未能事人，焉能事鬼？」敢問死。曰：「未知生，焉知死？」
>
> Jilu asked about serving the deities. The master said, 'If you are not yet able to serve man, how will you be able to serve ghosts?' He dared to ask about death. He replied, 'If you are not yet able to understand life, then how will you understand death?' (*Analects*, 1990: 11.12.449-450)

[4] Much has been written on this subject in the context of early China, see Lewis, 1993, Poo, 1996, Puett, 2009.

[5] For discussions of how sacrifice impacts the human interaction with the extrahuman, see Brashier, 2012: 184-228.

Already *Analects* 7.21 has been discussed, advising that when it comes to how the master is to relate to the extrahuman, the master is not meant to speak about it. This does not seem to be something adhered to in the text, as some of these examples show. This is not necessarily a conflict though, as the *Analects* is organized as a series of sayings and anecdotes attributed to Confucius, but often featuring many different aspects of that character and other characters (Nylan and Wilson, 2010: 25-27).

Regardless of the internal consistency of the text and how one should understand these passages in terms of their 'message', one sees continued discussion with how the extrahuman and the human are to relate to one another. The issue of ritual, in this case prayer, is what prompts the appearance of the extrahuman. The extrahuman agents of deities and ghosts are mentioned, but only in generic terms with no great qualification beyond the notion that there are deities above and deities below. In both these examples, the discussion of the extrahuman is one which is involved in a discourse of behaviour, something that is also dependent on the behaviour of the human as illustrated by the concern for the behaviour of the Master in 7.21.

***Zuozhuan* 左傳**

'Zhuang' 莊 32.3 (662 BCE)

> 秋七月，有神降于莘。
>
> 惠王問諸內史過曰：「是何故也？」對曰：「國之將興，明神降之，監其德也；將亡，神又降之，觀其惡也。故有得神以興，亦有以亡，虞、夏、商、周皆有之。」王曰：「若之何？」對曰：「以其物享焉。其至之日，亦其物也。」王從之。內史過往，聞虢請命，反曰：「虢必亡矣。虐而聽於神。」
>
> 神居莘六月。虢公使祝應、宗區、史嚚，享焉。神賜之土田。史嚚曰：「虢其亡乎！吾聞之：國將興，

聽於民；將亡，聽於神。神，聰明正直而壹者也，依人而行。虢多涼德，其何土之能得？」
In the seventh month, in Autumn, a god descended to Shen.[6]

King Hui asked Royal Secretary Guo, 'What is the reason for this?' He replied, 'When a state is about to rise up, bright gods[7] descend there because they keep watch over its virtue. When it is about to fall, gods also descend to it because they gaze upon its wickedness. The reason one has obtained a god is because one is on the rise, and also because one is about to fall. Yu, Xia, Shang and Zhou all had such cases.'

The King said, 'What are we to do?' He replied, 'We are to make a sacrifice to it with items to suit the occasion. The day it arrived is what [prescribes] the items needed.' The King followed this. Royal Secretary Guo went and heard that the state of Guo made a request of it. He returned and said, 'The state of Guo will surely fall. It is tyrannical and follows the gods.'

The gods dwelt in Shen for six months. The Duke of the state of Guo sent Supplicator Ying, Steward Qu and Scribe Chen to sacrifice to it. The gods bestowed land and territory to them. Scribe Chen said, 'The state of Guo will fall! I have heard that when a state is about to rise, it follows the people, and when it is about to fall, it follows the gods. When gods are bright and proper and one with a man, they rely on him to carry out actions. Guo is very frivolous with virtue.[8]

[6] A location in the state of Guo that is found near modern day Sanmenxia 三門峽, Henan.
[7] The term 'bright' modifying 'gods' here is marked as it provides an attribute to gods, something of which there is a great paucity in the *Zuozhuan*. As these gods behave similarly to those in other passages of the *Zuozhuan*, and this modification is not followed up, it can only be idly supposed whether this suggests subsets of *shen* or is purely a descriptive marker.
[8] Yang gives *liang* 涼 as *bo* 薄.

> What is the land it is able to obtain?' (*Zuozhuan*, 1990: Zhuang 32.3.251-252)

This section is one of many that feature the extrahuman in the *Zuozhuan*, a text that devotes substantial attention to the subject (Schaberg 2001:96-104). Zhuang 32.3 is of noted interested compared to the others as it is one of the few where the events of the passage are framed around the actions of an extrahuman agent, herein a god who descended to Shen. In the discussion that follows, the Royal Secretary Guo discusses, in fine *Zuozhuan* adviser-advisee tropes, with the King Hui about extrahuman events primarily in terms of socio-political realities, something that Kenneth Brashier has spoken of within the confines of other passages of the *Zuozhuan* (Brashier, 2011: 195-202). In the Royal Secretary's discussion, there is no attention paid to what this god looks like or what this god is. Although there is a brief comment about 'bright gods', it is never explicitly developed how 'bright gods' differ from the other gods mentioned in this passage. Indeed, in the discourse of the text the crux of what the Royal Secretary imparts to King Hui rests on how King Hui should respond to this event and in turn how the gods will respond to King Hui. The discussion is couched in strong moral terms with gods descending to both virtuous and the wicked and thus marking the rise and fall of notable personages and dynasties. This moralising is not unusual for the *Zuozhuan*, and, as David Schaberg has pointed out, is a common trope associated with the explaining of the extrahuman (Schaberg, 2001: 98-104).

As the story develops, one continues to see a discussion of how one is supposed to behave to the extrahuman, and in turn how the extrahuman is supposed to behave to the human. The state of Guo behaves improperly to the gods, by accepting land from them, and the Royal Secretary's discussion of this event indicates that Guo will surely fall. This is confirmed to the audience as certainly being fact in the coda of the passage.

Throughout this discussion, the way in which the extrahuman has been framed is in terms of how it should behave in situations, similar to the concern for behaviour seen in the *Analects*. In all of these discussions, there is no explicit discourse on what these different extrahuman agents are. The events in Zhuang 32.3, are set off by the arrival of a god; there is no discussion of what or who this god is, and Royal Secretary Guo's discourse is one that completely subordinates this to a socio-political system where how

it behaves is most paramount. This certainly reinforces the importance of understanding how the extrahuman operate with respect to the human communities that produced these texts, but at the same time may also suggest that in the 'How' discourse descriptions of physical form are not present, but at will be seen, this is not always the case.

***Mozi* 墨子**

'Ming gui xia' 明鬼下

> 非惟若書之說為然也，昔者，宋文君鮑之時，有臣曰祈辜，固嘗從事於厲，祩子杖揖出與言曰：『觀辜是何珪璧之不滿度量？酒醴粢盛之不淨潔也？犧牲之不全肥？春秋冬夏選失時？豈女為之與？意鮑為之與？』觀辜曰：『鮑幼弱在荷繈之中，鮑何與識焉。官臣觀辜特為之』。祩子舉揖而槁之，殪之壇上。當是時，宋人從者莫不見，遠者莫不聞，著在宋之春秋。諸侯傳而語之曰：『諸不敬慎祭祀者，鬼神之誅，至若此其憯遬也！』以若書之說觀之，鬼神之有，豈可疑哉？
>
> It is not only that the tales that have been recorded from accounts are true. In the past, during the time of Lord Wen, Bao, of Song,[9] there was a minister called Huo Guangu. He had assuredly been affected by malevolence. A sorcerer held an oar at him and said, 'Guangu, what is this jade doing being of incomplete measure? What is this wine and grain doing being impure? What are the sacrifices doing being incomplete? Have the seasons selected been neglected? How could you have done this? Am I to think Bao does this?' Guangu said, 'Bao is in his infancy and is in swaddling clothes. How would Bao understand this? I, the minister, have done this specifically.'

[9] Reigned 610-589 BCE.

> The sorcerer lifted up the oar and struck him. He died on the altar. At that time, amongst the people of Song who were present, there were none who did not see it. Amongst those who were away, none did not hear about it. It was recorded in the Song's annals, and the feudal lords transmitted it saying, 'All of those who do not respect and mind the sacrifices, then the punishment of the deities will arrive like this- swift and sorrowful.' When one views this with this recounted tale, then as for the existence of deities, how can it be doubted? (*Mozi*, 1993: 31.332-333)

The 'Ming gui xia' of the *Mozi* is ostensibly interested in discussing the existence of ghosts. This is laid out in its introduction where it speaks to those who 'hold that there are no ghosts' 執無鬼者 and responds to this supposed community's complaints in a series of questions and answers. This rhetoric is maintained though the interlocutor's identity changes and the precise topics of discussion somewhat meander concluding with an explanation of the value of sacrifice in the realm.[10]

The above excerpt is taken from a series of passages all starting with 'It is not only…' as a rhetorical device to further the arguments put forward as to the veracity of the existence of ghosts. Interestingly, a ghost is not specifically meant to appear in this passage but rather a sorcerer, which will differ from a recounting of this story which will be seen later in the *Lunheng*. This tale explains how this sorcerer was displeased with the supplicator Guangu's offerings and thus killed him with an oar for violating ritual propriety. As in the *Zuozhuan* passage before, the appearance of sacrifice is a prime motivating factor in the discussion of the extrahuman. Indeed, even though this text is meant to be about the extrahuman, it concludes with a discussion of the value of sacrifice and role of sacrifice. Likewise, no attention is placed on explaining who or what this sorcerer is, and it is his actions, not his nature, that are discussed to prove the existence of ghosts. Throughout the 'Ming gui xia', discussions of the extrahuman, like this one, do not hinge on explaining what they are, but rather 'how' they relate to the human and operate in the world, and through this show their existence,

[10] A more detailed description of the structure, rhetoric and arguments of this passage can be found in Loy and Wong, 2004: 347-352.

such as in this passage where the sorcerer is displeased with the violation of sacrificial propriety and takes his punishment out on Guangu.

Shanhai jing 山海經
'Shan jing'山經 (Excerpt)

> 凡(昔隹)山之首，自招搖之山，以至箕尾之山，凡十山，二千九百 五十里。其神狀皆鳥身而龍首，其祠之禮：毛用一璋玉瘞，糈用稌米，一璧，稻米、白菅為席。
>
> In the case of the peaks of Mt Zhui, from the mountain of Zhaoyue to the mountain of Qiwei is in all ten mountains and 2,950 *li*. All of their gods' forms are bird bodied and dragon headed. The ritual of their sacrifice: an animal[11] is used and one *zhang* of white jade is buried; sacrificial rice is used, glutinous rice, and one *bi* and paddy-field rice.[12] White rushes make up the mats. (*Shanhai jing*, 1992: 1.8)
>
> 凡西次二經之首，自鈐山至于萊山，凡十七山，四千一百四十里。其十神者，皆人面而馬身。其七神皆人面牛身，四足而一臂，操杖以行：是為飛獸之神；其祠之，毛用少牢，白菅為席。其十輩神者，其祠之，毛一雄雞，鈐而不糈；毛采。
>
> In the case of the peaks of the second guideway of the West, from Mt Ling to Mt Lai is in all seventy mountains and 4,140

[11] Guo Pu explains this to mean the use of an animal with fur. In five phases-informed systems, animals are correlated into five categories reflecting their external coverings, with 'hairy' *mao* 毛 being one of the five. There is no mention of any of the other four categories-scaly *lin* 鱗, feathered *yu* 羽, naked *luo* 贏 and armoured *jie* 介. (Sterckx, 2002: 79) Thus it is unclear if this is playing on this system or the character *mao* could be taken simply to denote a class of animals or a generic term for animal. For more discussion of the terms for animals, see Sterckx, 2002: 15-43.

[12] Strassberg translates *dao* 稻 as unhulled-rice (Strassberg, 2002: 89).

forty *li*. Regarding ten of their gods, all are human faced and horse bodied. Seven of their gods are all horse faced, cow bodied, four footed and one shouldered. They lift up a cane so as to move. These are the gods of flying beasts. One sacrifices to them. An animal is used, the *shaolao*, and white reeds make up the mats. Regarding their group of ten gods, one sacrifices to them. The animal is one rooster; one uses a bell and not sacrificial rice. The plumage is multicoloured. (*Shanhai jing*, 1992: 2.38)

凡北次三經之首，自太行之山以至于無逢之山，凡四十六山，萬二千三百五十里。其神狀皆馬身而人面者廿神。其祠之，皆用一藻茝瘞之。其十四神狀皆彘身而載玉。其祠之，皆玉，不瘞。其十神狀皆彘身而八足蛇尾。其祠之，皆用一璧瘞之。大凡四十四神，皆用稅糈米祠之，此皆不火食。

In the case of the peaks of the third guideway of the North, from the mountain of Taixing to the mountain of Wufeng is in all forty-six mountains and 12,350 *li*. The gods' forms that are all horse bodied and human faced number twenty. They sacrifice to them, all using one water rush and iris and burying them. Fourteen of their gods' forms are all hog bodied and wear white jade. They sacrifice to them, all with white jade that is not buried. Ten of their gods' forms are all hog bodied, eight legged and snake tailed. They sacrifice to them. All use one jade disc and the burial of it. In all the cases of the forty-four gods, all are sacrificed to using sacrificial rice that is glutinous rice. This is all not cooked with fire. (*Shanhai jing*, 1992: 3.99)

凡東次三經之首，自尸胡之山至于無皋之山，凡九山，六千九百里。其神狀皆人身而羊角。其祠：用一牡羊，米用黍。是神也，見則風雨水為敗。

In the case of the peaks of the third guideway of the East, from the mountain of Shihu to the mountain of Wuzao is nine mountains and 6,900 *li*. Their gods' forms are all human bodied and goat horned. Their sacrifice: use of a single ram, grain is used, millet. As for these gods, when one appears, then wind, rain and water will make a flood. (*Shanhai jing*, 1992: 4.113)

凡洞庭山之首，自篇遇之山至于榮余之山，凡十五山，二千八百里。其神狀皆鳥身而龍首。其祠：毛用一雄雞、一牝豚（气刀），糈用稌。凡夫夫之山、即公之山、堯山、陽帝之山皆冢也，其祠：皆肆瘞，祈用酒，毛用少牢，嬰毛一吉玉。洞庭、榮余山神也，其祠：皆肆瘞，祈酒太牢祠，嬰用圭璧十五，五采惠之。

In the case of the peaks of Mt Dongting, from the mountain of Zibian to the mountain of Rongyu is in all fifteen mountains and 2,800 *li*. Their gods' forms are all horse bodied and dragon headed. Their sacrifice: an animal is used, one rooster, one sow whose throat has been cut, sacrificial rice is used, glutinous rice. In the cases of the mountain of Fufu, mountain of Jigong, Mt Yao and the mountain of Yangdi, all are marchmounts. Their sacrifices: exposing and burial of the sacrificial items for all. Prayers are used with wine, and an animal is used, the *shaolao*, the pendant for the animal is one multicoloured jade. As for Mt Dongting and Rongyu's gods, their sacrifices: exposing and burial of the sacrificial items for all, prayers with wine and a *tailao*

> sacrifice. Pendants are used with fifteen sets of *gui*[13] and *bi*, five-coloured string ties them. (*Shanhai jing*, 1992: 5.179)

The construction and narrative in the above passage, and throughout the 'Shan jing' of the *Shanhai jing* which several scholars argue represents an early stratum of the text (Fracasso, 1993: 359-361), is very formulaic, wherein each section starts out describing the principal mountain of that particular direction. It proceeds to describe features of that mountain; these descriptions can be in depth or brief and lay out any physical characteristics of the mountain be it having rivers and forests, the flora and fauna, which usually have some descriptive qualities, and any resources such as precious metals or minerals found on the mountain, something that early scholars of the text like Rémi Mathieu argue mark this text as having an important socio-political outlook (Mathieu, 1983: CIII). It then proceeds to construct a map by listing other mountains in terms of distance and direction from this peak mountain and describes any important features of them.[14] At the end of the descriptions of each set of mountains, a summary of the mountains of that set is provided that enumerates the length of this range and states how this set has gods. It then provides the ritual sacrifice for these extrahuman agents. Every set in all the sections ends in this manner with similar rhetorical structure as the five examples from one set of each of the sections show.

The extrahuman finds an equally formulaic place in the narrative of the 'Shan jing'; all five of the above passages contain detailed descriptions of the physical forms of gods. These descriptions talk of gods as theriomorphic hybrids such as being 'bird bodied and dragon headed' in the case of the peaks of Mt Zhui or 'human bodied and goat horned' in the case of the peaks of the third guideway of the East. Though some variation in style is present, such as the more lengthy description of seven gods in the second guideway to the West, it still fits in the pattern of depicting these gods as

[13] A *gui* is a generally rectangular plate of jade whose upper portion tapers to a point to form a triangle. This along with the previous *zhang* and *bi* are often found in treatises on sacrifice as ritual implements.

[14] For an in-depth look at how the *Shanhai jing* physically constructs the world, please see Strassberg, 2002:30-43.

being composite hybrids of what must be assumed to be more readily recognisable animals.

These very evocative descriptions were not seen in the other texts discussed, and this suggests that describing what the extrahuman are is part of the discourse of the 'Shan jing'. The second guideway to the West does provide a qualifying statement to the second set of seven gods it describes by terming them 'The gods of flying beasts', something not seen before nor seen anywhere else in the *Shanhai jing*. This would also suggest that in contrast to the other 'How' texts discussed, this text provides insights and clues into what the extrahuman are, something that would suggest this discourse is similar to the 'What' approach that will be discussed shortly.

Though this is an excellent illustration of how the discourses can be fluid and were of course reflective of patterns in individual texts, it belies the importance of understanding the appearance of these extrahumans to the larger narrative and ignores a vital component of each passage that of sacrifice. In the above examples, sacrifice is the final and most detailed aspect of the descriptions of each of the mountains. All gods throughout these locations are offered a sacrifice, and the descriptions are specific to each type of god. The descriptions primarily describe the items to be employed, often involving types of animals and rice, but have a few prescriptions such as prayers, burials and uses of precious objects. In addition, such as in the third guideway of the East, one sees what happens if one actually sees these gods: wind, rain and water will create a flood.

These strong ritual prescriptions are intimately linked to the purpose of the *Shanhai jing* that of a guideway or manual to manoeuvre a path through the world (Ke, 1978: 1-4, Strassberg, 2002: 229 n 1). This world is not simply constructed explicitly through the descriptions laid out, but implicitly through the narrative patterns laid out. The uniformity of narrative construction and the rhetorical repetition serves as a means of indoctrinating its readers into understanding why such sacrifice is necessary. The rhetoric is designed to construct a proper world, neatly set out and organised about peak mountains in specific directions. In this proper world, gods are associated with every set of mountains; these gods have a specific form, though are given no names to differentiate them, but receive an appropriate sacrifice since that is what the prescriptions explain to their readers.

By providing a specific description of the extrahuman at each site, one is readily able to locate oneself in this world and thus able to determine what mountain one is on, what other flora and fauna are present, and most importantly what sacrifices one is meant to perform. In such a framework, the discourse presented is not concerned with what the extrahuman are as a topic in its own right, but merely how their appearance relates to their association with specific regions in this world and the sacrifices that are meant to be afforded to them. Indeed, one can rely upon these descriptions to understand how the community that produced the *Shanhai jing* thought gods looked, but that is merely implicit information embedded within a much larger point.

***Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露**
'Jiaoyu' 郊語 (Excerpt)

> 天者，百神之大君也。事天不備，雖百神猶無益也。何以言其然也？祭而地神者，《春秋》譏之。孔子曰："獲罪於天，無所禱也。"是其法也。故未見秦國致天福如周國也。《詩》云："唯此文王，小心翼翼，昭事上帝，允懷多福。"多福者，非謂人也，事功也，謂天之所福也。傅曰："周國子多賢，蕃殖至於駢孕男者四，四乳而得八男，皆君子俊雄也。"此天之所以興周國也，非周國之所能為也。今秦與周俱得為天子，而所以事天者異於周。以郊為百神始，始入歲首，必以正月上辛日先享天，乃敢於地，先貴之義也。
>
> As for Heaven, it is the great lord of the myriad gods.[15] If in serving Heaven, one is unprepared, then even with the myriad gods will they still be without benefit.

[15] Although myriad is often used to translate the character for 10,000 *wan* 萬, what in most counting systems employed in Chinese texts would be equivalent to the contemporary

> Why do I say that this is so? Regarding sacrificing but to the Earthly gods,[16] the *Chunqiu* investigates this. Confucius says, 'One who is wicked towards Heaven, is without something to pray .'[17] This is my model. Thus one never saw the state of Qin bring about Heavenly good fortune like the state of Zhou.
>
> The *Shi* says, 'It is this King Wen, with mindful heart and reverence, toils and serves *Shangdi*, and is cared for with many blessings.' He received many blessings.'[18] These 'many blessings' are not a reference to people. The service and effort to them refers to that which is blessed by Heaven. Tradition says, 'The Prince of the State of Zhou had many worthy strengths and reproduced until those that were pregnant with twin sons were four. With these four pregnancies, he got eight sons, and all the princes were handsome.' This is the means by which Heaven raised the state of Zhou, and it is not what the state of Zhou was able to do.
>
> Now the Qin and Zhou were both able to make a Son of Heaven, but the means in which they served Heaven was different from the Zhou. They took the *jiao* to be for the myriad gods first, and its beginning to be at the start of the year. One should first sacrifice to Heaven on the *xin* day of the first week of the first month and then deign to do so for

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counting concept of a myriad, its use here is merely in its general sense of a large number as the word for 100 *bai* 百 is also often employed as a modifier implying a large number.

[16] The commentary suggests that pieces of the text are missing, as the Chinese is grammatically incorrect. 'The case of one not sacrificing to Heavenly gods yet sacrificing to the Earthly gods 不祭天神而祭地神者' (*Chunqiu fanlu*, 2007: 65.398.) is a suggested correction. The translation above is slightly glossed to try and capture the idea of essentially opting to sacrifice to gods over Heaven.

[17] *Lunyu*, 2006: 3.13.100.

[18] *Shijing*, 2007: Daya 13.477. The passage in this edition quoting the *Shijing* uses 聿 rather than 允.

> Earth. This is the meaning of putting nobleness first. (*Chunqiu fanlu*, 2007: 65.398-399)

'Jiaosi' 郊祀 **(Excerpt)**

> 故《春秋》凡譏郊，未嘗譏君德不成於郊也。乃不郊而祭山川，失祭之敘，逆於禮，故必譏之。以此觀之，不祭天者，乃不可祭小神也。郊因先卜，不吉不敢郊。百神之祭不卜，而郊獨卜，郊祭最大也。

> Thus in the cases of the *Chunqiu* investigating the *jiao*,[19] I have not yet investigated the case of a sovereign who is virtuous and not completing successfully the *jiao* sacrifice. If they had actually not performed the *jiao* but sacrificed to the mountains and rivers, losing the order of sacrifice and being rebellious in ritual, then this should be investigated. When looking upon this, one who does not sacrifice to Heaven then cannot sacrifice to the lesser gods. As for the *jiao*, one first divines; if it is not auspicious, then one doesn't dare perform the *jiao* sacrifice. That the sacrifices of the hundred gods do not involve divination, and yet the *jiao* only involves divination is because the *jiao* sacrifice is the greatest. (*Chunqiu fanlu*, 2007: 69.409)

The 'Jiaoyu' and 'Jiaosi' passages are two of five sections devoted to the *jiao* sacrifice in the *Chunqiu fanlu*, and one of twelve devoted to issues pertaining to sacrifice.[20] The number of sections dedicated to its discussion alone speaks of the *Chunqiu fanlu's* concern for both sacrifice and the *jiao*, beyond its exposition of the sacrifice as supreme owing to Heaven being its recipient, reflecting the importance of Heaven's legitimising role to the sovereign (Queen, 1996: 201-204). Such sentiments echo through both the

[19] The *jiao* sacrifice is noted nine times in the *Chunqiu*- Xi 31, Xuan 3, Cheng 7, 10, 17, Xiang 7, 11, Ding 15 and Ai 1.

[20] Some commentators have asserted, though, that the five sections devoted to the *jiao* can be understood to represent a single continuous passage (*Chunqiu fanlu*, 2007: 66.394).

passages selected above, wherein the first is deeply concerned with expounding on the proper order of sacrifices, with the *jiao* to Heaven as pre-eminent. The 'Jiaosi' passage then also states that the *jiao* is meant as a sacrifice to Heaven, and holds that only after performing it, can one sacrifice to the lesser gods. It also clarifies that only the *jiao* involves divination, not the sacrifices to the myriad gods.

This lengthy discussion of sacrifice is not surprising given the topic of conversation, but the discussion of the extrahuman is primarily found in these and other sections devoted to the subject, similar to texts discussed earlier. Like any 'How' texts, the *Chunqiu fanlu* discusses how the extrahuman operates in these sacrifices and like the texts before talks about the socio-political impact of doing so. The discourse of the extrahuman in these passages actually expands on how the extrahuman are socio-politically organized in their own right by explicitly constructing gods in relation to Heaven. By terming gods as lesser in comparison to Heaven in the 'Jiaosi', one may argue that the passage posits Heaven as greater, something confirmed in the *Jiaoyu* section that asserts that Heaven is the Great Lord of gods.[21]

The *Chunqiu fanlu* also cites an analysis of an earlier text, the *Chunqiu* in its discussion of this subject. The citation of other texts was not something seen in the earlier passages, though in some of the texts citing the *Shi, Shang* and *Yi* were long standing rhetorical techniques and the material cited has found its way into what are today the *Classics*. Geoffrey Lloyd and Nathan Sivin have argued that these citations do not represent a layer of intertextuality so much so that they represent a shared body of knowledge of poems, speeches and proclamations which held argumentative and ritualistic weight in these discourses in the Warring States (Lloyd and Sivin, 2002: 68-75). That the *Chunqiu fanlu* is analyzing them in a way, as shown with its discussion of what 'many blessings' means in the *Shi* line, raises interesting questions about the development of textual analysis as a tool in this discussion will be seen to be rather common in 'What' texts in discussing the extrahuman.

'What'

[21] This is also restated in another section devoted to the *jiao* in the text- *Jiaoyi* 郊義 (*Chunqiu fanlu*, 2007: 66.402).

'What' texts see a large degree of diversity in how they speak about the extrahuman. 'What' texts often take the extrahuman as the dominant topic in their discourse, and in fact many have sections of their texts devoted explicitly to the extrahuman. In these passages, they show a strong concern for discussing what the extrahuman are, either in terms of their appearances, capacities and or mental states, and most importantly their identity. To achieve this, 'What' texts commonly rely on earlier texts from the Warring States and Western Han to expand on their arguments as to what the extrahuman are. In this way, 'What' texts exist in a web of textual references in their construction of the extrahuman, and in turn are actually highly dependent on the discourses of 'How' texts in the discussions of 'What'.

***Lunheng* 論衡**

'Siyi' 祀義 (Excerpt)

> 曰：夫夜姑之死，未必厲鬼擊之也，時命當死也。妖象厲鬼，象鬼之形則象鬼之言，象鬼之言則象鬼而擊矣。何以明之？夫鬼者，神也。神則先知，先知則宜自見粢盛之不膏、珪璧之失度、犧牲之臞小，則因以責讓夜姑，以楫擊之而已，無為先問。先問，不知之效也；不知，不神之驗也；不知不神，則不能見體出言，以楫擊人也。夜姑，義臣也，引罪自予已，故鬼擊之。如無義而歸之鮑身，則厲鬼將復以楫掊鮑之身矣。且祭祀不備，神怒見體，以殺掌祀。如禮備神喜，肯見體以食賜主祭乎？人有喜怒，鬼亦有喜怒。人不為怒者身存，不為喜者身亡，厲鬼之怒，見體而罰。宋國之祀，必時中禮，夫神何不見體以賞之乎？夫怒喜不與人同，則其賞罰不與人等；賞罰不與人等，則其掊夜姑，不可信也。

I say that the death of Ye Gu cannot surely be because a wraith hit him. It was the time that he was fated to die.

When a portent[22] appears as a wraith, if it appears with the form of a ghost, then it appears with the speech of a ghost. If it appears with the speech of a ghost, then it appears as a ghost and hits.

How can one understand this? As for a ghost, it is a god. If it is a god, then it has insight. If it has insight, then it should see for itself if there are ungenerous offerings of sacrificial grain, wrongly measured jade discs and plates and skinny and small sacrificial animals, then it would thus take this to reproach Ye Gu. It would use a paddle to hit him and no more, there would be no need for first questioning him. If it first questioned him, then it wouldn't have knowledge of the sacrifice. Its not knowing is evidence it is not a god. If it doesn't know and is not a god, then it would be unable to manifest a structure,[23] emit words and take a paddle and beat a man.

As Ye Gu was a just official, he took the wrongdoings upon his own person, thus the ghost hit him. If he was without justice and placed blame on Lord Bao, then the wraith would have also taken the paddle and beat Lord Bao's person.

Further as the sacrifices were incomplete, the spirit would have been angry and appeared in physical form in order to kill those managing the sacrifices. If the ritual had been complete and the gods had been are happy, would they

[22] Throughout the *Lunheng*, Wang often attributes odd occurrences and the events people claim to be the fault of ghosts as portents *yao* 妖. For further discussion of this see Chen, 1968: 299-310.

[23] In effect a body, however Wang Chong asserts in other passages that things are composed of both a form *xing* 形 and structure *ti* 體 that would be the analogous concept to the body.

> have been willing to appear in physical form to bestow food on the masters of sacrifice? Man has happiness and anger. Ghosts also have happiness and anger. Man does not make his body exist when angry and does not make his body disappear when happy. When a wraith is angry, it manifests a body and punishes.
>
> In the sacrifices of the state of Song, it was certainly the time for appropriate ritual.[24] Why didn't the god appear in physical form so as to bestow things? If their happiness and anger is not the same as man's, then their rewards and punishments are not the same as man's. If their rewards and punishments aren't the same as man's, then this hitting of Ye Gu cannot be true. (*Lunheng*, 1990: 76.1052-1053)

The above passage is found in the same text as the quote at the beginning of this article the *Lunheng*. It contains several passages that are devoted to discussing the extrahuman, in addition to mentions of the extrahuman distributed throughout the text. Though discussions of the extrahuman are quite obvious in the above passage, the earlier quote from the *Lunheng* and several others have been employed by some twentieth century scholars to define the *Lunheng* and its attributee, Wang Chong, with the role of sceptic and atheist in the face of a feudal and superstitious world (Liang, 1979: 1-20). Although such an argument holds little basis given that there is no renunciation of the extrahuman in the passages in the *Lunheng*, such an analysis does highlight the rhetorical features of the *Lunheng* – its highly polemic and essayistic approach.[25]

The above extract from the 'Siyi' recounts the tale of Ye Gu, the supplicator of Lord Bao of Song, who apparently was killed by a paddle-wielding evil spirit that had been displeased at the meagre and poorly assembled offerings provided for him. This tale is similar to that recounted

[24] The term 'appropriate ritual' *zhongli* 中禮 carries strong ideas of propriety and temporal correspondence that should be apparent from the strong concern for these matters in several of the texts discussed so far.

[25] For a discussion of argumentative strategies used in the *Lunheng*, see McLeod, 2007 and Puett, 2005/06.

in the 'Min gui xia' of the *Mozi* though replacing a sorcerer with a ghost. The *Lunheng* regards the story as nonsense and argues that it was simply Ye Gu's time to die, using this discussion to explain how it could not have been due to extrahuman forces.

The means by which the *Lunheng* proves this is first to entertain the possibility of Ye Gu as a ghost and thus proceeding to detail what a ghost is and what that means. It first asserts that a ghost is a god and that gods have insight.[26] It then reckons that this insight would allow the gods to observe the improper sacrifice and thus reproach Ye Gu for the improper sacrifices that were laid that lead to Ye Gu's death. However, as the story explains that the evil spirit questioned Ye Gu first, this is evidence of it not having insight and thus not being a god. The *Lunheng* also points out how gods are capable of manifesting a body, speaking and handling tools and hitting someone with a paddle. Though this would not refute the ability of an extrahuman to carry out the events in this story, the *Lunheng* does contest that it was not a ghost by rhetorically asking why if gods do not manifest bodies to eat the food of a correct sacrifice, they will manifest bodies to vent their anger at those who do not perform a correct sacrifice. The passage continues this logic by comparing man and gods and explaining how a man is unable to make his body appear or disappear in line with his moods, despite gods being capable of doing.

Seen throughout this example is an exposition on what exactly constitutes this type of extrahuman agent. Some of these explanations are unique to this text, but in terms of approach, the *Lunheng* actively discusses what the extrahuman are. Indeed, the polemic rhetoric it takes up requires it to seek such definitions as proof for its argument that Ye Gu was not in fact killed by one of them. These very active and explicit definitions of the features and abilities of the extrahuman are different from what was seen in passages presented earlier in this article. Indeed, none of those passages were concerned with the extrahuman as an object of study in its own right, but because it was related to other subjects of discussion, most notably that of

[26] This is an interesting semantic stretch of these two terms which though both referring to extrahuman agents, are often kept to refer to separate agents in other texts. The conflation of these terms can be argued to reflect the *Lunheng's* somewhat ambiguous use of terms, but also suggests the possibility of the growing use of *shen* as a generic term to refer to the extrahuman in Eastern Han texts.

sacrifice. Sacrifice is referenced in this passage, and indeed proper sacrifice, but there is no discussion of what that is, in contrast to the approach seen in the *Mozi*.

***Qianfu lun* 潛夫論**

'Wulie' 巫列 (Excerpts)

凡人吉凶，以行為主，以命為決。行者，己之質也；命者，天之制也。在於己者，固可為也；在於天者，不可知也。巫覡祝請，亦其助也，然非德不行。巫史祝祈者，蓋所以交鬼神而救細微爾，至於大命，末如之何。譬民人之請謁於吏矣，可以解微過，不能脫正罪。設有人於此，晝夜慢侮君父之教，干犯先王之禁，不克己心，思改過善，而苟驟發請謁，以求解免，必不幾矣。不若修己，小心畏慎，無犯上之必令也。故孔子不聽子路，而云「丘之禱久矣」。孝經云：「夫然，故生則親安之，祭則鬼享之。」由此觀之，德義無違，鬼神乃享；鬼神受享，福祚乃隆。故詩云：「降福穰穰，降福簡簡，威儀板板。既醉既飽，福祿來反。」此言人德義美茂，神歆享醉飽，乃反報之以福也。

虢公延神而亟亡，趙嬰祭天而速滅，此蓋所謂神不歆其祀，民不即其事也。故魯史書曰：「國將興，聽於民；將亡，聽於神。」楚昭不穰雲，宋景不移咎，子產距裨灶，邾文公違卜史，此皆審己知道，身以俟命者也。晏平仲有言：「祝有益也，詛亦有損也。」季梁之諫隋侯，宮之奇說虞公，可謂明乎天人之道，達乎神明之分矣。

…

且人有爵位，鬼神有尊卑。天地山川、社稷五祀、百辟卿士有功於民者，天子諸侯所命祀也。若乃巫覡之謂獨語，小人之所望畏，土公、飛尸、咎魅、北君、衙聚、當路、直符七神，及民間繕治微蔑小禁，本非天王所當憚也。

In the case of the fortune and misfortune of people, one takes behaviour as the indicator and fate as the decision. Behaviour is the material of the self, and fate is the regulation of Heaven. Those that rely on themselves will certainly be able to do it. Those that rely on Heaven will not be able to understand it. The requests of shamanesses, shamans and supplicators are but assistance in this.

If one is not virtuous, they do not work. The prayers of shamans and supplicators are but only the means to communicate with deities and save the base. When it comes to the great course of fate,[27] there is no possibility of their doing anything about it. If one were to compare it to the making of requests by people to officials, then they can be used to liberate the base, but are unable to make bare the proper and wicked. Suppose that there are people like this who day and night slight and bully the instructions of the sovereigns and fathers, work and offend against the prohibitions of the first kings, do not conquer their own hearts nor ponder changing their faults [lacuna] good. And if they were suddenly to seek out and make requests so as to seek respite from this, then surely there is no hope.[28]

This is not as good as cultivating oneself, for if one is cautious, mindful and respectful, then that one will refrain

[27] This borrows from Anne Behnke Kinney's translation for this term. The word *daming* 大命 can also refer to the Mandate of Heaven, but this translation captures a greater sense of the term (Kinney, 1990: 111).
[28] Reading *ji* 幾 as *ji* 冀.

from offending against the command of those above is certain.[29] Thus Confucius did not follow the advice from Zilu, but said, 'My praying has been for a long time.'[30] The *Xiaojing* says, 'In reality if in life one is peaceful to one's relations, then in sacrifice, one makes offerings to the ghosts'[31]

Looking on all of this then, if in virtue and righteousness, one refrains from deviating, then the deities are given sacrifice. If the deities receive sacrifice, then good fortune and blessings will swell. Thus the *Shi* says, 'The good fortune sent down is plentiful; the good fortune sent down is bountiful; the ceremonies offered are great. After we have drunk our fill, after we have eaten our fill, good fortunes and blessings will come to our prayers.'[32]

The Lord of Guo looked up to a god and rapidly fell.[33] Zhao Ying sacrificed to Heaven and speedily perished.[34] Thus it can be said that the gods did not favour their sacrifices and the people did not rise to their service. Thus the scribes of Lu wrote, 'When a state is on the rise, it listens to the people. When it is about to fall, it listens to the gods.'[35] King Zhao of Chu did not pray to the clouds,[36] Lord Jing of Song did not change his faults.[37] Zichan resisted Pizao.[38] Duke Wen of Zhu deviated from the diviners.[39] These are cases where they all examined themselves to know the Way and focused

[29] Inverting *ling* 令 and *bi* 必.
[30] *Lunyu*, 2006: 7.35.282.
[31] *Xiaojing*, 1998: 8.11.
[32] *Shijing*, 2007: 16.522.
[33] *Guoyu*, 2002: Zhou I.12.28-31 and *Zuozhuan*, 2000: Zhuang 32.3.251-253
[34] *Zuozhuan*, 2000: Cheng 5.1.821-822.
[35] *Ibid.* Zhuang 32.3.251-253.
[36] *Ibid.* Ai 6.4.634-636.
[37] *Lüshi chunqiu*, 2009: 6.145-147 and *Huainanzi*, 1989: 12.298-300.
[38] *Zuozhuan*, 2000: Zhao 17.5.1390-1392.
[39] *Ibid.* Wen 13.3.597-598.

> on themselves so as to await that which is fated. Yan Pingzhong had said, 'As supplications have benefits, so too do curses have harm.'[40] Ji Liang's remonstration of Marques Sui[41] and Gong Zhiqiao persuading Lord Wu[42] can be said to be clear on the way of the Heaven and Man and understand thoroughly the divisions of sentience and clarity
>
> Further, if men have titles, then deities have rank. Heaven and Earth, the mountains and rivers, the Soil and Grain Altars and the Five Sacrifices, the myriad officials and *shi* make efforts for the people, and are that which the Emperor and Feudal Lords command sacrifice to. As for that which the shamans and shamanesses solely speak of and the petty people look to and fear are the Seven Gods: Tu Gong, Fei Shi, Jiu Mei, Bei Jun, Xian Ju, Dang Lu and Zhi Fu.[43] Then the common people dealing and managing the trifle and petty taboos is not the origin of that which causes awe in the Heavenly Kings. (*Qianfu lun*, 1997: 26.301-6)

The above excerpt is taken from a text called the *Qianfu lun* which is attributed to the scholar Wang Fu 王符 (82-167 CE), and like the *Lunheng* is a compilation of a series of essays on various topics. The 'Wulie's title suggests that it is a passage devoted to understanding shamans and other medium-agents. Though these figures are referenced in the first paragraph

[40] *Yanzi*, 1980: 7.446-33 and *Zuozhuan*, 2000: Zhao 20.6.1415-1418.
[41] *Zuozhuan*, 2000: Huan 6.2.109-112.
[42] *Ibid.* Xi 5.8.207-212.
[43] What these seven are is unclear as five of these seven are only mentioned in this text. Both Fei Shi and Zhi Fu are mentioned in the *Lunheng* though are not considered proper nouns by the editors in those texts as they are in the *Qianfu lun*, and thus if they are meant to be the same thing is unclear. Fei Shi is not explained in the *Lunheng*; as a common noun a translation of 'flying corpses' would be possible though that would suggest an idea akin to zombies. Wang Chong depicts this term alongside other malevolencies and ghosts that some believe afflict homes, requiring exorcism to dispel with them. (*Lunheng*, 2007: 75.1043) Zhi Fu is understood from the *Lunheng* as a taboo date that prohibits certain actions when the anti-planet Taisui is in certain positions, *zi* and *wu*, on the Jupiter cycle (*Lunheng*, 2007: 69.982).

of the section, the chapter deals mainly with the issue of virtue and the moral rectitude of humans and how this relates to man's fortune. Extrahumans do appear throughout, and in some ways this discourse of morality is very similar to texts which adopt the 'How' approach in discussing the extrahuman, but, as can be seen, there are some marked differences in terms of how the extrahuman are talked about and brought into the larger discourse on moral rectitude.

The 'Wulie' begins by first introducing a large, general condition that leads into finer points, augmented with allusions to notable events found in earlier texts. This resembles the rhetorical techniques employed by passages of the *Lunheng*. The text starts with issues of fortune and misfortune; this leads to general and very metaphysical statements regarding the factors of fortune and misfortune and the very proto-existential comment that those who rely on themselves will understand and those that rely on Heaven do not. It continues to provide numerous examples to support the importance of virtue. These include a reference to the extrahuman events that transpired, such as in the state of Guo as seen in the *Zuozhuan's* Zhuang 32.3.

The final paragraph taken from the 'Wulie' states an understanding of why there is sacrifice, after a list of basic, canonical sacrificial sites. It discusses this by elucidating the nature of what the extrahuman are, by talking about their rank and providing seven names of seven gods. The 'Wulie' does not go into any detail over what these seven gods are, although some of the terms do appear elsewhere in other texts from the Eastern Han.[44]

[44] *Lunheng*, 2007: 69.982 and 75.1043.

***Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義**
'The Soil Altar Gods' 社神

> 孝經說：「社者，土地之主，土地廣博，不可遍敬，故封土以為社而祀之，報功也。」周禮說：「二十五家置一社。」但為田祖報求。詩云：「乃立冢土。」又曰：「以御田祖，以祈甘雨。」
>
> 謹按：春秋左氏傳曰：「共工氏有子曰句龍佐顓頊，能平九土，為后土，故封為上公，祀以為社，非地祇。」
>
> The *Xiaojing* relates, 'The Soil Altar is the master of soil and earth. As soil and earth are vast and expansive, it all cannot be revered in its entirety. Thus one installs soil in a box and regards it as the Soil Altar and sacrifices to it to repay its efforts.' [45] The *Zhouli* relates, 'Twenty-five households establish one Soil Altar.'[46] This only repays the assistance from the Ancestor of the Field.[47] The *Shi* says, 'You establish a burial mound.'[48] It also says, 'He used it to protect the Ancestor of the Field; He used it to pray for sweet rain.'[49]
>
> I have carefully noted what the *Chunqiu Zuoshi*[50] transmits: 'Gonggongshi had a son called Goulong. He assisted Zhuanxu and was able to pacify the nine lands, becoming Houtu. Thus he was enfoeffed as the High Duke, and in

[45] These lines are not found in transmitted versions of the *Xiaojing*.
[46] This line is not found in the transmitted versions of the *Zhouli*, though it is also cited in the *Shuowen jiezi* in its definition for Soil Altar. (*Shuowen jiezi*, 2006: 1.15B.8)
[47] The title for the one who is meant to have been the first to plough fields. In most historio-mythical traditions the invention of farming is attributed to Shennong. (Yuan, 2007: 67-74)
[48] *Shijing*, 2007: 13.480.
[49] *Shijing*, 2007: 11.436.
[50] Another name for the *Zuozhuan*.

> sacrifices is regarded as the Soil Altar. It is not a chthonoi.'[51]
> (*Fengsu tongyi*, 1981: 8.354-355)

The above selection is taken from a text known as the *Fengsu tongyi* that is attributed to Ying Shao 應劭 (c. 140-204? CE). The text has often been valued for its depictions of local life at the end of the Han dynasty, particularly in the area of Runan 汝南 where Ying Shao is meant to have lived. The text is assumed to have suffered seriously through the passage of time, coming to the present day in only ten sections, themselves with portions reputed as missing (Nylan, 1993: 106-108). The above selection is a representative passage within the 'Sidian' section of the text, a section whose title suggests it is concerned with sacrifice, akin to what was seen in the *Chunqiu fanlu*.

The structure, rhetoric and discourse seen in this passage are typical of the other sections of the 'Sidian' which follow the same pattern although with different deities. Here they are concerned with the god of the Soil Altar.[52] Discussion of sacrificial sites has been seen to be common in many examples, particularly in many of the 'How' texts discussed. However unlike in these texts there is neither a discussion of the propriety of these sacrifices nor their role in the socio-political system. These passages' concerns rest in identifying the deity of these particular sites; in order to achieve this, the *Fengsu tongyi* relies on citations from earlier texts. The passage begins with a citation from the *Xiaojing*, though neither lines are found in the current text, that provides an explanation of what these two things are both being the heads of their namesakes. The text then proceeds to cite other sources of information, in both cases these are the *Zuozhuan* and the *Shijing* with the *Zhouli* also appearing to explain the Soil Altar god. The citation from the *Zuozhuan* help construct a history and lineage for the gods, providing a back-story for the Soil Altar's god.

Though such a discussion has resonance with the 'How' texts seen before, this is not the direction of the argument as the *Fengsu tongyi* does not provide an answer to what is meant to be sacrificed to the Grain Altar gods, but rather suggests that this provides further evidence to explain what

[51] This line is not exactly the same as in the transmitted *Zuozhuan*. (*Zuozhuan*, 2000: Zhao 29.4.1503.)
[52] For a highly enlightening discussion of the Soil Altar, see Kominami, 2009: 201-214

the gods of rice are the Grain Altar, and even explaining what they are not chthonoi. These two passages and the means by which they discuss the extrahuman are typical of the remainder of the 'Sidian'. It is clear from the discussions presented that the *Fengsu tongyi's* interest rests in defining what these extrahuman agents associated with the sacrifices are, through textual citations and causal relationships.

The Discourse of the Extrahuman

It is clear from the examples provided that the discourse of the extrahuman was varied with many interesting and textually specific concerns, arguments and depictions. However, even despite the heterogeneity seen in the previous passages, it is also apparent that there are also similarities in their approaches, particularly the two dominant modes discussed, 'How' and 'What'. That two such discourses are so pervasive raises questions as to why they are present and what this can tell us not only about the discussion of the extrahuman but intellectual discourse in general at this time.

When looking at the texts that represent each of the two approaches, there are some similarities despite the differences in approach; some of the same stories are relied upon in different texts, such as seen in the *Mozi*, *Lunheng* and *Qianfu lun* or in the *Zuozhuan* and the *Fengsu tongyi*; there are similar vocabularies and related discourses that show themselves in some capacities; sacrifice, ritual and the objects related to them are clearly of some affiliation to the extrahuman in many of these texts, and there are clearly notions of different types of extrahuman agents, many of which help influence or play a role in the discussions presented. Despite these similarities though, the difference in approach, and often concern, remains prominent. One of the most marked and glaring correlations that this difference highlights is the blatant temporal difference in texts: texts that employ the 'How' approach originate in either the Warring States and Western Han, while texts that employ the 'What' approach are dated to the Eastern Han.[53]

[53] The dating of these texts is a messy and complicated affair. Many of these texts evolved over a long period of time in different capacities and so should not be understood as simply coming into existence at a single point. (See Kern 2002 and Boltz 2005 for a more in depth discussion.) The origination of these texts to the respective periods discussed is not in

That such a definitive divide between these discourses exists points to larger and more dramatic changes in the intellectual and cultural history of early China. As such, it is important to understand that these two approaches represent symptoms of other changes that are taking place between these two periods, and that causes for the changes in the discourse of the extrahuman can be found in the socio-political and cultural changes that took place between the Warring States/Western Han and the Eastern Han periods.

In socio-political terms, the periods of the Warring States and Western Han witnessed many dramatic changes to the societies and polities that existed around the Yellow and Yangtze rivers. This is most evident in the rise of a strong centralising Empire started by Qin Shihuangdi and continued with the efforts of the first Han Emperors. Their attempts to control their dominion through strong centralised rule clearly reverberated throughout the intellectual communities of these times and influenced the production of texts. Many texts from this particular time, especially during the end of the Warring States and the beginning of the Western Han, can be understood to be produced with such a goal in mind by putting forward visions and paradigms of centralised worlds with centralised systems to govern them, something that Mark Edward Lewis refers to as World Builder texts (Lewis, 1999: 99-145). Furthermore, royal and then imperial patronage was both the dominant means to produce texts, particularly in the Western Han where projects such as the establishment of the Classics was a dominant occupation of the intellectual communities of the time.[54]

This interest in centralised socio-political rule through texts can be seen strikingly in the examples taken from the *Shanhai jing* and *Chunqiu fanlu* both of which are putting forward sacrificial systems that govern a centralised world. In both those systems, the texts speak of the extrahuman and how they behave and relate to this world, through the *Shanhai jing's* locus-focused sacrifices and the *Chunqiu fanlu's* discussion of hierarchical sacrifices. In all 'How' texts seen here, religiosity plays a vital part in these

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major dispute, (Loewe 1993: 12-23, 67-75, 105-112, 263-268, 309-323, 336, 341) however that such consistencies do appear across such multivalent works speaks to the contribution of the socio-political and cultural environment in which the texts evolved.

[54] For further information on this process see Nylan 2001.

texts' socio-political understandings, and, as seen, it is in these sections that the extrahuman are most frequent. It is thus not unexpected to see that the discourse pertaining to these texts is one of how they fit into these systems and that passages concerning sacrifice and ritual will thus spawn discussion of the extrahuman.

In contrast, the Eastern Han, having emerged from the disruption of the Wang Mang period, was greatly weakened by this disruption, and intellectual communities did not find themselves subject to as strong a centralised court and its agendas. Furthermore, the growing strength of the bureaucracy and eunuchs and the lack of a fixed political and social elite contributed to a continued decentralisation of power away from the emperor and led to greater debate and in-fighting at court (Bielentsten, 1986: 274-290).

All of these factors are reflected in Eastern Han texts, as can be seen in the examples provided where the intellectuals that produced them tended to be analytical and self-appraising of the current society and system rather than constructing a new system; such a discourse was very apparent in the *Lunheng* and the *Fengsu tongyi*. On the one hand, this attests to the efforts of the projects and texts of the earlier time in the construction and establishment of a nominal socio-political system, something that is often addressed in texts from the Eastern Han. On the other, it also reflects the more individual and less centralised efforts taken on the part of these intellectuals. Indeed the *Lunheng* and *Fengsu tongyi* are often attributed to authors who are believed not to have been part of the central court.[55]

It is clear too, how the discourse of the extrahuman, amongst other things, would be strongly influence by this changed society. In the examples given one sees a strong concern with analysing stories and texts that came before and trying to understand and make sense of them, often with justifications found in earlier texts. The absence of descriptions and identities found in the earlier discourse could certainly have contributed to the evolution of the 'What' discourse, though it would need to take into account the fact that answers to this are still found in texts with a clear 'How' discourse; indeed as seen in the *Qianfu lun* and *Fengsu tongyi*, it is primarily from texts like the *Zuozhuan* that explanations of extrahuman identity are drawn.

[55] For a discussion of the attribution of these works see Loewe and Pokora 1993 and Nylan 1993.

Hence, it can be argued that the discourses of these texts were influenced, and perhaps influenced, the socio-political environment that they were produced in. This also influenced the discourse of the extrahuman in both texts, as can be seen, but the socio-political changes between these two periods are only one prominent change that intellectual communities underwent. Many cultural factors also emerged between these two periods that can help explain the changes in the discourse of the extrahuman seen, and can certainly be argued to have helped shaped the bifurcation between the 'How' and 'What' approaches.

It is evident from the 'What'-discourse that reliance on earlier texts is the primary means by which these texts discuss what the extrahuman are. However, this practice is also seen in the *Chunqiu fanlu*, which is argued to discuss the extrahuman more with the 'How' approach and so it is perhaps inapt to assume the two things are exclusive in discourse. However, there are some subtle nuances which indicate that though the authors of the *Chunqiu fanlu* clearly were beginning to engage with a textual medium, it was not to the extent or the uniformity displayed by the later texts. The *Chunqiu fanlu* only engages with the *Chunqiu*, indeed arguing to be regarded as a commentary on it; in addition it continues the fine rhetorical tradition of citing examples from the *Shi*, *Shang* and *Yi*. Though in practice this is very precursory to what is seen in Eastern Han texts, the level to which citing earlier texts and stories is taken becomes the main medium of evidence-based argument presented in Eastern Han texts.

The Fengsu tongyi provides citations with titles and expands on ideas located within texts, while it is a false assertion about the lack of the extrahuman in earlier texts that prompts the *Lunheng* to explain them. This strong understanding of text and citation, and the reverence for texts as the final say, is not a rhetorical or argumentative strategy employed in texts of the 'How'-discourse, though the use of material found in other texts does exist.

Dirk Meyer has argued that many texts from the Warring States were primarily formed from intellectual communities that relied on oral traditions to transmit meaning and ideas, with texts being more artefacts and commodities produced for other purposes (Meyer, 2009: 831-833). He argues that texts like the *Analects* can be understood as 'authority-based' texts wherein an intellectual community would employ the text in a larger

discourse that existed outside of the text rather than the discourse being self-contained in the text, what he argues as an 'argument-based' text (Meyer, 2009: 844-850).

That there would be a 'textual community', or perhaps for our purposes a discourse, that surrounded what is observed in some of the 'How' texts allows for much speculation over what parts of the discourse we are seeing and why. With respect to the passages in the *Analects,* this most certainly helps provide a strong explanation for their terse and somewhat authoritative nature, given that they are merely taken out of a context that has been lost, an argument that Pines makes with regard to the *Zuozhuan*, though on a less meta-textual level (Pines, 2002: 40-41).

Several texts from the 'How' camp would, however, fall into Meyer's 'argument-based' camp, as they seem highly self-contained, such as the passages from the *Chunqiu fanlu* or *Shanhai jing*. If this is because they meet Lewis' arguments for a 'World-builder text' and by this virtue must also be 'argument-based' is an interesting rhetorical possibility. Indeed this rhetorical mandate can also be applied to texts that adopt the 'Why'-approach, but this simple rhetorical need to have a self-contained argument is not enough simply to explain why one suddenly sees lengthy essays citing texts with titles and deconstructing them. Only the *Chunqiu fanlu* engages in any sort of deconstruction and even then only on a specific text, which fits within the rhetorical tradition of citing the Classics for authority, as Schaberg (2001: 60-88) and Kern (2005:293-297) have argued.

Rather many of these factors contributed to the transformations seen in the intellectual cultures from the Classical to the Post-Classical period, which is quite vividly apparent here in the ways in which the extrahuman are discussed. Though the extrahuman are by no means the reason for this change, that the discourse of the extrahuman is radically changed by this is quite marked and highlights the strong need to look at other discourses to try and understand what transformation may have occurred with this change over in intellectual societies.

Conclusion

It is clear that the realm of the extrahuman, like many other topics, is something that was discussed and explored in early Chinese texts. Whilst these texts brought with them many interesting and special perceptions of the extrahuman, this paper has shown that some consistencies do span the wide gap of space and time that both divides and informs these texts. On the one hand, texts from the Warring States and Western Han often contain discussions of how extrahumans relate to themselves and the human, often within a socio-political and sacrificial framework. On the other hand, texts from the Eastern Han often contain discussions of what extrahumans are and what they are like, often relying upon texts from earlier periods to bolster their claims to this.

These two separate approaches are not intrinsically exclusive; certainly there are a few texts in the Warring States and Western Han that can be argued to point to what the extrahuman are[56] and those in the Eastern Han who argue how they operate,[57] and as earlier mentioned, other strategies can be adopted by texts, but these two approaches are markedly dominant in the texts from early China. Further, the former approach is more represented in a great diversity of texts from the Warring States and the Western Han, while the latter is much more common in texts of the Eastern Han. This may not be a clean or even split, and of course temporal change never is, but it can certainly be argued to be symptomatic of larger changes in the socio-political environment informing these texts and the lives of their compilers as well as the shifts in the culture of intellectual communities of the Warring States and Western Han versus those of the Eastern Han and beyond.

Far from being absent, as the *Lunheng* may have asserted, or rather ancillary, the topic of the extrahuman was a ubiquitous one in texts from

[56] In the numerous passages of the *Zuozhuan* that mention the extrahuman, Zhao 昭 1.12 is one of the few that provides details as to what they may be. For a further discussion of this, see Winslett 2010: 41-44.

[57] Of the texts originating from the Eastern Han, the *Baihutong* 白虎通 which is attributed to Ban Gu 班固 (32-92 CE) includes a discourse that can be classified as 'how'. Its discussions of the extrahuman are rather limited when compared to the texts discussed in this article, dealing more with sacrifice and ritual. It is notable for often quoting earlier texts and engaging in the same textual analysis as other texts from this period.

early China. However, the discussion was by no means uniform, with many different arguments and ideas. Such a rich discourse is only beginning to be explored and understood, but, as we have seen in this article, its study provides many insights not only into how the compilers of these texts understood the extrahuman, but also how they understood and indeed were shaped by the world they lived in.

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Justin Winslett is Lecturer in Chinese at the University of Manchester. Previously he served as a departmental lecturer in Chinese at the University of Oxford and a Stanley Ho Junior Research Fellow in Chinese at Pembroke College, Oxford. His research is primarily concerned with the extrahuman in material in the early empires.