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## PEKING PLOTS: FICTIONALIZING THE BOXER REBELLION OF 1900

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*By Ross G. Forman*

“A handful of foreigners have shown China what they can do against murderous thousands, and it only remains for the Powers to stamp the lesson deeper, and exact punishment for the guilty and full compensation for losses sustained.”

— W. Murray Graydon, *The Perils of Peking* (1904)

“To find something akin in its savage barbarity you must go back to Lucknow, where a mixed multitude shut up in the Residency were holding out against fearful odds in expectation of relief by Havelock’s Highlanders, resolved to perish of starvation rather than surrender, for the fate of Cawnpore stared them in the face.

“It adds point to this parallel to remember that the Tartar rulers of China are cousin german to the Great Moghul who headed the Sepoy Mutiny.

“It was some excuse for the King of Delhi that he was seeking to regain his throne. No such apology can be offered for the Empress Dowager of China. She has made war not without provocation, but wholly unjustifiable, on all nations of the civilized world.”

— W. A. P. Martin, *The Siege in Peking* (1900)

THIS ESSAY REVIEWS THE LITERARY PRODUCTION — primarily adventure novels, and several of them bestsellers — centered around the events of the 1900 Boxer Rebellion, in which a Chinese “secret society,” with the collusion of certain Manchu authorities, carried out a systematic attempt to annihilate all Westerners and “native Christians” living in China.<sup>1</sup> The Boxers, so-called because their “superstitious” practices looked like magic boxing, swept across North China from the spring of 1900, eventually throwing much of the imperial capital of Peking (Beijing) into confusion.<sup>2</sup> Forced to hole up in the Legations and other barricaded areas, the Westerners of the region joined forces under largely British leadership and fought against incredible odds to protect themselves, holding out

until an international resistance force, led by the British, rescued them fifty-five days later, and the Rebellion subsided.<sup>3</sup> Important as a turning point in Chinese international relations and as a mark of the increasing weakness of the central authority of the Middle Kingdom, the Boxer Rebellion served an even more important function with regard to British conceptualizations of the empire in its formal and informal forms. It threw into question non-interventionist trade strategies and underscored the tenuous nature of imperial authority both in formal colonies such as India (where fledgling nationalist movements were evolving) and in areas bordering on these formal colonies and largely dominated through foreign authority. (The central Chinese government, for instance, though not dependent on imports and loans to any great degree, at this point gathered all of its significant income from the British-led Imperial Maritime Customs Service.)

Capitalizing on wide-scale publicity surrounding the uprising and journalistic reporting on the survivors of the siege of the British Legation, metropolitan authors responded quickly and prolifically with a body of adventure novels.<sup>4</sup> The uprising spawned two types of fictions: the first, about the events of the Rebellion itself and the heroic efforts of a boy protagonist, disguised in native dress, to safeguard his family members and the European community at large; the second, about the break-up of China and an ensuing invasion from the East of “yellow hordes.”

The first type of fiction presents a historical discourse about the stability of empire and the ultimate supremacy of the “civilized” over “uncivilized,” of discipline over mobbery. In their continual reference to the Indian Mutiny of 1857,<sup>5</sup> in which the British suffered a humiliating defeat at Cawnpore but resisted “nobly” during the siege of Lucknow, these narratives of the Boxer Uprising assert a model for “native” resistance and the re-establishment of order that simultaneously points to the inherent instability of empire, but also to its mode of incorporation, expansion, and extension of authority.<sup>6</sup> The result of the Sepoy Rebellion had been Benjamin Disraeli’s conversion of India into a directly-controlled Crown Colony; in the age of imperialist expansion of 1900, many saw the situation in the Celestial Kingdom as a mirror to India’s and anticipated the annexation of parts of China.<sup>7</sup> Novelists in particular predicted such moves in the breakdown of the indigenous imperial structures, essentially arguing Ronald Robinson’s and John Gallagher’s thesis on informal imperialism *avant la lettre*.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, the risks of incorporating China, like India, were well-recognized: the potential for destabilization, for reverse colonization, for a dangerous hybridity of structures is clearly marked in these texts. In reading these novels, therefore, I hope first to explain their position within a political and historical form of imperialism that, although recognized by historians, has received little attention by either literary scholars or post-colonial theorists, and second, to situate the works within a more familiar discourse of imperial anxieties. Sara Suleri has argued that acts of appropriation under colonialism are symptoms of the terror and the vulnerability of cultural boundaries. In the narratives of anxiety that arise from such encounters, she claims, aggression functions as a symptom of terror, not possession. Even more than in British India, such anxieties of empire are revealed starkly with respect to China and the Boxer Movement precisely because the crisis of authority remains unresolved, with the aggression practiced on cantonments or isolated European quarters being bravely repulsed without the necessary subsequent legitimation of power being achieved. Operating within the interstices of a multiplicity of colonial structures, in which British hegemony is contested not only by the Chinese state and by the Boxers, but also by the Russians and

Japanese, these narratives mark the landscape of China as a crucial site for preventing the expansion of Russian and Asian empires over the West and over sovereign space allocated to Europe by China (i.e., the Legations). The conflict between official British policy in the region — largely non-expansionist and non-interventionist, especially under Lord Salisbury — at odds with public opinion at home in favor of territorial expansion, adds to this crisis of authority instigated by the Uprising.<sup>9</sup>

China in 1900, it must be remembered, was the locus of an intense scramble for control, with British trade supremacy threatened primarily by the Russians in Manchuria and their French allies, but also by the Germans, Italians, and Japanese. France's aggressive policy in the last decades of the nineteenth century to secure control over southern China and the island of Hainan subsequent to its incorporation of what had formerly been the Chinese tributary states of Indochina — in addition to the Russian military presence in Port Arthur and its construction of railroads in the north of China — threatened not only the integrity of the Chinese state and Britain's trade and control over customs collections, but also the formal colonies of Burma and India.<sup>10</sup> France's refusal to allow the British to build a railroad from the Burmese frontier into China and Russia's repeated attempts to gain control over the Imperial Maritime Customs Service, organized and headed by Sir Robert Hart, were seen by the British press (if not by Lord Salisbury) as direct threats to the balance of power in China and the stability of the empire. Envisaged by political theorists and the public at the time were a British-controlled Yangtze Protectorate, the occupation and subsequent annexation of Tibet, and the expansion of the Treaty Ports and the area around Hong Kong. Russia had plans for the invasion of Manchuria and had already attempted the seizure of ports in Korea. Japan retained Formosa (Taiwan), ceded to it after it defeated China in 1895, and Germany and Italy both sought concessions in the region, the former successfully gaining a port in retaliation for the murder of several missionaries. Britain, meanwhile, sought to consolidate her empire on the subcontinent and protect it from French and Russian incursions. The years leading up to the Rebellion marked a period of intense "Russophobia," shared by key political figures in China, such as Hart.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time, the breakdown of the enormous Chinese empire, ruled by the "foreign" Manchus, functioned as a metaphor for Britain's own imperialism, signaling their ultimate inability to overcome resistance in subject states. With Britain's hegemony over its colonies shaken by the embarrassments and heavy casualties of the on-going Anglo-Boer War, a sense of fragility existed. Many in Britain believed that the only way to protect her own trade and her own empire lay in preventing the collapse of the Manchu empire, and books and political speeches of the time continually link the two empires and argue for a common fate. Lord Beresford concluded in 1899 in the record of his commercial mission to China the year before, *The Break-Up of China*, "Investigations on the spot have convinced me that the maintenance of the Chinese Empire is essential to the honour as well as the interests of the Anglo-Saxon race, and I hope that when the British and American people are acquainted with the facts as a whole, they will be similarly convinced"(1–2).<sup>12</sup> Unless the degeneration of the Chinese Empire is prevented, Beresford continues, war is a certainty, "and the whole civilized world may be compelled to share in the conflict" (3). (This policy was one the British would continue to pursue after the Rebellion, when the Dowager Empress, who had tacitly consented to the extermination policy of the Boxers, supposedly lost her power to the European-supported, reform-

minded Emperor.) The analogy between the two empires gained strength from the “foreign” ethnic nature of the Manchus — a fact repeatedly stressed by observers during this period. Internal conflicts over modernization, social and fiscal reorganization, and industrialization through strategic railroad building were regularly reported in the metropolitan press in Britain in the years before the Uprising.

The causes of the Boxer Rebellion have been the subject of several recent historical studies and need not be detailed here, beyond acknowledging that economic and other factors gave the Chinese laborers who formed the core of the movement significant cause for the xenophobia they subsequently displayed.<sup>13</sup> Starting in the province of Shantung (Shandong) and originally anti-Catholic, the Boxer Movement gradually widened to include all of North China, with the professed aims of killing all foreigners and forcing all “native Christians” to either abandon their faith or die. Its adherents held large demonstrations, described as follows by a missionary correspondent for the *Shanghai Mercury*, a leading English-language daily: “Each band was conducted by a ‘demonized’ leader, who, by the selection of an epileptic or by the patient aid of hypnotism, caused a ‘medium’ to display wild and unnatural symptoms or to utter wild and strange speech, this serving as a basis for the claim of this Society to spiritual power. Every follower was assured of IMMUNITY FROM DEATH or physical injury — their bodies being spiritually protected from sword cuts and bullets” (*The Boxer Rising* i).<sup>14</sup> With collusion from various local governments and later from the Empress Dowager and her staff, the Uprising resulted in wide-spread chaos in terms of looting, pillaging, and murdering. The sovereignty of the Legations was immediately violated, and when authorities from the Tsung-li Yamen (Foreign Office) offered safe conduct out of the city to Europeans, the Legations were dubious — particularly when the German Minister, Baron von Ketteler, was murdered by soldiers on his way to negotiate with the officials on the removal of the Europeans from the city. Subsequent historical work has shown that many of the events of the Rebellion, considered incredible both by those Europeans party to the siege and by the novelists who chronicled their plight, derived from severe cultural misunderstandings on both sides, as well as from misinformation. For example, the Empress Dowager declared war on all the Powers after being told that Imperial Troops had forced a European relief force back from the strategic Taku (Dagu) coastal forts, when that force had actually taken control of the forts; similarly, a Shanghai correspondent for the *Daily Mail* threw Europe into blood-thirsty consternation by reporting as fact a rumor of the fall of the Legations and the extermination of the foreign residents at Peking in July 1900, in the middle of the siege.

Consolidating their forces in the British Legation and under the leadership of Sir Claude MacDonald, Britain’s plenipotentiary minister in China, the Europeans and several thousand native Christians withstood continual siege by Boxers and Imperial soldiers over the summer of 1900 until relieved by an international force, which entered Peking in August.<sup>15</sup> The Dowager Empress and her entourage were forced to flee the city, which was then divided into sectors by the different European and the Japanese forces involved in the operation. A subsequently negotiated treaty entailed the execution of eleven pro-Boxer officials, an enormous and crippling indemnity, the destruction of the Taku forts, the stationing of European forces along key approaches to the capital, and the establishment of a permanent Legation guard (Esherick 311). The conditions of the treaty contributed significantly to anti-Manchu sentiment in China, and recent scholars have

concluded that it helped pave the way for the Nationalist revolution in 1911 (though in the short term it may have forestalled a carving up of China by the Powers). The publicity generated by the Uprising within Britain was significant, with many survivors of the siege publishing their accounts in newspapers or books. The siege — entirely unanticipated both by the press and British government officials — removed the Anglo-Boer War from its position as leader in British papers.<sup>16</sup> After it ended and accurate information about the relief of the Legations could be reported, it provided an antidote to the humiliations of the conflict in South Africa.<sup>17</sup> The novelists described here took advantage of this publicity and quickly published novels about the siege, in which they generally had not been involved. Their knowledge of China often is scant, and the novels appear to have been based on often erroneous news reports published during the Rebellion (when contact with the Legations was practically non-existent), as well as on the often fanciful accounts of the survivors. Many of the authors appear to have held military ranks, which are always heralded on the books' title pages.

*A State of Siege: Novels Representing the Attack on the Legations*

MAKING IMPLICIT IF NOT OVERT references to the earlier imperial history of the 1857 Sepoy Rebellion and the plight suffered by the English at Cawnpore and Lucknow, these narratives share with their Indian-based predecessors highly allegorical plots in which tiny numbers of embattled Britons bravely fend off threats from large numbers of “natives”; in so doing, they uphold the principles of British expansion while typing the natives as laboring under misconceptions and acting purely on impulse, rather than reason.<sup>18</sup> The small British community stranded in the compounds of India and China function as metonyms for the community at home, vastly outnumbered by their imperial subjects but able to gain mastery through superior technology, combined with scientific rationalism — but only after a long and uncertain struggle.<sup>19</sup> The typical model of the static Asian state against the dynamic Western power is thus crucially rearticulated at the moment in which it seems most in doubt, that is, at the very site of rebellion and social upheaval.

While before the war the mapping of China is given in terms of “spheres of influence,” of huge territorial tracts, the novels of the Boxer Rebellion redefine Chinese space in terms of the urban, specifically in terms of the three urban centers that were the main sites of European resistance to the Uprising: Peking, Tientsin (Tianjing), and the Taku Forts (see Figure 1). The carefully constructed delineation of urban space before the war — into European cantonments and native quarters, or in Peking, into the European concessions/Legation Quarter, the Imperial City, the Tartar City, and the native quarters — is disrupted by the war, as the available space for the British protagonists decreases: novel after novel includes a scene either on the outskirts of the town or in the countryside in which the boy heroes are threatened before the Rebellion begins, forcing them to constrict their movements to the city itself, then successively to the European concession areas and ultimately to the British Legation in Peking (or, occasionally, Gordon Hall in Tientsin). Here, the historical process of the “opening up of China,” achieved by gunboat diplomacy since the early Victorian period, is implicitly reversed: the British are symbolically stripped of their hard-won access to Chinese land, to trade, and ultimately re-placed in the situation of isolation that had marked the first settlements in China (where the merchants were only allowed to negotiate with specifically designated individuals and could not

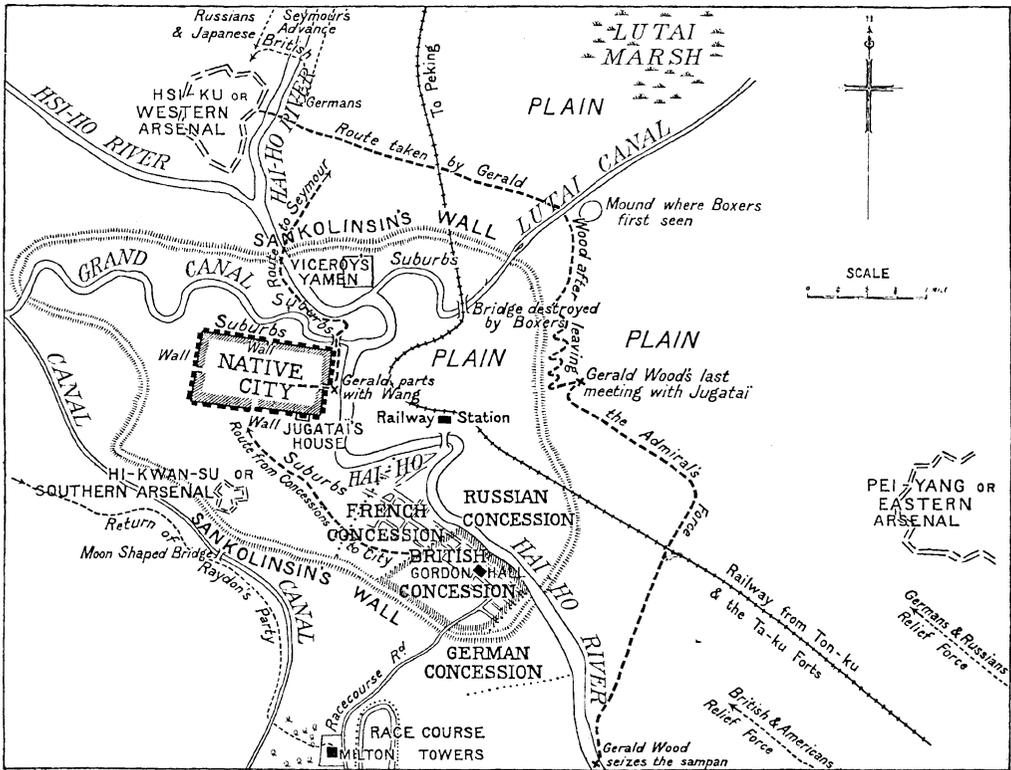


Figure 1. Map of the environs of Tientsin, illustration from Captain Charles Gilson, *The Lost Column: A Story of the Boxer Rebellion in China* (London, 1909). By permission of The British Library, London [012804.I.17].

circulate at all). The threat of the Rebellion's success, then, becomes an articulation of historical reversal, of returning China to the isolation of a century earlier. Such a narrative of anti-progress cannot be, and is not, allowed to succeed: re-penetration of Chinese space through disguise becomes the harbinger for the military forces that arrive at the eleventh hour to end the siege of the Legation. Admiral Seymour's "column" opens up China in a progressive movement from the coast into the empire, and ultimately to its heart, the capital, in a process roughly analogous to the movement from Treaty Port to extraterritorial rights to diplomatic representation in Beijing which had characterized the historical relationship between China and Europe during the nineteenth century. The reassertion of sovereignty, with the flying of the flags over the Legation and the flight of the Empress Dowager, is itself perceived as a recasting of the results of earlier uprisings and occupations by British and French forces (specifically, that of 1860). The mapping and remapping of imperial history presented in these novels finally asserts a teleology of progress that will no longer be capable of reversal by its assertion of the European "right" of presence in the Middle Kingdom (though later invasion novels indicate that anxieties about such reversals were not at all quelled by the outcome of the Boxer Rebellion.)

As invoked by these literary narratives (and also by journalistic accounts of the Uprising and by political commentaries on it), the Boxer Rebellion gains significance as a populist-grounded rejection of capitalism and the principles of exchange in favor of the traditional Orientalist model of stasis and despotism. In attempting to reverse British imperial history to return China to an ahistorical past of never-ending isolation, the Rebellion seeks to situate China and the Chinese outside of history in the way that Marx conceives of it in his writings on imperialism in India, or “vegetating in the teeth of time,” as he specifically refers to the Celestial Empire in an 1858 article on the opium trade.<sup>20</sup> Marx’s writings on China roughly coincide with those about India and link the 1857 Indian Mutiny with the Taiping Uprising earlier in the decade. They are useful because they reinforce the links between China and India that the novels explicitly introduce and because they theorize the relationship between the periphery of empire and its effects on the metropolitan center in ways that both predict the response encapsulated in these texts, as well as in ways that explain the connection between the novels’ representation of the Boxers and the peasant Chinese mobs in terms directly analogous to those used in late-Victorian fiction to describe the working classes. What concerns me here is not Marx’s actual theories on Asian despotism and what has come to be called the Asiatic Mode of Production. Instead, I am interested in how his rhetoric on China, and a closely related rhetoric on India, theorizes acts of originary violence perpetrated on static states that essentially rebound by evoking the specter of working-class violence at home.

In a series of articles published from the mid to late 1850s, Marx predicts resistance to the foreign presence (specifically the Taiping Rebellion, with its hybrid Christian identity, and the second Anglo-Chinese War, 1856–58, over the Arrow incident, but also a continuous process of such uprisings as a result of the colonial encounter), and argues that while such upheavals are unlikely to change the structure of the Manchu Empire, the effect that they might have on the British Empire and on Britain’s progression through capitalism might be profound. Writes Marx in “Revolution in China and in Europe,” published in May 1853 in the *New York Herald*:

It may seem a very strange, and a very paradoxical assertion that the next uprising of the people of Europe, and their next movement for republican freedom and economy of government, may depend more probably on what is now passing in the Celestial Empire, — the very opposite of Europe, — than on any other political cause that now exists, — more even than on the menaces of Russia and the consequent likelihood of a general European war. But yet it is no paradox, as all may understand by attentively considering the circumstances of the case.

Whatever be the social causes, and whatever religious, dynastic, or national shape they may assume, that have brought about the chronic rebellions subsisting in China for about ten years past, and now gathered together in one formidable revolution, the occasion of this outbreak has unquestionably been afforded by the English cannon forcing upon China that soporific drug called opium. Before the British arms the authority of the Manchu dynasty fell to pieces; the superstitious faith in the eternity of the Celestial Empire broke down; the barbarous and hermetic isolation from the civilized world was infringed; and an opening was made for that intercourse which has since proceeded so rapidly under the golden attractions of California and Australia. At the same time the silver coin of the Empire, its lifeblood, began to be drained away to the British East Indies. (15–16)

Here Marx identifies the dangers of global imperialism that later novelists were so keen to exploit: its potential to destabilize political situations abroad,<sup>21</sup> its connection to related events elsewhere in the imperial structure, its connections (metaphoric and real) to emerging working-class consciousness, and so on. Although opium had ceased to be a significant issue in terms of British trade by the turn of the century because the Chinese now produced the drug themselves, the pressures described by Marx retain their relevance for the “lessons” taught by the Boxer narratives.<sup>22</sup> The novels articulate this “lesson” directly in connection with their perceived history of China’s place in the history of the British Empire. Whereas for Marx the effects of gunboat diplomacy on China will ultimately propel Britain closer to the breakdown that ushers in major social reform, however, these narratives write from a bourgeois perspective that views this degeneration in terms of imperial anxiety. “China’s history is of the greatest interest, as any one who has had the patience to study it will admit,” begins the authoritative patriarchal voice in Captain F. S. Brereton’s *The Dragon of Peking* (1902). “It begins earlier than that of any other nation; it tells of an ancient civilisation greater even than that of Egypt and Rome. And all through it records a curious conservatism — the wish of all Chinese for centuries to remain at the stage of education and refinement to which they had attained and, shutting all their ports, to live on in their present contentment and ease, and have nothing to do with outsiders” (78). This conversation between the father of boy protagonist Bob Duncan who, readers are told, was born at an opium depot of the East India Company off the China Coast — who is the very voice of mercantilist empire — occurs before the outbreak of the Rebellion and is followed by a programmatic description of the history of China’s interaction with Britain (the Opium Wars, the Arrow War, the Taiping Revolt, and so on) that firmly places the upcoming uprising within Britain’s own historical purview: the history of the East is just another narrative of the history of the West.

Engels follows more explicitly on Marx’s line on China a few years later, in a set of 1857 articles published in the *New York Daily Tribune*. In “Persia and China,” he contrasts a nation in the process of adopting European military organization with one resistant to it and therefore capable of endless and potentially destabilizing resistance: “In Persia, the European system of military organization has been engrafted upon Asiatic barbarity; in China, the rotting semi-civilization of the oldest State in the world meets the Europeans with its own resources. Persia has been signally defeated, while distracted, half-dissolved China has hit upon a system of resistance which, if followed up, will render impossible repetition of the triumphal marches of the first Anglo-Chinese war” (111). The “piratical policy of the British Government,” he continues, marks the Chinese outbreak against foreigners as “a war of extermination.” Wars between unequal civilizations, he concludes, are wars of the lowest common denominator, and the lesser civilization must fight the greater one by the limited means that it has attained. The emphasis for both Marx and Engels is repeatedly on China’s age, its steadfast retention of what at one time was a progressive form of social organization, but which has now stagnated. The images of decay, of rot, and of the vampiristic draining of the Empire’s lifeblood (and whether Marx figures Britain or China as the vampire here is tellingly unclear) are as much symptoms of Britain’s own breakdown with regard to the laboring classes as they are of China’s: stereotypically, the primitive Other and the working-class Self are interpolated.

The echoes of such an interpolation resound clearly through the Boxer Rebellion narratives, which employ late-Victorian terminology of the mob, the unruly, and the

animalistic as it appeared in narratives about the urban working classes in Britain to describe the Chinese. Although the majority of the participants in the Rebellion were peasants and not the urban poor — “the countryside in arms against the foreigner,” as one soldier described it — the remapping of these novels onto the urban space of Peking and Tientsin allows for a collapsing of representations of the Chinese and working-class British.<sup>23</sup> Unruly, reckless, and often in a drugged or hypnotic stupor, the Boxers are repeatedly described in ideologically determined vocabulary as “hordes” and considered in amorphous, non-individualistic terms that recall the descriptions of the crowds of laborers on the mean streets of the East End. Charles Frederick Gurney Masterman’s labeling in *From The Abyss: Of Its Inhabitants* (1902) of the poor in terms of “hordes,” “floods,” “streams,” and “torrents,” for instance, de-individualizes them in nearly identical terms to the Boxer narratives. Characterizing the effects of China’s secret societies before the Rebellion breaks out, the narrator of Captain Charles Gilson’s 1909 *The Lost Column: A Story of the Boxer Rebellion in China* states: “[The secret society adherent] has become a frenzied, shrieking fanatic, that death alone can stop. He has gone mad, with a blind and desperate madness to gain his ends or die. From time immemorial this old same madness has spread across the paddy fields and laid hold upon the people like the plague, spreading infection, until whole provinces are up in arms and crying for revenge” (41). Whether willful or no, this analogy between Chinese peasant and British laborer functions not only to reinforce the image of the working class as the exotic within — the incorporation of the imperial Other into the literal center — but also makes it clear what the battle for sovereignty in China and for the retention of control in the Legations is really about: maintaining the physical boundaries of class against siege from without. With its huge population and decaying empire, China to these British writers “is the question of the future,” as Brereton puts in *The Dragon of Peking*. Like the working classes, the Chinese population is large, destitute, and willing to emigrate; like it, it carries the potential to violently assert the superiority of its numbers.<sup>24</sup>

The implicit comparison between the urban poor and the Chinese is further clarified by the appearance of common tropes and images of detective fiction in both the Boxer Rebellion novels and late-Victorian East End crime stories.<sup>25</sup> Once again, the issue is about the containment and transgression of boundaries, and of an implicit boundary between East and West. As narratives about the Limehouse Chinese community in London complicate but ultimately reassert this East/West dichotomy in their divisions between East London and London “proper,” so these novels present a similar spatial mapping of difference in the Chinese city. In China, the question of borders is visibly aided by the presence of real and not just metaphorical walls: the wall that protects the British Legation, the wall that surrounds the “Forbidden” Imperial City, the walls of the Tartar City that encompass the Legations and the Forbidden City, and the gates that allow entrance and egress to these spaces form a significant element of these works’ plots. In one novel, W. Murray Graydon’s *The Perils of Peking* (1904), the boy heroes actually escape detection, torture and murder at the hands of the Boxers by hiding within the wall for several weeks.<sup>26</sup> Occupying this liminal space, they are safe both from their Chinese antagonists and from the “friendly fire” which their Chinese-clad bodies might otherwise attract. Nearly all the novels include a scene in which disguised Britons escape missionary settlements in the interior, arriving at safety in the Legation only after deceiving guards at the walled entrance to the city into thinking they are Chinese. And Gilson’s *The Lost Column* steps straight out of the pages of

Frank Norris when it introduces Wang, the Chinese detective with a “Frisco accent” who in the context of the violent revolution occurring around them, saves boy hero Gerald from the hands of the gangster Jugatai, through his mastery of disguise and an ability to penetrate the “native quarter” of the city.<sup>27</sup>

At the same time, the Boxer narratives bolster the psychological connections between the working classes and the Chinese with an interesting charting of the physical that particularly reveals anxieties about cultural incorporation and hybridity through the site of the male body. Both through disguise, which allows the adolescent boy protagonists to heroically prove themselves as “men of the empire” while assuming exoticized and decidedly feminized characteristics, and through a discussion of body hair, the novels articulate a confusion of masculine codes of conduct, reflected through the working classes (Chinese disguise is always in the costume of a coolie, never a mandarin), and resolved through a later revelation of their “true” identity and a heterosexual romance plot to tie up the loose ends. Disguising oneself as the native opens up a curious articulation of the “not quite/not white” paradigm of mimicry described by Homi K. Bhabha. The desire for a colonial subject that is recognizable, almost the same but not quite (a “brown-skinned Englishman,” to use Macaulay’s infamous phrase) is here transformed into the act of becoming an unrecognizable and decidedly differentiated Other, but not quite. With their skin dyed with berries, their false queues, and their peasant clothing, the middle-class boys of the Boxer narratives contain the transgression that literally threatens to kill their “race” by successfully mimicking the Boxers and rendering their authority incomplete and ultimately inactive. Unlike the natives dressed in the Western clothing of education and science but whose pigtailed and pigmentation mark them as essentially Other, the boys of the Boxer narratives convincingly escape detection and mimic only to enable them to formally and physically reject the alien.<sup>28</sup> In fact, their disguise is always too good, and each boy suffers perilous moments either leaving or entering the Legation premises because he is perceived as being the very monster he is trying to defeat. The process of slippage thereby described operates both to open a window into the otherwise concealed activities of the alien (through the observations made and comments reported by the English protagonists while in disguise) and firmly closes that window by reestablishing a hegemonic imperial authority in the end (through the occupation of Peking — and especially the Forbidden City — by the allied forces). This hegemonic order is stamped as a middle-class one when the protagonists remove their peasant garb and “come out” as bourgeois Britons.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, the Boxers, with their superstitions and “barbarism,” form a particularly useful mirror for British society in China and, by extension, elsewhere in the empire because they are supposed to epitomize difference at its most negative: unadulterated, mass savagery (only partly excused by its somewhat legitimate motivations) opposed to the heroic individuals of the nation of shopkeepers.

Perhaps representative of these novels’ discussion of disguise and of the Boxer Rebellion in general is G. A. Henty’s *With the Allies to Peking* (1904). As is typical of the adventure genre, the center of the action becomes a family which in its geographical displacement models the metropole-periphery structure of the empire itself. After years of schooling under the protection of his uncle who heads the family firm’s London house, adolescent Rex Bateman is sent “home” to his parents in China on the eve of the Boxer Rebellion. His family incorporates the sweep of the British presence in China, with his father and uncles representing the commercial side through their trading business in the

Treaty Port of Tientsin and his mother and aunt representing the affective or moral side through their link to the aunt's missionary husband. With a sympathetic understanding of the Chinese (his closest companion being the servant Ah Lo, who has been his tutor and friend since infancy) and their objection to foreigners (based on misrepresentations and hysteria), boy wonder Rex must fulfill the traditional role of imperialist in protecting the economic and social interests of his nation by rescuing his family from the Rebellion. (His young cousins are being held in the *yamen* of a local official, their missionary parents having been killed.) At the same time, he must foster a dialogue with the Chinese that tends to solidify British authority in the region while mitigating those misunderstandings that caused the upheaval. Henty therefore establishes Rex's sympathy for the Chinese on the novel's first page — in which Rex tells his uncle that on beginning school in the London suburbs his classmates dub him the Heathen Chinese — and on the second page, when readers learn that his closest emotional bond is to Ah Lo, and that he speaks Chinese “like a native.” Though the inscrutable Chinese retain their distance from Henty's audience, Rex's qualifications for mediating between the two cultures are quickly established. In one passage, on the steamer that takes him back to China, he literally acts as interpreter after Ah Lo beats up some working-class toughs who harass him.<sup>30</sup> When the time comes for heroism, it is precisely this linguistic competence that enables him to “pass” as Chinese when he disguises himself and sets out with Ah Lo to secretly rescue his aunt and cousins (see Figure 2).<sup>31</sup> In his letter to his father explaining his disappearance on the rescue mission, he even suggests that the elder Bateman tell his mother he has gone to act as an interpreter for incoming European troops in China. Initiated in the risks of disguise by his actions to bring his family safely into the Legation fold, Rex then offers his services to his nation, conducting a series of missions in disguise that establish him firmly as the hero of the siege. With Ah Lo's help, he rescues thirteen native Christians from a cellar in Peking. Then he single-handedly dismantles two mortars that threaten the Legation's defenses. Dressed as a landowner, he worms his way into the presence of the pro-foreign Prince Ching, who regretfully is unable to provide help. Finally, during a cease-fire in the siege, he resolves to go to Tientsin and see to his parents' safety, while carrying a vital message from Sir Claude MacDonald through Boxer lines to the relief expedition there. In all these exploits, disguise is the enabling mechanism for success; being Chinese allows him to defeat the Chinese. He even acquires the stereotypical Chinese characteristics of stealth and silence. Astonishingly, the only palpable danger he faces in all this is a tiger; only in the encounter with the “natural” world does his costuming fail to operate.

The striking resemblance between Henty's presentation of Rex Bateman and Kipling's Kim suggested by this reading of disguise shows how clearly the boy adventurer in China fits into a more generic imperialist mode practiced on the outskirts of empire. Both boys are unusual in their linguistic capacities and in their ability to mediate between Eastern and Western cultures.<sup>32</sup> Ah Lo's visits to Rex at school find their counterpart in the lama's role in helping Kim to attend an elite Indian school. And like Kim, Bateman must act in disguise in matters of grave national interest. Both boys serve as vital conduits for information, crucially passed on with the aid of their disguises: Kim while acting as a spy in the Great Game and Rex while carrying a message detailing their plight from the besieged of the Legations to the military forces at Tientsin. Ultimately, however, linguistic competence may enhance their disguise, but the key information being passed in these narratives is from one British representative to another. That information concerns mili-



Figure 2. “Rex rescues his cousin from the Boxers,” illustration from G[eorge] A[lfred] Henty, *With the Allies to Peking* (London, 1904). Courtesy of the Fales Library, New York University.

tary actions to safeguard British interests which clearly delineate the distinction between passing and communicating with the Other and becoming it. Concurrently, the seeds of imperial knowledge that the boys incubate see their maturation in their own development into full-fledged men of empire.

An intriguing discourse on masculinity is thus generated by Henty’s use of disguise that I wish to examine more fully with respect to the Boxer novels. Importantly, many of these novels rely on the heroic actions of a beardless, adolescent boy who, in disguise, passes messages between the Legation and Admiral Seymour’s relief column to propel

their narratives. The boys can pass as Chinese because they possess feminine traits often assigned to the Chinese male: lack of body hair, smooth skin, even long hair. As Joseph Bristow has described in his *Effeminate England: Homoerotic Writing After 1885*, effeminacy and empire “stood in violent opposition” by the end of the nineteenth century, and the effeminate figure residing within the metropolitan center was considered as racially regressive (11). These novels pick up on this discourse in their presentation of the Chinese and the heroes’ adoption of effeminate traits as an integral part of their disguise.

The boys’ “girlish” appearance, however, is merely a stage in their development; the Chinese male seems stuck at the level of adolescent physical development, just as his civilization is supposedly underdeveloped. Here, the novels can be said to link up to a strand of the emerging discourse on homosexuality, seen as springing from the improper resolution of the Oedipal conflict, that is, the psychological failure of the (male) child to progress normally from oral to anal to the adult genital state of being. The Asiatic or the primitive also remains stuck at such an earlier state of psychological development. “They are very like children,” says the adult voice in *With the Allies to Peking*. “[T]hey will bear desperate oppression and tyranny with passive submission, and they will break out furiously at some fancied wrong” (40).

George Manville Fenn’s *Stan Lynn* (1902) makes clear the importance of facial hair in distinguishing between Chinese and European capacities within this discourse on masculinity (see Figure 3). The action of the opening scene, involving an invasion of the (all-male) family’s warehouse, causes Uncle Jeffrey’s most prized possession — his beard — to be singed, inspiring the following dialogue:

‘What! You don’t know, boy. It’s a wonderful climate out here for making your hair grow. Look at the Chinamen’s tails!’

‘Oh, but a lot of that’s false, isn’t it?’

‘In some cases, my boy, but generally it is all real; and if it were unplaited it would be longer. But don’t you imitate John Chinaman. You don’t want a long tail. You turn the hair-current from the back of your head on to your chin and let it grow there, so as to make you look big and fierce, ready for dealing with Chinese merchants.’

‘But I shall seem boyish for years to come, I’m afraid,’ said Stan sadly. ‘I look very young.’

‘And a splendid thing, too,’ said Uncle Jeff. ‘Who wouldn’t be you, to look young and feel young? — Eh, Oliver? — Oh, you young masculine geese who are always wishing that you were men, if you only knew what you are treating with contempt, how much better it would be for you!’ (37–38)<sup>33</sup>

The displacement of the natural growth of facial hair onto the unnatural queue that the Chinaman cultivates already indicates a physical marking through gender of English predominance, further strengthened by the fact that the plait of hair is known as a tail, a vestigial feature in the human body. Typically, the pigtail functions as an essential marker of Chinese manhood — China is a “nation of pigtails and bland simple faces,” according to *The Dragon of Peking*.<sup>34</sup> It is also the means for asserting a British superiority in fight: in many of the novels, a Briton secures the Chinaman’s queue, leaving him with the unpleasant option of humiliation and loss of status within his own cultural system by having it ripped off or with the option of falling into enemy hands (see Figure 4). Focusing on this displacement of the Chinaman’s hair from the face to the back of the head also



Figure 3. W. H. C. Groome, "Heading for Trouble" ("Just in time to bring his rifle-butt down on the head of a big Chinaman"), illustration from George Manville Fenn, *Stan Lynn: A Boy's Adventure in China* (London, 1902). By permission of The British Library, London [012809.f.33].

invokes a train of associations about long hair in popular melodrama, linked explicitly to the feminine and to unruly sexuality. By contrast, the British adolescent's masculinity lies in his eventual ability to grow this beard, once his actions in the narrative have justified his transition from boy to man. He only acts the part of the Chinaman. His "drag," with all its associations of deviance, simply allows him to pass vital information or rescue womenfolk from being butchered and functions only while he operates in always, already deviant non-European space. The *Bildungsroman* style of his transition recalls the reader



Figure 4. W. H. C. Groome, “Stan Gets His Man” (“Hah!, ejaculated Stan, springing up to seize his adversary”), illustration from George Manville Fenn, *Stan Lynn: A Boy’s Adventure in China* (London, 1902). By permission of The British Library, London [012809.f.33].

to the middle-class origins of these narratives — they are about securing a bourgeois imperial class against coded working-class/native resistance.<sup>35</sup>

In fact, many Boxer novels conclude by asserting the “natural” end point of the boy’s development into a full-fledged man: an infatuation with a woman, made possible by the close quarters in which the Rebellion has forced them to live, is sealed by the clumsy introduction of a marriage plot that ties together the loose ends of the adventures and signals a return to normalcy. Typical of this pattern is Constanca Serjeant’s *A Tale of Red*

*Pekin* (1902), one of the few Boxer novels penned by a woman. Back in England, a group of survivors are gathering for the Christmas holidays and await the arrival of the carriage of one of their party. The novel's final line runs as follows: "Yes, but do you know, Nina,' Lilian Ross replied archly, and almost in a whisper, 'I think I hear something else besides, a long way off, perhaps — but still I think I hear besides — the sound of wedding bells'" (105). Such marriage-plot endings also serve to disrupt an earlier homoerotic bond put in place in those novels that feature two boy protagonists. During the Uprising, the boys shared adventures and close quarters outside of the Legation — and thus outside of a Europeanized space open to domestication, which is restored to them when the Rebellion ends. In *The Dragon of Pekin*, this resolution of homoerotic tensions finds its object of triangulation in Bob and Charlie's discovery of a "stunner," Eva Mannering, the daughter of a missionary. In a battle later in the novel in which the normally gentle Bob kills all the Boxers in sight, he exclaims, "That will teach them!" he growled hoarsely. 'That will persuade them to ill-treat girls in future!'" (240). However, desire is not particularly well-developed in this text, and neither Bob nor his stepbrother Charlie "get the girl" in the end; instead, they further sublimate same-sex desire and become partners in a business venture.<sup>36</sup>

Surprisingly, the sexual deviance of the Chinese implied by this discourse on masculinity does not go beyond representations of immaturity. Though the novels detail the ferocity of the Boxer's bloodlust, they practically avoid the issue of sexual violence towards European women, typically a key metaphor for the anxiety of empire and a staple of the Mutiny narratives that the Boxer novels closely resemble.<sup>37</sup> First-hand accounts of the Uprising do indicate that a myth of violation existed. But it did not find its way into novelistic depictions. Even the trope of having the besieged plan to kill their wives and children and then themselves, rather than fall into Chinese hands, is related to issues of torture, rather than sexual outrage. (The one site at which sexual deviance does raise its specter with respect to women is in the depiction of the Empress Dowager in many instances as an evil vamp; however, this image is not discussed in any depth by the novels.) In part, this curious absence of rape metaphors may stem from the reason that Peter Fleming suggests in his narrative account of the Rebellion, *The Siege at Peking* (1959): "The legend that European women were outraged before being killed is supported by no evidence and is inherently unlikely; to the sexual appetite of the Chinese male the female barbarians — large-footed, long-nosed and white-skinned — made a negligible appeal" (135).<sup>38</sup> It also may have to do with widespread cultural notions of Chinese sexual deviance as enervation: in the figures of the homosexual, the eunuch, the harem, and so on. The male authorship and male-centered plots of the majority of these, and in fact of most Victorian adventure novels, may also play their role here. Indeed, the one guarded reference to sexual violence in these works appears in one of the few women-authored novels on the Rebellion and refers, presumably, to women who are Christian converts, not British women. This novel, Alicia Berwicke's *Out in China!* (1902), is also the only Boxer narrative to concentrate on sexual issues: the Rebellion provides the backdrop for its two principal characters, Forbes, British consul of an "outport" in North China, and Winifred, wife of the port's principal trader, to contemplate adultery. The adultery never occurs — but only because Winifred sickens and dies because of the hardships of the Rebellion, which finds them stuck at the outbreak of hostilities in the hills surrounding the outpost after an outing to a nearby temple. While evading the Boxers, they come across various

atrocities, including a mass grave of native Christians and three women “apparently stripped naked, wounded in every horrible way, and split open, as fish are split open, and hung upon a tree to dry” (134). Later, the body of a child mutilated suggestively by pitchforks invokes in another character a revulsion against all Chinese, even the group’s faithful servants. These intimations of sexual violence are as exceptional as the novel itself in not being centered around the Peking British Legation and in being a “domestic” fiction that incorporates the uprising into its plot.

Linked to the issue of disguise for the Western protagonists and the physically-marked societal underdevelopment for the Chinese antagonists is the narrative strategy of justifying European intervention in China — and British aspirations over the region — through a complex and highly mediated articulation of what the subaltern Chinese supposedly think. Through their British characters’ acts of costuming, the protagonists end up in situations that allow for the “grievances” of the Chinese peasant and laborer to be voiced unwittingly in the presence of the “foreign devil” himself. Bolstering both the authenticity of the mechanisms of disguise (and consequently, a form of supremacy) and the omniscience of the author (and another form of supremacy), the inclusion of these utterances attempts to circumscribe the violence of the Rebellion by designating its causes (superstition, taxation, corruption, gunboat diplomacy, etc.). It also seeks to explain for an English reading audience the mysterious vehemence and systematic extermination of foreigners that marked the outbreak. Such an explanation is not merely the reductionist impulse to impose an imperialist ideology on racially coded savages, as Patrick Brantlinger has suggested is typical of the Mutiny narratives. Instead, it represents a more complex dialogue on fair and free trade that argues for a specific type of capitalist expansion, under the rubric of informal imperialism, and that recognizes the criminal behavior that a previously underregulated state of affairs has permitted certain foreigners to exercise in China.<sup>39</sup>

To arrive at this reassertion of a free-trade, fair-trade imperialism, the novels early on (generally prior to the outbreak of violence) speculate on the causes of Chinese discontent with the “foreign devils,” followed by a Chinese perspective on the question as overheard by the boy protagonist while disguised as a native. A narrative such as adventure-writer giant Henty’s *With the Allies to Peking* masterfully juxtaposes a speech by the protagonist Rex Bateman’s father explaining the suffering of the poor Chinese with his servant Ah Lo’s later explanation (after the Rebellion has broken out) to his own parents that the English want to trade, not fight, and have had their motivations misunderstood. This curious role reversal — in which the Englishman articulates a partial defense of the Boxers’ conduct (albeit prior to the start of the Uprising) and the Chinaman a defense of informal British colonization — allows for a complex form of identification to occur that locates anti-foreign violence in ignorance and propaganda and types the Chinese as essentially pro-British, if not pro-European.<sup>40</sup> When Rex stays with Ah Lo’s family on his way to Peking, Henty includes a long discussion between the servant and his father on the nature of things Western that aims to justify the imperialist project in political and moral terms while underscoring the similarities between the cultures themselves. The British are great fighters, but do not like to fight, Ah Lo states, “and it is only when their trade is interfered with, or their people ill-treated, that they go to war” (64). Religiously tolerant, they nonetheless believe in Protestantism, just as the Chinese believe in Buddhism. “They try to convert others,” Ah Lo continues, “just as the Buddhists came to China and

converted large numbers of our people. They think they are doing good, and spend much money in trying to do so. It is strange to me that they cannot leave things alone, but it is their way, and certainly I have no ill-will towards them on that account." Absolved of improper economic aspirations and tolerant of other cultures but benignly trying to spread the word of the "true God," Ah Lo's British ultimately retain an inscrutability for the Chinese, demonstrating that while the cultures can coexist equably, they cannot, to use E. M. Forster's terms, connect. Importantly, while Rex's process of education follows a patriarchal/hegemonic father-son route, the Chinese peasant's process of education operates in reverse: it is the son who teaches the father of the essential value of intercourse with the West. It is New China teaching Old China's most stagnant members, its peasants.

The imperialist allegory in Henty, underscored by his protagonist's very name of "Rex," or "king," is thus balanced by a sympathy towards the rebellious Chinese and an effort to understand their feelings on the part of the patriarchal elder Bateman. Rex's father reminds his son of the indignities that the British have made the Chinese suffer: the trade in opium, the influx of missionaries, the forced opening of the ports, etc.<sup>41</sup> He maintains that the Europeans should keep ambassadors in Peking but otherwise leave the country alone (unless invited to do otherwise), protesting vociferously over the "game of grab" started by the Japanese and Russians. (Hong Kong, having been grabbed much earlier, does not come under his purview.) Rex's father ends his assessment of the Chinese culture with a Darwinian analysis according to which, as a result of population density, "the struggle for life is so severe that the wits of the people become sharpened" (98). Henty's argument of scarcity here leads to the conclusion that the Chinese are the shrewdest bargainers in the world, essentially acknowledging that for the Chinese the marketplace is always a battleground, and envisaging the Empress' tacit support for the Boxers as a response to historical restrictions on trade autonomy. Yet this attempt to encapsulate the Chinese point of view using Western scientific theories ultimately performs the same acts of cultural erasure on Chinese hegemony that Mr. Bateman is arguing have created the disturbance.

Generally speaking, the subaltern speeches recorded in all the Boxer novels partly exculpate the peasants. In the peasants' place, they vilify the Dowager Empress as a wicked woman who has shown herself "capable of any atrocity" (Brereton 75).<sup>42</sup> Though an historically suspect reading of the Rebellion, this vilification of the Empress serves the ideological purposes of empire well: insurrection follows from the corruption and decadence of the central authority symbolized by its head; rival empires must then intercede to restore order.<sup>43</sup> Or in Freudian terms, following from their analysis of the Chinese as children, the narratives assert that the Chinese lack the institutionalized superego that the Empress is supposed to embody. Thus the novels conclude by implicitly proposing new regulatory measures to prevent future breakdowns, either for the British in China or for the Chinese government. These mechanisms hearken to the earlier emphasis on safeguarding international trade: Henty's *With the Allies to Peking*, for example, closes with a complete reorganization of the protagonist's family business in China, as a result of the Rebellion, a reorganization cemented by the family's withdrawal to England to re-found their business. Julian Croskey's tribute to Sir Robert Hart, "*The S.G.*" (1900), finishes with the triumphant re-establishment after the Rebellion of the Imperial Customs Service, always the symbol of British mercantile nobility in China in action. Brereton's *The Dragon of Peking* ends similarly when the control of a lucrative jade mine — wrested from the

narrator's father by the criminal Sung, later a Boxer leader — is regained by the family once the title deeds to property are found on Sung's dead body.<sup>44</sup> A new partnership between the two boy protagonists of the novel, Bob and his father's ward Charlie, seals the basis for this new type of trade. (Whether such a concession ought to have remained in Chinese hands in the first place is not contested by this narrative.)<sup>45</sup> E. A. Freemantle's curious short story, "Prince Tuan's Treasure" (1911), whose action centers around protecting the Peking branch of the British-owned Shanghai and Hongkong Bank (where protagonist Frank King and others survive the siege) reveals the more naked side of this mercantile vision, however. After being rescued by Blue Jackets and Marines, King and others gather £3 million worth of goods off the streets of Peking; his £300,000 share allows him to marry Miss Stephens, whom he has met during the siege. While King is in Hong Kong selling his loot, a Chinaman tells him about the hidden location of the anti-foreign Prince Tuan's magnificent treasure. He enlists the help of the allied invasion force. They find treasure worth £21 million (half of which he himself receives, the other half going to pay the allies' expenses), and he and his wife retire happily and prosperously to England. The noble siege at the Legation and the Peitang Cathedral is here transposed to a financial institution that perhaps marks Europe's true interests in China, as does the theme of looting, which was widespread in Peking among the soldiers of the allies. The money belonging to the most famous anti-foreign royal advisor and champion of the Boxers is appropriately transferred to the allies as an ironic form of indemnity.

Echoing a series of plots centering on the rescue of British diplomatic and mercantile personnel in China, the restorations or reconsolidations of commercial interests in these novels herald a future for China that sternly rejects xenophobia and the purportedly traditional Asiatic isolationism. The British are here to stay; in fact, they even make claims to belonging, with many of the characters featured in the texts having been born and bred in China. It may be true, as *The Lost Column* muses at its end that, "They were wayfarers, far afield, in a strange land they had learnt to call their own, but England was the only land they loved" (379). But the underlying fact that they *had* learned to call China "their own" remains.

Strategies for regulation against future Boxer Uprisings also extend to the missionary activities that were a substantial cause of friction not only between the Chinese and the Europeans, but also among the Europeans in the years leading up to the Rebellion. The 1890s had seen an enormous increase in missionary efforts, both Protestant and Catholic, in the region. "China was the goal, the lodestar, the great magnet that drew us all in those days," wrote Sherwood Eddy of the Student Volunteers for Foreign Missions (Esherick 92).<sup>46</sup> In contrast to the Taiping Rebellion, a popular movement perceived in the nineteenth century as having stemmed from a bastardized Chinese understanding of Christianity and featuring a reform-oriented program, the Boxer Rebellion was seen as reacting specifically against missionary activities and as being regressive in its isolationist vision. Its manifestos specifically named missionaries as targets because of their alleged criminal acts. "Attention: all people in markets and villages of all provinces in China," ran one notice, "now, owing to the fact that Catholics and Protestants have vilified our gods and sages, have deceived our emperors and ministers above, and oppressed the Chinese people below, both our gods and our people are angry at them" (*China's Response to the West* 190).<sup>47</sup> At best violence towards missionaries is seen as inaccurate, though if these novels are any indication, the Boxer's accusations of sacrilege are hardly unjustified: In the best

tradition of “B” movie thrillers, *The Dragon of Peking* introduces the Boxers through a shoot-out involving its boy protagonists, “unsavoury” monks, and an enormous statue of Buddha that serves as the boys’ fortress during the confrontation; *The Lost Column* has its characters hiding and escaping gangsters inside a hollow Buddha; and *The Perils of Peking* features a Buddha statue blocking a door against a horde of Boxers, while another Buddha figure is positioned in front of a window to allow its boy-heroes to escape their pursuers. “That idol has done more for us than it ever did for the people who worshipped it,” one character quips (112–13).

The British missionaries themselves generally get portrayed as well-intentioned, if misguided and misunderstood. French and German Catholic missionaries, however, are treated with less sympathy. Despite the even more “heroic” resistance by those stranded in Peking’s Peitang Cathedral during the Boxer Rebellion, the novels focus on Catholic attempts to secure treaty rights to a status equivalent to that of the mandarins and a squabbling on behalf of their flock that earned them disgust both from peasants and government officials alike.<sup>48</sup> Writes Henty:

We invade them with a vast crowd of missionaries, who settle themselves in all parts of the country, build themselves houses and churches, and set to work to convert the Chinese. Naturally the Chinese don’t like it. Certainly we should not like it ourselves if hundreds of Chinamen were to settle down in all our towns, open joss-houses, hold out all sorts of advantages to proselytes, and convert the lowest and most ignorant class of the population to Confucianism or Buddhism. But this is not all. Missionaries take the converts under their protection, set up a little imperium, demand the right to judge and punish their own people, and generally to set the local authorities pretty well at defiance; and the Catholic bishops have actually insisted upon having the title, rank, and power of Chinese viceroys. (97)

Here, the missionaries practice a dangerous form of imperialism — dangerous because it mimics *formal* imperialism in claiming sovereignty, judicial functions, and official status, with the Catholics exemplifying these demands at their worst. Such attempts at formal imperialism disrupt the free-trade imperialism championed by Henty and others, and, significantly, they do so by disrupting class structure. The “lowest and most ignorant classes” become Christians precisely because of the economic benefits they derive from it.<sup>49</sup> The process upsets indigenous cultural arrangements, especially their most sacred traditions of “superstition” such as ancestor worship, and ruins the credibility of the European trader.<sup>50</sup> One of the precipitating causes of the revolt — Germany’s seizure of the North China port Jiaozhou after two of its missionaries were murdered — comes under similar censure for its participation in another act typical of formal imperialism, the annexation of territory: “Suppose two Chinese had been killed in Germany, what do you think the Germans would say if China were to demand as compensation Bremerhaven?” (40). Not all Boxer narratives are so critical of missionaries; in fact, Serjeant’s *A Tale of Red Peking* appears to be written by a female member of a missionary family. Initially narrated by Cecelia, the child of a missionary doctor, the novel tells its readers at its start, “The Chinese are dreadfully, dreadfully cruel, and very cunning and deceitful, but father says they make splendid Christians” (2). The Boxers, accordingly, are characterized as “like devils possessed” (6). Their most barbaric acts in the novel are towards native Christians, who die; the British characters lose a baby on their trek to safety, but otherwise survive unscathed to

continue their good works. They owe their overall safety and successful arrival at the Legation to Li, a wealthy native Christian converted by Cecelia's father, the suggestively named Paul St. John. Berwicke's *Out in China!* also expresses guarded sympathy for the missionaries. Blaming Parliamentary politics and British indifference to the individuals serving its imperial interests abroad, Berwicke has her British consul Forbes comment after the Rebellion of the missionaries, "Oh! They don't count. There is no *close* time for Missionaries now. Lord Salisbury has laid it down as an axiom, that they are to be always at all seasons ready for martyrdom" (172). Her sympathy is not unequivocal, however. Earlier in the novel, she cynically notes, a missionary essentially forces the party going to the temple to guard his family as he prepares to flee the coming Rebellion by insisting on offering his compound as shelter for the night. The most curious of the Boxer texts must be the missionary fantasy *The Escort of an Emperor; A Story of China During the Great Boxer Movement* (1910), set in that "city of the plain," Peking, in the aftermath of the allied invasion. Written by the American H. O. Kohr, who claims to have lost his eyes in a dynamite explosion while in China as a young man, the tale posits the success of Elder Wood of the obscure and reviled "Sunlight Mission" in Peking. Wood's extraordinary success at converting the Chinese after the Rebellion is the envy of other missionaries who previously despised him. The elder then converts a profane American military officer, who in turn works wonders with the royal family when he is chosen to escort the Dowager Empress back from her exile to Peking. The narrative depicts the Dowager as a force of Satan who keeps the Emperor imprisoned and the Emperor as a pro-Christian, pro-reform character who would rule China justly if only he had the chance (common representations of both figures from the failure of reform efforts in 1898 onward) and ends with an appeal to Americans to avoid false idols, to remember the Lord, and to lean on him in their troubles.<sup>51</sup> Rambling and massively incoherent thanks to the extended biblical exegesis that fleshes out its plot, *The Escort of an Emperor* perhaps offers the best indication of what it was about missionaries that both the Chinese and novelists such as Henty disliked.

Nonetheless, these texts inculcate their own utopian visions of informal imperialism in their idealistic discussion of the British-led international cooperation during the Boxer Rebellion and of Britain's primacy in a sort of precursor to the military campaigns organized later in the century by the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations. In this, they reflect the opinions of the cultural moment in which they were constructed, though historians have cast doubt on the degree to which Britain held the strings. The novels inflate Britain's leadership role in the events and the extent to which cooperation was actually achieved. Sir Claude MacDonald, the British minister to Peking who headed the resistance in the Legations, appears as a paragon of British imperial diplomacy: an effective bureaucrat, a keen coalition builder, and a cautious, fatherly figure reluctant to send the adolescent protagonists on their perilous mission to deliver news to the troops at Tientsin. (In fact, many of the novels represent the adolescents as developing the idea of this mission on their own, pledging to conduct it with or without official support.)

Britain's troops, featuring a body of Lancers from India, serve as a monument to the overall success of its management of empire, as well as the loyalty of its subjects. (The irony of relieving the siege of the Peking Legation with troops whose forefathers had participated in the sieges at Lucknow and Cawnpore is lost to these writers.) The widely reported remark attributed to the Empress Dowager when told that these Indian troops had entered Peking that "perhaps they are our expected reinforcements from Turkestan" is itself a

monument to Britain's imperial achievement over the competition. Making the political personal, *The Dragon of Peking* sends a detachment of the Bengal Lancers with the boy protagonists scurrying up a river and into caves in an effort to capture the evil Sung and restore their father's property. Though a Boxer kills Sung before they can get to him, the trip up the river and into the caves, with another party of Lancers crawling along the Great Wall, marks the degree of Britain's control over territory and terrain made possible by the Rebellion. The Lancers eventually find Sung and aid in the restoration of the boys' patrimony, land and mine concessions in the supposedly sovereign state of China.

At the same time, the novels tacitly suggest that the consolidation of the Europeans in the more strategically viable British Legation was not an accident, but an act of fate reflecting Britain's capacity for leadership (rather than her historical role as principal trader in the region). Symbolized by the "International," a makeshift gun used by the Europeans to withstand the siege and a recurring motif in these texts, the novels thus put Britain "in possession" of a new role as global overseer: "Perhaps the strangest incident of all, because it coincides with what happened so recently in Mafeking and Kimberley, is the effort we made to supply ourselves with another gun," says Mr. Rankin of *The Dragon of Peking*. "We found one in the British Legation. It was old and rusty, and probably belonged to the French as far back as 1860, when they *accompanied* our forces into Peking. French by manufacture, *but British by right of discovery*, it was taken over by the American armourer, and mounted on a pair of spare wheels carried for the Italian gun. Then it opened fire, using Russian shells. Did you ever hear of such a gun? or of one more properly christened the 'International'?" (283–84, italics added). The motives for sending troops to intervene in the uprising similarly are glorified and placed within a naturalizing discourse. According to Gilson's *The Lost Column*, "They were men of different blood, come either from the cold, misty North or the warm and sunny South, to help their friends and serve their God and avenge a violence to their Faith. Since Richard the Lion-heart led his armies to the Holy Land there had been no such sight as this. It was a twentieth-century crusade, wherein politics were flung to the winds, past rivalries forgotten in one great common cause — Humanity" (362).<sup>52</sup> Politics, though, seem to be flung to the winds only so long as Britain can exercise control over the international force. The novels consequently downplay the independent achievements of the other powers. Japanese forces, for instance, were primarily responsible for the relief of the Legations, a circumstance on which these novels certainly do not elaborate — though they consistently praise the Japanese military organization, sometimes to the detriment of Britain's own. The quiet optimism about the Japanese formula for Westernized industrialization and militarization expressed in these novels is consistent with political attempts to seek Japan as an ally in the region and to promote reforms in China itself. Writers such as Sir Charles Dilke had seen Japan as a natural ally for Britain as early as the 1870s, even dubbing it the "England of the East."<sup>53</sup> Japan's surprising and decisive defeat of China in the 1890s had earned it further respect from European military forces, a respect then bolstered by its conduct in the international expedition against the Boxers. Its purchases of British military equipment (whereas the Chinese preferred German equipment) had also won it favor in British circles.

Over the course of the decade following the publication of the Boxer novels, however, the guarded references to Japanese military prowess as noble are reconceived to fit a new paradigm of the "Yellow Peril" — in the form of the Asiatic invasion novel, in which the repressed Chinese make their return in league with their fellow "yellows" on the other

side of the South China Sea. Despite the historical connections with China that the invasion novels would later use in their conflation of the two nations into a united front against Europe, Japanese citizens also were targeted during the Boxer Rebellion. Both in the siege and in the relief expedition, the Japanese were amalgamated with the Westerners, and commentators were careful to distinguish between Japanese and Chinese modes of civilization. The Boxer novels responded accordingly. Henty, for instance, has Rex's father argue that Japan and Britain need to unite after all this is over "in insisting that China shall not suffer further loss of territory at the hands of the Russians or anyone else. There is no question that that is our best policy. It is to our interest that China shall remain whole and united and capable of holding her own against Russia. Neither Britain nor Japan can have any desire for territory, and after the war is over, an alliance offensive and defensive between these two nations would be worth all the loss of life and property we have incurred" (274–75). The sacrifices of the Boxer Rebellion, in other words, are to be to the altar of a Japanese-English *entente* that would solidify Britain's global noble premiership over nations motivated by baser self-interest and the "game of grab." Yet in the years from 1905 onwards, this optimism about Asia's adoption of Western methods cedes to a hysteria about East Asia's teeming masses, supposedly overrunning Australia and America and South Africa and on their way to England's shores — a hysteria that reaches its culmination in the invasion novels. As historical fictions of a tightly delineated type, the narratives of the Boxer Rebellion thus encourage the tracing of an intricate network of imperial anxieties radiating from the Middle Kingdom to India to Germany and Europe and demonstrate conclusively the implicit, if sometimes submerged, links between discourses of direct and indirect modes of imperialism.

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## NOTES

1. Note on spelling and terminology: For consistency's sake, I have used old spellings for Chinese place names; where practical, I have included the current spelling in parentheses. Also, the term "English" may generally be taken to mean "British" here, in keeping with the slippage in meaning of the word current at the time the texts under discussion were written. For an entertaining and informative (if at times inaccurate) overview of the Rebellion and its antecedents, see Fleming.
2. The "Boxers" reportedly gained their name from early descriptions of them submitted to the English-language *North China Daily News* by inland missionaries early in 1900. At their rallies, they held demonstrations of their magic capacities (often using epileptics as mystics) and their "miraculous" resistance to bullets and steel. The full translation for their Chinese name in use at the time was "The Society of the Fists of Righteous Harmony." Properly speaking, the Boxer Rebellion was not actually a rebellion; it professed to support the Manchu leaders in Peking.
3. The eight countries that participated in allied forces in China were Britain, America, Japan, Russia, France, Germany, Italy, and Austria. Officials of eleven nations were holed up within the Legation during the siege; fourteen nations overall were represented.
4. The bulk of these adventure novels are, quite predictably, about boys and are written by men. I have only been able to find two Boxer novels written by women; see Serjeant and Berwicke.

5. Henty's Boxer narrative, *With the Allies to Peking*, is, for instance, nearly identical in plot and structure to his 1881 tale of the Indian Mutiny, *In Times of Peril*.
6. See Brantlinger's chapter on "The Well at Cawnpore: Literary Representations of the Indian Mutiny of 1857" for a discussion of the Mutiny novels. As Brantlinger claims for narratives about the Mutiny, so the Boxer novels also participate in "extropunitive projection, the racist pattern of blaming the victim expressed in terms of an absolute polarization of good and evil, innocence and guilt, justice and injustice, moral restraint and sexual depravity, civilization and barbarism" (200).
7. See, for instance, Martin's comments:

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach is reported to have said in Parliament that 'it would be madness for Great Britain to attempt the administration of any part of China.'

Has not British administration converted the colony of Hong-Kong from a barren rock into the richest emporium of the Far East? Are not the Chinese, of all peoples, the easiest to govern, and are not the British confessedly the ablest administrators of foreign dependencies? As to the possibility of a foreign power governing China, the experiment of the Anglo-French Alliance, which for a short time in 1860 governed the province of Canton through native authorities, is highly instructive; and the experience of the Manchus during two and a half centuries ought to be conclusive. (22–23)

An American, Martin was the president of the newly-founded, Western-style Peking Imperial University at the time of the outbreak.

8. See Robinson and Gallagher. In their much critiqued conceptions of imperialism, they argue for a continuity of imperial strategy throughout the Victorian period, with informal structures only being replaced by formal ones when informal methods failed to succeed. Often, this failure resulted from the pressure of European commerce and culture on indigenous political structures. Although historians in recent years seem to have viewed "the imperialism of free trade" theory with skepticism, it has lived on in anthropological discourse through the notion of "first contact." It also has strong support in the political analysis of the period. For instance, "*These from the Land of Sinim*" — whose author Hart was probably in the best position to judge Chinese politics of any Westerner (given his role in creating and running the Customs Service for nearly half a century) — blames both the Boxer Rebellion and the crisis of authority for the Manchu government on the effects of British-imposed treaty stipulations, especially the principle of extraterritoriality.
9. Importantly, and unlike many of the earlier fictions about China, nearly all of the narratives about the Boxer Rebellion and Chinese invasions of Europe see their publication in the metropolitan center. Although a steady stream of first-hand accounts about the rebellion were produced and published in China, the literary interest in the Uprising, and its perceived threats, would have been at odds with both missionary and commercial attempts to re-establish themselves in China after 1900.
10. It should be recalled here that the detective mastermind who saves Britain from China in Rohmer's infamous Fu Manchu novel series is Nayland Smith, the (fictitious) Burmese Commissioner.
11. This Russophobia makes its way into several novels about China published in the late nineteenth century, notably "*The S. G.*" in which Hart is pictured as the only thing standing in the way of Russia's invasion and annexation of China. An early invasion novel, *The Yellow Wave* zooms forward to 1954, when Russia forces China to participate in an invasion of Australia to prevent a full-scale invasion of her own territories. For historical background on the period, see Wilgus.
12. Beresford's solution to the break-up of China is a restructuring of the Chinese military with British training, techniques, and technology.

13. Drought, starvation, and the advancement of Christianity into the Chinese interior are among the causes of the uprising assigned by historians. See, for example, Esherick. In *These from the Land of Sinim*, Customs Chief Hart blames the Boxer Movement on problems in earlier treaty stipulations that caused open wounds to remain unhealed, not simply on China's tradition as a closed society: namely, he condemns the concept of extraterritoriality, so insisted on by European powers in negotiating treaties but which rankled the Chinese. He also argues that obstacles to relations would disappear if extraterritoriality were abolished, and lead the Chinese to willingly open up the ports, interior, etc. to foreign commerce. Historically, of course, this policy was not allowed to be tested.
14. The passage cited here was written by Dr. Hykes of the American Bible Society shortly before the outbreak of the rebellion.
15. A short-lived cease-fire late in July gave the besieged a respite and a chance to restore their fortifications. Several thousand people, mostly Chinese Christians and schoolgirls, resisted siege at the Peitang, or North Cathedral, under the auspices of the French Bishop Favier. Though conditions were even more dire and their resistance potentially heroic, British novelists do not focus on this siege, perhaps because its main players were French, Italian, and Chinese.
16. Despite the fact that the rebellion came as a shocking surprise even to foreigners in China, there is a body of fiction that strangely seems to predict this type of occurrence on the eve of the outbreak. Among these works is Hand's and Teale's *Pyro-spectacular Drama*, about the European invasion of Peking in 1860, which appeared in 1899. (This work was never published, and I can find no records as to whether it was ever performed.) Hand and Teale had also produced the 1895 *Drama of the "Relief of Lucknow."* Shiel's *The Yellow Danger* was published in 1898 and predicted murder and mayhem for Europeans emanating from the Manchus.
17. Not surprisingly, several of the novels make explicit comparisons to the Anglo-Boer War. In Brereton's *The Dragon of Peking*, the boy heroes decide to leave the safety of the Legation and play a more integral part in the conflict because there is a chance for them to see the action they have missed in South Africa. A Chinese opponent's ferocity later proves "that this Celestial was as cunning as any of the dark-skinned warriors to be met with in South Africa" (158–59). Just before Bob goes off on his crucial mission to send a message from the Legations to Tientsin, a Japanese official warns, "Remember, though I have no wish to dissuade you, that these poor ignorant Chinese are worse than Boers, and that if you fall into their hands you can expect no mercy — in fact, it would be better to shoot yourselves" (154). Meanwhile, the Chinese servant who helps the boys is given a stereotypically African manner of speech, referring, for instance, to his charges as "Massa." Britons in China therefore symbolically recoup the losses in Africa; natives, black or Chinese, are also amalgamated into an undifferentiated menace.
18. The myth behind the Mutiny has always been that use of either sacred or profane fats (pork to offend the Muslims, cow to offend the Hindus) in guns carried by the Sepoys sparked the rebellion, and not larger economic and political issues. With China, the country's xenophobia and inability to understand "benign" missionary activities prove to be the impetus for revolt. Reports that Europeans had poisoned wells, circulated by the Boxers, had a similar hysterical effect on the populace that the fat issue had had in India. Intriguingly, Fleming ascribes an obsession with the Mutiny among those actually involved in the siege. Discussing the library of Mr. Cockburn, First Secretary of the British Legation at the time of the Boxer Rebellion, he notes, "It included several books dealing with the Indian Mutiny, and accounts of the Relief of Lucknow were in keen demand [during the Siege]; the fate of Cawnpore was less closely studied" (152).

19. See, for instance, such Mutiny novels as Henty's, George Tomkyns Chestney's *The Dilemma* (1876), and Sir Philip Meadow-Taylor's *Seeta* (1887). Post-colonial literature written by Britons about the Mutiny has sensationally revisited this theme, notable in Gerald Hanley's *The Journey Homeward* (1961), John Masters's *The Ravi Lancers* (1972), and J. G. Farrell's *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1973).
20. See Marx, "The Opium Trade": September 20, 1858, *New York Daily Tribune*, republished in *On Colonialism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960) 185–88:

While the semi-barbarian stood on the principle of morality, the civilized opposed the principle of pelf. That a giant empire, containing almost one-third of the human race, vegetating in the teeth of time, insulated by the forced exclusion of general intercourse, and thus contriving to dupe itself with delusions of Celestial perfection — that such an empire should at last be overtaken by the fate on occasion of a deadly duel, in which the representative of the antiquated world appears prompted by ethical motives, while the representative of overwhelming modern society fights for the privilege of buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest markets — this, indeed, is a sort of tragical couplet, stranger than any poet would ever have dared to fancy (188).

21. Robinson and Gallagher develop their thesis on this subject out of this conceptualization by Marx, arguing that the pressures put by Britain on its informal empire had disastrous effects on indigenous structures, of which an event like the Boxer Rebellion would be a telling trace. Engels himself in his writings on the 1857 events in China, sees this collision between East and West as foreboding the breakdown of China: "The very fanaticism of the southern Chinese in their struggle against foreigners seems to mark a consciousness of the supreme danger in which old China is placed; and before many years pass away, we shall have to witness the death-struggle of the oldest empire in the world, and the opening day of a new era for all Asia" (116).
22. Interestingly, just as opium was no longer important to the economy of the empire and India at this time, it began a prominent entry into the discourse about the Chinese in London and in sensational journalism on opium dens and infectious vice produced from 1900 to 1914.
23. Clive Bigham, author of *A Year in China* (1901), quoted in Fleming 77.
24. The Luddite character of many of the Boxer's actions — particularly their destruction of railways — further enhances the force of this comparison.
25. This interpolation of images of East End detectives and those operating in China could be made more widely in terms of the empire as a whole, with Kipling's detective stories set in India and his novel *Kim* reinforcing these same parallels for similar aims.
26. The two boys in this novel are nominally American but are ideologically lumped with the British within the cooperative international framework of the Legation resistance to the siege and are responsible to Sir Claude MacDonald, Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary in China at the time of the Uprising. A common Anglo-American identity is promoted by several of the works discussed here.
27. See Norris's "The Third Circle" (1895), a penetration of "China in America" in San Francisco's Chinatown. See also Sherlock Holmes's descent into an East End opium den in Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Man with the Twisted Lip," published in the *Strand Magazine* (1891): 623–37.
28. The Boxer narratives' reading of disguise crucially ignores the fact that British missionaries in China often adopted local dress; the uniqueness of disguise in this case is that it affects a different class. Novels about missionaries are often more historically accurate in this respect. Dawe, for instance, describes the narrator's godfather, head of the Inland Mission at Fong-Chin, as wearing "the ordinary costume of a Chinese gentleman" (80).
29. It should be noted that there are few working-class British characters in these novels, with the notable exception of the comic figure of Mr. Pannick in Gilson. Pannick represents the

imperial promise made good — the working-class lad whose transportation overseas allows him to pull himself into the middle class. But he is comically nouveau riche. He still drops his “aitches,” and his table manners leave much to be desired, despite his nice house. Most importantly, he is the antithesis of the heroic. When called upon to be brave during the uprising, his cowardice puts his friends at risk. All is excused, in the end, thanks to his overall good nature and goodwill. But the novel participates in a stamping of class as innate, rather than condition-based.

30. See Lin’s discussion of this scene.
31. The model for Henty seems to be Sir Richard Burton, whose own disguise as an Afghan trader allows him to safely enter Mecca only because he cannot be linguistically marked as foreign.
32. See Suleri’s chapter on Kipling.
33. *Stan Lynn* is technically a novel about pirates, not Boxers, but there seems little distinction between this work’s muddled presentation of the Chinese scoundrels and its contemporaneous, explicitly Boxer-themed companions. Continual references to the coming of peril and the publication date of 1902 suggest a conflation of these issues.
34. The queue also served as a religious marker at this time in China’s history: Christianized Chinese, like foreigners, did not wear queues.
35. Stock descriptions in British-based narratives of East Enders and the laboring poor in general as “hairy monsters” resonate curiously in these narratives. Each of these works reacts to the Chinese description of white people as “hairy barbarians” — thereby associating all Europeans in terminology coded as specific to a primitivized working class in the British context. Like “foreign devil,” this term is highlighted in the text and marks the breakdown of the dichotomy in identification between laborer and non-laborer via a deflection in the lens of empire. The attention given to it, and the need to assert its inaccuracy as part of a prejudice common to the illiterate masses, operates to relocate the monster where it should firmly belong for the Victorian middle-class reader: among the lawless poor.
36. A discussion of the sublimation of same-sex desire in the imperial context can be found in Lane, whose comments in the introduction to his book are particularly germane to my analysis here.
37. Sharpe draws close connections between the emergence of a myth of interracial rape and the Mutiny narratives, that would suggest that images of rape should be prevalent in the Boxer tales, as well.
38. The “large-footed” assertion here is of dubious value, since the women of the peasant families from which the Boxers were drawn would not have practiced foot-binding. Nor did Manchu women.
39. Broadly speaking, the set of novels about Chinese pirates led by or aided by Europeans serves a similar function. See, for instance, Dalton’s *The Wasps of the Ocean*, in which an Englishman is forced to become a pirate leader terrorizing the waters near Wei-hai-wei.
40. Suleri has argued that the situation of postcolonialism always informs the colonial narrative, and invokes an almost psychoanalytic trauma about the transfer of power — the emphasis being on the transfer, rather than on power itself. Boxer Rebellion narratives operate within this paradigm of colonial terror.
41. Another version of this discussion emerges in this extraordinary passage from Gilson’s *The Lost Column*:

There was reason and justice enough in all they said: they had no cause to love the European. He had usurped their trade. He had stolen their ports, and forced himself upon a country that had done well enough without him for forty centuries. They had their own learning, their own customs, history and civilization, that went back to the days when Europe was wild and barbarous and dark. And yet they were being forced, at the muzzle of six-inch guns, to accept the mushroom

civilization of a day. From the Chinese point of view, there was much to justify their wrath; but nothing to excuse the ends to which it carried them. Therein they placed themselves far beyond the reach of exculpation. They had laid claim to a civilization older than the hills: they gave proof that through it all they had nursed the ferocity of wild beasts, the brutality of the lowest types of man, made doubly hideous by the fiendish ingenuity of a race of men who for centuries had made cruelty a craft. (146–47).

42. See, for instance, Serjeant: "It is the cruel Empress who hates the foreigners, and it is her emissaries who have stirred up the people against us. The Boxers are her tools really, and the ignorant people are told all kinds of things which they believe, that the Europeans take their little children and kill them, and that it is our presence here which causes the lack of rain, and then they pretend to see the most wonderful apparitions, those who appear always bearing the same message, 'Kill! kill!'" (46).
43. The theme of palace intrigues between the Empress Dowager and the Emperor is memorialized in Dawe. In his novel, the protagonist and narrator is an Englishman assimilated into Chinese society who acts as the "Emperor's Watch-Dog," saving the Emperor from the Dowager's plans to destroy him and thus safeguarding the Manchu state and pro-foreign reforms. Though not about the Boxer Rebellion, the Uprising is the explicit subtext of the novel, which employs the techniques of detective and spy fiction to great effect.
44. Sung's death occurs shortly after the narrative reveals that he is racially part British. The hybrid typically constitutes the greatest evil, and the revelation explains his criminal conduct and self-serving leadership of a Boxer band at the same time as stemming from a cultural illegitimacy that has led him to literally steal the property of his English heritage. "It was Sung, the Chinese murderer, the scoundrel who, not content with the evil he had already done, must needs do more, — must needs forget the few drops of Western blood flowing in his veins, and take part against the foreigners; and, worse than all, must add to his sins by dragging unwilling men away, and ruthlessly slaughtering the wives and babes of those who refused to obey his orders" (345).
45. Throughout, the novel has articulated the threat of upheaval in China to British international interests by reducing that threat to Sung and his personal effect on Bob and Charlie's family. The problem lies not with a monolithic entity known as the "Chinese" but with a particular Chinese, Sung. His evilness stands in for that barbarity that has, in the author's mind, caused the Rebellion in the first place. Reducing the complex historical actions of the Rebellion to this villain-hero scenario also allows to persist long-standing binary oppositions between East and West, free and despotic, colonizer and colonized.
46. Esherick notes that in the last decade of the nineteenth century, Protestant missionary forces in China more than doubled, from 1,296 in 1889 to 2,818 in 1900 (93).
47. Translations of some Boxer manifestos would have been available (through newspapers and other sources) to the novelists discussed here.
48. Modern historical work has indicated that the Catholic missionaries generated many more complaints than the Protestant ones and were probably more insensitive. See, for instance, Esherick 84–85.
49. While the economic motive seems to have been an important one for conversion, historical work does not support the contention that the poorest classes were necessarily those attracted to Christianity. However, the notion of "rice Christians" is prevalent in materials published at the time.
50. Analogous references to native Christians appear in narratives on India, referring to the cultural and economic dangers of the conversion of the "untouchables," who also gained status and economic benefits by abandoning their role as outcasts.
51. Crackpot as it sounds, Kohr's theory reflected the not uncommon views of missionaries at this time. Boxer survivor Beals argues that restoring a reform-minded emperor to the

- Manchu throne will have the effect of bringing on mass conversions to Christianity and of regenerating the Chinese empire. Respect for the foreigner's power, now felt, will cause respect for the foreigner and his teaching; the English language will become preferred over Chinese (156). His account of the rebellion ends with an utopian vision of a Christianized, Englished China, with the light breaking over it — a country of peace and prosperity for missionaries, traders, and its citizens (158).
52. Fleming and others have shown, of course, that there was considerable disagreement between parties belonging to different Legations, as well as significant rivalries among the relief forces, especially the British, French, and Russian contingents. It also remains unclear in this passage whether the Boxers or Chinese in general have forfeited their rights to this great, common cause of humanity through their perceived acts of barbarism.
  53. See, for instance, Dilke's paean to the Meiji reforms in "English Influence in Japan," first published in the *Fortnightly Review* as "An Additional Chapter for Greater Britain" and republished in the expanded eighth edition of *Greater Britain*.

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