

顛覆基督教英雄：喬治·馬偕的《福爾摩沙紀事》裡

的疾病敘述與男子氣概危機

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摘要

不同於帝國書寫裡殖民者在冒險犯難的過程所體現的陽剛男子氣概，白人病患的女性化(effeminate)特質成為主流殖民論述裡白人征服者/土著被征服者的反論述。白人男子氣概的建構充斥於十九世紀的醫學、文學及文化論述之中，將探索新世界的男性殖民者/旅行家/傳教士/冒險家等塑造成健康、強壯、適應力強、充滿活力之形象。女性化的白人病患則成為主流論述裡的「他者」。本論文便是以此為出發點，將位居「他者」的白人病患角色放在聚光燈下，重新檢視其受忽略、壓抑、貶抑的疾病經驗，探究疾病如何影響白人患者的身體與心理並透過書寫傳達「他者」的感受與經驗。

本論文探討於十九世紀台灣開放通商口岸之後來台的加拿大傳教士喬治·馬偕(George Leslie Mackay 1844-1901)在其傳教書寫與回憶錄《福爾摩沙紀事》裡所記載之感染熱病經驗，特別著重傳教士馬偕常為人忽略之病患角色。在《福爾摩沙紀事》一書中馬偕回顧於台灣各地巡迴傳教之觀察與見聞，書中的疾病敘述一方面受到十九世紀英雄式傳教書寫(heroic missionary writing)文體的限制，一方面受限於當時對於傳教士健康形象之期待與要求，馬偕刻意壓抑曾於私密日記揭露在陌生異教地域裡，面對猛烈侵襲的瘧疾表現出之痛苦、無助與掙扎。《福爾摩沙紀事》的讀者反而對馬偕攜其弟子向頑強的漢人異教徒宣教，無畏瘴癘之氣，翻山越嶺，深入獵人頭之原民部落進行佈道之剛強男子氣概形象印象深刻。本論文細究《福爾摩沙紀事》如何將馬偕塑造成英勇強健的傳教英雄，並探討書中再現的疾病敘述如何透露馬偕的白人基督徒男子氣概危機。

關鍵字：喬治·馬偕、男子氣概危機、疾病敘述、《福爾摩沙紀事》

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Unsettling a Christian Hero: Narratives of Disease and Masculinity Crisis in George Leslie Mackay's *From Far Formosa*

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Abstract**

The construction of White masculinity is perceivable through nineteenth-century discourses of medicine, literature, and culture that fashion male colonialists, travelers, missionaries, and explorers as sturdy, healthy, accommodating, and energetic adventurers. The effeminate White patient thus becomes “the Other” to the mainstream construction of masculinity. Thus said, this paper wants to highlight the Otherness of the White patient from the tropic, foreground his or her long ignored, repressed, and abased experience of sickness, and explore how diseases serve to dismantle the construction of masculinity by Victorian discourses.

Masculinity promoted by Muscular Christianity Movement in Victorian England has exerted its influence on missionaries preaching gospels overseas. The masculine, stalwart military force guarding the far-reached territories of the British Empire finds its counterpart in the image of a sturdy overseas evangelical worker. The first Canadian Presbyterian missionary to Formosa, an island which has just opened its ports to foreign powers since the 1860s, George Leslie Mackay (1844-1901) is represented as an evangelist braving the tropic, intimidating heathenry in the memoir *From Far Formosa*, which was published in 1895 for readers, lay and religious, to bolster Christian masculinity. Such construction of masculinity may also reflect Victorian fear of becoming “the invalid,” a feminized figure who fails to adapt to the harsh milieu of the conquered territories. Unlike previous studies of Mackay highlighting his missionary achievements, this paper underscores Mackay's largely unexplored role as a patient of tropical fever, examining how narratives of disease in *From Far Formosa* serve to undermine White muscular Christianity fashioned through heroic missionary writing and uncover fin de siècle masculinity crisis felt by men at home and abroad.

Key words: George Leslie Mackay, masculinity crisis, narrative of disease, *From Far Formosa*

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But if growth is rapid, so is decay, and hence
man's deadliest foe—malarial fever. This is the
blackest cloud that hangs longest over our
beautiful island. (*From Far Formosa* 43)

Introduction

Discourses about tropical disease in the nineteenth century often harbor a perspective upon racial hierarchy, relegating the unique geography of the tropic zone and its sultry, monotonous climate to the key factors that contribute to lower races and civilizations. Through such a perspective, the constitution of its inhabitants is constructed as no less threatening and contagious than miasma and other diseases prevalent in the tropic zone. People inhabiting the tropic were considered to be lazy, irascible, licentious, irresolute, and susceptible to excessive drinking. The underdevelopment of civilization in the tropic zone was thus ascribable to the exhibition of such “tropic inertia”.¹ Comparatively, the mild and changeable climate of Europe was considered to be suitable for breeding superior races and civilizations. Such discourses replete with a sense of racial superiority were underpinned by contemporary nosogeography and theories of climate and civilization.² Many scientific discoveries of the nineteenth century were appropriated to explain the close ties between disease, climate, and the superiority of certain race. For instance, the British biologist Charles Darwin claims that it is a process of natural selection for certain race to gain immunity from endemic disease and become prosperous in a

¹ See Ellsworth Huntington, *Civilization and Climate* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1924).

² See W. F. Bynum, “Darwin and the Doctors: Evolution, Diathesis, and Germs in Nineteenth-Century Britain,” *Gesnerus* 40 (1983): 43-53.

region. According to Darwin, the environment only serves as a testing ground in such an evolutionary process, in which only the race that is better constituted and develops immunity from endemic disease can survive. Darwin's theory of evolution was later appropriated by environment determinists to underscore that environmental factors like geography, climate, and latitude are key elements to the health of a race and prosperity of its civilization.

With the expansion of the Empire and commerce, more and more White people exploring the tropic were attacked by its diseases, which might prove fatal to the victims or render them mentally and physically exhausted. The deterioration of White constitution caused by tropic climate brought many tropic invalids³ back to the metropole, whose incompetence to perform tasks caused great loss to the Empire. Degenerationists even claimed that these tropic invalids were an epitome of racial degeneration, which, if not dealt with properly, would be as contagious as tropic diseases and result in the destruction of the whole nation and race.⁴ Facing the fear of racial degeneration, White people were advised to cultivate a stalwart, wholesome body. Aside from taking medicine to prevent tropic diseases, White people from all classes who headed for tropic places were advised by medical doctors to acclimatize themselves to the torrid weather, carefully choose their diet, eschew iced drinks, clothe themselves rationally, avoid excesses both physical and mental, and keep out of the sun during the hottest of the day.⁵ Scholars such as Anderson and Bederman have indicated this suggestion of building up a strong, masculine body for the White moving to the tropic land is especially associated with masculinity crisis emerging in the metropole since the late nineteenth century.⁶ Because of the development of

³ Medical discourses of the early nineteenth century argue that tropical climate deteriorates the constitution of the White people. The coinage of the term "tropical invalid" reflects such a perspective from medical climatology. See James Johnson, *The Influence of Tropical Climates on European Constitutions* (New York: E. Duyckinck, 1826); Alan Bewell, "Tropical Invalids," *Romanticism and Colonial Disease* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1999) 277-95.

⁴ See Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, C. 1848-C.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989).

⁵ See Lewelys F. Barker, "Medical Commission to the Philippines," *Bulletin of the John Hopkins Hospital* 11 (1900): 26-30 qtd in Anderson (1997): 1356.

⁶ See Warwick Anderson, "The Trespass Speaks: White Masculinity and Colonial Breakdown," *The American Historical Review* 102.5 (1997): 1346-1348; Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: Chicago UP,

bureaucracies, the intense competition from the working-class propelled by the process of modernization, and the advance of women rights movement, the middle-class men find it hard to maintain the morality-laden image of self-mastery, to which conventional bourgeois manhood clings. The traditional role of middle-class men as breadwinners has been greatly challenged, thus making them pursue masculinity emphasizing corporeal characteristics such as aggressiveness, stalwartness, athleticism, and virility. The crisis facing the White in the tropic colony is as intimidating as that facing the middle-class men in the metropole, and the only way to abate such colonial/gendered crisis is to cultivate a robust, virile body.

Muscular Christian Movement prospering since the late nineteenth-century is a response to masculinity crisis in the senses of religion, race, and gender. It is a religious movement aiming at revitalizing the increasingly sagged spirit and weakened body of the Christian. Through demanding Christians of tough exercise in daily life, Muscular Christian Movement wants to bolster up muscular Christianity and an image of manly Christians.⁷ And missionary work provides evangelical Christians with a worthy arena within which “they could prove their manhood” through “the action of combating sin, of enlisting in the army of God” (Hall 249).⁸ The effect of Muscular Christian Movement is such that missionaries at home and abroad embark on the training of the spiritual and the corporeal. Missionaries accessing the colonies overseas are especially “soldiers of the spiritual empire” whose battles with the forces of darkness “linked individual achievements to the conquests of civilization” (Comaroff 9). The itineration which missionaries employ as a means of preaching the gospel abroad is considered to be an outdoor exercise

1995).

⁷ The requirement of Christian masculinity can be dated back to the New Testament. In the nineteenth century, Muscular Christian Movement, which targets a renaissance of evangelical masculinity, was most associated with the British novelists Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes, who fashion their heroes into stereotypes of manly Christians. See Catherine Hall, “Muscular Christianity: Reading and Writing the Male Social Body,” in Donald E. Hall (ed.), *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994) 3-16; J. A. Mangan and James Walvin, “Introduction,” in J. A. Mangan and James Walvin (eds), *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1987) 1-6.

⁸ See Catherine Hall, “Missionary Stories: Gender and Ethnicity in England in the 1830s and 1840s,” in Cary Neilson, Lawrence Grossberg, and Paula Treichler (eds), *Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1992) 240-70.

that strengthens both the mind and the body. Outdoor leisure activities such as hiking and climbing are also popular among missionaries who want to promote health and uplift morality through physical exercise.⁹ These activities of mounting upward are also recommended by doctors to help those who proselytize the tropic heathens inhale fresh air from the highness to prevent the attack of miasma. Besides, outdoor activities are generally considered to be beneficial to missionaries in that they may help provide energy for the strenuous task of evangelization. Assumptions as such connect foreign missionaries' physical exercise with the colonists' cultivation of manhood and the middle-class re-fashioning of masculinity. Both the collapse of order and the deterioration of bodily constitution from within and without the Empire need to be restored or revitalized by the exercising of male bodies.

Since overseas evangelization poses an intimidating task to even male missionaries, whose Christian masculinity would be ascertained by the way they fare in the less civilized soil of heathen land, such a task is considered to be inappropriate to women whose body and mind are constructed as much more poorly constituted than men's. Nineteenth-century medical discourses have attributed female maladies to their reproductive power, arguing that women who encounter "the biological crises of the female life-cycle" have a fragile mind and body and tend to suffer from physical and mental diseases.¹⁰ Women were thus thought to be more susceptible to the torrid climate and the attack of diseases from the tropic land. Psychological diseases are also reputed to have an obviously gendered distribution since the nineteenth century. Women's susceptibility to mental disorder has long been ascribed to their unique system of reproduction. Women were considered to lose their mental equilibrium at puberty, pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause. The word "hysteria" is

⁹ See Eric Reinders, *Borrowed Gods and Foreign Bodies: Christian Missionaries Imagine Chinese Religion* (London: California UP, 2004) 46. Besides, aiming at helping the middle and the working classes to commit themselves to wholesome and respectable recreation such as hiking and outdoor activities, Rational Recreation Movement advocated by bourgeois reformers in the late nineteenth-century also exert influence on the cultivation of the body and mind of evangelists. See P. Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (London: Routledge, 1978); Stephen Hall Clark, "The Development of Leisure in Britain after 1850," <http://www.victorianweb.org/history/leisure2.html>.

¹⁰ See Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture 1830-1980* (London: Penguin, 1987) 55.

even used as an umbrella term to refer to all the psychological diseases afflicting women.¹¹ Many women who went to the tropic territories as wives to the colonials were reported to come under the influence of the sultry climate and suffer from tropical neurasthenia, a mental disease causing mental disorder, irascibility and physiological fatigue.¹²

Against masculinity embodied by colonialists who overcome obstacle and endure hardship in the settlements, effeminacy displayed by the White patient constitutes a counter-discourse to the White conqueror vs. the native conquered mapped out in the mainstream discourse. The construction of White masculinity is perceivable through nineteenth-century discourses of medicine, literature, and culture that fashion male colonialists, travelers, missionaries, and explorers as sturdy, healthy, accommodating, and energetic adventurers. The effeminate White patient thus becomes “the other” to the mainstream construction of masculinity. Thus said, this paper wants to highlight the otherness of the White patient from the tropic, foreground his or her long ignored, repressed, and abased experience of sickness, and explore how diseases serve to dismantle the construction of masculinity by Victorian discourses.

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¹¹ As a mental disease, hysteria often occurs to young, unmarried women, thus also being called the “daughter’s disease”. See Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture 1830-1980* (London: Virago, 1987) 147.

¹² Besides, becoming involuntarily idle because of their freedom from domestic chores, these women tended to feel nostalgic, melancholy, lonely, and bored in a place far away from home, where social activity and living space are both limited. See Indrani Sen, “The Memsahib’s ‘Madness’: The European Woman’s Mental Health in Late Nineteenth Century India,” *Social Scientist* 33. 5-6 (2005) 31-36; Dane Kennedy, “Diagnosing the Colonial Dilemma: Tropical Neurasthenia and the Alienated Briton,” in Durba Ghosh and Dane Kennedy (eds), *Decentering Empire: Britain, India and the Transcolonial World* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2006) 157-81.

heathenry in his memoir *From Far Formosa*, which was published in 1895 for readers, lay and religious, to bolster Christian masculinity. Such construction of masculinity may also reflect Victorian fear of becoming “the invalid,” a feminized figure who fails to adapt to the harsh milieu of the conquered territories.

Until recently, studies of Mackay have been conducted by scholars of religion, addressing mainly his missionary triumph in Formosa.¹³ The publication of *The Life and Legacy of George Leslie Mackay: An Interdisciplinary Study of Canada's First Presbyterian Missionary to Northern Taiwan (1872-1901)* in 2012 marks a departure from the above-mentioned religious approach with researches by scholars from a wide spectrum of disciplines such as history and missiology, comparative literature, dramaturgy, historiography and cultural studies. However, Mackay's role as a patient of fever, his narratives of tropic disease, and his involvement in the Victorian construction of Christian masculinity are emerging, new issues that have not been explored yet. Unlike previous studies of Mackay highlighting his missionary achievements, this paper thus underscores Mackay's largely unexplored role as a patient of tropical fever, examining how narratives of disease in *From Far Formosa* serve to undermine White muscular Christianity fashioned through heroic missionary writing and uncover fin de siècle masculinity crisis felt by men at home and abroad.

The Fashioning of a Christian Hero in the Missionary Memoir

The visibility of the little known Far-East island Formosa to the world has been largely increased by the publication of George Leslie Mackay's *From Far Formosa: The Island, Its People, and Missions* in 1895, a memoir and semi-autobiographical writing about the author's career as pioneering Canadian Presbyterian missionary in Formosa. Until the publication of this memoir, Mackay

¹³ See, for instance, James R. Rohrer, “George Leslie Mackay in Formosa, 1871-1901: An Interpretation of His Career,” *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* 47 (2005): 3-58; “Charisma in a Mission Context: The Case of George Leslie Mackay in Taiwan, 1872-1901,” *Missiology: An International Review* 36. 2 (2008): 227-236. For earlier studies of Mackay as a successful missionary to Formosa, see Graeme McDonald, “George Leslie Mackay: Missionary Success in Nineteenth-Century Taiwan,” *Papers on China* 21 (1968) 131-83; Marian Keith, *The Black Bearded Barbarian: The Life of George Leslie Mackay of Formosa* (New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1912); R. P. MacKay, *Life of George Leslie Mackay, 1844-1901* (Toronto: Board of Foreign Missions, 1913).

has devoted himself to the evangelical enterprise for more than twenty years in Northern Formosa. Braving the anti-foreign Chinese heathens and intimidating head-hunting aborigines, Mackay has helped establish sixty chapels, two educational institutions, and one mission hospital while baptizing more than two thousand and six hundred heathens.¹⁴ Mackay's missionary success becomes a valuable experience especially to those planning to undertake overseas missions and to the Foreign Mission Committee in his country. As the editor J. A. MacDonald indicates in the preface to the memoir, an account of Mackay's experiences and work in Formosa would "stimulate the faith and zeal of the church" and has to be prepared before the missionary's career should be cut short by "the uncertainties and perils to which his life is constantly exposed" (3-4). The purposes of this memoir are thus not only to provide "more reliable and extensive information about Formosa than that of any other living man" but also to keep a record of "the missionary hero who had given himself to Formosa, with Pauline faith and self-renunciation, [hoping] that it might be redeemed from error and sin" (3-4).

To bolster such an image of Christian manliness, the narrative in *From Far Formosa* is subject to a process of selection, organization, and revision by the editor and the author. Asserting that he is responsible for "much of the personal element found throughout the book" (5), the editor undertakes the responsibility of organizing the materials "into form and life" (4). Highly conscious of his task, MacDonald even quotes Macaulay's saying about the writing of history that while the details might all be true, yet the total impression "worlds part" (4). To avoid creating inadequate and misleading images of Mackay as a missionary, the author claims no less responsibility in reviewing his memoir than the editor. For every scrap of material "was read and studied under the author's eye," annotations "were made at his dictation," the plan of classification and arrangement "received his cordial approval," and nearly all of the manuscript in its final form "was revised by him" (4). The nature of memoir-writing as a collaborative work by the author and the editor is further indicated as MacDonald states that his aim in editing has been "to

¹⁴ See *From Far Formosa* 333-35.

preserve in its integrity not only the substance but the literary style of the author” (4).

Out of the fragments from Mackay’s manuscripts, *From Far Formosa* is thus composed as a writing of personal history as well as a report of missionary triumph. For the compilation of this memoir, Mackay provides his “notes, observations, extracts from diaries and reports, studies in science, fragments of description, and sketches of character” (4). These materials constitute the backbone of Mackay’s observations about the island, its inhabitants, and missions, as the subtitle of his memoir indicates. However, it is the editing power that shapes the public image of Mackay, who is re-fashioned as missionary hero out of his fragmentary writings. Highlighting Mackay’s personal features, MacDonald says in the editorial preface:

To see the man of indomitable energy, unflinching courage, and iron will shrink from anything like self-assertion, and yield without dispute to another’s judgment, would be a revelation for which they are not prepared who know him only as a man of speech and action. To see his modest self-effacement, and to know how real his faith is, how personal God is to him, is to grasp the secret of his success. (*From Far Formosa* 5)

This portrayal of the evangelical worker as a self-effacing crusader endowed with physical and spiritual prowess is typical of many contemporary reports of missionaries extolling a highly personalized form of heroism.¹⁵ Such a heroic image is also what had motivated Mackay to pursue his missionary career since childhood, when he found in William C. Burns (1815-1868), a pioneering, successful British Presbyterian preacher to China, an exemplar model of the muscular Christian ideal which Niel Gunson argues was so revered by missionary candidates throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Comparable to the muscular Christian ideal embodied by the

¹⁵ See Jean and John Comaroff, “Through the Looking-Glass: Colonial Encounters of the First Kind,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1.1 (1988) 9.

¹⁶ See Niel Gunson, *Messengers of Grace: Evangelical Missionaries in the South Seas, 1797-1860* (Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1979) 60. As Mackay narrates in the opening chapter of his memoir, Burns visited Woodstock and Zorra, Mackay’s hometown, on his tours through Canada, and “poured a new stream into the current of religious life” (*From Far Formosa* 16). The effect of his visit was such that “[Burns’s] name was cherished in the home, and something of his spirit touched my boyish heart” (*From Far Formosa* 16).

heroic missionary is the evoked “martial soul” of Mackay’s grandfather who fought at Waterloo. As Mackay relates, “his martial soul went into my blood” and “when once I owned the Savior King, the command, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,’ made me a soldier of the cross” (*From Far Formosa* 16). The reader of Mackay’s memoir is thus prepared to encounter in the following chapters a soldier of Christian army fighting the battle with dark forces until his ultimate conquest.

The missionary’s double role as devoted evangelist and intrepid explorer is well matched by the hybrid nature of missionary memoir writing as work report and travel narrative. Mackay is aware of such a hybrid nature of his memoir writing. For he wants *From Far Formosa* to be “most instructive” and “least romantic” (4) to its reader and thus to be distinguished from contemporary entertaining travel narrative. Compared with the solid information extracted from the cold data and statistics in Mackay’s work report, the “moving incident” (4) unfolded in his narrative, however, provides a more lively example of how Christian heroes like Mackay may fare in a heathen land. *From Far Formosa* abounds in episodes highlighting Mackay’s intrepidity as messenger of God’s gospel. Out of these episodes, Mackay emerges a fearless, stalwart leader of a salvation army bringing God’s grace to the still unblessed heathens of Formosa. An entry from Mackay’s 1875 diary recording his outburst of anger at the anti-foreign Chinese heathens is particularly quoted in the memoir to underscore his righteousness to the holy cause:

But remember, O haughty city, even these eyes will yet see thee humble in the dust. Thou art mighty now, proud, and full of malice; but thy power shall fall, and thou shalt be brought low. Thy filthy streets are indicative of thy moral rottenness; thy low houses show thy baseness in the face of heaven. Repent, O Bang-kah, thou wicked city, or the trumpet shall blow and thy tears be in vain! (164-65)

Espousing an Orientalist missionary perspective, Mackay represents Formosan heathendom as the exotic other. The city of Bang-kah is represented as “the Gibraltar of heathenism in North Formosa” inhabited by “materialistic, superstitious

dollar-seekers” with “swaggering ignorance” and “double-faced wickedness” to be conquered by the holy, purified army of Christians (164). The trope of a chivalric, Christian knight fighting a crusade is thus employed to highlight the ultimate triumph of mission achieved by Mackay who succeeds in converting even the most unyielding inhabitants of the heathen land.¹⁷

While the experience of Mackay’s preaching to the Chinese heathens may be laden with overt religious messages, a fine line nevertheless exists between a heroic missionary and an intrepid explorer in Mackay’s narrative of another perilous journey undertaken to convert the head-hunting aboriginals in Eastern Formosa:

Several hundred savages came down the spur of the mountain and watched us. Our boat tried hard to land, but the surf was against us. We hailed, beckoned, and threw several shining silver dollars toward them. They were naked and vicious-looking, but no one dreamed of danger—only to land and see them. The surf saved us. Had we succeeded in landing no one would have returned. Many an unsuspecting explorer has been murdered there by that tribe (229).

Such passages can be easily browsed through in books filled with narratives of adventuresome anecdotes by contemporary travelers exploring the unknown areas of the world. Braving these intimidating Formosan head-hunters, Mackay calls himself a wary explorer, who knows it is God that “holds the winds and the waves in his hand, and was behind the surf that day” (229).

As well as the textual narratives employed to provide a profile of missionary heroism, photographs taken during Mackay’s itinerancy are also enclosed as icons of evangelical masculinity that helps completes the fashioning of a Christian hero in *From Far Formosa*. These photos not only serve as testimonies to missionary work performed in Formosa but also strengthen the image of Mackay as pioneering

¹⁷ In Chapter XVII, which is entitled “How Bang-kah Was Taken,” Mackay discloses his ultimate success of proselytizing Chinese heathens “in that once proud city” (169). The greatest change produced in Bang-kah is demonstrated by the fact that in 1893, on the eve of his departure to have the second furlough in Canada, Mackay was invited to sit in a handsome silk-lined sedan-chair to be carried in honor through the same streets of Bang-kah, where people hurled stones and shouted threatening words at Mackay and his disciples. See *From Far Formosa* 164-71.

Christian hero not intimidated by any hardship lying ahead of his way to saving pagan soul. Robust, healthy, and stoutly built, the figure of Mackay in these photos offers the very picture of evangelical masculinity, which highlights physical prowess as well as spiritual force as manifestation of Christian manhood. While textual narratives cultivate a missionary hero with a strong mind, determined to fulfill his enterprise, these graphical images reinforce the bodily capabilities of such a hero.



Figure 1. Mackay and Students on the March.
From Far Formosa. 1895. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 2011.



Figure 2. Mackay and Students Descending a Mountain.
From Far Formosa. 1895. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 2011.



Figure 3. Bound for the Ki-Lai Plain.
From Far Formosa. 1895. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 2011.



Figure 4. A Dental Operation.
From Far Formosa. 1895. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 2011.

Narratives of Disease and Masculinity Crisis

As has been mentioned, the fashioning of a missionary hero is important to the writings about overseas evangelization. However, not all the tasks a missionary undertakes are heroic, not to mention the many failures or frustrations he is supposed

to encounter. Any obstacles or difficulties coming in the way of his strenuous task would be overcome ultimately in spite of their formidable quality, and these overcome difficulties in missionary narratives serve to bolster up the triumph of overseas evangelical business, which has been usually undertaken by a male before the second half of the nineteenth century. In other words, the narrative order of a missionary memoir or report would disintegrate if a holistic picture of evangelical heroism is missing.¹⁸ As has been discussed, *From Far Formosa* is paradigmatic in offering a heroic and masculine portrayal of the Canadian Presbyterian missionary George Leslie Mackay. Mackay's debilitating experience of fever in the memoir, however, proves to be a crucial crisis which needs to be resolved to close the rupture in the narrative of evangelical masculinity.

Bearing the imprints of colonial footsteps into the invaded territories over the world, malaria is indicated by Mackay to have been named alternatively as "jungle fever," "African fever," and in Formosa, he has heard it called "Tamsui fever" (311), which is named after one of the first Formosan ports opened to foreign forces since the Treaty of Tianjin was signed in 1858. While these alternative names may register the various geographical traces of empire and disease, they nevertheless refer to a common debilitating experience of illness that contemporary medicine has not yet produced satisfactory curing effects. Those who are afflicted by malaria in Formosa, including natives and foreigners like Mackay, are described as having the symptom of feeling cold and hot in turns, earning names such as "intermittent fever," "chills and fever," and "fever and ague" (312) for the notorious tropical disease.

To approach fever as a medical issue is congenial to the writing of heroic missionary memoirs, a genre employed to create a public, sanguine image of the evangelical worker. To tackle fever as a personal experience of suffering, however, means to meddle in the narrative order of evangelical masculinity. The menace of disease to the missionary hero thus needs to be represented as manageable. Mackay had the first attack of fever in 1873, one year after his arrival in Formosa, after an

¹⁸ See Esme Cleall, *Missionary Discourses of Difference: Negotiating Otherness in the British Empire, 1840-1900* (London: Palgrave, 2012) 108-11.

extended tour into the savage territory in the mountains to proselytize Christianity. This enervating experience was disclosed in detail in the “Geography and History” chapter, in which Mackay survived the dreadful disease with the help from Western medicine and his attentive Chinese student:

. . . when I returned and lay down to sleep I became cold as ice, shook and trembled like an aspen-leaf, my teeth chattering so loudly that A Hoa heard it in an outer apartment. He came to my relief and remained at my bedside the whole night. As there was no fireplace in the building, it was impossible to get warmed. Heavy doses of quinine broke the fever, but my system was not free from it for years. Many times, on trips among churches and in the mountains, have the mats under me been wet with perspiration during the hot stage of the disease. (*From Far Formosa* 43)

Since then, Mackay had been constantly prostrated by the disease throughout his long sojourn in Formosa. His diaries are teemed with more narratives of fever experience. The diary entry from July 8th of 1874 indicates the helplessness and despair of Mackay as a victim to fever:

Still down with fever. Students in turn so kind attended to me night and day. Fever. What poison running madly through my veins—World of Misery (*Mackay's Diaries* 127)

The entry from September 12th of 1885 shows how Mackay managed to tolerate the debilitating effects of fever, which undermined even his determination to Christianize the heathen land:

Ther.85'. went across to see the chapel going up. Stayed very long got chilled came back quite unwell, down with fever. Medicine! Medicine! Oh to get home and yet Poor Formosa! What of thee? Sound the Gospel still and let this Isle resound His praise. (*Mackay's Diaries* 453)

The entry from July 24th of 1888 records the overwhelming effect of fever attacking Mackay's family members, students, and servant:

Ms. Mackay and children down with fever-Cook sick, Girls in school

sick-Servant sick. (*Mackay's Diaries* 599)

And the diary entry from July of 1889, a torrid month in Formosa, reveals Mackay's most vivid, private combat with the disease:

All day my head fell as if pounded. My bones ached and my whole body felt wretched...Now cold chills running through me, and now sweating and feverish. Ah yes my old companion that only deserted me in the clear, cool, bright Canadian atmosphere, you come again to make life miserable. Now again for sleepless night. Malarial fever thou art a demon. The day will come when freed from your trying grasp this dweller in the body thou art tormenting will soar above you to regions where all miseries never enter. (*Mackay's Diaries* 665)

Overall, the intimacy of diary as a genre allows Mackay to unfold his painful experience of sickness without the burden of maintaining the public, sanguine image of a missionary hero. On the contrary, the narrator "I" in Mackay's memoir is obviously more self-possessed and the narrative tone is more controllable.¹⁹

Besides, the experience of sickness is not a subject appropriate to the writing of missionary memoir, a genre which allows little space for the narrative of the evangelical worker's private life.²⁰ The insertion of Mackay's fever experience into the narrative of his evangelical activities is made pertinent only through a link to the ascendancy of foreign medicine, which missionaries use as a means of proselytizing Christianity to the otherwise obstinate Formosan heathens. While in the nineteenth century Formosa was not even a colonized territory for foreign powers until 1895, missionaries, along with venturesome merchants, nevertheless have been heralds of Western influences since the latter half the nineteenth century. Aligning themselves

¹⁹ According to Esme Cleall, virtues like 'patience,' 'stoicism,' 'fortitude,' and 'resilience' with which nineteenth-century missionaries "were claimed to face their illness help reaffirm their missionary identity" (110). Such accounts also offer the opportunity to heal some of the troubling ruptures illness presents to the self in the missionary narrative. See Esme Cleall, *Missionary Discourses of Difference: Negotiating Otherness in the British Empire, 1840-1900* (London: Palgrave, 2012) 110.

²⁰ See Mary Goodwin, "Heroic Memoirs form a Hot Country: Taiwan Missionary Life Writing," in Clyde R. Forsberg Jr. (ed.), *The Life and Legacy of George Leslie Mackay: An Interdisciplinary Study of Canada's First Presbyterian Missionary to Northern Taiwan (1872-1901)* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012) 76.

with the Empire, overseas missionaries, as well as colonial administrators, pride themselves on shedding the light of knowledge, technology, and civilization for the unenlightened corners. Coming to Formosa at a time when Western medicine has begun to assert its prominence, Mackay, like other missionaries to the island, introduces healing art as a manifestation of the benevolence of the Great Healer.

Throughout *From Far Formosa*, Formosa and its inhabitants are consistently represented as an afflicted feminine, heathen body in need of the rescue from masculine, Christian healers.²¹ Mackay introduces the island as being damp and under “the powerful influence of the broiling tropical sun” (43), claiming that these deciding features of its environment lead to the appalling disease—malarial fever, “the blackest cloud” (43) hanging over the beautiful island. Typical of contemporary views on the cause of malaria, Mackay’s remarks ring of environmental determinism commonly adopted by even pathologists before the 1880s. His narrative transforms the beautiful island into a land plagued by incurable, contagious diseases whose intractability produces fearsome consequences on natives and foreigners:

The bacteria of Asiatic cholera and malarial fever, carried on the wind, sweep over the country like a deathful pestilence. Sometimes the fatal effects of the climate do not appear for many months; but they manifest themselves so suddenly and unexpectedly that the physician has little chance to save life. Therefore we have often been called to follow the beloved members of our little community to the grassy resting-place out on the hill. (43)

The island has been described by Mackay as a “White man’s grave,” a term reminding his reader of the horrifying disease-ridden coast of West Africa to colonists and foreign explorers.²²

Missionaries like Mackay who conduct medical missions around the island are

²¹ As Anna Johnston indicates, the development of muscular Christianity in the latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed missionary men who “discovered and invented their masculinity through their encounter with other cultures” (8). Vigorous but pious British manliness was contrasted with depraved native masculinity, and missionary tests “anxiously but assertively represented the world in these terms” (8).

²² See Philip D. Curtin, *Death by Migration: Europe’s Encounter with the Tropical World in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989).

emblems of evangelical masculinity and advanced Western medicine in that they survive tropical diseases and eagerly apply themselves to the healing of afflicted Formosan pagans. While not being a qualified physician, Mackay has nevertheless acquired much first-hand experience with malaria cure through medical work done individually or institutionally. Having received basic medical training, Mackay dispenses medicine to natives prostrated with fever during his itinerating trips with students. Mackay's occasional assistance in Tamsui Mission Hospital and later Mackay Mission Hospital,²³ an institution under his supervision, has also added to his experience with the treatment of malaria. Throughout Mackay's medical reports in the 1870s and 1880s, malaria has also counted as one of the major diseases afflicting Formosan people.²⁴ The inhabitants of Formosa are thought to embrace superstitious, heathen cure or unscientific Chinese herbal medicine as remedy to this dreadful disease.²⁵ The absurdities of how malaria was treated by Formosan priests, sorcerers, and doctors have been laid bare by Mackay to highlight the ascendancy of Western medicine, which enables missionaries to "do incalculable service to afflicted humanity," and so "to commend the gospel of their Master, who healed many who were sick of divers diseases" (*From Far Formosa* 314).

The gendered implications of Mackay's prejudiced projection of an afflicted feminine, heathen body in need of the rescue from masculine, Christian healers find their counterpart in the imagination of a gendered female missionary body that opens another rupture in the narrative of evangelical masculinity in *From Far Formosa*. It is a narrative rupture which corresponds to the emergence of female ministry since the latter half of the nineteenth century that threatens to break the order of a dominantly masculine evangelical enterprise. To persuade his reader of the benefits

²³ Tamsui Mission Hospital, in which Mackay had only one room for his patients, was replaced by Mackay Mission Hospital, a commodious building erected in 1880 with wards and necessary equipment through financial aid from a Mrs. Mackay in Detroit in memory of his husband Captain Mackay. See *From Far Formosa* 316.

²⁴ See Mackay's *Report of the Tamsui Mission Hospital 1877-80* and *Report of the Mackay Mission Hospital 1881-91*.

²⁵ Depending on their beliefs, Formosan people suppose the disease to be caused "by the patient unluckily treading on mock-money" put in the street by a priest or sorcerer" or "by a conflict between the hot and cold principles in nature" or "by two devils, one belonging to the negative principle in nature, fanning the patient, thus causing the chills, and the other belonging to the positive principle, blowing a furnace and producing heat and fever" (*From Far Formosa* 311).

of employing native preachers in overseas evangelization, a practice still wanting the approval of the Canadian Presbyterian Church,²⁶ Mackay makes an example of how foreign women may fail to perform their mission. While Mackay might intend such a strategy of localization to be employed in the recruitment of Formosan native preachers, his illustration nevertheless addresses particularly the drawbacks of employing the female gender in overseas evangelization. Physical weakness of the female missionary is highlighted in Mackay's introduction of her:

A foreign lady goes to take up her abode in Tamsui. Rosy-cheeked, healthy, and hopeful, she thinks she can do her own housework while studying the language. In this she proceeds for a few months. But the hot weather comes, and with it fever. The color gone from her face, and strength from her arm, the lady must hand the housework over to a Chinese male cook. (*From Far Formosa* 300)

On the one hand, the imagination of a weak, fragile female body that easily succumbs to the tropical climate and the onerous task of evangelization is congenial to the construction of female vulnerability by contemporary medical discourses. On the other hand, such construction projects men's (and Mackay's) anxiety over women's increasing involvement in the public domain traditionally held to be masculine.

Such anxiety can be also detected in Mackay's vociferous contention about the offending nature of the androgynous features of the female missionary. For this foreign lady, who is enthusiastic and committed to her work, would be stared at by the Chinese as she goes out among them because "[her] dress is not like theirs, and

²⁶ In *From Far Formosa* and in his correspondence with the Foreign Missions Committee of Presbyterian Church in Canada, Mackay argues that Formosan natives make better preachers than foreign missionaries. According to Mackay, the advantages of using native preachers are lower expenses, no culture and language barriers, greater adaptability to tropical climate, and higher accessibility to Chinese women hearers (which is only possible when the preacher is a native woman). Mackay's argument was refuted by Kenneth F. Junior, another missionary from Presbyterian Church in Canada, who takes issue with Mackay as regards his strategic marriage to a native woman for the mission's purpose. He does not like to think that Mackay imagines "there are not as devoted Christian young ladies in Canada—young ladies who can and will suffer as much for Christ as any Chinaman who ever breathed" (McDonald 152). See the files of the Foreign Missions Committee, No. 784, Mar. 8, 1878 qtd in Graeme McDonald, "George Leslie Mackay: Missionary Success in Nineteenth-Century Taiwan." *Papers on China* 21 (1968) 152. See also *From Far Formosa* 285-90; 297-307.

some dispute as to whether she is a man or woman” (300). The very fact of her independence, “of her being there in a foreign land, far away from relatives” would “[lower] her in their estimation” (300). Besides, her simple act of going out on foot into streets would “[offend] against their ideas of propriety” (300). Downplaying the fact that foreign ladies have been well-received and have been contributing to Formosan evangelization since the nineteenth century,²⁷ Mackay stigmatizes the New Woman features characterizing overseas female ministry, which have started to threaten fin de siècle metropolitan bourgeois manhood. Violating conventional feminine decorum demanded of Victorian women, these self-reliant female workers of overseas evangelization, with their modern dress, independence, and public appearance, might have invited a gendered, reactionary gaze from male missionaries like Mackay as well as from Formosan heathens. To further uphold his argument, medical authorities implicated by a male gaze at the female body are ultimately invoked by Mackay to testify to foreign women’s incompetence as messenger of God’s gospel in Formosa:

For apart from the fact that the way is often impassable, the climate is so damp and the region so unwholesome that even native workers dread it, no foreigner has ever spent many days there without suffering, and no medical man who knows the country would dare give his consent to a foreign lady making the attempt and even with the best of care she may often be prostrated with fever. (*From Far Formosa* 302)

As has been mentioned above, Mackay’s imagination of a female evangelical worker more susceptible to the assault of fever than her male counterpart is congenial to the popular nineteenth-century medical construction of female bodies easily enervated

²⁷ As Linda Peterson indicates, women have began to be approved for missionary service in India and Asia since the 1820s and “the missionary enterprise opens to women a sphere of activity, usefulness and distinction not, under the present constitution of society, to be found elsewhere” (95). See Linda Peterson, *Traditions of Victorian Women’s Autobiography: The Poetics and Politics of Life Writing*, (Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2001) 95. Elizabeth Cooke Ritchie (or Mrs. Ritchie) is among the pioneering female missionaries to nineteenth-century Formosa, who devoted herself to the evangelical enterprise for more than a decade, promoted native women’s education, and helped found the first girls’ school in the island. Like many Western women who came to Formosa as wives and helpmates to the officer, the doctor, and the missionary, Ritchie led an active life and made no less contribution than her husband Reverend Hugh Ritchie.

by tropical environment and disease. These enfeebled and tamed female bodies, which are a projection of male fear of the boundary-transgressing women, are employed by Mackay as well as his contemporaries to dissuade women from entering the public sphere and to cover masculinity crisis increasingly felt by especially men of the middle-class at home and abroad.

Conclusion

Despite its intimidating symptoms, fever as a disease is not represented as life-threatening in Mackay's narrative of his sickness in *From Far Formosa*, whereas in his diaries the disease is reported to launch a most vehement attack on his body and soul, which only death, or according to Mackay's Christian belief, life after death can ease him of the afflicting pain. Like the many anecdotes unfolding tales of adventure in his itinerating trips to the anti-foreign Chinese and head-hunting Formosan aborigines, the narrative of sickness in Mackay's memoir aims at presenting a missionary hero conquering all the difficulties in his mission. The experience of sickness opens a rupture and loophole in the narrative of evangelical masculinity, challenging the conventional image of invincible heroes in the writing of missionary memoir while transgressing the boundaries of the public and the private starkly mapped out in such a genre.

As a form, heroic missionary memoirs tend to favor experience from the public, masculine realms. The feelings of fear, pain, despair, and frustration, which are not uncommon to overseas evangelical workers in the nineteenth century, have to be repressed or re-appropriated in memoirs which are meant to impress the reader with the bravery of missionary heroes and the success of their work. Mackay's experience of sickness and recovery becomes presentable in *From Far Formosa* after it is re-appropriated as a means of displaying evangelical masculinity and the superiority of imperial medicine. The crisis of masculinity in *From Far Formosa* is detected not only in the fashioning of Mackay as an almost indefatigable missionary hero but also in the assumption that such a hero is exclusively a male. Mackay's repressed fear of becoming effeminate and disease-struck is embodied by his

projection of that fear onto the bodies of women missionaries vulnerable to the assault of malaria fever. These weakened female bodies, however, reflect exactly the male fear and anxiety increasingly perceivable in late Victorian evangelical and medical constructions of masculinity.

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