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**Observing Formosa: Savages in the Missionary
Writings of George Leslie Mackay and William
Campbell**

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摘要

透過「參與觀察」(participant observation)，十九世紀遠赴世界各洲傳播基督教文明的傳教士與原住民異教徒近距離接觸，實際參與其生活環境所完成的對於未開化人種之描述紀載，就如同當時民族誌學者整理出版的田野調查報告一樣，皆標榜客觀、不介入的觀察視角。然而，傳教士的民族誌書寫此文類同時雜揉兩種不同屬性之書寫，本身就有內在的矛盾——從傳教士的角度如何客觀忠實地報導異教信仰的野蠻人。此外，伴隨十九世紀基督教海外傳教運動的蓬勃發展，帝國的迅速拓展以及受達爾文物競天擇理論啟發的社會演化論之提出都對傳教士的民族誌書寫產生相關之影響。本篇論文以十九世紀下半葉前往海外傳教的加拿大長老教會牧師馬偕及英國長老教會牧師甘為霖在《福爾摩莎紀事》(*From Far Formosa*)及《素描福爾摩莎》(*Sketches from Formosa*)裡對於台灣原住民之敘述為例，指出上述兩位傳教士雖然皆深入異域實地參與原住民之生活，然而兩者對於原住民殘酷天性所採取的渲染描繪，並藉機提出基督教與帝國力量作為原住民異教徒救贖之手段，則是與標榜客觀中立的民族誌書寫背道而馳。

關鍵詞：福爾摩莎野蠻人、十九世紀、傳教士書寫、喬治·馬偕、甘為霖

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Observing Formosa: Savages in the Missionary Writings of George Leslie Mackay and William Campbell

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Abstract**

Nineteenth-century missionary writings are not disinterested in nature. Claiming objectivity for their portrayal of indigenous heathens, overseas missionaries, like ethnographers, adopted a detached view toward the subjects in their “participant observation”—that is, their intimate contacts with uncivilized savages. Yet the ambivalence of missionary ethnographies as a hybrid genre consisting of a twofold purpose explains the inherent contradictions and difficulties of reporting heathen savages objectively. This paper thus explores the ethnographical representations of Formosan aborigines by George Leslie Mackay and William Campbell, a Canadian and a British Presbyterian missionary to Formosa in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In Mackay’s *From Far Formosa* and Campbell’s *Sketches from Formosa*, the two missionaries demonstrate their flair as ethnographical observers. Making acute perceptions of alien culture in every aspect of life, Mackay and Campbell nevertheless are not unbiased in offering a unified, consistent picture of savage cruelty in need of evangelical and imperialist redemptions.

Key words: Formosan savagery, the nineteenth-century, missionary writings, George Leslie Mackay, William Campbell

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Observing Formosa: Savages in the Missionary Writings of George Leslie Mackay and William Campbell

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1. Introduction

The primary aim of ethnographies is to record in detail human activities, cultures, and customs from all over the world. One may trace the origin of systematic ethnographical writings back to as early as the eighteenth century. However, it is in the nineteenth century that ethnography as a subject growing out of anecdotes or travel narratives gains full-fledged development. Since the late eighteenth century, ethnography has been composed by metropole-based armchair researchers who never go overseas and largely depend upon ancient books, almanacs, or epistles from abroad for their writings about alien races and customs. Their observations are extracted from the narratives or depictions offered by explorers, naturalists, missionaries, merchants, and colonial officials who do not go overseas for ethnographical purposes.¹ These representations of alien customs, peoples, and cultural practices by travelling ethnographers have much bearing on the imperial gaze and the display of primitive peoples and alien species staged in the nucleus of the Empire—the metropole.²

¹ For instance, published from 1836 to 47, the third edition of *Researches into the Physical History of Man* is a highly influential series of books in five volumes on ethnology by the British ethnographer James Cowles Prichard, who browses through related documents to obtain information necessary for his writing.

² The spectacular display of peoples and species from around the globe in the Crystal Palace after the Great Exhibition was held in London in 1851 indicates exactly how the British subject's imperialist voyeurism toward the cultural other can be satisfied by exotic spectacles. As Stocking indicates, thirteen life-size groupings of savages, including the Eskimos, the Red Indians, the West African Negroes, the Bushmen, Kaffirs, Malays, Dyaks, Papuans, Australians, and Maoris were exhibited

The maturing of scientific disciplines through the nineteenth century also had great impact upon the development of ethnography. Prior to the publication of *The Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin in 1859, studies of ethnography were subject to the proposition of Christian monogenesis, which argued that human descendants from Adam and Eve were unequally constituted in terms of the civilizing influences they received. The more civilized Christian White people were thus shouldered with the responsibility to bring the torch of civilization to the heathen, uncivilized barbarians. In the name of religion, the idea of ethnocentrism had become acceptable since the Enlightenment, which assigned human beings to a supreme position in the Great Chain of Being and created a hierarchy of races based upon whether they were civilized and progressive. However, Christian monogenesis was challenged by the theory of evolution. Natural selection took the place of God's will, and human beings, taken down from their height, were held to be susceptible to the forces of evolution as much as all the other species.

Inspired by biological evolutionary theory as such, ethnographers developed a corresponding theory of socio-cultural evolutionism to explain the development of human society and civilization.³ The proponents of socio-cultural evolutionism asserted that all human communities developed in sequence through the stages of hunting, the pastoral, the agricultural, the commercial, and the industrial. The synchronic existence of primitive tribes and civilized societies around the world was attributed to their different paces of evolution.⁴ This assertion predominated the writing

along with the other fauna in the newly established Natural History Department of the Crystal Palace, which was sold to private speculators after the Great Exhibition. See George W. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1987) 47. See also Sadiah Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2011) 185-270.

³ Contemporary ethnographers such as Auguste Comte, Herber Spenser, Edward Tylor, and Benjamin Kidd all proposed theories buttressing socio-cultural evolutionism.

⁴ See Gary P. Ferraro, *Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective* (Minneapolis: West, 1995).

of ethnography since the latter half of the nineteenth century, offering an excuse for colonialists whose aggression had been justified as an intention to improve the status quo of the under-developed.⁵ Under the banner of science, evolutionary theory as such was nevertheless subject to a White, ethnocentric perspective in its arguing that all civilizations follow the same pattern of development and its defining civilization solely in terms of techno-economic development.

The nineteenth century witnessed the flourishing of missionary movements, which were synchronized by the rapid expansion of colonial powers around the globe. Until ethnography became a full-fledged science in the late nineteenth century, missionary writings, along with travel writings by explorers and adventurers, provided first-hand information of the physiognomies, customs, habits, and other ethnographical facts about aliens.⁶ Considering that even the most well-known ethnographers were armchair researchers, the voluminous accounts offered by missionaries throughout this century provided the basis for the theoretical arguments of ethnographers.⁷ These personalized and often pseudo-scientific missionary writings competed with ethnographies in claiming the authoritative knowledge of the native people.⁸ However, motivations and preconceptions prevented nineteenth-century evangelical workers from presenting an unbiased picture of the cultural other despite their having frequent

⁵ Along with many pseudo-scientific disciplines developed during the heyday of New Imperialism such as physical anthropology, anthropometry, and anthropometry, the theory of socio-cultural evolutionism serves the purpose of scientific racism, which exploits racial hierarchy as an excuse for imperialist expansion. See John P. Jackson and Nadine M. Weidman, *Race, Racism, and Science: Social Impact and Interaction* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2004).

⁶ It is not until the latter half of the nineteenth century that with the development of ethnographical methodologies, the installation of professional societies, and the expansion of colonial forces, researchers began to conduct short-period, small-scale field trip to the tribes in America, Africa, Asia, Australia, and Oceania.

⁷ See George W. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1987) 79.

⁸ As Clifford indicates, while recognized as central to the research process, the ethnographer's personal experiences, including the states of serious confusion, violent feelings or acts, censorship, important failures, and excessive pleasures, are firmly restrained by the impersonal standards of observation and "objective" distance in classical ethnographies. See James Clifford, "Introduction," *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds (Berkeley: California UP, 1986) 13.

and intimate interactions with heathen savages.

This paper thus wants to tackle the largely unexplored representations of aborigines by George Leslie Mackay and William Campbell,⁹ a Canadian and a British Presbyterian missionary to Formosa in the latter half of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ Approaching different tribes of Formosan aborigines for evangelical purposes, Mackay and Campbell nevertheless have affinities with nineteenth-century ethnographers through undertaking field studies on the natives' customs, practices, and social organizations. As is indicated in Mackay's *From Far Formosa* and Campbell's *Sketches from Formosa*, the knowledge of the geography, geology, flora and fauna, history, and ethnology native to the heathen land has become the staple of Victorian overseas missionary writings which serves to provide useful background information for readers or prospective evangelical workers. Missionaries like Mackay and Campbell were trained for collecting first-hand data about Formosan aborigines as well as Chinese heathens with a view to proselytizing these unbelievers. As with ethnographers claiming authenticity of their field findings, Mackay vows to the reader that his observations of savagery from the little known Far Eastern island can be verified by his exposure to heathen savages at the stake of life:

What I have learned of their customs and beliefs has been through personal

⁹ Even in the past decade, studies of George Leslie Mackay and William Campbell have been dominated by approaches of religious history and missiology. While interdisciplinary approaches have been adopted especially by scholars interested in exploring Mackay as an iconic figure in nineteenth-century American and Canadian religious history, a more critical examination of the missionary's observations of Formosan savagery is still absent in the recently published proceedings of the 2009-2010 conference held in Ontario, Canada and Tamsui, Taiwan. See 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).

¹⁰ Even in the most recently published history of Taiwan, the spotlight is always cast on the missionary success of Mackay and Campbell, who are credited with establishing not only churches but also schools and hospitals for the Formosan people, with only passing comments on the hardships they underwent in converting the mandarins and natives of the island. See Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *Maritime Taiwan: Historical Encounters with the East and West* (New York: Sharpe, 2009) 75-77; Robert Gardella, "From Treaty Ports to Provincial Status, 1860-1894," *Taiwan: A New History*, Murray A. Rubinstein, ed. (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1999) 169-70.

contact with them for weeks together in their hamlets and villages. There was constant danger, for no one can tell how or when the savage nature will manifest its savagery; but intercourse with them was always interesting and instructive. (*FFF* 252)¹¹

Remarks as such indicate not only the missionary's professed achievement in presenting an objective, authentic view of Formosan aborigines but also his keen interest in studying them as savages wanting the redemption of Christianity.

2. Christian Civilization and Its Missions

In his 1895 *From Far Formosa*, Mackay shows his understanding of those savage pagans from the island in South-eastern Asia. Feeling sympathy for the deprived Formosan aborigines, who had occupied the island long before the Chinese settlers, Mackay draws an analogy between American exploitation of the Indians and Chinese takeover of savage territory:

The Chinese in Formosa have great contempt for the aborigines, and treat them very much as the Americans have treated the Indian tribes, bartering with them, cheating them, and crowding them back into their mountain strongholds. (*FFF* 103)

The principle of fraternity enables Mackay to embrace the Formosan "other" as much as he embraces the American Indians. However, examining the physical feature of Formosan aborigines, Mackay claims that their skull "has the appearance of a round ball or bone," and "this is characteristic of the islanders belonging to the lower races" (*FFF* 97). William Campbell even concludes that aborigines inhabiting eastern

¹¹ Mackay's *From Far Formosa* and Campbell's *Sketches from Formosa* are hereafter abbreviated as *FFF* and *SFF* respectively.

Formosa “seem to be mere children” intellectually because “they use their fingers in counting” (*SFF* 62). Disclosing familiarity with Darwinism, Mackay and Campbell seize the opportunity to act as amateur ethnologists to provide their readers with “things which are informing” (*SFF* preface) and the most up-dated information¹² concerning the ethnology of Formosa, an island said to be occupied by “the dwarfs, the black giants, and even the tailed men” (*SFF* 266).

Out of an ethnographical interest in surveying the manifestations of savage material culture, Mackay and Campbell collect and represent objects from Formosan savages to expose how primitive they are in the scale of civilization. Ranging from costume, daily utensils, pottery, fabrics, and containers, these objects constitute a spectacular display of the Oriental other, whose primitivism must have dazzled the readers of *From Far Formosa* and *Sketches from Formosa*. Material culture as such draws a dividing line between savagery and civilization, between Formosan savages and the English reader. On the other hand, the two missionaries are importers of Western materials. Touring in aboriginal regions, Mackay and Campbell often bring with them rifles, medicine, linen, and other goods featuring the triumph of Western technology as gifts to make peace with the savages. For instance, the envying gaze from Formosan savages enticed by Campbell’s British cloth implies a visual hierarchy that assumes the superiority of Western technology:

At length, a few of our presents were produced, including about twelve

¹² Prior to the nineteenth century, neither reliable nor first-hand information is accessible to any Western reader who wants to know more about Formosa than that passing laudatory exclamation made by the Portuguese sailor centuries ago. The success of *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa, an Island subject to the Emperor of Japan*, a fake book providing fabricated stories about Formosa and published in 1704 by the imposter George Psalmanazar, is possible only because Europeans had little knowledge of this Far Eastern island. Even to the missionary Mackay on board, who craved to learn about the place he was designated to preach the gospel of Jesus, the only resources he found available from the ship’s library was “such works as *The Social Life of the Chinese* by Justus Doolittle, *The Middle Kingdom* by S. Wells Williams, *China and the Chinese* by John L. Nevius, and *China and the United States* by Spears” (*From Far Formosa* 29).

yards of highly-coloured cotton print, which at once called forth the admiration and joy of every spectator. It was a piece of the flimsiest Manchester stuff, with great staring flowers on a frightful pattern of scroll-work; and yet, that bit of cloth produced an almost profound impression on the minds of those people. All formality was now laid aside. I was looked upon as having had some share in the manufacture of this wonderful production. (*SFF* 196-97)

Campbell's gift-giving, a conduct intended to show respect to the chief, is nevertheless rendered as a display of the state-of-the-art dyeing and weaving techniques of a superior race. Manchester's cotton print, a major export of the British Empire, is employed by the missionary not as a commodity in exchange for lucrative return but as a gift that earns him hospitality, friendliness, and not the least, an admiring gaze from the savages.



Figure 1. A Pe-po-hoan Weaver.

From Far Formosa. 1895.



Figure 2. Savage from Mount Morrison.

Sketches from Formosa. 1915.

Through object-collecting and gift-giving, Mackay and Campbell highlight savagery as a regression in the development of human civilization. Such a regression is ascribed to the lack of Christian influence rather than to an earlier phase of human civilization claimed by ethnographers at that time. Censorious descriptions abounding

in nineteenth-century missionaries' ethnographic writings about savage heathens are also perceivable in Mackay's and Campbell's books. For instance, after offering a cursory glimpse at the uncivilized state of the Lam-si-hoan inhabiting eastern Formosa, Mackay concludes:

In society constituted as it is among the Lam-si-hoan, neither refinement of life nor elegance of manners need be looked for. Their lives have not been touched by those great movements that have fixed the standard of manners in Christian civilization, and they never indulge those habits of thought and introspection that awaken self-consciousness and a sense of shame. They never heard the name of God, and have no knowledge of his grace and truth. (*FFF* 247)

Mackay's comments are not unbiased in reducing Formosan savages to uncultivated and thoughtless heathen races awaiting the salvation of Christianity. Typical of "many savage tribes alike in the East and in the West" of the island, the Lam-si-hoan is considered to have "little moral or social recuperative power" and "imbibe nothing of the rejuvenating life-streams of civilization" (*FFF* 248). This is where gospel-preaching missionaries like Mackay and Campbell diverge from fact-finding ethnographers. Coming up with multifarious first-hand observations about savage life, customs, and habits, Mackay and Campbell are pioneers in exploring untrodden, dangerous territories to perform ethnographic field-work in nineteenth-century Formosa. However, rather than leading to a scientific rendering of primitive culture, their observations are subject to a Christian and often masked ethnocentric interpretation.

3. The Representations of Heathen Violence

As Christopher Herbert indicates in *Culture and Anomie: Ethnographic Imagination in the Nineteenth Century*, missionaries needed to employ a discourse which endowed them with incontestable moral superiority over indigenous populations to justify their aggressive incursions into native societies. They made it their business to produce such a discourse and to people the uncultivated land with the very beings that had to be found there: depraved, brutish savages.¹³ The violence of Formosan aborigines is especially highlighted in both Mackay's and Campbell's accounts of their many barbarian practices such as headhunting, cannibalism, human-sacrifice, and tribal warfare. On the one hand, to portray these aborigines as obsessed by violence and cruelty is to reinforce the hierarchy of Christian civilization and heathen savagery. On the other hand, typical of nineteenth-century missionary literature that conveys the images of heathen barbarianism, savagery, and cruelty, Mackay's and Campbell's accounts of Formosan savagery serve to justify the needs of more evangelical workers and resources to facilitate the enterprise of proselytizing the unconvertible.¹⁴ In Mackay's and Campbell's representations of Formosan savages, we may easily discern a seemingly contradictory image. Unaffected by the progress of civilization, the mountaineers Chhi-hoan or "raw barbarians" are praised by Mackay and Campbell for their honesty, integrity, friendliness, and hospitality:

These savages are singularly free from many moral and social vices

¹³ See Christopher Herbert, *Culture and Anomie: Ethnographic Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1991) 158-59.

¹⁴ As Campbell recalls after his first visit to the savage tribes in central Formosa: "I look back with much gratitude on this pioneer visit to the region east from Po-li-sia. Not that it suggests the duty of making any immediate effort for carrying the Gospel to this Bu-hwan tribe; because, apart from attempting any aggressive movement among the swarming Chinese at our very doors on the western side of the Island, an immense amount of work has yet to be overtaken at our present thirteen widely-scattered stations. Many of the Church members, some of our preachers even, are deplorably ignorant; while the trained labourers are few, and myself the only pastor over a region which, at home, would have several bishoprics, and a whole battalion of Christian workers" (*SFF* 67).

common alike among civilized and uncivilized peoples. Gambling and opium-smoking are very rare; murder, theft, incendiarism, polygamy, and social impurity are almost unknown, except where the baneful influence of Chinese traders and border-men has corrupted the simplicity of the savage.
(*FFF* 258)

In spite of their uncouth habits and savage customs, Formosan aborigines nevertheless keep morality intact, evoking the image of “noble savages” popular in Western representations of new found barbarians since the Age of Enlightenment. Savage morality as such is contrasted with depravity, trickiness, and moral looseness concomitant with the civilization of the Chinese, a race deemed to be superior to Formosan aborigines in intellect and culture.

While savagery may be associated with the simple, uncultivated life lived by Formosan aborigines inhabiting the innermost, Eden-like mountainous areas which amaze foreign visitors like Mackay and Campbell, it is nevertheless also connected with the many savage customs practiced by the same people, of which head-hunting is notoriously portrayed and represented by both missionaries. While understanding that head-hunting, for Formosan natives, is a means of revenge upon the Chinese intruders who had driven them from the plains into the mountains, Mackay and Campbell, in spite of showing their sympathy, nevertheless condemn the cruelty of such a practice. Understating Chinese intrusion and oppression, their narratives more often than not stigmatize the native’s head-hunting practice. Exaggerating head-hunting as a passion for murder inveterate to Formosan aborigines, Mackay says:

Head-hunting is the ruling passion among the savages in Formosa. This is the one crime of violence laid to their charge. To this, as to nothing else,

they give themselves from earliest youth to decrepit age, following it with an ardor that never cools and a cruelty that never relents. (FFF 267)

Far from offering objective, non-judgmental descriptions of Formosan aborigines' head-hunting custom,¹⁵ Mackay and Campbell fill their narratives with such deprecating descriptions of head-hunting or cannibalistic practices observed among the natives.

Although the purpose of these tours into the alien, dangerous regions is to proselytize and civilize the savages, their writings, teeming with adventures and anecdotes, reflect the personalized, heroic form of nineteenth-century missionary texts.¹⁶ The fearlessness and masculinity of the missionary as adventurer is accentuated throughout the narratives where he encounters dangers and difficulties. Both Mackay and Campbell narrated how they had a narrow escape from brutal Formosan savages, unreflective of the fact that they were trespassers on the path they feared to tread again. Their heroic deeds are not only transformed into words but also memorialized by a collection of relics registering the gaze of missionary ethnographers. Those "special" cakes from Campbell's collection tell the story of savage ruthlessness. As the missionary remarks:

For it should be known that some of the Formosan tribes boil down every

¹⁵ It is not until seven years after Campbell published his *Sketches from Formosa* that Janet B. Montgomery McGovern, the first female anthropologist to Formosa, unfolded her ethnographical observations of Formosan aborigines in her 1922 *Among the Headhunters of Formosa*, a book pioneering in its unbiased, systematic approaches to the head-hunting tribes in the island.

¹⁶ As Jean and John Comaroff indicate, while sharing similarities, missionary writings are different from self-effacing travel narratives because the former employ personalized, heroic form that link individual achievement to the conquests of civilization. See Jean and John Comaroff, "Through the Looking-Glass: Colonial Encounters of the First Kind," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1.1 (1989), 9. See also Anna Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003) 39-44; Mary Goodwin, "Heroic Memoirs from a Hot Country: Taiwan Missionary Life Writing," *The Life and Legacy of George Leslie Mackay: An Interdisciplinary Study of Canada's First Presbyterian Missionary to Northern Taiwan (1872-1901)*, Clyde R. Forsberg Jr., ed. (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012) 75-79.

head brought in to a thick jelly, from which thin oblong cakes are made, for being nibbled to inspire fresh courage when another murderous attack is to be made upon the invaders of their country. It is almost impossible for any outsider to obtain specimens of those cakes; and the two found at this time were sent by me to the Imperial Ethnographical Museum at Berlin, because I had an arrangement with Dr. Bastian that I would send as many choice articles as I could to the Museum if he supplied me with any rare pamphlets which came his way for adding to my bibliography of Formosa. (SFF 121)

While Campbell's collection of savage articles is meant for an exchange for resources useful to his study of Formosan history,¹⁷ Mackay collects heathen objects for the cause of mission work. Crowded with "every conceivable kind of article of use or interest to Chinese, Pe-po-hoan or savage" (FFF 288-89), Mackay's parlor-size, private museum in Tamsui boasts "a complete collection of relics representing every aspect of savage life" (FFF 289). The museum is constructed as a place to display the real Formosa to the reader, with a view to introducing Christian influences to the heathen land.¹⁸ Among these "gruesome and repulsive" things which are said to be "indicative of ferocity and savage cruelty" (FFF 289) stands a life-size figure representing "a fierce-looking head-hunter from the mountains, his forehead and chin

¹⁷ A British Presbyterian missionary preaching the gospel in Southern Formosa, William Campbell is also an acknowledged authority on the history of Formosa. Campbell demonstrates his excellence in the seventeenth-century Formosan history by publishing *Formosa under the Dutch: Described from Contemporary Records* in 1903. In *Sketches from Formosa*, Campbell also devotes one chapter to unfolding a glimpse at the history of Formosa from its Dutch colonial period through the Qing dynasty to the Japanese regime at present. This chapter was originally published as an article entitled "The Island of Formosa: Its Past and Future" in *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 12.8 (1896): 385-99.

¹⁸ As Vynckier indicates, Mackay's museum is intended as "an objective, scientific, and educational display of the real Formosa" (259). It is also a spectacle that suggests "an imaginary alternative Formosa that would allow Christianization and other Western forces to proceed apace" (259). See Henk Vynckier, "Museifying Formosa: George Mackay's *From Far Formosa*" *Sinographies: Writing China* (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 2008) 259.

tattooed, his spear at his side, bows and arrows strapped across his shoulders, a long knife at his girdle, and his left hand clutching the cue of some unfortunate victim” (*FFF* 289). Together with the photographs which are enclosed in *From Far Formosa* to provide the reader with graphic images of Formosan savagery, this figure which is placed in the corner of Mackay’s museum in Tamsui and later sent to the Royal Ontario Museum of Canada¹⁹ must have intimidated the visitors with its vividness of heathen cruelty.



Figure 3. Armed Head-hunters. *From Far Formosa*. 1895.



Figure 4. Armed Pe-po-hoan Near Savage Territory. *From Far Formosa*. 1895.

Turning a blind eye to colonial violence impinging upon the island since the seventeenth century, these representations of heathen violence perpetrated by Formosan aborigines become problematic and betray their belying White ideology. While knowing better than to ignore the history of Formosa’s being colonized by three foreign forces and the fact that Formosan aborigines had been expelled from their original residence by the Chinese settlers,²⁰ Mackay and Campbell nevertheless are taciturn

¹⁹ Collected during his numerous trips around Formosa, these objects, together with the many specimens of the flora and fauna, served as the basis for a museum at the Oxford College established by the missionary in Tamsui, which later contributed to the collections of the ethnological department at Royal Ontario Museum of Canada. See Alvyn J. Austin, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* Vol. 13 (Toronto: Toronto UP, 1994) 653.

²⁰ In *From Far Formosa* and *Sketches from Formosa*, both Mackay and Campbell indicate their familiarities with the colonial past and present of Formosa. Acquiring especially ample knowledge about how the Formosan was colonized by the Dutch in the seventeenth century, Campbell is also fascinated by the fair governance of Formosa by the Japanese, whose colonization of the island began

about the violence committed by the colonizers, whose crimes seem to be pardoned or even whitewashed in the missionary rhetoric of imperialist evangelicalism.

4. The Rhetoric of Imperialist Evangelicalism

While Formosa was never subjected to Western colonial rule,²¹ the nineteenth-century colonial gaze was nevertheless an embedded perspective of many missionaries who came to the island to evangelize the people. Missionaries like Mackay and Campbell disclose affinities with the Empire especially in their condescending attitude toward Formosan aborigines, whose miserable status quo they declare will be at an end if only these aborigines subject themselves to colonial/divine rule. Campbell employs the rhetoric of evangelicalism in eulogizing Dutch colonization of Formosa two centuries earlier:

The Chinese did not dare to venture amongst [the savage tribes], because long years of oppression and trickery on their part had quite appropriated that Western region where the native was wont to fish and to hunt, and where many of his little villages and hamlets nestled in comfort and security; whereas, although sometimes acting towards them in a very high-handed way, the Dutch had come to adjust inter-tribal quarrels, to act fairly, and to prove *an unspeakable blessing* to the aborigines of Formosa. (*SFF* 272-73 my italics)

This mentioning of the Dutch as fair, well-intentioned colonizers is significant. On the one hand, the enlightened Dutch came to Formosan aborigines in the seventeenth

since 1895.

²¹ While foreign forces like Britain and the United States have considered seizing Formosa out of commercial and military purposes, these considerations never materialized into action. France is the only Western force that attacked Formosa in the late nineteenth century, an action that alerted the Chinese government to incorporate the island, which had been largely ignored, into a province. In *From Far Formosa*, Mackay has one chapter reporting the bombarding of Northern Formosa by the French in the Sino-France War in 1884.

century (1622-1662) as imposing saviors whose blessings contrast with the oppression and trickery they receive from the Chinese under the rule of the Qing Dynasty. On the other hand, the rhetoric of imperialist evangelicalism manifests itself in Campbell's implicit comparisons of the British Empire and the Presbyterian missionaries to the Dutch colonization and their alleged benevolent effects on the islanders.

Campbell alludes to Formosa's earlier history of colonization by the Dutch to pave the way for his eulogization of Formosa's current rule by the Japanese, "a most vigorous, intelligent race," (*SFF* 335) since 1895. Along with the many "civilizing influences brought to bear on all the non-Chinese-speaking tribes" by Japanese administration (*SFF* 286), Campbell expects the process of modernization to be introduced by Formosa's new ruler:

[Before] long, good roads will be all over the Island, the railway will be carried down from north to south and branch lines added on, harbours opened, and a proper currency introduced, with parliamentary representation, upright officials, skilled native doctors, newspapers, and cessation of work every seventh day in all Government offices. (*SFF* 285-86)

Such a narrative, as Campbell claims, is underpinned by an ardent hope for "the betterment of all classes of the people" on the island (*SFF* 300), a hope which is shared not only by the colonizer but also by the messenger of the heavenly kingdom. While Campbell's sympathy with the new colonizer is likely to come from the British alliance with Japan, the coalescence of imperialism and evangelicalism nevertheless finds its root in his identity as a missionary from the Empire who comes to the aborigines as a savior in both the secular and the sacred senses.

Like Campbell, who does not hesitate to campaign for the benevolence of imperial rule over Formosan savages, Mackay endorses imperialism as a promising regime for the natives. In his passing comments on the Japanese as new masters to this island, Mackay says “a new element will be introduced” and while the relations of the Japanese to the present inhabitants “cannot as yet be set forth” (*FFF* 93), the indications are that “they will treat the aborigines with fairness” (*FFF* 94). The various aboriginal tribes in Formosa, who are ill treated by the exploitive, deceitful Chinese, may thus look forward to “a brighter day under the flag of the ‘Rising Sun’” (*FFF* 214). Ignoring that colonial violence may also come from such a new regime, Mackay extols the Empire as well as the Savior as an enlightening force driving out savagery and darkness in the conquered heathen land. Mackay’s and Campbell’s attitudes toward the Empire reflects exactly the missionary’s growing identification with the expanding imperialist forces which are increasingly allied with the evangelical business in their shared aims of shedding lighting on the uncivilized territories all over the world.

5. Conclusion

Nineteenth-century missionary ethnographies are not disinterested in nature. Claiming objectivity for their portrayal of indigenous heathens, missionaries, like ethnographical observers, adopted a detached view toward the subjects in their “participant observation”—that is, their intimate contacts with uncivilized savages. Yet the ambivalence of missionary ethnographies as a hybrid genre consisting of a twofold purpose explains the inherent contradictions and difficulties of reporting heathen savages objectively. As has been indicated, both Mackay and Campbell demonstrate their flair as ethnographical observers in their writings about Formosan aborigines. Making acute perceptions of alien culture in every aspect of life, the two missionaries nevertheless are not unbiased in offering a unified, consistent picture of savage cruelty

in need of evangelical redemption. To elicit support from evangelical organizations and to justify the purpose of overseas evangelical work, Mackay and Campbell employ the stark image of ruthless, blood-thirsty barbarians in their portrayals of Formosan aborigines, stigmatizing heathen violence as an unchristian practice. Representing violence as congenial to uncivilized Formosan savages, the two missionaries nevertheless fail to address the misdemeanor of the colonizers to this island. Complicit in the enterprise of expanding imperialism, Mackay and Campbell cloak the violence committed by the intruders in their rhetoric of imperialist evangelicalism.

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