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*Politics, Religion and Pleasure: Travel  
Writing about China in the Literary and  
Philosophical Society of Newcastle, 1880-  
1925*

H. A. HUMES

PhD

2018

*Politics, Religion and Pleasure: Travel  
Writing about China in the Literary and  
Philosophical Society of Newcastle, 1880-  
1925*

Hannah Anne Humes

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## *Abstract*

Founded in 1793, Newcastle's Literary & Philosophical Society is the largest independent library outside of London, with collections as diverse as its history. Since its founding, travel writing has made up a significant proportion of the society's collections. By the nineteenth century, connections between the North East and the Far East ranged from industrial, to cultural and religious and this is reflected in the Lit & Phil's travel writing collections. Until now, however, the significance of Newcastle's interests in China at the turn of the twentieth century has been neglected in scholarship.

Nonetheless, the library's catalogues demonstrate a continued interest in the acquisition of travel accounts, within which books on China feature in significantly larger numbers than other countries in Asia. This thesis is the first to examine the society's collection of travel writing in relation to regional interest in China at the turn of the twentieth century. Moreover, I argue that the uniqueness of the collection is a result of this specific historical context of Newcastle.

My thesis also provides an original, interdisciplinary model for approaching regional libraries by combining collection-focused methods with close readings of individual items, alongside the historical and regional context of the society. A close reading approach to the books within the collection uncovers the richness of the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China' and demonstrates how collection analysis alongside a literary approach can upset expectations of regional libraries. This thesis approaches travel writing as read by the members of the Lit & Phil, to demonstrate that the collection is a direct response to the intellectual interest demonstrated by the society's membership in the early twentieth century, leading to the development of the diverse and unique collection of travel narratives in the Lit & Phil.

### *Acknowledgements*

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I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

**I declare that the word count of this thesis is 81,739.**

Name: Hannah Anne Humes

Date:

Signature:

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## Introduction

Towards one end of Newcastle's Westgate road are the elegant buildings of the Literary and Philosophical Society. Entering past the society's sign, which quietly announces its presence to passers-by, visitors are greeted by marble figures and a grand staircase, ushering up to the Main Gallery of the society's library. Away from the encouraged conversation of the main library space, past the hatch serving tea and coffee, and down a set of stone steps, are the society's travel writing collections from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These relatively undisturbed books are key to interpreting the society's intellectual interests in the rest of the world at the turn of the twentieth century, an interest which is underpinned by the history of Newcastle since the eighteenth century and the Lit & Phil's steadfast position as a prominent intellectual institution in the North East.

The Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, or Lit & Phil, as it is commonly known, was founded in 1793 as a debating society and conversation club, by William Turner, a local Unitarian Minister. The Society's building on Westgate Road has been a feature of Newcastle's cultural landscape since 1825. Today it is the largest independent library outside of London and holds a unique collection of over 160,000 books. Turner intended that as well as having regional aspirations, the Lit & Phil should also be nationally relevant.<sup>1</sup> The founding members of the Lit & Phil had a wide range of interests, demonstrated by the initial schedule of discussions and papers. The introduction to the society's bicentenary lectures quips that the founding members of the Lit & Phil 'tried their hands at everything'.<sup>2</sup> With the exception of the subjects of

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<sup>1</sup> Asa Briggs, 'The Foundation and Subsequent Role of the Society', in *The Lit & Phil Bicentenary Lectures, 1993* (Newcastle: Literary and Philosophical Society, 1994), p.13.

<sup>2</sup> John Philipson, 'Introduction', in *The Lit & Phil Bicentenary Lectures, 1993* (Newcastle: Literary and Philosophical Society, 1994), p.1.

politics and religion, which were prohibited by the founding rules, the society encouraged the growth of national and international interests, not least through its investment in the development of the travel writing collections.

This thesis will examine the ‘Travel Writing: China’ section housed in the Reference Room at the Lit & Phil. The Reference or ‘Silence’ Room contains travel writing and historical accounts about every corner of the world and is only accessible to members. Its relative seclusion, however, speaks to the fact that the books in this room are in less demand by the members of the society than books housed elsewhere, for example in the more accessible Main Gallery or the James Knott Room. The section at the focus of this thesis comprises travel accounts about China, mostly published or acquired by the library in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, between 1880-1925. I have chosen to analyse these books as they represent a snapshot of the Lit & Phil’s interest in China at the turn of the century. Whilst other travel accounts of China are available in the library, those in the Reference Room represent the largest number of travel writings about China housed in one place in the Lit & Phil.<sup>3</sup>

My thesis will argue that ‘Travel Writing: China’ is underpinned by regional connections with China which mediated and were mediated by the Lit & Phil’s academic and intellectual international interest in the region. Moreover, I will argue that one of the key means through which this intellectual, rather than practical or spiritual, interest is demonstrated is through the prevalence of images in the accounts that make up the section. By approaching ‘Travel Writing: China’ through the professional or personal motivations of the travel authors contained therein, this thesis will analyse the

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<sup>3</sup> More contemporary travel accounts about China are housed in the Main Gallery. Older and more valuable accounts are housed in the society’s Bolbec Hall.

function and form of these books, and in turn, their purpose and impact on the Lit & Phil's collections.

Before turning to the books contained in the 'Travel Writing: China' section, I will first offer a brief introduction to the Lit & Phil Society, its collections and catalogues. As well as through the collections themselves, the Lit & Phil has connections with China through individuals, such as Robert Morrison, the first Protestant Missionary to China and honorary member of the society. In order to understand the perceptions of China in Newcastle at work in the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China' section, it is first necessary to understand the perception of and interaction between China, Newcastle and the North East during the period in which these titles were acquired. This introduction aims to give a brief overview of both cultural and commercial connections between Newcastle and China. I will then turn to recurring national images and stereotypes of the Far East and how China and the Chinese were presented in local newspapers in Newcastle. This contextual information will help to situate the ensuing discussion of the collections and their contents.

In the early to mid-nineteenth century, the society's membership was dominated by the commercial middle classes of Newcastle as its annual membership fee largely excluded working-class readers from becoming regular members. The society acquired many curious objects and books, including a wombat and duck-billed platypus, preserved in spirit, and an Egyptian mummy. It has also been at the centre of many technological and scientific innovations. George Stephenson first presented his miner's safety lamp to the Lit & Phil in 1815, and the first demonstration of a working electric lamp took place in the society's lecture theatre in 1879. The Lit & Phil became a hub of intellectual and scientific progress and discussion in Newcastle, as a result of the broad range of interests of its affluent members. In *British Clubs and Societies, 1589-1899*

(2000) Peter Clark discusses how these literary and philosophical societies were able to encompass a broad range of their members' interests. These 'provincial bodies', growing out of industrial towns like Newcastle, Birmingham and Manchester, found that they were able to attract socially diverse memberships, whose discussions encompassed science and issues of social improvement, as well as historical and literary themes.<sup>4</sup> Clark's study on the associational nature of societies like Newcastle's Lit & Phil underpins my assertion that the acquisition of travel collections did not happen in isolation from the members of the Society, and that the development of 'Travel Writing: China' at the turn of the twentieth century hinged on the interests and desires of the society's membership.

The Lit & Phil has a long history as a stalwart intellectual institution in the North East. Understanding the changing historical context of the region since the Lit & Phil's foundation, and Newcastle's industrial and cultural development thus offers some insight into the international interest of members of the society.<sup>5</sup> Examining Newcastle's library scene from 1850-2000, John C. Day situates the Lit & Phil within a wider landscape of libraries in the North East.<sup>6</sup> He suggests that whilst library development in Newcastle has broadly followed national trends, a number of collections of national significance grew out of the specialist libraries of industrial institutions, such as The Elswick Works Literary and Scientific Institute, opened in 1848. Day credits the

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.111.

<sup>5</sup>See, Dick Keys and Ken Smith, *Armstrong's River Empire: Tyne Shipyards That Supplied The World 1852-1948* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Tyne Bridge Publishing, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> John C. Day, "The Library Scene in an English City: Newcastle upon Tyne Libraries 1850-2000," in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Alistair Black and Peter Hoare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 206-15 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521780971.018>>

Lit & Phil for its role in the development and support of this library scene and the city's broader intellectual growth and activities.

The Lit & Phil's own accounts of its founding and development provide further contextual detail. Robert Spence Watson's *History of the Literary & Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1793-1896* (1897) is a key resource documenting events and changes in the Society since its foundation. On the subject of the library, Spence Watson clearly identifies that travel texts made up a significant proportion of the library's collection towards the end of the eighteenth century:

There were 20 folios, 142 quartos, 240 octavos, 27 duodecimos, and 10 maps! The greater part of the books were what at that time were called works upon Natural Philosophy (and what we should style scientific books), and books of travel.<sup>7</sup>

This focus on the travel collections held by the Lit & Phil underlines the fact that the subject has played an important part in the Lit & Phil's library since its inception.<sup>8</sup>

The histories of library culture in the North East, and of the Lit & Phil in particular, are an incredibly useful resource for understanding the development of the library. I often draw from these texts, however, my research is not simply another historical study of Newcastle or a descriptive overview of the research potential of the Lit & Phil's library. My research not only offers an original reading of the Lit & Phil and its collections, but also offers a new methodological approach to travel writing in regional libraries.

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Spence Watson, *History of the Literary and Philosophical Society (1793-1896)* (London: Walter Scott, 1897), p.175.

<sup>8</sup> Also see Charles Parish, *The History of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1896-1989* (Newcastle: Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1990).

*Arts and Culture*

On 13 October 1840, Newcastle's mayor, John Carr, held an internationally themed, fancy dress ball at the Assembly Room, at which was seen the national dress of many Asian countries, including China.<sup>9</sup> In the eighteenth century, balls played an important function in Georgian society as an arena 'of display' in metropolitan towns.<sup>10</sup> Newcastle's Assembly Rooms opened in 1776 and were a popular entertainment venue, even as the fashion for assemblies dwindled in the nineteenth century. What is intriguing about this instance is that this fancy-dress ball combines the Georgian tradition of 'display' in society, with the display of international dress. This ball particularly seems to have been very popular. T. Fordyce recorded that '[u]pwards of a thousand cards of invitation were issued, and this brilliant assembly was graced by the presence of nearly eight hundred ladies and gentlemen.'<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, we cannot know how accurate these outfits were but this gathering of international dress demonstrates that Newcastle's 'polite' society had global interests, in national dress at least.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The full reference in *Local Records; or, Historical Register of Remarkable Events which have occurred in Northumberland and Durham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Berwick-upon-Tweed, V* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: T. Fordyce, 1867) reads 'October 13 [1840]. - A fancy and full dress ball, upon the scale of unusual magnitude and splendour, was given by the mayor of Newcastle (John Carr, esq.), at the Assembly Room, in that town. Upwards of a thousand cards of invitation were issued, and this brilliant assembly was graced by the presence of nearly eight hundred ladies and gentlemen. The whole affair passed off in the most admirable manner. All appeared delighted with the amusements of the eventing, and all felt no less obliged to the worthy mayor and mayoress for having provided such splendid an entertainment. The fancy dresses were numerous and elegant, and upon the whole interesting. They embraced the costumes of France, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Germany, Tyrol, Naples, Poland, Albania, Turkey, Greece, Hungary, Persia, China, Circassia, Arabia, Canada, and Africa.' p.134.

<sup>10</sup> Helen Berry, 'Creating Polite Space: The Organisation and Social Function of the Newcastle Assembly Rooms', *Creating and Consuming Culture in North-East England, 1660-1830*, ed. by Helen Berry & Jeremy Gregory (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), p.120.

<sup>11</sup> Fordyce, *Local Records*, p.134.

<sup>12</sup> 'One of the great events of the late Victorian period was the Diamond Jubilee Fancy Dress Ball held at Devonshire House on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1897. John Thomson was one of several photographers chosen to

The region's interest in China is also attested by a host of other cultural and practical evidence, not least the acquisitions of northern intellectual societies, such as the Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle-upon-Tyne which was originally housed in the Lit & Phil. Due to the size of the natural history collections and the spatial limitations of the Lit & Phil's building, it quickly became apparent that the natural history collections and library could not co-exist. As a result, in 1829 the Natural History Society was formed as a separate organisation, and by 1833 they had purchased their own site to display their collections. The Natural History Society's habit for collecting items from China reaches back to the eighteenth century, when the Society was still housed at the Lit & Phil. During this period, both the Natural History Society and the Lit & Phil acquired a considerable number of books about China that complemented their other physical collections. These acquisitions demonstrate the intellectual and cultural interest in China of institutions across the city.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Natural History Society became a repository for interesting artefacts brought back to the North East from China by individuals, soldiers or consul members, as can be seen from the 'List of Presents' contained in the Annual Reports of the Natural History Society, which records the items they received.<sup>13</sup> These gifts from China, all listed in the 'miscellaneous' category, included: a Chinese lady's scarf embroidered with gold, a model of a Chinese water mill, portions of a prepared edible bird's nest, a case of bird skins, three Chinese Shields, two Hats, three Umbrellas, a pair of Mandarin's Boots, a Flag, three Esquimaux Dresses, three Cloaks, one Bark Dress, one Sponge Jacket, Tiles, one Skull,

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photograph those who attended. The album with the photographs reproduced in photogravure was presented to the Duchess of Devonshire'. Stephen White, *John Thomson: Life and Photographs* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1985), p.33. Thomson was an acclaimed and popular travel writer himself, producing several accounts of his time in China, one of which, *Through China with a Camera*, is included in the Lit & Phil's collection and will be analysed in this thesis.

<sup>13</sup> *Annual Reports of the Natural History Society for the years 1829-1864.*

one Spear, and two pieces of Wood.<sup>14</sup> In 1842, Captain Gustavus Hamilton Coulson of the Royal Navy donated a large number of items from China. Amongst his gifts were bows, arrows, a matchlock, a shield, helmets, caps, a banner and an umbrella.<sup>15</sup> The Society's Annual Reports also offer information about another of Coulson's donations, a 'Chinese Lady's Foot', which the Report confidently asserts will be a 'novel acquisition to the museum'.<sup>16</sup> A historical register from the period records that the items donated by Coulson were 'tastefully put up in the museum by the curator, in one of the compartments, and attract much of the notice of the visitors.'<sup>17</sup> The acquisition and acceptance of these objects demonstrates that the Natural History Society was interested in many aspects of China, and the lives of its inhabitants. The domestic and every day represented by an umbrella or hat, were accepted alongside the unusual, most obviously evidenced by the Chinese lady's foot.

The majority of these gifts to the Natural History Society were given by military men, such as Captain Coulson and Captain Collinson. Collinson, who went on to be appointed Vice-Admiral Sir Richard Collinson, was born in Gateshead in 1811, and after successfully negotiating the 'great river of China, the Yang-tsze-kiang' during the first Opium War, went on to survey the Chinese coast to 'enable merchant ships to take advantage of the openings gained by the war into the various new ports in that country'.<sup>18</sup> Commander Coulson was also local to the North East and had a family seat

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<sup>14</sup> *Natural History Society Annual Reports* (Natural History Society Library and Archive NEWITM.2006.H2580).

All of these items were acquired between 1844 and 1863.

<sup>15</sup> Fordyce, *Local Records*, p.160-161.

<sup>16</sup> *Natural History Society Annual Reports (ending 1824, 1843, 1844)*, p.5.

<sup>17</sup> Fordyce, *Local Records*, p.161

<sup>18</sup> 'Obituary: Vice-Admiral Sir Richard Collinson, K.C.B.', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography, Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)* 5 (1883), 606-609 (p.606-607).



at Blenkinsopp Castle in Northumberland.<sup>19</sup> These military connections, rather than trade or consulate links, brought the members of the Natural History Society into contact with items from China. In this respect, the Opium Wars transformed awareness about and interest in China in the North East. It is clear that those coming back from China believed that this diverse range of gifts would be of interest to the Society.

Whilst the Opium Wars were evidently influential, nonetheless, the origins of these intellectual interests can be traced, in part, to the commercial connections between the North East and China in the period. Newcastle had grown to become a port of international significance, with a huge volume of global traffic passing through, by the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>20</sup> Unlike ports which focused on passenger liners, Newcastle was a tramp port, dominated by the movement of bulk cargo, especially coal.<sup>21</sup> Despite the dominance of coal, however, according to *Browne's Export List 1892-1905*, Newcastle shipped no coal to China during the period covered by the lists. It appears that Middlesbrough held the monopoly of shipping directly to China in the North East. During the late nineteenth century, pig, bar and rail iron was shipped from Middlesbrough to Hong Kong and Shanghai, and orders ranged from five tons of bar iron (August 1893) to 1250 tons of pig iron (December 1894).<sup>22</sup> In 1893, 4389 tons of rail iron was shipped to Port Arthur from the Wearside port. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, it was not uncommon to find a direct route to China, likely to be Hong Kong or Shanghai, from Middlesbrough every two months. Despite the fact that the majority of direct sailings between the North East and China were conducted from

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<sup>19</sup> See John Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry; or, commoners of Great Britain and Ireland enjoying territorial possessions or high official rank, but uninvested with heritable honours* (London: Henry Colburn, 1837), p.525-526.

<sup>20</sup> Graeme J. Milne, *North-East England 1850-1914: The Dynamics of a Maritime-Industrial Region* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), p.19.

<sup>21</sup> A tramp service, opposed to a liner service, has no fixed schedule or route. Ships can be available at short notice to sail to or from any port.

<sup>22</sup> *Browne's Export List 1892-1905* (DT.NCE/16 Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums).

Middlesbrough, Newcastle's great shipping industry was building vessels to compete in the global China trade.<sup>23</sup> After the one hundred and eighteen day passage of the *Oliver Cromwell*, a Tyne built ship, between Shanghai and the Downs, off the Kent coast, local interests in Newcastle seized the opportunity to claim that Tyne built ships could compete with the clippers coming out of 'other shipbuilding centres especially for the China tea trade'.<sup>24</sup> Ships crossing from England to China which had the potential, or reputation, of swift passages often commanded a much higher freight rate than other vessels.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the limited shipping between Newcastle and China, there were still those in the region who had an active interest in trade relations with the Far East. In 1829, James Losh, a prominent local lawyer and founding member of the Lit & Phil, made a speech to a public meeting in the Guildhall, Newcastle of 'great length and brilliancy', with the suggestion of establishing an association with the view of advancing free trade with India and China.<sup>26</sup> Losh's brothers were prominent businessmen in the North East. William Losh was an 'entrepreneurial businessman who founded the Walker Iron Works', and John Losh had connections with the banker Aubone Surtees.<sup>27</sup> There is little doubt that James would have been aware of the impact that direct trade between Newcastle and China would have had. Unlike the Wear which was shipping iron directly to China, the commodity-filled Tyne built ships would make their way to London to stock up on goods before embarking on their international

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<sup>23</sup> Richard E. Keys, *Dictionary of Tyne Sailing Ships: Record of Merchant Sailing Ships Owned, Registered and Built In the Port of Tyne from 1830 to 1930* (Benwell: Richard E. Keys, 1998), p.98.

<sup>24</sup> Keys, p.99-100.

<sup>25</sup> Keys writes 'In 1850 the American clipper the *Oriental* (Capt. Nathaniel B. Palmer) acquired the right reputation by averaging 204 ¼ miles per day on a passage from New York to Hong Kong where she was immediately snapped-up to carry tea to London at £6 per ton – which worked out at something like seventy per cent of her building cost of \$70,000!' p.98.

<sup>26</sup> Fordyce, *Local Records*, p.87.

<sup>27</sup> Berry, p.137.

journeys. It was not unknown for an outward-bound clipper to take coal from the North East, ‘for some Chinese or intermediate port’, and bring tea back to London. Thus, Newcastle was thoroughly implicated in the Chinese trade networks.<sup>28</sup>

### ***Lord Armstrong and Elswick***

During the 1870s and early 1880s, eleven vessels were completed for the Chinese government at the Elswick works, more than for Britain, Holland or Australia.<sup>29</sup> Lord Armstrong’s Elswick works on the banks of the Tyne, which employed over twenty thousand people in its heyday, produced ships, hydraulic cranes and arms on an international scale and, by the mid-nineteenth century, was in demand around the world.<sup>30</sup> China’s finest Man-of-War was also built at the Elswick works. It would be lost to the Japanese, also Armstrong customers, in July 1894, less than 10 years after leaving Newcastle.<sup>31</sup> To collect these vessels, the Chinese government sent naval forces to Newcastle. In 1887, almost six hundred officers and men of the Imperial Chinese Navy arrived on the transport ship *Too Nan*, to collect the cruisers *Chih Yuan* and *Ching Yuan*, which had been built by Armstrong. The arrival of the Chinese crew in ‘dark blue uniforms, light blue waist scarves and black turbans’ and officers in ‘Chinese hats and dark blue suits with black velvet facings and trimmings’ was followed with great interest by those in Newcastle.<sup>32</sup> The late entrance of five hundred and eighty

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<sup>28</sup> Keys, p.101.

<sup>29</sup> Keys and Smith, p.7.

<sup>30</sup> William George Armstrong was born in 1810 in Shieldfield, Newcastle, and led a life characterised by experimentation and success. Newcastle was a fortuitous place for Armstrong to be born. Mining was a centuries old industry in the region. Iron and lead works were an established part of North East industry, which in turn stimulated shipbuilding on the region’s rivers. By the mid-eighteenth century these industries were still ‘little more than pinpricks in a fabric that was still essentially mediaeval’. All of this was to change with the explosion of the rail industry in the nineteenth century, during which Newcastle remained the ‘sole producer [...] of locomotive engines in the world’. The North East was becoming a place of innovation, and it is in this environment that Armstrong came to dominate. See David Dougan, *The Great Gun-Maker: The Life of Lord Armstrong* (Newcastle: Frank Graham, 1971), pp.18-19.

<sup>31</sup> ‘CHINA LOST THREE WAR SHIPS’, *New York Times* (1857-1922) 1 August 1894.

<sup>32</sup> Keys and Smith, p.21.

Chinese sailors to the Tyne Theatre and Opera House on Westgate Road, only a few hundred yards from the Lit & Phil, during their stay in Newcastle in 1887, apparently provided the remaining audience with as much enjoyment as the play.<sup>33</sup> Dick Keys and Ken Smith suggest that there is evidence that Chinese sailors were received very well on Tyneside, and some were invited to be entertained in local family homes.<sup>34</sup>

As well as a successful engineer, Armstrong was also the sixth and longest serving president of the Lit & Phil Society. His tenure lasted forty years, from 1860 until his death in 1900. The international connections of Armstrong's business led to personal acquaintances in the Far East for the Armstrong family. Craggside, Armstrong's house in Rothbury, Northumberland, has an 'oriental' or Japanese Room, which houses a selection of ceramics and prints given to the Armstrong's by Yorisada Tokugawa, the uncle of the Empress of Japan. As a leading industrialist of his age, a key member of Newcastle's intellectual institutions, and a collector of 'oriental' art and objects, Armstrong straddles many of the thematic concerns of this thesis: Newcastle's local and international context, its impact on the intellectual curiosity of the Lit & Phil, and the society's collecting and acquisition habits at the turn of the twentieth century. As I will argue, we can trace a clear correlation between the Lit & Phil's collections and larger regional interests during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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<sup>33</sup> Keys and Smith, p.21.

<sup>34</sup> Keys and Smith, p.23. Not all sailors sent to collect the cruisers survived their journey. Lien Chin Yuen, aged 21, and Chin Shou-Fu, aged 30, died in Newcastle Infirmary and were buried in St John's Cemetery at Elswick. Until 2017 the gravestones of the sailors were toppled but recently a project has been crowdfunded to undertake the restoration of the graves. See Newcastle Photographs Blog for an image of a Chinese headstone at St. John's Cemetery from 2006 < <http://newcastlephotos.blogspot.co.uk/2006/05/elswick-st-johns-cemetery.html> > [accessed 3 November 2017] and Zhang Zhihao and Wang Mingjie, 'Foreign field will be forever home for Chinese sailors', *Telegraph Online* < <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/world/china-watch/culture/chinese-graves-restored-in-newcastle/> > [accessed 11/02/2018]

## *China to America, via Newcastle*

One significantly overlooked aspect of Newcastle's exposure to China and the Chinese is the passing of Chinese crewmen and coolies through Newcastle's quayside during the 1920s and 1930s. By the 1920s, Chinese sailors had a reputation for being flexible and resourceful seamen. G. R. Worcester, a leading British authority on junks, assessed the competence of Chinese seamen in *Sail and Sampan in China* (1966). He wrote that whilst the largest proportion of Chinese sailors came from a relatively small geographical area in Kwangtung (Guangdong) and Fukien (Fujian), they were highly adaptable in their new environment and developed a 'skill and resourcefulness [which] is second to none in the world'.<sup>35</sup>

Manifests of those arriving off ships from foreign countries were a legal requirement of the United States government from 1820 onwards, and some details of Chinese crewmen departing from Newcastle are available in crew manifests from American ports. The transcripts give basic information about a ship's name, the names of passengers or crew travelling, the ship's arrival date in America, and importantly for the purposes of this thesis, the port of departure. These records offer other details such as 'race', 'position in ship's company', 'literacy', as well as their 'height', 'weight' and 'physical marks, peculiarities, or diseases'. These manifests also give details of how long each sailor had been at sea, which offers some indication of the experience of the Chinese crewmen, and how long they had been aboard the vessel they were connected with. Large numbers of ships crewed by Chinese sailors passed through Newcastle en route to America, which meant that the Chinese would likely have been a visible feature of life on the quayside. Documentation of these Chinese sailors is an unexplored line of

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<sup>35</sup> G.R. Worcester, *Sail and Sampan in China* (1966), qtd in Robert J. Schwendinger, 'Chinese Sailors: America's Invisible Merchant Marine, 1876-1905', *California History*, 57 (1978), 58-69 (p.63).

enquiry regarding the exposure and visibility of Chinese individuals in the North East during the early twentieth century.

One such vessel, travelling from Newcastle with a Chinese crew, was the *SS Solen*, an oil tanker owned by the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, and later, the Shell Company of Straits Settlements Ltd, Singapore (figure 1). The *Solen* was built in 1922 for the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company by Swan, Hunter & Wigham Richardson Ltd in Wallsend, Tyneside. Its engines were also built on Tyneside by Wallsend Slipway & Engineering Co. Ltd. It sailed with a predominantly Chinese crew, with the exception of the Master and the Mates who were English. The tanker was seized by the Japanese during the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), but was soon handed back to the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company. The *Solen* was broken up in China in 1949. Arriving in New Orleans from Newcastle on 19 October 1928, the *Solen's* manifest is detailed enough to list the physical marks of some of the Chinese sailors, including 'scar right side face', 'scar on right temple', and 'scar forehead'.<sup>36</sup> Other recorded marks include 'tattoo dragon left forearm' and 'mole on nose'. The English members of the crew appear to have been unscathed on their arrival in New Orleans. Whilst the scars on the Chinese crew members may be evidence of the dangers of life at sea on board an oil tanker, it may also be an example of the racial suspicion faced by Chinese crews. A record of a tattoo or a scar on an official document would make Chinese men easier to identify for the American authorities in the event of suspicious circumstances.<sup>37</sup> By recording physical and identifiable differences between Chinese crewmen, these manifests emphasise the importance of the visual in British and

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<sup>36</sup> List or Manifest of Aliens Employed on the Vessel as Members of Crew, *SS. Solen*, arriving in New Orleans from Newcastle-upon-Tyne October 19<sup>th</sup> 1928 < [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) >[accessed 16 June 2015]

<sup>37</sup> The Chinese Exclusion Act 1882 suspended the immigration of Chinese workers to the United States. By compiling physical details of the Chinese crewmen, crew manifests would also allow US authorities to account for all Chinese workers and expel those it deemed in violation of the exclusion act.

American perceptions of China and the Chinese. As we shall see, for the texts gathered in the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China', visual cues are repeatedly used as ways to vivify their accounts in intriguingly varied ways.

As well as the larger business dealings of Armstrong's Elswick works and the international movement of Chinese crewmen through Newcastle, the establishment of smaller scale businesses can also offer insight into Chinese life in the North East. The first Chinese laundry listed in a Newcastle trade directory belonged to Mr Fong. It was established in 1936 on Chillingham Road, Heaton, a suburb to the east of Newcastle city centre. Mr Fong's laundry expanded during the 1930s, and by 1940 there were premises at 158 Heaton Park Road, 159 Chillingham Road, and 1 Wandsworth Road in Heaton. It is possible that laundries were located closer to the quayside earlier in the twentieth century to cater for sailors coming through Newcastle, but due to a steady supply of passing trade, we may presume they did not deem it necessary to advertise in a local trade directory, meaning their existence remains unrecorded.<sup>38</sup>

Newcastle trade directories suggest that Chinese laundries appeared later and in fewer numbers than other port cities. In Liverpool and Birkenhead, the number of Chinese laundries grew from sixty-three in 1890, to over one hundred in 1907.<sup>39</sup> Cardiff had thirty Chinese laundries in 1911, all of which were attacked during the seamen's strike in July 1911, owing to the belief amongst the British striking seamen that the Chinese were strike breakers.<sup>40</sup> However, some positive representations of the Chinese and their businesses appeared in the local press in Cardiff. Joanne M. Cayford recounts

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<sup>38</sup> Some of the larger Royal Navy Vessels carried Chinese laundrymen aboard, and they were paid by the sailors rather than by the military. An unofficial list of Chinese laundrymen can be found for *HMS Ark Royal* and *Hermes* at the National Archives <

<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C4849916> > [accessed 14 July 2015]

<sup>39</sup> Gregor Benton and Edmund Terence Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain 1800 – Present: Economy, Transnationalism, Identity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.89.

<sup>40</sup> Benton and Gomez, p.89.

a 1910 article, 'Celestials and Wash Tub' about Chinese laundries. It praised the ability of the Chinese to deal with the laundry of poorer families, and particularly in their treatment of 'feminine attire'.<sup>41</sup> It was in this type of work, stated the correspondent, at which 'the Celestial' is said to be adept, concluding that 'possibly his skill and care in this direction are due to the increased retention of his general trade'.<sup>42</sup> Across Britain laundry thus offered the Chinese their first opportunity to move away from the regional quaysides, and into communities: what Gregor Benton and Edmund Terence Gomez term, from 'salt to soap'.<sup>43</sup> For a modern visitor to Newcastle, the most obvious connection with China is the flourishing Chinatown located on Stowell Street but it was not until the 1970s that Chinese restaurants sprang up in the area.<sup>44</sup>

What the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China' section helps to demonstrate is that, despite the limited record of commercial contact between China and Newcastle in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was clearly an intellectual appetite for information about, and narratives of, the Far East and particularly of China. The significant contracts from the Far East for ship building and the presence of Chinese sailors may have stimulated this interest even if, or perhaps even because, the population of resident Chinese in the city was so small.

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<sup>41</sup> Joanne M. Cayford, 'In Search of 'John Chinaman': Press Representations of the Chinese in Cardiff, 1906-1911', *Llafur: The Journal of the Society for the Study of Welsh Labour History*, 5 (1991), 37-50 (p.41).

<sup>42</sup> Cayford, p.41.

<sup>43</sup> Benton and Gomez, p.89. The next transition in Chinese business would be from 'soap to soy'. Following the second world war, Chinese immigrants took advantage of a post-war restaurant boom and an appetite for foreign food in Britain. As a result, a large number of Chinese restaurants were opened. The popularity of these restaurants and takeaways have allowed Chinatowns across Britain to develop and thrive.

<sup>44</sup> Newcastle's Chinatown is one of only five recognised Chinatowns in England. The others are in London, Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool.



## National and Regional Representations of China

### *Representations of China in Newcastle*

As we have noted, the practical influence of commerce with China was relatively limited at the turn of the century. Nonetheless, during this period when the Lit & Phil was actively acquiring books about China, newspapers in the North East, such as Newcastle's *Daily Chronicle*, maintained a surprisingly international outlook and printed stories from around the world. For example, in April 1900, when much international reporting was taken up by the Boer War in South Africa, the *Daily Chronicle* published stories on beheaded Chinese murderers in 'Pekin', hostilities at the beginning of the Boxer Rebellion, Russian activity in Manchuria and the protection of foreigners in China.<sup>45</sup> As well as covering stories from inside China, newspapers also published stories about Chinese individuals living in the North. In 1923, the *Chronicle* followed the story of Lee Doon, the second Chinese national to be executed in England, across three successive articles, which appeared on 3, 4 and 6 January. The story outlined Lee Doon's court appearance in Leeds, during which he was found guilty of murdering his employer, the owner of a Chinese laundry, and hiding his body in a trunk in the cellar. On 6 January 1923, the final story of Lee Doon appeared in the *Chronicle*, with the headline 'Executed Chinaman's Belief', in which the writer claimed that Doon

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<sup>45</sup> 'Affairs in China: A Missionary's Murderers Beheaded' and 'Russia and Corea', *Evening Chronicle*, 2 April 1900; 'Serious Situation in China: Increase of the Anti-Foreign Feeling. Further Arrests. Hostile Attitude of the Tsung-Li-Yamen.', *Evening Chronicle*, 16 April 1900; 'The Cloud in the Far East: Russian Activity in China and Corea. Growing Mistrust by Japan. Reported Warlike Preparations.', *Evening Chronicle*, 30 April 1900; and 'The "Boxers" and the Chinese Christians: Reported Massacre Denied', *Evening Chronicle*, 26 April 1900. Other stories included 'Affairs in China' [April 9<sup>th</sup>] about a railway from, Kalgan to 'Pekin'; Russia's diplomatic success in China and British appeals against Russian concessions and 'The Powers and China' [April 10<sup>th</sup>] which reports a note from England, America, France and Germany demanding the complete suppression of the Boxer Rebellion.

believed that he would be reincarnated, and that his final wish was to return as ‘anything than a Chinaman’.<sup>46</sup>

The reporting of this execution shows that the *Chronicle* believed that its readers would be interested in following the case of Doon through successive articles, despite the fact that the story was not local to Newcastle or Northumberland. The content of the articles contains much more than the formal details of the murder and sentence. The last article to appear includes Doon’s belief in reincarnation, his wish to be beheaded rather than hanged, the fact he had rice for his last meal and that he read Chinese illustrated magazines. Doon’s character, beliefs and incarceration all feature in the articles, and so it can be assumed that it was all perceived by the newspaper to be of interest to their readership in Newcastle. A Chinese man being sentenced to hang in England was still an exceptional event in 1923, and so remained newsworthy. The article ends with details of the first execution, which took place nineteen years before Doon’s: ‘[t]he other was Pong Arn who was executed at Walton Gaol on 3 May 1904, also for the murder of a compatriot’.<sup>47</sup>

Other stories from January 1923 about China in the *Chronicle* include ‘How Hi and Ho Lost Their Heads’ on 6 January, describing the first recorded eclipse in China, as told by the Astronomer Royal Sir Frank Dyson; ‘Miss Inglis and Chang Chu’ again on 6 January, which was the story of the arrest of Cyril Goodge who was detained for supplying a ‘chinaman’ with unrefined cocaine; and a political story about Chinese demands for Port Arthur appeared on 17 January. The range of articles about China and the Chinese, from Chinese myth to contemporary political demands, suggests that the

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<sup>46</sup> ‘EXECUTED CHINAMAN’S BELIEF’, *Evening Chronicle*, 6 January 1923, p.3. (Newcastle City Library – Microfilm).

<sup>47</sup> ‘EXECUTED CHINAMAN’S BELIEF’, p.3.

*Chronicle* believed their readership to be interested in understanding more than one aspect of Chinese life.

The reporting of China and the Chinese in regional newspapers adheres to broader recognisable cultural stereotypes found in Britain at the turn of the twentieth century. Critics have recognised that representations of China in Britain were often a reflection of developments and attitudes in the Western world, more than of the reality of the East.<sup>48</sup> Sybille Fritzsche suggests that discourses of travel writing offer two lenses through which to understand representations of China. She argues that orientalist perspectives understand China as ‘other’, framed by its own history and structures, unique, separate and bearing no semblance to the West.<sup>49</sup> Alternatively, China could be understood as an earlier version of the West, a ‘Middle Ages come alive’.<sup>50</sup> Fritzsche notes that the construction of China as an archaic form of the West is underpinned by an assumption that Darwinian processes of technological and scientific progress were a necessary societal goal. Subsequently, in this model, travel writers understood China to be on the path to technological and scientific industry, mirroring developments in Europe and America at the turn of the twentieth century.

Within these broader lenses, more specific cultural images and stereotypes became established within representations of China. One image easily identifiable to the British public at the turn of the twentieth century is that of the coolie worker. A coolie was a migrant labourer, and whilst these workers could be of different nationalities, for example Indian, Malay, or Javanese, the term has become synonymous with the Chinese immigrant labour force. Often in Britain, coolie labour was perceived to be a far-off

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<sup>48</sup> See Raymond Dawson, *Chinese Chameleon: An Analysis of European Conceptions of Chinese Civilizations* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>49</sup> Sybille C. Fritzsche, ‘Narrating China: Western Travelers in the Middle Kingdom after the Opium Wars’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Chicago, Illinois, 1995), p.13.

<sup>50</sup> Fritzsche, p.13.

issue as Chinese workers were usually sent to distant countries within the British Empire, such as Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand or Canada.<sup>51</sup> In theory, the coolie labourer would have a contract with his employer which stated his pay and conditions, as well as the designated length of his employment, after which he would be free to return to his native country or to remain in the country of his employment to work as a free man. However, the historian Hugh Tinker claims that, in reality, the use of a coolie work force allowed the West to ‘draw upon a pool of cheap labour with the minimum of restrictions and the maximum of leverage against the workers.’<sup>52</sup>

In 1874, the entomologist W. L. Distant addressed the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland on the subject of ‘Eastern Coolie Labour’. Distant claims that the Chinese are ‘inseparable to [a sugar] estate and fulfil a variety of occupations’ whilst making up a ‘cheerful body’ of workers.<sup>53</sup> However, Distant also writes that their ‘dwellings usually exhale a most disagreeable effluvium’, they gamble as ‘all Chinamen do’, and whilst they are industrious, they also have a ‘strong propensity to cheat’.<sup>54</sup> Distant’s lecture to the Anthropological Institute demonstrates how the image of the coolie was presented to an intellectual elite in Britain. His characterisation echoes the common representation of Chinese migrant labour in Western spheres as a lazy, cheeky, dirty and sly workforce. Whilst exceptions to this image did exist, Chinese coolies were often viewed as competing with a white workforce, and so racial, as well as economic tensions developed. In some countries,

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<sup>51</sup> The Coolie Immigration Committee was set up in the House of Commons in 1910 to ‘consider the question of Coolie Immigration in the Crown Colonies.’ ‘Coolie Immigration Committee’, *Historic Hansard Online* <<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1910/apr/06/coolie-immigration-committee>> [accessed 18 May 2015]

<sup>52</sup> Hugh Tinker qtd in Evelyn Hu-Dehart, ‘Chinese Coolie Labour in Cuba in the Nineteenth Century: Free Labor of Neoslavery’, *Contributions in Black Studies: A Journal of African and Afro-American Studies*, 12 (1994), 38-54 (p.39).

<sup>53</sup> W.L. Distant, ‘Eastern Coolie Labour’, *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 3 (1874), 139-145 (p.142).

<sup>54</sup> Distant, p.142.

fear of the moral influence and economic damage of Chinese migrant labour resulted in laws to limit the movements or the rights of Chinese workers.<sup>55</sup> In ‘Travel Writing: China’, Somerset Maugham’s *On A Chinese Screen* (1922) describes the coolies he watches from a distance as malformed, beasts of burden, physically damaged by their toil.<sup>56</sup> Mrs Archibald Little writes *In The Land of the Blue Gown* (1902) that ‘[o]ur big brute of a coolie disappeared without his wages one day.’<sup>57</sup> Like Distant’s claim that coolies had a ‘propensity to cheat’, Little claims that her ‘brute of a coolie’ stole a jacket, and never returned to her employment. The ‘Travel Writing: China’ section thus reiterates many of the accepted cultural images of China and the Chinese, such as the coolie. As we shall see, factors such as reader expectation or a publisher’s demands, rather than the authenticity of the traveller’s experiences, may have played a part in the representations of Chinese individuals in the books contained in ‘Travel Writing: China’.

The image of the hard-working coolie functions in sharp contrast to the picture of the Celestial Empire, and its delicate inhabitants, which began with the first European travellers to China. The term Celestial Empire arises from the image of the Chinese monarch as the ‘son of Heaven’, and the Chinese as ‘Celestials’.<sup>58</sup> The citizen of the Celestial Empire, or Flowery Land, was often represented through the trend of chinoiserie that was hugely popular during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, reaching the peak of its vogue in the 1750s. Chinoiserie was first imported from China and Japan in the eighteenth century and was characterised by its use of fanciful, exotic

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<sup>55</sup> ‘Australia (1855), New Zealand (1881), the United States (1882) and Canada (1885)’. Anne-Marie Lee Loy, ‘“... the Chinese are preferred to all others”: Nineteenth-Century Representations of the Chinese in Trinidad and British Guiana’, *Asian Studies Review*, 27 (2003), 205-225 (pp.205-206).

<sup>56</sup> W. Somerset Maugham, *On A Chinese Screen* (London: William Heinmann, 1922).

<sup>57</sup> Mrs Archibald Little, *In the Land of the Blue Gown* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1908), p.226.

<sup>58</sup> Ross Forman, *China in the Victorian Imagination: Empires Entwined* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.11.

landscapes and oriental scenes.<sup>59</sup> Its popularity led to British designers replicating imported designs and creating their own imagined versions of China and the East. One of the most prevalent examples of chinoiserie is willow pattern pottery, which often depicts the story of young love, the wrath of a scorned mandarin and an idyllic landscape. Whilst the images produced in chinoiserie were often landscapes and scenes, the Chinese population did not escape capture on crockery and cabinets. They, like the landscape, are uniform and neat: '[h]ats, shoes, and cheekbones are worn high, while moustaches, pigtails, and finger-nails are encouraged to grow to inordinate length'.<sup>60</sup> One result of the trend of chinoiserie is that early visitors to China found it difficult, 'if not impossible, to reconcile their preconceived notions of the country with its actual appearance.'<sup>61</sup> Rather than finding the mythical and romantic Cathay, travellers found the realities of life in China at odds with their expectations.

There are many pictorial representations of China, both visual and verbal, to be found in the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China' section. Photographers, such as John Thomson who travelled to China in the late nineteenth century, and who was included in the section, present vast panoramic landscapes incorporating pagodas and temples, as well as a range of Chinese people from the homeless and poverty-stricken to Manchu brides on their wedding day. Through such images, we can trace how authors sought to confirm and/or challenge readerly expectation. Moreover, the apparent popularity of some of these books, evidenced by their rebinding and maintenance since their acquisition, helps us gauge the extent to which Lit & Phil readers, in particular, sought out images that gave them a clearer sense of what China actually looked like.

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<sup>59</sup> See the V & A's Chinoiserie Style Guide, *Victoria & Albert Museum* < <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/s/style-guide-chinoiserie/> > [accessed 06 November 2017]

<sup>60</sup> Hugh Honour, *Chinoiserie: The Vision of Cathay* (London: John Murray, 1961), p.6.

<sup>61</sup> Honour, p.5.

By the end of the Victorian era, China was often presented to a British audience as an active threat through its connection with opium consumption.<sup>62</sup> In Victorian fiction, China as a whole was repeatedly conflated with the figure of the opium smoker.<sup>63</sup> The Chinese opium addict, located both in China and in the East End of London, which was to become synonymous with opium smoking in Britain, was pictured as a ‘beast in repetitive motion’, a frail animal sustained on ‘meagre rations and opium dross’<sup>64</sup>. Like the celestial citizen, unable to move into a modernising world, the opium wreck represented an ‘absolute lack of forward realistic drive’.<sup>65</sup> Physically, the opium wreck was represented as animalistic or subhuman, totally ‘other’ to the muscular Christianity admired in Victorian England. In ‘Travel Writing: China’, many travellers in China accepted opium use amongst their Chinese assistants. Isabella Bird suggests that opium use offers some relief from the hardships of their working life, whereas to missionaries like Dugald Christie, whose account *Thirty Years in Moukden* (1914) is also included in ‘Travel Writing: China’, opium was something to be renounced by the Chinese if they were to follow a more spiritual path.<sup>66</sup>

The small population of Chinese immigrants in London’s East End, often there to serve the needs of the transient population coming from the surrounding ports, became symbolic of a perceived threat that opium presented to British men and women at the heart of the Empire.<sup>67</sup> Inspired by London’s East End, especially Limehouse,

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<sup>62</sup> See Ross Forman, *China in the Victorian Imagination: Empires Entwined* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>63</sup> Keith McMahan, *The Fall of the God of Money: Opium Smoking in Nineteenth-century* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), p.15.

<sup>64</sup> McMahan, p.4.

<sup>65</sup> McMahan, p.4.

<sup>66</sup> Dugald Christie, *Thirty Years in Moukden 1883-1913* (London: Constable & Co, 1914).

Isabella Bird, *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond* (London: John Murray, 1899) p.159.

<sup>67</sup> In regard to the Chinese immigrant population in London Foxcroft writes, ‘[t]here had been Chinese living in the East End of London, mainly Stepney, since the 1780s but for most of the nineteenth century this small community numbered less than 100 throughout Britain, although numbers increased from the 1860s. At the start of that decade there were about 150 Chinese in the whole country, the number

authors concocted shadowy figures such as Sax Rohmer's Fu Manchu, tales of corrupted women, and hints of violence and drug smuggling. In his travels through the East End, Charles Dickens the Younger depicts the space which Chinese sailors occupied:

Chaos and space are here at present almost at odds which is which, for improvement has at the present moment only reached the point of partial destruction, and some of the dismal dog-holes still swarm with squalid life, while others gape tenantless and ghastly with sightless windows and darksome doorways, waiting their turn to be swept away into the blank open space that yawns by their side. At the bottom of this slough of grimy despond is the little breathless garret where Johnny the Chinaman swelters night and day curled up on his gruesome couch, carefully toasting in the dim flame of a smoky lamp the tiny lumps of delight which shall transport the opium-smoker for awhile into his paradise.<sup>68</sup>

Even during the peak of Chinese residency in Limehouse, numbers were small and by the 1930s the Chinese population in Limehouse had dwindled and dispersed to other parts of London.<sup>69</sup> Nonetheless, throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Limehouse and East London held an oriental mystique, representations of which were infused with glamour and danger.

Despite the popularity of the Fu Manchu stories at the start of the twentieth century, the Lit & Phil does not hold any copies of Rohmer's books. However, the library does hold eight books by Robert Hans Van Gulik, a Dutch diplomat and writer, who spent much of professional life in China.<sup>70</sup> Gulik is best remembered, if

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increasing to nearly 7000 in the following twenty years.' Louise Foxcroft, *The Making of Addiction: The 'Use and Abuse' of Opium in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p.65.

<sup>68</sup> Charles Dickens the Younger qtd in John Seed, 'Limehouse Blues: Looking for 'Chinatown in the London Docks, 1900-40', *History Workshop Journal*, 62 (2006), 58-85 (p.59).

<sup>69</sup> See Seed, p.58-68.

<sup>70</sup> The Lit & Phil holds the following of Gulik's Judge Dee books: *The Chinese Nail Murders* (1961) (Main Library Fiction P98133), *The Chinese Maze Murders* (1962) (Main Library Fiction P98943), *The Haunted Monastery* (1961, 1963) (Main Library Fiction P0630), *The Willow Pattern* (1965) (Main Library Fiction P01570), *Murder in Canton* (1966) (Main Library Fiction P02472), *Judge Dee at Work* (1967) (Main



remembered at all, for his Judge Dee stories.<sup>71</sup> Unlike Rohmer, who played on growing sinophobia in Britain at the start of the twentieth century, Gulik's stories follow a Chinese protagonist, detective Judge Dee, in solving mysteries in ancient China, and rely heavily on traditions of Chinese crime writing, or 'gong'an'.<sup>72</sup> The Lit & Phil notes in its catalogue that Gulik's books are Chinese Fiction, or Chinese Historical Fiction. The inclusion of these books suggests that the library offered an alternative narrative to Rohmer's 'Yellow Peril' stories by the mid-twentieth century. By acquiring stories set in ancient China, with Chinese protagonists, influenced by Chinese writing traditions, albeit written by a Dutch diplomat, the Lit & Phil gave its membership fictitious accounts of China which were grounded in Eastern traditions in the mid-twentieth century.

The images of the coolie, the opium wreck and the sinister embodiment of the orient, as in Fu Manchu, all serve to emphasise an 'exotic' difference between China and the Chinese being represented, and the British readership at the turn of twentieth century. Zhang Longxi writes that the West traditionally saw China as the 'image of the ultimate other'.<sup>73</sup> China could become any image the West required, and as such could become any 'other'. At the turn of the twentieth century, industrial, social and economic revolutions were changing the nature of the western world, which in turn changed representations of China in order to maintain an identifiable alternative to the West. As Zhang argues, until the Opium Wars (1839–1842 and 1856–1860), China's difference

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Library Fiction P02896), *Necklace and Calabash* (1967) (Main Library Fiction P03158), and *Poets and Murder* (1968) (Main Library Fiction P03571).

<sup>71</sup> See Christopher Fowler, 'Forgotten Authors No. 26: Robert Van Gulik', *The Independent*, 08 March 2009 < <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/forgotten-authors-no-26-robert-van-gulik-1637520.html> > [accessed 10 January 2018]

<sup>72</sup> Sabrina Yuan Hao, 'Transcending Cultural Boundaries: Robert Van Gulik's Judge Dee Detective Stories', *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, 43.4 (2016), 551-567 (p.553).

<sup>73</sup> Zhang Longxi, 'The Myth of the Other: China in the Eyes of the West', *Critical Inquiry*, 15 (1988), 108-131 (p.110).

from the West was often looked upon as an opportunity, rather than an indicator of weakness or backwardness. However, seeing China as technologically and culturally backward was to become an enduring view throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reinforced by specific stereotypes of Chinese degeneracy or amorality.<sup>74</sup>

During the same period, China became a prominent political issue for the British government, with the China Question overshadowing ‘all other international issues’ in British politics.<sup>75</sup> The decline of the ruling Chinese imperial government, Western expansion, and China’s unexpected defeat by Japan in 1895, threatened the stability of China. This led some in British politics, including the Prime Minister, to fear a power struggle between the great European nations ‘for the ruins of the Chinese Empire’.<sup>76</sup> Russian territorial expansion and influence in Northern China became a key concern for some in British politics as it was seen as a threat to British trade in the Far East. T. G. Otte writes that Russian influence seemed to grow as other empires, such as the Ottoman, Persian and Chinese, fell into decline.<sup>77</sup> The Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, was openly criticized for the government’s approach towards China. Instead of promoting an active expansion of British influence and territorial concessions in China, advocated by some politicians, Salisbury was primarily concerned with the maintenance

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<sup>74</sup> Zheng Yangwen writes ‘[f]rom the beginning of European encounter and engagement, whether seen through the eyes of the Jesuits or and Parisian intellectuals of the 1660’s, European scholars of different convictions applauded China for various reasons. The country inspired and enlightened. Its difference was not weakness, but rather opportunity for many, from men of religion to men of commerce. This remained the case until the nineteenth century, when political opinions towards the Middle Kingdom began to change. Even then, China still had an army of admirers and supporters.’ Zheng, Yangwen, ed., *The Chinese Chameleon Revisited: From the Jesuits to Zhang Yimou* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2013) p.20.

<sup>75</sup> T. G. Otte, *The China Question: Great Power Rivalry and British Isolation, 1894-1905* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.2.

<sup>76</sup> Rosebery (Liberal Prime Minister 1894-1895 and Foreign Secretary 1885-1890 and 1892-1894) qtd in T.G. Otte, *The China Question*, p.1.

<sup>77</sup> T.G. Otte, *The China Question*, p.3. Otte suggests that this was because of Russia’s close proximity to China.

of British interests. He was also criticised for failing to curtail Russian expansion into British spheres of interest in China, such as the Yangtze Basin.<sup>78</sup> The government's foreign policy towards China was thus fiercely criticized by the Liberal opposition in the House of Commons.

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<sup>78</sup> Clifford reminds his readers that 'spheres of interest, unlike leaseholds or concessions or settlements, had no standing in diplomacy or international law', Nicholas Clifford, *"A Truthful Impression of the Country": British and American Travel Writing in China, 1880-1949* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2001), p.1.

***Robert Morrison and Lectures at the Lit & Phil***

In the Main Gallery of the Lit & Phil hangs a portrait of a man in black robes, surrounded by Chinese writings (figure 2). The man in the painting is Robert Morrison, a pioneer of the Protestant religion in China, who was born in Morpeth, Northumberland and raised in Newcastle from the age of three.<sup>79</sup> As well as being the first protestant missionary in China, he was also a respected linguist, lexicographer, author and translator. Born in 1782, Morrison became interested in undertaking a career as a missionary as a young man. He trained with his father as boot-tree maker in Newcastle, but after the death of his mother in 1802 decided to pursue a career as a missionary. After his training at the London Missionary Society, Morrison was unable to secure passage to China with the East India Company because of their policy of refusing passage to missionaries. Instead Morrison sailed to China via North America, attempting to convert his fellow passengers and crew along the way. He arrived in Macao in 1807.

Morrison acknowledged that his attempts to convert China to Christianity were going to be arduous. As he journeyed towards China for the first time he wrote in his journal, 'I feel more and more my own insufficiency for so great a work'.<sup>80</sup> During his missionary work in China it is estimated that Morrison converted less than a dozen

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<sup>79</sup> Morrison's portrait was painted and donated by Henry Perlee Parker in 1833 (1795-1873). Parker was a local artist, originally from Devonport, and founding member of the Northumberland Institution for the Promotion of the Fine Arts.

<sup>80</sup> Eliza Morrison, *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of Robert Morrison* (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1839), p.111.

Chinese people. However, the measure of his success as a missionary was in paving the way for others who would continue his work.<sup>81</sup>

China was not a welcoming place for missionaries in the early 1800s. The imperial government had forbidden the teaching of the Chinese language to any foreigners under pain of death. A commentator noted that one of Morrison's Chinese tutors always carried shoes with him, so he would be able to claim that he was there to repair Morrison's shoes if anyone was to ask. The 'brutal conditions' enforced by the Chinese government ensured Morrison had to depend on his own ingenuity during the China Mission that led to 'his impressive chain of accomplishments' requiring bravery and almost inexhaustible patience.<sup>82</sup>

It was also forbidden for foreigners to remain in China for purposes other than trade. As it was illegal for Morrison to remain in China as a missionary, he was employed by the East India Company as a translator, as they had recognised his talents with the Chinese language. His role with the East India Company legitimised his presence in China and funded his missionary activities, mostly his attempts to translate the Bible into Chinese. During his twenty-seven years in China, Morrison focused mostly on translations, and between 1815 and 1822 the East India Company published his six volume *Dictionary of the Chinese Language*.

Morrison's talent with the Chinese language led him to produce, amongst other texts, religious tracts in Chinese and grammar books for those wanting to learn the language. In addition, he published his translation of the Bible with the assistance of his

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<sup>81</sup> See Fuk Tsang-Ying, 'Evangelist at the Gate: Robert Morrison's Views on Mission', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 63.2 (2012), 306-330.

<sup>82</sup> Christopher A. Daily, *Robert Morrison and the Protestant Plan for China* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 2013), p.7-8.

See J. Barton Starr, 'The Legacy of Robert Morrison', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 22.2 (1998), 73-76 < <https://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/electronic-books/articles/legacy-morrison.pdf> > [accessed 17 January 2018]

friend and mission collaborator William Milne (1785-1822) in 1823.<sup>83</sup> The preface to *Grammar of the Chinese Language* (1815) asserts that a student should not be under the impression that Chinese ‘is a very easy thing to acquire’, yet it is not ‘insurmountable’ for an Englishmen to learn.<sup>84</sup>

Another of Morrison and Milne’s joint ventures was the establishment of an Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca. Morrison was the founder, and Milne the college’s first president. The college was set up to provide Chinese-language training for missionaries and the education of local boys. The Anglo-Chinese College was hailed as a success and a similar institution was created in Singapore, where Morrison was invited to be vice-president. As well as his missionary and translation works, Morrison was also invited to be a part of Lord Amherst’s embassy to Peking (Beijing) in 1816 as an interpreter. The aim of the embassy was to improve the relations between Britain and China, but ultimately the embassy failed. It did, however, cement Morrison’s reputation as a man with intimate knowledge of China and the Chinese, and the principal Chinese scholar of the early nineteenth century. Morrison returned to England just once during his time as a missionary. He left China in December 1823 and arrived in England in March 1824. During his time at home, Morrison gave a sermon at the High Bridge Chapel in Newcastle, appealing for funds to support his mission (figure 3). His time in Britain did not last and he returned to his work in China in 1826.

Robert Morrison died in 1834. He was buried in the Protestant cemetery in Macao. His grave notes what many believe to be his greatest achievements: his dictionary of the Chinese language, the founding of the Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca and his translations of the Bible. Morrison’s portrait remains in a prominent

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<sup>83</sup> The Lit & Phil also holds a copy of William Milne’s *Life in China* (1857).

<sup>84</sup> Robert Morrison, *Grammar of the Chinese Language* (Serampore: Mission Press, 1815).

position within the Lit & Phil, in the Main Gallery and the James Knott Room, where the society's most popular books are kept. The continued display of his portrait suggests that the society values its connections with Morrison's academic and missionary work. The painting also serves as a constant reminder to members of the historical intellectual links between the Lit & Phil and China. A legacy of interest in the Lit & Phil can be traced from Morrison, through various lectures about China held by the society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to the present 'Travel Writing: China'.

Lectures about China in the Lit & Phil began in the late nineteenth century. At this time, 'Travel Writing: China' was continually changing, influenced by the membership's interests. Professor Reverend James Legge (1815-1897) was the first person to give a lecture about China to the Lit & Phil. He gave two lectures entitled 'The Chinese Written Characteristics: Ancient Chinese as Indicated by the Characters' during the 1878-79 lecture season. Like Morrison, Legge was a missionary in China, who later became the first sinologist at Oxford University. Legge was born in Huntley, Aberdeenshire, a town which developed a reputation by the nineteenth century for sending its sons out to become missionaries around the world.<sup>85</sup> William Milne, who had assisted Robert Morrison in his translation of the Bible into Chinese, and alongside Morrison founded the Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca, was also a native of Huntley. During his youth, Legge was reportedly spurred on in his desire to become a missionary in China when he saw one of Milne's Chinese tracts.<sup>86</sup> Legge arrived in Malacca in

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<sup>85</sup> Norman J. Girardot, *The Victorian Translation of China: James Legge's Oriental Pilgrimage* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2002), p.18-19.

<sup>86</sup> See G. Wright Doyle, 'James Legge', *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity* <<http://www.bdcconline.net/en/stories/l/legge-james.php> > [accessed 06 July 2015]

1840 and, like Morrison, served as the president of the Anglo-Chinese College, from 1840 to 1843.<sup>87</sup>

When Legge came to Newcastle to give his lecture on Chinese written characteristics, Parker's portrait of Morrison would have been on display in the Lit & Phil. There is little doubt that Legge would have been familiar with Morrison's work. There are no records to suggest that Legge was motivated to give a lecture at the Lit & Phil by the Society's connection with Morrison. However, it is interesting that such a dominant figure in Sinology in the nineteenth century gave two lectures on the topic to the society's members, which would have likely encouraged further intellectual interest in China within the society.

Between Legge's first lecture on China and 1930, five lectures about China were given at the Lit & Phil.<sup>88</sup> The second was given by William Blakeney, an officer in the Royal Navy, on the 29 October 1897, and was titled 'Personal Reminiscence of Exploring Service in the China Seas – Commerce, Prosperity, War – Forty Years Ago – Illustrated with Coloured Lantern Slides from Original and Other Drawings'.<sup>89</sup> Blakeney's travel writings of his experiences in China, *On the Coasts of Cathay and Cipango Forty Years ago: A Record of Surveying Service in the China, Yellow and Japan Seas and on the Seaboard of Korea and Manchuria* (1902), with illustrations by F. L. Breton Bedwell, was acquired by the Lit & Phil in the year it was published and is still included in 'Travel Writing: China'.

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<sup>87</sup> William Milne was also the president of the Anglo-Chinese College (1818-1822) before the college was moved to Hong Kong in 1843. See Peter Tze Ming Ng, 'Globalization and Religion: The Case of Malacca and the Work of Robert Morrison', *Religions*, 3 (2012), 1075-1084.

<sup>88</sup> There was also another lecture about Tibet at the Lit & Phil during this period. Tibet's independence at this time was complicated, and it is likely that a British audience would have thought about Tibet in relation to India, as well as China.

<sup>89</sup> Blakeney gave another lecture about his travels, titled 'Some further experiences on the Coasts of Corea and Japan (with lantern illustrations)' at the Lit & Phil on November 27<sup>th</sup> 1899 that was attended by 498 people.



Like the donation of Chinese objects to the Natural History Society by military and naval men returning from China, the books and lectures on China at the Lit & Phil were influenced by military factors. The third lecture on China was ‘The Siege of Port Arthur as I Saw it – with Lantern Illustrations’ by Ellis Ashmead Bartlett, special correspondent of *The Times*, on 2 October 1905. Bartlett’s lecture was attended by seven hundred and fifty people, the second highest number for any lecture or performance that year. Bartlett was a war correspondent, remembered today for his links to the formation of the ‘Anzac’ legend during his reporting of the First World War.<sup>90</sup> The siege of Port Arthur marked the beginning of the Russo-Japanese war, 1904-1905. The Japanese attacked the Russian naval base in Port Arthur, on the coast of Manchuria in China, without formally declaring war. After significant human losses, a peace treaty brokered by the Americans was signed by the two countries in January 1905, with Russia surrendering Port Arthur. The Japanese victory curtailed Russian imperial expansion in China and on the Korean peninsula. Like Blakeney, Bartlett wrote about his experiences in China in *Port Arthur: The Siege and Capitulation*, which was also acquired by the Lit & Phil. Bartlett’s text was first published in 1906, a year after his lecture to the society. Interestingly, despite being based on travel experiences in China, Bartlett’s book is classified as ‘History: China’, rather than ‘Travel Writing’ in the Lit & Phil’s catalogue.

The next lecture was not until 1921. J. O. P. Bland, ‘a talented but latterly bitter man’ offered his insights on China as a member of the British political class, and his talk was simply called ‘Present-day China – with lantern illustrations’.<sup>91</sup> Bland’s lecture

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<sup>90</sup> See Kevin Fewster, ‘Ellis Ashmead Bartlett and the Making of the Anzac Legend’, *Journal of Australian Studies*, 6 (1982), 17-30.

<sup>91</sup> Robert Bickers, ‘John Otway Percy, Bland’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31920>> [accessed 06 July 2015]

was attended by seven hundred and fifty-six people.<sup>92</sup> Born in Malta, the son of a Major-General, Bland's hopes of becoming a lawyer were dashed early in life by the family's faltering financial position. During his time in China, Bland held many positions, including customs official, member of the Shanghai municipal council, secretary to Robert Hart, as well as an employee of the British and Chinese Corporation.<sup>93</sup> He also wrote light verse and worked as a journalist on his return to England. Like the other speakers, Bland published books on China. The library holds four of Bland's published works: *China Under the Empress Dowager* (1910) co-written with E. Blackhouse, *Li Hung-chang* (1917), *Annals & Memoirs of the Court of Peking* (1914) and *Recent Events and the Present Policies in China* (1912).<sup>94</sup> Each of Bland's books were acquired by the library the year they were published.

Finally, the philosopher Bertrand Russell gave a lecture titled, 'Young China', with five hundred and ninety-two people in attendance, on 12 February 1923.<sup>95</sup> This

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<sup>92</sup> Robert Bickers, 'John Otway Percy, Bland', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography's entry on Bland reads: 'A billet in the customs offered a good career path for those who kept their heads. Bland began as a fourth assistant, rising slowly through the ranks and serving in Hankou (1884–6), Canton (Guangzhou) (1887), and Peking (Beijing) (1887–94), with a break in Shanghai (1888–9) occasioned by an indiscreet love affair in Peking. On 29 November 1889 in Shanghai, Bland married an American, Louisa Dearborn Nickels (*b. c.* 1864), widow of M. C. Nickels and daughter of a Pacific Mail Line skipper, Captain H. C. Dearborn. These were halcyon days, bouts of ill health apart. Bland initially looked at China as exile, and the 'spiritual wilderness of the outports' (Bland, chap. 5, 1) was suffused for expatriate residents with an insular tedium enlivened only by drink, sex, or sport, and terminated through disgrace, illness, or death. Unlike many others Bland was not undone and he escaped the wilderness to positions in Shanghai and in Peking, where he served as Hart's private secretary in 1894–6.'

<sup>93</sup> Bickers, Robert, 'Bland, John Otway Percy', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

<sup>94</sup> J.O.P. Bland, *China Under the Empress Dowager* (London: Heinemann, 1910) (Reference Room Folio 951/34); J.O.P. Bland, *Annals & memoirs of the Court of Peking* (London: Heinemann, 1914) (Reference Room Folio 951/34a); J.O.P. Bland, *Recent Events and the Present Polices in China* (London: Heinemann 1912) (Reference Room Folio 951/38); J.O.P Bland, *Li Hung-chang* (London: Constable & Co, 1917) (Reference Room Nonfiction 923.251/3). The Lit & Phil holds two other Li Hung Chang biographies. Mrs Archibald Little, *Li Hung Chang: His Life and Times* (London: Cassell & Co, 1903) acquired in March 1904, and William Francis Mannix, *Memoirs of the Viceroy Lu Hung Chang* (London: Constable and Company, 1913), acquired in November 1913 and rebound in 1928. The library also holds biographies on Chang Kai Shek and Sun Yat Sen, both early presidents of Republican China.

<sup>95</sup> All information on lectures given to the Lit & Phil between 1878 and 1930 is taken from corresponding 'Annual Reports', held in the Librarian's Room.

lecture is likely to have been connected to Russell's 1922 publication *The Problem of China*. Russell begins *The Problem of China*,

Chinese problems, even if they affected no one outside China, would be of vast importance, since the Chinese are estimated to constitute about a quarter of the human race. In fact, however, all the world will be vitally affected by the development of Chinese affairs, which may well prove a decisive factor, for good or evil, during the next two centuries. This makes it important, to Europe and America almost as much as to Asia, that there should be an intelligent understanding of the questions raised by China, even if, as yet, definite answers are difficult to give.<sup>96</sup>

As his book testifies, Russell travelled in China for intellectual purposes, giving lectures and visiting academics. Again, the Lit & Phil holds a copy of *The Problem of China*, and whilst it is based on Russell's time in the country, it is classified as 'History: China' and the catalogue notes its subject as 'China Politics and Government; China Foreign Relations; China Civilization', omitting any mention of travel or philosophy.

The large number of 'lantern illustrations' included in the Lit & Phil's lectures on China furthermore suggests an interest in visual representations of the Far East by members of the society. This interest is reflected in the section of travel writing about China with fifty-six of the sixty-one books containing images. Mrs. Archibald Little's, *Intimate China (1899)*, for example, contains as many as one hundred and twenty photographs and images.<sup>97</sup> As we shall see for many of the authors in the section, visual representations, alongside narrative sketches and an interest in sight more broadly, were a crucial means for communicating with the readers.

These lectures demonstrate an active interest and a willingness to engage intellectually with China on the part of the members of the Lit & Phil Society. The

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<sup>96</sup> Bertrand Russell, *The Problem of China* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1922), p.9.

<sup>97</sup> Mrs. Archibald Little, *Intimate China: The Chinese as I Have Seen Them* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1899)

available figures show that these events were popular regardless of whether they were on the experiences of a consul member, the suggestions of a philosopher, or the recollections of a journalist. Bland's lecture in particular was the direct result of a specific request made by a long-term member of the society, C.F. Cutter. Cutter wrote in the members Suggestions Book 1907-1945 on 16 January 1920, requesting 'Lectures on China, resources, generations, International complications', to which someone at the Lit & Phil has replied 'will be considered'.<sup>98</sup> The following December Cutter suggests, 'A Lecture on China. By J.O.P. Bland'. Cutter's recommendation was obviously taken on board as Bland gave his lecture to the Lit & Phil the following December.

Throughout the turn of the twentieth century, the Lit & Phil arranged lectures for its members to satisfy their international intellectual interests. In 1898 lectures covered 'French Men and French Manners', 'Travel and Adventure in South Africa, with Lantern Illustrations', and 'The Spirit of Greek Art, with Lantern Illustrations'.<sup>99</sup> The 1899 lecture series included talks titled 'Afghanistan and its People with Lantern Illustrations', 'Egyptian Art: An outline of the Rise developing and changes of Art during 5000 years with Lantern Illustrations', 'The Jenolan Caves of New South Wales with lantern illustrations', 'Some Experiences in West Africa with Lantern Illustrations' and 'Some Further experiences on the coasts of Corea and Japan with

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<sup>98</sup> Cutter was somewhat of an eccentric. He lived with his English wife in Fountain Cottage in Low Fell, Gateshead. A history of Low Fell gives this information about him: 'From the 1890s onwards the house was occupied by an elderly American gentleman, Mr. Cutter, and his English wife. Mr. Cutter continued into the twentieth century to wear the costume of Sherlock Holmes, deerstalker cap and ulster with a cape. In warm weather he wore a cloth cap, not a deerstalker, but he never wore a hat or went bareheaded. After his death his widow lived on in the old house, cared for chiefly by her gardener, who lived in Fountain Cottage. The house was very old-fashioned, with stone floors, cold and comfortless, but when she died she left a large fortune to a deserving charity. I do not think she was a miser; it just never occurred to her to alter her way of living.' Cutter also had the particular habit of dressing as Sherlock Holmes, with accompanying deerstalker and cape, when out of doors. Madeleine Hope Dodds, 'Low Fell History: Part 3', *Gateshead Libraries* < <http://www.gatesheadlibraries.com/local--family-history/low-fell---additional-pages/low-fell-history-part-3> > [accessed 06 July 2015]

<sup>99</sup> Attendance at these lectures were as follows: 'French Men and French Manners' 536, Travel and Adventure in South Africa' 750, and 'The Spirt of Greek Art 476. *Annual Report 1898*.

Lantern Illustrations'.<sup>100</sup> Internationally focused lectures continued to be well attended into the early twentieth century. In 1903 subjects included the glaciers of Kangchenjunga, West Indian eruptions, forgotten cities of Ancient Mexico, the Caucasian Alps, first impressions of Spain, Trinidad and the Pitch Lake and the Cathedral of Siena. The varied nature of the lectures and their consistently high attendance by members of the society suggests that no single perspective on the rest of the world held prevalence with the membership. Whereas many of the international lectures presented to the Lit & Phil at the turn of the twentieth century focused on the geographical, aesthetic or historical nature of a place, city or county, however, lectures on China overwhelmingly are the outcome of travel or experience in China and a personal knowledge of the contemporary moment in the county. Unlike other international lectures, which may have appealed to a generalised international curiosity, arguably lectures on China, like the 'Travel Writing: China section' catered to the memberships interest in accounts of China based on experience and a perceived 'intimate' knowledge. This thesis will argue that it is the membership's intellectual interest in China, satisfied by the provision of first-hand accounts of China, that drove the themes available to them both in yearly lecture schedules and in the 'Travel Writing: China' section.

University courses that touched on China were also held in the Lit & Phil's premises. In 1914, a Cambridge University Local Lectures course was offered called 'England and Her Neighbours in The Far East', with an average of three hundred and eighty-eight attending lectures, and an average attendance of eighty-four at classes. The syllabus included a lecture on 'America's Position', which encompassed topics such as

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<sup>100</sup> Attendance at lectures were as follows: 'Afghanistan and its People' 514, 'Egyptian Art: An outline of the Rise developing and changes of Art during 5000 years' 628, 'The Jenolan Caves of New South Wales' 385, 'Some Experiences in West Africa' 694 and 'Some Further Experience on the Coasts of Corea and Japan' 498. *Annual Report 1899 & 1903*.

American interest in Eastern Asia as influenced by the development of California, which saw an influx of Chinese labour in the nineteenth century, to American trade with China and the anxiety surrounding the maintenance of international commerce in China without conflict. The course was offered by Ian Campbell Hannah of Trinity College Cambridge. The syllabus was broad, ranging from ‘Lecture I: Decadence of Asiatic Powers’ to ‘Lecture XI: France and her Foreign Possessions’ on the Far East, with accompanying lecture questions printed alongside in the handbook.<sup>101</sup> This well attended university course suggests a larger academic interest in Asia as well as a more general cultural curiosity. The wide-range of subjects covered by Hannah, like the ‘Travel Writing: China’ section, clearly appealed to the intellectual interest demonstrated by the Lit & Phil and its members.

### *The Lit & Phil’s Catalogues*

The diversity of the Lit & Phil’s ‘Travel Writing: China’ can be traced through the society’s published catalogues. In the preface to the 1903 catalogue, Frederick Emley wrote that

[i]n the minds of those who founded the society [...], the formation of a library was subsidiary to the reading and discussion of papers; but, as members of like pursuits formed independent societies, and communicated to these societies the fruits of their

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<sup>101</sup> The full lecture is as follows: Lecture I: Decadence of Asiatic Powers, Lecture II: The Empire of China, Lecture III: Early Intercourse Between Europe and Asia, Lecture IV: The East India Company, Lecture V: England in Asia To-Day, Lecture VI: Russian Expansion Eastwards, Lecture VII: The Russian Empire Today, Lecture VIII: American’s Position, Lecture IX: Leading Features in the History of Japan, Lecture X: The Present Position of Japan, Lecture XI: France and Her Foreign Possessions and Lecture XII: Germany and the Smaller States. See Ian C. Hannah, *Syllabus of a Course of Lectures on England and Her Neighbours in the Far East* (1900) (Librarian’s Room Tract 042/4).

The average attendance of lectures was three hundred and eighty-eight. The average attendance at classes was eighty-four.

study and research, the library gradually acquired more importance, until at the present day it has become the society's principal object.<sup>102</sup>

The influence of the society and its members cannot be removed from the actions and acquisitions of the library. Whilst the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China' is informed by larger regional interactions between Newcastle and China, such as the involvement of its members in shipping trade with China, or the donation of spoils of the Opium Wars to the Natural History Society, it is the intellectual interest of the society in China that has sustained the growth of the section and kept the books in circulation.

The Lit & Phil published catalogues of their library in 1848 and 1903, with supplementary material appearing in 1858 and 1869. These are the only two comprehensive catalogues published by the society in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Until 1848, the only existing record of the collections and newly acquired books were contained in Annual Reports to members. In the Lit & Phil's 1848 catalogue, all travel texts are organised in 'Class III: Geography, Voyages and Travels'. Within this larger bracket, books were distributed into subcategories depending on their content. For example, if a book covered only one country or region, they would be placed into 'Voyages and Travel in Particular Quarters of the Globe' and then classified into the country or region they described, such as 'China and Tartary' or 'India, Cabool, Bokhara'. Books that described a more sustained journey over many countries are classified under 'Voyage and Travels Extending Over More than One Quarter of the Globe'. Even more epic travels are classed as 'Voyages round the World, and Voyages and Travels of Discovery'. Proportionally, China makes up the second largest section of texts in the 1848 catalogue (49 titles), following the 'India, Cabool, Bokhara' grouping (58 titles). 'Geography, Voyages and Travels' in the 1848 catalogue includes journals,

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<sup>102</sup> *Catalogue of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1903* (Newcastle: Literary and Philosophical Society, 1903), p.iv.

geographical descriptions, pilgrimages, memoirs and narratives. By devoting Class III to travel writing, the Lit & Phil prioritised it as a genre of writing, given a similar weighting of importance to ‘Literature’ (Class XIII), ‘Poetry’ (Class XIV) and ‘Natural History’ (Class X) (see appendix one). This prioritisation reflects the longstanding position of travel writing within the Lit & Phil’s collections, noted by Spence Watson.

The catalogue published by the Lit & Phil in 1903 is significantly different to its 1848 counterpart. In the 1903 catalogue, the ‘Geography, Voyages and Travels’ section has been replaced. Instead, books on travel are classified ‘History’, and divided between the classifications subgroups. This change of classification was due to the introduction of the Dewey decimal system, which the library began to implement in 1887. I have chosen to refer to these books as ‘Travel Writing: China’, as that is how they are entered in the 1903 catalogue and as this phrase offers the clearest and most direct way of discussing the section as a whole. Emley writes that the Lit & Phil’s 1903 catalogue was ‘probably the first catalogue of a large general library in the United Kingdom to be published in accordance with Mr Dewey’s system’.<sup>103</sup> The British Museum, and other large institutions in Britain and America, influenced the change in classification. One means of differentiating between catalogued texts included the separation of ancient history (930) and modern history (940-990) and classifying books by their geographical location, rather than chronologically. The 1903 catalogue does not include any books on the ancient history of China. In the modern history section however, China makes up the second largest proportion of books about Asia, following India. This is demonstrative of the Lit & Phil’s interest in contemporary Chinese history.

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<sup>103</sup> *Catalogue of the Literary and Philosophical Society, 1903*, p. vii.



Instead of the Lit & Phil deciding on their own classifications, as they had done in 1848, the Dewey decimal system provided a standard model of classification. The 1848 catalogue has eighteen classes:

Class I. Theology

Class II. History and Biography

Class III. Geography, Voyages and Travels

Class IV. British Topography and Antiquity

Class V. Philosophy of the Human Mind and Ethics

Class VI. Politics and Jurisprudence

Class VII. Mathematics and Natural and Experimental Philosophy

Class VIII. Fine Arts

Class IX. Applied Science –Arts, Manufactures, Mines &c.

Class X. Natural History

Class XI. Anatomy and Physiology, Medicine, Surgery, Farriery

Class XII. Agriculture, Gardening, Planting

Class XIII. Literature

Class XIV. Poetry

Class XV. Works of Fiction and Literary Miscellanies, Collected Works,  
Libraries, and Works published by Societies

Class XVI. Greek and Latin Classics, Original and Translated

Class XVII. Encyclopaedias, Transactions and Reports of Learned and other  
Societies

Class XVIII. Periodicals

The Dewey decimal system of library classification has ten categories:

0. General Works
1. Philosophy
2. Religion
3. Sociology
4. Philology
5. Natural Science
6. Useful Arts
7. Fine Arts
8. Literature
9. History

The 1903 catalogue simplified the Lit & Phil's collections in line with emerging national library trends. There was no longer a specific class for travel writing, which moved from 'Geography, Voyages and Travels' (1848) to the subcategory 'Geography and Description', under the larger and broader grouping 'History' (1903). This reclassification in the early twentieth century suggests that the society's motivation in

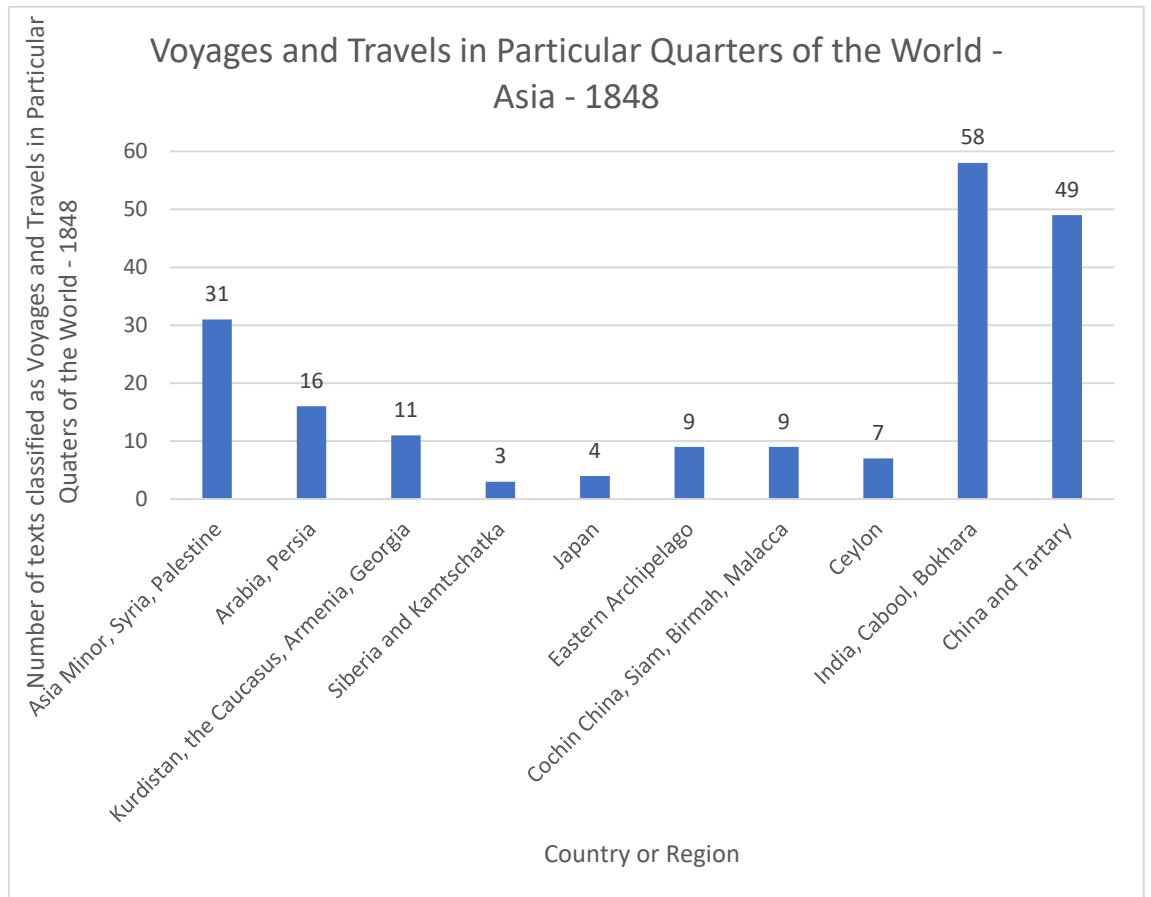
creating a library in line with the most influential of British and American institutions took precedent over the prioritising of a particular collection.

The two graphs below clearly illustrate the growth in travel writing about China between the 1848 and 1903 catalogues, as well as a growth in travel writing about Asia more broadly. The number of texts, including multiple and new editions and books on travel in Asia generally, doubled from two hundred and sixteen in 1848, to four hundred and thirty-eight in 1903. The number of countries or regions had also grown. The 1848 catalogue contains ten groupings of countries or regions. By 1903, the number of regional or country groups covered in the section had grown to thirty-nine, excluding books on Asia as a general travel topic. The accelerated acquisition of travel accounts from Asia was in line with the growth and development of the Lit & Phil as a library itself. The increase in scale and range of travel accounts from Asia indicates intellectual and academic interests in the rest of the world by the members of the Lit & Phil. It is noteworthy that in the 1903 edition of the catalogue, travel books on China appear across several geographical categories: 'China' (fifty titles), 'N.E. China' (one title) and 'S.E. China' (three titles). The 1903 catalogue also classifies 'Manchuria' (one title) in a separate geographical grouping. Manchuria can refer both to a region that falls entirely in China, and to a region that falls partially in China and partially in Russia. This regional nuancing in the catalogue suggests a particular geographical and political understanding of China by the Lit & Phil. Moreover, this nuancing is evident in other aspects of the 1903 catalogue's geographical groupings that combine regions, countries, cities, ancient places and areas spanning across countries.<sup>104</sup> These groupings suggest that the Lit & Phil's interest in the rest of the world, and the sections that grew out of

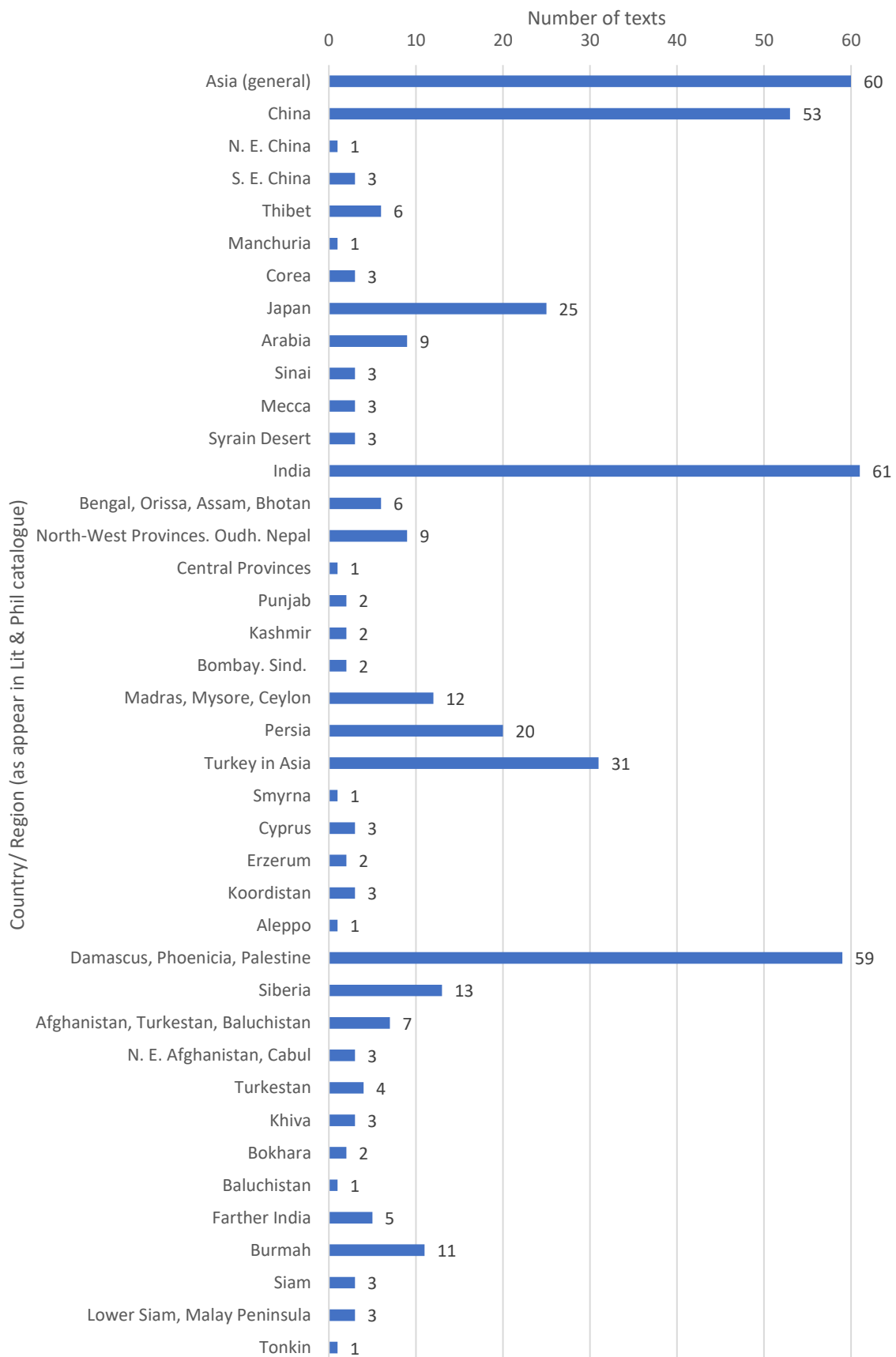
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<sup>104</sup> For example, Farther India, which is a catch all for South East Asia, including Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar and Malay states.

that interest, was less concerned with established borders than it was with the intellectual value of the texts to respond to members' cultural curiosity.



## History - Geography and Description, 'Asia' - 1903



It is possible that these groupings evidence a more regional, and trade-orientated, interest in Asia by the people of Newcastle and the membership of the Lit & Phil. In *Breaking into the Monopoly* (2013) Yukihiisa Kumagai writes that the Glasgow East India Association, which lobbied against the renewal of the East India Company's exclusive trading rights, wrote to regional manufacturing outposts like Newcastle to raise support for their cause.<sup>105</sup> Like Glasgow, for some, such as James Losh, Newcastle's interest in Asia during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was dependant on the potential of trade. Connections such as these underpin the region's interest in Asia, not least China.

The Lit & Phil's section of travel writing about Asia also reflects British colonial activity in the region, with the increased number of texts available about India between 1848 and 1903 correlating with the establishment of British Crown rule in India (1858) and the ensuing rebellions. Similarly, we can observe the growth of the grouping 'Damascus, Phoenicia, Palestine' (59 titles). This group refers to the Syrian city, an ancient trading nation, and a country now on the borders of Israel, Jordan and Egypt. In the 1848 catalogue, this group exists as 'Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine' (31 titles) and represented a far larger geographical area. Asia Minor encompasses the westernmost point of Asia and the majority of modern-day Turkey. This regrouping reflected a growth of titles and a simultaneous narrowing of the geographical area of interest. This boost in acquisitions was likely stimulated by an interest in the decline of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the nineteenth century, a political situation that received regular coverage in the national press and debate in parliament.

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<sup>105</sup> Yukihiisa Kumagai, *Breaking into the Monopoly: Provincial Merchants and Manufacturers' Campaigns for Access to the Asian Market, 1790-1833* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2013), p.90.

Between the publication of the 1848 and 1903 catalogues, the number of books of travel writing about China rose from forty-nine (China and Tartary) to fifty-eight (China, North East China, South East China and Manchuria). While at first this may not appear to be a significant quantitative rise, closer attention reveals a highly dynamic section of travel writing. Only nineteen books appear in both the 1848 and 1903 catalogues. There is no physical evidence as to why books were removed from 'Travel Writing: China' between 1848 and 1903. Their removal may have been a reflection of the age or condition of the travel accounts, which demanded that they were taken out of general circulation. Alternatively, it may have been that these books were less in demand by members as the Lit & Phil's collections grew. The remaining thirty-nine were new acquisitions by the library. Today the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China' is significantly different to both of its earlier incarnations. Twenty books remain on the shelves of the section today from the 1903 catalogue. Overwhelmingly, books were moved, rather than deaccessioned from the library (see appendix two). This suggests that the Lit & Phil valued travel accounts about China enough to keep them in a less accessible location, rather than choosing to deaccession them. Deaccession or movement from 'Travel Writing: China' may have happened for several reasons. Titles may have fallen out of fashion with the membership and were moved to create space for more popular books, or some books, like Robert Morrison's dictionaries, may have been deemed too valuable to keep in general circulation.<sup>106</sup> It remains frustrating that there is no record to indicate the society's rationale for these moves, but with the evidence available we are able to speculate as to the library's motives. As this discussion

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<sup>106</sup> Another reason for the loss of books may be the fire of 1893 that ripped through the library building and its collections. The Lit & Phil's website suggests that that fire 'was probably caused by the overheating of a beam beneath the hearthstone of the fireplace, lit to provide hot water for refreshments'. It is unlikely that a substantial number of 'Travel Writing: China' books were affected by the fire as many books from the 1848 catalogue can be traced in the Lit & Phil's collections through the online catalogue. 'Our History', *The Lit & Phil Website* <<http://www.litandphil.org.uk/information/history/#37>>

suggests, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the section was in no way stagnant, but developed to meet the needs of the Lit & Phil's members.

Only three books appear in both the 1848 and 1903 catalogue and the shelves of the library today in 'Travel Writing: China': *Three Years' Wanderings in The Northern Provinces of China* (1847) by Robert Fortune, *Memoirs of Father Ripa, During Thirteen Years' Residence at the Court of Peking in the Service of the Emperor of China* (1844) translated by Fortunio Prandi, and *A Narrative of an Exploratory Visit to each of the Consular Cities of China, and to the Islands of Hong Kong and Chusan, on behalf of the Church Missionary Society, in the Years 1844, 1845, 1846* (1847) by the Reverend George Smith. Fortune was a botanist and tea plant hunter. Father Ripa was one of the first Jesuit priests to hold a position in the Chinese court, and George Smith was a missionary and Anglican bishop of Hong Kong. Their consistent place within the section testifies to the broad range of interests in China to which 'Travel Writing: China' catered. Their position also confirms their popularity since the mid-nineteenth century. Had Fortune, Ripa and Smith's travel writings on China fallen out of favour with the library's membership, they would have been moved to other places in the library, such as the Librarian's Room or the less accessible Bolbec Hall. *Memoirs of Father Ripa* is in a poor condition, held together with straps to keep the binding intact. Smith's *A Narrative of an Exploratory Visit* is also in a poor state of repair with some pages falling away from their binding. Whilst the physical condition of these books, as well as others in the section, are testament to their use by members since acquisition, equally the disrepair of these travel accounts could also reflect the section's diminished circulation in recent years, compounded by its physical location within the library. Interpreting the physical condition of the books in the section as clues to the nature and place of these travel accounts in the Lit & Phil underlies the specific approach of this



thesis, in which the books on the shelves of the Lit & Phil are understood as physical objects in the context of the library.

As previously noted, the Reference Room which houses the sixty-one books that make up the 'Travel Writing: China' section today is not in a prominent position within the library, which implies that these books are less valued than books which are easier to access. It contains nineteenth and twentieth century books no longer in high demand by the members. Some books in the section are in disrepair, awaiting the attention of the Lit & Phil's, ever in demand, bookbinders. As in the 1903 catalogue, the 'Travel Writing: China' remains classified in the Dewey Decimal System today. The section contains some famous examples of writing about China at the turn of the twentieth century, such as Isabella Bird's *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond* (1899) and Arthur Smith's *Chinese Characteristics* (1890). It also contains books whose classification as travel writing feels tangential at best, such as H. G. W. Woodhead and H. T. Montague Bell's *The China Year Book 1912* (1912), an assortment of information about trade statistics, accounts of political events, governance, defence, public justice and constitutional reform. *The China Year Book 1912* was the first in a series of yearbooks which ran until 1939, and its inclusion in a travel writing section is difficult to fathom. There are several other books which do not immediately appear to belong in 'Travel Writing: China'. Robert K Douglass's *Society in China* (1894) is based on journals, novels, plays and Blue books, and Douglass's personal experiences travelling in China are not mentioned.<sup>107</sup> Similarly, it is difficult to understand Arthur Diosy's *The New Far East* (1899) as a travel account of China.<sup>108</sup> Rather, it is a general study of China, Japan and Korea at the end of the nineteenth century. Diosy, the vice-chairman of the Japan

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<sup>107</sup> Robert K Douglass, *Society in China* (London: A.D. Innes, 1894).

<sup>108</sup> Arthur Diosy, *The New Far East* (London: Cassell and Co, 1898).

Society, unsurprisingly is more concerned with Japan than China specifically. Another questionable inclusion in the 'Travel Writing: China' section is Percy Sykes, *The Quest for Cathay* (1936) which is a collection of accounts of historic travels to China, from the earliest European explorers in Asia, to Portugal's discovery of the ocean route to China.<sup>109</sup>

Whilst recognising that the Lit & Phil has chosen to include these books as travel writing, I have chosen not to analyse these outliers. The inclusion of these books demonstrates the occasionally arbitrary nature of the classification of books in the 'Travel Writing: China' section. As they do not claim to be travel accounts, and do not refer to the authors' time in China regularly, if at all, they are not analysed in greater detail. However, the inclusion of these books in the 'Travel Writing: China' section raises questions about the nature of classification and how the accepted characteristics of travel writing have been understood and interpreted by the library's acquisitions team.

The somewhat arbitrary classification of books in the 'Travel Writing: China' section seems to indicate that although the library was keen to modernise by adopting the Dewey Decimal system, they did not place a high premium on precise allocation of acquisitions once the categories had been put in place. As travel accounts were acquired throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries they were classified as travel writing largely without further detail. The card catalogue simply notes the reference sequence and gives the author's name and full title of the book. The Lit & Phil's current online catalogue contains more detailed information, noting, for example, if the library considers books to be 'Description and Travel', 'Missions China' or

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<sup>109</sup> Sir Percy Molesworth Sykes, *The Quest for Cathay* (London: A. & C. Black, 1936), p.xi.

‘China in Literature’, amongst many other nuanced labels, all falling within ‘Travel Writing: China’.<sup>110</sup> The online catalogue takes its information from the title pages of the travel accounts it describes. Subsequently, the descriptive labels given to the books are subjective to the individual updating the catalogue from print to digital. Arguably, the nuanced descriptive labels, that do not appear to adhere to a standardized set of conventions, are as arbitrary as the placement of the books into the section in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The arbitrary allocation of books to the ‘Travel Writing: China’ reflects the nature of the travel accounts contained therein. The porous boundaries of travel accounts in the section reflect how the travel genre could be used as a vehicle for the ideologies of the traveller. The hybrid nature of travel writing, developing out of, and responding to, other forms of literature, encompassing not only the biography and experience, but also the ideology, of the author has called some to argue that travel writing is not a genre at all but rather a ‘collective term’ broad enough to include the expansive scope of travelling experience.<sup>111</sup> While it is not the aim of this thesis to argue for or against the genre of travel writing, the Lit & Phil’s ‘Travel Writing: China’ section is an excellent example of the porous boundaries of the genre, and how disparate travel accounts can come to be grouped together under the title ‘Travel Writing’.

In the opening words of his 1880 travel account of China, William Gill begins, ‘Why not China?’<sup>112</sup> ‘Why not’ can be aptly applied to the ‘Travel Writing: China’ section as a whole and the individual travel accounts contained within. As a

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<sup>110</sup> The online catalogue states that *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond* is ‘Description and Travel’, *Fire and Sword in Shansi* is ‘Missions China’, and *On A Chinese Screen* is ‘China in Literature’.

<sup>111</sup> See Jan Borm ‘Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology’, in *Perspectives on Travel Writing*, ed. by Glen Hooper and Tim Youngs (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) pp.13-26.

<sup>112</sup> William Gill, *River of Golden Sand: A Narrative of A Journey Through China And Eastern Tibet to Burmah* (London: John Murray, 1880).

consequence of the arbitrariness of the catalogue, I have developed my own categorisation of the section to organise the whole into smaller subcategories.

### *Political, Pleasurable and Missionary Travel Writing*

In order to make the section more manageable, I have organised the travel accounts into three broad categories based on the identity of their authors and their narratives: missionary and religious travellers, travellers for pleasure and personal exploration, and political or trade orientated travellers. These subcategories are informed by data analysis of the section and wider critical reading. Several critical studies of travel writing about China from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century foreground types of traveller as a means of categorising texts. Whilst scholars have understood religious, political and pleasure-seeking travellers alongside one another, often they group travel accounts about China by the tropes their travel accounts contain (for example prejudice or eye-witness accounts), or they focus on a case study of one particular traveller. For example, Jeffrey Dupee's *British Travel Writers in China – Writing Home to a British Public, 1890-1914* (2004) and Fritzsche's doctoral thesis 'Narrating China: Western Travelers in the Middle Kingdom after the Opium Wars' (1995) approach travel writing about China through the various tropes each account demonstrates.<sup>113</sup> Nicolas Clifford's *'A Truthful Impression of the Country': British and American Travel Writing in China 1880-1949* (2001) includes travellers from all backgrounds and analyses their written descriptions of China alongside one another.<sup>114</sup> My thesis recognises the differences in motivation between travellers in China during

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<sup>113</sup> Jeffrey N. Dupee, *British Travel Writers In China – Writing Home To A British Public, 1890-1914* (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2004).

<sup>114</sup> Nicolas Clifford, *'A Truthful Impression of the Country': British and American Travel Writing in China 1880-1949* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2001).

the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which in turn informs my understanding of what type of travel writing the members of the Lit & Phil had access to. Combining the quantitative data from the 1848 and 1903 catalogues and my own statistical analysis of the section with the qualitative categories developed in secondary critical sources creates a productive methodological approach and enables me to offer original insight into the section. Approaching the travel accounts quantitatively allows the nuances of the section to be fully understood. Rather than simply seeing the section as reflecting a homogenous genre, acknowledging that each account has a unique ideological underpinning, and as such that accounts can be grouped into categories that served various aspects of the Lit & Phil's intellectual interest in China, allows the full significance of the section to be uncovered. Without first analysing the section for its authors, titles and content it is unlikely that the nuances of the section would have become apparent. Situating each travel account in its own category thus provides a foundation to build qualitative and close textual analysis of the section, and suggests reasons as to why an independent library in Newcastle was actively acquiring books about China.

Moreover, in attending to the materiality of the travel writing section I am able to enrich my observations with interpretation of the physical evidence of usage and environment. For example, interpreting the Lit & Phil's copy of Isabella Bird's *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond* for its physical attributes, a broken spine or torn pages, evidences its usage and worth within the society's collections. Without encompassing the physical nature of the 'Travel Writing: China' section, these books can only partially be understood in the specific context of the Lit & Phil.

My process of categorising these texts led me to create a database of biographical information of each travel writer in the section, in order to analyse similarities between the content, aims and purpose of titles quickly and easily. For example, Constance Cummings and Isabella Bird both produced professional travel writing from their extensive travels around the world, despite having very different approaches to travel in general. The travel accounts of missionaries, politicians, and merchants cannot be separated from their occupations. In her travel account, *Old Highways in China* (1884), Isabella Williamson claims that her writings are not connected with her mission work, and yet the purpose of her journeys are to ‘carry Gospel truth to as many of the women of China’ as she could reach.<sup>115</sup> It has usually been a straight forward process to identify texts on the basis of their professional intent, however, the categorisation of those travelling for pleasure and personal exploration is more complicated since the category is not connected to a particular profession and does not have an obvious ideological message to present. Ting Chang identifies that the ‘voluntary nature’ of French travelling collectors in the nineteenth century affected the nature of their travel accounts.<sup>116</sup> My political, pleasure and missionary categories analyse the travel accounts in the Lit & Phil, keeping in mind the particular context of why travel authors were voluntarily travelling in China and how that affecting the narratives they produced.

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<sup>115</sup> Isabella Williamson, *Old Highways of China* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1884), p.6.

<sup>116</sup> Ting Chang, *Travel, Collecting and Museums of Asian Art in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), p.20.

## Literature Review and Methodology

### ***Literature Review***

In developing my own categories of travel writing, I have taken direction from the work of various scholars who approach Chinese travel writing through the particular motives that inform the writers' studies. The focus of my thesis is travel writing specifically. As such, my thinking is inevitably informed by two key voices in travel writing scholarship: Mary Louise Pratt and John Urry, and in particular their field defining works *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992) and *The Tourist Gaze* (1990).<sup>117</sup> Both Pratt and Urry inform my critical analysis of the travel accounts in my dissertation particularly, as both recognise the importance of sight and the visual as an aspect of travel. The traveller's gaze is mediated through the narrative of the author's travel accounts and the passage of time since their arrival home. The concept of the gaze is particularly pertinent in my chapter 'Travelling for Pleasure and Personal Exploration in China' which argues that visual images and photographs were often a highly constructed aspect of representing China and the Chinese in travel accounts during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The materiality of the books held at the Lit & Phil warrants attention too as, in this section, we are briefly able to place ourselves in the position of the Lit & Phil's membership at the same time as we are invited to occupy the traveller's viewpoint on China. The traveller's gaze becomes the reader's gaze as the visual appearance of China emerges in the text.

Whereas Urry writes from a sociological stance and provides a model for understanding gazes 'constructed through difference', Pratt takes a literary approach and, rather than focusing on the dynamics of tourism, she analyses the burgeoning genre

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<sup>117</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).  
John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage Publications, 2002).

of travel writing since the eighteenth century.<sup>118</sup> Pratt argues that travel writing has an ideological function in representing the ‘rest of the world’ to the ‘home’ country of the traveller. Pratt’s approach critically situates her close reading of travel writing within the relevant fields of knowledge to which it connects. My own methodological approach uses Pratt as a model by combining close readings of travel accounts held by the Lit & Phil and situating them within the section as a whole. In doing so, I emphasise the significance of the texts examined within this regional collection as mediators of the members’ understanding of China at the turn of the twentieth century.

Susan Schoenbauer Thurin’s *Victorian Travelers and the Opening of China 1842-1907* (1999) is organised into case studies of travelling individuals differentiated by their occupations.<sup>119</sup> These include: Robert Fortune, the botanist and tea hunter employed by the East India Company; Archibald Little, whose travels in China were borne from a desire to open the country to steam power; Constance Gordon Cumming, a lady of relative wealth, who travelled in luxury at the invitation of others; and Isabella Bird whose contemporary reputation comes from her travel accounts of exotic lands. The Lit & Phil holds books by each of these travellers. I have classed Robert Fortune as a trade orientated traveller, as he was in China at the behest of the East India Company, and I have classed Cumming and Bird as travellers for pleasure and personal exploration, as they were travelling by their own means and for their own enjoyment. Archibald Little does not appear in the Lit & Phil’s ‘Travel Writing: China’, instead he can be found in the ‘History: China’ section. Thurin, like myself, is clearly interested in those travelling for pleasure and those travelling for trade-focused and political ends. Thurin’s organising structure of case studies allows her to frame the travellers she

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<sup>118</sup> Urry, p.1.

<sup>119</sup> Susan Schoenbauer Thurin, *Victorian Travelers and the Opening of China 1842-1907* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1999).



engages with in their own biographic and historical context, and provides a helpful model for my own research.

By far the most common category of travel writing studies by those interested in Anglophone travel writing about China from this period is missionary writing. There are many studies on missionaries in China and their writing, with scholarly interest ranging from the arrival of the Jesuits in the sixteenth century, to the missionary activity of the London Missionary Society during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The missionary Robert Morrison remains the Lit & Phil's most enduring connection with China. Critical studies and biographies about Morrison have been largely concerned with Morrison's life in China, or his missionary training in London. Christopher Daily's *Robert Morrison and the Protestant Plan for China* (2013), for example, is a meticulously researched account of Morrison's life.<sup>120</sup> Daily questions the prevailing stories of Morrison's biography, constructed and propagated by Morrison's widow, Eliza. Through archives based in Hong Kong, London, and Edinburgh, Daily rewrites the narratives surrounding Morrison through the lens of the missionary training provided by David Bogue, a tutor for the London Missionary Society. Daily argues that the mission format created and taught by Bogue, provided an invaluable template for Morrison's missionary work in China. Daily's study offers an archive-based insight into the often difficult lives of pioneering missionaries in China and provides useful contextual information for my own research.<sup>121</sup> Newcastle and the Lit & Phil remain a neglected aspect in studies on Morrison. I would argue, however, that Morrison's connections to Newcastle demonstrate the early missionary underpinnings of the Lit &

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<sup>120</sup> Christopher Daily, *Robert Morrison and the Protestant Plan for China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013).

<sup>121</sup> See Christopher Hancock, *Robert Morrison and the Birth of Chinese Protestantism* (London: T & T Clark, 2008).

Phil's interest in China and thereby its development of the 'Travel Writing: China' section.

Two notable studies of interest regarding missionary work in China are *The Boxers, China, and the World* (2007), edited by Robert Bickers and R. G. Tiedemann, and Isaac Yue's 'Missionaries (MIS-) Representing China: Orientalism, Religion and the Conceptualization of Victorian Identity' (2009).<sup>122</sup> The collection of essays in *The Boxers, China, and the World* has informed my understanding of missionaries in China during the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, as many of the essays reference missionary travel accounts to draw historical conclusions. The Boxer Rebellion, China's anti-foreign uprising, which predominantly affected missionaries and Chinese Christians, coincided with a spike in acquisitions of travel writing about China. The Lit & Phil acquired six books of travel writing about China during the year of the Rebellion, four more than in any other year. These books were Isabella Bird's *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond: An Account of Journeys in China, Chiefly in the Province of Sze huan and Among the Man-tze of the Somo Territory* (1899), Arthur Smith's *Village Life in China, A Study in Sociology* (1899), Archibald R. Colquhoun's *The 'Overland' to China* (1900), Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore's *China: The Long Lived Empire* (1900), George Ernest Morrison's *An Australian in China: Being the Narrative of A Quiet Journey Across China to Burma* (1895), and A. B. Freeman-Mitford's *The Attaché at Peking* (1900). As reports of the Boxer Rebellion appeared in local newspapers in Newcastle, this spike in acquisitions is likely to be a response to local interest in the rebellion. The *Evening Chronicle* published stories on beheaded Chinese murderers in 'Pekin', hostilities at the beginning of the Boxer Rebellion, Russian activity in Manchuria and the protection of foreigners

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<sup>122</sup> *The Boxers, China, and the World*, ed. by Robert Bickers and R. G. Tiedemann (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007). Isaac Yue, 'Missionaries (MIS-) Representing China: Orientalism, Religion and the Conceptualization of Victorian Identity', *Victorian Literature And Culture*, 37.1 (2009), 1-10.

in China, amongst other events during the Rebellion. All of the books were published in either 1895, 1899 or 1900, suggesting a desire to collect recent information about China from those who had travelled in the country, and suggesting that contemporary events in China influenced the section.

In his article ‘Missionaries (MIS-) Representing China: Orientalism, Religion and the Conceptualization of Victorian Identity’, Yue argues that representations of China in missionary writing functioned in Victorian constructions of their own rigidly moralistic identity by presenting Chinese identity in direct opposition to British Victorian culture. However, I argue that simply reading missionary travel accounts of China in opposition to their ‘home’ audience, as Yue does, fails to accommodate representations of China by some who spent considerable periods of time in China, and who in some instances developed deep sympathies with their adopted country, either culturally or spiritually. Moreover, representations of China by missionaries fulfil a cultural curiosity in the members of the Lit & Phil, informed by interest in contemporary events, such as the Boxer Rebellion, as much as the broader interest in ‘exotic’ and ‘oriental’ depictions of the home life of the Chinese.

Collection-based studies have become a more popular area of interest for those interested in East-West relations, some of which are particularly pertinent to my thesis. There is a long history of such work and it is an approach international in its practice. Early collection-based scholarship often took a descriptive methodological approach, produced by librarians or those working with a particular collection in order to draw attention to their area of interest and to disseminate catalogue data. Descriptive collection-focused studies have also appeared about British institutions; but they are broader in nature. In 1953, G. R. Crone, the Royal Geographical Society’s librarian and map curator, described aspects of the Society’s collection of early books and charts that

would be of interest to readers of the *Journal of Navigation*, in which his article appeared.<sup>123</sup> Acknowledging that his article does not comprehensively cover the Society's collections, Crone describes objects of particular value or interest, such as 'interesting Dutch ms. charts of the East Indies and the China seas', and the eighteenth-century 'Oriental Navigation published by W. and J. Mount and T. & T. Page'.<sup>124</sup> Crone's article focuses on material artefacts and describes their research potential for others.

Notable examples of descriptive articles on American collections of written material from, or about, China include Jonathan Goldstein's 'Resources on Early Sino-American Relations in Philadelphia's Stephen Girard Collection and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania' (1980), Kenneth W. Berger's 'Ch'ing Period Manuscripts on China in the Duke University Library' (1982), and Joyce A. Madancy's 'Hidden Treasures: US State Department Diplomatic records and their Relevance for Scholars of Late Imperial China' (1998).<sup>125</sup> Madancy's article emphasises the research potential of material available to scholars of late imperial China within diplomatic records, which contain consul reports, letters, petitions and inflammatory placards, along with many other examples of bureaucratic relations between America and China.<sup>126</sup> Similarly, Goldstein points to the potential research value of the collections held in the Stephen Girard Collection and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. He also suggests possible lines of enquiry that may prove fruitful to researchers, such as the legal foundations of

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<sup>123</sup> G. R. Crone, 'Early Books and Charts in the Royal Geographical Society's Collection', *Journal of Navigation*, 6.1 (1953), 38-43.

<sup>124</sup> Crone, p.38 & 39.

<sup>125</sup> Jonathan Goldstein, 'Resources on Early Sino-American Relations in Philadelphia's Stephen Girard Collection and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania', *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 4.8 (1980), 114-129. Kenneth W. Berger, 'Ch'ing Period Manuscripts on China in the Duke University Library', *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 4.8 (1982), 85-89.

Joyce A. Madancy, 'Hidden Treasures: US State Department Diplomatic Records and their Relevance for Scholars of Late Imperial China', *Late Imperial China*, 19.1 (1998), 82-99.

<sup>126</sup> Madancy, p.83.

American trade with China, or the ‘use and appraisal of Chinese material culture in early America’.<sup>127</sup> Berger’s 1982 article acknowledges that China is ‘not a major area of collecting concern’ for the Duke University library, and so these ‘important resources’ would only be of interest to ‘serious researchers’ of China.<sup>128</sup> In his 1998 article, Melvin P. Thatcher describes the Chinese resources available in the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU). The collection objective of the GSU is to ‘acquire and preserve records for the majority of the historical population of a country’.<sup>129</sup> Like other studies, Thatcher emphasises the research value of the collection and takes a wholly descriptive methodological approach. The emergence of articles such as these in the 1980s and 1990s evidences the starting point of critical interest in written collections from and about Asia that could enrich historical research of Sino-American relations.<sup>130</sup> Critical collection-focused studies have developed in recent years but these descriptive articles, often written by those working directly with collections, have laid the foundations for further study which my thesis aims to begin to address. Rather than pointing to the potential research value of the Lit & Phil’s ‘Travel Writing: China’, my thesis instead engages with the section’s content whilst arguing the importance of Newcastle’s historical context in relation to its creation and development.

Collection-focused studies with a descriptive methodology on material from China have also emerged from China. Chieh-hsien Ch’en’s ‘Some Rarely Used Chinese Materials for the Study of the Yi Dynasty’ (1987) draws attention to archival collections, such as the Ming and Ch’ing *Nei Ko* storehouse or the Archives of the Ch’ing State Historiographer’s Office, which may be highly valuable in historical

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<sup>127</sup> Goldstein, p.115.

<sup>128</sup> Berger, p.85, 87, 89.

<sup>129</sup> Melvin P. Thatcher, ‘Selected Sources for Late Imperial China on Microfilm at the Genealogical Society of Utah’, *Late Imperial China*, 19.2 (1998), 111-129 (p.111).

<sup>130</sup> Also see Judy S. Lu, ‘Contemporary China Collection in the Asian Division: The Library of Congress’, *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, 14.1 (2007), 74-103.

understandings about Korea.<sup>131</sup> Other collection-focused studies from China include Wenxian Zhang's 'The Yellow Register Archives of Imperial Ming China' (2008) and Ng Lun Ngau-ha's 'A Survey of Source Materials in Hong Kong Related to Late Ch'ing China' (1979).<sup>132</sup> These articles demonstrate an interest in collections for research from scholars in Asia. My study participates in the approaches being developed in both China and America, which engage with China through archival sources and unique collection items, enabling discussion not only about China but also about the history of interest as represented by the history of collections.

Andrew West's 1992 article traces the history of the ethnography collection of William Hesketh Lever, acquired during his around-the-world trips, and its dispersal through various businesses and institutions since Lever's death.<sup>133</sup> The development of Lever's ethnography collection was dependant on travel, both physically to obtain objects from around the world, and as encouragement for Lever's interests in developing a collection at the beginning of the twentieth century. West points to various reasons, such as a lack of a comprehensive collecting strategy and World War I, as to why Lever never managed to fulfil his aim of establishing a sophisticated ethnography collection at Port Sunlight, Merseyside. He evidences the building of the collection through excerpts from Lever's incomplete diaries and photographs of Lever in South Africa and at a mission station in the Congo. Although West focuses on the collecting habits of one man and on tracing the likely history of his acquisitions, his combined

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<sup>131</sup> Chieh-hsien Ch'en, 'Some Rarely Used Chinese Materials for the Study of the Yi Dynasty', *Korean Studies*, 11 (1987), 58-64.

<sup>132</sup> Wenxian Zhang, 'The Yellow Archives of Imperial Ming China', 43.2 (2008), 148-175.  
Ng Lun Ngai-ha, 'A Survey of Source Materials in Hong Kong Related to Late Ch'ing China', *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 4.2 (1979), 126-156.

Also see Jing Liao, 'The Contributions of Nineteenth-Century Christian Missionaries to Chinese Library Reform', *Libraries & the Cultural Record*, 41.3 (2006), 360-371.

<sup>133</sup> Andrew West, 'The History of the Ethnography Collections of W. H. Lever', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 4.2 (1992), 273-283.

biographical and historiographical approach is a useful method for approaching the history of the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China' section. West's article provides a solid historical methodological model for this collection-focused study. Just as West analysed photographs and journals alongside Lever's collection, this thesis cross-references 'Travel Writing: China' with acquisitions and historical catalogue data, as well as member's suggestions and the lecture schedules throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century, allowing these items to be contextualised as part of the society's broader interest in China.

Such critical approaches to collections that draw cultural or historical conclusions have only recently emerged. Vanessa Wood's 'The Part Played by Chinese Women in the Formation of an Indigenous Church in China: Insights from the Archive of Myfanwy Wood, LMS Missionary' (2008) offers a critically nuanced approach to a collection of material about China.<sup>134</sup> Wood uses a collection-based methodology to draw conclusions about the lives of missionaries. She engages with the personal archive of Myfanwy Wood to argue that Christian Chinese women, and the societies to which they belonged, played a significant role in creating and sustaining Christian communities in China.<sup>135</sup> Whereas Wood focuses on the personal archive of a female missionary at the beginning of the twentieth century, my research is more concerned with how missionaries contributed towards an interest in China within Newcastle's Lit & Phil, and how their texts help shed light on the significance of its section of travel writing about China. My approach allows this thesis to argue that 'Travel Writing: China', including the writings of missionaries, is underpinned by the context in which it

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<sup>134</sup> Vanessa Wood, 'The Part Played by Chinese Women in the Formation of an Indigenous Church in China: insights from the archive of Myfanwy Wood, LMS missionary', *Women's History Review*, 17.4 (2008), 597-610.

Also see Hilde Godelieve Dominique De Weerd, 'The Discourse of Loss in Song Dynasty Private and Imperial Book Collecting', *Library Trends*, 55.3 (2007), 404-420.

<sup>135</sup> Wood, p.607.

was acquired and developed throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. This approach draws from both descriptive scholarship which points to collections of interest, and critical collection-focused studies that use such collections to draw critical and historical conclusions.

Ting Chang's 2013 monograph, *Travel, Collecting and Museums of Asian Art in Nineteenth-Century Paris* asks how European art collectors used physical objects to represent Asia to their contemporaries.<sup>136</sup> Chang underpins her study with reading strategies proposed by postcolonial scholars, acknowledging that 'the Western institutions of museums and collections are typically iterations of authority'.<sup>137</sup> The Lit & Phil is an authoritative institution in the sense that it was one of a limited range of sources for representations of China in Newcastle during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Similar to my focus on the Newcastle and Lit & Phil, Chang limits her research boundaries to Paris in the nineteenth century. This allows her study to draw specific conclusions about the collections being analysed. Chang also analyses individual items in the collections. In particular, she examines images and photographs that represent the travels of collectors in the Far East. Chang examines how global trade and commercialism impacted on the travels and collecting practices of individuals. Like the French collections described by Chang, the Lit & Phil also has an interest in the visual products of travel and mobility in China as demonstrated through the books acquired and the illustrations mentioned previously. Chang's monograph is a collection-focused study, influenced by the historical context of Paris, informed by postcolonial criticism, and as such is a useful methodological model for my own research in the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China' at the turn of the twentieth century.

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<sup>136</sup> Chang, p.1.

<sup>137</sup> Chang, p.1.



A recent special issue of the *Journal of the History of Collections* titled *Ideas of Asia in the Museum* (2016), edited by Sonya S. Lee, focuses exclusively on representations of Asia. This issue includes articles on a Japanese art collection, exhibitions of Korean art, Chinese Buddhist art in America, the display of Kucha mural fragments in Germany, Russian conceptualizations of Asia, the Burma collection at the British Library, Sri Lankan art collections in Los Angeles, and Asian art collections from the Pacific.<sup>138</sup> Lee's introduction to the issue explains how the essays included build on previous scholarly interest in Asia, whilst examining Asian collections in relation to perceptions of the continent during the twentieth century.<sup>139</sup> Both Chang and the special issue of the *Journal of the History of Collections*, evidence a growing interest in Asia within collection-focused studies.

The most pertinent analytical, collection-focused study to my own is Chris Wingfield's 2016 article on the London Missionary Society, with which Robert Morrison, a key figure in the Lit & Phil's relationship with China, trained. Wingfield describes his 'archaeological approach' to their museum collections by which he aims to 'focus on the collection itself, rather than the rhetoric surrounding it' in order to gain a sense of how items acquired by the LMS museum connected to various parts of the

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<sup>138</sup> Patricia J. Graham, 'Langdon Warner's vision for the Japanese collection at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1930–1935', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 28.3 (2016), 367–382. Nancy Lin, '5,000 Years of Korean Art: Exhibitions abroad as cultural diplomacy', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 28.3 (2016), 383–400; Daisy Yiyu Wang, 'Charles Lang Freer and the collecting of Chinese Buddhist art in early-twentieth-century America', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 28.3 (2016), 401–416; Sonya S. Lee, 'Central Asia coming to the museum: The display of Kucha mural fragments in interwar Germany and the United States', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 28.3 (2016), 417–436. Adele Di Ruocco, 'Russian conceptualizations of Asia: Archaeological discoveries and collecting practices in Russia at the turn of the twentieth century', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 28.3 (2016), 437–448; Alexandra Green, 'From India to Independence: The formation of the Burma collection at the British Museum', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 28.3 (2016), 449–463; Julie Romain, 'Ananda Coomaraswamy and the formation of the Sri Lanka collection at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 28.3 (2016), 465–478; Melody Rod-ari, 'The Pacific Rim: connecting peoples, collecting histories: The formation of South and Southeast Asian art collections in Los Angeles', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 28.3 (2016), 479–492.

<sup>139</sup> Lee, p.360.

world.<sup>140</sup> Wingfield's interests does not lie with individuals like Morrison, rather his argument suggests that the development of the museum, and its subsequent decline, was directly influenced by the institutional motivations of the LMS. In turn, this reveals how far scholarly attention on the history of collecting practices can shed light on institutional concerns and associational interests in relation to the acquisition of material. Whilst Wingfield's focus is on objects in the LMS's museum and my thesis analyses a section of travel writing, the influences and motivations of both are clearly informative of collection practices. My thesis argues that members' interests in China underpin the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China' during the nineteenth and twentieth century. The life and work of missionaries, like Morrison and others, included in the section, flesh out this narrative of the society's connections with China.

Alongside historical and collections-based scholarship, my research is further informed by developments in Digital Humanities methods for bringing quantitative and qualitative research together. In their 2011 article 'Learning to Read Data: Bringing out the Humanistic in the Digital Humanities', Ryan Heuser and Long Le-Khac identify the ways in which apparently overwhelming amounts of quantitative, digital data can usefully inform qualitative and conceptual trends, which otherwise would have been undiscovered to those working within the humanities.<sup>141</sup> For Heuser and Le-Khac, the digital humanities provide a way of bringing to light questions scholars had not considered asking, but they admit that this new methodological style is often approached with some trepidation. They argue that raw data does not always provide enough information to draw meaningful conclusions; it must be read alongside

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<sup>140</sup> Chris Wingfield, "Scarcely more than a Christian trophy case': The Global collections of the London Missionary Society museum (1814-1910)', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 29.1 (2017), 109-128 (p.7).

<sup>141</sup> Ryan Heuser and Long Le-Khac, 'Learning to Read Data: Bringing out the Humanistic in the Digital Humanities', *Victorian Studies*, 54.1 (2011), 79-86.

qualitative analysis. In light of this observation, we can observe that the numbers themselves tell us little about how interest in China in Newcastle was mediated through the ‘Travel Writing: China’ section in the Lit & Phil. By understanding quantitative figures alongside the qualitative analysis of the content of travel writing about China during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, quantifiable data can provide insight into Newcastle’s interest in China and draw connections to the Lit & Phil’s ‘Travel Writing: China’ section.

Megan Peiser writes in a blog post for *The Research Society for Victorian Periodicals*, that her research producing and using the Novels Reviewed Database, 1790-1820 (NRD), takes a combined qualitative and quantitative methodological approach. Peiser qualitatively analyses the content of reviews ‘page-by-page’; however, she also uses data analysis to draw broader insights ‘into the practices of criticism’.<sup>142</sup> Like Peiser, I have also constructed my own database of information which includes publication details, library accession numbers and dates, class marks, the physical condition of the text and whether it has been rebound, as well as notes on illustrations or photographs (see appendix three). My thesis will take a similar methodological approach, underscoring the qualitative analysis of travel accounts, in the form of case studies, with the quantitative data extracted from the Lit & Phil and its collections. In doing so, my methodology offers insights into the formation of the Lit & Phil’s travel writing section whilst proposing a unique approach to travel writing about China.

Qiana Johnson, the Collection and Organizational Data Analyst Librarian at Northwestern University, also sees the value of a combined quantitative and qualitative

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<sup>142</sup> Megan Peiser, ‘Review Periodicals and the Visibility of William Lane’s Minerva Press’, *The Research Society for Victorian Periodicals* < <http://rs4vp.org/review-periodicals-visibility-william-lanes-minerva-press-megan-peiser-university-missouri/> > [accessed 14 February 2017] (para 3 of 12)

approach to library collections.<sup>143</sup> Johnson suggests that ‘collection analysis is a quantitative analysis’, which includes ‘circulation rates, the number of titles in a particular subject area, or financial support of a particular area’.<sup>144</sup> Whereas collection assessment is qualitative, for example how well a ‘collection supports a particular subject’ or how well a collection ‘compares to that of another library’, collection analysis is quantitative and is used to determine broader trends within the library.<sup>145</sup> Whilst Johnson sees a double-pronged approach as useful to libraries themselves, it is also helpful for researchers in uncovering previously unknown aspects of a particular collection. The Lit & Phil holds annual reports, member’s suggestions books, and lecture schedules, all of which contain various quantitative and qualitative data from both the society and its members that support my argument that Newcastle’s interest in China influenced the acquisition of travel books.

### ***The Thesis***

I first analyse the politically motivated travel writing in the section. I argue that despite the lack of parliamentary interest demonstrated by Newcastle’s MPs in China at the turn of the century, the Lit & Phil continued to curate a legacy of politically influenced travel accounts in their collections, from its earliest acquisitions until the mid-twentieth century. The presence of the thirteen politically motivated or influenced travel accounts also provide some insight into the idiosyncrasies of the Lit & Phil’s ‘Travel Writing: China’ housed in the Reference Room. This chapter will place political travel writing within the turbulent context of China at the turn of the twentieth century, marked by anti-foreign uprisings and subordinating treaties, and argue that travel writing could offer a vehicle of response to political events for British travellers. This

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<sup>143</sup> Qiana Johnson, ‘Moving from Analysis to Assessment: Strategic Assessment of Library Collections’, *Journal of Library Administration*, 56.4 (2016), 488-498.

<sup>144</sup> Johnson, p.498.

<sup>145</sup> Johnson, p.489.

chapter will suggest that the travel accounts analysed engage with China as a location on which the foreign policy decisions of other countries play out, focusing specifically on Russian expansion, rather than representing their journeys as a means of experiencing China for their readership.

I then go on to examine missionary writing in 'Travel Writing: China'. Many of the travel accounts written by missionaries in China demonstrate a discursive interest in the Chinese 'national character', thus moving from the visual to a deeper comprehension of China as a nation. I will examine the Chinese 'national character', as presented in three missionary travel accounts from the section, to suggest that the missionaries' interest in the characteristics of the Chinese enabled them to move their discussion from the visual to argue that national and spiritual progress could be achieved in China by missionary work. In this chapter, I will suggest that the visual aspects in missionary travel writing fulfil the Lit & Phil's broader cultural interest in China evident in the rest of 'Travel Writing: China', rather than implying that missionary travel writing was acquired by the society for the religious foundations of the narrative. Specifically, I will examine the use of visual tropes in relation to medical missionary work in China and its function within missionary travel writing.

My final chapter analyses travel accounts written for pleasure which make up the largest proportion of 'Travel Writing: China'. I argue that in these books the pleasure of the authors and the pleasure of the reader is reciprocal. Travel books written by those travelling for pleasure that found a home in the Lit & Phil, were produced not simply as a record of experience, but often written and published with the pleasure of the reader in mind. The prevalent use of images, for example, is one such example of this. This chapter analyses the importance of photography in representing China at the turn of the twentieth century in 'Travel Writing: China'. I also examine how popular

travel authors shaped their image of China through visual and textual snapshots in their narratives. I then examine how textual and visual images corroborated, rather than challenged, stereotypes about China and the Chinese in order to represent China as recognisable whilst still remaining 'other', what I term 'comfortingly oriental', to British readers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.



*Figure 4. 'The Solen', Tyne Built Ships, A history of Tyne shipbuilders and the ships that they built, < <http://www.tynebuiltships.co.uk/S-Ships/Solen1922.html> > [accessed 22 June 2015]*



*Figure 5. BBC Your Paintings, Reverend Robert Morrison (1782 – 1834), First Christian Protestant Missionary in China by Henry Perlee Parker < <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/paintings/reverend-robert-morrison-17821834-first-christian-protesta5771> >*



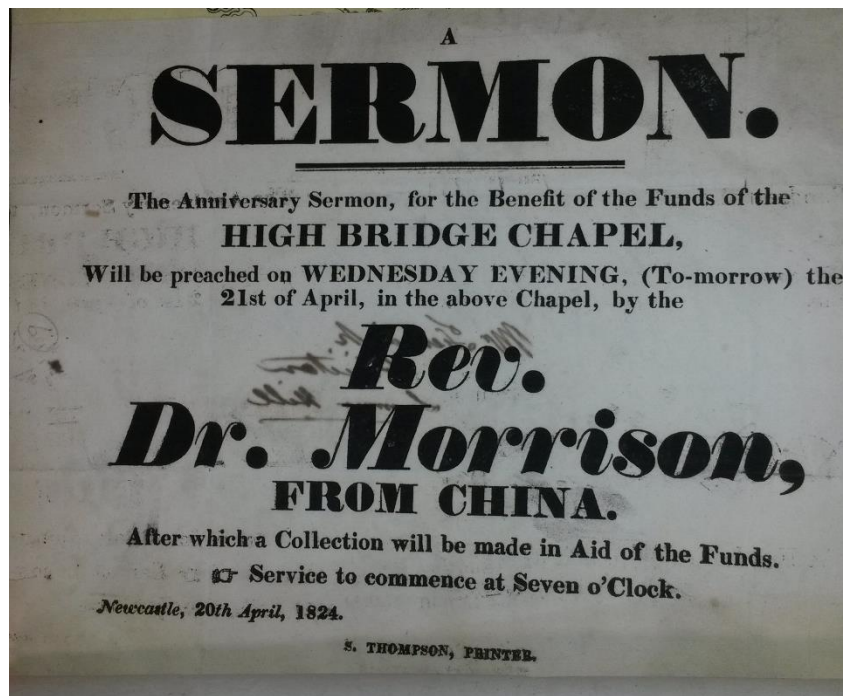


Figure 6. Sermon Flyer, Newcastle 20 April 1824, Robinson Library Special Collections.

*Acquiring the Political: Political and Commercial Travel Writing about China in the Lit & Phil*

On 3 March 1859, Earl Grey presented a petition to the House of Lords. The petition was from the inhabitants of Newcastle upon Tyne and Tynemouth who requested that inquiries be made into the trial of William Tarrant, publisher of the Hong Kong newspaper *The Friend of China*, who was being accused of libel in his reporting of official collusion with Chinese pirates.<sup>146</sup> Earl Grey said that reports of the trial had caused ‘some excitement in the North’ that led to public meetings being held in Newcastle and Tynemouth.<sup>147</sup> Why exactly the people of the North were quite so excited about Tarrant’s trial, Earl Grey neglects to mention, but the petition was presented to the Lords nonetheless. This petition is one of the very few recorded instances of political interest in China being actively demonstrated by the people of Newcastle, evidenced in Hansard.

In the ensuing years, Newcastle MPs do not seem to have been particularly interested in China during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, despite the political debates going on in Westminster. Little information is evident about Newcastle’s political voice on China in the Historic Hansard online database of official reports of debates in Parliament. George Renwick, the conservative MP for Newcastle upon Tyne 1900-1906 and 1908-1910, contributed to a debate on the duty on tea from

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<sup>146</sup> Tarrant’s entry in *A Biographical Sketch-Book of Early Hong Kong* reads ‘by taking a strong editorial line on every issue and expressing it in pungent language, he made himself perhaps unnecessarily prominent. His self-assured task of keeping an especially vigilant eye on the local government and its leading officials led to immoderate attacks upon them, and involved him in libel actions, fines, and even imprisonment. He courted martyrdom, but since he lacked the necessary personal idealism he achieved only notoriety, redeemed by a measure of public sympathy.’ G. B. Endecott, *A Biographical Sketch-Book of Early Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005), p.130.

<sup>147</sup> ‘Publisher of “The Friend of China”’, in *Historic Hansard Online* < <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1859/mar/03/publisher-of-the-friend-of-china> > [accessed 8 June 2017]

China in 1909.<sup>148</sup> In 1904, Sir Walter Plummer, MP for Newcastle upon Tyne 1900-1906, made enquiries to the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs as to whether he was aware of Japanese war-ships in Wei-hai-Wei, a British leased territory in China.<sup>149</sup> Apart from these minor contributions, it appears that no Newcastle political figure contributed to parliamentary debates about foreign policy regarding China during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There was, however, some interest in China from the Newcastle MP Charles Trevelyan later in the twentieth century. In 1925, Mr (later Sir) Trevelyan, MP for Newcastle upon Tyne Central between 1922 and 1931, asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr Austen Chamberlain, what he intended to do about the recent shooting of unarmed Chinese workers in Shanghai.<sup>150</sup> In his speech, Trevelyan quotes Chinese newspapers which record the plight of low wages and child labour in Shanghai's factories, as well as describing a number of defeated industrial strikes. The sporadic evidence in the Hansard records of small contributions to debates on China from Newcastle MPs suggests that there was little consistent regional interest in the China Question or the Far East Question. This apparent lack of regional debate about China is reflected by the limited number of books on the topic in the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China'.

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<sup>148</sup> 'Clause 60. – Duty on Tea', in *Historic Hansard Online* <  
[http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1909/sep/23/clause-60-duty-on-tea#S5CV0011P0\\_19090923\\_HOC\\_482](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1909/sep/23/clause-60-duty-on-tea#S5CV0011P0_19090923_HOC_482) > [accessed 12 June 2017]

<sup>149</sup> 'The Japanese and Wie-hai-Wei', in *Historic Hansard Online* <  
[http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1904/feb/22/the-japanese-and-wei-hai-wei#S4V0130P0\\_19040222\\_HOC\\_147](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1904/feb/22/the-japanese-and-wei-hai-wei#S4V0130P0_19040222_HOC_147) > [accessed 12 June 2017]

Both Mr, later Sir, George Renwick and Sir Walter Plummer were conservative MPs for Newcastle. There seems to be some discrepancy within the Hansard constituency records and some overlap in the time that Renwick and Plummer served as Newcastle's MP. Newcastle's constituencies have changed and throughout time have included Newcastle upon Tyne (1832-1918) Newcastle upon Tyne Central (1918-) Newcastle upon Tyne East (19018-1997) Newcastle upon Tyne East and Wallsend (1997-) Newcastle upon Tyne North (1918-) and Newcastle upon Tyne West (1918-1983), *Historic Hansard Online* <  
<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/constituencies/n> > [accessed 7 June 2017]

<sup>150</sup> 'China: Disturbances', in *Historic Hansard Online* <  
[http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1925/jun/15/china-disturbances#S5CV0185P0\\_19250615\\_HOC\\_217](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1925/jun/15/china-disturbances#S5CV0185P0_19250615_HOC_217) > [accessed 12 June 2017]

In the same period, however, there was some interest in Newcastle from the Imperial Maritime Customs Office in China demonstrating commercial, if not political, relations. In his collected letters, Sir Robert Hart, the second inspector general of the Customs Office from 1863 to 1907, writes of the construction and delivery of the ships, *Alpha* and *Beta*, made in Newcastle, to China. In their footnotes to Hart's letters, John King Fairbank, Katherine Frost Bruner and Elizabeth MacLeod Mateson note that the ships left Newcastle on 19 June 1876 and that they had been rigged as schooners for their journey to China. The successful arrival of the *Alpha* and *Beta* was regarded as a 'great achievement, as it was most unusual to send out such small gunboats with the heavy guns mounted.'<sup>151</sup>

The Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China' contains a small number of politically and commercially influenced travel accounts. Travel writings by those concerned with political relations or commerce account for fourteen texts in total. The section contains a similar number of missionary travel accounts, only one more than politically motivated accounts. This chapter will examine two such political and commercially influenced travelogues: *China and the Present Crisis* (1900) by Joseph Walton and *Manchu and Muscovite: Being Letters from Manchuria Written During the Autumn of 1903* (1904) by B. L. Putnam Weale.<sup>152</sup> Many of the books on China published at the turn of the twentieth century, including those analysed in this chapter, were prompted by a reaction to political events and commercial potential in China.

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<sup>151</sup> *The I.G. In Peking: Letters of Robert Hart Chinese Maritime Customs 1868-1907*, ed. by John King Fairbank, Katherine Frost Bruner and Elizabeth MacLeod Mateson, (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1975), p.228.

<sup>152</sup> Joseph Walton, *China and the Present Crisis* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co, 1900). B. L. Putnam Weale, *Manchu and Muscovite: Being Letters from Manchuria Written During the Autumn of 1903* (London: Macmillan, 1904).

Whilst their numbers are small, the physical condition of political and commercial travel accounts in the section is notable. As a researcher, I am conscious that the physicality of Walton's *China and the Present Crisis* has changed significantly as a result of this thesis. It has been necessary to borrow travel accounts from the Lit & Phil's Travel Writing Section. On first borrowing *China and the Present Crisis* from the library it was in a poor state of repair. Its binding was severely damaged, a map of China had been ripped out and all of the edges were damaged and boxed. Some months later, after returning the book to the library, I re-examined *China and the Present Crisis* to find that it had been extensively restored by the Lit & Phil's in-house binding, who repair books relative to their usage in the library. As I had borrowed and returned the book, it was sent to the binding team. Therefore, had I not taken *China and the Present Crisis* from the section, it is unlikely that it would have been restored. I have come to the conclusion that by borrowing records, I was in fact destroying my own evidence before understanding how significant it would become to other aspects of this thesis by changing the physical nature of the section. By borrowing, as any other member of the society is entitled to do, my research removed the evidence of wear and damage inflicted on *China and the Present Crisis* since it was acquired at the start of the twentieth century. Putnam Weale's *Manchu and Muscovite* has physically fared better in the section. While the overall condition is worn, it was not rebound by the in-house binding team despite being taken out several times during the course of my research. As there are no borrowing records the physical condition of the section offers evidence as to the membership's engagement with the section since the acquisition of the travel accounts. The changing physical nature of the section is dependent on members usage over time, which includes my own activity as a member and researcher in the society.

Political and commercial travel accounts make up a small number of the books in the section, however, the diverse nature of these travel accounts and their topical and rhetorical similarities to other texts in the section offer insights into the interests of the Lit & Phil and their collecting practices at the turn of the twentieth century. In this chapter, I will also demonstrate that political and commercial travel writing in the Lit & Phil does not engage with many of the expected tropes about China in order to authenticate their journeys, unlike many other travel accounts in the collection.

This chapter will first explore the legacy of politically influenced travel writing in ‘Travel Writing: China’ and the rationale for understanding these texts alongside one another. I will also briefly describe political events which impacted on the perception of China in British foreign policy at the turn of the century. This chapter will then look specifically at two travel accounts in the section and argue that their writings foreground China as a location for the activities of foreign powers, engaging with China and the Chinese only insofar as they corroborate the authors’ political stances. I will lastly analyse the ways in which travel writing can provide a vehicle for political argument and how these authors present Russian expansion in Northern China.

### ***Political and Commercial Categorization***

As mentioned in the Introduction, the Lit & Phil’s classification of travel writing often appears arbitrary. Predominantly the library’s section of books about China falls into two sections: ‘Travel Writing: China’ and ‘History: China’. The subjective formation of the ‘Travel Writing: China’ and ‘History: China’ sections evidences the specific nature of the Lit & Phil’s interest in the political and commercial landscape of China at the turn of the twentieth century. Due to the somewhat haphazard nature of the section, I have imposed my own classifications to extrapolate significant themes in

‘Travel Writing: China’. Sybille C. Fritzsche notes that representations of China through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were impacted by many personal factors specific to the traveller or travel writer, for example ‘nationality, profession and gender’, the length of time the journey had taken, even the mode of transport selected become important features in the presentation of China and the Chinese.<sup>153</sup> The categorization of political and commercial travel writing, for the purposes of this thesis, are derived from several factors. Whilst the qualifications for my imposed categories on the section began in the Lit & Phil’s catalogue, I have not approached these in isolation. The author’s biography has also played a significant part in separating out the ‘Travel Writing: China’ section into its smaller, constituent parts. The author’s stated motivations and aims have also been taken into account.

I have placed Walton’s *China and the Present Crisis* into the political and commercial travel writing category because Walton, as an MP, was particularly engaged with Britain’s connection to, and influence in, China. The purpose of Walton’s journey was to establish as much information as possible, from both the Chinese and foreigners living in the country, in order to attempt to influence British foreign policy. His political credentials are confirmed by the inclusion of Walton’s speech to the House of Common’s on his return from the Far East. The categorization of Putnam Weale’s *Manchu and Muscovite* is less direct. Putnam Weale, the nom de plume of Bertram Lenox Simpson, was a member of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service, like his father before him. It is not only Putnam Weale’s membership of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service which qualifies *Manchu and Muscovite* as a political and commercial

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<sup>153</sup> Fritzsche, p.158.

travelogue, but also its narrative focus on relations between Russia and China at the turn of the twentieth century.

The Lit & Phil offers this descriptive catalogue note to *China and the Present Crisis*: 'Eastern question (Far East) China Description and travel. ; China Commerce Great Britain. ; Great Britain Commerce China. ; Korea Description and travel. ; Japan Description and travel. ; China Foreign relations 1644-1912'.<sup>154</sup> Similarly, the Lit & Phil provides the following note for *Manchu and Muscovite* 'Russians China Manchuria. Manchuria (China) Description and travel. ; Eastern question (Far East)'.<sup>155</sup> These descriptions are not original to the acquisition of the books, and the card catalogue does not provide any descriptive information on the books' contents and motivations. Similarly, the 1903 catalogue does not provide any descriptive notes for *China and the Present Crisis*. When the catalogue was digitized in the early 2000s, the card catalogue was edited and expanded into the new online format and the descriptive notes for *China and the Present Crisis* and *Manchu and Muscovite* were edited during the digitization process. Despite the lack of evidence as to whether the Lit & Phil presented these texts as political travel accounts in their card and 1903 catalogue, Walton and Putnam Weale's works contribute to a legacy of political and commercially influenced travel in the library.

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<sup>154</sup> 'China and the Present Crisis', *Lit & Phil Online Catalogue* <  
<http://webopac.litandphil.org.uk/iguana/www.main.cls?p=97e6230f-f86f-44c6-9f57-0790e78e9766&v=c97386a2-914a-40c2-bd8d-df4c273175e6&t=1509302270297&rtisearch=1&searchProfile=AllKeywords#1509302284433> >  
[accessed 29 October 2017]

<sup>155</sup> 'Manchu and Muscovite', *Lit & Phil Online Catalogue* <  
<http://webopac.litandphil.org.uk/iguana/www.main.cls?p=97e6230f-f86f-44c6-9f57-0790e78e9766&v=c97386a2-914a-40c2-bd8d-df4c273175e6&t=1509302454632&rtisearch=1&searchProfile=AllKeywords#1509302459923> >  
[accessed 29 October 2017]



The Lit & Phil has collected political and commercial accounts about China since before the publication of its first catalogue in 1848. Accounts of the first British embassies to China, the journeys of ambassadors, naval military operations and exploratory visits to consular cities sit alongside the narratives of missionaries and explorers in the 1848 catalogue. This catalogue contains accounts of Lord Macartney's and Lord Amherst's embassies to China, for example Clark Abel's *Journey in China, and Voyage to and from that Country, in 1816-17; containing the most interesting Transactions of Lord Amherst's Embassy* (1818); Aeneas Anderson's *Narrative of the British Embassy to China, in 1792-4, with Accounts of the Manners and Customs of the Chinese and Description of the Country* (1795); and John Barrow's *Travel in China (with Lord Macartney's Embassy)* (1804). Although both embassies to the Chinese imperial court were considered to be politically unsuccessful, they are significant as evidence of early diplomatic interactions between China and Britain. All three of these accounts remain in the Lit & Phil's collections today, albeit removed from the current incarnation of 'Travel Writing: China'.<sup>156</sup>

The political and commercial travel accounts that appear in the 1848 catalogue largely survived into the 1903 catalogue. Other political and commercial accounts made their way into the section between 1848 and 1903 such as *The Attaché at Peking* (1900), *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's mission to China and Japan in 1857-59* (1859) and *China and the Present Crisis*. The continual presence of political and commercial travel writing in the section suggests an enduring interest in such texts by members of the society. Rather than simply recounting the experiences of a journey, as we find in the texts that I have classified as travels for pleasure, political and commercial travel

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<sup>156</sup> These texts are now housed in Bolbec Hall. Abel's *Journey in China, and Voyage to and from that Country, in 1816-17* (Bolbec Folio 915.1/2), Barrow's *Travel in China* (Bolbec Folio 915.1/4) and Anderson's *Narrative of the British Embassy to China, in 1792-4* (Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/3).

writings call upon experiences to evidence and validate particular political standpoints, or commercial recommendations.

Many aspects of political and commercial exchange between China and Britain were thus examined in the Lit & Phil's sections of books about China during the nineteenth century. This continued to be the case into the early twentieth century, during which the society kept abreast of political developments in China, such as the Sino-Japanese war, the Boxer Rebellion and the Russo-Japanese war, not only through its 'Travel Writing: China' section, but also through the growth in what they classified as historical books about the Far East or 'History: China'. There are many examples of books about Chinese politics and commercial life being acquired soon after their original publication in the Lit & Phil's 'History: China' section during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, Archibald R. Colquhoun's *China in Transformation* was published in 1898 and acquired by the Lit & Phil in the same year. The same is the case for, amongst others, Harry Craufuird Thomson's *China and the Powers: A Narrative of the Outbreak of 1900* (1902), Arthur Alison Stuart Barnes' *On Active Service with the Chinese Regiment: A record of the operations of the first Chinese regiment in North China from March to October 1900* (1902), Henry Savage-Landor's *China and the Allies* (1901) and Chester Holcombe's *The Real China Question* (1901). The swift acquisition of books on China suggest that the Lit & Phil catered to its membership's interest in contemporary political and commercial matters, despite this interest not being reflected in the parliamentary disposition of the North East at the time.

The 'Travel Writing: China' classification came out of the Lit & Phil's introduction of the Dewey Decimal system, but rather than focusing on one strand of China and Chinese culture, the travel section brought disparate subjects and attitudes

towards China to sit alongside one another. Whilst the 'History: China' section often deals with larger, more internationalist concerns about China, such as the fear of the collapse of the Chinese empire and a subsequent land grab by foreign powers at the turn of the twentieth century, the travel writing section is founded on personal experiences, which provide more intimate introductions to the various, and often chaotic, aspects of politics in China and Britain's relation to it. These personal travel accounts also allow for 'Travel Writing: China' to be interpreted as entertainment, generally aimed at a broad readership, such as the Lit & Phil's general membership, rather than the specific audience of a political analysis.

The Lit & Phil's swift acquisition of political and commercial 'History: China' accounts continued into the early to mid-twentieth century. For example, George W. Keeton's *China: The Far East and the Future* was published and acquired by the Lit & Phil in 1943 and William Edward Soothill's *China and the West: A Sketch of Their Intercourse* was published in 1925 and acquired by the library in the January of 1926. This is most likely a response to an interest in the series of revolutions in China and its move towards communism after 1920. Notably, Putnam-Weale's *The Fight for the Republic in China*, first published in 1918 was held by the Lit & Phil in 'History: China' and replaced in 1935 (figure 4).<sup>157</sup> Although it is impossible to be specific about the reasons for this replacement, it may have been lost, stolen or not returned by a member, the act of replacing *The Fight for the Republic* implies that it was deemed to be an important or highly circulated book by the Lit & Phil.<sup>158</sup> According to their accession records, the Lit & Phil replaced ninety-five books across their collections in

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<sup>157</sup> I have no evidence of when *The Fight for the Republic in China* was first acquired by the Lit & Phil but based on the acquisition of other books in the 'History: China' section it is reasonable to assume it was purchased the year it was published.

<sup>158</sup> It is unlikely that *The Fight for the Republic in China* was replaced because it was damaged as the Lit & Phil library had an in-house binding team at the time.

1935. In 1934, one hundred and twenty-eight books were replaced and in 1936 the number was sixty-three. *The Fight for the Republic* was repurchased second hand along with thirty-three other volumes on various subjects, including another book about China.<sup>159</sup> Many of the replaced books were written in French or were collected volumes of classics. Despite the relatively common practice of replacing books, *The Fight for the Republic* would have to have been considered popular or worthy of attention to warrant its replacement. Hints as to the reasons for its popularity with readers may be found in Alicia Little's review of the book for *The Bookman*. In her review of *The Fight for the Republic in China*, Little, a China 'old hand' and author herself, accuses the first two thirds of *The Fight for the Republic* of being a record of 'disgusting scandals', differentiating it from the historical or academic style of many other modern histories of China in the Lit & Phil's sections. The inclusion of scandalous books about life in China, by one famed for his knowledge on the subject, supports the suggestion that books about China in the Lit & Phil could function as entertainment, as well as providing political and commercial information about the Far East.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Harold M. Vinacke, *Modern Constitutional Development in China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1920) is not in either the 'History: China' or 'Travel' sections. Instead it is classified Gallery Nonfiction 342.51/1, with the catalogue note 'China Politics and Government 20<sup>th</sup> century'. It is the only book in this classification about China and sits along books on Swiss democracy and books on the future of democracy in India. I can find no evidence as to why it was placed here, rather than with other books on a similar subject matter on China. It was replaced, second hand, by the library 25 April 1935. No reason is given for its replacement in the accession records. 'Modern Constitutional Development in China', *Lit & Phil Online Catalogue* <  
<http://webopac.litandphil.org.uk/iguana/www.main.cls?p=97e6230f-f86f-44c6-9f57-0790e78e9766&v=c97386a2-914a-40c2-bd8d-df4c273175e6&t=1497261285628&rtisearch=1&searchProfile=AllKeywords#1516545686213> >  
 [accessed 12 June 2017]

<sup>160</sup> Alicia Little, 'The Fight for the Republic in China Review', *The Bookman*, 55.326 (1918), 65-66 (65). Little is not complimentary about *The Fight for the Republic* in her review. She calls Putnam Weale's work a 'nauseous narrative' and 'repulsive' as far as page 196. She berates Putnam Weale for not only recording scandals in China, but making his own comment on them, like the 'joy-crow of a cock'. Alicia Little herself has three books included in the Lit & Phil's collection of travel writing about China, *In the Land of the Blue Gown* (London: T.F. Unwin, 1908), *Intimate China: The Chinese as I Have Seen Them* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1899) and *Round My Peking Garden* (London: T.F. Unwin, 1905).

Another notable inclusion in the ‘History: China’ section is *The Far East* (1905) by Archibald Little, Alicia Little’s husband. Little begins by noting that his business ‘necessitated extended travel in China and the neighboring countries’, effectively defining his own account as travel writing.<sup>161</sup> Contemporary studies on travel writing in China, such as Nicholas Clifford’s “*A Truthful Impression of the Country*”: *British and American Travel Writing in China, 1880-1949* (2001) and Susan Thurin’s *Victorian Travelers and the Opening of China 1842-1907* (1999), engage with Little and his writing as one of the archetypal travellers in China at the turn of the twentieth century. Not only does he define his own books as travel writing, he is also defined as such by critics. Nonetheless, in an example of the idiosyncrasies of the Lit & Phil’s application of the Dewey Decimal system, Little’s book was included not in ‘Travel Writing: China’, but the ‘History: China’ section.

### ***Political and Commercial Travel Writing in the Lit & Phil***

The best known of the authors in the category of political and commercial travel writing is arguably Robert Fortune (1812-1880), the Scottish botanist and plant hunter employed by the East India Company, who is often credited with establishing tea plantations in India. At best, Fortune can be called an ingenious botanist and explorer, and at worst, he is the most famous example of horticultural industrial espionage. The Lit & Phil holds two of Fortune’s travel accounts, *A Residence Among the Chinese: Inland, on the Coast, and at Sea* (1857) and *Three Years’ Wanderings in the Northern Provinces of China, Including a Visit to the Tea, Silk and Cotton Countries* (1847). These accounts describe his journey across China, during which the Chinese government had forbidden the free movement of foreigners in the country. Fortune

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<sup>161</sup> Archibald Little, *The Far East* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1905), p.v.

reached levels of fame in Britain unaccomplished by the plant hunters who preceded him, many of whom met unpleasant deaths on their own travels. His fame coincided with an ‘unprecedented demand in Britain’ for trees and shrubs from around the world as gardening became a favoured pastime amongst the middle classes.<sup>162</sup> The significance of the inclusion of Fortune’s accounts demonstrates an interest in politically and commercially engaged travel writing throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as they maintained their position within ‘Travel Writing: China’ when other texts were removed.

Fortune’s travel writing from the mid-nineteenth century is an early outlier compared to the remaining political and commercial accounts in ‘Travel Writing: China’ housed in the Reference Room. Fortune’s books belong to a legacy of early commercial and political interest, starting with the Macartney and Amherst embassies, in the Lit & Phil’s travel writing section. Largely, however, political and commercial travel accounts about China appear after 1900, the year of the Boxer Rebellion and the Siege of Legations. These events led to far greater political and commercial interest in China by British readers. The travel accounts analysed in this chapter appear in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion and comment on the situation in China, at the zenith of political and commercial turbulence, and at a time when many commentators predicted the total break-up of China and warned of the international ramifications for Britain.

Alongside Fortune, the politically and commercially influenced travelogues in ‘Travel Writing: China’ include: *John Chinaman and a Few Others* (1901) and *Ancient China Simplified* (1908) by Edward Harper Parker; *On The Coasts of Cathay and*

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<sup>162</sup> G. S. Boulger, ‘Fortune, Robert’, rev. Elizabeth Baigent, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* < <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9953> > [accessed 9 May 2017]

*Cipango Forty Years Ago: a Record of Surveying Service in the China, Yellow and Japan Seas and on the Seaboard of Korea and Manchuria* (1902) by William Blakeney; *The Back Blocks of China: A Narrative of Experiences among the Chinese, Sifans, Lolos, Tibetans, Shans and Kachins, between Shanghai and the Irrawadi* (1904) by Robert Logan Jack; *The China Year Book, 1912* (1912) by H.T. Montague Bell and H.G. Woodhead, *The Attaché at Peking* (1900) by Algernon Bertram Freeman-Mitford, Robert K. Douglass's *Society in China* (1894), E.T.C Werner's *China of the Chinese* (1919), Arthur Diosy's *The New Far East* (1898), and Clive Bigham's *A Year in China, 1899-1900* (1901), as well as the travel accounts of Walton and Putnam Weale.

Parker was a long-serving consul member at Wenchow, Fusan, and Shanghai, amongst other cities, and is best remembered, if remembered at all, as a historian of China who published extensively and had a large influence in introducing 'Chinese culture to the English-speaking world.'<sup>163</sup> Parker was a scholar as well as being a politically active figure amongst the British in China and, as a result, his travel writings are underscored by both an academic and an experiential approach to the Far East.

Blakeney's 1902 travel account, *On The Coasts of Cathay and Cipango Forty Years Ago*, is also included in 'Travel Writing: China'. Blakeney was a British surveying officer and naval hydrographer who sailed to China in 1855 with a British fleet. In 1897, he presented a lecture to the Lit & Phil titled, 'Personal Reminiscences of Exploring Service in the China Seas – commerce, prosperity war – forty years ago –

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<sup>163</sup> David Prager Branner, 'The Linguistic Ideas of Edward Harper Parker', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 119.1 (1999), 12-34 (p.12). The Lit & Phil holds many of Parker's writings on China, including *China: Her History, Diplomacy and Commerce* (London: John Murray, 1901) (Reference Room Nonfiction 951/23), *China: Past and Present* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1903) (Reference Room Nonfiction 951/23a), *A Thousand Years of the Tartars* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1924) (Reference Room Nonfiction 950/19).

(illustrated with coloured lantern slides from original and other drawings)'.<sup>164</sup>

Unfortunately, there are no attendance figures for Blakeney's lecture but, five years later when *On The Coasts of Cathay and Cipango* was published, the Lit & Phil acquired a copy the same year. Blakeney's lecture and travel account are significant as they suggest an interest in different forms of information about China.

Algernon Freeman-Mitford was an active member of the Foreign Office in the Far East. In 1902, he was given the peerage of the first Baron Redesdale and although Freeman-Mitford regularly attended the House of Lords he rarely spoke unless on matters connected with the Far East. In 1863, he was sent to St Petersburg as part of a Foreign Office embassy and channelled his interests into politics and foreign policy.<sup>165</sup> He volunteered for the position of attaché in China and afterwards went on to spend over four years in Japan, during which he witnessed internal revolutions and civil war. He served in China during the 1860s soon after diplomatic relations were first established.<sup>166</sup> E.T.C. Werner, Robert K. Douglass and Clive Biggam were also consul members in China who, on their return to Britain, became noted Sinologists.

Also included in 'Travel Writing: China' and categorised as political and commercial travel writing are *The Back Blocks of China: A Narrative of Experiences among the Chinese* by Robert Logan Jack, and *The China Year Book, 1912* (1912) by Bell and Woodhead. Logan Jack was born in Scotland and employed as the government geologist for Queensland. He was in China examining mining properties at the behest of W. Pritchard Morgan, MP during the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion. He arrived in

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<sup>164</sup> William Blakeney's travel accounts of China, *On the Coasts of Cathay and Cipango Forty Years Ago: A Record of Surveying Service in the China, Yellow and Japan Seas and on the Seaboard of Korea and Manchuria* (London: E. Stock, 1902) was published in 1902 and acquired by the Lit & Phil in the same year.

<sup>165</sup> See Edmund Gosse, 'Mitford, Algernon Bertram Freeman, first Baron Redesdale', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* < <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35048> > [accessed 16 May 2017]

<sup>166</sup> Frances Wood, *The Lure of China* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), p.89.



China in 1900 as the Boxer Rebellion was gathering momentum and escaped ‘from China by the back-door’.<sup>167</sup> Henry Thurburn Montague Bell and Henry George Wandesford Woodhead were primarily editors of China-based newspapers, such as the *Peking Daily News*, the *Peking and Tientsin Times*, the *North China Herald* and the *North China Daily News*.<sup>168</sup> Woodhead was active in a campaign to stop Britain spending the indemnity money from its part in quashing the Boxer Rebellion on ‘promoting education in China’, as he believed that education would lead to a revolutionary, anti-foreign sentiment amongst the Chinese.<sup>169</sup> *The China Year Book 1912* is a collection of, amongst other things, maps, trade statistics, accounts of political events, governance, defence, public justice and constitutional reform, drawing on recent data to provide a report on the political and commercial situation in China. *The China Year Book 1912* was the first in a series of yearbooks which ran until 1939. It is held by several university libraries in the UK, such as SOAS, University of Manchester and Kings College London, as well as the British Library, but those who do hold *The China Year Books*, categorise them as journals relating to politics and government in China, not books.<sup>170</sup> *The New Far East* by Arthur Diosy is also an unexpected inclusion in ‘Travel Writing: China’, as Diosy was a founding member of the Japan Society and his work is not travel writing, rather it is an introduction to relations in the Far East. The

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<sup>167</sup> Robert Logan Jack, *The Back Blocks of China: A Narrative of Experiences among the Chinese, Sifans, Lolos, Tibetans, Shans and Kachins, between Shanghai and the Irrawadi* (London: Edward Arnold, 1904), p.vii.

<sup>168</sup> Paul French, *Through The Looking Glass China’s Foreign Journalists From Opium Wars to Mao* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), p.112.

<sup>169</sup> French, p.112.

<sup>170</sup> ‘China Year Book (1912)’, in *The University of Manchester Online Catalogue* <[https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/prime-explore/fulldisplay?docid=44MAN\\_ALMA\\_DS21173207870001631&context=L&vid=MU\\_NUI&lang=en\\_US&search\\_scope=BLEND&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=local&query=any,contains,The%20China%20Year%20Book&sortby=rank&mode=basic](https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/prime-explore/fulldisplay?docid=44MAN_ALMA_DS21173207870001631&context=L&vid=MU_NUI&lang=en_US&search_scope=BLEND&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=local&query=any,contains,The%20China%20Year%20Book&sortby=rank&mode=basic)> [accessed 17 January 2018]  
‘China Year Book’, in *SOAS Library Online Catalogue* <<https://library.soas.ac.uk/Record/389061#details>>  
‘The China Year Book’, in *Kings College London Library Online Catalogue* <[http://library.kcl.ac.uk/F/F8LLQK1ULELBTRF6P6J8JNCTJ3SMKLUI1686R3IKUK98EQKR6I-14415?func=full-set-set&set\\_number=017215&set\\_entry=000001&format=999](http://library.kcl.ac.uk/F/F8LLQK1ULELBTRF6P6J8JNCTJ3SMKLUI1686R3IKUK98EQKR6I-14415?func=full-set-set&set_number=017215&set_entry=000001&format=999)> [accessed 04 October 2017]

inclusion of *The China Year Book* and *The New Far East* in ‘Travel Writing: China’, rather than in ‘History: China’ where their classification would appear to make more sense, was likely motivated by local considerations, such as shelf space. The situating of botanists, hydrographers, journalists and MPs alongside each other in ‘Travel Writing: China’ supports the suggestion that the classification of books about China could be inconsistent. The haphazard inclusion of travellers and authors who do not share common themes or interests, and the inclusion of books which may not at first appear to belong in the ‘Travel Writing: China’ section at all, suggests that the Lit & Phil prioritised its members’ interest in the political and commercial experiences and motivations of those who had travelled to China personally, over the precise application of the Dewey system of categorisation.

My analysis of the political and commercial books within ‘Travel Writing: China’ focuses on Joseph Walton’s *China and the Present Crisis* and B. L. Putnam-Weale’s *Manchu and Muscovite*. There are significant differences between the lives of these men, their experience as travellers and the travel accounts they produced. Joseph Walton (1849-1923) was born in County Durham and became a successful colliery owner and business man. His success allowed him to run for parliament and, in 1897, he successfully contested the mining constituency of Barnsley, winning by over one thousand votes. Walton maintained his seat until 1918. He was part of a band of MPs at the turn of the twentieth century who persistently aimed to keep questions about Britain’s relationship with the Far East at the forefront of politics. ‘The Pigtail Committee’, as they became known, directed debates on China and its future, as well as contributing to newspapers and journals to disseminate their message.<sup>171</sup> Walton was

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<sup>171</sup> See, for example, C. E. Howard Vincent, ‘British Trade Interests in China’, *The Times Digital Archive*, 31 March 1899 <  
<http://find.galegroup.com/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=unn&tabl>

one of the Committee's most prominent members, along with Robert Armstrong Yerburgh (Conservative, Chester, 1886-1906 and 1910-1916) and Sir Howard Vincent (Conservative and Industrial, Sheffield Central, 1885-1908).<sup>172</sup> In parliament, Walton became known as 'The Member for China' as a result of his interest in the Far East and his persistence in drawing attention to Asia in British politics between 1898 and 1903.<sup>173</sup>

In its review of *China and the Present Crisis*, *The Athenaeum* noted the establishment of a practice 'which has grown up of members [of parliament] going abroad to study on the spot the details of foreign politics in which they are interested', which it claims often 'gives rise to rash assertions and hasty generalizations.'<sup>174</sup> Although Walton was not the first to travel with the aims of informing his understanding of foreign policy, the practice did not always result in accurate or useful information. Despite criticisms of MPs travelling abroad to study foreign lands, *China and the Present Crisis* found popularity amongst British audiences, with *The Bookman* writing in its 'Monthly Reports of the Wholesale Bookselling Trade', that it was one of the most popular titles about China in 1900.<sup>175</sup>

In the introduction to *China and the Present Crisis*, Walton claims that his aim in travelling to China was 'ascertaining from the best informed men on the spot what

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[D=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=CS186311295&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0](#) > [accessed 19 January 2018]

<sup>172</sup> T.G. Otte, 'Avenge England's Dishonour': By-Elections, Parliament and the Politics of Foreign Policy in 1898', *The English Historical Review*, 121 (2006), 385-428 (pp.388-389).

<sup>173</sup> 'Joseph Walton's Obituary', *The Times Digital Archive*, 9 February 1923 <

<http://find.galegroup.com/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=unn&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=CS202970185&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0> > [accessed 12 June 2017]

<sup>174</sup> 'China and the Present Crisis, with Notes on a Visit to Japan and Korea Review', *The Athenaeum*, 11 August 1900, p.173.

<sup>175</sup> 'Monthly Reports of the Wholesale Bookselling Trade', *The Bookman*, September 1900, p.166.

the political situation really was.’<sup>176</sup> The information that Walton gathered is condensed into a speech to parliament titled, ‘British, Commercial, and Political Interests in China’ given on the 30 March 1900 and included in his book when it was published.<sup>177</sup> To contextualise China for Parliament, Walton had a ‘large map prepared’, which he wished to hang in the House of Commons, or at least to be hung ‘in the Tea Room for a short time’.<sup>178</sup> While not claiming to be an expert on China, Walton was undoubtedly passionate, and he used his experiences of travelling to evidence his opinions on China and to attempt to influence British foreign policy. Travel, for Walton, substantiated his political approach, which in turn kept China included in debates on British foreign policy in parliament.

Putnam Weale was a member of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service, a customs service that, amongst other things, collected and assessed duty on trade in China, policed smuggling and mapped coastal areas. As a predominantly British-managed operation, the Imperial Maritime Customs Service functioned as a commercial and political enterprise in China. Putnam Weale’s time in the Imperial Maritime Customs Service lasted from 1896 to 1901 and it appears that his service ended in an undignified manner, possibly connecting him, Robert Bickers argues, ‘with zealous looting in the aftermath of the siege of the legations in Beijing’.<sup>179</sup> After leaving the service, Putnam Weale went on to work for the Chinese government, as well as Chinese warlords at the beginning of the twentieth century, whilst writing about China in books and newspapers for British audiences.<sup>180</sup> After years of emphasizing his own

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<sup>176</sup> Joseph Walton, *China and the Present Crisis, with Notes on a Visit to Japan and Korea* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1900), p.v.

<sup>177</sup> Walton, p.224-248.

<sup>178</sup> Walton, p.228.

<sup>179</sup> Robert Bickers, *Britain in China: Community, Culture and Colonialism 1900-1949* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p.33-34.

<sup>180</sup> See, amongst others, *The Coming Struggle in Eastern Asia* (London: Macmillan, 1908), *The Eternal Priestess: A Novel of Chinese Manners* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1914), *The Truth about*

importance as an expert on China to his publisher, Macmillan, Putnam Weale finally achieved the status of ‘a man who knew about China’.<sup>181</sup> His writing and publishing career was cut short when he was murdered in 1930 for his part in the seizing of customs for the warlord Yan Xishan (1883-1960). Bickers suggests that Putnam Weale was a ‘somewhat louche’ figure and that his role in the employ of warlords, and his subsequent murder, surprised few in the treaty ports.<sup>182</sup> The Lit & Phil holds several other works by Putnam Weale in ‘History: China’. These include *The Conflict of Colour* (1910), *The Fight for the Republic in China* (1918) and *The Truce in the East and its Aftermath* (1907).<sup>183</sup> *Manchu and Muscovite* is Putnam Weale’s only text classified as travel writing by the Lit & Phil. Even though not a comprehensive collection of Putnam Weale’s written works, the acquisition of his books demonstrates that the Lit & Phil was interested in collecting books on the political and commercial situation at the turn of the twentieth century by those with an expert reputation and who had, at the same time, an interest in the seamier side of international politics.

*The Bookman* magazine charted interest in China in relation to bookselling during the political turbulence of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In August 1900, it reported that although the book trade ‘has slackened considerably’, ‘China has loomed large during the last few weeks’.<sup>184</sup> The looming interest in China is likely due to the Boxer Rebellion and the Siege of Legations which began to capture public interest in June of the same year.<sup>185</sup> The following month *The Bookman* reported

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*China and Japan* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1919), *Why China Sees Red* (London: Macmillan, 1925) and *China’s Crucifixion* (London: Macmillan, 1928).

<sup>181</sup> Bickers, p.34.

<sup>182</sup> Bickers, p.34-35.

<sup>183</sup> *The Conflict of Colour* (London: Macmillan, 1910) (Gallery Nonfiction 572.2/1), *The Fight for the Republic in China* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1918) (Reference Room Nonfiction 951/40), *The Truce in the East and its Aftermath* (London: Macmillan, 1907) (Reference Room Nonfiction 952/20).

<sup>184</sup> ‘Monthly Reports of the Wholesale Bookselling Trade’, *The Bookman*, August 1900, pp.135-136.

<sup>185</sup> ‘Lord Charles Beresford’s “The Break-up of China” has probably been the most sought after, and a fair demand has been experienced for Scidmore’s “China, the Long-Lived Empire,” Colquhoun’s “Overland to

that China had continued to exercise an influence over the book trade in Britain, and that

several new editions of the older works treating upon that region have been issued, and have sold fairly well. Amongst the most recent production, “China and the Present Crisis,” by Joseph Walton, and “China in Decay,” by Alexis Krausse, appear to have been the most popular.<sup>186</sup>

The Lit & Phil not only holds copies Walton’s *China and the Present Crisis*, but also Krausse’s. They sold well and, in October of the same year, the magazine commented that, whilst no new books of importance have been published about China, ‘works previously mentioned in these columns have commanded a steady sale.’<sup>187</sup> These reports suggest that the Lit & Phil’s acquisition of books about China were reflective of broader national reading trends.

Sales of books about the military campaigns in Africa and China were particularly successful, with *The Bookman* reporting that interest in these ‘troubles [have] no appearance of flagging’.<sup>188</sup> By the summer of 1901 reviewers of books of China were well versed in the ‘oriental’ representations of China offered to the reading public by authors and travellers. A review of W.A. Cornaby’s *China Under the Search Light* (1901) complained that

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China,” Krausse’s “China in Decay,” and a cheaper edition of Shiel’s “The Yellow Danger”.’ ‘Monthly Reports of the Wholesale Bookselling Trade’, *The Bookman*, August 1900, p.135.

<sup>186</sup> ‘Monthly Reports of the Wholesale Bookselling Trade’, *The Bookman*, September 1900, p.166.

<sup>187</sup> ‘Monthly Reports of the Wholesale Bookselling Trade’, *The Bookman*, September 1900, p.166.

<sup>188</sup> ‘Monthly Reports of the Wholesale Bookselling Trade’, *The Bookman*, May 1901, p.35.

Of particular interest during the spring of 1901 in regards to China was *These from the Land of Sinim* (1901) by Sir Robert Hart, *A Year in China* by Clive Bigham and *The Siege of the Peking Legations* by Allen Roland.

The Lit & Phil holds a copy of Hart’s *These from the Land of Sinim* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1901) (Reference Room NONFIC 951/26).

the public is probably tired of panoramic views of the eighteen provinces, surveys of Chinese history from the time of the great Yu to the last sign from the Court at Si Ngan, and all the steps and etiquettes of mandarindom.<sup>189</sup>

This review emphasises the regular inclusion of visual views and surveys of China travel writing in the period and their hackneyed use to impress the reader. It appears that the reading members of the Lit & Phil, unlike this review's portrayal of the broader reading public, were not tired of such 'panoramic views' of China as the society continued to acquire and develop their collection of books about China in both the 'History: China' and 'Travel Writing: China' sections until the mid-twentieth century. Moreover, of the thirty-eight books acquired and classified as 'Travel Writing: China' after 1900, all but three contained illustrations or photographs, emphasising that the visual played a significant role in the representation of China and the Chinese to the reading membership of the Lit & Phil throughout the beginning of the twentieth century.

### ***Political Understanding of China in Britain at the Turn of the Twentieth Century***

The political debate surrounding China at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries was at the heart of British foreign policy at Westminster.<sup>190</sup> China's surprise defeat in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95 established China as a 'dying nation' in the eyes of the rest of the world. China had become the Sick Man of Asia. The figure of the 'Sick Man', first used to describe the decline of the Ottoman Empire as the Sick Man of Europe, is often used to imply the impending failure of a government.<sup>191</sup> Harry Harding suggests that as a 'Sick Man', China was vulnerable to

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<sup>189</sup> 'China Under the Search Light by W.A. Cornaby' Review, *The Bookman*, July 1901, p.129.

<sup>190</sup> See T.G. Otte, *The China Question: Great Power Rivalry and British Isolation, 1894-1905* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>191</sup> Tsar Nicholas I of Russia was purportedly the first to describe the Ottoman Empire as a sick man in 1853.

military intervention or territorial exploitation by world powers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>192</sup> Germany led the way in land accessions in China in the late nineteenth century, followed swiftly by Russia in Manchuria. Fears were building in the British political establishment about the collapse of China and a seemingly inevitable land-grab by foreign powers. By the end of the nineteenth century, travellers were reporting Port Arthur (Lüshun), a Russian naval base and port, as an established example of Russian influence in China. T. G. Otte suggests that Russian influence in Asia appeared to grow unchallenged in China, especially in Manchuria, against a backdrop of decline in the Ottoman, Persian and Chinese empires. Otte notes that increased Russian accessions in China became increasingly difficult to restrain for other world powers.<sup>193</sup> The Conservative Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, who was Prime Minister three times between 1885 and 1902, was openly criticised by his political peers for his government's approach towards the Far East. Instead of promoting an active expansion of British influence and territorial concessions in China, advocated by some politicians, Salisbury was primarily concerned with the maintenance of British interests. He was also criticised for appearing to fail to curtail Russian expansion into British spheres of interest.<sup>194</sup> Like some in the political class, the public was also growing concerned by the government's position towards the Far East.<sup>195</sup> Lord Salisbury himself

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<sup>192</sup> Harry Harding, *China and Northeast Asia: The Political Dimension* (Lanham, MD & London: University Press of America, 1988), p.12.

David Scott writes that for some in the West, China was both a 'decrepit Sick Man of Asia' and a threat lying in wait, a skulking Yellow Peril, after the century of humiliation by foreign powers. David Scott, *China and the International System, 1840-1849: Power, Presence, and Perceptions in a Century of Humiliation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), p.3. The 'century of humiliation' covers the period between the 1830s and 1940s during which China was subjected to imperial expansion by foreign powers.

<sup>193</sup> Otte, *The China Question*, p.3.

<sup>194</sup> Clifford reminds his readers that 'spheres of interest, unlike leaseholds or concessions or settlements, had no standing in diplomacy or international law'. Clifford, p.1. For articles criticising Salisbury's approach to China see, amongst others, 'Lord Salisbury and China', *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 16 July 1898, p.70-71, and 'Lord Salisbury and The Far East', *The Speaker: The Liberal Review*, 18 June 1898, pp.752-753.

<sup>195</sup> Otte, 'Avenge England's Dishonour', p.387.



saw no need to seek territorial ‘compensation’ for Russian expansion into British spheres of interest; however, he was forced resignedly to admit that the public required ‘territorial or cartographic consolation in China’.<sup>196</sup> He wrote: ‘[i]t will not be useful, & it will be expensive but as a matter of course we shall have to do it’.<sup>197</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, ‘The China Question’ had become one of the key debates within British foreign policy.

The Boxer Rebellion of 1900 contributed to this already tumultuous period of international politics in relation to China. The ruling Qing government’s acceptance of commercial and territorial concessions to foreign powers, along with economic hardship and rain failures led to the growth of the Society of the Righteous and Harmonious Fists, later the Righteous and Harmonious Militia, amongst some of the lower classes of Chinese society. The Boxer movement originated in the Shandong province of Northern China and was fiercely anti-foreign and anti-Christian.<sup>198</sup> ‘Boxer’ was the name given to the Society by foreign commentators due to the ritualistic physical exercise they practiced, which they believed would make them impervious to foreign weapons. The victims of the rebellion were largely Chinese Christians, but a lesser number of western missionaries were killed during attacks which saw the destruction of churches, hospitals and railways, along with other property. In the summer of 1900, the Boxers besieged Peking and the foreign legations in the city. The violent rebellion was supported by the leader of the declining Qing government, aging the Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908). The Boxer Rebellion was formally ended in 1901 with the signing of the Boxer Protocol between China and The Eight Nation Alliance: Japan, Russia, the British

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<sup>196</sup> Salisbury qtd in Otte, ‘Avenge England’s Dishonour’, p.389.

<sup>197</sup> Salisbury qtd in Otte, ‘Avenge England’s Dishonour’, p.389.

<sup>198</sup> See Joseph W. Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1987) and *The Boxers, China, and the World*, ed. by Robert A. Bickers and R.G. Tiedemann (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

Empire, France, the United States, Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary. This is the political setting against which Walton published *China and the Present Crisis*, with the aim of influencing British foreign policy and encouraging commercial and political interaction with China.

### ***China and the Present Crisis and Manchu and Muscovite***

The travel accounts analysed here were both published in the early twentieth century, when China still felt the international repercussions of the Boxer Rebellion. *China and the Present Crisis* and *Manchu and Muscovite* present particularly interesting responses to the political situation in China from a British perspective. *China and the Present Crisis* was the only book written by Walton and, as his political career testifies, China in relation to British foreign policy was very much his passion. Putnam Weale played a role within the Imperial Maritime Customs Office and so his political stance against the Russian annexation of Manchuria and his many descriptions of Russian aggression in China mirror the fears of many British politicians in Westminster prior to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905.

Walton and Putnam Weale identify the political underpinnings of their travel accounts early in their prefatory or introductory chapters. In *China and the Present Crisis*, Walton begins by claiming that the ‘eyes of the whole civilized world are now turned towards China, where it appears only too certain that one of the most terrible tragedies which history has ever recorded has just taken place.’<sup>199</sup> By referencing the Rebellion, even without directly naming it, Walton situates his travel writing within the broader political context of China, the Qing government and its international relations after 1900. Walton, as an English MP, goes on to affirm his belief in the importance of

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<sup>199</sup> Walton, p.v.

the British government in the maintenance and development of political and commercial interest in China. The purpose of Walton's travel and travel writing is to inform and influence foreign policy towards China and so the political foundations of *China and the Present Crisis* cannot be ignored.

Walton claims to have recounted his travels without 'literary pretensions', something that was noted critically by reviewers.<sup>200</sup> *China and the Present Crisis* privileges substance, for example information about the building of railways or meetings with princes and mandarins in support of the role of the British in China, over literary sophistication, of which there is very little. A review in the *Westminster Review* writes that Walton is wise not to lay claim to any literary skill, as he has none. They go on to comment that the 'text consists of short jerky sentences of two or three lines, a method of construction which entirely destroys the reader's pleasure in its perusal.'<sup>201</sup> This 'jerky' style may also be the result of the speed of production and publication, which is likely to have been driven by public interest in the Boxer Rebellion.

Putnam Weale was not a part of the political order in Britain or China, but he wastes no time in asserting his own credentials in commenting on growing Russian influence in Manchuria in *Manchu and Muscovite*. The first lines of Putnam Weale's account claim there is a 'serious need' for a book on Manchuria and the 'great Far Eastern crisis' to rectify the 'extraordinary ignorance in Europe' of conditions in China's northern province.<sup>202</sup> The obvious implication is that he is the right man to write such a timely account of Russian activity in China, as a man who has known 'his Far East since his first days'.<sup>203</sup> Throughout his prologue Putnam Weale comments on

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<sup>200</sup> Walton, p.v.

<sup>201</sup> 'China and the Present Crisis Review', *Westminster Review*, October 1900, p.470.

<sup>202</sup> Putnam Weale, p.vii.

<sup>203</sup> Putnam Weale, p.vii.

the failings of other books on Russian activity in Manchuria.<sup>204</sup> By situating *Manchu and Muscovite* alongside books on similar topics and criticising their content and authors, Putnam Weale sets out from the start to privilege his own knowledge of the political situation in China regarding Russia.

Rather than offering visual representations of China as a rural idyll or stagnant civilization, as we find in many of the travel writings of professional travel writers, *China and the Present Crisis* and *Manchu and Muscovite* represent progress in China at the hands of foreign influence, for example through visual descriptions of Chinese transport or life in treaty ports, in order to present overtly political messages to their readers. For example, Putnam Weale comments on the painfully slow speed of the newly built Russian railway, and by doing so draws attention to the perceived slapdash nature of Russian expansion in Manchuria. Walton notes the conditions of Chinese roads and river transports in order to justify broader comments on the need for reform in China and a more substantial intervention by Britain in the Far East. The ambition of political influence lies behind every travel writing trope and formal convention found in *China and the Present Crisis* and *Manchu and Muscovite*, and drives Walton and Putnam Weale's journeys.

Unlike Walton, whose travel account was published after the events of the Boxer Rebellion were reported to British readers, Putnam Weale's account appeared on the eve of the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905.<sup>205</sup> The outbreak of the war was predicted by many, but some of the prophecies made by Putnam Weale in *Manchu*

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<sup>204</sup> Particularly Wirt Gerrare's *Greater Russia* (1903) and Alexander Ular's *Un Empire Russo-Chinois* (1902).

<sup>205</sup> There is a publisher's note that follows the preface that reads 'Readers should understand that Mr. Weale's very timely and instructive book was written before the outbreak of war between Russia and Japan, although several of his forecasts, as, e.g., the taking of Dalny, have already been fulfilled. June, 1904.' p. xii.

*and Muscovite* were mirrored in the specific events of the war which led many to praise his expertise on the matter. The reviewer for *The Athenaeum* compliments Putnam Weale's 'remarkable prescience as to the early stage of a war which he foresaw at a time when most men regarded it as improbable'.<sup>206</sup> The subheading to Putnam Weale's 'Prologue to the Crisis' reads 'Giving a Complete Account of the Manchurian Frontiers from the Earliest Days and the Growth and Final Meeting of the Russian and Chinese Empires in the Amur Regions'.<sup>207</sup> Putnam Weale uses this heading to elevate his position as a source of scholarly and historical knowledge about China, rather than simply as a travel writer, to his readership. Not only does Putnam Weale claim to offer a complete account of cultural and political contact between China and Russia, he also includes information on the '[g]rowth' of the Russian and Chinese empires and their relation to the Amur region.<sup>208</sup> By offering historical and cultural background to Russia's involvement since first contact between the countries, Putnam Weale establishes himself as offering not only first-hand experience and observation, but also as a reliable source of information and political understanding of the tensions between Russia and Japan in relation to Manchuria at the beginning of the twentieth century. This allows him to claim personal knowledge of the '[f]inal' contact between Russia and China. By appearing to present a complete image of Manchuria, from its history, 'down to the very last moment', Putnam Weale takes advantage of the political situation in order to propagate himself as an expert, or as Bickers deems him, a 'man who knew about China'.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> 'Manchu and Muscovite Review', *The Athenaeum*, 4002 (1904) 38.

<sup>207</sup> Putnam Weale, 'Prologue to the Crisis', p.1-65.

<sup>208</sup> The Amur region, containing the Amur river, has been considered a part of eastern Russia since the late nineteenth century.

<sup>209</sup> Putnam Weale, p.vii.

Bickers, p.34.

Clifford writes that by the early twentieth century, representations of China had become more recognizable, readers of travel books could reasonably expect to find ‘the Shanghai Bund or the imperial palace of Beijing’.<sup>210</sup> However, as the reading public became more familiar with China and the Chinese, interest came from the ability ‘of the writer to defamiliarize them’.<sup>211</sup> Whereas Clifford suggests this happened in the years after World War I, I believe it can be seen earlier in the writing of politically and commercially minded travellers like Walton and Putnam Weale. The defamiliarization of China in political and commercial travel accounts is demonstrated through a shift in British political understanding of China and the Chinese as historic, perpetuated by tropes of a China without history, paused in its own timelessness, that were often prevalent in travel writing, to China as a scene for the latest international relations and political interactions. The representations that Walton and Putnam Weale make of China and the Chinese are mediated through both British and Russian expansionist perspectives and an interest in the future, rather than in any aesthetic timelessness or romanticized past.

Unlike many travel authors describing China at the turn of the twentieth century, Walton and Putnam Weale do not validate or authenticate their journeys through tropes which may have been expected or considered common by their readership. In his analysis of British and American travel writing between 1880-1949, Clifford claims that descriptions of dirt in travel accounts served to substantiate experience:

[p]assing the night between the clean sheets of Shanghai’s Palace Hotel or the Wagons-Lits in Beijing was not experiencing real China; passing the night in a filthy smoke-begrimed Hubei inn, with the hogs snuffling outside, was.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Clifford, p.11.

<sup>211</sup> Clifford, p.10.

<sup>212</sup> Clifford, p.47.

Like the bund and the imperial palace, dirt was an expected trope for the reader of travel writing about China. In her travel account *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond* (1899), Isabella Bird writes that her chief aim ‘on arriving at a foreign settlement or treaty port in the East is to get out of it as soon as possible’.<sup>213</sup> To Bird, and many of her travelling contemporaries, the ‘real’ China lay away from western political activity or thriving commercial ports, in Chinese-run inns and on river junks which authenticated their experiences. Walton and Putnam Weale had no such concerns with this version of the ‘real’ China, instead they mostly, if not exclusively, present themselves as communicating with those non-native to China and are concerned with foreign developments and prospects in the country.

Unlike Bird, Walton and Putnam Weale do not validate their travelling experiences through tropes of a ‘traditional’ China or through descriptions of mean living. The continued interest in China’s future, its position alongside world powers and its future potential for British benefit, shift the authenticating features at work in *China and the Present Crisis* and *Manchu and Muscovite* from past to present/future, or alternatively from rural and agricultural to political and commercial. Walton and Putnam Weale do not claim to offer a recognizably ‘authentic’ Chinese experience in the sense of many other travel authors at the turn of the twentieth century. This is not to suggest that they do not offer any authenticating methods in their travel writing, but rather to demonstrate how some travel accounts about China also complicated accepted understandings of China and the Chinese during this period.

### ***Walton, Viceroy and Port Arthur***

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<sup>213</sup> Isabella Bird, *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond: An Account of Journeys in China, Chiefly in the Province of Sze Chuan and Among the Man-Tze of the Somo Territory* (London: John Murray, 1899), p.19.

*China and the Present Crisis* is the result of Walton's eight-month trip around China, Korea and Japan in 1899. Born in Durham, Walton offers a rare perspective on China, that of a man from the North East. Unlike many of the other travel accounts held in 'Travel Writing: China', he does not describe temples or pagodas, mention the capabilities or failings of his Chinese assistants or marvel at China's abundant cultural history, as these aspects of his travel do not contribute to the political or commercial conversations surrounding China in Britain at the turn of the twentieth century. Walton's travel account has an unwavering political focus, offering China as observable only inasmuch as it is practically placed for British benefit.

Where similarities can be drawn between Walton and contemporary travel accounts, political statements are rarely far away. Like many who travelled in China, such as Isabella Bird, Clive Bigham and Mrs Archibald Little, Walton also took a trip on the lower and upper Yangtze. He travelled on the S.S. 'Kutwo', a steamer, and a houseboat, engaged for him by an agent of Jardine Matheson, a trading company in China.<sup>214</sup> Whereas other travellers often organised their own transport, or at least claimed to do so in their travel accounts, the acquisition of Walton's houseboat and Chinese crew is dependent on his commercial and political links. Unlike other travellers, who may be expected to comment extensively on the landscape, the Chinese crew members or their mode of transport, Walton comments on various meetings with viceroys and statesmen, a visit to the Han Yang Iron works and an arsenal.<sup>215</sup> These locations provide no opportunity to showcase the landscape's natural aesthetic and are not tourist spots. As with Jardine Matheson's acquisition of the houseboat for Walton's use, both the locations and activities described in *China and the Present Crisis* are

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<sup>214</sup> Isabella Bird writes about her experiences on the Yangtze in *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond* (1899), Clive Bigham in *A Year in China 1899-1900* (1901) and Mrs Archibald Little in *The Land of the Blue Gown* (1908), all of which are in the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China' section.

<sup>215</sup> Walton, p.122.



dependent on the established foreign political and commercial structures already in place in China. Indeed, both Walton and Putnam Weale rely on these established structures, predominantly British and Russian, whether for transport, communication, or for the cultural insights they wish to present.

In the short time between Walton's travels and the publication of *China and the Present Crisis*, the Boxer Rebellion had changed the political landscape in China. It is likely that the crisis in the title was originally intended to refer to the impact of Russian power in Northern China, however, after the events of 1900, the most obvious crisis to Walton's readership would have been the anti-foreign Boxer rebellion and its aftermath.<sup>216</sup> The shifting identity of which crisis it is to which Walton alludes illustrates the complex and unstable nature of China's political circumstances during the turn of the twentieth century.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, concern was growing within the British political establishment about Russian intentions towards China. After the Sino-Japanese War, China became financially weakened and, as a result, became more dependent on foreign borrowing. These loans soon became political weapons, used by foreign powers to consolidate and expand concessions, such as naval bases, and commercial influence, exemplified in the rapid development of Russian-funded railways in China.<sup>217</sup> These concessions led many to fear the break-up of China and the collapse of the imperial government. In an illustration which appeared in *Le Petit Journal* in 1898, national visual stereotypes of Britain, France, Russia, Germany and Japan discuss which part of China, represented by a cake, to carve away (see figure 5). A flustered but

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<sup>216</sup> Walton, p.111.

<sup>217</sup> See the Franco-Russian loan of June 1895, or the smaller British (or Cassel) loan and the German (or Nanking) loan both agreed later in 1895. T.G. Otte, *The China Question: Great Power Rivalry and British Isolation, 1894-1905* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.83.

powerless Chinese mandarin holds up his hands in objection behind the negotiations of the others. In the same year, Punch published the cartoon 'Hold On, John!', in which a masked 'John Chinaman' figure is being pulled apart, again by the visual stereotypes of Britain, France, Germany and Russia (see figure 6). These images demonstrate the way in which anxiety over China's future was visually mediated through popular culture to a broad audience.

At the same time, however, the Boer Wars in Southern Africa distracted political attention from the Far East, which Walton notes in his statement to the House of Commons on his return to Britain from China on 30 March 1900:

I am aware how entirely absorbed the public mind is by what has been transpiring in South Africa for some time past, but I venture to submit that we should be unworthy of the great imperial responsibilities which rest upon our shoulder were we to allow the affairs, however important, of any one part of our Empire to monopolise our attention to the serious neglect of vital interests in other parts of the world.<sup>218</sup>

Against this turbulent international backdrop, the Boxer Rebellion erupted in 1900. As we have seen, the Boxer Rebellion changed the political reference points of *China and the Present Crisis*, causing Walton to include the brief line in his introduction noting the most 'terrible tragedies which history has ever recorded' in China as well as lambasting the initial response to the Rebellion by the Foreign Office in his summing up of the crisis. Walton blames the 'absence of any firm and definite policy on the part of England' and the 'aggressive action of Russia and Germany in extorting concessions' in China.<sup>219</sup> Despite the long and often fraught history of relations between Britain and China, the obvious prior low point being the Opium Wars, Walton notes that the Chinese statesmen he interviewed during his travels regarded Britain 'as their best

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<sup>218</sup> Walton, p.224-225.

<sup>219</sup> Walton, p.v & 249.

friend', until it failed to assist in repelling international aggression in the Far East.<sup>220</sup>

Walton's suggestion that Britain's tentative foreign policy was a contributing factor to anti-foreign sentiments in China is tempered by the argument that Russian and German expansion, or 'unjust interference' in China, alienated the Chinese, which he claims was one of the causes of the Boxer Rebellion.<sup>221</sup>

These comments, and many like them in *China and the Present Crisis*, demonstrate Walton's belief in the importance of British policy in regard to the internal affairs of China. As a friend and political ally, Walton suggests that Britain could encourage reform to improve China, whilst of course securing a 'position to exercise [...] powerful influence' and demanding a settlement which prevents Britain 'being overshadowed by any other Power'.<sup>222</sup> The significant difference, moral, political, economic or otherwise, between Britain's commercial gains, and the gains of any other 'Power', is not examined.

In order to validate his claim that he travelled to ascertain the most current information from those in China, Walton includes notes on his various meetings with Chinese statesmen and viceroys. These meetings are loosely recounted and described to the reader, rather than presented as transcripts or accurate minutes. Presenting the viceroys and statesmen in this manner, Walton selects the phrases which best support his key arguments and offers them in a way which positions reformist statesmen in China as strong political allies, feeding into the larger political narrative that Walton constructs.

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<sup>220</sup> Walton, p.252.

<sup>221</sup> Walton, p.251.

<sup>222</sup> Walton, p.256.

In his interview with the viceroy Liu-Kun-Yi, ‘one of the most powerful men in China’, Walton suggests that both men agreed that the weakening of British influence was regrettable for China’s future prospects.<sup>223</sup> It is notable that in his account of the meeting with Liu-Kun-Yi, Walton does not provide his reader with a description of the elder statesman, aside from his being ‘old and feeble’.<sup>224</sup> Instead, Walton privileges Liu-Kun-Yi’s reformist political stance and his positive attitudes towards British political and commercial intervention in China. The lack of physical and visual description is not exclusive to Walton’s interview with Liu-Kun-Yi, it is also absent from the vast majority of his other interviews with Chinese viceroys and statesmen. Whilst this lack of physical description may be a rhetorical attempt to sustain focus on the political positions discussed in the interviews, the lack of detail may also be a result of Walton’s want of literary skill. Despite this absence of literary talent, the relatively narrow remit of Walton’s travel writing permits him to forgo the stylistic challenge of overly ‘exotic’ or orientalisising descriptions. What could be perceived as of interest to a general readership, for example the Viceroy’s robes, or the ceremony of the meeting, or the surroundings in which the meeting took place, could be found in the accounts of Walton’s travelling contemporaries. Walton likely presumed that his readership on the other hand, were more interested in the practical and logistical facts which he presents. Despite this lack of ‘exotic’ detail and its focus on logistical and political interaction, articles in *The Bookman* evidence that *China and the Present Crisis* still found popularity with general readerships. Presumably this is due to the fact that the Boxer Rebellion had made headlines and there was a popular demand for accounts from ‘men on the spot’ in China.

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<sup>223</sup> Walton, p.111.

<sup>224</sup> Walton, p.108.

The only physical description of a Chinese viceroy comes during Walton's account of his reception with Chang Chih Tung, Viceroy of Hunan and Hupeh Provinces. Like Liu-Kun-Yi, Walton claims that Chang is also 'regarded as one of the most influential men' in China.<sup>225</sup> He writes,

[h]e is an intelligent-looking man, with bright alert eyes, a grey beard, and finger nails more than an inch long. Many Chinese of high rank grow them even longer. He wore a conical hat made of reeds, lined with scarlet. It had also a long scarlet fringe suspended from a scarlet button on top of the hat. His flowing garment was of violet silk, lined with blue, and from his neck were suspended numerous strings of round buttons of various colours, denoting his rank and official status. In China you keep your hat on during interviews.<sup>226</sup>

Walton's use of colour may appear simplistic, but it does adhere to the direct style of the rest of *China and the Present Crisis*. This focus on colour demarcates the physical difference between the political establishment in Britain and China. For Walton, Chang Chih Tung, with his long finger nails and flowing gown, represents the traditions of the political establishment in China, and despite his 'honest, patriotic, and progressive' opinions, he still physically and visually embodies the structures of imperial China.<sup>227</sup> Walton's identification of the visual features of the viceroy's appearance makes him immediately recognisable as other; a figure of the 'oriental' which is otherwise absent from his travel account.

Although Chang Chih Tung and Liu-Kun-Yi are members of the political establishment in China, they belong to the reformist fringe of their sector. To Walton, the British government failed to oppose the usurpation of the Emperor in the late

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<sup>225</sup> Walton, p.119.

For more information on Chang see Meribeth E. Cameron, 'The Public Career of Chang Chih-Tung 1837-1909', *Pacific Historical Review*, 7.3 (1938) 187-210.

<sup>226</sup> Walton, p.118-119.

<sup>227</sup> Walton, p.119.

nineteenth century and permitted the Empress Dowager to rule with ‘unenlightened, corrupt, and anti-foreign place-hunters’, rather than accepting the assistance of the reforming, intelligent men that Walton sought out in China.<sup>228</sup>

Walton’s representations of his interactions with viceroys and statesmen are mediated through his own western gaze. David Spurr argues that for the colonial traveller, both the ‘surveying and policing eye’ and the sympathetic gaze of the humanitarian eye are a product of established and entrenched colonial values. In *China and the Present Crisis*, Walton occupies the position of both surveyor and sympathiser, announcing himself as ‘an Englishmen whose policy was China for the Chinese’, whilst travelling to secure a ‘position to exercise [...] powerful influence’ for Britain.<sup>229</sup> The duplicitous nature of Walton’s stated motivations can be seen in his presentation of Liu and Chang. Despite his sympathies towards China, as they are presented through Walton’s western lens of perception, the viceroys are figured as culturally and politically other. Walton, however, must attempt to present Liu and Chang in a way which agrees with his larger political narrative about China, specifically that Britain should have a more active foreign policy towards the Far East. By including his interviews, Walton suggests that his opinions are shared by important men in China who have accurate knowledge about the political situation. In Walton’s account of Liu, the aging viceroy is described as enlightened, patriotic and honest. His personal qualities and opinions are esteemed as they agree entirely with Walton’s own. Walton writes that the viceroy, like himself, cannot understand ‘why the British government should have allowed Russia to ride roughshod over China’ and allowed their own prestige to be diminished.<sup>230</sup> Here the lack of British influence in China is directly

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<sup>228</sup> Walton, p.39.

<sup>229</sup> Walton, p.119 & p.256.

<sup>230</sup> Walton, p.111.

correlated to the growth of Russian aggression and territorial gains. In this section, and throughout *China and the Present Crisis*, Walton presents a clear option to his readership and to Westminster: act in China or allow Russia to gain more advantage in the Far East. Walton underpins this message with his account of his meetings with the viceroys.

In *Imperial Eyes*, Pratt explores the concept of reciprocal vision in relation to Mungo Park's travel narrative, in which he describes being observed by African women. Parks becomes the object of the female African gaze, the price 'for seeing Africa and Africans', often in exchange for food.<sup>231</sup> On his way to meetings with Chinese viceroys, this reciprocal vision is momentarily evidenced in *China and the Present Crisis*. Whereas for Park reciprocal seeing is organised along gender lines, in Walton's case the reciprocal seeing is social and cultural, whilst also being unequal. He writes that the 'Chinese who crowded the picturesque narrow streets opened their mouths, gazed, and smiled with amusement at the, to them, grotesque-looking men passing through the midst.'<sup>232</sup> Walton uses the gaze of the Chinese crowds in order to demonstrate both the novelty of his own presence visiting viceroys and the inexperience of Chinese perception regarding outsiders. Their gaze is mediated through Walton, and as such, cannot be understood as authentic. However, by recognising the he is under the gaze of the Chinese crowd Walton gives them an agency to briefly see in the text, and be entertained at his expense.

Like the viceroys, the landscape of China does not escape Walton's gaze when it appears to be politically significant. Walton systematically presents the landscape of China in visual terms, using prepositional statements such as 'on the right', '[i]nside the

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<sup>231</sup> Pratt, p.82.

<sup>232</sup> Walton, p.118.

bay’ and ‘on the western side’, to construct an accurate panorama of the view of Port Arthur.<sup>233</sup> Spurr suggests that such systematic surveillance was the standard language of scientific writings by the mid-nineteenth century that allowed ‘natural objects to become visually accessible’.<sup>234</sup> Walton’s systematic and detailed approach to the landscape of Port Arthur draws on this established scientific discursive feature, which lends itself to an objective assessment. The observable features of Port Arthur, such as its general landscape (‘hilly’), its fortifications (‘every hilltop is bristling with fortifications, guns being mounted in all directions’) or Russian ability to mobilize for defence and attack in the port (‘The place is [...] full of soldiers and sailors’) evidence that Walton’s surveillance of the landscape is focused on its strategic importance and its ability to be utilised by foreign powers, rather than its aesthetic beauty.<sup>235</sup> Such a systematic and detailed approach to the landscape is designed to appeal to specialist readers, for example politicians or industrialists with a vested interest in commerce and political activity in China, who would likely have been interested in the scale of potential, and for whom such detail would have been valuable. Nonetheless, unlike scientific writing, Walton does not offer his reader any indication whence his measurements have come. If they come from the Russian officials he meets, as suggested in the chapter, then the veracity of such politically and militarily useful information becomes questionable and undoes the reliability of the information for Walton’s intended audience.

‘A Visit to Port Arthur’ appears at the beginning of chapter five and includes specific details of the port’s geography and hydrography, given in exact measurements of feet, fathoms and yards. In her analysis of Victorian discovery rhetoric, Pratt

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<sup>233</sup> Walton, p.76 & p.77.

<sup>234</sup> Spurr, p.18.

<sup>235</sup> Walton, ‘Chapter V: A Visit to Port Arthur’, p.75- 84.



identifies three conventions used by travellers in their written interpretations of the landscape. She argues that the landscape was ‘*aestheticized*’, described as though it was the background of a painting.<sup>236</sup> Landscapes are then ascribed with a ‘*density of meaning*’, representing the visual as both physically and semiotically rich.<sup>237</sup> Finally, Pratt points to the traveller’s ‘mastery’ of evaluation of the scene being surveyed.<sup>238</sup> *China and the Present Crisis* offers a politically mediated alternative to this landscape survey. Rather than aestheticizing the landscape in order to romanticise it, Walton presents the landscape of Port Arthur visually in order to emphasise its commercial, economic and political potential. The specific nature of his description, given in feet and inches, implies that the landscape is rich with economic or military potential, rather than rich in ‘material or semantic substance’ which Pratt identifies in her analysis of Richard Burton’s travel writing. Walton’s mastery of the scene of Port Arthur is established by the detail that he presents to his reader, and by his relationship to the Russian society established there. Moreover, Walton’s gaze over Port Arthur is not only mediated through his position as a privileged traveller, but also through the detail available to him in his access to the cultural and military organisations already established in China by Russia.

### ***Putnam Weale and Russian Failings in China***

Like Walton, Putnam Weale is concerned with Russian activity in China at the start of the twentieth century. *Manchu and Muscovite* is a collection of letters, written in 1903, documenting Putnam Weale’s journey through Manchuria on the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER). Geographically, Manchuria encompasses most of northeast China and

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<sup>236</sup> Pratt, p.204.

<sup>237</sup> Pratt, p.204.

<sup>238</sup> Pratt, p.204 & p.205.

its historic boundaries have been subject to change, partly due to its proximity to Mongolia and Russia, and its consequent appeal to imperial expansion by foreign powers.<sup>239</sup> The CER was completed by Russia in only six years (1897-1903) and marked a period of rapid construction and increased Russian settlements in Manchuria and the development of the major centre of Harbin.<sup>240</sup> Putnam Weale visited many sites of British political and commercial interest in Manchuria, such as treaty ports and railway hubs. As he was commissioned to record his travel experiences by ‘some Far Eastern publications’, remaining in Manchuria was presumably a remit of his employment.<sup>241</sup> Putnam Weale travelled around Manchuria to many of the key areas of interest, such as Port Arthur, Dalny (Dalian), Harbin and Moukden on the CER, observing changes in Russian activity whilst tracing his way through the region. The journalistic style of *Manchu and Muscovite* provides a vehicle for Putnam Weale’s opinions and predictions of an impending Russo-Japanese War. Putnam Weale’s driving message of growing Russian aggression conforms to the evident interest in Russia’s actions in China by writers in *The Times*, where articles appeared regularly in print at the start of the twentieth century.<sup>242</sup>

Both Walton and Putnam Weale are concerned with the military capabilities of Russia in the port, for example the size, number and condition of mounted fortress guns, but, for Putnam Weale, the details of Port Arthur’s defensive capabilities are secondary to the social lives of the Russian community based there. Chapter three, ‘Port Arthur’,

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<sup>239</sup> See Peter C. Perdue, ‘Boundaries, Maps, and Movement: Chinese, Russian, and Mongolian Empires in Early Modern Central Eurasia’, *The International History Review*, 20.2 (1998) 263-286.

<sup>240</sup> See Felix Patrikeeff and Harold Shukman, *Railways and the Russo-Japanese War: Transporting War* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007). Putnam Weale visits Harbin shortly after leaving Port Arthur and describes his time there in chapter six ‘On The Road to Harbin’ chapter eight ‘Harbin, The Railway City’ and chapter ten ‘Harbin by Night’.

<sup>241</sup> Putnam Weale, p.x.

<sup>242</sup> See, for example, ‘Manchuria and the Russian Railway’, *The Times*, 37030 (1903) 4 and ‘Russian And Manchuria: Further Demands’, *The Times*, 37068 (1903) 5.

functions as Putnam Weale's introduction to Russia's key presence in Manchuria. Here Putnam Weale describes the railway journey from Dalny (Dalian) to Port Arthur, Russian investment in Manchuria, comments on the growing commercial opportunities and changing population, the strategic position of Port Arthur as a naval base, and the pervading 'strutting militarism' of the place.<sup>243</sup> He describes Port Arthur as 'armed to the teeth' and 'symbolic of the Russian Bear, with paw raised ready to strike or be struck' (figure 7).<sup>244</sup> Putnam Weale's invocation of the bear as a symbol of Russian aggression in China demonstrates a significant distinction between Walton and Putnam Weale's approaches to Russian activity. Unlike Walton, Putnam Weale uses longstanding symbols that would have been immediately recognisable and thus engages his readership with the notion of Britain in symbolic and binary opposition to Russia in China.

The apparent strength of Russian military might is undermined in the following chapter, 'Sunday in Port Arthur', in which Putnam Weale remarks on the unloading of defensive fortress guns, 'carelessly flung' from railway trucks which left their casing 'smashed like so much match-wood, tubes dented, screws lost etc., etc.'<sup>245</sup> By countering his observations of Russian fortifications in Port Arthur with accounts of fecklessness on the ground, Putnam Weale strengthens his own arguments that Britain must be more vigorous in its defence of its territorial concessions in China, and that Russian aggression is not insurmountable. This counterpoint presents Russia as unorganised and susceptible to British force. Russian ineptitude in *Manchu and Muscovite* also functions as a reassurance to Putnam Weale's British readership, downplaying the perceived Russian threat. Putnam Weale also uses Russian failings in

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<sup>243</sup> Putnam Weale, p.87.

<sup>244</sup> Putnam Weale, p.88.

<sup>245</sup> Putnam Weale, p.90.

China to suggest that increased British practical assistance would coincide with the moral superiority of British rule. Spurr suggests that colonial discourse justifies authority rhetorically through the ‘demonstration of moral superiority.’<sup>246</sup> Putnam Weale implies British moral superiority, against the backdrop of Russian moral and logistical failings, in order to suggest that British activity in China is both possible and morally justifiable.

During his time in Harbin, a major hub on the CER, Putnam Weale scorns Russian society, from women’s fashion, whose ‘impossible combinations’ would appal Paris and London, to the fine distinctions drawn between rich and poor in Russian society, to the murderous criminal underbelly of the city which sees ‘ruffianly giant’ men chained hand and foot.<sup>247</sup> This sense of superiority is reinforced in Putnam Weale’s description of his journey from Dalny by rail. Running late for the train, Putnam Weale’s unnamed travelling companion reassures him that ‘Manchurian trains are nothing if not complaisant.’<sup>248</sup> Putnam Weale also notes the luxury of the newly built, first-class railway carriages compared with the ‘lackadaisical manner’ of everything else connected with the railway.<sup>249</sup> Whilst these particulars can, at first, be read as simply a record of Putnam Weale’s experiences, his description of his means of travel also provides a means for critiquing Russian activity. The forty miles between Dalny and

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<sup>246</sup> Spurr, p.110.

<sup>247</sup> Of the women, Putnam Weale writes that ‘straight-fronted corsets and bell-shaped skirts have not progressed as far as Harbin yet. The clothing is sill of the fashion of the early nineties, and half-forgotten photographs come back to one.’ p.166

On his arrival in Harbin he notes the murder of two men who were found ‘lying stark and naked with skulls beaten in. I myself has seen in the afternoon a ruffianly giant seated on a big cart and chained hand and foot, who was being sent back to Sanghalien for life. [...] Harbin is full of criminals and men that are badly wanted, but the Government is too intent on other business to pay any attention to them. When you have seen one of Russia’s criminals you realise that she is not treating them too harshly by condemning them to life-sentences in Saghalien.’ p.167

As for the Russian gentlemen, Putnam Weale simply writes ‘If you are a true man you drink either coffee or champagne and nothing else. Should you be poor you emphasise the fact by ordering coffee, and you need say no more – you are classified in your proper category and given up as hopeless’. P.168.

<sup>248</sup> Putnam Weale, p.81.

<sup>249</sup> Putnam Weale, p.83.

Port Arthur amount to one hundred and forty miles 'in any other part of the world' on the Russian trains that travel at an 'unconscionable' pace.<sup>250</sup> Indeed, the inefficiency of Russian intervention in Manchuria, such as the poor running of the railways or the handling of fortress guns, is constantly highlighted throughout the book, and by questioning Russia's commercial and infrastructural interventions in China, Putnam Weale calls into question its ability to improve and defend its position against attack.

The chapter 'Sunday in Port Arthur' offers another opportunity for critique of Russian society in China, whilst striking a more personal note, making Putnam Weale's reader an accomplice in his censure. The entire chapter is concerned with what one 'does' within Russian society on a Sunday in the port. He is woken by the sound of the Russian fleet testing their defences, eats an unsatisfactory Russian tiffin at midday, and attends the horse racing, followed by a bicycle race. All of these activities are interspersed with heavy drinking and the sound of military bands. The emphasis of the chapter is placed on what 'should' be done. Putnam Weale notes that Nicobadza has recently replaced Saratoff's as the 'place to go', and that whilst there are many ways to amuse yourself on a Sunday afternoon, 'you should go to the races if you are correct'.<sup>251</sup> Putnam Weale writes that you 'must drive a drosky' rather than a rickshaw in the daytime, and you 'must only drink the sweet sickly champagne of Messrs. Roederer & Co. at ten roubles a bottle, and nothing else.'<sup>252</sup> The instructional tone and repetition of 'you must' borders on the farcical in its specificity. Although the society of Europeans

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<sup>250</sup> Putnam Weale, p. 82 & 83.

Putnam Weale gives a reason for the speed of the train: 'The train proceeded at an unconscionable, snail-like pace, which cannot have exceeded fifteen miles an hour, and the rumbling and rocking was very marked and extremely disagreeable. This is due to the lightness of the rails, which are severely overtaxed by the weight of the train, and there is no doubt that the track, as it stands at present, could not bear much heavy traffic without constant repair.' p. 83.

<sup>251</sup> Putnam Weale, p.90 & 91.

<sup>252</sup> Putnam Weale, p.96.

A 'drosky' is a Russian or Polish term for a low, four-wheeled open carriage.

and Russians have removed themselves geographically from the social structures of their homelands, they are presented as clinging to an established, 'correct' way of conducting themselves, one that attempts to reconstruct the protocols of European pastimes and etiquette in China.

According to Putnam Weale, one of the 'correct' codes that has not been mirrored from European polite conduct in Port Arthur is female sexual behaviour. He writes that there are women of 'several sorts and varieties' in Kuantung and Manchuria, but the lady 'with a past is, with few exceptions, the lady who is always present'.<sup>253</sup>

I saw a lieutenant just off his ship salute with great courtesy and give his arm to a lady of indifferent virtue. No one paid any attention to him, and he passed his superior officers and their wives with the utmost unconcern. Everyone does it in Port Arthur, so why be surprised?<sup>254</sup>

The women of Port Arthur fill the role of temporary companion and fulfil the promise of sexual promiscuity to those who offer them their arm, with the allusion of prostitution and payment firmly implied. Whilst in Harbin, Putnam Weale describes the story of an officer who attempted to murder a girl 'who was engaged in the pleasant task of transferring her affections to another pocket-book', commenting 'passions find primitive expression in Harbin'.<sup>255</sup> These examples imply that the Russian acceptance of prostitution leads to the decline of other moral codes and to violence. Russian women in China are represented as somewhere between the western women and the exoticized Chinese of other travel accounts: morally inferior to other western ladies but racially separate from the 'oriental' women. Putnam Weale cannot represent the Russians as racially other, as he might do with the Chinese. Instead, by representing Russian women

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<sup>253</sup> Putnam Weale, p.93.

<sup>254</sup> Putnam Weale, p.93.

<sup>255</sup> Putnam Weale, p.169.

as being of ‘indifferent virtue’, and Russian men as slaves to farcical codes of behaviour, he presents them as morally and culturally other, an affront to the normative social conventions of his contemporary British readership, who may have already been concerned about Russian activity in China.

‘Sunday in Port Arthur’ ends with the assertion that Sundays are ‘gay, very gay’, but if one looks under the surface, as Putnam Weale claims to have done, there is a ‘rotteness and a hollowness’ which contradicts Russia’s outward organisation and influence in China.<sup>256</sup> The rhetoric of the chapter changes swiftly from ridicule to reprimand of the ‘reckless squandering of money’, both by the government and the Russians living in China, and the ‘barbaric profusion and ostentation’ of their behaviour.<sup>257</sup> Putnam Weale implies that the irresponsible actions of Russians in Port Arthur reflects the Russian government’s policy of expansion in Manchuria. Like the railway’s luxury carriage moving at an unconscionably slow pace, for Putnam Weale Russian activity and society in China are linked in their inability to stand up to scrutiny or challenge.<sup>258</sup> Felix Patrikeeff and Harold Shukman suggest that despite the quick expansion of infrastructure in Manchuria, Russian commercial and economic concerns remained largely ‘thin and highly vulnerable’.<sup>259</sup> They write that although in reality Russian commercial influence was limited, the perception of Russian aggression in China at the turn of the twentieth century shaped the international response to Russia’s expansionist activity in Manchuria, especially in the eyes of the Japanese. This would become a key contributing factor to the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905).<sup>260</sup> The

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<sup>256</sup> Putnam Weale, p.97.

<sup>257</sup> Putnam Weale, p.97.

<sup>258</sup> Putnam Weale, p.83.

<sup>259</sup> See Felix Patrikeeff and Harold Shukman, *Railways and the Russo-Japanese War: Transporting War* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007) p.2.

<sup>260</sup> See Patrikeeff and Shukman, ‘Introduction’.

‘highly vulnerable’ Russian infrastructure is what Putnam Weale highlights in his account of 1903 Manchuria.

The overtly lavish nature of Russian life in China is something that Walton also observes. On a visit to the railway from Newchwang, Walton meets Mr. Titoff, a Russian engineer on the growing line. Walton, who claims that Titoff knows that he is ‘one of their opponents in the English Parliament’, is treated to a three-hour tiffin.<sup>261</sup> It included

vodka, Crimean claret, champagne *ad lib.*, beer and aerated drinks, also an unlimited quantity of tea, which was served in huge glasses with sugar but no milk, a little claret being substituted for milk by the Russians. We had excellent chicken soup, tinned Russian sturgeon, salmon, chicken, woodcock, and black-cock.<sup>262</sup>

Obviously, the excesses encountered by Putnam Weale in 1903 were already occurring in 1899. As in Harbin and Port Arthur, drinking regularly and in large quantities is recorded as a feature of Russian life on the railway. The ability to offer this wide range of items to Walton and his party comes directly from the ability to import things on the expanding railway system. Mr Titoff apologises profusely for having only tinned meats to serve as his cook had died of bubonic plague two days before Walton’s arrival. As a precautionary measure Mr Titoff had ‘burnt to the ground the kitchen and adjoining rooms in which his servants lived’.<sup>263</sup> Despite his exceptional hosting skills, Walton does briefly censure Mr Titoff for his treatment of his Chinese servants, who he abused in ‘unmeasured terms’.<sup>264</sup> Walton surmises that if that is the way the Russians treat the Chinese, there certainly will be ‘no love lost between them’.<sup>265</sup> This accusation of poor

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<sup>261</sup> Walton, p.8.

<sup>262</sup> Walton, p.8.

<sup>263</sup> Walton, p.8.

<sup>264</sup> Walton, p.9.

<sup>265</sup> Walton, p.9-10.



treatment is placed between two glowing accounts of Russian kindness and generosity. Unlike Putnam Weale who presents Russian excess in China to ridicule and to mock, Walton emphasises their hospitality, expressing his admiration of Mr Titoff and his 'splendid physique'.<sup>266</sup> Walton's praise of Mr Titoff suggests a separation between Russian governmental policy, which he opposes in principle and in parliament, and Russian individuals on the ground who work to enact their government's policy. As Mr Titoff exclaims to Walton, 'political differences ought not to be allowed to prevent private friendships'.<sup>267</sup>

Even more so than in Walton's account, any detailed description of the Chinese, and certainly of Chinese individuals, is conspicuously absent in *Manchu and Muscovite*. The descriptions that Putnam Weale does offer of 'the Chinaman' appear in relation to the 'Slav' occupiers, for example he notes that the Chinese learn Russian 'with extraordinary ease' and suggests that they are unable to watch Russian warehouses without the temptation of corruption.<sup>268</sup> Instead, Putnam Weale's account of his experiences in Manchuria prioritises the visibility of Russians in China over the actual effects of Russian expansion on the Chinese populace themselves. Unlike the Chinese, Russians could be represented in direct competition with British interests in China. Four years earlier, Walton attempted to present the reformist members of the Chinese political establishment as reasonable allies to British interests. Putnam Weale, by contrast, chooses not to interact with Chinese statesmen or viceroys personally, and his focus remains on the Russian population throughout his travel account. Despite the title suggesting an equal weighting for 'Manchu' and 'Muscovite', this does not transpire in Putnam Weale's writings. His representation of the political infrastructure in

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<sup>266</sup> Walton, p.9.

<sup>267</sup> Walton, p.9.

<sup>268</sup> Putnam Weale, p.241 & p.173.

Manchuria, where *Manchu and Muscovite* claims that Russia holds much of the power and influence, neglects the Chinese and offers China simply as a location for political events relevant to Britain. China is thus structured by Putnam Weale as a location for international relations that bear little relevance to the host nation. The Chinese do not fit into the overarching narrative of Russian aggression and Putnam Weale's gaze remains fixed on Russian activity, from Russia's history of territorial accession to the perception of its incompetence in China.

The political and commercial travel accounts make up a small but significant proportion of the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China'. *China and the Present Crisis* and *Manchu and Muscovite*, alongside their politically classified counterparts, almost exclusively engage with the turbulent political landscape in China at the turn of the twentieth century and the relation of British politics to it. For Walton and Putnam Weale, Russia is the key to this political landscape. Placing their experiences alongside political and commercial knowledge about Russia in China, motivates their travel and their activities as well as their desire to publish for a broader audience in order to disseminate their personal and political views on China. As we shall see, this offers a significantly different perspective on China to those travelling as professional writers or missionaries, not least because it is the immediate present and the future, not a romanticised past, that concerns Walton and Putnam Weale. The quantitative presence of political and commercial travel accounts is small in the Travel Writing: China section, and their presence exemplifies the arbitrary and malleable genre classifications used by the Lit & Phil. These unquestionably political books surprise us, sitting as they do comfortably alongside those travelling for pleasure or for religious reasons. Approaching the collection quantitatively as well as qualitatively, draws our attention to the differences between travel accounts, for example their ideological foundations, whilst

also encouraging us to account for their being collected together, alongside one another on the shelves of the Lit & Phil. As we have seen in lectures on China presented to the Society at the turn of the twentieth century, these books also reflect the memberships interest in contemporary political accounts of China based on personal experience or perceived intimate knowledge. Taking into account the number and contemporary political themes of lectures, the quantity of political accounts in 'Travel Writing: China' becomes far more significant as they can be seen to directly support topics of discussion within the society.

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Figure 7. Accession Note in the front of B. L. Putnam Weale's *The Fight for the Republic in China*.



Figure 5. Henri Meyer, illustration in 'Le Petit Journal', 1898. "En Chine Le gâteau des Rois et... des Empereurs", "China - the cake of kings and... of emperors". Wikimedia Commons < [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:China\\_imperialism\\_cartoon\\_jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:China_imperialism_cartoon_jpg) > [accessed 5 June 2017]



“HOLD ON, JOHN!”

*Figure 6. 'Hold On, John!', Punch, 1898 < [www.punch.co.uk](http://www.punch.co.uk) > [accessed 25 January 2018]*

# 時局圖



Figure 7. Tse Tsan-tai (1872-1939), 'The Situation in the Far East'

(between 1900-1904) <

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian\\_Bear#/media/File:%E6%97%B6%E5%B1%80%E5%9B%BE.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Bear#/media/File:%E6%97%B6%E5%B1%80%E5%9B%BE.jpg) > [accessed 27 September 2017]

*'Is it Worth While?': Missionary Travel Writing about China in the Lit & Phil*

The newly ordained American missionary Arthur H. Smith sailed for China in 1872. He would eventually spend over fifty years of his life in the country, writing, teaching and preaching to some of China's poorest people.<sup>269</sup> Since 1990, Smith's most popular text, *Chinese Characteristics* (1890), has had a resurgence of interest amongst cultural critics in China who continue to debate Smith's value within contemporary Chinese society.<sup>270</sup> *Chinese Characteristics*, however, is not the story of Smith's journey through China; it is instead an examination of what Smith believes to be 'the essence of being Chinese'.<sup>271</sup> Some have claimed that Smith's writing is 'accurate and insightful', arguing that as an onlooker Smith presents the Chinese character in a way which the Chinese themselves never could.<sup>272</sup> Chinese cultural critics, such as Sun Yu and Hui Yang, suggest that *Chinese Characteristics* was written to help to 'save' the Chinese and that Smith's book, first published over one hundred and twenty years ago, is still relevant in describing the characteristics and identity of the contemporary Chinese population.<sup>273</sup> Alternatively, others have argued that the Chinese characteristics in the text are based on gross over-generalizations and demonstrate Smith's cultural

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<sup>269</sup> David M. Stowe, 'Arthur Henderson Smith, 1845-1932', in the *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity* < <http://www.bdconline.net/en/stories/s/smith-arthur-henderson.php> > [accessed 16 June 2016]

<sup>270</sup> Arthur Smith, *Chinese Characteristics* (New York, Chicago, Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1894). Twenty-nine editions have been re-published in China between 1991 and 2014.

<sup>271</sup> Hui Yang, 'Quest for the Chinese Identity: An Analysis of the Reception of A.H. Smith's *Chinese Characteristics* in Contemporary China, 1990-2014', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 37 (2016), 84-91 (p. 84).

<sup>272</sup> See Wu. B., 'Tazhe shiyu li de zhongguoren—du zhongguoren de texing' ['Chinese in the Eyes of The Other: Reading *Chinese Characteristics*'], *Zhongguo Tushu Pinglun*, 2 (1999), 54-55; and Mao X., 'Toushi yu yingxiang: meiguo zaoqi chuanjiaoshi mingenpu de zhongguo sixiang Yanjiu' ['Pictures and Images: Research on the Chinese Thought of Arthur Henderson Smith'], *Wanxi Xueyua Xuebao*, 24 (2009), 119-121.

<sup>273</sup> See Sun Yu, 'He Zhongguoren de qizhi chuban' ['Congratulations to the Publishing of *Chinese Characteristics*'], *Lu Xun Yanjiu Yuekan*, 5 (1996), 51-55; and Yang Z., 'Zhiyi "guominxing shenghua" lilun—jianping liuhe dui luxun xingxiang de niuqu' ['Questioning the Validity of the Theory of 'National Spirit Mythology'—Commenting Concurrently on Liu He's Distortion of Lu Xun's Image'], *Jishou Daxue Xuebao: Shehui Kexue Ban*, 3 (2002), 59-66.



ignorance, also accusing *Chinese Characteristics* of lacking contextualization and of blatant discrimination.<sup>274</sup>

Smith was certainly not the only missionary publishing writings based on experiences in China at the turn of the twentieth century. Many men and women produced accounts, some of which found their way into the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China'. These accounts have drawn varying degrees of attention, both critically and from general readerships. Jeffrey Dupee asserts that missionary travel literature represents 'an entirely different sub-set' of writing, compared to the travel accounts produced by those travelling for political, exploratory or pleasure purposes, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>275</sup> In this 'subset' the missionaries in China were seen, by both themselves and their readers, to be 'travellers for Christ'.<sup>276</sup> For Dupee, missionary travel literature demonstrates that authors were not travelling for 'their own pleasure but rather journeying through China for a higher purpose, with travel merely a means to an end, not its own end for its own pleasures'.<sup>277</sup>

Likewise, Anna Johnston suggests that missionary writing is often characterised by ideological concerns, which could be 'fundamentally and frankly propagandist in nature'.<sup>278</sup> She writes that such narratives were written to serve distinct purposes, aiming to help raise and to sustain funds for the missionary cause, to ensure that readers

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<sup>274</sup> See Weng, W., 'Mingenpu de jingli yu zhongguoren de texing' ['The Experience of Arthur H. Smith and his Chinese Characteristics'], *Fujian Shifan Daxue Xuebao: Zhexue Shehui Kexueban*, 4 (2009) 129–135; Liu X., 'Guojia xingxiang suzhaoyu guoji hanyu wenhua chuanbo—dui Zhongguoren de qizhi yishu de zanduo shengshi' ['Shaping National Image and Promoting Chinese Culture: Re-examination of Chinese Characteristics'], *Zhongwen Zixue Zhidao*, 6 (2008) 25–31; and Wang X., 'Qinmo chuanjiaoshi yanzhong de zhongguo xinxiang—yi Minggenpu, Hetianjue yiji Maigaowen wei kaocha zhongxin' ['Image of China in the Late Qing Dynasty in Missionaries' Eyes with Arthur Henderson Smith, Chester Holcombe, and John Macgowan as the Research Objects'], *Chongqing Daxue Xuebao: Shehui Kexue Ban*, 12 (2012) 79–82.

<sup>275</sup> Jeffrey N. Dupee, *British Travel Writers In China – Writing Home To A British Public, 1890-1914* (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2004), p.301.

<sup>276</sup> Dupee, p.305.

<sup>277</sup> Dupee, p.305.

<sup>278</sup> Anna Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.6-7.

were supportive of the religious mission, and to encourage others to take up missionary work in China and elsewhere.<sup>279</sup> Johnston identifies a set of common features to which the structure of missionary writing often conforms. The first is an overwhelming optimism, emphasising positive evangelical achievements and avoiding any mention of failure. Second, a sense of confidence; the figure of the missionary is almost exclusively free from any religious doubt, disease or personal crisis.<sup>280</sup> Thirdly, these texts draw an artificial contrast between the native population, which is depicted as lying in moral decay, and the, usually male, missionary's activity in this foreign land as heroic, long-suffering, and of unimpeachable moral integrity.<sup>281</sup> The features which Johnston identifies, particularly that of the heroic, irreproachable missionary figure, and the confident emphasis on mission achievement, can be seen in many of the missionary travel accounts from China held in the section.

In her analysis of missionary writing and postcolonialism in Africa, Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi similarly identifies examples of missionary discourses which 'deny any agency to the colonized or the evangelized', in which the 'indigenous [are] seen through the external, European gaze' and local voices are denied.<sup>282</sup> She also finds that Catholic and Protestant missionaries in Africa often shared common aims, many of which would have been similarly implemented in China: 'the eradication of local practices and beliefs, and the struggle against polygamy, fetishes, idols and ancestral worship'.<sup>283</sup> Although Mudimbe-Boyi is focusing on the work and writing of missionaries in Africa, comparable missionary discourses can be found in the missionary travel accounts from

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<sup>279</sup> Johnston, p.6-7.

<sup>280</sup> Johnston, p.6-7.

<sup>281</sup> Johnston, p.6-7.

<sup>282</sup> Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi, 'Missionary writing and postcolonialism', *The Cambridge History of Postcolonial Literature*, ed. by Ato Quayson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 82, 86, 92.

<sup>283</sup> Mudimbe-Boyi, p.86.

China in the Lit & Phil which privilege the 'European gaze' whilst denying local Chinese voices and agency.

However, very little attention has been paid to the broad range of discourses with which missionary travel writing from China engaged, and how the content and form of these texts appealed to a larger, often more secular, Anglophone audience. The missionary activities of these travel authors did not limit their engagement with larger cultural discourses regarding China and the Chinese. It is their involvement with these larger discourses which continued to make these travel accounts appealing, despite significantly differing levels of popularity.

One of the Lit & Phil's founding principles was that religion was a prohibited topic of conversation between members.<sup>284</sup> This principle was reiterated by Robert Spence Watson in his history of the Lit & Phil, published after the centenary of the society's foundation, in which he writes that two 'great topics divide friends and make them foes — religion and politics'.<sup>285</sup> Spence Watson suggested that restrictions on religion and politics allowed members to meet on 'neutral ground', which he insisted should always be observed by the members of the society.<sup>286</sup> However, as can be seen through the missionary texts from China, as well as the expansive section of religious texts in the main gallery of the library, the Lit & Phil collected many religious texts throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and this particular founding principle of the society must have been a grey area. Instead, it appears that while books promoting particular religious views were forbidden, texts which approached religion from a historical or cultural perspective were far more welcome within the collections.

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<sup>284</sup> Robert Spence Watson, *History of the Literary and Philosophical Society* (London: Walter Scott, 1897), p.43. Rules prohibiting discussion of religion stood until 2007 when the Society became a registered company.

<sup>285</sup> Spence Watson, p.329.

<sup>286</sup> Spence Watson, p.329.

For example, the Lit & Phil holds a full collection of the *Sacred Books of the East* series, which comprises fifty volumes produced by Oxford University Press.<sup>287</sup> The series contains many translated key texts from Eastern religions and was compiled for educational purposes. These volumes in the ‘Religion’ section fulfil an academic purpose within the library, rather than an evangelical one. The collection’s editor, Max Muller, asserted that the texts provided a ‘solid foundation for a comparative study of religions of the East’, rather than offering religious ideologies.<sup>288</sup> Under the 1848 classification, books on religion would have been categorised as ‘Class I: Theology’. It is likely that texts on China, then, were assessed by the Lit & Phil for their academic merit and religious objectivity before being admitted into the society’s collections.

This chapter will explore what aspects of the missionary texts in the ‘Travel Writing: China’ section would likely have been of interest to the membership of the Lit & Phil. I will argue that the visual and informational aspects of missionary texts appeal to the membership’s cultural curiosities regarding China and that the visual and written imagery in missionary writing coincides with the prevalence of China’s visual appearance throughout the section. Furthermore, the travel accounts that this chapter will examine demonstrate discursive attempts to understand the Chinese ‘national character’, moving from the visual to a deeper comprehension of China as a nation. Firstly, therefore, this chapter will examine the use of the texts deploy tropes of seeing and sight in relation to medical missionary work in China and its function within missionary travel writing. I will then analyse aspects of homogenisation in the visual representation of the Chinese population by missionaries. I will then turn to the Chinese ‘national character’, as mediated through missionary writing, to suggest that the

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<sup>287</sup> *The Sacred Books of the East Series Translated by Various Oriental Scholars and Edited by F. Max Müller* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879-1910).

<sup>288</sup> Max Muller, ‘Sacred Books of the East’, *The North American Review*, 128.271 (1879), 631-646 (p.631).

missionaries' interest in the characteristics of the Chinese enabled them to move their discussion from the visual to argue that national and spiritual progress could be achieved in China by missionary work. Underpinning my analysis is the acceptance that the religious vigour of these travel accounts, which presumably would have been the missionary authors' main drive for writing and publishing, is not the reason why such texts were acquired by the Lit & Phil. Instead, aspects of these missionary travel accounts, such as their engagement with the visual and their descriptive constructions and analysis of the Chinese 'national character' at the turn of the twentieth century, fulfil the Lit & Phil's broader cultural interest in China evident in the rest of 'Travel Writing: China'.

Missionary and religious texts account for fifteen books in 'Travel Writing: China', one more than politically motivated accounts. In order to contextualise the books analysed in this chapter in detail, it is helpful first to give a brief description of the other items inspired by missionary activity on these shelves. These include Fortunato Prandi's translation of the *Memoirs of Father Ripa, During Thirteen Years' Residence at the Court of Peking in the Service of the Emperor of China* (1855) and Reverend George Smith's *A Narrative of an Exploratory Visit to each of the Consular Cities of China, and to the Islands of Hong Kong and Chusan, on behalf of the Church Missionary Society, in the Years 1844, 1845, 1846* (1847).<sup>289</sup> After travelling extensively in China for the Church of England, George Smith (1815–1871) was appointed the Bishop of Hong Kong where he often conducted services in Mandarin and English.<sup>290</sup> Matteo Ripa (1682-1745) was a Jesuit priest who served as an engraver to

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<sup>289</sup> *Memoirs of Father Ripa, During Thirteen Years' Residence at the Court of Peking in the Service of the Emperor of China*, trans. by Fortunato Prandi (London: John Murray, 1855).

Rev. George Smith, *A Narrative of an Exploratory Visit to each of the Consular Cities of China, and to the Islands of Hong Kong and Chusan* (London: Seeley, Birnside, & Seeley, 1847).

<sup>290</sup> 'Smith, George (1815–1871)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25805?docPos=8>> [accessed 09 June 16].

the Chinese court between 1710 and 1723 and helped to establish a college for Chinese Christians in Naples. Prandi's translations come from the 'most interesting portions' of Father Ripa's time in China.<sup>291</sup> Isabella Williamson's *Old Highways in China* (1884) is the account of the author's four journeys along the backroads of China's Shandong Province and the everyday lives of the Chinese women she met.<sup>292</sup> Reverend John Macgowan (1835-1922), like Robert Morrison was a member of the London Missionary Society. His 1907 text *Sidelights of Chinese Life* is an extensively illustrated collection of essays on the nature of life in China, from 'The Farmer' and 'Servants', to 'The Seamy Side of Chinese Life' and 'Some of the More Shady Professions in Chinese Life'. Two travel accounts in the missionary category are by the same author, Isaac Taylor Headland (1859-1942). *Home Life in China* (1914) is a collection of essays focusing largely on the domestic life of Chinese women, while *Court Life in China* (1909), draws on accounts of his wife's medical connections with the Chinese Court.<sup>293</sup> Also included in the section are Arthur Evans Moule's *Half a Century in China* (1911), Timothy Richard *Forty Five Years in China* (1916), Guliemena F. Alsop, *My Chinese Days* (1918) and *Village Life in China*, by Arthur Smith.

I have chosen to examine the remaining missionary texts in the section which are *Thirty Years in Moukden 1883-1913 Being the Experiences and Recollections of Dugald Christie* by Dugald Christie, edited by his wife (London: Constable, 1914), *Fire and Sword in Shansi: The Story of the Martyrdom of Foreigners and Chinese Christians* by Eben Henry Edwards (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, 1903), and *Chinese Characteristics* by Arthur H. Smith (New York, Chicago, Toronto: Revell, 1894). The Lit & Phil holds first editions of *Thirty Years in Moukden* and *Fire and Sword*, and a

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<sup>291</sup> *Memoirs of Father Ripa*, p. iii.

<sup>292</sup> *Old Highways in China* was recently reissued by Cambridge University Press (2010).

<sup>293</sup> Isaac Taylor Headland, *Home Life in China* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1914).

Isaac Taylor Headland, *Court Life in China* (New York & Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909).

third, revised edition of *Chinese Characteristics*.<sup>294</sup> Smith, Edwards and Christie published their travel accounts roughly a decade apart, and yet, due to the length of their residencies, all three men's missionary experiences in China would have partly coincided. Christie was obviously proud of the length of time he had spent in China as it is used in the title of his travel account. Smith is famed for his fifty years of missionary activity in China, publishing often during his time in the country. It is unclear from *Fire and Sword* exactly how long Edwards spent in China as a missionary. Each of these men saw drastic changes in China, which affected how and why they sought to present China to their Anglophone readerships.

Whereas *Chinese Characteristics* and *Thirty Years in Moukden* are primarily the result of the missionaries' everyday interactions, medical or otherwise, with the Chinese people they are attempting to convert, Edwards's *Fire and Sword in Shansi* looks retrospectively at the Boxer Rebellion.<sup>295</sup> Of Edwards himself, very little is known, and what knowledge exists comes from the introduction to the text written by Alexander Maclaren. Edwards was a missionary in Shanxi, in North China. All other members of the mission, both British and Chinese, were attacked during the Boxer Rebellion whilst Edwards was on furlough, or leave of absence, in Britain. Edwards had been a medical missionary in China for twenty years and returned to the country immediately on hearing the tragic news of his mission companions in Shanxi. The emotive introduction written by Maclaren praises Edwards's 'self-repression' and 'disinterested zeal', whilst writing that the Christian Church should be thankful for the facts and particulars which

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<sup>294</sup> Between 1890-1900 editions of *Chinese Characteristics* were being produced by Fleming H. Revell in New York and Chicago (1890, 1894, 1899, 1900), Kegan, Paul, Trench, Truber & Co in London (1892, 1894, 1895, 1899, 1900), Oliphant in Edinburgh (1890, 1894, 1897, 1900), The Young Peoples Missionary Movement in New York (1894), The United Society of Christian Endeavour in Boston (1894), North China Herald Office in Shanghai (1890), and Hakubunkan in Tokyo (1896) where it was translated by Tamotsu Shibue and titled *Shinajin kishitsu*.

<sup>295</sup> E. H. Edwards, *Fire and Sword in Shansi: The Story of the Martyrdom of Foreigners and Chinese Christians* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1903).

he claims first appear in the 1903 edition.<sup>296</sup> Each of these texts offers something valuable in its own right, but they also offer insight into the intellectually curious, international nature of the Lit & Phil's acquisition habits in the period. Both *Fire and Sword in Shansi* and *Thirty Years in Moukden* were acquired in the year they were published, 1903 in the case of the *Fire and Sword*, and 1914 for *Thirty Years in Moukden*. Unfortunately, there are no acquisition details for *Chinese Characteristics* and so it is unclear when or how it made its way into the library.

As noted in Chapter One, the lack of borrowing and acquisition records brings an unappreciated significance to the physical condition of the 'China: Travel Writing' section. For example, the Lit & Phil's copy of *Chinese Characteristics* is a 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, published in 1894, having been originally published in 1890. It is likely that *Chinese Characteristics* was rebound as its condition is fair relative to the rest of the section. The comparatively good physical condition of the book in the section, along with the knowledge that it was a nationally and internationally popular account, allows us to make the reasonable assumption that it was rebound due to usage by the membership, rather than neglect.<sup>297</sup> In contrast, the binding of *Fire and Sword* is original to the book. It has retained much of its colour on its cover which shows a large red pagoda and a sword, physically identifying itself as an 'oriental' travel account amongst the black and navy spines of the other books. Published in 1903 by Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, a Scottish publishing house known for its religious and biographical output, the detailed cover of *Fire and Sword* is likely to have been an artistic choice made by the publishers to attract contemporary readers. One reason we may conjecture for the dwindling

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<sup>296</sup> Dr Alexander Maclaren 'Introduction', Eben Henry Edwards, *Fire and Sword in Shansi: The Story of the Martyrdom of Foreigners and Chinese Christians* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1903), p.7.

<sup>297</sup> See Lydia H. Liu, 'The Ghost of Arthur H. Smith in the Mirror of Cultural Translation', *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, 20 (2013), 406-414.



engagement with *Fire and Sword*, along with other travel and historic accounts of China in the Lit & Phil, is its distance from contemporary interest. As the rebellion faded into history, the members became less interested in accounts of it. *Thirty Years* is in a worn condition but largely intact, broadly inline with the state of the rest of the section. Its edges are boxed, and it is generally in an unkempt condition. Despite being taken out of the library several times during the course of this research, its condition has not warranted rebinding.

Missionary travel writing has fared better in terms of physical condition than political travel writing despite making up a similar proportion of the section. This may be because political travel accounts chimed more accurately with lectures, appealing more to contemporary political interests, and so found a more regular readership amongst members in the early twentieth century. Nonetheless, some volumes appear to have been well used within this subsection. For example, *Chinese Characteristics*, which was likely rebound in the 1920s or 1930s.<sup>298</sup>

### ***Missionaries in China and 'Travel Writing: China'***

Missionary interaction with China dates back to the thirteenth century when Jesuit missionaries were sent to negotiate the passage of pilgrimage routes to Jerusalem for Christian leaders and to attempt to ensure a peace between medieval Christian nations and the expanding Mongol empire.<sup>299</sup> The first account of China by a missionary was by John of Plano Carpini, (Giovanni da Pian del Carpine), the first papal envoy dispatched to visit the Mongol court of the Great Khan by Pope Innocent

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<sup>298</sup> Most of the travel accounts that were rebound prior to the start of this research were rebound in the 1920s and 1930s.

<sup>299</sup> See Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600*, 'The Utter East: Merchant and Missionary Travels during the "Mongol Peace"' (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp.87-121.

IV in 1245. Whilst Carpini never reached China himself, during his time in the Mongol court he heard stories of the mystical Cathay and brought reports back from his journey.<sup>300</sup> As Francis Wood has noted, the first missionary to reach China in 1294 was John of Monte Corvino. His writings are ‘almost entirely restricted to religious matters’ and tell us very little of the China he experienced.<sup>301</sup> However, in Monte Corvino’s letters he draws on some of his early experiences of China which give insight into the world in which he found himself. For example, in his first letter, Monte Corvino writes of his meeting with the ‘Emperor of the Tartars [...] the Grand Cham’, and whilst the Emperor had ‘grown too old in idolatry’ to accept the religion Monte Corvino offered him, ‘he bestow[d] many kindnesses upon the Christians’ which he witnessed during his two year sojourn with the Grand Cham.<sup>302</sup> In the same letter, he also writes of the best passage routes to China, details of the church he has built, and estimates the number of people he has baptised.<sup>303</sup>

The Jesuits arrived in China in larger numbers towards the end of the sixteenth century and with them more information about China reached Europe. After the entrance of the first Jesuit priest into the Chinese court in the sixteenth century, they were allowed to serve as ‘tutors in mathematics, map makers, imperial astronomers, painters and architects’.<sup>304</sup> In turn, they introduced Chinese philosophy to Europe and published works in Chinese on Christianity. The Jesuits sent detailed observations of China in their letters to Rome and some published works were compiled by priests in

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<sup>300</sup> Cathay is an anachronistic term for China.

<sup>301</sup> Frances Wood, *The Lure of China: Writers from Marco Polo to J. G. Ballard* (London: Yale University Press, 2009), p.10.

<sup>302</sup> John of Monte Corvino, *Cathay and the Way Thither: Being A Collection of Medieval Notices of China, Vol. III*, trans. and ed. by Colonel Sir Henry Yule (London: Hakluyt Society, 1913), p.45.

<sup>303</sup> ‘I have built up a church in the city of Cambaliech, in which the king has his chief residence. This I completed six years ago; and I have built a bell-tower to it, and put three bells in it. I have baptised there, as well as I can estimate, up to these time some 6000 persons; and if those charges against me of which I have spoken had not been made [that he had not been sent by the Pope, and was a spy], I should have baptized more than 30,000 and I am often still engaged in baptizing.’ Monte Corvino, p.46.

<sup>304</sup> Wood, p.36.

Europe from the accounts they received. The Lit & Phil owns one such example, a 1621 edition of *Istoria de la China i cristiana empresa hecha en ella: por la Compañia de Iesus*. The volume contains a translation of the journals of Matteo Ricci, one of the founding figures in Jesuit missions to China, as well as materials relating to his death, compiled by Nicolas Trigault, first published in 1615.<sup>305</sup> It was presented to the society by Henry Glynn, a local civil engineer, and today is stored in Bolbec Hall (951/15). Frustratingly, there is no record of when Glynn presented the text to the society. The donation of Ricci and Trigault's writings illustrates how the Lit & Phil acquired religious and missionary works throughout the nineteenth century, despite the ruling to exclude religious and political topics from the society. Glynn was a member of the Lit & Phil in the mid-nineteenth century, and his presentation demonstrates that members felt that books on China were important and relevant to the library's collections.<sup>306</sup>

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Protestant missionaries were also highly active in China, following the example of Robert Morrison. Morrison was awarded an honorary membership of the Lit & Phil after his donation of Chinese translations, miscellanies and famed Chinese dictionaries.<sup>307</sup> It is notable that the Lit & Phil rewarded Morrison's intellectual contributions to the society, rather than acknowledging solely his missionary work in China. Likewise, James Legge, the prominent missionary and sinologist, gave two lectures to the Lit & Phil during the

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<sup>305</sup> Robert Richmond Ellis, 'Representations of China and Europe in the Writings of Diego de Pantoja: Accommodating the East or Privileging the West?', *Western Visions of the Far East in a Transpacific Age, 1522-1657*, ed by Christina H. Lee (Surrey, Ashgate, 2012), p.105. See also Michela Fontana, *Matteo Ricci: A Jesuit in the Ming Court* (Maryland & Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011)

<sup>306</sup> Henry Glynn can be found on the member's role for 1844.

<sup>307</sup> Along with the Chinese-English Bibles and Morrison's Memoirs, the Lit & Phil also holds *A Grammar of the Chinese Language* (Serampore: printed at the Mission-Press, 1815), *A View of China, for philological purposes: containing a sketch of Chinese chronology, geography, government, religion & customs. Designed for the use of persons who study the Chinese language* (London: Black, Parbury, and Allen: Macao, printed at the East India company's press, 1817) and a *Chinese miscellany: consisting of original extracts from Chinese authors, in the native character; with translations and philological remarks* (London: Printed by S. McDowall for the London Missionary Society, 1825).

1878-79 lecture season. Legge's lectures were titled 'The Chinese Written Characteristics: Ancient Chinese as Indicated by the Characters'. Legge's lectures addressed the intellectual interest of the Lit & Phil, with historical and calligraphical topics, rather than matters regarding his extensive missionary work in China or his work with the Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca, founded by Morrison. This privileging of intellectual input over religious achievements is reflected in the missionary writing in 'Travel Writing: China'. By cataloguing these mission texts as 'Travel Writing' rather than 'Religion', class 200 under the Dewey Decimal system, the society demonstrated that it valued other aspects of these texts than their religious underpinnings.

Within the library of a society which avoided collecting subjective or propagandist religious works, these missionary texts on China sit awkwardly on the shelves alongside other, more conventional, travelogues. This academic or intellectual context for the missionary travel accounts needs to be kept in mind when thinking about the regional, intellectual space of the Lit & Phil, for whilst religion played a significant role in the creation of the text, it becomes less significant to the reader in the Lit & Phil. Missionary travel writing from China in the Lit & Phil thus goes some way to helping us understand the section as a whole. The travel writing from China by western missionary authors, collected by the Lit & Phil, was acquired for academic reasons rather than religious ones.

Despite the librarian's classification of these texts as travel writing, many of these missionary authors on the shelves of the Lit & Phil are less concerned with recording the author's spiritual or physical 'journey' through China, than they are with presenting broader themes and a deeper understanding of China's cultural and political situation, even where these are heavily mediated through the missionary's gaze. Seven of the twelve missionary travel accounts use subject-focused chapters to organise their

texts, such as ‘Social Solidarity’ and ‘The Absence of Nerves’ in *Chinese Characteristics* or ‘Family Life’ and ‘Amusements’ in *Sidelights on Chinese Life*.<sup>308</sup> These chapters create independent snapshots of an aspect of life in China rather than providing a larger narrative about the authors’ journey or life in China. Such textual snapshots of life in China reinforce disassociation between the reader and the subject of the chapter by not disclosing related details but instead moving quickly from one broad and complex subject to another.

Mary Campbell notes, ‘[t]he old motifs of the journey - home, departure, destination, the liminal space between - have lost their reference in the lived experience of most people who are not tourists’.<sup>309</sup> Campbell refers to these ‘old motifs’ in relation to contemporary theories of travel literature since the 1980s. However, this lack of a ‘home, departure, destination’ structure can be seen throughout the missionary texts in the Lit & Phil’s ‘Travel Writing: China’.<sup>310</sup> Breaks in the spatial or temporal narrative, which allow for short stories or character profiles, can also be seen in texts which follow a more linear narrative. For example, Christie’s *Thirty Years in Moukden* (1914), contains ‘The Story of Blind Chang of the Valley of Peace’, the tale of the conversion, virtuous life and finally the martyrdom of a Chinese Christian, which breaks the chronological narrative chain of Christie’s experiences. Whilst it may be that such breaks in narrative are more representative of the complicated ‘lived experience’ of travel, by including an extended character profile in the middle of his personal narrative Christie presents a version of the ‘Chinese character’, similar to Smith’s *Chinese*

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<sup>308</sup> Rev. J. Macgowan, *Sidelights on Chinese Life* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1907). The other accounts which use subject-focused chapters are Edwards’ *Fire and Sword in Shansi*, Smith’s *Village Life in China*, Moule’s *Half a Century in China* and Isaac Taylor Headland’s *Home Life in China and Court Life in China*.

<sup>309</sup> Mary Baine Campbell, ‘Travel Writing and its Theory’, *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.4.

<sup>310</sup> Campbell, p.4.

*Characteristics*, albeit on an individual scale. ‘The Story of Blind Chang’ also exemplifies how honourable, in Christie’s terms, the Chinese character can become when the individual accepts Christianity.

As these features of organisation indicate, the existence of missionary texts in the China travel section may be due to the fact that these texts, though religious in focus, claimed to be otherwise. In fact, some authors suggested they had separated their missionary motivations from their travels in China entirely, and so whilst clearly having religious aims for travelling, the authors claimed to have produced ‘secular’ travel writing. For example, in the preface to Isabelle Williamson’s *Old Highways of China*, she writes:

This volume does not profess to give an account of mission work — that will be found in our denominational literature — but rather records observations of every-day life made during my journeys through North China and during my intercourse with people.<sup>311</sup>

How successful Williamson is at separating religion from travel is questionable as the main motivation for her trips around North China was to ‘carry the Gospel truth’ and her account was published by the religious tract society.<sup>312</sup> Arthur Smith also distances his writings from their religious origins, for example by titling *Village Life in China, A Study in Sociology*. This choice of title is clearly intended to distinguish the work from traditional expectations of missionary publications.

Missionaries in China not only produced their own travel writing, but also appeared regularly in the travel writing of others, including in several volumes that sit alongside the work of Edwards, Christie and Smith on the shelves of the Lit & Phil.

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<sup>311</sup> Isabelle Williamson, *Old Highways of China* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1884), p.6. Williamson was the wife of the medical missionary Dr Williamson, who largely operated in Northern China.

<sup>312</sup> Williamson, p.6.

Isabella Bird, for example, writes of being happily received at mission church houses, and of superstitions amongst the Chinese that foreign missionaries ate children. Bird observed, ‘when we foreigners entered one of the poorer streets many of the people picked up their infants and hurried with them into the houses’.<sup>313</sup> Meetings and friendships between travellers, such as Bird and more long-term missionary residents in China, attest to the social networks between westerners in China at the turn of the twentieth century, the connectedness of which mirror the proximity of these texts in ‘Travel Writing: China’. Nicholas Clifford writes in his study of British and American travel writing in China between 1880 and 1949 that ‘[r]ace trumped gender’. In other words, gender differences between western travellers were considered less important than the differences between travellers and the Chinese.<sup>314</sup> The difference between missionaries and non-missionaries is even less significant in these texts, and in China in this period a shared western heritage likewise trumped religious affiliation. The references to missionaries and mission houses in secular travel accounts from China indicates that just as missionaries engaged with broader discourses in their own writing, they were also included in the accounts of others. In other words, these missionary texts share more connections with their travelogue counterparts than might be first anticipated.

### ***Health & Medicine: Spectacle & Conversion***

The visual plays a significant role in the writings of missionaries in China throughout the Lit & Phil’s ‘Travel Writing: China’. Whilst, as we shall see, the visual was used to authenticate the accounts of those who travelled for pleasure, missionaries arguably had a more practical function in their use of the visual in their travel narratives.

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<sup>313</sup> Isabella Bird, *Then Yangtze Valley and Beyond* (Albemarle Street, London: John Murray, 1899), p. 352.

<sup>314</sup> Nicholas Clifford, *“A Truthful Impression of the Country”: British and American Travel Writing in China, 1880-1949* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2001), p.30-31.

Unlike Isabella Bird and John Thomson, for example, whose curation of their images offered entertainment and reassurance to their reader in their more pleasure-driven travel writing, the impressions of missionaries such as Edwards and Christie are underpinned not only by their cultural context, but also by their religious aims. Thus, as in the writing of those travelling for pleasure and of those travelling with political and commercial motivations, in ‘Travel Writing: China’ eye-witnessing often functions in service to the authors’ broader motivations. Missionary writing in the section is no exception.

Both Edwards and Christie were medical missionaries, and both were listed members of the Medical Missionary Association of China in the association’s journal. Christie’s *Thirty Years in Moukden* was edited by his second wife and published by Constable and Company, London in 1914. It was acquired by the Lit & Phil in May of the same year. It broadly traces Christie’s time in China, paying special attention to the role of medical missionaries during the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. Also published in 1914 was the *Medicine in China* report by the China Medical Commission of the Rockefeller Foundation. The report begins by asserting that medical statistics hardly exist in China, and what information there is, is largely in the control of the Customs service. The report also begins by claiming that the state of health in treaty ports ‘which have more or less European influence’ is not an accurate reflection of the state of health and medicine across China.<sup>315</sup> It is likely then, that the travel texts of medical missionaries played an important role in filling the gaps in knowledge relating to health and medicine in China, even if the information provided relates to a limited geographical area, such as Moukden (Mukden) in Christie’s account.

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<sup>315</sup> *Medicine in China by the China Medical Commission of the Rockefeller Foundation* (New York: University of Chicago Press, 1914) p.1 < <https://archive.org/details/medicineinchina00boargooq> > [accessed 12 January 2016]



The contribution of missionaries to the spread of Western medical practice in China at the turn of the twentieth century is unquestionably crucial. One way that missionaries contributed towards such medical knowledge was through their interest in sight and seeing.

Christie had devoted himself to learning Chinese during his first year in China and took an interest in local customs and activities that no doubt helped to break down barriers between the local Chinese population and missionaries at a time when many Chinese locals were suspicious of the presence and actions of foreigners. He was also heavily involved in Red Cross activities during times of conflict in China, which he documents in *Thirty Years*, specifically the chapter ‘Among the Wounded’, which describes Christie’s Red Cross work in Newchwang during the first Sino-Japanese War. At the beginning of the conflict no provision was made for the wounded in the Chinese army and many died of a ‘slow starvation or the more merciful cold’.<sup>316</sup> He returned to Scotland several times to recruit medical professionals and staff to his cause and to raise money to support both the first hospital and first medical college in Manchuria. Details of Christie’s medical mission activities and records of the kinds of diseases and injuries he treated would have been invaluable as first-hand accounts to those, like the Rockefeller Foundation, who sought to know more about the state of health in China. Christie’s sympathies towards China and the Chinese, as well as his attempts at integration, suggest that *Thirty Years* is informed by an empathetic attitude, albeit one mediated by religious and racial prejudices. One of Christie’s contemporary reviewers claims that *Thirty Years* is mainly a record of ‘victorious progress’ in the face of conflict, suspicion, rebellion and disease.<sup>317</sup> Whilst his travel narrative reveals little

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<sup>316</sup> Christie, p.99.

<sup>317</sup> *Thirty Years in Moukden, 1883-1913* [Review], *Saturday review of politics, literature, science and art* (30 May 1914), p.711.

about Christie himself, throughout the text it becomes clear that he was devoted to the healthcare he provided for the 'heathen' Chinese throughout his time in the country, and that his actions had a large impact on relationships between the Chinese and foreign missionaries in Mukden.

Christie admits he was ambivalent towards the challenges of missionary work in China when he first arrived in the country. *Thirty Years* begins with an introduction titled 'Is It Worth While?', in which Christie asks whether such work can make a difference in China: '[w]hat can a handful of foreigners do among these millions?'<sup>318</sup> Christie quickly comes to the conclusion that despite hostilities and persecutions, the hardships were worth the changes he had personally witnessed in Mukden.<sup>319</sup> In this rhetoric of hardship, Christie reflects Isaac Yue's conceptualisation of Victorian identity as unwaveringly moralistic, founded on Christian faith. Christie presents himself as having overcome difficulties through his faith and steadfastness for the religious good of Mukden and its inhabitants. He claims that at the end of his thirty years in Manchuria, missionaries and particularly medical missionaries, were witnessing regeneration in China, alongside the end of hostilities towards foreigners. He also writes that he counts many Chinese officials as his friends, that Christianity is regarded 'with a kindly eye' and that the government is supportive of Christian medical colleges.<sup>320</sup> Rather than suggesting that by 1914 Christianity was peacefully accepted by all in China, these positive statements represent Christie's attempts to present missions in Mukden as a success after his thirty-year tenure.

Christie conforms to many of the common features of the missionary figure identified by Johnston. Like Johnston's archetypical missionary figure, Christie is

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<sup>318</sup> Christie, p.2.

<sup>319</sup> Christie, p.3.

<sup>320</sup> Christie, p.3.

overwhelmingly optimistic, emphasizing not only his own achievements but those of other missionaries, and whilst difficulties are mentioned, he narrates all suffering as justifiable for the missionary cause. Like Johnston's missionary figure, Christie is free from any religious doubt, disease or personal crisis.<sup>321</sup> Both are long-suffering, heroic, modest (male) and often live in stark contrast with the local population around them. Unlike Edwards, who purposefully distances himself from the central martyred missionary figures in *Fire and Sword*, Christie conforms to archetypal conventions of the missionary form, carefully distinguishing himself from the general Chinese population around him.

Christie was a highly-skilled Scottish medical missionary and had received qualifications from both the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh.<sup>322</sup> As the reputation of his hospital in Mukden improved with its growing number of successful operations, more patients arrived from the local area willing to be treated, and so the hospital grew. Christie writes that the largest obstacle he faced during his first months and years in China was that local people would only agree to treatment in his hospital as a last resort. One of the first successful operations Christie was able to perform was a cataract operation, done outdoors where there was enough light. This outdoor medical care allowed a crowd to gather around the operating table.

One [patient] was a merchant in the city, whose right eye had been blind for several years, and whose left eye had now failed from the same cause. There was a good deal of interest shown in this case as the man was well known, and giving sight to the blind was unheard of. Our little hospital was very dark, so the operating table was drawn out to the open air. A number of people gathered round, including some officials, and the operation was performed in public, amid breathless expectancy. All went well, and

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<sup>321</sup> Johnston, p.6-7.

<sup>322</sup> Crawford, p.73.

when I held up my fingers and the people heard him count them, there was quite a sensation.<sup>323</sup>

The significance of this passage is its demonstration of Christie's, and the mission's, cultural and intellectual superiority through the medical spectacle of the cataract operation. Christie is able to perform a public 'miracle' by restoring sight to the blind. Indeed, this is done without divine intervention but with perhaps the next best thing for Christie, medical science. By bringing the operation outside Christie also provides a form of entertainment for his onlookers. They wait 'amid breathless expectancy' and there is 'quite a sensation' when the operation is a success.<sup>324</sup> As a westerner in Mukden, Christie was a curiosity and locals were 'much taken up with the strange foreigner'.<sup>325</sup> His demonstration of western medicine is an extension of this strangeness to the Chinese. In this passage, Christie also prioritises his own presence, as a sight-giver, and negatively comments on his Chinese surroundings. The less than ideal environment, the dark 'little hospital', the 'tumble-down quarters', are emphasised, so that the triumph of the operation appears more acute.<sup>326</sup> Christie is the conscious visual object of his Chinese audience, as well as the giver of sight, whilst the Chinese audience are visualised as medically ignorant by Christie for his reader, and the Chinese merchant at the centre of the scene receiving treatment is the object of attention of both the Chinese audience and Christie's medical skills.

Christie also gives an example, elsewhere in his book, of a teacher who had fallen destitute due to his blindness. The teacher was also operated on outdoors and had his sight restored.<sup>327</sup> Christie claims that the success of these cataract operations, the

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<sup>323</sup> Christie, p.8.

<sup>324</sup> Christie, p.8.

<sup>325</sup> Christie, p.4.

<sup>326</sup> Christie, p.8.

<sup>327</sup> Christie, p.8.

first to be performed in Manchuria, went some way towards easing suspicions and tensions regarding the presence of medical missionaries in the local community. These multi-layered accounts of sight and seeing function to underpin the presentation of Christie's successes as a medical missionary and reassure the reader that progress in China is both possible and worthwhile.

Larissa N. Heinrich draws attention to the significance of eyes and seeing within medical missionary writings. Heinrich suggests that missionary hospitals chose to treat easily removed tumours and offer cataract surgeries 'that would restore sight to the blind' because such 'surgeries would yield cures that Chinese could observe with, or cause to be enacted on, their own eyes'.<sup>328</sup> Rather than choosing to perform these surgeries because they were relatively simple for Western medical missionaries to do, or because external treatments showed obvious or fast results for the Chinese audiences, Heinrich claims another reason was the 'fixation on the ocular [that] had to do with deeply rooted convictions about *how* the Chinese saw, what it was they saw when they looked, and how it was they made sense of that information on seeing it'.<sup>329</sup> As well as allowing the blind to see, for example through cataract operations, missionaries often used visual materials, such as illustrations, photography or models, to demonstrate the superiority of western medicine to patients, Chinese converts and medical students.<sup>330</sup> In relation to medicine and health, the western missionaries were able, in a small way, to control sight and what was seen by their Chinese patients. Isabella Bird writes of her visit to Christie in China that he gave 'illustrated popular scientific lectures in the winter', which suggests that, like those missionaries described by Heinrich, Christie was invested in the reciprocal relationship between seeing and the presentation of visual

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<sup>328</sup> Larissa N. Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images: Translating the Pathological Body Between China and the West* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008), p.4-5.

<sup>329</sup> Heinrich, p.4-5.

<sup>330</sup> Heinrich, p.4.

material to those he treated.<sup>331</sup> By engaging with the sight and seeing of the Chinese, medical missionaries sought to guide those they treated visually to Christianity. In this sense, the visual clarity of sight, which the missionary helps the Chinese patient to attain physically, helps them to achieve the religious, or metaphorical, clarity of Christ. In the travel text, this emerges as a rhetoric of seeing and sight, a characteristic of missionary writing unidentified by Johnston but central to the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China'.

This rhetoric of the visual is integral to the main purpose of the missionary narrative, becoming a metaphor for conversion. Esme Cleall suggests that in both the New Testament and the Hebrew Bible disease and disability are linked to sin, and gives the example of blindness as punishment. The darkness of blindness is contrasted with the image of Jesus as the light of the world in medical missionary narratives.<sup>332</sup> James R. Ryan identifies the importance of the advancement in optical devices 'from looking-glasses to cameras' for missionaries, at least in part because of the significance of metaphors of light, sight and vision for Western Christian conceptions of the 'self'.<sup>333</sup> Cleall quotes from a prominent missionary in India, Reverend Mullens, who observed that a 'surgical operation [was] requisite to remove the cataract from their [India's] spiritual vision'.<sup>334</sup> Following the argument that medical missionaries, like Christie, saw links between sightedness and virtue, as opposed to blindness and sin, it is possible to suggest that medical missionaries saw themselves as helping to cure sin through healthcare, placing further emphasis on the importance of the medical work of missionaries in China and the religious organisations which supported them.

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<sup>331</sup> Isabella Bird qtd in D.S. Crawford, p.74.

<sup>332</sup> Esme Cleall, *Missionary Discourses of Difference: Negotiating Otherness in the British Empire, 1840-1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p.80.

<sup>333</sup> James R. Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), p.143.

<sup>334</sup> Reverend Mullens, qtd in Cleall, p.81.

Christie used several medical methods to try to introduce religion into his patients' lives. Whilst visiting towns to offer free medical care, he kept a record of the nature of people, who were often 'hostile' and 'suspicious' ('The sight of my stethoscope made a man run for his life'), and whether he could give out religious literature to locals.<sup>335</sup> Christie writes, '[t]he Dispensary is our widest opportunity' as 'preaching goes on all morning in the waiting-room', but the best work is done in the hospital.<sup>336</sup> There he can find out the patient's real standpoint on religion, and 'show him day by day Christianity in action'.<sup>337</sup> For Christie, medical care was integral to initiating Christianity into people's lives. If, however, as Christie previously mentions, many Chinese only came to his hospital as a last resort, this begs the question of how receptive his patients really were to daily preaching. Mudimbe-Boyi identifies missionary discourses which 'deny any agency to the colonized or the evangelized', in which the 'indigenous [are] seen through the external, European gaze' and local voices are totally denied.<sup>338</sup> In Christie's hospital, sickness and disease had likely already taken agency from the Chinese patient, and thus the patient had no choice but to become the object of Christie's 'European gaze' and medical preaching.

### *Chinese National Character Through Missionary Eyes*

The three missionary texts forming the focus of this chapter forego some of the more conventional travelogue subjects of the journey and geographical description in favour of an ethnographic approach to recording Chinese culture and character. This is no coincidence, as one of the dominant discourses to which missionaries in China contributed is that of the Chinese characteristic or stereotype. Smith, Edwards and

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<sup>335</sup> Christie, p.78.

<sup>336</sup> Christie, p. 79.

<sup>337</sup> Christie, p. 79.

<sup>338</sup>Mudimbe-Boyi, p. 86.  
Mudimbe-Boyi, p. 92.

Christie all engage with aspects of the Chinese national character within their travel narratives. The trope of stereotyping through national characteristics is not exclusive to Chinese missionary travel writing. Noël Valis draws attention to the use of national characteristics within British and American travel writing about Spain at the turn of the century.<sup>339</sup> Valis quotes a review from the period that praises a text which talks of the ‘real life and intimate character of the Spaniard’.<sup>340</sup> Another reviewer cited by Valis, compliments the ‘rare insight into Spanish characteristics and life’ by an American female travel author.<sup>341</sup> Valis’s examples demonstrate that an interest in national characteristics was not limited to missionary travel writing in this period. Moreover, Valis’s work indicates that an interest in (the Chinese) national character was not exclusively motivated by the appeal of exoticness or ‘orientalness’. The common presence of an interest in the characteristics of the Chinese, as well as an interest in the more mundane aspects of Chinese life in missionary travel accounts held in the *Lit & Phil*, demonstrates an appetite amongst the Society’s members for this sort of material. Moreover, the inclusion of accounts of national characteristics suggests that missionary authors had an informative impact in the West regarding ideas and perceptions of China beyond their religious endeavours which their publications described.

The widespread adoption of a discourse of ‘characteristics’ in missionary writing about China may have been inspired by the success of Arthur H. Smith’s *Chinese Characteristics*, which was the most widely read American book about China at the turn of the twentieth century and remained so until the early 1930s.<sup>342</sup> Like

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<sup>339</sup> Noël Valis, ‘Crisis, Religion and Turn-of-the-Century British and American Travel Writing on Spain’, *Bulletin of Spanish Studies: Hispanic Studies and Researches on Spain, Portugal and Latin America*, 92 (2015), 441-468.

<sup>340</sup> Anon, ‘The New Books’, *The Outlook*, 97 (1911), p. 942, qtd in Valis, p. 3.

<sup>341</sup> Anon, ‘An American Woman in Spain’, *The Nation*, 72 (1901), pp. 300-301, qtd in Valis, p. 15.

<sup>342</sup> See Lydia H. Liu, ‘The Ghost of Arthur H. Smith in the Mirror of Cultural Translation’, *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, 20 (2013), 406-414.



Putnam Weale's *Manchu and Muscovite, Chinese Characteristics* was first produced as a series of articles in the *North China Daily News* in Shanghai which, Smith writes, excited 'so much interest, not only in China, but also in Great Britain, in the United States, and in Canada, that the publishers were asked to produce it in a more permanent form'.<sup>343</sup> By publishing their articles as a collection, Putnam Weale and Smith are able to draw together sketches of China in a coherent, and marketable, whole. As Lydia H. Liu identifies, Smith became an influential figure on the issue of U.S.-China relations and was welcomed to the White House by President Roosevelt to discuss his opinions on the state of China.<sup>344</sup> Not only did Smith become a key figure in America for his Chinese writings, his works were also translated into Japanese (1896) and classical Chinese (1903) with new translations appearing more recently in Beijing (1998), Shanghai (1999) and Hong Kong (2000). It is interesting to note that recent editions have appeared in China, whereas in the West Smith is largely forgotten. Liu argues that Smith's 'oblivion in the West' results from the metamorphosis of his writings into a 'familiar discourse of Chineseness that no longer requires the sanction of authorial signature'.<sup>345</sup> Smith's biased construction of 'Chineseness' has become the accepted 'truth', whereas Smith himself has been subsequently overlooked. It is certainly unlikely that Smith could foresee the impact of his articles for the *North China Daily News* and how they would eventually disseminate.

As exemplified by Smith's *Chinese Characteristics*, missionaries made a significant contribution to the images of China that circulated throughout the rest of the world. Yue suggests that Victorian assumptions about Chinese cultural identity were

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<sup>343</sup> Arthur H. Smith, *Chinese Characteristics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (New York, Chicago, Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company), p. 3.

<sup>344</sup> See Lydia H. Liu, 'Translating Nation Character: Lu Xun and Arthur Smith', *Translingual Practice: Literature, Nation Culture, and Translated Modernity* (California: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 45-76.

<sup>345</sup> Liu, 'The Ghost of Arthur H. Smith', p. 407.

reinforced by missionary texts from China. Yue goes as far as to say that ‘the two institutional forms of religion and Orientalism collaborated in a tightly-knit relationship to support and reaffirm the conventional perception of the Victorian “moralistic” identity’.<sup>346</sup> This Victorian identity, Yue suggests, was fundamentally based on Christian faith, out of which grew other cultural ideologies such as ‘virtue’ and ‘work ethic’, a faith which was ‘perceived by many early Victorians as a true reflection of their society’.<sup>347</sup> However, exploring the varied missionary texts in ‘Travel Writing: China’ complicates Yue’s relationship between western missionaries in China and the audience for whom they were writing as many missionary authors acquired a deep understanding of China and the Chinese which was based on personal experience, rather than abstract forms of Victorian orientalism.<sup>348</sup> The missionary authors analysed here spent considerable periods of time in China and had sympathies with their adopted country, either culturally or spiritually.

Just as Yue presents the views of missionaries about the Chinese as based on unexamined cultural ideologies, Sascha Auerbach suggests that with regard to immigrant Chinese communities in imperial Britain, there was often a tendency to reduce the Chinese as a race ‘into a homogenous, undifferentiated mass’, which was worsened by an unwillingness by the British to differentiate between individuals.<sup>349</sup> Auerbach notes that often the ‘habits, characteristics, and character of one (whether observed, constructed, or simply assumed) thus became that of the whole, and every individual became equally accountable for the sins of his race’.<sup>350</sup> This reductive racial

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<sup>346</sup> Isaac Yue, ‘Missionaries (MIS-)representing China: Orientalism, Religion, and the Conceptualization of Victorian Cultural Identity’, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 37 (2009), 1-10 (p. 1).

<sup>347</sup> Yue, p. 1.

<sup>348</sup> Yue, p. 1.

<sup>349</sup> Sascha Auerbach, *Race, Law, and “The Chinese Puzzle” in Imperial Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 6-7.

<sup>350</sup> Auerbach, p. 6-7.

attitude, which Auerbach identifies in the approaches towards Chinese immigrant populations in London, can also be seen in the missionary travel accounts of Smith, Christie and Edwards. Whilst the location of the Chinese population may have been different, the homogenised images of China and the Chinese presented by the travel writer to their readers are striking in their similarities, whether in China or in Britain.

*Thirty Years in Moukden*, presents a more personal perspective in the representations of the Chinese people Christie encountered, for example he discusses at length the training of Christian Chinese doctors at the medical school he helped to establish in Manchuria, as well as the diligence of the Chinese pharmacy staff employed in his small hospital. Christie was the first Scottish medical missionary to be sent to China by the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. D. S. Crawford claims that he was the most ‘celebrated and influential Western medical pioneer in that part of the world’, and he is primarily remembered for his part in the opening of the first formal medical college in Northern China.<sup>351</sup> Crawford writes that it was Christie’s medical missionary work that helped to open, sustain and develop local mission hospitals and enhance ties between the local Chinese and westerners in Northern China. Whilst it appears that it was Christie’s background, personality and willingness to become fluent in Chinese that made him a popular and trusted figure within the Chinese communities in which he worked, one reviewer of *Thirty Years in Moukden* complained that the text revealed ‘practically nothing of [Christie’s] own personality’.<sup>352</sup> Crawford explains that he operated with five basic principles:

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<sup>351</sup> D.S. Crawford, ‘Mukden Medical College (1911-1949): An Outpost of Edinburgh Medicine in Northeast China. Part 1: 1882-1917; Building the Foundations and Opening the College’, *The Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh*, 36 (2006), 73-79 (p. 73).

Christie was also a keen explorer and mapmaker and was made a Fellow of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.

<sup>352</sup> ‘*Thirty Years in Moukden, 1883-1913: being the Experiences and Recollections of Dugald Christie Review*’, *The Athenaeum*, 29 August 1914, p. 225-6.

to be courteous and polite to Chinese officials and as far as possible to follow Chinese customs, offer all medical care without charge, to train assistants, to spend the hospital's limited funds with great care, and to offer his services freely during emergencies.<sup>353</sup>

Christie cultivated a deep respect for the Chinese and their culture and developed a sensitive mode of dress which was 'neither outlandishly Western nor falsely pretending to be Chinese'.<sup>354</sup> Yet, despite Christie's cultural sensitivities, popularity amongst missionaries and Chinese, and his active medical mission work during his time in China, his writings, like many missionary texts, feature many problematic generalisations about China and the Chinese, which contributed to homogenising discourses about the Chinese in Britain at the turn of the twentieth century.

In his chapter titled 'The Boxer Madness, 1900', Christie writes of a small gathering between himself, the remaining two male missionaries in Mukden and his most trusted Chinese assistants, consulting on the best course of action before the arrival of the Boxer forces in the area. The Chinese assistants respond '[i]f you remain, we will stand by you, and we'll all die together. If you go, your lives will be saved, and we can look after our families and ourselves'.<sup>355</sup> The British missionaries left soon after. The loyal, self-sacrificing, assistants in Christie's description, who choose to remain dedicated to their missionary employers in the face of death, are presented in stark contrast to the violent Boxers, who, Christie proposes, act out of a belief in blind superstition (imperviousness to bullets, inhuman strength) and the encouragement from the Empress-Dowager and her Government.<sup>356</sup> Alongside the many individual Chinese Christie presents, the Boxer militias appear as a homogenous group. In *Thirty Years*,

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<sup>353</sup> Crawford, p. 74.

<sup>354</sup> 'Dugald Christie (1855–1936)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48851>> [accessed 23 November 2015].

<sup>355</sup> Dugald Christie, *Thirty Years in Moukden: being the Experiences and Recollections of Dugald Christie* (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1914), p. 139.

<sup>356</sup> Christie, p. 134.

once a man joined the Boxer Rebellion, he was indistinguishable from the cause or other Boxers. Christie writes that there were ‘no beggars [...] left in the slums, all had become Boxers’.<sup>357</sup> For Christie, these broad, homogenous groupings of Chinese are exclusive, demonstrating a reductive racial attitude in Christie’s work which denies any voice or agency to the Chinese Boxers, even during times of violent rebellion.

This pattern of reductive homogenising is also identified by Mary Louise Pratt. In her reading of John Barrow’s ethnographic portrait of the !Kung people, in *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa* (1801), Pratt writes that the tribe are reproduced as a ‘collective *they*’, which is distilled into *he* ‘(=the standard adult male specimen)’.<sup>358</sup> In *Thirty Years in Moukden*, the Chinese Boxers are visually and culturally presented by Christie as a homogenised collective, with no distinguishing features, and characterised by their large numbers and brutal actions. Moreover, Christie, like Smith, repeatedly uses traits and characteristics to encompass attributes of the whole Chinese race, neglecting the cultural context, differing locations or economic privation or prosperity of individuals or provinces. However, as previously noted in the interaction with Chinese servants, Christie does write of some of the individuals he knew personally, such as Dr Wei, the medical assistant in Mukden and Pastor Liu, who shaved his head and attempted to pass for a Buddhist priest who had lost his money to hide from the Boxers.<sup>359</sup> Unlike the patients in Christie’s hospitals who are denied their own agency, Pastor Liu, a ‘prominent figure among Moukden Christians’, is represented as having visual agency as he is able to alter his physical appearance in order to avoid detection temporarily.<sup>360</sup> Despite taking on the guise of a Buddhist priest, as an established Christian figure in Christie’s community, Liu uses his mutable visibility as a tool

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<sup>357</sup> Christie, p.135.

<sup>358</sup> Pratt, p.64.

<sup>359</sup> Christie, p.147.

<sup>360</sup> Christie, p.147.

without having his authentic motivations as a Christian questioned. Thus Christie presents the Chinese, at certain points, en masse but at other times as individuals, equally capable of cultivating an interest in science and medicine, as superstition. By presenting these alternative pictures of the Chinese, Christie creates both a foreign other and a sympathetic figure for his western audience. Nonetheless, all of the positive presentations of the Chinese that Christie makes are characterised by their sympathy to Christie's missionary cause, for example the Chinese servants and the western trained doctor, which suggests that while his images of China and the Chinese are nuanced they preserve established racial and moral hierarchies within the text.

Like Christie, whose representations of China and the Chinese are mediated through his western lens of perception, Smith's introduction is heavily underpinned by Smith's American, missionary context. *Chinese Characteristics* discusses the character, sometimes very loosely defined, of the Chinese population with whom Smith came into contact during his missionary activities. In his introduction, he makes it clear that no person can give an all-encompassing impression of China in its entirety:

A witness when put upon the stand is expected to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Many witnesses concerning the Chinese have told the truth, but perhaps few of them have succeeded in telling nothing but the truth, and no one of them has ever told the whole truth.<sup>361</sup>

Smith assumes his readers are familiar with the phrase 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth', which in turn assumes a basic knowledge of the western legal system. In the first lines of his introduction, then, Smith makes it very clear that his intended audience is English-speaking and inhabits the western world. Having established his audience, Smith goes on to explain the scope of what he intends to cover in the book, building on the point that his prior legal allusion sought to illustrate – that

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<sup>361</sup> Smith, p. 9.

one cannot cover everything. He therefore warns his reader that *Chinese Characteristics* is ‘not intended to be [a] generalisation for a whole Empire’.<sup>362</sup> Instead, what Smith claims to be presenting is ‘merely a notation’ of his impressions of China and the Chinese.<sup>363</sup> However, Smith’s claim is contradicted by the rhetorical sweep of his contents page, where chapters are divided by generalised characteristics such as ‘Face’, ‘Contempt for Foreigners’, ‘The Absence of Sincerity’ alongside ‘Parasitism’, ‘Eating’ and ‘Hunger for Gain And Thirst for Fame’, amongst others. These broad, simplistic categories helped to establish and reinforce images of China and the Chinese in the western world which became familiar and ingrained.

As well as the generalising scope of Smith’s work, his ability to categorise Chinese characteristics suggests an implicit position of power to observe, organise and prioritize how the Chinese are represented to his assumed Anglophone audience. Like the African missionaries in Mudimbe-Boyi’s work, Smith’s *Chinese Characteristics* represents the Chinese indigenous population through the same privileged, European gaze which marked the missionaries’ ‘status as whites, Europeans and Christians’.<sup>364</sup> Smith’s narrative voice, to the total exclusion of any Chinese input, alongside his authorial value judgements over what constitutes a Chinese characteristic, leaves no space for a Chinese voice or agency. For Mudimbe-Boyi, this indigenous voicelessness is part of a larger ‘process of appropriation [...] accompanied by dominance and affirmation of authority’.<sup>365</sup> Smith appropriates Chinese characteristics by controlling, organising and presenting his experiences of China and the Chinese to convince his readership of his own authority as an experienced missionary and Sinologist.

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<sup>362</sup> Smith, p. 13.

<sup>363</sup> Smith, p. 13.

<sup>364</sup> Mudimbe-Boyi, p. 90.

<sup>365</sup> Mudimbe-Boyi, p. 92.

Lydia Liu remarks that Smith's conception of religion is wholly linked to 'the American Way of Life' which was 'deeply immersed in the idea of progress and [...] middle-class values'.<sup>366</sup> Charles W. Hayford writes that the 'respectable middle classes', which largely formed this conception of the American Way of Life, 'sought righteous comfort and social stability in the missionizing of their culture to people who might otherwise be dangerous; they set out to 'Americanize' immigrants, workers, Native Americans, and eventually the whole world'.<sup>367</sup> As Liu and Hayford recognise, class, culture, religion and missionary work were tightly interwoven for American missionaries like Smith. Although Smith and the missionary families that accompanied him attempted to live as locals when they first arrived in North China, Hayford argues that they 'brought with them a way of life, a set of aims, and a political context that would not allow them to fit in so neatly and simply as they wanted'.<sup>368</sup>

This cultural context of the American Way of Life informs not only how Smith categorises the Chinese, but also the rhetoric he uses to describe them. Smith writes, '[the Chinaman] is thus prepared by all his intellectual training to allow the most incongruous forms of belief to unite, as fluids mingle by endosmosis and exosmosis'.<sup>369</sup> Smith uses the simile ('as fluids mingle by endosmosis and exosmosis') to draw attention to his superior scientific, and by extension western, knowledge which he also brings to China and his presentation of Chinese characteristics.<sup>370</sup> The inclusion of scientific knowledge and terminology also demonstrates that Smith believed he had something more to offer than his religion; he is also a part of the civilizing mission in

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<sup>366</sup> Liu, 'The Ghost of Arthur H. Smith', p. 409.

<sup>367</sup> Charles W. Hayford, 'Chinese and American Characteristics: Arthur H. Smith and His China Book', *Christianity in China: Early Protestant Missionary Writings*, ed. by Suzanne Wilson Barnett and John King Fairbank (Cambridge MA. & London: The Committee on American-East Asian Relations of the Department of History, 1985), p.153-174, p.154.

<sup>368</sup> Hayford, p. 159.

<sup>369</sup> Smith, p. 295.

<sup>370</sup> Smith, p. 295.



China due to his superior learning. Mudimbe-Boyi identifies the ‘civilizing’ mission running parallel to the ‘evangelizing’ mission in Africa.<sup>371</sup> However, the idea of a ‘civilizing’ mission to China is more complex. As Auerbach points out in her work on perceptions of China and the Chinese, at the turn of the twentieth century, both Britain and China had long histories of complex legal systems, culture and government:

both were resistant to political or legal subjugation by other nations; they were both seen to be imperial, commercial, acquisitive, ambitious, hard-working and legalistic; both were globally mobile; and, like British communities in Asia and Africa, the Chinese were often perceived as voluntarily segregating themselves, socially and culturally, from those around them.<sup>372</sup>

With such cultural and commercial comparisons to be drawn, and missionaries like E.C. Bridgman acknowledging the ‘antiquity and great accomplishments of the Chinese civilization’, it might be questioned why any group saw any kind of civilizing mission as necessary.<sup>373</sup> However, like so many things relating to China, the perception of Chinese civilization was malleable, seen as both highly advanced and pitifully backward by the western world.<sup>374</sup> By understanding Smith as part of a civilizing mission, as well as a religious one, it is possible to read *Chinese Characteristics* as an introduction to the ‘faults’ of the Chinese to which ‘improvements’ could be made. As previously noted, the character or habits of a Chinese individual were often extrapolated to become ‘characteristic’ of the whole Chinese race.<sup>375</sup> In the introduction to *Chinese Characteristics*, Smith writes: ‘[i]t is not assumed that the Chinese need Christianity at all, but if it appears that there are grave defects in their character, it is a fair question

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<sup>371</sup> Mudimbe-Boyi, p. 85.

<sup>372</sup> Auerbach, p. 4-5.

<sup>373</sup> E.C. Bridgman was the first American Protestant missionary to be sent to China.

E.C. Bridgman qtd in Yue, p. 3.

<sup>374</sup> See Raymond Dawson, ‘Introduction’, *The Chinese Chameleon: An Analysis of Europeans Conceptions of Chinese Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>375</sup> Auerbach, p. 6-7.

how those defects may be remedied'.<sup>376</sup> Smith's rhetoric invites his reader to draw the conclusion that Christianity is the appropriate method of correction of Chinese flaws. Smith then goes on to evidence the defects of the Chinese and to reinforce the conclusion that Christianity is the correct means of civilizing China throughout *Chinese Characteristics* in its ethnographic content and discourse.

The issue of Chinese characteristics and national character in China is important to the wider cultural context of China and to missionary travel writing in the Lit & Phil. As Liu has argued, developing out of German philosophy in the eighteenth century, theories of 'national character stress[ed] the organic differences between nations'.<sup>377</sup> She goes as far as to write:

[t]he idea of national character subsumes human differences under the totalizing category of national identity and has proved tremendously useful in legitimizing Western imperialist expansion and domination of the world.<sup>378</sup>

In this regard, Smith's missionary travel writing was an active part of this campaign of western imperialist expansion through the presentation of a homogenous Chinese character inferior to European, especially Anglo-Saxon, races. This connection between missionary writing and imperial expansion reinforces the 'earthly concerns', as opposed to the 'higher purpose', of missionary travel writing that Johnston describes.<sup>379</sup> Johnston suggests that whereas missionaries often wanted to help reinforce their own causes through publishing, the 'earthly concerns' of imperialism in China links missionaries with a far larger discourse of race, empire and commerce. Missionary authors in China, like Smith, Christie and Edwards, did not exist in isolation from the events around them, especially in the turbulent final years of the Qing government. Their construction of

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<sup>376</sup> Smith, p. 14.

<sup>377</sup> Liu, *Translingual Practice*, p. 47.

<sup>378</sup> Liu, *Translingual Practice*, p. 48.

<sup>379</sup> Johnston, p. 6-7.

stereotypes should be understood in this context. Moreover, it was this context that gave rise to an interest in national characteristics amongst the Chinese themselves in the same period. In part influenced by travel writers such as Smith, Chinese writers too began to examine these characteristics in the context of political upheaval.

Liu describes an article published in 1917, 'Zhonggou guomin xing jiqi roudian' ('The national character of the Chinese and its weaknesses') by Guang Sheng, as crystalizing 'all the seminal arguments surrounding the notion of national character at the beginning of the twentieth century'.<sup>380</sup> Guang Sheng's premise was that the Chinese are fundamentally tolerant; opposed to the xenophobic and exclusionist nature of Europeans; and that this tolerance had led 'to a disregard for independent thinking and individual freedom'.<sup>381</sup> Chinese intellectuals, such as Liang Qichao (1873-1929), Sun Yat-sen (1866-1926) and Lu Xun (1881-1936), also took a great interest in, and wrote about, the national characteristics of their native country in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The influential author Lu Xun argued that the Chinese national character needed to be transformed and thought it could be done 'by means of literature'.<sup>382</sup> It appears that the Lit & Phil also found Chinese notions of their own national character of interest. The library holds a copy of the *History of Chinese Political Thought During the Early Tsin Period* (1930), co-authored by Liang Qichao. Interestingly, Liang's text, translated by L.T. Chen, is not classified as 'History: China' but rather as social sciences (320.951/2). Sun Yat-sen's *International Development of China* (1922) also held by the Lit & Phil, however, is classed in 'History: China'. Whilst it may be the case that Liang's text is classed as social sciences as it is concerned with early government, politics and philosophy in China, it is likely another example of

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<sup>380</sup> Liu, *Translingual Practice*, p. 49.

<sup>381</sup> Liu, *Translingual Practice*, p. 49.

<sup>382</sup> Liu, *Translingual Practice*, p. 51.

the arbitrary nature of classification on acquisition exhibited by the Lit & Phil at the beginning of the twentieth century.

### ***Travel Writing and Missionary Experience***

Books across the 'Travel Writing: China' and 'History: China' sections in the Lit & Phil refer to the Boxer Rebellion as an internationally significant event. Unlike Smith, whose mission station in the North of China remained relatively untouched by the Boxer Rebellion, Edwards, who spent twenty years in China as a medical missionary, was changed forever by the rebellion. He was the only surviving member of his mission as he was on leave when the station was attacked. Although *Fire and Sword* deals with a critical political and cultural event in recent Chinese history, which itself has received a great deal of scholarly attention, Edwards's writing has only been referred to by academics as a briefly acknowledged example of missionary writing and experience in wider relation to the Boxer Rebellion in Shanxi.

Edwards suggests the trouble for foreign missionaries and Chinese Christians began with the murder of two German missionaries in 1898, for which there was no significant retribution. Indeed, Edwards proposes that a number of 'outrages', meaning murders of foreign missionaries, had 'origin and source in the Chinese Government', and argues that no one was appropriately punished for them.<sup>383</sup> The term 'outrages' had implications of terrorism at the beginning of the twentieth century, associated, for example, with the 'bombing outrages' of anarchists in London and on the European continent in the late nineteenth century. In *Fire and Sword*, however, Edwards lays the blame for the massacre of the missionaries in Shanxi directly at the door of Manchu Yu Hsien (Manchu name, Yuxian). Edwards writes that until the appointment of Yu Hsien

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<sup>383</sup> Edwards, p. 29.

as Governor of Shanxi ‘the inhabitants of Shansi had been noted for their docility, no serious disturbance of any kind having occurred during more than twenty years of Protestant missionary work among them’.<sup>384</sup> A letter by Arthur Smith titled ‘Memorandum of Charges against H. E. YU HSIEN, late governor of Shantung’ is also reproduced in order to evidence Yu Hsien’s reported crimes.<sup>385</sup> Amongst many other things, Smith accuses the governor of ‘allowing a rebellion to go unchecked’ and secretly promoting ‘the rebellion by refusing to allow the troops to fight’.<sup>386</sup> Both Smith and Edwards claim that Yu Hsien is directly responsible for the massacre of foreigners in Shantung and Shanxi, as if the governor ‘has despatched [them] with his own hand’.<sup>387</sup> The use of Smith’s letter in *Fire and Sword* suggests a united, shared discourse between missionary authors in relation to the Boxer Rebellion; a willingness to share textual space in order to strengthen positions for the actions against the Boxer movement and the Chinese government. It also evidences a cohesive acceptance between Edwards and Smith of accounts and representations of Chinese Mandarins thought to have been colluding with Boxer activity and uses a similar rhetoric to hold them to account.

Edwards writes that Yu Hsien ‘had not been inaptly described as the “Chinese Nero”’.<sup>388</sup> By claiming that Yu Hsien was directly responsible for the massacre of

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<sup>384</sup> Edwards, p.52.

<sup>385</sup> Smith, qtd in Edwards, p.50-51.

Before being appointed the governor of Shanxi, Yu Hsien was the governor of Shantung.

<sup>386</sup> Smith, qtd in Edwards, p.50-51.

<sup>387</sup> Smith, qtd in Edwards, p.50-51.

Smith goes on to write that ‘We think that the Foreign Powers interested in the good government of this province ought to insist that he be degraded, and the edict should be published in the Peking Gazette with the phrase “never to be mentioned for employment again,” and his conduct should be assigned. Also that the said Powers should see to the perpetual enforcement of this punishment, as only an adequate guarantee of peace in this province.’ p.51.

<sup>388</sup> Edwards, p.21.

Also see, Roger R. Thompson, ‘Reporting the Taiyuan Massacre: Culture and Politics in the China War of 1900’, *The Boxers, China, and the World*, ed by Robert Bickers and R.G. Tiedemann (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), pp.65-92.

foreign missionaries because of his violent and xenophobic policies, Edwards creates a scapegoat against whom his readers can rally. In many ways Yu Hsien is presented as the oriental 'other' to Edwards's western readers: brutal, anti-western, anti-Christian, standing against everything which the missionaries see themselves as representing. However, whilst many observers acknowledge the role that Yu Hsien played in the uprisings in Shanxi, there are other factors for which Edwards gives no account in relation to the Boxer violence in the region. Contemporary historians now argue that there were many more local, moral and administrative reasons for the Boxer violence against foreigners in Shanxi. Henrietta Harrison suggests that violence was widely viewed as 'intervillage warfare' within the Shanxi region.<sup>389</sup> This seems to be supported by the fact that whereas some villages would shelter fleeing missionaries in huts or caves, as noted in *Fire and Sword*, others would turn them away or raise their own Boxer militias. Roger Thompson argues that there were many aspects of 'mob violence' within Boxer uprisings throughout Shanxi, and yet Edwards often presents the martyrdom of western missionaries and Chinese Christians as an organised and systematic affair, with orders coming from key officials, particularly Yu Hsien. By presenting the Boxer Rebellion as sanctioned, with final orders of 'Beat' and 'Kill' coming directly from the mouths of local officials, Edwards vilifies the ruling classes to a much greater extent than the ordinary members of the Boxer militias.<sup>390</sup> Edwards describes Yu Hsien as sitting in his 'judgment-seat', uttering brutal instructions and laughing derisively at the doomed missionaries.<sup>391</sup> Like the dramatic pathos of *Fire and Sword*, the representation of the government officials as 'oriental' villains and despots function both to emphasise the plight of missionaries and to offer an image of otherness

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<sup>389</sup> Henrietta Harrison, 'Village Politics and National Politics: The Boxer Movement in Central Shanxi', *The Boxers, China, and the World*, ed by Robert Bickers and R.G. Tiedemann (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), pp. 1-16, p.7.

<sup>390</sup> Edwards, p.82.

<sup>391</sup> Edwards, p.82.

in China that might be combatted. By singling out the ruling establishment as brutal oppressors, rather than blaming all Chinese, Edwards reinforces his aim that the travel account should encourage others to travel to China after the Boxer Rebellion. Whilst there must be a villain in a text on martyrs, Edwards must temper this against his hope for encouraging others into missionary activity.

The main body of *Fire and Sword* is primarily separated into six sections: ‘The Province of Shansi: The Scene of the Massacre’, ‘The Spread of Boxerism in Shansi’, ‘After the Massacres’, ‘Persecutions of the Native Church’, ‘Memorials and Last Letters’ and ‘Present Needs and Future Prospects’. Like Smith in *Chinese Characteristics*, Edwards uses subject-focused sections to draw together his experiences of China and the Chinese. Whilst he articulates his religious motivations throughout, his text is structured as a series of essays which support his final arguments surrounding the state of Christianity in China in the early twentieth century. Also included is a list of the ‘Martyrs of Shansi’ and the missions to which they belonged. *Fire and Sword* is structured to allow different aspects of the Boxer Rebellion to be approached, albeit only from Edwards’s perspective.

In *Fire and Sword*, Edwards’s ‘journey’ is largely recounted in the second section, ‘The Spread of Boxerism in Shansi’, through relating the events at each mission station, its location, its inhabitants and their fate in relation to the Boxer Rebellion in Shanxi, martyred or otherwise. Edwards begins with the massacre of T’ai Yuan Fu, and traces the ‘spread of the storm [...] first to the south and then to the north of that city’.<sup>392</sup> The massacre of forty-five Christian missionaries on Monday 9 July 1900 has been subject to much speculation, both in newspapers at the time and in scholarly

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<sup>392</sup> Edwards, p.59.

material since there were no witnesses.<sup>393</sup> Edwards himself writes ‘[a]s to what really occurred, the whole truth will probably never be known’.<sup>394</sup> The story of the massacre is followed by a selection of stories of missionaries fleeing their stations, often to rural villages, or attempts to reach another province or city on hearing rumours of an imminent Boxer attack. As Edwards was not in China during the time of the Boxer Rebellion, descriptions of fleeing missionaries are retrospectively and imaginatively constructed. Without personal experience or verifiable witnesses, Edwards’s vivid images of young children clamouring at their mother’s necks in fear, or the hopes of groups of female missionaries, appeal to the reader’s pity.<sup>395</sup> These incidents construct the missionary experience of the Boxer Rebellion emotively to further Edwards’s own aims in encouraging others to take up the missionary cause in China, what Johnson would call the missionary’s ‘earthly concerns’.<sup>396</sup>

‘The Spread of Boxerism in Shansi’ is of particular interest as, unlike Smith’s ‘snapshot’ approach to categorising his attitudes and opinions towards China, it reads like a geographical guide to the massacres in Shanxi. Edwards gives very clear directions to the places where particular events happened, such as ‘travelling southwards from T’ai Yuan Fu by the main road [...] is Ping Yao Hsien – some 70 miles distant’ and starting ‘again from T’ai Yuan Fu we go south-west, and after three days’ journey come to the little town of Hsiao Ih Hsien’.<sup>397</sup> There are many examples of this kind of geographical specificity throughout the section. Such cartographic exactitude creates a kind of rhetorical mapping for the reader to visualise the events

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<sup>393</sup> For example, ‘HORRIBLE DEATHS: American Missionaries Subjected to Inhuman Barbarities. Most Diabolical Murders Committed in The Province of Shanshi’, *Boston Daily Globe*, 4 October 1900. See Paul A. Cohen, *History in the Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

<sup>394</sup> Edwards, p.72.

<sup>395</sup> Edwards, p.82 & 84.

<sup>396</sup> Johnston, p.6-7.

<sup>397</sup> Edwards, p.82-83.

Edwards, p. 87.



described throughout *Fire and Sword*. Edwards also includes a ‘sketch map’ to scale across two pages (figure 8), with markers denoting the sites of martyrdom, so that the reader can clearly identify each event. For added detail, the reader is also provided with meteorological notes for certain years preceding the Boxer Rebellion (see figure 9), presumably to give an authentic account of the famine caused by poor harvests which contributed to the uprising. Edwards does not directly refer to the meteorological information in the main text of his travel account. Nonetheless alongside the cartographic language, mapping and scientific detail, this information serves the rhetorical function of confirming Edwards’s status as similar to that which Mary Pratt defines as a ‘scientific’ traveller. For Pratt, the ‘scientific’ traveller categorises what he witnesses and experiences in western modes of thought. Pratt’s ‘scientific’ traveller used natural history to assert an ‘urban, lettered, male authority over the whole of the planet’ during the eighteenth century.<sup>398</sup> The Boxer Rebellion was not a natural event that could be measured and calculated. However, by applying a systematic approach to a political and cultural event, Edwards becomes a scientific traveller, aiming to re-establish narratological control over the seismic disruption the rebellion had wrought. Yet Edwards is not methodically collecting information on the Boxer Rebellion for knowledge’s sake; his scientifically narrated travels have fundamentally religious motivations.

Unlike the more conventionally scientific travellers of the eighteenth century that Pratt references, whose experiences are organised through descriptions of ‘geography and identifying flora and fauna’ structured by an ‘asocial narrative’, *Fire and Sword* is dependent on interactions with others.<sup>399</sup> The details Edwards offers are based on social interactions and the reproduction of the personal accounts of others,

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<sup>398</sup> Pratt, p. 38.

<sup>399</sup> Pratt, p. 51.

rather than purely simple observations or categorisation. Pratt also defines an alternative role to the 'scientific' traveller, which could also be seen to be taken up by Edwards: that of the 'sentimental' traveller. Pratt claims that Mungo Parks (1771-1806) is a forerunner of travel writing in the sentimental mode: '[h]e made himself the protagonist and central figure of his own account, which takes the form of an epic series of trials, challenges, and encounters with the unpredictable'.<sup>400</sup> Whilst Edwards does not make himself the central heroic figure of *Fire and Sword*, the trials and martyrdom of the missionaries and Chinese Christians is emphasised throughout the text in often minute detail, and often with tragic consequences.

Like Mungo Parks, Edwards often uses a day-to-day narrative to track or recount the movements and actions of the missionaries, for example through reconstructed diaries or chronologically presented letters which are usually integrated into the narrative. Edwards is able to adapt some of the conventions of the sentimental form, for example interpolated stories, as typified for Pratt by Parks, to convey stories to a western audience of martyrdom during the Boxer Rebellion, of which he had no first-hand experience. Mr Pigott, for example, who had had been at the same missionary station as Edwards and was killed by the Boxers, wrote to his neighbour Mr Farthing when rumours began to surface of local trouble in Shanxi. Edwards reproduces Pigott's letters throughout June 1900, which show that whilst things were 'lively', he was reassured that prayers and petitions would see a peaceable outcome.<sup>401</sup> The series of letters ends abruptly and Edwards picks up where Pigott stops. The details of the Pigotts' actions are given as if in diary entries, recounted by Edwards: 'Saturday (30<sup>th</sup> June 1900) was spent quietly'; 'Sunday (1<sup>st</sup> July) the much and long-desired rain fell in

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<sup>400</sup> Pratt, p. 75.

<sup>401</sup> Pigott, qtd in Edwards, p. 73.

torrents'; and 'Monday (2<sup>nd</sup> July) the terrible news was brought to them'.<sup>402</sup> Mr Pigott and his family are soon taken prisoner and executed on the order of a Chinese official. This recreated diary format follows on neatly from Pigott's letters in a similarly intimate style, heightening the pathos of Pigott's fate.

The inclusion of Pigott's letters, along with the reproduction of many other documents throughout the text, gives *Fire and Sword* a multi-vocalism, which helps to offset the fact that Edwards was not an eye-witness to the events he describes. This multi-vocalism also gives the reader constant textual reminders of the martyrs on whom *Fire and Sword* is so heavily focused. As well as letters and diary-like information about the martyrs, Edwards also references newspapers, such as the *Peking Gazette*, and official documents and imperial edicts.<sup>403</sup> Unlike Smith's *Chinese Characteristics* which uses a single voice to present a unified account of the people, the dynamic of *Fire and Sword* is thus always shifting in voice, focus and geography in order to encompass as many western perspectives as possible.

Pratt writes that the sentimental traveller constructs 'the space/time of the traveling' out of human activity, 'interactions among the travelers themselves or with people they encounter'.<sup>404</sup> Edwards embellishes this by drawing on not only his own experiences but those of others. As well as encompassing many perspectives, the volume's multi-vocalism thus also contributes to Edwards's dramatic intent. The drama, emphasized by the various examples of documentation in the text, perhaps none more striking than the 'List of the Martyrs of Shansi' which appears before the contents page, is intended to encourage a sense of pathos in the western reader.<sup>405</sup> In the final section,

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<sup>402</sup> Edwards, p. 77-78.

<sup>403</sup> Edwards, p. 48, p. 309.

<sup>404</sup> Pratt, p. 76.

<sup>405</sup> There are no Chinese names on the list of martyrs presented by Edwards. Those included are from The (Late) Shou Yang Mission, The American Board Mission, The English Baptist Missionary Society, The

Edwards reveals his overall aim for the highly-charged emotive nature of his travel account: China needs more missionaries.

In Pratt's discussions of the scientific and the sentimental traveller, the two forms of traveller and the work they produce are distinct from one another. Her discussions of the scientific traveller, focussing on North European travel books in southern Africa, are restricted to the eighteenth century, and Pratt's subsequent sentimental traveller is exemplified by Mungo Parks and his *Travels into the Interior Districts of Africa* (1799). By the time Edwards was travelling, writing and publishing his works on China at the beginning of the twentieth century, with developments in international travel, science, trade and political relations between empires, Pratt's distinctions between the scientific and sentimental seem less defined, in relation to the travel writer in China.

### ***The Future of China at the Turn of the Twentieth Century***

Christie's *Thirty Years*, Edwards' *Fire and Sword* and Smith's *Chinese Characteristics* all end in a similar fashion by turning to China's future prospects. Christie's final chapter is titled 'Looking Forward', Edwards ends with China's 'Present Needs And Future Prospects' and Smith with 'The Real Condition Of China And Her Present Needs'.<sup>406</sup> It is notable that each of these texts was published roughly a decade apart, and so looking at how missionaries saw the future of China across three decades allows a particularly interesting point of comparison. *Chinese Characteristics* was first published in 1890, *Fire and Sword* in 1903, and *Thirty Years* in 1914.<sup>407</sup> By turning to

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British and Foreign Bible Society, The Chinese Inland Mission, The Swedish Mongolian Mission, The Christian and Missionary Alliance and the Scandinavian Alliance Mongolian Mission.

<sup>406</sup> Christie, p.288-292.

Edwards, p.303-316.

Smith, p.314-330.

<sup>407</sup> Lit & Phil holds a third edition of *Chinese Characteristics*.

the future of China and looking past the end of their own journey and travel narrative, Christie, Edwards and Smith position themselves as experts on the subject of China. In 'Travel Writing: China', definitive predictions about the future of the Far East appear as a regular closing trope. The forecasting character of these conclusions helps to underscore the appeal of expertise, suggesting that these authors can tell us what will happen next. If, as Spence Watson suggests, texts were not acquired for their religious content, it is Christie, Edwards and Smith's worldly expertise, characterised in these sections, rather than their missionary credentials, which appealed to the Lit & Phil.

In his final section, Smith claims that China can never reform itself from the inside for three 'mutually inconsistent' reasons: firstly that reform is perceived to be unnecessary, secondly, that it is impossible due to the 'tremendous obstacles which any permanent and real reform must encounter', and thirdly that there is no harmonious agency by which reform could be brought about.<sup>408</sup> Instead, what China needed at the turn of the twentieth century, according to Smith, is 'unrestricted intercourse, free trade, and the brotherhood of man', all of which require greater involvement by western powers.<sup>409</sup> For Smith, Christianisation and, by extension, civilization, depended on greater links which China could foster through 'more ports, more imports, a lower tariff, and no transit taxes'.<sup>410</sup> In this final section, Smith blurs the lines between missionary, civilizing, trade and political motivations. We might here expect that Smith would focus on China's religious or moral future, but his approach is far broader and leans more heavily in favour of reforming China in a way which would best suit foreign powers. Smith fails to see, or at least does not mention the prospect of an anti-foreign rebellion

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<sup>408</sup> Smith, p.323.

<sup>409</sup> Smith, p.325.

<sup>410</sup> Smith, p.325.

which was only a few years away, the fall of the imperial government or the reforming movements which would eventually lead to the Chinese Republic.

Whilst Edwards concentrates on the Boxer Rebellion and its effects in the main text of *Fire and Sword*, his final section has a broader scope. He writes that things in China are ‘drifting back to their old ruts’, meaning that things are returning to how they were before the Boxer Rebellion.<sup>411</sup> Unlike Smith, Edwards has the benefit of hindsight regarding the Boxer Rebellion, but his ideas about China’s future prospects are less concerned with the country than with the Protestant religion recovering missionary strength, insisting that immediate ‘reinforcements should be sent out to make such reparation as is possible’.<sup>412</sup> This focus on Protestantism, rather than diversifying into trade or a civilizing mission, is likely to be a result of Edwards’s personal connections to the persecution and massacre of foreigners. Edwards is also very concerned about the work of Roman Catholics in China who he believes were making ‘strenuous efforts, not only to regain lost ground, but to make fresh advances’.<sup>413</sup> For Edwards, the fight for the religion of China between Protestantism (and more specifically Anglicanism) and Catholicism is vital, but it is unclear for whose benefit this battle is being waged as an explanation of how the expansion of Protestantism, rather than Roman Catholicism, would help the Chinese population is omitted in this final section.

Christie’s final section, ‘Looking Forward’, is relatively succinct compared to those of Smith and Edwards. It is possible that this is because internal, democratic reform, ‘the unparalleled effort of three hundred millions of people’ as Christie calls it, was already underway by the time *Thirty Years* was published in 1914.<sup>414</sup> Christie had

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<sup>411</sup> Edwards, p.303.

<sup>412</sup> Edwards, p.311.

<sup>413</sup> Edwards, p.315.

<sup>414</sup> Christie, p.288.

faith that under the leadership of Yüan Shih-k'ai China would be able to reform itself, firstly through the imitation of other nations, and then by adapting and finding 'her own new Way'.<sup>415</sup> Unlike Smith and Edwards, Christie sees China and the Chinese as capable of completely autonomous reform and rule with 'no insignificant future before her'.<sup>416</sup> He also advocates the strength of the youth of China as the 'backbone of the land' to reinforce regeneration. However, he does raise concerns about the speed at which parliament has been formed and how many are quick to relinquish the value of past traditions, rejecting The Five Relationships of Confucius as a key example. Instead, Christie writes that the young should work with older, experienced figures in order to obtain stable reform. He uses this section simplistically to praise the activities of reforming individuals and hopes that China can go forward in the twentieth century united. However, Christie's expectations for China would quickly be undone. China's first president, Yüan Shih-k'ai, would go on to murder the leader of an opposing political party, undermine the validity of the Chinese parliament and send China on the path to warlordism. This was quickly noted by those who reviewed *Thirty Years*. One review, which appeared in *The Athenaeum* on 29 August 1914, highlights Christie's lack of

suspicion of the true aim of Yuan Shih-Kai's policy, which must have declared itself very soon after these pages were written, in the establishment of a monarch as independent of popular control as perhaps any which China has seen.<sup>417</sup>

Neither Smith, Edwards nor Christie had an accurate vision of what the future would hold for China, despite the lengthy time they spent in the country, their relationships with local officials and their correspondences across China.

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<sup>415</sup> Christie, p.289.

<sup>416</sup> Christie, p.289.

<sup>417</sup> *Thirty Years in Moukden, 1883-1913: being the Experiences and Recollections of Dugald Christie Review*, *The Athenaeum*, 29 August 1914, p.225.

The shift of these final ‘future’ sections, compared to the prior content of these travel accounts, accomplishes similar things in *Chinese Characteristics, Thirty Years* and *Fire and Sword*. By offering clear ideas on what China needs to do to move forward into the twentieth century, Smith, Edwards and Christie present authoritative opinions, backed up by their experiences in China. In the context of the Lit & Phil, these final sections may have been of particular interest to its members as they demonstrate a speculative cultural insight into the future of China, even if such insight would later be proved wrong. These final sections are in no way about the ‘journey’; they far exceed the end point of the author’s narrative.

Each of these final sections reference the Chinese character and points to it as crucial to the prospects of the regeneration of China. For these three missionary authors, the character of the Chinese nation was going to be a key feature in the country’s future development in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For both Smith and Edwards, the Chinese character desperately needed assistance from western missionaries. Edwards writes that ‘education without Christianity will not bring about the desired end; for we want not only to instruct and improve, but to mould character’.<sup>418</sup> Edwards goes on to quote a missionary in India: ‘He [Protestant God] alone can make a new nation who can form a new man’.<sup>419</sup> In this final section, the development of a Chinese national character is irrevocably linked with the influence of missionary work and Christianisation. Smith sees the Chinese character as lacking the potential for reform. He writes, ‘what they [the Chinese] do lack is Character and Conscience’, which is not compensated for by their ‘intellectual abilities’, ‘patience, practicality, or cheerfulness’.<sup>420</sup> It is notable that Smith capitalises ‘Character and

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<sup>418</sup> Edwards, p.308.

<sup>419</sup> Edwards, p.308.

<sup>420</sup> Smith, p.316-317.



Conscience' and not the other characteristics he lists, which emphasises what he believes the Chinese lack, rather than any positive qualities he perceives them as possessing. Smith argues that his judgments on the Chinese character have 'not been hastily formed' and that they are based on observations which are not included in the text.<sup>421</sup> By reinforcing his own credentials in relation to the Chinese character, Smith also reduces the agency of the Chinese by presenting them through what they lack. Mudumbe-Boyi recognises that missionary groups often sought to eradicate local cultural traditions, such as idolatry and ancestral worship, as part of the Christianisation/civilization mission in Africa. Smith's attempts to present the Chinese through their deficiencies, in order to show how they may improve in line with his missionary ideologies, represent a desire to eradicate 'destructive' national and cultural characteristics which, for Smith, do not contribute to the improvement of China.

Christie takes a more positive approach to the Chinese character at the end of *Thirty Years*. In his conclusion, he admits that it is far too soon in the reform process to predict what China will achieve in the medium to long term, and that those who 'have experience of the inherent strength of the Chinese character are convinced that she has no insignificant future before her'.<sup>422</sup> Christie presents Chinese characteristics as a strength which will help, rather than hinder, the development of China. As *Thirty Years* was published over two decades after *Chinese Characteristics*, Christie's presentation of a Chinese character may be indicative of a more progressive approach to the idea of national characteristics by missionaries, or even more broadly, within Britain and America. Although the image of China may have shifted in the eyes of the West, it is

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<sup>421</sup> Smith, p.315.

<sup>422</sup> Christie, p.289.

vital to remember that the West was also changing and shifting, which impacted on how the East was viewed.

This changing West can be seen to be mediated through the interests and concerns in *Chinese Characteristics*, *Fire and Sword* and *Thirty Years*. Concerns move from an interest in trade for Smith, to the need for suitable retribution for the losses incurred by missionary groups during the Boxer Rebellion in *Fire and Sword*, and finally Christie acknowledging that the West may be ‘a disturbing element’ in China’s reforming process.<sup>423</sup> These missionary travel narratives were a part of a larger change in perspectives on China that fluctuated throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, Christie and Edwards are highly likely to have been aware of Smith’s *Chinese Characteristics*, which would have influenced how they approached the Chinese national character, both in their writing and on their travels. In ‘Travel Writing: China’, the travel narratives of Christie, Edwards and Smith position themselves and are received as experts. Despite their religious and missionary underpinnings, their expertise on the present and future needs of China seem to have appealed to the intellectual interests and curiosities of the society.

### ***Conclusion***

One inescapable part of the missionary’s work was that he was there to change the dynamic of the foreign land in which he found himself. Missionaries are not there simply as witnesses. They were there to convert as many as they could to Christianity, and one result of this in his or her text is that traditional aspects of the host country’s culture are rejected. Mudimbe-Boyi writes that missionaries, consciously or not, judged local customs ‘through the lens of their own religion and culture’ which led to local

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<sup>423</sup> Christie, p.288.

practices and cultures being branded as ‘immoral’.<sup>424</sup> This particular religious context reinforces the ‘sub-set’ status which Dupee bestows on missionary travel writing. However, this distinction from the larger body of travel writing from China at the turn of the twentieth century does not make these texts less worthy of critical attention.<sup>425</sup>

Smith, Edwards and Christie repeatedly present the Chinese as a homogenous collective and by doing so position themselves as authoritative voices on the nature of life in China and what it is to be Chinese. Smith is still considered, by some, as a specialist on the Chinese character today. Of the three travel accounts analysed in this section, *Thirty Years* is the only text which regularly presents Chinese individuals, albeit alongside the homogenised groupings of the Boxers and other local populations. However, the Chinese individuals that Christie describes are often highly westernised, such as a doctor trained at the mission hospital, which suggests that images of Chinese individuals are nuanced whilst still preserving established racial hierarchies within *Thirty Years*. By characterising and stereotyping the Chinese in their writings, Smith, Edwards and Christie engaged with larger intellectual, as well as religious, discourses which clearly position them as experts, as much as missionaries. Their experience and expertise are the reason they are included in the Lit & Phil’s ‘Travel Writing: China’.

Specifically, Christie and Edwards engaged with the political and cultural discourse surrounding the Boxer Rebellion in their travel accounts. Both missionaries have a similar issue to tackle: to condemn the action of the Boxer movement without vilifying the entire Chinese race. As previously noted, Johnston suggests missionary writing was often ‘frankly propagandist in nature’ and could have financial and ideological motivations.<sup>426</sup> In engaging with the Boxer Rebellion, Christie and Edwards

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<sup>424</sup> Mudimbe-Boyi, p.87.

<sup>425</sup> Dupee, p.301.

<sup>426</sup> Johnston, p.6-7.

challenge potentially problematic discourses coming from China to perpetuate the propagandist nature of their texts by emphasising the need for more missionaries in the country.

Quantitatively speaking, missionary travel accounts make up a small proportion of the overall section (although more than the political and commercial accounts). Despite their small number, these books are significant to the section, bypassing the society's prohibition of religious materials. Travel accounts that I have classified as missionary travel writing take a notably different approach to many others in the section, and yet they do not appear to have any significantly different physical traces to the rest of the section, their condition being roughly similar to the other volumes. This suggests that these texts were read in similar ways to their non-religious companions on the shelves of the Travel Writing: China section. Indeed it may well have been the nonreligious content of these books, such as their discussions of the Chinese national character that furthered understanding of China and the Chinese, which primarily appealed to the membership of the Lit & Phil. In their final sections, Smith, Edwards and Christie consolidate their position as experts on China and justify the missionary lens through which they privilege their own world view and limit Chinese agency. Like many missionary travel accounts from China produced at the turn of the twentieth century, *Chinese Characteristics*, *Fire and Sword* and *Thirty Years* engaged in broader discourses outside of the author's missionary and religious motivations and it was Smith, Edwards and Christie's expertise and cultural insight that made their missionary travel writings of interest to the Lit & Phil when they were acquired at the beginning of the twentieth century.



Figure 8. 'Sketch Map to illustrate Dr E.H. Edwards "Fire & Sword in Shansi"', p.48

METEOROLOGICAL NOTES AT T'AI YÜAN FU, SHANSI, NORTH CHINA.

Lat. 37° 55' N. Lon. 112° 52' E.

	1896.				1897.				1898.			
	Average Max.	Average Min.	Mean.	Rain.	Average Max.	Average Min.	Mean.	Rain.	Average Max.	Average Min.	Mean.	Rain.
January . . .	35	9	22	...	29	9	19	.25	34	11	23	.10
February . . .	39	15	27	...	36	10	23	...	40	19	28	.68
March . . .	47	23	35	...	48	29	38	.51	47	26	37	.42
April . . .	64	42	53	2.73	66	41	54	.83	66	40	53	.79
May . . .	75	50	62	1.81	76	53	64	.53	82	56	69	.46
June . . .	87	63	75	2.21	88	62	75	1.67	86	61	73	.36
July . . .	94	67	81	1.71	90	70	80	3.94	90	68	79	5.81
August . . .	84	64	74	5.73	87	66	76	2.95	82	62	72	3.16
September . . .	74	52	63	.36	77	54	65	.50	69	55	62	.84
October . . .	61	39	50	.18	65	38	52	.40	63	40	52	.71
November . . .	51	29	40	...	46	29	37	.89	46	30	38	...
December . . .	31	10	20	.30	29	9	19	...	34	12	23	...
Means or Totals	62	38	50	15.03	61	39	50	12.47	62	40	51	13.33

Meteorological observations from the interior of China are always so difficult to obtain that we are much indebted to Mr. F. Jacob Hood for sending us the abstract of observations by Mr. E. H. Edwards, M.B., C.M., which we have arranged in the above table.—EDITOR, *Symon's Monthly Meteorological Magazine*, October 1899.

The Province of Shansi

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Figure 9. Meteorological Notes at T'ai Yuan Fu, Shansi, North China' 1896, 1897, 1989, p.39

### *Art Imitates Life?: Travelling for Pleasure and Personal Exploration in China*

Isabella Bird (1831-1904), the prolific Victorian travel writer, died a week before her seventy-third birthday at her home in Edinburgh, her bags and boxes packed for a return journey to China. Bird had briefly visited China in 1878 and again in 1895, aged sixty-four, to spend fifteen months touring the country, covering over eight thousand miles (see figure 10). Originally, she claimed that she had no intention of publishing the resulting travel account, *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond: An Account of Journeys in China, Chiefly in the Province of Sze Chuan and Among the Man-Tze of the Somo Territory* (1899), but succumbed to the encouragement of others, including her friend and publisher John Murray.<sup>427</sup> Unlike Walton and Putnam Weale, Bird wrote that she had little interest in the treaty ports of Hong Kong or Shanghai, or the lavish lifestyles they often provided to their European inhabitants, writing that she had ‘not the remotest hankering after’ the Anglo-Asiatic attractions on offer.<sup>428</sup> Instead, Bird wished to see the ‘native’ Shanghai, the Chinese part of the city away from the comfort and convenience of European developments, in other words, the ‘real’ China. However, on returning from the ‘dark, crowded, dirty, narrow, foul, and reeking streets of the neighbouring city’, Bird acknowledged that she was unsurprised that most Europeans in Shanghai were unacquainted with the neighbouring Chinese city.<sup>429</sup> Clifford suggests that travel writers like Bird use descriptions of dirt in China to authenticate their experiences of the country. For those travelling for pleasure and personal exploration regularly, one way to represent this authentic experience was through the witnessing of

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<sup>427</sup> Nicholas Clifford, *“A Truthful Impression of the Country”: British and American Travel Writing in China, 1880-1949* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2001), p.1.

<sup>428</sup> Isabella Bird, *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond: An Account of Journeys in China, Chiefly in the Province of Sze Chuan and Among the Man-Tze of the Somo Territory* (London: John Murray, 1899), p.15. *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond* was published under Bird’s married name, Mrs J. F. Bishop, however most critics and biographers predominantly use Bird, both before and after she was married.

<sup>429</sup> Bird, p.26.

the everyday and domestic alongside expansive descriptions and images of ‘oriental’ and ‘exotic’ landscapes.

The majority of ‘Travel Writing: China’ is made up by those travelling for pleasure and voluntary exploration, suggesting that one of the aims of the Lit & Phil’s acquisition of these books was the pleasure and entertainment of their members. Many of the books in the section written for pleasure conform to established stereotypes about China and the Chinese at the turn of the twentieth century, rather than mounting any challenge to accepted understandings. This chapter will argue that in the Lit & Phil’s ‘Travel Writing: China’ section, pleasure can be seen as reciprocal between the traveller and the reader in the travel accounts of Isabella Bird, John Thomson and Somerset Maugham. I will also suggest that the visual plays a significant role in the representations of China and the Chinese at the turn of the twentieth century in ‘Travel Writing: China’. Firstly, this chapter will analyse the importance of photography in both travel writing and in China during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It will then interpret some of the images produced by travel writers through the lens of the visual and textual snapshot, which allowed travellers to construct and to curate visibility in their narratives. Thirdly, I will examine how textual and visual images corroborated, rather than challenged, stereotypes about China and the Chinese in order to represent China as recognisable whilst still remaining ‘other’, or comfortingly ‘oriental’.

As I have noted already, overwhelmingly, the accounts in ‘Travel Writing: China’ contain images and maps. Fifty-six books out of sixty-one contain some sort of visual representation of China or the Chinese, with three claiming to have over one hundred images. The number of travel accounts containing images suggest that the Lit & Phil considered visual representations of China to be an important aspect of the travel writing they acquired, evidenced by the significant number of landscapes, maps,



photographs and illustrations. Mrs Archibald Little's *Intimate China: The Chinese as I Have Seen Them* (1899) contains one hundred and twenty illustrations and images of life in China, capturing everything from temples and graves to Chinese tea-carriers and soldiers, to comparisons between women's bound and unbound feet.<sup>430</sup> As well as providing images of 'exotic' and 'oriental' landscapes to entertain their readerships, the books in 'Travel Writing: China' also serve the Lit & Phil's intellectual and cultural curiosity about China, underpinned by the regional reporting of China in local newspapers and the development of university courses on the Far East hosted at the Lit & Phil.<sup>431</sup> As with the objects acquired by the Natural History Society in the nineteenth century, many of the visual representations included in the section reinforced assumptions about China presented to the people of Newcastle at the turn of the twentieth century, for example the image of the hard-working coolie or the delicate, timelessly decorated Chinese bride.

One way of understanding these visual and textual images of China and the Chinese in 'Travel Writing: China' is through the tradition of the tableaux vivant. These created images, or 'playful costumed stagings', recreated scenes from classic art or dramatized historic events and have been described as one of the most popular amusements of the early nineteenth century, 'engendering a love for and appreciation of art'.<sup>432</sup> Like the tableaux vivant, a staged image of China is a fiction, playing to the themes and perceptions the photographer or traveller wishes to privilege. As we shall

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<sup>430</sup> Mrs Archibald Little, *Intimate China: The Chinese as I Have Seen Them* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1899) 'Temple to the God of Literature', p.294, 'Outside Confucius' Grave', p.307, 'Soldier', p.278, 'Brick-tea carriers on the Great Brick-tea Road', p.403, 'Women's Natural Foot, and other Woman's Feet bound to 6 Inches' and 'Woman's Natural Foot, and another Woman's Feet bound to 4 ½ Inches', p.138 & 139.

<sup>431</sup> See 'Executed Chinaman's Belief' Newcastle Evening Chronicle 06/01/1923 p.3 (Newcastle City Library – Microfilm) and the reporting of the Boxer Rebellion in local newspapers.

<sup>432</sup> Danielle Paz, 'Tableau Vivant' The Chicago School of Media Theory, < <https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/tableau-vivant/> > [accessed 4 August 2016]

see, Bird, Thomson and Maugham all stage China in a similar way to the tableaux vivant's dramatization of historical events. This visual presentation privileges one version of life in China over another by limiting what can be seen by the reader/audience and restricting the full picture. These textual or visual images tended to emphasize or reinforce, rather than challenge, western perceptions of China and the Chinese, which were largely established by the beginning of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, some authors also adopted an aesthetic of aperture by which the momentary, visual experience of the traveller is privileged, independent of understanding or a broader context.<sup>433</sup> This aesthetic is personal and neglects the perspective of those being observed in order to take a snapshot of reality, often representing China visually in ways which reinforce western perceptions of passive stasis, romantic timelessness or stagnation.

Photography in the nineteenth century was heavily engaged with discourses of ethnography and anthropology.<sup>434</sup> The illustrated books in 'Travel Writing: China' often use the tradition of ethnographical images, images of objectification and survey, to reinforce cultural stereotypes. James R. Ryan identifies that 'photographing the natives' was a common pursuit of travellers by the turn of the century.<sup>435</sup> The many images of Chinese people in 'Travel Writing: China' conform to this practice, capturing both individuals and groups. In the section, Chinese visibility arguably responds to the

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<sup>433</sup> An aesthetic of aperture refers to the moment before understanding or comprehension, which privileges the instant nature of experience, and is not dependant on the author or readers interpretation. Modernists, such as Virginia Woolf, adapted an aesthetic of aperture from the Fauve group, who arbitrarily framed their images, obscuring their work through awkward angles. The literary aesthetic of aperture reduces 'the narrative to imagistic elements' in order to produce images which privilege experience, rather than comprehension. See Katherine Baxter, 'Early twentieth century modernism and the absence of God' (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2003).

<sup>434</sup> James R. Ryan 'Photographing the Natives', *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), pp.140-182. See, for example, J. H. Lamprey, 'Chinese Male' (1870).

<sup>435</sup> James R. Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), p.142.

intellectual interest in China by the Lit & Phil in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As well as catering for intellectual concerns, those travelling for pleasure and personal exploration, despite not having an underpinning ideology, wrote with the pleasure of their reader in mind. Within these books, pleasure is reciprocal. The narratives of those travelling for pleasure were written and published to please their readership.

Interaction and travel between the western world and China has often been described as an ‘opening’. China had been opened to trade, commerce, political intervention and cultural influence, but during the nineteenth century, the country was opened to tourists in a way that had never before been permitted by the Chinese government. Julia Kuehn identifies two phases to the beginnings of tourism in China. The first, she claims, was based on the assumption, particularly in Britain and America, that China needed external assistance in order to become an economic and political ally of the West.<sup>436</sup> This led to a greater cultural and political interest in China from western countries and facilitated the growth of travel and tourism. The second phase was influenced by the emergence of a ‘Grand Tour’ of China, which prescribed places of interest and popular activities to undertake. This ‘Grand Tour’ was made possible partially by the earliest female travellers to China, such as Isabella Bird, Constance Gordon-Cumming (1837-1924) and Eliza Scidmore (1856-1928), whose travel accounts paved the way for others. Whilst these books could be used for research or guidebooks, the personal narratives meant that they also functioned as entertainment for the armchair traveller, satisfying the intellectual curiosity of the reader.

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<sup>436</sup> Julia Kuehn, ‘China of the Tourists: Women and the Grand Tour of the Middle, 1878-1923’, *Asian Crossings: Travel Writing on China, Japan and Southeast Asia*, ed. by Steve Clark and Paul Smethurst (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008), p.114.

According to Kuehn, female travel authors particularly ‘claimed China for travelling and tourism’ between 1878-1923.<sup>437</sup> Whereas travel writing by missionaries, consul members or Sinologists was largely produced by men during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the growth of tourism in China allowed women a stake in the travel writing market. Whilst, as Kuehn identifies, women were important to the emergence of tourism in China, travel texts were also produced by men travelling for pleasure and personal exploration. These male travellers, despite travelling in the same places and engaging in similar activities as their female counterparts, are not always classified as tourists, often noting their military careers or connections to intellectual institutions on their title page. William Gill’s *River of Golden Sand* (1880), both volumes of which are held in the Lit & Phil’s ‘Travel Writing: China’, notes Gill’s captaincy in the Royal Engineers, and yet his travel narrative begins, ‘Why not China?’<sup>438</sup> This flippant rhetorical opening suggests that Gill travelled to generate what Urry would term ‘supposedly [...] pleasurable experiences’, rather than for any larger military benefit.<sup>439</sup> By predicating their travel accounts for pleasure or personal exploration with a membership of an association or military accolade, authors gave their narratives a sense of weight and authority from the title page onward.<sup>440</sup> As the memberships of geographical and intellectual societies were predominantly male in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is perhaps unsurprising that similar accolades appear in the books of few women travellers. Bird, as the first female member of the Royal Geographic Society, was one of the exceptions. By grouping together male

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<sup>437</sup> Kuehn, p.129.

<sup>438</sup> William Gill, *River of Golden Sand: A Narrative of A Journey Through China And Eastern Tibet to Burmah* (London: John Murray, 1880).

<sup>439</sup> Urry, p.1.

<sup>440</sup> Other examples in ‘Travel Writing: China’ include Archibald R. Colquhoun’s *The ‘Overland’ to China* (London & New York: Harper & Brothers, 1900) which notes Colquhoun’s award of the Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society, his position as the Deputy Commissioner in Burma, Administrator or Mashonaland, South Africa and special correspondent of The Times in the Far East, as well as his authorship of ‘China in Transformation, ETC’.

and female travellers for pleasure and personal exploration, this chapter explores similarities and differences within their writing and their experiences of China and the Chinese. Both male and female travellers for pleasure in 'Travel Writing: China' were aware of the need to please their readerships, whether that was to entertain, to appeal to an established fan base or offer insights into life in China. The large number of books in 'Travel Writing: China' by those travelling for pleasure underpins the assertion that as well as the author's motivation for travel, the society was also interested in the reader's pleasure, which it catered for in its acquisitions.

### *Gazing on China*

In his seminal work on tourism, *The Tourist Gaze*, Urry writes that there is 'no single tourist gaze'; that social factors and historical context impact on how the traveller gazes at their surroundings.<sup>441</sup> Unlike the missionary, who leaves his native country for a clear and specific purpose, to spread the word of God, the tourist travels because it 'supposedly generates pleasurable experiences which are different from those typically encountered in everyday life'.<sup>442</sup> In the case of the travel writer, their gaze is also mediated through several processes linked to their historical and social contexts. For example, a desire to sell their travel account successfully to a readership at 'home', to gain academic recognition for their account from larger institutions, such as the Royal Geographic Society, or perhaps to secure funding for further travels. These factors interweave with the traveller's 'gaze' with which the readers are presented.

Like Urry, Mary Louise Pratt recognises the importance of sight and the visual to travel writing. In her analysis of travel writing from Southern Africa during the eighteenth century, she suggests that 'scientifically minded' travellers are 'chiefly

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<sup>441</sup> Urry, p.1.

<sup>442</sup> Urry, p.1.

present as a kind of collective moving eye on which [...] sights/sites register' in their travel narratives.<sup>443</sup> By contrast, travellers writing in a 'sentimental' tradition, such as Mungo Parks, interact far more with their surroundings to reproduce both themselves and the human drama of their narrative, textually.<sup>444</sup> Whilst Pratt is recognised as an influential critic within the field of travel writing, her models of 'seeing' have been called into question in relation to their applicability and relevance to travel in China. Steve Clark, for example, asserts that Asia's urban centres complicate Pratt's imperial-gaze models because the supposed relationship of dominance and subversion falters against the fact that by the time the McCartney Embassy arrived in 1793, 'Beijing was hugely more populous and imposing than contemporary European capitals'.<sup>445</sup> Susan Schoenhauer Thurin also suggests that 'Victorians did not go to China as an empty land that yields to the monarchical gaze Pratt ascribes to the explorer' and that often the Chinese were less than passive in their reception of their foreign visitors.<sup>446</sup> Bird writes of being attacked by a crowd of Chinese men who threw stones at her open chair, one of which knocked her unconscious, yelling 'foreign devil' and 'child eater' as they made their escape.<sup>447</sup> Whilst the travel writer is in control of their representations of China and the Chinese, Clark and Thurin's arguments suggest that the China they encountered was not entirely submissive.

My analysis of travel accounts for pleasure and personal exploration in the 'Travel Writing: China' section will draw on the stylistic characteristics of written and visual images of China and the Chinese. I will focus particularly on visual tropes within travel texts, in order to explore how authors challenged or reinforced their readers'

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<sup>443</sup> Pratt, p.60.

<sup>444</sup> Pratt, p.76.

<sup>445</sup> Steve Clark, 'Introduction', *Asian Crossing: Travel Writing on China, Japan and South East Asia* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008), p.3.

<sup>446</sup> Schoenhauer Thurin, p.20.

<sup>447</sup> Bird, p.332.

expectations of China whilst engaging with the reciprocal nature of pleasure between the traveller and the reader.

Since the emergence of critical interest in travel writing, which accompanied a 'counter-traditional wave' across the humanities in the 1980s, visibility has become a predominant mode through which to view travel texts.<sup>448</sup> Paul Smethurst and Julia Kuehn suggest that an inherent instability in travel texts comes from

being twice displaced from the reality of the journey: first, through the traveller's retrospective and subjective interpretation of places visited, people seen and impressions received and, second, through linguistic displacement of the reconstituted travel experience.<sup>449</sup>

The 'linguistic displacement' of travel writing can also be applied to the visual image, which is mediated through the author's interpretation and displacement of representing that which is no longer there, such as by reproducing a photograph of a scene or individual, or placing an image in the context of their travel narrative. Countering this displacement, some authors chose to deploy an aesthetic of aperture in travel writing to frame scenes in order to convey the momentary exposure of experience, rather than understanding, which does not depend on a deeper comprehension of a larger situation.<sup>450</sup> Books for pleasure and personal exploration in 'Travel Writing: China' thus offer visual representations of China without necessarily claiming to present an overarching ideology, instead presenting their works as entertainment. This disavowal of motivation is exemplified in *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond*, which Bird claimed to have no intention of publishing, and in Gill's *River of Golden Sand* which supposedly was the result of a flippant conversation. It is not the aim of this chapter to argue for or

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<sup>448</sup> Paul Smethurst and Julia Kuehn, 'Introduction', *New Directions in Travel Writing Studies*, ed. by Paul Smethurst and Julia Kuehn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 1-16 (p.1).

<sup>449</sup> Smethurst and Kuehn, 'Introduction', *New Directions*, ed. by Smethurst and Kuehn, p.5.

<sup>450</sup> See Katherine Baxter, *Early twentieth century modernism and the absence of God* (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2003).

against the absence of specific ideological expression within travel books for pleasure or personal exploration within 'Travel Writing: China'. However, this apparent lack of ideological expression alongside the popularity of these books, as evidenced by contemporary reviews, and the perceived entertainment value bestowed on them by both the Lit & Phil and the broader reading public, suggests that the thrust of acquisitions to 'Travel Writing: China' between 1880-1925 was to appeal to the cultural curiosity and amusement of the membership, rather than to adhere to or to support a particular approach or philosophy regarding China.

Across 'Travel Writing: China', the visual and textual 'snapshots' of China and the Chinese give readers access to the experiences in travel accounts from those travelling for pleasure and personal exploration. A photographic snapshot is usually considered to be a shot taken 'with little or no delay in aiming', or to be an 'instantaneous photograph taken with a hand camera'; a definition which took on meaning for photographers in the late 1850s, who wrote of "'snapping" the camera shutter'.<sup>451</sup> Outside of photographic vernacular, a snapshot can also be a brief overview or summary of a complex or larger whole. Andreas Huyssen asserts that a snapshot can suggest 'superficiality, reification of time, arbitrariness of the image'.<sup>452</sup> However, he goes on to argue that the snapshot is a space in which the 'present turns into memory, but simultaneously it preserves the appearance of a presence'.<sup>453</sup> In travel writing, the snapshot preserves the experiences of the author for their readership, whether in a written description, photograph or image.

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<sup>451</sup> Brian Coe and Paul Gates, *The Snapshot Photograph: The Rise of Popular Photography, 1888-1939* (London: Ash & Grant, 1977), p.6.

<sup>452</sup> Andreas Huyssen, 'Modernist Miniatures: Literary Snapshots of Urban Spaces', *PMLA*, 122 (2007), 27-42 (p. 32).

<sup>453</sup> Huyssen, p.33.



Many critics have analysed the place of photography in nineteenth and twentieth century travel writing about China. However, the importance of the visual and textual snapshot has not yet been considered.<sup>454</sup> A snapshot could be used to capture an instantaneous image of China, but what were often presented as snapshots frequently betray evidence to suggest that scenes had in fact been meticulously constructed by the traveller; in other words, the traveller constructed the visual appearance of the scene. I have included these in my analysis because the impression of the snapshot was often the aesthetic aim of the photographer and, in many cases, it is almost impossible to define how instantaneous their photographs were.

In his 1936 essay, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', Walter Benjamin suggests that modernity has transformed the function of art through developments in film and photography. Benjamin writes that 'even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be'.<sup>455</sup> Whilst Benjamin is referring to a physical work of art and its reproduction here, such as a painting, the same approach can be taken towards those attempting to capture images of China during the travels of writers. A traveller can never faithfully recreate an image of China, visually or textually, or its 'presence in time and space', regardless of technological advances in film and photography.<sup>456</sup> A snapshot, which attempts to preserve the 'appearance of the

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<sup>454</sup> See Larissa N. Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images: Translating the Pathological Body Between China and the West* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008), Shi Chen, 'Early Chinese Photographers From 1840 to 1870: Innovation and Adaptation in the Development of Chinese Photography', (Master of Arts Thesis, University of Florida, 2009) < [http://etd.fcla.edu/UF/UFE0025015/chen\\_s.pdf](http://etd.fcla.edu/UF/UFE0025015/chen_s.pdf) > [accessed 20 July 2016] and James R. Ryan, 'Photographing the Natives', *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997) pp.140-182.

<sup>455</sup> Benjamin, p.214.

<sup>456</sup> Benjamin, p.214.

presence', however superficially, was perhaps as close as the traveller could come to capturing a moment in space and time.<sup>457</sup>

Like the snapshot, the aesthetic of aperture is also removed from its presence in space and time, and yet it exposes the reader to a momentary experience of a journey, unconcerned with deeper understanding or comprehension. Textual representations of a traveller's journey in China are often not dependent on a deeper comprehension of the scenes gazed upon. Like the photograph, many travellers attempted to capture their experiences, for example through authenticating tropes, which did not require a deeper understanding of China and the Chinese at the turn of the twentieth century.

Approaching the visibility of China through the snapshot and the aesthetic of aperture allows for a nuanced approach to how and why these travellers produced visual and textual images of China in their writing. This chapter will primarily focus on travel writing that incorporates photography or relies heavily on visual motifs in order to explore that engagement with eye-witnessing and visibility. These visual motifs in 'Travel Writing: China' offer a direct means of imparting pleasure to the reader, presenting an object of difference and appealing to what the reader is presumed to find interesting. This chapter will thus engage with aspects of visibility in the 'Travel Writing: China' section and argue that travellers present written and visual representations of China and the Chinese for distinct purposes.

### ***Travelling for Pleasure in the Lit & Phil***

Travel accounts from China written by authors travelling for pleasure and personal exploration make up the largest proportion of 'Travel Writing: China' (thirty-one of the sixty-one travel accounts). These individuals travelled for a varied number of

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<sup>457</sup> Huyssen, p.32.

purposes. Ting Chang notes the importance of situating travel writing in the personal motivations and the ‘voluntary nature’ of the travel author.<sup>458</sup> The intrepid female travellers of Kuehn’s study are evidenced in works such as Constance Cumming’s *Wanderings in China* (2 vols. 1886) and Eliza Scidmore’s *China The Long Lived Empire* (1900). Cumming was a prolific travel author who illustrated her own travel accounts. Due to her wealth and connections, Cumming saw much of the world very comfortably and travelled for her own leisure or at the invitation of others. She published many travel accounts and, alongside *Wanderings in China*, the Lit & Phil holds *At Home in Fiji* (1881), *Fire Fountains* (1883), *In the Hebrides* (1883) and *Two Happy Years in Ceylon* (1892). Eliza Scidmore, the American travel writer, photographer and journalist, best remembered for bringing cherry blossom trees to Washington D.C. in the early twentieth century, was the first woman to join the National Geographic Society board of managers. She travelled extensively in the Far East, producing a vast catalogue of images, articles and travel accounts. The Lit & Phil holds two of Scidmore’s travel accounts, *The Long-Lived Empire* and *Winter India* (1903). Kuehn has argued that the popular travel writings of these women opened China to intrepid tourists. She suggests that the first generation of female travellers in China, citing Bird, Cummings and Little, took advantage of every established British network in the Far East and ventured into areas unexplored by western travellers in China.<sup>459</sup> The models established by these women influenced successive accounts of China and representations of China available to the membership of the Lit & Phil. In this chapter, therefore, I have selected Isabella Bird’s *The Yangtze Valley* as a case study of women’s travel writing in China from this period.<sup>460</sup>

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<sup>458</sup> Chang, p.20 &76.

<sup>459</sup> Kuehn, ‘China of the Tourists’, p.114.

Whilst critical attention has been paid to female travellers in China at the turn of the twentieth century, their male counterparts also occupy space in ‘Travel Writing: China’, for example Gill’s *The River of Golden Sand*, Archibald Colquhoun’s *The ‘Overland’ to China* (1900) and Dr. Gottfried Merzbacher’s *The Central Tian-Shan Mountains 1902-1903* (1905). Gill (1843-1882) inherited his fortune. He financed international journeys of exploration, whilst remaining in the army and becoming a spy for the British government. He was elected to the Royal Geographical Society and presented with the Society’s Founder’s Medal in 1879 ‘for the important Geographical work [...] performed during two long journeys of Exploration, voluntarily undertaken, along the northern frontier of Persia in 1873, and in Western China and Tibet in 1877’.<sup>461</sup> Both *The River of Golden Sand* and Cumming’s *Wanderings in China* were rebound by the Lit & Phil, which suggests that they were well read and popular amongst the library’s members.<sup>462</sup>

These travelogues, and those like them, often recount large distances travelled and describe many areas in China. Bird covered over eight thousand miles during her time in the country, whilst Gill travelled through China, Eastern Tibet and Burma (Myanmar). Despite their often limited time in China, those travelling for pleasure visited many places and saw as much of the country as they could. Such travel accounts consequently often included dramatic personal travel narratives that appealed to both the reader’s imagination and their desire for knowledge. The form of these travel accounts is also varied, taking the shape of letters, subject-focused chapters, or adapted articles, a formal feature that as we have seen was also used by many missionary authors in China, as well as linear narratives. The formal and stylistic diversity within

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<sup>461</sup> Tony Hadland, *Glimpses of a Victorian Hero: Captain William Gill Explorer and Spy* (Balsall Common: Hadland Books, 2002), p.38.

<sup>462</sup> *The River of Golden Sand* was rebound in 1927 and *Wanderings in China* was rebound in 1937.

books written by those travelling for pleasure, making up the largest proportion of ‘Travel Writing: China’, reflects the diversity of those travelling. Unlike those travelling for political and commercial purposes, or missionaries travelling for their own religious reasons who often drew on shared generic tropes, travellers writing for pleasure are made up of a far more varied range of authors and their style reflects this heterogeneity. For example, professional and prolific travel writers like Bird, may have established a particular style in earlier narratives and had the expectations of readers and publishers to take into account. Alternatively, those with a military or academic background, such as Gill’s *River of Golden Sand* or Captain Francis Younghusband’s *Among The Celestials* (1898) may have been influenced by works outside of the travel writing genre.

Alongside Fellows of the Royal Geographic and National Geographic Society, such as Bird, Gill and Scidmore, were other ‘old China hands’, long term residents in China, for instance Mrs. Archibald Little, who wrote novels and travel accounts based on her experiences travelling in the Far East with her husband.<sup>463</sup> Those travelling for pleasure and personal exploration in ‘Travel Writing: China’ also include accounts by, amongst a variety of others, a plant collector (Reginald Ferrer), an Australian novelist (Mary Gaunt), an Irishwoman choosing to run hospitals in Ningpo (Emily Lucy De Burgh Daly) and an independently wealthy mountaineering enthusiast (Dr. Gottfried Merzbacher).<sup>464</sup> In his preface, Younghusband makes the aim of his travel account explicit, to please his reader, to write something with the ‘chance of interesting an

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<sup>463</sup> Mr Little appears in the Lit & Phil’s ‘History: China’ section. *The Far East* (1905)

<sup>464</sup> Reginald Ferrer, *On The Eaves Of The World Vol 1 & 2* (London: Edward Arnold, 1917).

Mary Gaunt, *A Broken Journey, Wanderings From The Hoang-Ho To The Upper Island of Saghalien And The Upper Reaches Of The Amur River* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1919).

Mrs Emily De Burgh Daly, *An Irishwoman in China* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1915). See *Dictionary of National Biography: From the Earliest Times to the Year 2002 Vol 3* (D-F), ed by James McGuire and James Quinn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) p.21 & 22.

Dr. Gottfried Merzbacher, *The Central Tian-Shan Mountains* (London: John Murray, 1905).

overburdened public.’<sup>465</sup> Despite the difference between authors, the desire to record their own experiences of pleasure, while imparting pleasure to their reader is a recurring feature of accounts in the section. Bird’s *The Yangtze Valley*, Thomson’s *Through China with a Camera* and Maugham’s *On A Chinese Screen* are a representative sample of the diversity within ‘Travel Writing: China’ held by the Lit & Phil.<sup>466</sup>

Bird is arguably the most famous female writer to have travelled in China, and her life, adventures and writings still attract critical attention.<sup>467</sup> *The Yangtze Valley* is the account of Bird’s journey across some of the remotest parts of China, which until then had not been documented for a British readership. Her journey across eight thousand miles through China and Tibet took over fifteen months to complete. John Thomson’s *Through China with a Camera* was the result of a lengthy residency in China, working and living amongst the Chinese as a photographer. Thomson travelled extensively throughout China during his time in the country, and *Through China with a Camera* is an amalgamated account of his time there, without consistent dates or linear narration. Thomson’s *Through China with a Camera* thus takes a retrospective approach to his travels and is largely organised by location, including chapters on Canton, Formosa Shanghai, Ningpo, Hankow and the Yangtze. Thomson also includes three subject-focused chapters, ‘The Chinaman Abroad And At Home’ in two parts and an appendix on ‘The Aboriginal Dialects of Formosa’. *Through China with a Camera* was published a year before Bird’s *The Yangtze Valley*, and despite the differences in their form, gender of the author, and in the length of time spent by the authors in the

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<sup>465</sup> Francis Younghusband, *Among The Celestials: A Narrative of Travels in Manchuria, Across the Gobi Desert, Through the Himalayas to India. Abridged from "Heart of a Continent"* (London: John Murray, 1898) p.vi.

<sup>466</sup> John Thomson, *Through China with a Camera* (London: Macmillan, 1898).

<sup>467</sup> A collection of Bird’s correspondence, passports and other ephemera are housed in The John Murray Archive at the National Library of Scotland. < <http://digital.nls.uk/jma/who/bird/index.html> > [accessed 21 November 2017]

country, these accounts have many stylistic similarities. For example, both *Through China with a Camera* and *The Yangtze Valley* heavily intersperse their travel accounts with photographs, partially to authenticate their travels by producing photographic evidence, and to demonstrate a technological superiority to both the Chinese they encountered and to their readership at home. Bird and Thomson also structure their accounts around key locations, such as the Yangtze River basin and treaty ports, and use a first-person narrative, which coincides with an authoritative tone and a western perspective that matches those of their readers.

Unlike Thomson and Bird, Maugham's *On a Chinese Screen* has no photographs or images. The title of the book itself, however, indicates the importance of the visual to Maugham's travel account suggesting, as it does, photographic or cinematic projection onto a screen, as might appear in one of the illustrated lantern lectures held at the Lit & Phil. Maugham mediates the visual experience of China through detailed chapters which build a series of narrative pictures for his reader. One way *On A Chinese Screen* renders the visual otherness of China, the Chinese and the European inhabitants of treaty ports is by representing specific aspects or characteristics independently, rather than drawing attention to shared similarities or creating an overarching narrative to link them. *On A Chinese Screen* does not attempt to supply a coherent picture for the reader to comprehend China. As well as the disruptive style of this organisation, the visual images that Maugham creates are not dependant on a larger understanding of issues surrounding China at the beginning of the twentieth century. Throughout the work Maugham uses an aesthetic of aperture through narrative structure and detailed description to frame experience rather than comprehension. *On A Chinese Screen* and *The Yangtze Valley* offer a particularly interesting opportunity for a comparison of approaches as the two authors adopt radically different styles: Bird

providing a direct, first-person account (as if written up from travel diaries), Maugham deploying a range of voices that create an ambivalent distance between author, reader and subject.

### ***Photographic Process and Chinese Photographers***

The photographic snapshot is perhaps the most obvious example of the use of the visual employed by those writers travelling for pleasure or personal exploration in China at the turn of the twentieth century. The snapshot is defined as instantaneous, with little attention given to the aim or position of the camera. However, Thomson and Bird were highly professional photographers and travellers, who often choreographed the images in their travel accounts. In many photographs contained in *Through China with a Camera* and *The Yangtze Valley*, Thomson and Bird strove to give the impression of the snapshot, of the instant capture of natural life, and yet there were often circumstances that prevented this naturalist approach, such as local superstition and fear, or technical limitations.

Travellers recording their journeys using photography during the late nineteenth century, as Bird and Thomson did, continued the larger tradition of the visualisation of British imperial endeavour which used photography to fulfil the demand in Britain for ‘accurate and reliable anthropological information’ from other countries.<sup>468</sup> By the turn of the century, ‘photographing the natives’ made up an important part of the colonial encounter between travellers and locals.<sup>469</sup> Ryan suggests that photographic apparatus itself ‘was seen as a sign of European cultural superiority with which to impress and even intimidate indigenous peoples’.<sup>470</sup> What Pratt identifies as the roaming ‘scientific’ eye within travel writing from the eighteenth century is literalised by the camera in the

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<sup>468</sup> Ryan, p.143.

<sup>469</sup> Ryan, p.140.

<sup>470</sup> Ryan, p.142.



nineteenth century. Both the scientific traveller and the photograph are impassive, and apparently distant from the human drama surrounding them.<sup>471</sup> All of the photographs contained within *The Yangtze Valley* and *Through China with a Camera* exist within, and document, the context of colonial encounter, a space Pratt determines as a contact zone, a term she uses to refer to a space in which geographically and historically separated peoples engage, forming unequal relations involving ‘coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict’.<sup>472</sup> Thomson and Bird work within both the contact zone of clashing cultures and the legacy of ethnographic photographic practices during the late nineteenth century. In the ‘contact zone’ represented by their travel narratives, Bird and Thomson engage with China and the Chinese on unequal terms, and their photography functions as a means of maintaining this inequality. For example, we find photographs that disregard or alter the activities of local populations to prioritise the ‘exoticness’ of the landscape; similarly, both Bird and Thomson curated images of individuals to play up the aspect of ‘Chineseness’ they wished to present to their reader. This controlling use of photography as a means of negotiating the contact zone inevitably affects how China and the Chinese are represented in the ‘Travel Writing: China’ section in the Lit & Phil.

Isabella Bird carved out a career publishing accounts of her wanderings in exotic places at a time when women’s roles outside of the domestic sphere were limited.<sup>473</sup> Bird, or Mrs Bishop, as she was later known on her travels, was the daughter of the Reverend Edward Bird, who encouraged his eldest daughter to travel independently. Edward had been a barrister in Calcutta before returning to Britain to take up Holy orders, moving his family several times before settling in Scotland. After struggling to

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<sup>471</sup> Pratt, p.60.

<sup>472</sup> Pratt, p.6.

<sup>473</sup> See Dorothy Middleton, ‘Some Victorian Lady Travellers’, *The Geographical Journal*, 139 (1973), 65-75.

find a meaningful role in life, Bird found freedom and excitement unexpectedly during a Pacific hurricane aboard a paddle steamer. She wrote, ‘the old sea God has so stolen my heart and penetrated my soul that I seriously feel that hereafter though I must be elsewhere in body I shall be with him in spirit’.<sup>474</sup> She travelled intermittently for the rest of her life, publishing accounts of her travels through her good friend John Murray’s publishing house. Bird often undertook journeys without the company of westerners, relying on local coolies and translators to make her way across the interior of China.<sup>475</sup> During her three-year visit to the Far East, between 1894 and 1897, Bird made two trips to the Far East and is now considered one of the most famous early female travellers in China.<sup>476</sup> Known in Edinburgh’s medical circles as an ‘invalid at home’, and a ‘Samson abroad’, she was the first woman to be inducted into the Royal Geographical Society.<sup>477</sup> Nonetheless, *The Yangtze Valley* was not a great commercial success due to the diversion of public attention from China to South Africa and the Boer War, 1888-1902. Bird was considered a highly popular traveller, and the number of her books in the Lit & Phil reflect this. As well as the *Yangtze Valley and Beyond*, the Lit & Phil also holds *The Hawaiian Archipelago* (1875), *A Lady’s Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1879), *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* (1880), *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan* (1891), and a reissued edition of *The Golden Chersonese and the Way Thither* (1883).

Bird largely supported the British government’s approach to China. As we have seen, during the latter part of the nineteenth century Britain, like many countries, sought

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<sup>474</sup> Olive Checkland, *Isabella Bird and ‘A Woman’s Right To Do What She Can Do Well’* (Aberdeen: Scottish Cultural Press, 1996), p.xiii.

<sup>475</sup> A 1996 biography explains that Bird’s ‘journeys in China were primarily an exploration of the Yangtze Kiang river basin. She journeyed on the river as far as Wan Hsien then made an enormous detour northward and westward before arriving at Chengtu, the great city of the Sze Chuan basin. She then undertook a further adventure north-west from Chengtu up the River Min into territory bordering China’s western frontier where the Mantze people lived on the edge of western Tibet. Finally, from Chengtu she followed the river in a great sweep southward coming back eventually to the coast.’ Checkland, p.131-132.

<sup>476</sup> See Checkland, p.129.

<sup>477</sup> Checkland, p.177.

to strengthen trade links with China, whilst also securing land concessions, such as Weihaiwei in north-east China.<sup>478</sup> Bird demonstrates her approval of these policies by dedicating *The Yangtze Valley* to the Marquess of Salisbury, Robert Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil (1830-1903), who served as both Prime minister and Foreign Secretary, and whose approach to imperial expansion in China Bird admired.<sup>479</sup> Salisbury was openly criticised by some, both inside and outside government, for his approach towards the Far East. Rather than encouraging a policy of active expansion of British influence and territorial concessions in China, Salisbury was primarily concerned with the maintenance of British interests. He was also criticised for appearing to fail to restrict Russian expansion into British spheres of interest.<sup>480</sup>

John Thomson lived in China for over a decade, deciding to take up residence there aged twenty-five after his elder brother had established himself in a ship chandlery business in Singapore. Thomson travelled extensively in the Far East throughout his life and developed a ‘fascination with the culture of China, the immense size of the country, and the opportunities it offered him to chronicle unexplored regions’.<sup>481</sup> Thomson left China in 1872, never to return to the country, and set about publishing accounts of his vast travels alongside his photographs. He wrote several books about his travels,

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<sup>478</sup> See Michael Bentley, ‘The empire’, *Lord Salisbury’s World: Conservative Environments in Late-Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp.220-250.

<sup>479</sup> Bird’s dedication reads ‘Dedicated by Permission to the Marquess of Salisbury, K.G. with the Author’s Profound Respect, and Admiration of the Noble and Disinterested Services Which he has Rendered to the British Empire’.

Salisbury was Prime Minister three times: from 23 June 1885 to 28 January 1886; from 25 July 1886 to 11 August 1892; and from 25 June 1895 to 11 July 1902. See Marjie Bloy, ‘Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury (1830-1903)’ <

<http://www.victorianweb.org/history/pms/salisbur.html> > [accessed 24 January 2018]

<sup>480</sup> Nicholas Clifford reminds his readers that ‘spheres of interest, unlike leaseholds or concessions or settlements, had no standing in diplomacy or international law’ in *“A Truthful Impression of the Country”: British and American Travel Writing in China, 1880-1949* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2001) p.1.

For articles criticising Salisbury’s approach to China see, amongst others, ‘Lord Salisbury and China’, *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 86.2229 (1898) 70-71, and ‘Lord Salisbury and The Far East’, *The Speaker: The Liberal Review* 17 (1898) 752-753.

<sup>481</sup> Stephen White, *John Thomson: Life and Photographs, The Orient, Street Life in London, Through Cyprus with the Camera* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), p.17.

including *Illustrations of China and its People* (4 vols. 1873-1874), *Foo Chew and the River Min* (1872) and *Through China with a Camera* (1898), although the latter is his only travel account to be acquired by the Lit & Phil. Primarily, Thomson was a photographer and had studios in Hong Kong and Shanghai during the decade he spent in the Far East, but it was through his published books that Thomson gained his ‘broadest audience’.<sup>482</sup> Like Bird, he was also a member of the Royal Geographic Society and became known as ‘one of the most avid geographic photographers of his period’.<sup>483</sup> As a prominent figure in the visualisation of China and the Chinese for British audiences, Thomson’s inclusion in ‘Travel Writing: China’ reflects his national popularity, and complements the section’s strong interest in the visual.

For the Victorian traveller, photography was as much a ‘scientific pursuit’, as an art form.<sup>484</sup> It required an understanding of the latest photographic equipment, which was often large and cumbersome, as well as a keen understanding of the chemistry required to develop and produce photographs and, for the traveller, the ability to apply this technical knowledge and skill in difficult conditions. The photographic process therefore had a large impact on both how the author-traveller was able to engage with the image they wished to present and how their reader interacted with it. Bird and Thomson were both accomplished photographers and reference their skills in their travel accounts. In his introduction, Thomson writes:

[t]o those of my readers interested in photography I may add a note on my method of working. All my negatives were taken by the wet collodion process, a process most exacting in its chemistry, especially in a land where the science is practically unknown.

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<sup>482</sup> Geoffrey Belknap, ‘Through the Looking Glass: Photography, Science and Imperial Motivations in John Thomson’s Photographic Expeditions’, *History of Science*, 52 (2014), 73-97 (p.78).

<sup>483</sup> Belknap, p.79.

<sup>484</sup> See Geoffrey Belknap, ‘Through The Looking Glass: Photography, Science and Imperial Motivations in John Thomson’s Photographic Expeditions’, *History of Science*, 52 (2014) 73-97.

Some of my troubles are recounted in these pages, and may prove interesting to the amateur who works along the line of rapid plates and films.<sup>485</sup>

During the mid-nineteenth century, when Thomson was originally taking these photographs, which were later collected in his published works on China, the wet collodion process was valued because of the level of clarity and detail it allowed the photographer to achieve.<sup>486</sup> His ability to master this 'exacting' process, with limited scientific assistance, positions Thomson as the expert, who has succeeded against the challenges China could throw at the western professional photographer. Whilst Thomson has won against the photographic troubles he faced in China, his address to his amateur reader implies that although some may be able to learn from him, due to the exacting nature of his photographic methods, it is unlikely that even enthusiastic amateurs, without a large budget to fund their hobby, would be able to replicate them. Thomson recognises that his notes on photographic practice may be 'interesting' rather than of practical assistance to the amateur.

The metaphorical, as well as physical, distance between the professional travel writer and the amateur reader is also dramatised by Bird through her accounts of her practice as a photographer. Whilst describing her travels by junk on the Yangtze River she notes,

above all, there were photographic negatives to develop and print, and prints to tone, and the difficulties enhanced the zest of the processes and made me think, with a feeling of complacent superiority, of the amateurs who need "dark rooms," sinks, water "laid on," tables, and other luxuries. Night supplied me with a dark room; the majestic Yangtze was "laid on"; a box served for a table: all else can be dispensed with.<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>485</sup> Thomson, p.viii.

<sup>486</sup> See Encyclopedia Britannica, 'Wet-collodion process' < <http://www.britannica.com/technology/wet-collodion-process> > [accessed 24/09/2015].

<sup>487</sup> Bird, p.156. Going on to discuss adapted photography processes, Bird writes 'I lined my "stall" with muslin curtains and newspapers, and finding that the light of the opium lamps still came in through the chinks, I tacked up my blankets and slept in my clothes and fur coat. With "water, water everywhere," water was the great difficulty. The Yangtze holds any amount of fine mud in suspension, which for

Here Bird, like Thomson, overtly reinforces the superiority of her expertise over both the Chinese, who do not have the technology to match her photographic accomplishments, and the amateur photographer, who does not have comparable knowledge, financial backing or equipment. The difficulties Bird faced force her to adapt the complicated technical and chemical methods of taking photographs. That Bird sees water and tables as a 'luxury' when developing her photographs demonstrates how little she and her Chinese crew had access to whilst travelling on the Yangtze River. The authority she feels comes from her ability to adapt as a result of her intimate knowledge of her method and the technology she uses. In this respect, Bird and Thomson present themselves as pioneers of the photographic process, developing and adapting techniques out of necessity in difficult, albeit voluntary, circumstances. In these passages, Thomson and Bird attempt to demonstrate that their skills as photographers give them a cultural, as well as a racial, superiority which came with being well-travelled, highly-skilled and financially stable. Photography in *Through China with a Camera* and *The Yangtze Valley* complicates the 'us' and 'them' dynamic of the Chinese as the (racial) other by distancing the authors from certain echelons of their 'home' society too.

Thomson's assurances that China is a land where the science of photography 'is practically unknown' are undermined by a 1905 article in the *Times of India* which appeared with the, assumedly exaggerated, claim that 'ten thousand Chinese photographers' worked in Weihaiwei.<sup>488</sup> In *Through China with a Camera*, Thomson himself writes of Afong, a talented Chinese photographer with a studio in Hong Kong, who accompanied Stewart Lockhart and his 1903 party to visit the Duke Kong, a descendant of Confucius. Afong also photographed Sir Arthur Kennedy, Governor of

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drinking purposes is usually precipitated with alum, and unless filtered, deposits a fine, even veil on the negative.' p.156.

<sup>488</sup> Sara Stevenson, 'The Empire Looks Back: Subverting the Imperial Gaze', *History of Photography*, 35 (2011), 142-156 (p.142).

Hong Kong (1809-1883) and the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia (1850-1908), as well as establishing his own studio in the same district as Thomson and maintaining a positive reputation amongst the western inhabitants of Hong Kong. This complicates the ‘us’ and ‘them’ dynamic of Thomson’s travel account. Rather than demonstrating an ‘us’ (traveller) and ‘them’ (Chinese) binary, Thomson here creates a grouping of those with technical photographic knowledge as well as aesthetic skill, such as Thomson and Afong, and those without. Nonetheless, this temporary change to the groupings of ‘us’ (skilled photographers) and ‘them’ (those without photographic knowledge), remains subject to the larger racial distinctions that Thomson inscribes in his unfounded claim about the lack of photographic knowledge in China.

The number of Chinese photographers in the late nineteenth century, and their ability to master western photographic techniques, was significantly due to the commercial opportunities available in treaty ports such as Hong Kong and Shanghai, which had a substantial western population. Whilst the works of many Chinese photographers are now lost, a large number of images produced by Afong still survive. This is due to his reputation among the western population of Hong Kong, who bought his work and brought it back to their home countries where it made its way into museums and galleries. Afong not only took photographs of westerners in Hong Kong, he also captured images of landscapes, temples and daily life in China.<sup>489</sup> Chinese landscapes and social scenes were often popular with travellers. This is evidenced through Afong’s advertising (see figure 11). Written in English, the advertisement ‘Invites inspection of his large collection of Views of Foochow, Hongkong, Canton, Swatow and Macao’. The use of English indicates that these ‘Views’ were produced

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<sup>489</sup> See Shi Chen, ‘Early Chinese Photographers From 1840 to 1870: Innovation and Adaptation in the Development of Chinese Photography’, (Master of Arts Thesis, University of Florida, 2009) < [http://etd.fcla.edu/UF/UFE0025015/chen\\_s.pdf](http://etd.fcla.edu/UF/UFE0025015/chen_s.pdf) > [accessed 20 July 2016]

commercially for a western market and their preservation in Britain and American museums and galleries indicates their significance.

Although both Thomson and Bird recognise the presence of Chinese photographers in their travel accounts, representations of Chinese photographic progress appear only obliquely in their narratives. As well as Afong, Thomson writes of other photographers and their work in Hong Kong, who display their photographs to the passing public in doorways. Whilst some of the portraits are ‘fairly good’, others are the ‘most hideous caricatures of the human face that it is possible for the camera to produce’.<sup>490</sup> This suggests that some Chinese photographers did not work in studios and yet still had access to photographic equipment and were not artistically or technologically skilled enough to meet Thomson’s artistic standards. Here Thomson dismisses the Chinese because of their lack of technical and aesthetic knowledge, despite (what we may presume was) their commercial success. By contrast, Bird recalls meeting Dr Lu, ‘a refined and cultured man’, at a medical mission station in Hangchow. His medical photography shows ‘great technical skill’, and Bird claims his physiological drawings are ‘very beautiful’.<sup>491</sup> Nonetheless, whilst Thomson and Bird acknowledge Chinese photographers, they do so in a way which does not challenge their own skills as professional photographers. For Thomson, the Hong Kong studios are artistically inferior, and as such reinforce his own superiority as a white British man working in the same field. As Dr Lu is a medical photographer, his role is highly specific, and so he is no threat to Bird and her position as a travel photographer in her own narrative.

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<sup>490</sup> Thomson, p.29.

<sup>491</sup> Bird, p.49.



By including descriptions of photographers in their travel accounts, Thomson and Bird also draw attention to aspects of modernisation in China, especially in Hong Kong with its booming population of photographic studios. These representations of Chinese modernity evidence one of the key contradictions that run through many of the travel texts from China in the Lit & Phil's section. Through their descriptions of Chinese photographic practice, Bird and Thomson acknowledge aspects of modernity in China, whilst simultaneously using their own photography to present a traditional or 'oriental' civilization, often through images of provincial dress, capturing what Clifford terms the trope of 'passive Eastern timelessness'.<sup>492</sup> These contrasting versions of the Chinese as active photographer and passive visual object are both mediated through Bird and Thomson's travel accounts and so are subject to their 'gaze' as western travellers, by which any threat to their authority as photographer, author and traveller is neutralized.

Thomson and Bird also produced photographs of the Chinese landscape for commercial western audiences. Like Afong, Thomson had a studio in Hong Kong where he photographed local people and their activities and was able to make a living as a professional photographer. Although less overtly, Bird was also taking photographs in China for commercial purposes insofar as the images in her travel accounts had to appeal to her readership and, fundamentally, sell books. If, as Urry identifies, the tourist gaze is always mediated through social and historical factors, Thomson, Bird and Afong's photographic practices, and therefore their gazes needed to be commercially viable, either as travel authors, professional photographers, or both. This visual viability is evident in 'Travel Writing: China', as the acquired books had to contribute to the readers' pleasure or interest. The commercial nature of photography within travel

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<sup>492</sup> Clifford, p.27.

writing undermines the notion of being able to travel wholly for one's own pleasure. The pleasure of the reader, in this case the reader in the Lit & Phil, must be considered. Reciprocal pleasure in travel writing is unbalanced whilst the pleasure of the reader takes precedent over the pleasure of the traveller due to the latter's commercial considerations.

Travel photography was one way of presenting racial differentiation, and by extension racial superiority/inferiority, to a Victorian audience and was often 'intended to offer representational proof of racial classifications'.<sup>493</sup> For the first time, those who had never left England could "see" those living across the world in a 'form of imaginary travel'.<sup>494</sup> But believing in the 'straightforward realism of the photographic image', as many armchair travellers did, is problematic when looking at the photographs in *Through China with a Camera* and *The Yangtze Valley*.<sup>495</sup> Thomson reported 'that many Chinese believed that the camera could see through the landscape, and that the photographic process involved the use of the eyes stolen from children'.<sup>496</sup> This fear would no doubt have resulted in a limited number of those willing to comply with being in Thomson's photographs. For the reader of volumes in the 'Travel Writing: China' section the question thus arises of how the Chinese were cajoled into appearing in such images when local superstitions were rife. General suspicions of the camera and its operator were not entirely unfounded since, as Ryan identifies, those sitters 'whom photographers did manage to capture had neither knowledge nor control over the uses and meanings of their likeness', so that the entirety of control over the images stayed

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<sup>493</sup> Belknap, p.1.

<sup>494</sup> Peter D. Osborne, *Travelling Light: Photography, Travel and Visual Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 200), p. 57.

<sup>495</sup> Thomas Prasch, 'Mirror Images: John Thomson's Photographs of East Asia', *A Century of Travels in China: Critical Essays on Travel Writing from the 1840s to the 1940s*, ed. by Douglas Kerr and Julia Kuehn (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 2007), pp.53-62. Belknap, p.9.

<sup>496</sup> Ryan. p.143.

with the photographer.<sup>497</sup> The images of Chinese people function in a similar way in both *Through China with a Camera* and *The Yangtze Valley*. Thomson and Bird satisfy the ethnographic interest of their readers and, in turn, the cultural curiosity of the members of the Lit & Phil. In this respect, Bird and Thomson's travel accounts fulfil a dual purpose: they both educate and please, and this dual purpose contributed to their continued popularity as travel authors on China accounting for their presence in the section.

Thomson did not find that the Chinese he wished to photograph were always willing participants and there is evidence that he had to pay individuals to pose for him. In the photograph titled 'A Mendicant Priest' from *Illustrations of China and its People* (1874), Thomson paid the participant fifty cents to pose, who afterwards 'demanded more money because "the picture had bereft him of a good portion of his good luck", which he would require to work up again with offerings' (see figure 12).<sup>498</sup> The photograph of the priest at first glance appears to be instantaneous, simply the arbitrary preservation of a moment, as a snapshot in its aesthetic definition should be. The casual pose of the priest's looking away from the camera suggests a lack of interest by the model or a lack of direction from Thomson as photographer. However, the exchange of money for the 'service' of agreeing to be photographed shifts the aesthetics of the image from instantaneous to choreographed. Like the photographs of the Chinese landscape, Thomson exerts control over the final image of the priest. The pose of the priest looking away from the camera, engrossed in his own activity, now takes on aspects of dissent, as the priest has more control over the image than we might possibly first assume. Roland Barthes writes, in *Camera Lucida*, about the process of being reduced, without struggling, to an object by the photographer and the camera: from poser to

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<sup>497</sup> Ryan. p.143.

<sup>498</sup> Thomson, qtd in Belknap, p.81

photograph. The mendicant priest goes through the same process, although unlike in Barthes's model, he does so because he is being paid.<sup>499</sup> Although Thomson has overall control over the photograph, its usage and reproduction, the priest is able to engage, at least partially, in the transaction of photography, and demand more money for his time as Thomson's model. The priest appears passive in the image, but the accompanying text changes the context of the photograph and removes the priest from the wholly passive role. The priest, as the actor of the image, is playing a staged, oriental role of passivity, in order for Thomson to produce the photograph that his reader expects.

Unlike those of Thomson, in Bird's photographs of Chinese life and landscape, there is no evidence to suggest that she paid individuals to pose for her whilst she was travelling in China. However, her position as a western photographer is still evident in her photographs and the surrounding travel narrative which accompany them. In a photograph of an arch between Wan Hsien and San Tsan-Pu, Bird's Chinese assistants 'made the crowds stand to right and left by a series of vigorous pushes, shouting the whole time, "In the name of the mandarin"' (see figure 13).<sup>500</sup> Here, the 'coolies' and 'boys' Bird has paid to accompany her on her journeys orchestrate the scene in order for Bird to attain the photograph she wants. As previously noted, Urry identifies no single tourist gaze. The tourist's gaze is influenced by many social factors, such as class, gender and nationality, and the historical context, and these impact on how and what the traveller sees.<sup>501</sup> Here, Bird, and her Chinese assistants, construct a touristic gaze by changing the unremarkable (for the Chinese locals) scene in front of the camera in order to emphasise the ornate arch which dominates the image. For Bird, factors which impact on her own tourist gaze may include the expectations of her publisher and her

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<sup>499</sup> See Nancy Armstrong, *Fiction in the Age of Photography: The Legacy of British Realism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1999) p.105-106.

<sup>500</sup> Bird, p.198.

<sup>501</sup> Urry, p.1.

readership. Whilst Bird predominantly travels to China for her own pleasure, by the time she arrived in the country she was already a famous travel writer in Britain, which is likely to have come with its own set of pressures to which to conform. In the photograph, 'A Pai-Fang', Bird privileges the local architecture over the Chinese themselves. The Chinese people who make up the activity at the bottom of the image are indistinct, which suggests movement as the shot was being captured. 'The Mendicant Priest' and 'A Pai-Fang' both visually and overtly reflect a tourist gaze in their representations of China and the Chinese: Thomson through his curation of the priest in his photograph, and Bird through the manoeuvring of the scene to privilege the aspect of the image, the ornate arch, which she deemed to be visually most significant. In response to the photographer's demands, the Chinese individuals in these images acquiesce, and play a part in the image assigned to them.

### ***Maugham's Textual Images of China***

The complicity of Chinese individuals is less significant in Maugham's *On A Chinese Screen*, in which the narrative voice observes, rather than interacts, with the scenes he watches and subsequently records. Unlike Bird and Thomson, Maugham does not use photography but still creates highly descriptive textual images throughout *On A Chinese Screen*. His vignettes often have no narrative movement and emphasise descriptive stasis, in which there is no attempt to construct a linear narrative, instead focusing on minute details and a particular moment in time. Unlike the photographic snapshots in *Through China with a Camera* and *The Yangtze Valley*, which exist within a narrative sequence, *On A Chinese Screen* is a series of textual images of China, presented as a series of sketches, all of which are able to stand independent of each other. Sections are titled with names, such as 'Sullivan' and 'Henderson', or concepts like 'Romance' and 'Fear', instead of sections based on location or mode of travel that many other authors use to structure their accounts in 'Travel Writing: China', such as

Bird, Thomson and Walton. As a 'literary' writer, Maugham's travel account is not obviously constructed from field diaries, notes or travel documents; nor is it even written with an agreement of subject. The detailed textual sketches he presents in *On A Chinese Screen* are purposefully crafted, and do not appear to have been written spontaneously. These written snapshots emphasise the 'exoticness' of his surroundings, invoking a literary style which would be familiar to the reader of his other fiction, rather than the avid reader of travel writing about China particularly.

Maugham was born in the British embassy in Paris in 1874. After the death of both of his parents, he moved to Germany where his literary ambitions were first encouraged. On his return to England, Maugham trained as a doctor at St Thomas's Hospital in London, but he never practiced due to the 'modest success' of his first novel, *Liza of Lambeth* (1897).<sup>502</sup> *On A Chinese Screen* is Maugham's account of his travels in China, first published in 1922. These detailed sketches of life in China also partially served as inspiration for Maugham's 1925 novel *The Painted Veil*, the story of an adulterous wife in Hong Kong, whose doctor husband takes her with him to treat a cholera epidemic in a remote town upriver as punishment for her infidelity.<sup>503</sup> At points in *The Painted Veil*, the female protagonist meets the same scenes described by Maugham in *On A Chinese Screen*. He was sued twice for libel during the publication of *The Painted Veil*, first for using the name Lane, 'of whom there were not a few in Hong Kong', and then again for changing the name to Fane, who happened to be the Assistant Colonial Secretary at the time.<sup>504</sup> Maugham is often considered to be a 'popular yet critically neglected figure', and unlike some of his drama and fiction, *On A*

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<sup>502</sup> See Maugham, (William) Somerset (1874–1965), Oxford Dictionary of National Biography < <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34947> > [accessed 11 August 2015].

<sup>503</sup> *The Painted Veil* was turned into a Hollywood movie of the same name in 1934 starring Greta Garbo and Herbert Marshall, and was adapted again in 2006 starting Naomi Watts and Edward Norton.

<sup>504</sup> Michael Ingham, *Hong Kong: A Cultural History*, 'Happy Valley: The Turf and the Sod' (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.81.

*Chinese Screen* seems to have been particularly overlooked by literary critics.<sup>505</sup> There is very limited scholarship about *On A Chinese Screen* and what is written predominantly supports readings of *The Painted Veil* and other fiction set in China rather than attending to the work on its own terms. The Lit & Phil holds many of Maugham's other writings, including novels, short stories, plays, bibliographies and letters. The inclusion of *On A Chinese Screen* in 'Travel Writing: China', rather than in 'Literature', 800 in the Dewey Decimal system of classification, suggests that the Lit & Phil valued its contribution to knowledge about China for its members as much as it valued Maugham's popularity as an author in their collections.

The use of the 'screen' in the title of *On A Chinese Screen* implies a connection to the cinema, a reference which is also demonstrated in the title of the first section, 'The Rising of the Curtain'.<sup>506</sup> The use of cinematic and theatrical references suggests that Maugham saw comparisons between the immediacy of experience, which cinema and theatre allowed, and the immediacy of experience during travelling. For example, Maugham's use of 'he', 'she' and 'you' marks a direct and instructional tone, akin to a stage direction, to encourage his reader to place themselves within the *mise en scene* of his sketches. *On A Chinese Screen* can thus be read as an attempt to recreate the immediacy of personal experience. Xavier Lachazette emphasises Maugham's unwillingness to consider images 'as an inferior form of experience'.<sup>507</sup> Instead, Maugham often used images in his travel writing and fiction, Lachazette argues, to present a shift in 'European mind', which allowed the traveller to 'envisage new ways

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<sup>505</sup> Philip Holden, 'A Life as a Work of Art: W. Somerset Maugham's Intimate Publics', *Literature Compass*, 8.12 (2011) 972-981 (973).

<sup>506</sup> Maugham, 'This Rising of the Curtain', pp.11-13.

See Robert L. Calder, 'Somerset Maugham and the Cinema', *Literature Film Quarterly*, 16.3 (1978), 262-273.

<sup>507</sup> Xavier Lachazette, 'Images and the Colonial Experience in W. Somerset Maugham's *The Casuarina Tree* (1926)', *Journal of the Short Story in English*, 56 (2011), 2-8 (p.4).

of apprehending and representing reality'.<sup>508</sup> In *On A Chinese Screen* the use of textual images privileges the author's perspective yet repeatedly incorporates the reader into the scene, whilst Maugham, like the cinematographer, stays out of the image.

Alongside the cinematic screen, the screen has a more traditional sense as an ornate interior room divider. The oldest example of a Chinese folding screen dates from the eighth century and is held at the Shoso-in repository in Japan.<sup>509</sup> The popularity of chinoiserie in European markets brought highly decorated, free-standing folding screens into British homes as 'oriental' objects. Chinoiserie screens were often lavishly decorated with fanciful, exotic landscapes and imagined Chinese scenes. Maugham's title thus also merges connotations of cinema and stage with recognisable pictorial representations of China to conflate the literary approach of the author with traditional perceptions of China and the Chinese.

We might go so far as to suggest that this invocation of the screen is reflected in Maugham's inconsistent use of first, second and third person at various points in *On A Chinese Screen*, which enables him to create a distance between the author and the action, and to transplant the reader into the scene. Thus, the third sketch, 'The Mongol Chief', begins

[h]eaven knows from what mysterious distance he had come. He rode down the winding pathway from the high Mongolian plateau with the mountains, barren, stony, and inaccessible, stretching on all sides, an impenetrable barrier.<sup>510</sup>

Here Maugham employs a combination of third person and past tense. These formal features, which are more usually employed in narrative fiction, romanticise the figure of the Mongol Chief, conjuring images of Genghis Khan, whilst emphasising the hardships

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<sup>508</sup> Lachazette, p.2.

<sup>509</sup> See 'Screens', Rachel Kennedy, in *Encyclopedia of Interior Design*, ed. by Joanna Banham (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015) pp.1146-1148.

<sup>510</sup> Maugham, p.17.



the Chief faced. Other chapters, including 'Fear', 'Romance' and (as we shall see) 'Beasts of Burden', are written in first person, present tense. Maugham's constant switching of subject, person and tense draws attention to the inability of travel writing to deliver an accurate reflection of experience and to the nature of travel writing as a construct. The individual sketches or vignettes placed alongside each other in *On A Chinese Screen* reflect the fragmented nature of representing the personal experience of travelling. This inconsistency provides a different way of representing the western traveller's experience in China that is also inevitably inflected by the modernist aesthetics that had developed in the intervening years between the publication of Bird and Thomson's books and Maugham's *On A Chinese Screen*. As an author on the literary scene in Britain, Maugham draws on the fragmentary style of British modernism that characterised writers from Conrad to Woolf. This style is in stark contrast with that of Bird and Thomson who present their experiences, even where these are amalgamated, as in the case of Thomson, into something approximating a continuous narrative flow. In the books in 'Travel Writing: China', the use of first person and present tense is the most common form, like a diary or letter. Maugham distils particular points of interest from his experiences of China and consciously separates himself from the diaristic narrative of earlier China travel writers.<sup>511</sup> The larger implications of Maugham's disruptive style specifically in the genre of travel writing is that it allows him to construct his travelling experience artistically, unhindered by concern for the practical and domestic issues, such as local transport or communication with locals, perceived by other travel writers to be of interest to their readers.

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<sup>511</sup> The Lit & Phil holds many of Maugham's writings, including plays, novels and autobiographies. The acquisition of *On A Chinese Screen* is likely a continuation of Maugham's popularity throughout the Lit & Phil's collection, rather than a specific interest in Maugham's opinion on China.

## *Images of Poverty*

Walter Benjamin asserts in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', that the 'artistic performance of a stage actor' is presented to the public in person, whereas the film actor 'is presented by a camera'.<sup>512</sup> Benjamin argues that the camera, 'guided by the cameraman', turns the audience into the 'critic' who takes the position of the camera, rather than participant.<sup>513</sup> For Benjamin, the removal of the actor's physical presence removes their ability to adjust the performance in response to an audience, and subjects the film actor to optical tests by the camera/audience. Benjamin goes on to write that '[t]he audience's identification with the [film] actor is really an identification with the camera'.<sup>514</sup> Throughout *The Yangtze Valley, Through China with a Camera* and *On A Chinese Screen*, the western reader is likely to align themselves with the travel writer due to similarities in their social or cultural context, rather than aligning themselves with China and the Chinese represented within these travel accounts, which are mediated through a western perspective and which often depict scenes of distinct 'otherness'.

The actor/model in the photograph is at an even greater distance than the actor in the film from their audience. Unlike the film, the photograph is by nature static and records stillness. Clifford identifies a particular kind of 'tourist photograph' by those travelling in China at the turn of the century, one which records the cruelty and misfortune of life in China.<sup>515</sup> Photographs of public executions or torture, and burning towns or cities, became one of the authenticating hallmarks of a visit to China for some travellers. Recording and presenting aspects of cruelty, brutality and poverty of Chinese

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<sup>512</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999), p.222.

<sup>513</sup> Benjamin, p.222.

<sup>514</sup> Benjamin, p.222.

<sup>515</sup> Clifford, p.110-114.

life in photographs for British audiences also served to turn the Chinese in the photographs from actors, as ascribed by Benjamin, to objects, by reinforcing disassociation through difference within the visual or textual snapshot. *Through China with a Camera* and *The Yangtze Valley* do not contain images of public executions. Instead, Bird and Thomson choose to prioritise other photographic tropes to authenticate their travels in China, such as the coolie. However, despite the lack of visual images of public executions, Thomson does include graphic descriptions of death and poverty. Recounting his experiences of a Chinese graveyard in a particularly poverty stricken area, he writes that there was no shortage of recent graves, which were covered with lime mixed with broken glass or pottery to deter ‘pigs and dogs from digging up the bodies’.<sup>516</sup> Thomson goes on to describe a row of long forgotten ‘glazed earthen pots, each containing a skeleton’, one of which had been broken and lay across a rock face, whilst a group of children played with the skull.<sup>517</sup> In this passage, and others like it, Thomson draws attention to the mundane reality of death for those in the poorest parts of China. Moreover, Thomson presents the realities of death in China visually through the image of children playing with a skull to his reader in a written snapshot of the scene. The description of children and the skull emphasises the otherness of behaviours in China and reinforces the separation between the children Thomson describes and his readers. Thomson clearly intends to shock his reader by his implication that the children do not know any better than to use human remains as toys and by the scene of freshly buried bodies and an absence of established British traditions surrounding death. Thomson admits that his ‘sketch of Amoy’ where he describes the scene, has ‘been a dark one’.<sup>518</sup> The offhand reference to children playing

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<sup>516</sup> Thomson, p.101.

<sup>517</sup> Thomson, p.101.

<sup>518</sup> Thomson, p.101.

‘catch-ball with the skull’, the failure to inter bodies and the poverty of the family member which results in their remains being left to ‘crumble, unfriended and forgotten’ encourage the reader’s sympathy for those denied a ‘respectable’ burial.<sup>519</sup> Nonetheless, these emotive scenes of death and poverty, summed up in the image of the children playing undeterred by the unsavoury nature of their toys suggest that death and youth are corrupted: death by the bodies lack of effective interment and youth by being exposed to death to the point of nonchalance.<sup>520</sup>

Privation in China is also described by Bird in *The Yangtze Valley*. Bird often presents images of landscapes or places of local curiosity. However, there are some images of the Chinese in Bird’s portfolio of China which present aspects of everyday misfortune and distress. ‘Female Beggar In Mat Hut’ shows an old woman from the slums of Hankow (see figure 14). Here Bird presents an obvious picture of Chinese difference, emphasised by poverty and opium addiction. As well as physically operating the camera, Bird herself becomes a lens through which the image of the woman is presented to the reader. Both the camera and Bird herself subject the female beggar to the ‘optical test’ of the close up, which in turn highlights both her poverty and her ‘otherness’.<sup>521</sup> These images of death and poverty suggest that no image of China, no matter how distressing or intimate, is off limits to the western traveller who wishes to reproduce them.

The photography of poverty was certainly not the exclusive preserve of travel writers and photographers in China. During his time in London, Thomson produced a book of photographs titled *Street Life in London* (1877) with the radical journalist Adolphe Smith. Like the Chinese ‘Female Beggar In Mat Hut’, ‘The Crawlers’ depicts

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<sup>519</sup> Thomson, p.101.

<sup>520</sup> Corrupted in relation to both Chinese and British standards of death, burial and interment.

<sup>521</sup> Benjamin, p.222.

an aging woman, poverty stricken, this time on London's streets at the end of the nineteenth century (see figure 15). This reproduction of poverty in photographs and film, in both London and China, however encoded with assumptions of race, class and difference, was a continuation of the romanticisation of poverty by painters in the nineteenth century.<sup>522</sup> Ryan suggests that the lower classes of 'darkest London' could be 'subjected to the same processes of exploration and objectification, as was used for the 'savage races' as both groups fell into 'deviant categories' through the lens of the photographer.<sup>523</sup> In turn, this rendered photographs of poverty, in China and London, exotic and voyeuristic. The camera and the travel writer represents poverty in order to turn the audience into the 'critic', described by Benjamin in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'. Distance, which is created by the camera, the travel writer and the circumstances of the individual in the photograph, reinforces a frisson of disassociation for the viewer within the visual snapshot. In the context of 'Travel Writing: China', the importance of this distance is the ethnographic study which it allowed for the middle-class member of the society at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>524</sup> Travelling to China may not have been possible for a member of the Lit & Phil, but gaining an understanding of the Chinese of all ranks of society through the 'Travel Writing: China' section was made attainable through photographic evidence.

### ***The Image of the Coolie***

Another key trope of authentication, alongside poverty, was the representation of labour. There are similarities between Maugham and Bird's representation of their

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<sup>522</sup> See William Marshall Craig's 'Cries of London'. *The Gentle Author*, *The British Library Online* < <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-cries-of-london> > [accessed 19 December 2017]

<sup>523</sup> Ryan, p.143-144. Also see Malte Strinbrink, "We did the Slum! – Urban Poverty Tourism in Historical Perspective", *Tourism Geographies*, 14:2 (2012) 213-234.

<sup>524</sup> See John C. Day, 'The Library Scene in an English City: Newcastle upon Tyne libraries 1850-2000', *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland, Vol.3* (2008) 206-2015 <<https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521780971.018>> [accessed 19 December 2017]

encounters with Chinese labour in particular, despite being published over twenty years apart. In her description of the Chinese trackers she employed along the Yangtze River, Bird wrote,

the poor fellows haul with all their strength for twelve hours daily, never shirking their work. They are rough, truly, but as the voyage went on their honest work, pluck, endurance, hardihood, sobriety, and good-nature won my sympathy and in some sort my admiration. They might be better clothed and fed if they were not opium smokers, but then where would be their nightly Elysium?<sup>525</sup>

For Bird, the Chinese labourers' defining feature is their honest endurance of hardship that wins her sympathy. Even their opium smoking is tolerable in the face of their hardiness. Bird suggests that the opium-induced 'elysium' of the trackers, a state of perfect happiness, is fair recompense for their hard work, despite their lack of material goods (clothes, food) because of it. W. L. Distant claimed in his address to the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland in 1874, that Chinese coolies made up a versatile and hardworking body of labourers, despite being dirty and prone to corruption.<sup>526</sup> The image of the coolie presented by Distant mirrors that of Bird, hardworking yet flawed. In *The Yangtze Valley*, Bird's visual and verbal images of the coolie in China reinforce rather than challenge the accepted notions of Chinese labour in Britain, exemplified in Distant's lecture.

Despite winning her admiration there is no sense from the passage above that Bird sees her Chinese companions as equals. Their habits, behaviours and actions are recorded by Bird because of their difference, not necessarily because of their admirable qualities. This is clearly seen through the reference to opium smokers. Similar to the authentication of experiences through dirt and poverty, noted by Clifford,

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<sup>525</sup> Bird, p.159.

<sup>526</sup> W.L. Distant, 'Eastern Coolie Labour', *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 3 (1874) 139-145.

representations of Chinese labourers or coolies served to authenticate the accounts of travellers like Bird and Maugham, whose readers had certain expectations of China and the Chinese.<sup>527</sup> This passage appears alongside a photograph of which Bird writes: 'I had an opportunity of taking an instantaneous photograph of my trackers at dinner' (see figure 16).<sup>528</sup> To what extent the photograph is a true snapshot, with the participants having no or little awareness of Bird's camera, we can never be sure, but the casual stance of the trackers and their knowledge of Bird's photographic practices implies that it is a 'natural' snapshot, rather than being heavily choreographed by Bird.

Urry suggests that to reproduce a scene in a photograph whilst travelling is to appropriate the object in the image. He writes that '[i]t is a power/knowledge relationship. To have visual knowledge of an object is in part to have power, even if only momentarily, over it'.<sup>529</sup> In 'Author's Trackers at Dinner', this power is evident. The use of the possessive noun, 'Author's', implies ownership of the trackers, and by extension power over both the recording of the image and the individuals represented therein, whilst Bird's visual knowledge of the men indicates her power of representation over the trackers and her power to communicate the image in the way she chooses. Urry also argues that the power of the photograph itself stems from its capacity to 'pass itself off' as an authentic contraction of reality, without revealing its 'constructed nature or its ideological content'.<sup>530</sup> The ideological content of Bird's photograph is crucial, yet easily overlooked. The poor dress of the Chinese trackers, their emaciated appearance and the basic condition of the boat, all contribute towards emphasising their otherness from both Bird, as a representative of the western world, and her readership. Comparing the life and condition of the trackers to Bird's technologically advanced way of

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<sup>527</sup> Clifford, p.47.

<sup>528</sup> Bird, p.159.

<sup>529</sup> Urry, p.127.

<sup>530</sup> Urry, p.128.

capturing them underlines her power as a western traveller. As well as technologically advanced ways of representing the other, Bird's superiority also brings with it an assumption of privilege. Financially, Bird is able to travel in relative autonomy, and is able to choose whether to stay in comfortable hotels or 'tumble-down' inns. As well as being substantially richer than the trackers she employs, her position as a white, British woman comes with its own perception of superiority. Clifford states that in China at the turn of the twentieth century, gender was not a significant differentiating factor between male and female travellers, in other words, that women looked on the 'lands and peoples through which they moved with eyes little different from those of white men'.<sup>531</sup>

As Thurin identifies, Bird's feelings of superiority were sometimes challenged whilst travelling in China. Once, during her time on a junk with the trackers, the men 'would not take the trouble to put a plank out' for her whilst disembarking the boat.<sup>532</sup> Bird consequently fell into the river and was forced to spend the rest of her time on land in wet clothes. This occasion led her to change her view of the trackers, whom she had previously described as 'too low to be human'; and at times she apologises for her 'failure to observe Chinese etiquette regarding entering and leaving boats and sedan chairs'.<sup>533</sup> This temporary reversal of the power structure, in which the trackers have the power to hinder as well as help her during her journey, leads Bird to reevaluate her own prejudices towards the men who assist her.

In *On A Chinese Screen*, Maugham includes a section titled 'The Beast of Burden' which presents the figure of the coolie labourer in China. Here Maugham crafts

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<sup>531</sup> Clifford, p.30-31.

<sup>532</sup> Schoenbauer Thurin, p.147.  
Bird, p.135.

<sup>533</sup> Bird, p.135.  
Schoenhauer Thurin, p.147.



a textual image of the coolie on the road, 'bearing his load', in 'his blue rags', fitting perfectly into his landscape, naturally occurring, as if he were a plant or wild animal.<sup>534</sup>

Then also you see the coolies' backs. The pressure of the pole for long years, day after day, has made hard red scars, and sometimes even there are open sores, great sores without bandages or dressing that rub against the wood, but the strangest thing of all is that sometimes, as though nature sought to adapt man for these cruel uses to which he is put, an odd malformation seems to have arisen so that there is a sort of hump, like a camel's, against which the pole rests.<sup>535</sup>

In this passage Maugham repeatedly uses 'you', which encourages the reader to observe the life and burdens of the coolie and position themselves in the place of the traveller, rather than passively reading over them. Maugham's use of second-person positions the reader inescapably as the observer by reinforcing what they can and cannot see in the textual image which Maugham creates. Like Bird, Maugham emphasises the hardship which the coolie is able to endure to the point that it leaves him scarred and malformed. For Maugham, the physical difference between both himself and the coolie, and the reader and the coolie, is emphasised through the 'odd malformation' of a hump, caused by years of difficult and repetitive work.<sup>536</sup> It is notable that Maugham focuses on a physical difference, even if textually, whereas Bird chose to draw attention to the cultural difference of opium smoking in the text accompanying her photograph. The textual image that Maugham crafts allows the reader to make the scarred, malformed coolie as pitiable or as grotesque as they imagine. In his textual image of the coolie, Maugham uses an aesthetic of aperture, to recreate a momentary exposure of experience.<sup>537</sup> Maugham does not claim to understand the life of the coolie fully, nor is he particularly suggesting that it would be desirable to do so. The coolie exists as a

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<sup>534</sup> Maugham, p.77.

<sup>535</sup> Maugham, p.78-79.

<sup>536</sup> Maugham, p.78.

<sup>537</sup> See Katherine Baxter, *'Early twentieth century modernism and the absence of God'* (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2003) p.24.

stationary, romanticised image of the other in *On A Chinese Screen*. In effect, this reduces Maugham's image of the coolie to a fleeting experience for the traveller and reader, rather than an individual with a life separate from the traveller's experience.

During his travels in Canton, Thomson describes his passing observations of a group of 'boatwomen', 'the prettiest and most attractive-looking of their sex to be met with out of doors in this part of China' (see figure 17).<sup>538</sup> Their 'boats are the perfection of neatness, and their dress as simple as it is picturesque'.<sup>539</sup> In Thomson's textual image of the attractive boatwomen, the 'young girls' could be hired by any passing European who no longer cared to walk.<sup>540</sup> Thomson's description of the boatwomen offers an alternative to the male Chinese labourer, often characterised by the coolie. Thomson notes that these boatwomen do not 'paint' themselves, and so are looked down on by other Chinese women for being of 'doubtful respectability', and yet they behave with 'uniform modesty and decorum' towards the Europeans who hire their boats.<sup>541</sup> By emphasising the modesty and decorum of these women, Thomson identifies, and praises, the fact that they conform to western standards of respectability, and by extension, that they understand their place within the hierarchy of European travellers and Chinese labourers. At the same time, we may surmise that the polite manners of these women are the result of understanding the best means of securing European custom. Thomson's description of the boatwomen puts into play both the familiar, in their 'modesty and decorum', and the exotic, or the reassuringly oriental in the picturesqueness of their dress.

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<sup>538</sup> Thomson, p. 81-82.

<sup>539</sup> Thomson, p. 82

<sup>540</sup> Thomson, p.81.

<sup>541</sup> Thomson, p.82.

Ryan identifies the Western fascination with the 'native' female body, which was often expressed in colonial photography, which positioned a 'beautiful, compliant woman' in exotic surroundings, often in order to depict the 'Orient'.<sup>542</sup> The 'native' female body, as photographed and described by western travellers, often depicted female figures 'languishing among fruit and vegetation, or resting under palm groves'.<sup>543</sup> Unlike the passive, languishing figures described by Ryan, Thomson's boatwomen are active and hardworking, they 'skull or row with great dexterity' across the rivers.<sup>544</sup> Like coolies and trackers, the boatwomen are characterised as admirably hardy. Therefore, Thomson does not simply aesthetically evaluate the Chinese boatwomen. He also evaluates their value as workers who contribute towards the tourist experience.

Like Thomson, both Bird and Maugham find aspects of the Chinese labourer to admire. For Bird it is the coolie's honesty and good-nature, alongside their hardiness which wins her admiration. Unlike Maugham, whose textual image focuses on observation from a distance, Bird's characterisation of the trackers is far more personal, if not individual. Bird lived with the trackers on-board a house-boat along the Yangtze River and her description of their wages, dress, various crew sizes, daily dangers and common diseases, diet, working technique, amongst other things is largely taken from personal experience.<sup>545</sup> In Bird's descriptions of Chinese labour, her characterisations thus come from specific experience that Bird then applies to all, or most, trackers, coolies and labourers in order to create a generalised picture of their lives for her readership.

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<sup>542</sup> Ryan, p.145.

<sup>543</sup> Thomson, p.145

<sup>544</sup> Thomson, p.82.

<sup>545</sup> See Bird, 'Chapter XIII. Life On The Upper Yangtze', p. 138-160.

Maugham romanticises the coolies' ability to persevere in the face of pain and hardship, neglecting any economic realities which might befall him if he was to stop working or become injured. Maugham writes that '[the coolies'] effort oppresses you. You are filled with a useless compassion'.<sup>546</sup> Maugham transfers the oppression he feels as a result of the coolies' labour to his reader, 'their effort oppresses you'. The 'useless compassion' Maugham's narrator and reader are 'filled with' is compounded by narrative distance: the reader, at home in Britain, had no opportunity to help the malformed coolie being observed by Maugham in China, even if they wished to do so. However, the effort of the coolies has no power over Maugham as a western traveller; he, like the reader, has the capacity to shift away from the scene. In creating a sense of admiration for the coolie in *On A Chinese Screen*, Maugham is not attempting to call his readership into action for the coolie's cause. Instead, like Bird, Maugham attempts to authenticate his experience of China through his observation of, and interaction with, Chinese coolies. Like Bird's photograph, Maugham's coolie in his blue rags does not challenge the culturally accepted account of Chinese labour and so serves to substantiate Maugham's experiences by conforming to readerly expectations.

This affirmation of readerly expectation is emphasised by the way both Bird and Maugham often describe Chinese labourers in groups, rather than as individuals. As noted above, Bird uses details of life on the Yangtze River to describe the lives of all trackers and in her photograph 'Author's Trackers at Dinner', the men are in a large group, eating together. To Maugham, labourers appear as a 'string of coolies', 'one after the other, each with a pole on his shoulder from the ends of which hang two great bales, and they make an agreeable pattern'.<sup>547</sup> The string of coolies draws a striking comparison with the 'string of camels, heavily laden', which Maugham describes in

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<sup>546</sup> Maugham, p.79.

<sup>547</sup> Maugham, p. 77.

‘The Rising of the Curtain’.<sup>548</sup> Like the camels, the coolies carry uniformly heavy burdens.

Whilst there may have been certain barriers obstructing Bird and Maugham getting to know the coolies and trackers personally, for example language, neither author attempts to make a detailed study of a single man and his features. One reason for this may be their reader’s expectations. If a cursory characterisation of China and the Chinese is all that is required or expected from a travel author, they are unlikely to produce detailed individual case studies. These general representations conform to stereotypes of China and the Chinese prevalent in Britain at the turn of the twentieth century. By omitting the complexities of individual lives and personalities, these travel writers present images which are comfortingly ‘oriental’ in their otherness. Differences appear quaint and distant, rather than concerning, to the reader. Arthur Smith begins *Chinese Characteristics* with the statement that ‘no single individual [...] could by any possibility know the whole truth about the Chinese’.<sup>549</sup> Rather than attempting to present the ‘whole truth’, generalisations about China by those travelling for pleasure and personal exploration are used to authenticate, creating a recognisable image of China that confirms rather than challenges readerly expectations.

From the two examples of visualizing Chinese labour in China taken from Maugham and Bird’s travel accounts, it is clear that the image of the coolie or tracker had not drastically changed between 1899, when *The Yangtze Valley* first appeared, and 1922, when *On A Chinese Screen* was published. This image of Chinese labour remained relatively unchanged despite larger political and cultural shifts within China during the period. One reason for this may be that the Chinese coolie was also a

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<sup>548</sup> Maugham, p.11.

<sup>549</sup> Smith, p.1.

recognisable figure outside of China due to international migration and schemes of indentured labour throughout the nineteenth century. With Chinese labour already figuring in the western imagination it is likely that travellers had already formed impressions of the coolie before reaching or reading about China. Furthermore, the author and, by extension, the publisher, may have been unwilling to present a drastically alternative picture of the coolie to their readership which might call the author's authority into question. In this respect, characterisation in travel writing becomes critical in fulfilling reader expectation and authenticating the traveller's experience and so expectation is reproduced as the traveller's 'authentic' experience.<sup>550</sup>

Throughout 'Travel Writing: China', there are similar descriptions of the figure of the coolie. For example, Mrs Archibald Little writes in *In The Land of the Blue Gown* that '[o]ur big brute of a coolie disappeared without his wages one day.'<sup>551</sup> Little claims that he was the most powerful man she had met in the region, but he stole a jacket, and never returned to her employment. Similarly, in *My Chinese Notebook* (1904), Susan Townley vividly describes the agility, skill and perseverance of 'curious' Chinese trackers, witnessed during her time on a houseboat.<sup>552</sup> In each of these books, the image of the hardworking coolie, always 'exotic' and always the embodiment of otherness, is presented time and again. As with Bird's 'Author's Trackers at Dinner', the visual and textual image of the coolie in 'Travel Writing: China' does not challenge its readers' anticipated notion of Chinese labourers. By not challenging such images, travellers for

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<sup>550</sup> Maugham's representation of the coolie would have recalled to some readers the recent presence of Chinese indentured labour on the Western Front of the First World War. Representations of coolie labour from the War often perpetuated the stereotypes that Maugham and other travel writers present. See for example, R.H Mottram's 'The Chink', *Ten Years Ago: Armistice and Other Memories* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1928).

<sup>551</sup> Mrs Archibald Little, *In the Land of the Blue Gown* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1908) p.226.

<sup>552</sup> Lady Susan Townley, *My Chinese Notebook* (London: Methuen & Co, 1904) p.216.

pleasure and personal exploration present their experiences as entertainment whilst authenticating their account through accepted tropes regarding China.

Unlike those travelling for political or missionary reasons, Bird, Thomson and Maugham do not treat the poverty they describe as a symptom of a broader issue, such as the failing Qing government or a lack of Christianity across the country. Where the Chinese government is mentioned, it is often in regards to buildings or general international relations. Travellers for pleasure and personal exploration in 'Travel Writing: China' are less concerned with domestic policy in China. This gives some indication of the function of the section. Many of the ideological, political and historical issues surrounding China and the Far East at the turn of the twentieth century are addressed in the Lit & Phil's 'History: China' section. 'Travel Writing: China', however, straddles broader intellectual interest and entertainment addressed by personal narratives. In his introduction, Thomson clearly states this dual intention, writing that through the use of photography, he has provided 'incontestable pictorial evidence of [his] *bona fides*' whilst sharing with his reader the pleasure of 'coming face to face for the first time with the scenes and the people of far-off lands.'<sup>553</sup> Throughout 'Travel Writing: China', and especially in those volumes written by individuals travelling for pleasure and personal exploration, the pleasure and satisfaction of the reader is overtly paramount, and travellers often present sketches and snapshots which will entertain and illuminate their readers.

### ***'Comfortingly Oriental'***

Thomson does not require the audience of his photographs to identify with the Chinese objects, or actors, in his images. Instead, what the reading members of the Lit

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<sup>553</sup> Thomson, p.v.

& Phil are presented with is 'otherness', mediated through a western lens. This otherness may be represented to a Victorian audience through class, gender, or race, and as was sometimes the case, all three simultaneously. Thomson's photograph captioned 'Chinese Curio Shop, Hong Kong' portrays the 'otherness' of the relatively ubiquitous occupation of shopping and shop-keeping (figure 18). Thomson's contemporary reader at the turn of the twentieth century would have identified with the activity of shopping, but there are differences which the British reader would immediately perceive as other: the oversized fans, the dress of the figures in the photograph and the items for sale.

It is likely that the curio shop is a trinket shop for western tourists. The sign at the top of the image reads 'Wah Loong, from Canton, Dealer in Silks, Crepe Shawls, Ivory'. By choosing to photograph a shop and shopkeeper whose wares are advertised in English, Thomson ensures that the reader can easily identify the image as comfortably 'oriental' and 'exotic'. This photograph visually displays established tropes of the 'orient' and fulfils, without challenging, a reader's assumptions about China and its shops. There is another name listed alongside Wah Loong; 'Cumwo' was a Hong Kong based silverware producer who manufactured intricate souvenir goods such as spoons, cups, dishware and decorative items for the export market, which reinforces the assumption that the shop is there to service Hong Kong's tourist population. The otherness of the store and attendants is paradoxically made easy for the reader to interpret by the familiar signage and recognisable items on display. Like Afong, whose photographs were produced for western tourists and inhabitants of treaty ports, the curio shop does not in fact present the 'real' or authentic China, instead servicing the perceived needs and desires of foreign visitors.



In his description of shopkeepers Thomson details the objects which are on offer in many shops and how they are to be paid for by customers.<sup>554</sup> Bird's *The Yangtze Valley* also contains photographs and descriptions of shops. These images and the written accounts which accompany them, imply an interest in the everyday and mundane by both travel authors and their readers. Whilst the reader may not identify with the individuals in the photographs these accounts assume their readers have an interest in aspects of Chinese life which reflect or differ from the reader's own life. This is a way of troubling the mundanity of developing modernity by reflecting universal activities back to the 'home' culture in exoticized forms. The interest in the familiar and mundane by travel writers lends itself to theories of the uncanny, a sense of unfamiliarity that appears at the very heart of the familiar.<sup>555</sup> Photographs and written descriptions of shopping in China project back to the reader an activity which is familiar, and yet, images like 'Chinese Curio Shop, Hong Kong', consciously or not, trouble the reader's familiarity with the activity by showing unfamiliar differences. By making the image easily understandable as 'oriental', Thomson visually presents the otherness of the scene within the familiar.

Whilst Benjamin acknowledges that photography and film can 'capture images which escape natural vision' through the use of techniques such as enlargements or slow motion, the scope of the textual images which Maugham creates are larger than a single scene or photo.<sup>556</sup> In the section titled 'Dawn', Maugham describes the rising sun whilst walking out of a Chinese town: 'It is no longer night, but it is not yet day'.<sup>557</sup> There is

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<sup>554</sup> 'One side of the shop is occupied by rolls of silk and samples of grass matting, all labelled and priced; the floor above is taken up with a cleverly arranged assorting of bronzes, porcelain, ebony furniture and lacquered ware'. 'Such men keep monthly market-books for their customers, and these with each item supplied and price jotted down, are settled at the end of each month.' Thomson, p.27-28.

<sup>555</sup> See Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*.

<sup>556</sup> Benjamin, p.214.

<sup>557</sup> Maugham, p.71.

an apprentice 'sweeping the floor', and a 'man washing his hands and face', whilst the 'darkness pales to a mist of purple [that] will kindle to a rosy flush'.<sup>558</sup> Maugham's movements and the movements of others are infinitesimal in this account, emphasising both a stasis in time and a timelessness of landscape. Minute and subjective details, the 'wan and shadowy light', the bamboos which look like 'groups of ladies in the Great Ming dynasty', or moments of 'most magical beauty', are presented as personal to Maugham and his experiences, reinforced by the recurring use of 'I'.<sup>559</sup>

Benjamin writes '[e]ven the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be'.<sup>560</sup> In this sense, Maugham's textual image of the dawn embodies the same characteristics as Thomson and Bird's photographs. Like the photographs, 'Dawn' is a record of a moment's 'presence in time and space', which has been reproduced through the printing of the book in its numerous imprints and editions. Yet Maugham's description gives the audience access to details which would be absent in photographs, like the movement of the mist over the paddy fields which 'climbs half way up the gentle hills', or the 'unbearable' cry of a seagull overhead.<sup>561</sup> The small movements and emotive description create the impression of being able to take in more than the naked eye, like the landscape shots included in *The Yangtze Valley* and *Through China with a Camera*. But Maugham's textual snapshots also give the reader access to details impossible to capture in a photograph, for example aural and tactile aspects of a scene.

For Maugham, engaging with the visual appearance of his travels enables him to record, however unstably, the momentary, fleeting nature or impression of travel.

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<sup>558</sup> Maugham, p.71-72.

<sup>559</sup> Maugham, p.71-72.

<sup>560</sup> Benjamin, p.214.

<sup>561</sup> Maugham, p.71-72.

Returning to the aesthetic of aperture, we can understand the rhetorical stasis established in 'Dawn' as an attempt to capture momentary experience. If, as Benjamin suggests, reproduced art can never inhabit the original's occupation of time and space, through the device of aperture Maugham attempts to overcome time and space in order to position his textual images as a fragment of momentary experience. The representational and narrative instability of these chapters, for example the inconsistent use of tense, person or subject, is both a response to and an avoidance of the imperfect nature of recording experience within the more traditional conventions of travel writing.

Regardless of their apparent claim to be scientific or unbiased, photographs were 'rarely viewed with unconditional trust' by their Victorian audience.<sup>562</sup> Timothy Mitchell notes that media, including photography, aided colonialism and sought to 'work with individual minds and bodies' through a 'process that was continuously reporting, picturing and representing itself'.<sup>563</sup> In this sense, Thomson and Bird's photographs from China can be viewed as reflections of western attitudes to 'exotic' or foreign landscapes. These western attitudes are encoded into photographs of China and the Chinese by travel writers and photographers with an assumption that they will be understood by their readers. This recalls the symbiotic relationship between the 'camera' and the 'critic' as defined by Benjamin, which relies on mutual cultural understanding or assumptions. For example, the photograph of the Curio Shop and the Chinese shop keepers relies on Thomson's reader identifying the similarities, but critically the differences, between the English and the Chinese scenario. This relationship between camera and critic can also be seen in Maugham's construction of textual images. Maugham must create a scene that his reader can access, and by using

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<sup>562</sup> Belknap, p.74.

<sup>563</sup> Timothy Mitchell qtd in Peter D. Osborne, *Travelling Light: Photography, Travel and Visual Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.53.

literary conventions and visual metaphors, for example bamboo standing like ‘groups of ladies in the Great Ming dynasty’, Maugham reinforces the comfortingly ‘exotic’ by his invocation of chinoiserie, which would likely have been familiar to his readers.<sup>564</sup>

Reading such snapshots of China and the Chinese through the lens of Benjamin helps us to understand the dynamics of mediation and control that operate between the individuals in the photographs, the traveller or photographer and the reader/audience.

### ***Conclusion***

*Through China with a Camera, The Yangtze Valley* and *On A Chinese Screen* are all in an unkempt condition due to their time on the library shelves and being handled by the members of the Lit & Phil society. The spine of *On A Chinese Screen* is dilapidated and coming away at the edges. The gold detailing on both the spine and the cover is faded, and there are cup marks where someone has used the book as a coaster. There is also a small gold symbol in the bottom right of the book. This symbol was brought back by Maugham’s father from a trip to Africa and he used it on many of his books, supposedly to bring prosperity. Until this research project engaged with the section, *The Yangtze Valley* had not fared much better; the Lit & Phil holds a first edition which was acquired in January 1900. Each of the 116 illustrations has been imprinted with a ‘Lit & Phil. Soc. Newcastle.’ stamp, presumably to deter members from removing illustrations and damaging the book. The edges were boxed and the spine damaged. Some pages had fallen out and were carefully placed between the covers. As a popular author, it is likely that Bird’s travel account was well read by the Lit & Phil’s members when it was acquired, hence its worn condition. Like *China and the Present Crisis*, *The Yangtze Valley* was rebound during the course of this research. The fallen pages have been replaced and the spine is now well preserved. I am currently

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<sup>564</sup> Maugham, p.72.

the only person to have removed *The Yangtze Valley* from the library in recent years. As the popularity of the texts has dwindled so too has the value placed on them as a physical object, and so over time the condition of these books has declined, without an urgent need to repair them. Over the years of this project, my consistent engagement with the section, and the previously neglected books therein, provided the required attention for these books to receive the attention of the in-house book binders. Understanding these books as physical objects in the section, provides a new vantage point on their contents. We can begin to read them not only for their subject matter but also for how that subject matter has appealed to and stimulated the intellectual interests of the society since in the late nineteenth century.

Accounts by those travelling for pleasure or personal exploration make up the largest proportion of the section, accounting for thirty-one of sixty-one of the travel accounts. Pleasurable travel accounts were also acquired with relative consistency throughout the turn of the twentieth century. From this quantitative approach, alongside an appreciation for the materiality and condition of travel accounts for pleasure in the section, it is possible to determine that these books were popular with the Lit & Phil's membership. Exploring *The Yangtze Valley*, *Through China with a Camera* and *On A Chinese Screen* qualitatively can then herald possible reasons for such quantitative popularity. Bird, Thomson and Maugham consciously engage with visual discourses, privilege images of their experience and use visual tropes to authenticate their travels. In this sense, visual appearance can be read as an all-encompassing aspect of travel writing from China for those travelling for pleasure or personal exploration, as what was presented both perpetuated and consolidated images of China for their western readers. All of the textual and visual images in these travel accounts are encoded, consciously or not, by the travel author. This encoding allows the image of China to be both 'exotic'

and accessible to their reader, in other words, to be 'other' without being challenging or threatening.

As we have seen in Bird, Thomson and Maugham's approach to labour in China, the visual characterisation of Chinese individuals and groups remain unchanged throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, despite differences in the author's context. The manipulation of visual tropes, in order to present an easily identifiable version of China, is affected by reader expectation. By fitting visual and textual images within the boundaries of expectation, Bird, Thomson and Maugham also demonstrate a commercial awareness of their travel writing as a product, which will be viewed and judged by readers who have already formed ideas about China and the Chinese.

In the context of the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China', the pleasure of the reader is catered to by both the travel writer and the society. This reciprocal pleasure is recognised by authors who construct images to appeal effectively to their readers. Similarly, the Lit & Phil acquired travel accounts about China in order to please their reading members who would have likely have had preconceived ideas about China and the Chinese at the turn of the twentieth century.



*Figure 10. Isabella Bird, 'The Author in Manchu Dress', The Yangtze Valley and Beyond. This photograph was taken on Bird's return to Edinburgh at the studio of John Moffat. Isabella Bird, The Yangtze Valley and Beyond (London: John Murray, 1899), p. 353*

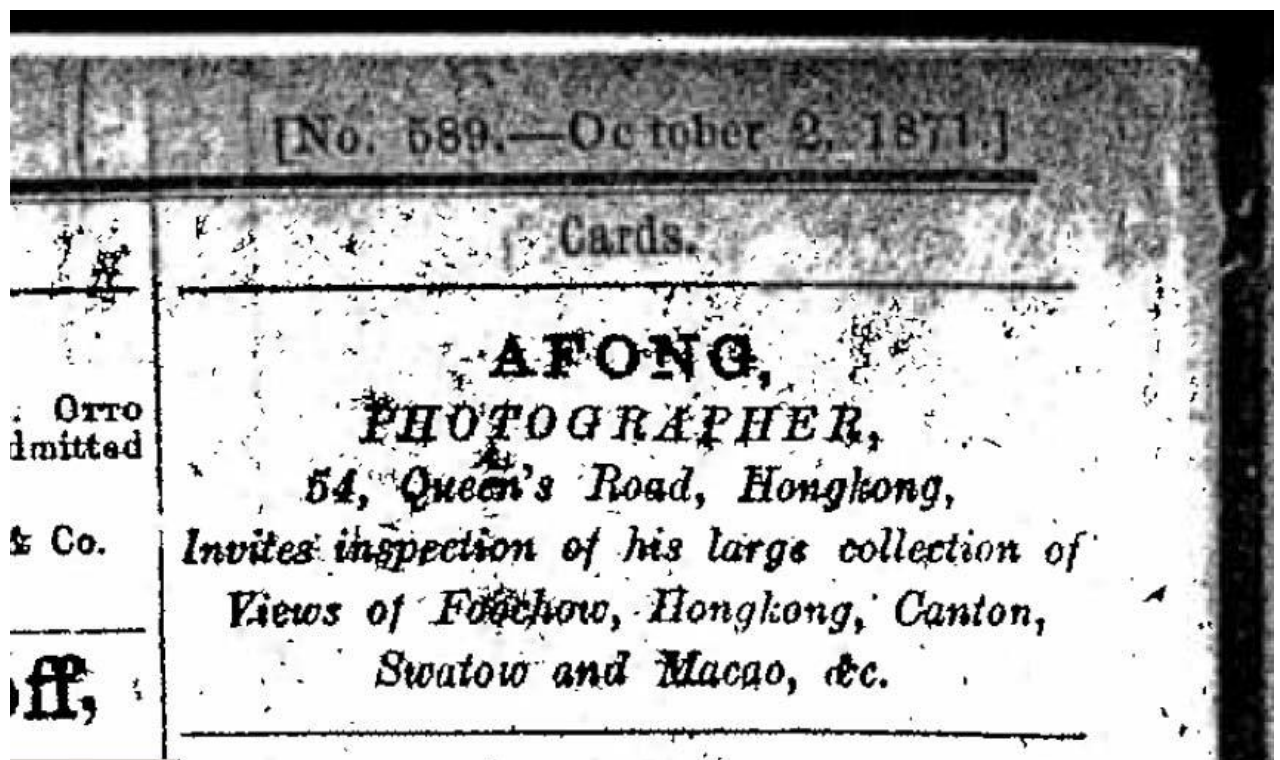


Figure 11. Afong's advertisement in *The Daily Advertiser*, Hong Kong, Oct. 2, 1871. Shi Chen, 'Early Chinese Photographers From 1840 to 1870: Innovation and Adaptation in the Development of Chinese Photography', (Master of Arts Thesis, University of Florida, 2009) <[http://etd.fcla.edu/UF/UFE0025015/chen\\_s.pdf](http://etd.fcla.edu/UF/UFE0025015/chen_s.pdf)> [accessed 20 July 2016] p. 29





*Figure 12. John Thomson, 'A Mendicant Priest', Illustrations of China and Its People*



*Figure 13. Isabella Bird, 'A Pai-Fang', The Yangtze Valley and Beyond. p.199*



*Figure 14. Isabella Bird, 'Female Beggar In Mat Hut', The Yangtze Valley and Beyond, p.78*



*Figure 15. John Thomson, Street Life in London, ‘The “Crawlers”’. This item is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0) license. <  
<http://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/objects/lse:zeg943muw>> [accessed 19 July 2016]*



AUTHOR'S TRACKERS AT DINNER.

*Figure 16. Isabella Bird, 'Author's Trackers at Dinner', The Yangtze Valley and Beyond, p.159*



*Figure 17. John Thomson, 'Chinese Boatwoman, Canton', Wellcome Library, <  
<https://wellcomeimages.org/> > [accessed 20 September 2016]*



*Figure 18. John Thomson, 'Chinese Curio Shop, Hong Kong', Through China With A Camera, opposite p. 28*

### Conclusion

Scholarship on travel writing has predominantly approached works through the lens of the author. Alternatively, this thesis has approached travel writing as read by the members of the Lit & Phil. A granular reading of the catalogue's subcategory 'Travel Writing: China' evidences that the development of the Lit & Phil's holdings at the turn of the twentieth century was both responsive to, and appealing to, the international intellectual curiosity demonstrated by the society and its membership in the period. Subsequently, this led to the development of a diverse collection of personal travel narratives, representing wide ranging ideological motivations for published accounts. I have also interpreted the role that personal and professional motivations played in the volumes collected under the category 'Travel Writing: China'. In turn, this thesis has examined why such travel accounts appealed to the Lit & Phil and how such disparate texts found a place alongside each other on the shelves of the society's Reference Room.

The 'Travel Writing: China' section is housed in the relatively inaccessible Reference Room because the society now considers these books to be less in demand by current members. Only twenty-six books classified as travel accounts about China, mostly post-1930, are housed in the library's more accessible Main Gallery. Travel books in the Main Gallery are also subject to the inconsistencies in classification apparent in the Reference Room's collection. For example, Frances Wood's critical analysis of travel literature from China, *The Lure of China: Writers from Marco Polo to J.G. Ballard* (2009) sits alongside the travel accounts of more contemporary travel authors, such as Ma Jian's *Red Dust* (2001) and Peter Hessler's *Country Driving: A*



*Chinese Road Trip* (2011).<sup>565</sup> The Lit & Phil classifies each of these texts as ‘Travel Writing: China’ (915) despite evident differences in style, content and aim. The practical aspects of classification and space, considered against the membership’s reading preferences, continues to affect the position of travel texts in the Lit & Phil. After all, despite being the largest independent library outside of London, the society only has a finite amount of space in its elegant rooms. The Lit & Phil does not appear to have kept notes on the movement of books from the Main Gallery to the Reference Room and, as a result, there is no definitive way of knowing how long texts have been considered to be in waning demand. Nonetheless, ‘Travel Writing: China’ in the Reference Room provides an important snapshot of the Lit & Phil’s internationalist interests during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which was influenced by the regional and the intellectual curiosities of the membership.

The Lit & Phil holds many travel accounts from around the world, evidenced by the 1848, 1903 and current online catalogues, implying that international travel was a popular genre in the Lit & Phil’s collections in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The continued acquisition of travel accounts demonstrates a legacy of interest in travel writing in the library, from the early collection practices of the society’s founding members.<sup>566</sup> One possible reason for political, pleasure and missionary accounts being classified as travel writing, rather than as religious studies or social sciences by the society, is that their classification as travel may have meant that they would appeal to, and therefore be browsed and read by, a larger proportion of the reading members of the society.

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<sup>565</sup> Frances Wood, *The Lure of China: Writers from Marco Polo to J.G. Ballard* (London: Yale University Press, 2009) (Main Library Nonfiction 915.1/107a).

Ma Jian, *Red Dust* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2001) (Main Library Nonfiction 915.1/112).

Peter Hessler *Country Driving: A Chinese Road Trip* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2010) (Main Library Nonfiction 915.1/113).

<sup>566</sup> Spence Watson, p.79.

My categorisation of travel accounts into political, pleasure and missionary groupings undertaken here is based on the biography of the writer, the stated aims in the travel accounts and notes in the Lit & Phil's online catalogue. As the card catalogue does not consistently contain notes on acquired texts, I have been unable to determine if the Lit & Phil perceived travel accounts to be politically or religiously nuanced when they were acquired. The impact of engaging with political, pleasure and missionary categories when approaching 'Travel Writing: China' in the Lit & Phil is the ability to offer a biographically nuanced reading of individual travellers and their writings, whilst still acknowledging their physical location alongside one another on the shelves of the Lit & Phil, as a diverse section influenced by the specific regional context of the society and its membership at the turn of the twentieth century. One benefit of categorising the section as I have done, is that it allows travel accounts influenced by people with similar professions or sharing certain ideologies to be understood in the light of their formal and stylistic differences and similarities, as well as examining how these books fit into 'Travel Writing: China' as a whole. A future area of research may be an analysis of the biographical, ideological, and cultural, as well as the formal and stylistic, differences between authors and travel accounts classified as by those travelling for pleasure, who have no obvious overarching professional similarities (beyond the profession of writing itself).

The number of representations of China in the library suggests a considerable appeal to the member's interests and, as we have seen, travel accounts containing representations of China were acquired throughout the beginning of the twentieth century. This also implies that the Lit & Phil was willing to accept a broad range of voices and opinions on China, overlooking the professional or ideological differences between the authors, as a way of responding to member interest. Many of the

representations of China analysed in this thesis substantiate accepted contemporary images of China, and of the Chinese national character, rather than offering a challenge to established perceptions. In 'Travel Writing: China', the range of voices offering conformist images of China and the Chinese would likely have appealed to the largest number of members and their international interests and curiosities in the library's general collections.

In each of the political, pleasure and missionary categories, the visual serves practical purposes, rather than being included in the accounts only to aestheticize or decorate. As my analysis of political travel writing has shown, visibility and witnessing, like the use of photography and the representation of China in the textual snapshot, is used by authors as a way to promote their own political stance on China. Instead of attempting to portray the Chinese accurately, in the descriptions of Port Arthur and western treaty ports visual cues are used to convey the country as a backdrop against which the foreign policy ambitions of other countries are played out. Joseph Walton and B. L. Putnam Weale visualise Russian activity in China in the early twentieth century as a response to political concerns about Russian imperial expansion in Britain, rather than attempting to offer a deeper cultural understanding of China, and the reality of life for the Chinese, for their readership.

In the missionary travel accounts of Arthur Smith, Dugald Christie and Henry Edwards, visual representations of China are employed to encourage support for their shared religious cause and inspire others to take up that cause in China, what Johnson considers their 'earthly concerns', always reassuring the reader that meaningful impact is possible.<sup>567</sup> This is evidenced by the mapping of Shanxi in *Fire and Sword*, which functions as a means for the reader to understand the scale of Edwards' travels; and by

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<sup>567</sup> Johnson, p.6-7.

the success of Christie's outdoor cataract operations in *Thirty Years*. Missionaries engage with images of China in order to offer tangible evidence of their successes and present physical evidence as to why missionary activity is necessary in China, rather than simply suggesting abstract notions of spirituality or religion.

For authors travelling for pleasure, the visual is used to authenticate their journeys, as well as their credentials as travellers, with valuable, first-hand experience of China. The visual and textual images they present are mediated, as Urry reminds us, through their multifaceted and culturally specific 'tourist gaze', which, in the case of Isabella Bird, John Thomson and Somerset Maugham, comes with the added caveats of reader and publisher expectation.<sup>568</sup> As such, authors travelling for pleasure often presented visual and textual tropes which were familiar to British readers and did not require deeper comprehension of China. For example, Isabella Bird's *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond* and Somerset Maugham's *On A Chinese Screen* confirm accepted visual stereotypes of the Chinese coolie, as anonymous and admirably hardworking, which remained relatively unchallenged despite larger political and cultural shifts within China during the period. Those travelling also had to consider the need for their voluntary journeys to appeal to the pleasure of their readership, on which the success of their volumes was based. Travelling for pleasure did not mean travelling without purpose. Rather than demonstrating an overt spiritual or political ideology in these volumes, travellers for pleasure were presumably conscious of future literary gains or personal accolades. For example, both Bird and Thomson were successful and prolific authors and members of the Royal Geographical Society.

The varied aims of representations of China in the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China' section imply that travel accounts were not acquired with the intention to support

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<sup>568</sup> Urry, p.1.

a specific interest about China, such as in a particular region or style of narrative. Instead, it appears that the Lit & Phil acquired travel accounts to provide for the intellectually curious nature of their members at the turn of the century, offering a purposefully broad range of aims and opinions based on personal experiences. Members, who would have been presented with an image of the Lit & Phil's closest cultural connection to China, Robert Morrison, every time they visited the library, would likely have been aware of such connections.

At the start of my research, I had expected to find that trade was a key point of connection between Newcastle and China at the turn of the century. In her discussion of Japan's relationship with the North East, Marie Conte-Helm draws attention to the enduring commercial links between the region and Japan, from Victorian enterprise to the continued business success of Nissan in Sunderland.<sup>569</sup> By contrast, whilst there is some evidence for commercial and political links between Newcastle and China, cultural interest, mediated through the activities of institutions such as the Lit & Phil and the Natural History Society, was a key contributing factor towards the development of 'Travel Writing: China'. My analysis of the Lit & Phil's collection data, alongside a close textual analysis of the collection, and original research into Newcastle's connections with China at the turn of the twentieth century, challenged my assumption that the travel accounts were acquired by the society in response to regional commercial links with the Far East. Instead, my interpretation of both the collection data and the individual books in the collection demonstrate a complex intellectual curiosity in China in the travel writing section, mirrored in the cultural collections of other intellectual institutions in Newcastle.

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<sup>569</sup> Marie Conte-Helm, *Japan and the North East of England: From 1862 to the Present Day* (London: Athlone, 1989)

Although the Lit & Phil has a large number of nineteenth and twentieth-century travel accounts from around the world, the library is general, aiming to appeal to as many members as possible. As a result of the size and general nature of the library's collections, it would likely have been impractical to retain records of the membership's response to travel as a specific area of their collections. There are also no borrowing records for the turn of the century. Frustratingly, I have found no evidence of how the reading members of the period reacted to the growing collection. Instead, I have used the Lit & Phil's 1848, 1903, card and online catalogues, as well as the composition of the collection and the pace of acquisitions, as recorded in the acquisitions records where available, to suggest that the development and response to the 'Travel Writing: China' collection was directly underpinned by the interest of the membership. The current location of the section in the Reference Room, only accessible by members, perpetuates the relatively poor condition of the volumes. Often books are out of order and books in a poor condition are not repaired, as upkeep is based on member engagement. The present condition of individual books in the section vary significantly. Some are particularly dilapidated with many loose pages or broken spines, kept together with ties. There are several possible reasons for the condition of books in the section. Firstly, travel accounts which have not been engaged with by the membership since their acquisition will have remained in a fair condition as they have not been excessively handled. Alternatively, books in a good condition may have been rebound due to their popularity with members and so their bindings, covers and pages will have been invested in by the library. Books in a poor state of repair may have seen their popularity dwindle and so the Lit & Phil has had no need to urgently repair them. Other travel accounts, particularly those analysed in detail in this thesis, are in much better condition. Without the regular engagement that this research has provided, it is likely that the books that have been restored by the Lit & Phil's inhouse binding team, would

have been left in their previous condition. My activities as a researcher has irrevocably changed the nature of the section.

A collection-focused quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China' section has allowed a unique understanding of the travel accounts to emerge. A quantitative approach to the section underpins the significance of nuances between travel writings to be appreciated and for their importance to be explored within a specific regional library. Without taking a collection-focused quantitative approach to the section, it is unlikely that defined categories would have emerged. Other regional travel writing sections would likely lend themselves to other categorisations, for example historical, sociological or ethnographic travel writing. A quantitative reading of the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China' section uniquely highlighted political, missionary and pleasurable differences in travel accounts which sit comfortably alongside one another on the shelves of the library. Combining this quantitative understanding of the section with case studies of close textual analysis offers reasons as to why travel accounts appealed to the Lit & Phil's membership at the turn of the twentieth century and how travel writers, writing for ideologically distinct reasons, nonetheless utilised shared tropes of travel writing in converging and contrasting ways.

This thesis is not intended to be a comprehensive study of the 'Travel Writing: China' section. Instead, I have endeavoured to create a framework for approaching collections within regional libraries which interweaves valuable detailed analysis of their content with a deeper understanding of the specific historic and regional context of the institution.

This thesis can be understood as a means to initiate further academic discussion on collections in regional libraries. Regarding the Lit & Phil, this research offers a

jumping off point for a larger analysis of the library's travel writing collections focusing on other areas of the world and their implications for understanding North East regional interests at the turn of the twentieth century. My approach to 'Travel Writing: China' would also provide the foundations of a comparative study between travel writing collections in other independent regional libraries. At the start of my research, I had expected that the Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China' section would be reflected in the collections of other independent Northern libraries, such as the Leeds Independent Library or Manchester's Portico.<sup>570</sup> In an examination of their online catalogues, despite the Leeds Independent Library and Portico owning texts classified as 'Travel Writing: China' in their collections, I have found this not to be the case. The Leeds Independent Library houses more contemporary travel writing, whilst the Portico's collection appears to be made up of pre-1880 travel accounts. Although there are differences in these 'Travel Writing: China' collections, my approach could offer a valuable insight into the precise intellectual interests of specific regional institutions, mediated through their patterns of acquisition for travel writing volumes. The Lit & Phil's 'Travel Writing: China' is unique in its content, history and configuration, formed by the specific nature of the Lit & Phil and its position as a stalwart intellectual institution in the North East.

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<sup>570</sup> The Lit & Phil, The Portico and The Leeds Library are all members of the Independent Libraries Association < <https://www.independentlibraries.co.uk/> > [accessed 11/02/2018]



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**Appendix Two: 1903 Catalogue and Location** – The table below shows the travel writing section as it appears in the 1903 catalogue. It also shows the current location of those travel books in the library collections. The asterisk (\*) following the authors name denotes a book's appearance in both the 1848 and 1903 catalogues.

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Current Location in Lit &amp; Phil</b>
David Abeel *	<i>Journal of Residence in China and the Neighbouring Countries, 1830-33</i>	1835	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/1
Clark Abel, T. H. Fielding & Andrew Strahan *	<i>Narrative of a Journey in the Interior of China, and of a Voyage to and from that Country, in the years 1816 and 17</i>	1818	Bolbec Folio 915.1/2
Aeneas Anderson *	<i>Narrative of the British Embassy to China, in 1792, 1793, and 1794</i>	1795	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/3
John Barrow *	<i>Travels in China, containing descriptions, and comparisons, made and collection in the course of a short residence at the imperial palace of Yuen-Min-Yeun, and on a subsequent journey through the country and Peking to Canton</i>	1804	Bolbec Folio 915.1/4
Isabella Bird	<i>The Yangtze Valley and Beyond</i>	1899	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/43
Thomas Blakiston	<i>Five Months on the Yang-Tsze : with a narrative of the exploration of its upper waters, and notices of the present rebellions in China</i>	1862	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/5
Andre Everard Van Braam Houckgeest *	<i>An authentic account of the embassy of the Dutch East-India company to the court of the emperor of China in the years 1794 and</i>	1798	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/6

	<i>1795 :(subsequent to that of the Earl of Macartney.) Containing a description of several parts of the Chinese empire, unknown to Europeans</i>		
Evariste Regis Huc	<i>The Chinese empire: a sequel to "Recollections of a journey through Tartary and Thibet"</i>	1859	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/25
John Dundas Cochrane	<i>Narrative of a pedestrian journey through Russia and Siberian Tartary: from the frontiers of China to the Frozen Sea and Kamtchatka; performed during the years 1820, 1821, 1822, and 1823</i>	1824	Bolbec Nonfiction 914.7/3
Archibald R. Colquhoun	<i>The "Overland" to China</i>	1900	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/47
George Wingrove Cooke	<i>China: being "The Times" special correspondence from China in the years 1857-58</i>	1858	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/7
Constance Gordon Cumming	<i>Wanderings in China, 2 vols</i>	1886	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/8
John Francis Davis *	<i>The Chinese: a general description of China and its inhabitants</i>	1844	Bolbec Nonfiction 951/5
John Francis Davis *	<i>Sketches of China, partly during an inland journey of four months, between Peking, Nanking, and Canton: with notices and observations relative to the present war</i>	1841	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/10 & Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/10
Arthur Diosy	<i>The New Far East</i>	1898	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/41
Justus Doolittle	<i>Social life of the Chinese: with some account of their religious, governmental, educational,</i>	1866	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/12

	<i>and business customs and opinions: With special but not exclusive reference to Fuhchau</i>		
Robert K Douglas	<i>Society in China</i>	1894	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/13
Henry Ellis, Charles Abbot, Clark M. Brownrigg & Thomas Davison *	<i>Journal of the proceedings of the late embassy to China: comprising a correct narrative of the public transactions of the embassy, of the voyage to and from China, and of the journey from the mouth of the Pei-Ho to the return to Canton. : Interspersed with observations upon the face of the country, the polity, moral character, and manners of the Chinese nation.</i>	1817	Bolbec Folio 915.1/14
Robert Fortune	<i>A residence among the Chinese: inland, on the coast, and at sea. Being a narrative of scenes and adventures during a third visit to China, from 1853 to 1856</i>	1857	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/15
Robert Fortune *	<i>Three years' wanderings in the northern provinces of China: including a visit to the tea, silk, and cotton countries; with an account of the agriculture and horticulture of the Chinese, new plants, etc</i>	1847	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/16
William Gill	<i>The river of golden sand: the narrative of a journey through China and Eastern Tibet to Burmah</i>	1880	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/17
John Henry Gray	<i>China: a history of the laws, manners, and customs of the people</i>	1878	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/18
Denham Gully *	<i>Journals kept by Mr. Gully and Capt. Denham during a captivity in China in the year 1842</i>	1844	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/19 (note: lost?)

Karl Friedrich August Gutzlaff *	<i>China opened: or, A display of the topography, history, customs, manners, arts, manufactures, commerce, literature, religion, juris-prudence, etc., of the Chinese empire</i>	1838	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/20
Karl Friedrich August Gutzlaff *	<i>Journal of three voyages along the coast of China, in 1831, 1832, &amp; 1833: with notices of Siam, Corea, and the Loo-Choo islands</i>	1834	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/21
J. B. Du Halde *	<i>Description of China and Chinese Tartary, together with Korea and Tibet</i>	1738	Does not appear in online catalogue
W. D. Bernard & W. H. Hall	<i>Narrative of the voyages and services of the Nemesis, from 1840 to 1843: and of the combined naval and military operations in China, comprising a complete account of the colony of Hong-Kong, and remarks on the character and habits of the Chinese</i>	1844	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/24
Samuel Kidd *	<i>China, or, Illustrations of the symbols, philosophy, antiquities, customs, superstitions, laws, government, education, and literature of the Chinese: Derived from original sources, and accompanied with drawings from native works</i>	1841	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/26
Alicia Little (Mrs Archibald Little)	<i>Intimate China, The Chinese As I Have Seen Them</i>	1899	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/42
John M'Leod *	<i>Voyage of His Majesty's ship Alceste, along the coast of Corea, to the island of Lewchew: with an account of her subsequent shipwreck.</i>	1818	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/27
William C. Milne	<i>Life in China</i>	1857	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/28
Algernon Bertram Freeman-Mitford	<i>The Attaché at Peking</i>	1900	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/51

George Ernest Morrison	<i>An Australian in China; being the narrative of a quiet journey across China to Burma</i>	1895	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/49
Laurence Oliphant	<i>Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's mission to China and Japan in the years 1857, '58, '59</i>	1859	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/29
Pehr Osbeck, Carl Gustav Ekebergm Olof Toren & Johann Reinhold Forster	<i>A voyage to China and the East Indies</i>	1771	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/30
Matteo Ripa, translated by Fortunio Prandi	<i>Memoirs of Father Ripa, during thirteen years residence at the court of Peking, in the service of the Emperor of China: with an account of the foundation of the College for the education for the young Chinese at Naples</i>	1845	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/31
Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore	<i>China, The Long-Lived Empire</i>	1900	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/48
John Lee Scott *	<i>Narrative of a recent imprisonment in China after the wreck of the Kite</i>	1841	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/32
Arthur H Smith	<i>Chinese Characteristics 3rd ed</i>	1894	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/33
Arthur H Smith	<i>Village Life in China, A Study in Sociology</i>	1899	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/46
George Smith *	<i>A narrative of an exploratory visit to each of the consular cities of China :and to the islands of Hong Kong and Chusan, in behalf of the Church Missionary Society, in the years 1844, 1845, 1846</i>	1847	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/34
George Staunton, George Macartney, Erasmus Gower, Joseph Collyer, John Pass, S. Daniell, John Thurston, Thomas Medland, William	<i>An authentic account of an embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China :including cursory observations made, and information obtained in travelling through that ancient empire, and a small part</i>	1797	Bolbec Folio 915.1/35



Ellis, William Byrne, John Chapman, John Heath, John Hall, William Skelton, John Landseer, James Caldwell, Benjamin Thomas Pouncy, Wilson Lowry, James Fittler, Benjamin Joseph Baker, John Barrow, William Alexander *	<i>of Chinese Tartary. Together with a relation of the voyage undertaken on the occasion by His Majesty's ship the Lion, and the ship Hindostan, in the East India company's service, to the Yellow sea, and Gulf of Pekin; as well as of their return to Europe : with notices of the several places where they stopped in their way out and home; being the islands of Madeira, Teneriffe, and St. Jago; the port of Rio de Janeiro in South America; the islands of St. Helena, Tristan D'Acunha, and Amsterdam; the coast of Java, and Sumatra, the Nanka Isles, Pulo Condore, and Cochin-China</i>		
John Thomson	<i>Through China with a Camera</i>	1898	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/52
Joseph Walton	<i>China and the Present Crisis</i>	1900	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/50
Isabelle Williamson	<i>Old Highways in China</i>	1884	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/38
William Curling Young *	<i>The English in China</i>	1840	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.1/39
Francis Edward Younghusband	<i>Among the celestials: A narrative of travels in Manchuria, across the Gobi Desert, through the Himalayas to India. Abridged from "The heart of a continent."</i>	1898	Reference Room Nonfiction 915.1/40
Henry Yule (Hakluyt Society)	<i>Cathay and the way thither: being a collection of medieval notices of China</i>	1913	Bolbec Nonfiction 910.6/1 AND Gallery Nonfiction 915.1

Robert Fortune	<i>Yedo and Peking. A narrative of a journey to the capitals of Japan and China: with notices of the natural productions, agriculture, horticulture, and trade of those countries, and other things met with on the way</i>	1863	Bolbec Nonfiction 915.2/6
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**Appendix Three: Current ‘Travel Writing: China’** – The table below shows the contents of the travel writing section in the Lit & Phil as it appears in the library today. The data is drawn from my own working catalogue of the section and information from the Lit & Phil’s online catalogue.

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Class Mark</b>	<b>Edition Year</b>	<b>Accession Number/ Accession Date</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Illustrations</b>	<b>Rebound</b>
Constance F Eka Gordon Cumming	<i>Wanderings In China, vol 1</i>	Reference Room Nonfiction: 915.18	1886	13 March 1888	Pleasure	Yes (5)	Yes (1937)
Constance F Eka Gordon Cumming	<i>Wanderings in China, vol 2</i>	915.18	1886	13 March 1888	Pleasure	Yes (6)	Yes (1937)
Robert K. Douglas	<i>Society in China</i>	915.113	1894	9 December 1895 - 4603	Political	Yes (22)	No
Robert Fortune	<i>A Residence Among the Chinese</i>	915.115	1857		Political	Yes (22)	No

Robert Fortune	<i>Three Years Wanderings in the Northern Provinces of China</i>	915.116	1847	8 August 1911	Political	Yes (17)	No
Capt. William Gill	<i>The River of Golden Sand, vol 1</i>	915.117	1880		Pleasure	Yes (5)	Yes (1927)
Capt. William Gill	<i>The River of Golden Sand, vol 2</i>	915.117	1880		Pleasure	Yes (9)	Yes (1927)
Fortunato Prandi	<i>Memoirs of Father Ripa</i>	915.131	1855	27 April 1933 – 23356	Missionary	No	No
Arthur H. Smith	<i>Chinese Characteristics</i>	915.133	1894		Missionary	Yes (19)	n/a
George Smith	<i>A Narrative of an Exploratory Visit to each of the Consular Cities of China</i>	915.134	1847		Missionary	Yes (13)	Yes (1926)

Isabelle Williamson	<i>Old Highways in China</i>	915.138	1884		Missionary	Yes (18)	No
Arthur Diosy	<i>The New Far East</i>	915.141	1898	31 December 1898 – 7021	Political	Yes (12?) Check	No
Capt. Francis Younghusband	<i>Among the Celestials</i>	915.14	1898	24 December 1908 – 6982	Pleasure	Yes (14)	No
Mrs Archibald Little	<i>Intimate China: The Chinese As I Have Seen Them</i>	915.142	1899	26 April 1933 – 23334	Pleasure	Yes (120)	Refaced – date unknown
Mrs Archibald Little	<i>Round About My Peking Garden</i>	915.142a	1905	22 November 1905 – 19309	Pleasure	Yes (85)	No
Isabella Bird	<i>The Yangtze Valley and Beyond</i>	915.143	1899	8 January 1900 – 7938	Pleasure	Yes (116)	No
Arthur H. Smith	<i>Village Life in China: A Study in Sociology</i>	915.146	1899	May 1900 – 8240	Missionary	Yes (16)	No

Archibald R. Colquhoun	<i>The "Overland" to China</i>	915.147	1900	4 September 1900 – 8600	Pleasure	Yes (39)	No
Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore	<i>China The Long Lived Empire</i>	915.148	1900	27 August 1900 – 8801	Pleasure	Yes (59)	No
George Ernest Morrison	<i>An Australian in China</i>	915.149	1900	8 October 1900 – 8831	Pleasure	Yes (32)	No
A B Freeman Mitford	<i>The Attaché at Peking</i>	915.151	1895	5 November 1900 – 8917	Political	No	No
John Thomson	<i>Through China with a Camera</i>	915.152	1898		Pleasure	Yes (28 listed. claims to contain 'nearly 100 illustrations'	No
Edward Harper Parker	<i>John Chinaman and A Few Others</i>	915.153	1901	21 November 1907 – 9999	Political	Yes (25)	Yes (1927)
Emile Bard	<i>The Chinese at Home</i>	915.164	1907	13 April 1907 - 21031	Pleasure	Yes (24)	No

Edward Harper Parker	<i>Ancient China Simplified</i>	915.153a	1908	19 February 1909 -23354	Political	Yes (12)	No
Arnot Reid	<i>From Peking to Petersburg</i>	915.	1899	30 December 1901 – 10181	Pleasure	Yes (1 map and frontispiece image)	No
Mrs Archibald Little	<i>In the Land of the Blue Gown</i>	915.	1908	24 September 1919 – 7878	Pleasure	Yes (45)	No
Clive Bigham	<i>A Year in China, 1899-1900</i>	915.155a	1901	10 March 1902 – 10362	Political	Yes (44)	No
William Blakeney	<i>On The Coasts of Cathay and Cipango Forty Years Ago</i>	915.157	1902	20 December 1902 – 11281	Political	Yes (109)	No
E. H. Edwards	<i>Fire and Sword in Shansi</i>	915.158	1903	23 April 1903 – 11541	Missionary	Yes (31)	No
Oliver G. Ready	<i>Life and Sport in China</i>	915.159	1903		Pleasure	Yes (13)	No

Robert Logan Jack	<i>The Back Blocks of China</i>	915.16	1904		Political	Yes (18)	No
J Macgowan	<i>Sidelights of Chinese Life</i>	915.165	1907	29 November 1907 – 11541	Missionary	Yes (46)	Yes (1928)
Ferdinand Joseph Harfield	<i>Opinions Chinoises sur les Barbares D'Occident</i>	915.166	1909	10 July 1909 – 23949	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sarah Pike Conger	<i>Letters From China</i>	915.167	1909	20 December 1909 – 24380	Pleasure	Yes (80)	No
Isaac Taylor Headland	<i>Court Life in China</i>	915.168	1909	26 April 1910 – 24742	Missionary	Yes (20)	No
Isaac Taylor Headland	<i>Home Life in China</i>	915.168a	1914		Missionary	Yes (16)	No
Lady Susan Townley	<i>My Chinese Note Book</i>	915.161	1904	22 May 1905 - 18708	Pleasure	Yes (19)	No



Dr Gottfried Merzbacher	<i>The Central Tian-Shan Mountains</i>	915.162	1905	19 October 1905 – 19212	Pleasure	Yes (21)	No
E. G. Kemp	<i>The Face of Manchuria Korea &amp; Russian Turkestan</i>	915.170	1910	No date available - 25837	Pleasure	Yes (24)	Yes (1936)
Rev. Lord William Gascoyne-Cecil	<i>Changing China</i>	915.169	1910	10 September 1910 – 25263	Missionary	Yes (33)	No
Katherine A. Carl	<i>With The Empress Dowager of China</i>	915.163	1906	11 April 1906 – 19722	Pleasure	Yes (22)	No
Arthur Evans Moule	<i>Half a Century in China Recollections and Observations</i>	915.171	1911	No date available - 25837	Missionary	Yes (18)	Yes (1939)
Montague Bell and Woodhead	<i>The China Year Book 1912</i>	915.172	1912	25 March 1912 – 27002	Political	No	No

Princess Der Ling	<i>Two Years in the Forbidden City</i>	915.173	1912		Pleasure	Yes (22)	Yes (1982)
Mrs De Burgh Daly	<i>An Irishwoman in China</i>	915.176	1915	17 January 1916 – 4433	Pleasure	Yes (48)	No
Timothy Richard	<i>Forty-Five Years in China Reminiscences</i>	915.177	1916	20 October 1916 – 5160	Missionary	Yes (19)	No
E. T. C. Werner	<i>China of the Chinese</i>	915.179	1919	11 July 1919 – 7727	Political	Yes (14)	No
Mary Gaunt	<i>A Broken Journey</i>	915.178	1919	31 March 1919 – 7488	Pleasure	Yes (31)	No
Gulielma G. Alsop	<i>My Chinese Days</i>	915.18	1918	17 February 1920 – 8357	Missionary	Yes (8)	No
A. S. Roe	<i>Chance and Change in China</i>	915.181	1920	11 March 1920 -8422	Pleasure	Yes (14)	No

Reginald Farrer	<i>The Rainbow Bridge</i>	915.184	1921	10 October 1921 – 10733	Pleasure	Yes (17)	No
W. Somerset Maugham	<i>On A Chinese Screen</i>	915.185	1922	19 December 1922 – 12125	Pleasure	No	No
James Reid Marsh	<i>The Charm of the Middle Kingdom</i>	915.186	1923	14 May 1923 – 1923	Pleasure	Yes (53)	No
Percy Sykes	<i>The Quest for Cathay</i>	915.192	1936	No date available – 26804	Pleasure	Yes (26)	Yes (1937)
Reginald Farrer	<i>On The Eaves Of The World Vol 1</i>	915.111	1917		Pleasure	Yes (34)	n/a
Reginald Farrer	<i>On The Eaves Of The World Vol 2</i>	915.111	1917	No date available – 56652	Pleasure	Yes (30)	Yes (1988)
Joseph Walton	<i>China and the Present Crisis</i>	915.1/50	1900		Political	Yes (1 map – damaged)	Yes (2015)

Frits Holm	<i>My Nestorian Adventure in China</i>	915.141	1924	5 June 1925 – 152714	Missionary	Yes (34)	No
Bertram Lenox Putnam Weale	<i>Manchu and Muscovite</i>	915.182	1904	26 June 1904 – 17828	Political	Yes (44)	No
Dugald Christie	<i>Thirty Years in Moukden 1883-1913</i>	915.183	1914	10 March 1914 - 2757	Missionary	Yes (26)	Yes



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