The Wild West Turns East: Audience, Ritual, and Regeneration in Buffalo Bill's Boxer Uprising

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Introduction

No one had expected the performance in Pittsburgh to erupt into pandemonium. Yet that is what happened late one summer evening in 1901, as the Wild West approached the dramatic conclusion of its grand finale. That year's finale was unusual in two respects: it was based not on the mythic past but on a more recent event, and it was set not in the American West but in the Far East—China. In the late 1890s, the Boxer Movement emerged in response to the increasingly intrusive presence of foreigners in China. Western Europeans and Americans viewed the Boxers as barbaric because the latter sought the eradication through violent means of the very things that signified "progress" in the West—telegraph systems, railroads, mining projects, and Christian missions. The movement culminated in the summer of 1900, when the Boxers laid siege to the foreign legations inside the walls of Peking (Beijing). Had they succeeded in penetrating the barriers to the legations, as they were precariously close to doing, a bloody slaughter would have ensued. Yet in response to the crisis, foreign nations with interests in China hastily assembled a relief force. Upon reaching Peking, this international army scaled the city walls, routed the Boxers, and rescued the legations.[1]

In 1901, William Cody, better known as Buffalo Bill, produced an elaborate reenactment of this overseas military victory called "The Rescue at Pekin."

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Though this performance always succeeded in arousing audiences, the spectators in Pittsburgh were especially excited as they stood throughout the entire program. As the mock battle reached its climax with the daring attempt by American soldiers to scale the massive Chinese wall, the evening's entertainment took an unexpected turn. The crowd, enraptured by the display of martial valor, surged *en masse* out of the stands and spilled onto the arena's dirt floor. As the audience flowed to the base of the wall, the soldier-performers standing on one another's shoulders and dangling on ropes could only look down in stunned amazement. A battle reenactment intended to inspire patriotism had, it seems, succeeded too well.[2]

Though the reenactment did not trigger a rolling tide of humanity at every venue, it always inspired audiences to connect emotionally with the drama in a way that found physical expression: people stomped their feet, shouted at the top of their lungs, shook their fists in the air, and wailed empathetically for fallen American soldiers. Why did this specific reenactment compel people to reject merely *seeing* in favor of *doing*? To answer this question, one could point to the ideological rhetoric surrounding the show. Both Wild West promoters and the press framed the reenactment as a contest between "civilization" and "savagery." Given this simplistic dichotomy, one might argue that most Americans proudly embraced their own civilization and welcomed opportunities to cheer exuberantly for it. In other words, one could attribute the fanatical enthusiasm of crowds to the popularity of the civilizing narrative used to justify foreign colonies and imperial wars: the noble Euro-American Prospero must subjugate the recalcitrant Boxer Caliban in order to plant the seeds of civilization in a distant and savage land.

However, this explanation of audience behavior requires one to take at face value white Americans' own rhetoric about "civilization" and "savagery," rhetoric which is emphatic in its insistence that a given group of people can be easily categorized as one or the other. Yet unambiguous language like this often flows not from true believers but rather from the truly ambivalent—from individuals who must constantly profess their faith in their own rigid classification system in order to keep the troubling doubts they harbor. If Americans were truly comfortable with the modern industrial state their nation was rapidly becoming, why would they flock to a form of entertainment that celebrated its antithesis—the violence, wildness, and even savagery of the frontier? American society's pressing need to impose order on the world with a simplistic binary nomenclature perhaps reflects that society's unspoken fear that the boundary is at best blurry—that residual savagery animates the thoughts and actions of the supposedly civilized.

Indeed, the Boxers were not alone in resisting modernity at century's end. As a new corporate order shaped life in the United States, Americans lived in a world that was increasingly rationalized, mechanized, sedentary, and clerical. Though this lifestyle possessed advantages, many felt enervated, flaccid, and less alive as the result of what some termed "overcivilization." Though this malaise could afflict anyone, white American men in particular felt susceptible. They feared that the rapidly developing civilization no longer required or valued the

"manly" traits that had been so essential to its founding. Theodore Roosevelt and others even saw a potential crisis looming in the offing.[3] What if the tremendous stores of restless energy and manly vigor that had helped to build the modern industrial state were diminished by the ease, comforts, and amenities afforded by the same state? In the end, the crowning achievement of American civilization would be, tragically, to create the conditions for its own decline.

To solve the coming crisis preemptively, President Theodore Roosevelt exhorted "civilized" men to seek physical, psychological, and spiritual renewal through beneficial encounters with the "savage." The history of the frontier presented ample evidence in support of this theory as, for nearly a century, the process of exploring, conquering, and settling the West had provided white Americans with salutary confrontations with "savagery"—forbidding terrain, wild animals, and hostile Indians. Not surprisingly, the perceived closing of the frontier at century's end prompted some to pose a poignant question: where could Americans now go to find such confrontations and forestall the nation's slide into a vulnerable, over-civilized state?

Buffalo Bill supplied the answer. Though the traditional role of the Wild West had always been to mythologize the epic frontier chapter in American history, in 1901 the traveling show did more than just capitalize on the nation's nostalgia for a bygone era. The various acts depicting the heroic West and the grand finale set in the "barbarous" East came together in one program, producing a synergy of substantial propagandistic force. If the former implicitly raised the unsettling question, "where can men find a suitable proving ground now that the frontier has vanished?" the latter provided the answer: by continuing west across the Pacific. Whereas the conventional acts in the Wild West represented Cody's attempt to superimpose a romantic mythology over the past, "The Rescue at Pekin" offered a future with an aggressive vision: the civilizing mission which had begun in the West could be extended to the Far East, and Chinese Boxers could serve as "new" Indians. "Buffalo Bill's Wild West," observed one journalist, "has extended so far west that it has met the east, and . . . has absorbed the orient."[4]

This article is certainly not the first to connect the Wild West to American empire.[5] Nor is it the first to discuss the difficulties many Americans experienced in adjusting to modernity.[6] It is the first, however, to study this battle reenactment set in China. More importantly, this article attempts to draw meaning from the unconventional behavior of audiences. It is the central argument here that, in open-air arenas across the nation, audiences seized upon a reenactment intended *to be seen* and converted it to a ritual *to be enacted*. My understanding of ritual comes from the anthropologist Victor Turner, who wrote extensively about the role of rite-of-passage rituals in society during difficult transitional stages, such as the progression from adolescence to adulthood. According to Turner, the cultural work of these rituals takes place during a "liminal" period, a transient time of altered consciousness in which the structures organizing a society temporarily fall away. In the absence of structure, rituals provide a creative zone in which people can resolve conflicts in the transition to the next life stage. This article

contends that audience members may have used the "The Rescue at Pekin" as a rite-of-passage ritual that helped them reconcile their fondness for their rugged past with their necessary participation in the modern industrial state that America was fast becoming.[7]

Buffalo Bill, The Fading West, and Rising Modernity

Before discussing "The Rescue at Pekin," we must first situate William Cody in his historical context. At the close of the nineteenth century, two vastly different American eras rubbed against one another almost like tectonic plates: the "closing of the frontier" and rise of the modern industrial state. Cody is intriguing because, more than any of his contemporaries, he seemed to straddle the two historical eras, rather than inhabiting one or the other. Though one might judge his position to be precarious, he managed to keep a foothold in both and even appeared to find creative inspiration in the great friction and instability produced by epochal change.

His Wild West show enjoyed its success in an era of tremendous economic growth, massive industrialization, and startling technological advances. As farms became increasingly mechanized and less dependent on human labor, large numbers of Americans looking for work headed to cities where populations swelled. In urban environments, factories enjoyed surging productivity; between 1870 and 1900, the nation's industrial output increased 500 percent. With electric lighting, indoor wash closets, breakthroughs in medicine, and the consummation of a national network of telegraph, telephone, and rail lines, quality of life for some Americans reached unprecedented levels. Pleased with these accomplishments, many toasted the remarkable progress of the day. On December 31, 1899, a *New York Times* editorial summed up this hopeful spirit: "We step on the threshold of 1900 . . . facing a still brighter dawn for human civilization." But beneath the optimism ran a counter current that resembled a vague dissatisfaction with modern life. Many Americans described themselves not as full of "vim and vigor" but rather as tired, weakened, and lacking in vitality—symptoms they attributed to the overcivilized nature of their lives.[8]

American men in particular understood their country as going through a difficult transition, and they were not entirely sure they approved of the changes. While they saw that manly vigor had been necessary to establish a strong civilization, it was now evolving into something much more feminine that threatened their manhood. The historian Elliot Gorn recently put into words the sorts of questions that vexed men at century's end: "Where would a sense of maleness come from for the worker who sat at a desk all day? How could one be manly without independence? Where was virility to be found in increasingly faceless bureaucracies? How might clerks or salesmen feel masculine doing 'women's work'? What became of rugged individualism inside intensively rationalized corporations?"[9] Along with work, culture itself had seemingly lost its manly edge. According to Ann Douglas, between 1820 and 1875, American

culture underwent a startling process of "feminization" that transformed literature, religion, and home life. In sum, to many Americans, manliness seemed to be increasingly outmoded in a culture "bent on establishing a permanent Mother's Day."[10]

This malaise helped drive the dime-novel craze. In the production and consumption of dime novels, we find, respectively, both a cause of the malaise and temporary relief from its symptoms. In 1901, the publishing house, Street & Smith, began to churn out weekly editions of *Buffalo Bill Stories*, a dime-novel series based very loosely on the frontier life of William Cody.[11] Writers received around $50 for a printable story but no credit for the final product; understandably, most opted not to wait for the muse to bring literary inspiration. In this environment, William Wallace Cook became the quintessential dime-novel writer: prolific, imaginative, and fast. He managed his time in a fashion that would have impressed Frederick Winslow Taylor, the progenitor of "scientific management" in industry. To maximize his output, Cook sped up some stages of the writing process and eliminated others altogether. For instance, early in his career, he stopped writing drafts in order to save time. At his peak, he could churn out two 30,000-word stories a week and sustain this pace for several months. Noting that his vocation resembled more manufacturing than artistic creation, Cook amusingly referred to it as "the fiction factory."[12]

Though the production side of *Buffalo Bill Stories* offered no respite from rationalized modern society, consumption of these works offered a degree of liberation. Dime novels owed much of their tremendous appeal to the imaginative escape they brought to individuals afflicted by the doldrums of overcivilization.[13] City dwellers read thrilling tales about western heroes and their rugged lives in the wilderness. In these stories, even the Chinese, who were far more often reviled in the period's popular fiction, partook of the opportunities to cultivate manly traits and heroism afforded by the frontier.[14] In one such story, a Chinese character named Yellow Hand (Figure 1) dresses in buckskins and moccasins, shoots a rifle with deadly accuracy, presides over an Indian tribe as its chief, and even saves Buffalo Bill's life. In behavior and appearance, Yellow Hand fits the model of the traditional frontier hero, first made popular by James Fenimore Cooper's literary creation, Leatherstocking.[15]

In another dime novel from the series, Buffalo Bill saves the life of a Chinese laundry man, Lung Hi, as a group of miners are about to hang him by his queue after falsely accusing him of stealing their gold. Realizing he owes his life to Buffalo Bill, Lung Hi vows to act faithfully as Bill's servant until he can repay the debt. At this point, readers probably expected the Chinese character to personify femininity—with his "girlish" queue, his job cleaning men's clothes, and his servile relationship to the manly Buffalo Bill. To the astonishment of both readers and Buffalo Bill, however, Lung Hi brings to the partnership all the manly attributes prized in the West. Back in China, Lung Hi had earned renown as a warrior during the Taiping Rebellion. In the United States, he added dexterity with American firearms to his already formidable arsenal of fighting skills: "He

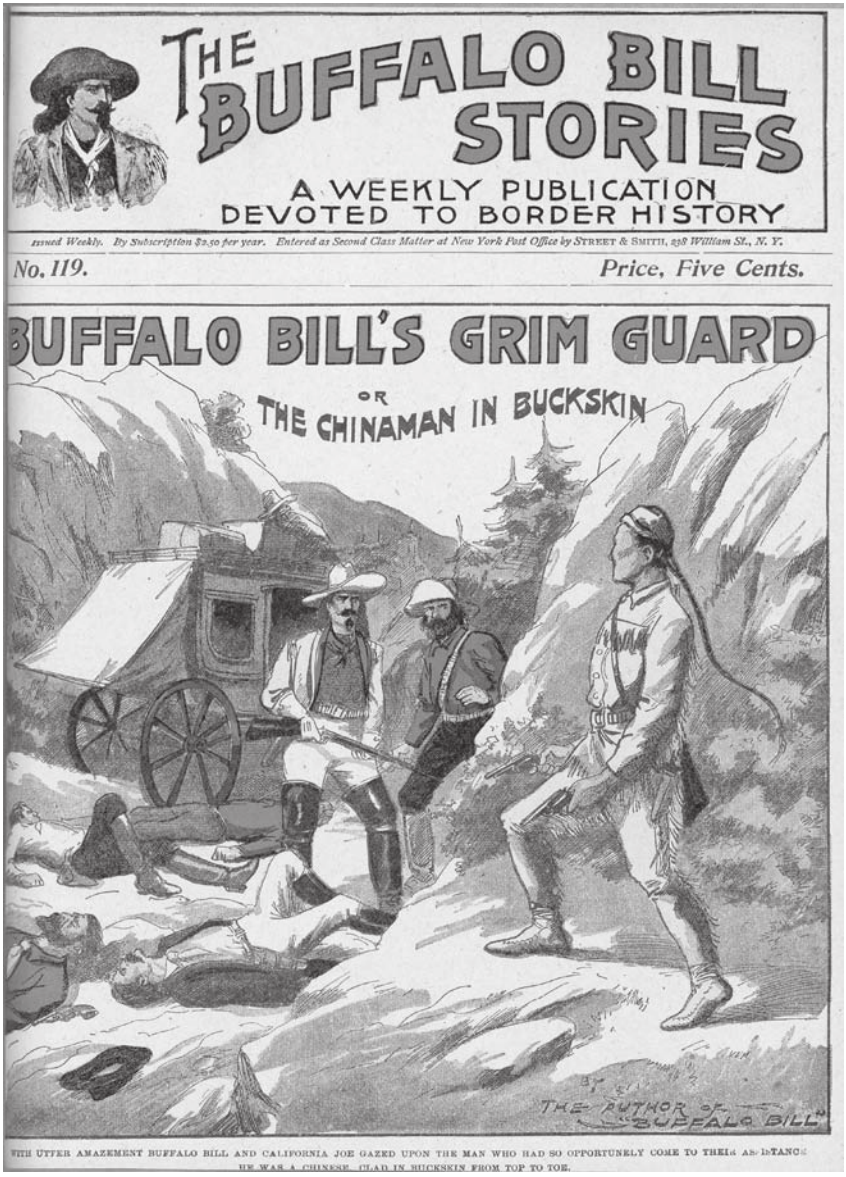

Figure 1: "Buffalo Bill's Grim Guard, or the Chinaman in Buckskin," *Buffalo Bill Stories*, August 22, 1903. McCracken Research Library, Buffalo Bill Historical Center.

. . . kept his Chinese dress, but he was fully armed, with rifle, cartridge belt and two huge revolvers, to say nothing of a tremendous knife with a blade fully two feet long." In a buffalo hunt, Lung Hi proves his manliness in the face of life-threatening peril:

> He let the reins of his horse go flying, and urged the animal along by voice and spur. Drawing his tremendous knife from its sheath, he whirled it around his head, giving vent to a series of loud yells. . . . He soon caught up with the rearmost of the herd, a fine bull, and edged up alongside until his galloping horse almost touched the flank of the huge beast. Bending over, Lung Hi gave a yell louder than ever and plunged his knife deep into the body of the buffalo with a skill worthy of a Spanish matador. The buffalo staggered in its stride, but the wound was not a mortal one. As Lung Hi drew out the knife it turned and swiftly charged upon him. It was a moment of deadly peril for the Chinaman, but he didn't lose his head. On the contrary he showed a skill in horsemanship that would not have been unworthy of Buffalo Bill himself. Pressing the flank of his horse with his knee, he made the animal turn neatly and just dodged the charge of the infuriated bull. As the latter thundered past, he stabbed it again with his long knife, which this time went deep into the heart, killing it instantly.

Later in the story, Lung Hi kills a Kiowa warrior, just as the latter is about to hack Buffalo Bill to death with his tomahawk. In the world of dime novels, even a Chinese immigrant could use the west as a manly proving ground.[16]

In addition to reading dime novels, American men also turned to Buffalo Bill's Wild West show for an antidote to the constraining and feminizing aspects of modern life. A ticket to the show meant more than a few hours away from work; it granted one access to a different kind of space, one set off from the quotidian world, and one that celebrated virtues associated with an earlier time: rugged individualism and the martial spirit. The Wild West, wrote the artist, Frederick Remington, offers a "harmless protest against the Derby hat and the starched linens—those horrible badges of the slavery of our modern social system, when men are physically figures, and mental and moral cogwheels and wastes of uniformity—where the greatest crime is to be individual, and the unpardonable sin is to be out of fashion."[17] For the same reason, Mark Twain became a fan. Towards the end of the century, Twain led a life in the northeast that was largely tranquil, contained, and domesticated, and in stark contrast to his adventurous earlier years, especially those out West during the Civil War. In a letter written to Cody, Twain explained how the show "stirred me like a war song" and reminded him of his former "wild life." For Remington, Twain, and

countless others, Buffalo Bill's brand of entertainment offered a man the chance to break free, if only temporarily, from the restraints of modern civilization.[18]

For other Americans, Cody's Wild West seemed to offer the template for individual and national rejuvenation. In 1901, the *New York Evening Sun* dubbed those in the Wild West "exemplars of the strenuous life," in reference to the famous philosophy of manly reinvigoration espoused by Theodore Roosevelt. Designed to preserve old-fashioned masculinity in a rapidly modernizing world, the "strenuous life" prized patriotism, self-reliance, rugged experiences in the natural world, dexterity with horses and firearms, and bravery in armed combat. Interestingly, Roosevelt believed not only that individual men needed to embrace his formula for their own good, but also that the overall health of the country was tied to their success or failure: "As it is with the individual, so it is with the nation." Indeed, if the wrong type of man were to proliferate—"The timid man, the lazy man . . . the over-civilized man, who has lost the great fighting, masterful virtues"—the United States would lose out in the high-stakes global contest to determine which nation would achieve "the domination of the world."[19]

Though that would, of course, be a shame in Roosevelt's view, a far worse fate awaited countries that failed to encourage militarism in its citizens. In his essay, "Expansion and Peace" (1899), Roosevelt posited the paradox that world peace depended on the willingness of great civilizations to constantly wage war. "It is only the warlike power of a civilized people," he wrote, "that can give peace to the world." When civilized nations become "overpeaceful," they lose their "great fighting qualities" and become susceptible to attack by the "barbarian" peoples of the earth. Though a given civilization may exist as a shining embodiment of progress, if it failed to cultivate martial prowess in its male subjects, it could lose confrontations with "savage" peoples. In Roosevelt's mind, the consequences were dire: as advanced civilizations were overrun by savage nations, the world would descend into a prolonged "period of chaotic barbarian warfare." To forestall this nightmarish scenario, it was incumbent upon civilized peoples to maintain their "fighting instinct" by relentlessly advancing armies into "the red wastes where the barbarian peoples of the world hold sway." Thus, in Roosevelt's world view, the well-being of the individual and the viability of the state were inextricably bound: both depended upon men who were willing to seek regeneration through violence and war.[20]

With many Americans sharing Roosevelt's opinion about real battles, the sort of mock battles performed by the Wild West understandably assumed a prominent role in society. Echoing Roosevelt, a reporter for the *Louisville Courier-Journal* praised Cody's "teachings in the art of war" for their practical rather than their entertainment value: "The stirring events of the past three years have shown that virility of martial manhood in its highest state of trained perfection is a necessity to the safety of the state, and that it plays a winning hand in the crisis of sudden and unexpected emergency."[21] According to this reporter, "martial manhood" was still relevant, as recent wars in Cuba, the Philippines, and now China clearly showed. Along with providing entertainment, the Wild West performed a vital

educational service to the nation by demonstrating the manly traits and fighting skills that underpinned successful military engagements around the world.

The foreign wars to which the Louisville reporter alluded were of immense importance to William Cody, for they allowed him to reorient the Wild West at century's end. Without these wars, he could offer little more than a moving museum of Western history that would appeal to Americans' collective nostalgia for the past. In fact, Major John Burke, the publicity agent for the Wild West, wrote in the 1893 edition show program that the frontiersman is "rapidly disappearing from our country" and that the Wild West was presenting a "history almost passed away."[22] That same year in Chicago, historian Frederick Jackson Turner delivered his famous paper at the American Historical Association meeting "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." The World's Fair in Chicago, the Columbian Exposition, through its architecture and exhibits, offered a utopian vision for the coming century based on civil order, the wonders of the machine, continued industrial growth, unprecedented agricultural abundance, and a dazzling array of consumer goods.[23]

With this glorious vision of modern civilization serving as his backdrop, Turner both announced the close of the frontier and posited a theory as to its impact on the American character: "The frontier has gone," he said, "and with its going has closed the first period of American history." After defining the frontier as "the meeting point between savagery and civilization," Turner argued that civilization's prolonged friction with the "savage" (hostile Indians and untamed wilderness) had fundamentally altered the American character, which now possessed "coarseness and strength," a "practical inventive turn of mind," "restless, nervous energy," and "dominant individualism."[24] Though William Cody was present in Chicago (the Wild West performed at a venue adjacent to the World's Fair), he almost certainly did not hear Turner speak. Yet if he had, he would probably have agreed with Turner that the frontier had altered the American character in a profound and, in Cody's view, beneficial way. Yet Cody would also have judged this theory to be lacking in novelty, given that he had for many years advertised himself as the perfect embodiment of the traits Turner enumerated. Though some of Cody's biographers have challenged his frontier credentials, all scholars agree that he was masterful in cultivating his public image.[25] For example, in the Wild West's program for 1886, Cody presented himself as "the representative man of the frontiersman of the past . . . Young, sturdy, a remarkable specimen of manly beauty, with the brain to conceive and the nerve to execute, Buffalo Bill *par excellence* is the exemplar of the strong and unique traits that characterize *a true American frontiersman*."[26] Yet a question Cody might have posed to himself concerned the continued relevance of these traits. What good were self-reliance, horsemanship, marksmanship, and rugged masculinity in the ascendant civilization celebrated at the Exposition?

Towards the century's end, the foreign wars of the United States allowed Cody to revive the show's core mission. In particular, an event that took place in the summer of 1900 halfway around the world in Asia seized Cody's attention.

It involved American soldiers battling in a distant land against a hostile group that resisted Western ideas, institutions, and technologies. In short, it was a military contest pitting the forces of "civilization" against those of "savagery," reminiscent of the Anglo-Indian confrontations of North America. And in Cody's eyes, these American soldiers were applying the exact set of traits and skills that frontiersmen had employed successfully in the West. The event captivated Cody, and he watched events unfold from afar with more than just a casual interest.

The Rise and Fall of the Boxers

When Roosevelt expressed his fear that a failure of martial manhood would consign the United States to a vulnerable state of effeteness, he had in mind another nation's sad fate. China, he wrote, had allowed itself to enjoy "a career of unwarlike and isolated ease," and now was paying a stiff penalty: "to go down before other nations which have not lost the manly and adventurous qualities."[27] Roosevelt was correct in that China had become militarily weak and that stronger nations were exploiting that vulnerability for commercial gain. At century's end, China was teeming with foreigners from Europe, the United States, and Japan. Roosevelt, however, was wrong in assuming that all Chinese people had lost the will or the ability to fight.

In 1898, a violent anti-foreign movement called the "Boxers United in Righteousness" began to brew in Shandong Province, an agricultural region wracked by floods, drought, locust swarms, and banditry. The misery and discontent generated by these blights transformed the region into a fecund breeding ground for a popular movement. It was the increasing visibility of foreigners and their industrial projects, however, that ultimately lit the fuse of this powder keg. For along with age-old afflictions, Chinese peasants now contended with new phenomena—missions, railroads, mines, and telegraphs—which they could only understand using an interpretative framework rooted in older Chinese religions, beliefs, practices, and superstitions.[28]

When missionaries erected churches, many local residents believed that these conflicted with the geomantic principles of *feng shui* and therefore brought bad luck to the community. In fact, a sign posted on street corners by the Boxers pointed directly to a causal relationship between the foreign presence and unfavorable meteorological conditions: "No rain comes from Heaven, / The earth is parched and dry. / And all because the churches / Have bottled up the sky."[29] Furthermore, when missionaries took in orphans, many Chinese concocted wild stories about how the children were mutilated so that their organs could be used in strange Western medicines and elixirs. Along with Western religion, Western industrial projects also provoked bewilderment and fright among the Chinese. Under foreign supervision, railroads were constructed and mines were dug without regard to cemeteries, causing many Chinese to believe that their dead ancestors had been rudely disturbed. Finally, few rural Chinese grasped either the purpose of or the scientific principles involved in the thousands of miles

of telegraph lines that crisscrossed the countryside. And since an eerie sound reverberated from the wires, some people viewed them as demon highways conveying evil spirits.[30]

It was out of this combustible environment of flux, hardship, and volatility that the Boxers emerged. The movement was steeped in superstition, with members engaging in a strange practice called Spirit Possession. By using a ritual to enter into a trance-like state, Boxers believed they could induce a spirit to enter their bodies, rendering them invulnerable to bullets. Much like the Ghost Dance of the Sioux, Spirit Possession sought to counteract the material superiority of western arms by summoning a higher spiritual power. And to the consternation of foreigners, the Boxers began to focus their rage on them, with railroads, telegraph systems, and missionaries residing in outlying villages initially the target of hostility. The Boxers harassed missionaries, destroyed their property, and killed many of their converts. They stoned and spat on Pearl Buck's father, Absalom Sydenstricker, as he preached the Gospel on the street. And in one chilling incident, Boxers tied him to a post and forced him to watch as a mob tortured to death a Chinese woman who was among his converted.[31]

The Boxer Movement rose in response to a distressing change in the environment and a perceived external threat. Anthropologist Anthony Wallace's theory of revitalization movements is applicable. Wallace first developed his theory to explain the near cultural death and subsequent rejuvenation of the Seneca Indians of upstate New York. Though he cited the Boxer Uprising (along with the Ghost Dance) as an example of revitalization, he did not study that specific movement.[32]

Revitalization theory best describes the movement. Periodically, the way of life of a group (a community, tribe, or nation) is disrupted by a massive change, one perhaps precipitated by disease, economic collapse, defeat in war, climate change, or the encroachment of aggressive Western cultures. As levels of stress rise, members of the group begin to lose faith in the ability of their present "cultural system" to bring about desirable or at least acceptable outcomes. If stress reaches intolerable levels, the group is jarred out of its "steady state," and may eventually become open to a charismatic leader's radical plan for revitalization. The plan, which the leader usually claims came during a moment of divine "inspiration or revelation," can take several forms. A "cargo cult" is designed to import the methods of a successful outside culture. In stark contrast, "nativistic movements" attempt to purge alien persons, customs, values, as these are perceived as the source of disturbance. The "revivalistic" variety is aimed at restoring the lost or forgotten customs and values of previous generations. The Boxer Movement exhibited what Wallace called "syncretism;" it tried both to revive old systems of beliefs ("revivalistic") and eliminate foreigners ("nativistic"). If adroitly conceived and carried out, a revitalization movement will yield a new steady state. If not, the results could be "suicidal" for the members of the movement. Such was the fate of the Boxers, whose violent prescription for cultural renewal eventually provoked the western powers.

At first, that response was slow to come. Though terrorized missionaries repeatedly sent alarming reports to the diplomats who worked in the foreign legations in Peking, these were not taken seriously. It was not until the Boxers began to converge on the capital that the diplomats realized their impending peril. Despite requests from diplomats, the Qing Government did not act to protect the foreigners and suppress the Boxers because the movement held some appeal for the paramount ruler, the Empress Dowager Cixi, and some members of her court. They were relieved that this movement, unlike previous ones, was anti-foreign in orientation and not anti-dynastic. Indeed, the slogan around which the Boxers rallied summed up their position quite clearly: "support the Qing, destroy the foreign!" If the Boxer movement were to be crushed, foreign armies would have to carry out the objective without reliable Qing assistance.[33]

Though this scenario did take place, the situation reached crisis proportions before foreign governments acted to intervene militarily. On June 19, 1900, the Boxers laid siege to the foreign legations, trapping 473 foreign civilians, 400 military personnel (including a unit of American marines), and some 3,000 Chinese converts to Christianity. Since the Boxers also destroyed the railroad tracks and telegraph lines emanating out of Peking, the beleaguered people could not contact the outside world. With limited quantities of food and ammunition, they waited behind their barricades for outside assistance to arrive.[34] With the situation growing increasingly dire, the foreign powers dispatched military forces to Tientsin (Tianjin). On August 4, a foreign expeditionary column of about 20,000 soldiers from various nations, including 1,700 Americans from the Philippines, commenced the long trek to Peking. The multinational force left a trail of devastation in its wake. James Ricalton, an American photographer who sought the "strenuous life" in China, followed the allied force and witnessed events firsthand. Describing Tientsin after the allies' departure, Ricalton wrote that the "great city" was "sacked, looted, and in ashes, by Christian armies" and transformed into "a holocaust of human life."[35]

Arriving in the capital in mid-August, the military column separated into individual national armies. A rather bizarre competition then ensued: which country's troops could scale Peking's walls, push back the enemy, and reach the Legations first? The Russian unit approached the city wall first, but there it stalled as it met with stiff Boxer opposition. Though the Americans easily scaled the wall, they promptly found themselves engaged in street combat inside the city. After several hours of fighting, they broke into the legations, only to find the Union Jack fluttering in the breeze. Facing only scant Boxer resistance, the British had beaten the Americans by about two hours.[36]

Thus, on August 14, 1900, the allies successfully lifted the Boxer siege. From the perspective of those trapped in the legations, the dreaded massacre had been prevented. Back in the United States, most Americans viewed the military intervention as necessary. In fact, even those who objected to imperialism in general, and the Spanish-American War in particular, favored the government's decision to send troops to China. In their opinion, this specific use of force,

intended to rescue the legations, did not constitute imperialism at all. The cover of *Harper's Weekly* (July 28, 1900) perfectly illustrated this view. By depicting the Boxers as blood-thirsty savages and the United States as a noble civilization, the visual image obviated any need to answer the question posed in the title, "Is this Imperialism?" (Figure 2).

Yet for Chinese civilians living in Peking, the line separating civilization from savagery was less clear. After the Boxers had been vanquished, bands of allied soldiers looted the city, brutalized defenseless citizens, and raped Chinese women. Though the Americans did not participate as much in this kind of behavior as the Russians and French, they were not entirely innocent. An American marine captain later admitted that his battalion had joined in the looting. "[D]uring the excitement of the campaign," he said, "you do things that you yourself would be the first to criticize in the tranquil security of home."[37] To James Ricalton, the allied response often matched the Boxer Uprising in savagery. The "Boxer uprising was stupid and barbarous," he wrote, but the "retaliation by the so-called

Figure 2: "Is this Imperialism?" *Harper's Weekly*, July 28, 1900.

Christian armies was often characterized by rape, plunder, cruelty, and enormous indemnities dictated by allied might." China, he wrote, received "a lesson in the ethics of Christian armies she will not soon forget."[38] George Lynch, a journalist for the British *Daily Express*, was equally outraged by what he saw. "There are things that I must not write, and that may not be printed in England," he wrote, "which would seem to show that Western civilization . . . is merely a veneer over our savagery."[39]

"The Rescue at Pekin"

In the summer of 1900, the protracted siege by the Boxers and the successful international relief effort dominated the headlines until the Galveston Hurricane replaced it. That autumn, William Cody broached an idea to his business partner, Nate Salsbury. Why not include a reenactment of the allied victory in the coming edition of the show? The two men promptly arranged for "The Rescue at Pekin," an elaborate spectacle that would stir the hearts of spectators with patriotism, awe them with its gigantism, and overload their senses with its colorful pageantry, thrilling action, incessant gun firing, and booming pyrotechnical explosions.

In April of 1901, this edition of the Wild West debuted in New York. After a two-week engagement in Madison Square Garden, the troupe embarked on a barnstorming tour of the United States, a series of mostly one-night stands that lasted well into October.[40] Two headlines from the *Buffalo Review* captured the in-one-day and out-the-next nature of the tour: "PEKIN RAISED IN A DAY" and "PEKIN THERE TO BE RAZED DAILY."[41] With its performers, animals, props, sets, costumes, technicians, stage hands, tents, and portable electric light plants, the Wild West used railroads to tour, and made stops in almost any city or town with a railway station. By the end of the 1901 season, the Wild West had covered several large geographic swaths including the mid-Atlantic region, upstate New York, western Pennsylvania, the upper South, and the eastern parts of the Midwest. For the 1902 season, the Wild West brought essentially the same show not only to Midwestern cities not reached in 1901 but also to the west coast.[42]

Americans came out in droves to see the newest and most anticipated feature of the Wild West, the "The Rescue at Pekin." In their coverage, most newspapers focused on the tremendous turnouts and the attendance records. Since spectators "crammed" the bleachers from the first row to the last, and thousands were turned away at the gate, newspapers admonished readers that the "daily crush at the box office is a pointer to go early." With twice daily shows typically bringing in between 20 and 30 thousand people, the attendance figures often exceeded the populations of the host cities, attracting visitors from neighboring towns and the countryside. Farmers and their families either took excursion trains set up especially for the Wild West Show or started out before sunrise to arrive at the venue well in advance of show time. The *Reading Herald* observed that the country folk began to materialize early in the morning, and before long a "great huddled mass" could be seen milling about.[43]

Since "The Rescue at Pekin" was the most visually spectacular act, Salsbury placed it last in the program as the grand finale. By all accounts, it was indeed an enormous and costly undertaking, requiring 100 horses, large amounts of gunpowder and explosives, the latest in cannons and firearms, and of course the massive wall of Peking that loomed majestically over one end of the arena. Though sources do not agree on the number of performers this spectacle employed, most accounts placed the figure at 500. Clearly, the show was an extravagant and costly affair. Yet Cody and Salsbury knew that the money, manpower, elaborate sets, and explosives were necessary to guarantee the realism of the reenactment. Indeed, Wild West organizers went to great lengths to recreate a convincing battle. To construct the mammoth wall of Peking, Cody and Salsbury instructed their designers to consult actual photographs taken in China's capital.[44] To further augment the realism, they secured veterans from several of the allied divisions that had served in China and equipped these men with real uniforms and up-to-date weaponry.[45] This commitment to authenticity apparently achieved the desired effect since newspapers across the country praised the show by drawing from the following pool of words and phrases: "genuineness," "realism," "truthful," "accurate," "realistic as to detail and accuracy," "faithful adherence to historical accuracy," "kept pace with history," and "realistic reproduction."[46] It "is cheaper and cooler," explained an impressed reporter from Chicago, "to see [warfare] this way then to go to . . . China."[47]

Despite its own claims of authenticity, "The Rescue at Pekin" was an amalgam. It combined real soldiers, uniforms, guns, and props with a largely fictional narrative of events in China. Before the performance started, audience members could read in the program an account that glorified the allied army and reduced a complex event to the simple clash between civilization and savagery. "The greatest historic event of 1900," the program proclaimed, "was China's amazingly audacious affront to the civilized world, by her barbaric attack upon" the Legations. The program dismissed the Boxer movement as "simply a savage, unreasoning and uncompromising hostility to foreigners."[48] Absent in the account was any mention of the allies' brutal behavior that would have blurred the boundary between civilization and savagery.

Like the program, the performance offered an idealized vision of warfare in which the battlefield became a locus of gallantry, adventure, and daring deeds. Two scenes comprised the production, the first in Tientsin and the second in Peking, with the towering wall representing the fortifications of both cities. In the first scene, the troops from the several allied nations assemble outside the walls of Tientsin; as each international unit files into the arena, it marches to its national anthem and carries its national colors. "It is indeed a superb sight," observed a journalist from Reading, Pennsylvania, "to witness the assembling of the troops from the different countries, in one allied army, to release from the tortures of the Chinese the members of their legation, who, being imprisoned behind the massive walls, await with fear the verdict of death to be rendered against them."[49] Once the knights of civilization finish displaying their plumage,

the commanders take leave of their troops to formulate strategy. In the meantime, the men indulge in sports and pastimes, including a live pig chase, designed "to show the fraternal spirit that actuated all the allies in…the campaign." In Warsaw, Indiana, the pig stole the show by eluding his pursuers and heading straight for the V.I.P. box occupied by the governor and his wife. Greatly amused, the audience "arose en masse" to applaud the courageous animal.[50] These games continue until the sounding of the bugle interrupts the levity and ushers in a tone of high seriousness, as "all are animated by the stir of war."[51] At this point, the men head for the exits to prepare for the second scene.

During the interlude, audience members could consult their programs to read about the allied army's expedition to Peking. Included in this narrative was the Battle of Yangcun, which took place on the second day of the trek. In the program's account, the American troops marched 15 miles despite a temperature so "stifflingly hot" and airborne dust so "choking" that many were "dropping with fatigue." However, there was no rest for the weary, as suddenly "there came a burst of rifle shots from the enemy's trenches." Though the Boxer attack caught the men off guard, they do not accept defeat:

> "Get the day's work over before dark, boys!" shouted a sergeant, and with a yell they charged straight at the trenches, their fatigue forgotten, the lust of battle shining in their eyes. This was more than the Chinese were prepared for. . . . A goodly number [of the Boxers] were relieved of the embarrassment of the situation by the fierce men in khaki sending them to join their ancestors, and those not so disposed of scrambled and scurried out of the trenches and behind the wall . . . Then . . . Imperial soldiers and "Boxers" alike threw away their weapons and ran, like scared coyotes, away northward and when last seen were only vanishing points on the horizon line.

This account is partly correct. The allies did win the Battle of Yangcun despite insufferable dust, temperatures soaring to 105°F, and fainting spells among the troops. The account errs, however, by failing to note that most of the artillery fire directed at the Americans came not from the Boxers, who apparently fled after putting up only modest resistance, but from a nearby Russian unit. Thus, most casualties resulted from friendly fire.[52]

Aside from the factual errors, one should also note that the account reads like a dime novel. First of all, the language in the above passage is cocky, insouciant, jocular, and not without its own brash sense of humor. For instance, instead of "killed," the Chinese are sent "to join their ancestors."[53] Second, most dime novels have a certain frontier flavor stemming from the genre's rise to popularity with stories set in the American west, and this passage is no different. Like the over-matched Indians of western stories, the Chinese here throw down their weapons, run "like scared coyotes" (a species indigenous to the North American

west, not coastal China), and "when last seen were only vanishing points on the horizon line." Third, the program utilizes a common dime-novel formula: that of a dramatic resurgence from men who are down-but-not-out. The allied troops, at their most vulnerable from heat and exhaustion, face a surprise attack from the enemy. Roused by the sergeant's stirring call to action—"Get the day's work over before dark, boys!"—the "fierce men in khaki" show their grit by rallying to deal the Chinese army a convincing defeat. One might expect to find the same basic plot in one of the many dime novels centered around Yale football involving Frank Merriwell.[54] In this way, the program amounted to a hybrid document, one that combined certain attributes of the historical genre with the style, tone, and formulas commonly found in the dime novel. Since the Wild West enjoyed a lucrative business relationship with Street & Smith, publisher of *Buffalo Bill Stories*, one of that company's stable of authors could easily have penned the program.

Meanwhile, on the arena floor, the setting switches to Peking. The audience watches as Boxer soldiers man the wall of Peking, prepare their Gatling gun, and raise the Chinese flag, which a New York reporter called "the royal standard of Paganism floating defiant of the Christian world." Other Boxer soldiers assume battle-ready positions in front of the fortifications. Hidden from the audience, the allied soldiers who have recently exited the arena join hundreds more for the climactic final engagement: the storming of the walls of Peking. They silently congregate around the front and side entrances to the arena and await the signal.[55]

When that signal comes, calmness gives way to mayhem as the allied armies stream into the arena from several different points, whooping and hollering and discharging their weapons in the general direction of the Chinese. The mock battle has begun. For audiences, it must have been an exhilarating moment and, with the amount of gunpowder and explosives expended, a deafening one as well. A reporter with the *Allentown Chronicle* wrote that, "with the rattle of musketry and machine guns, the blazing of red fire and the display of pyrotechnics, the feature proved most interesting." The *New York Herald* reported that "Powder was burned with a reckless extravagance." In fact, the noise was so loud inside Madison Square Garden that it drowned out a program of lectures being delivered at the neighboring Garden Theater.[56]

As the Chinese Gatling gun at the top of the wall "spat spitefully above the din," allied soldiers fall from gunshot wounds. As they are carried off the arena floor, tearful wails can be heard from members of the emotionally involved audience. But it is the Chinese who suffer the greatest casualties, and part of the audience's pleasure undoubtedly comes from seeing them overwhelmed by the better-trained and better-equipped allies. A reporter from Elmira wrote that the Chinese soldiers "are duly slaughtered to the tuneful uproar of Gatling guns, cannons, and a host of small arms." "The Boxers," wrote the *New York Sun,* "fire blank cartridges and fall dead at the proper intervals." Cody himself described the Boxers' role as allowing "themselves to be mowed down by machine guns." As mock battles go, this one is emphatically one-sided.[57]

As the reenactment approaches its climax, all eyes in the arena turn to the wall of Peking (Figure 3). With victory now a foregone conclusion, the show derives its suspense from an intramural contest within the multinational force: which country's men will be the first to scale the wall, enter the legations, and garner the glory of replacing the Chinese flag with its own colors? Units from England and the United States are the first to reach the towering structure and commence the task of climbing it. And as was *not* historically the case in China, where the British reached the legations first, in the Wild West's version the honors go to the Americans.

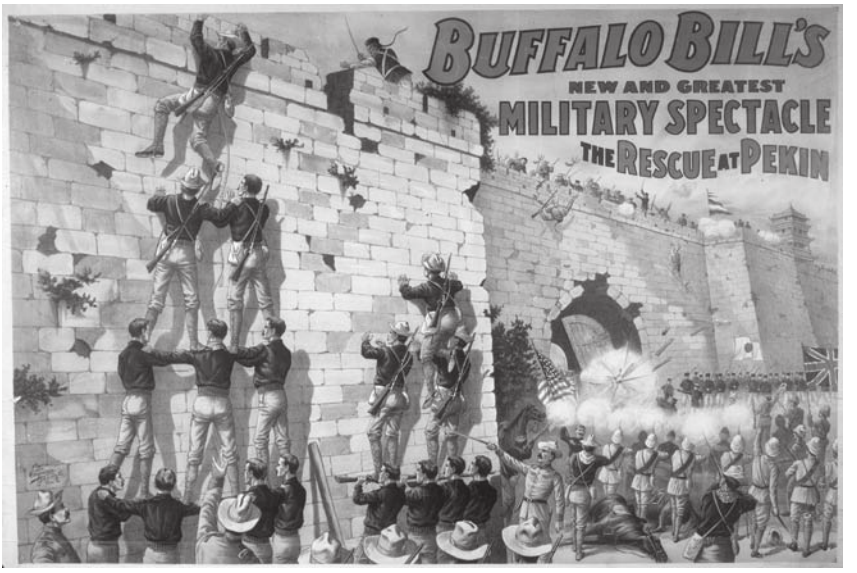

Figure 3: Wild West poster. Courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

On the issue of realism, a few reporters faulted the Wild West for omitting important facts. "If this portrayal," wrote a New York journalist, "only wound up with a scene of murder and looting on the part of some of our foreign allies it would have been far more interesting and instructive than it is."[58] That said, only a small minority seemed to mind. The thrilling, albeit inaccurate, conclusion would typically elicit a huge roar of approval from the audience. "The spectators rose in delight," wrote the *New York Journal*, "when the Americans scaled the wall ahead of the allies."[59] The changing of flags, stated the *Evansville Courier*, "caused the vast assemblage to cheer and wave handkerchiefs, hats and umbrellas."[60] An exuberant reporter in Baltimore summed up the performance with unambiguous language: "the allied forces of Christendom were shown as dealing a staggering blow to the Boxer demon of the Orient."[61]

The New Indians

But who was this unfortunate "Boxer demon" who died hundreds of deaths in open-air arenas across the United States? Since the show's commitment to realism demanded the participation of actual Boxer soldiers, Cody and Salsbury considered sending agents to China for recruiting purposes. They never secured actual Chinese fighters, however, for a couple reasons. First, bringing Boxers to the United States was a risky proposition given that only several months had elapsed since the Boxers' defeat. Quite simply, emotional wounds had likely not yet healed. Second, the hiring of authentic Boxer soldiers was not cost-effective. Whereas other members of the troupe, such as the Indian performers, could appear in several different acts, the Chinese could only participate in the "The Rescue at Pekin." Consequently, the Wild West could not afford to invest so much money, time, and effort in recruiting, feeding, housing, and paying soldiers who would appear in a single reenactment.[62]

After ruling out the hiring of genuine Chinese soldiers, Cody settled on a much easier solution. In an article he wrote for *Collier's Weekly* describing a rehearsal, he explained who his Boxers were and what their function was:

> Now we rehearse the battle of Tien-Tsin, the advance of the allies upon Pekin, and the taking of the Celestial City. Our Indians act as our Boxers—for real Boxers were not obtainable—and allow themselves to be mowed down by machine guns. Just as the last Indian-Boxer falls dead on the Great Wall of China, twelve o'clock sounds, and, with it, the bugle calls all hands to the mess-tent for luncheon.

The lot of playing the Chinese ultimately fell to the Sioux Indians already employed by the show. After robbing the Deadwood Stage Coach, the Sioux donned loose-fitting blue-cotton uniforms and attached long braids to the backs of their heads to serve as Chinese queues.[63]

Reporters and Wild West promoters derived great amusement from this substitution. A reporter for the *New York Sun* thought that the Indians were naturals for the role since they were "used to dying" in the show: "They die in the cowboy battles about the emigrant wagon and they die again in the chase of the Deadwood coach. . . . They made no objection to . . . dying the death of Boxers this year." Major Burke stated that "the Indians are a great sight better fighters than the Boxers are," but agreed that they did often land on the "hard luck side of the fights in this show." A reporter for the *New York Evening Sun* employed prevalent Indian stereotypes in joking that the new role required the Indians to suppress their true character. "[T]he Indians behaved beautifully," he wrote. "Some of them seemed a little ill at ease in their Chinese make-up, but they kept themselves entirely in the landscape, positively refused to scalp a single member of the allied forces and never even indulged in so much as the

ghost of a war whoop."[64] Apparently the Indians "behaved beautifully" enough to fool some in attendance. In at least two cities, newspapers printed that Cody had employed actual Chinese people.[65]

Though issues of convenience and cost-efficiency dictated Cody's decision to fill the Boxer roles with Indians, on a metaphorical level this substitution proved to be meaningful. By the 1890s, three decades of Indian wars had largely eliminated Indian tribes as an impediment to the settlement in the west. While white Americans had once characterized Indians as blood-thirsty savages, they increasingly viewed them as noble in defeat. As the photographs of Edward Curtis demonstrate, Rousseau's eighteenth-century concept of the "noble savage" enjoyed a reprisal in a new era. Indeed, Cody himself understood that the Indian wars were over, that the winners and losers had been decided, and that both sides had fought valiantly. For this reason, in 1893, he included a ritual of Anglo-Indian reconciliation in the Wild West.[66] Though the end of the Indian wars qualified as good news for most white Americans, it meant that contests with Indians were no longer available to those seeking tests for their manhood. Thanks in part to these Anglo-Indian conflicts, the frontier had served the nation admirably, many believed, as a massive generator of martial valor, physical fortitude, and rugged manliness. With the Indians defeated, where could white American find beneficial encounters with the "savage"?

While Indians played the Boxers within the Wild West's performance space, in the global context, the Boxers were becoming the *new Indians*—a bold yet unfortunate group that dared to use violence to resist the inexorable march of civilization.[67] In fact, substantial evidence suggests that Americans understood the Boxers by ascribing to them the stereotypical traits once reserved for defiant Indians: cruelty, savagery, and blood-thirstiness. *Leslie's Weekly*, the leader among news agencies in providing Boxer coverage, explicitly made the connection. Both Indians and Chinese, the weekly reported, possessed an "unadulterated fiendishness." Furthermore, Harold Cleveland, who in 1900 wrote a book capitalizing on the nation's fascination with the Boxers (Figure 4), probably found the inspiration for his provocative title, *Massacres of the Christians by the Heathen Chinese and Horrors of the Boxers*, in an earlier work by Henry Davenport Northrop, *Indian Horrors; or, Massacres by the Redmen* (1891).[68]

The Boxers also acquired Indian traits in American cinema. National interest in the Boxer Uprising prompted moving picture studios to hastily produce short films on the subject. Though purportedly shot in China, these pictures were actually filmed in American studios. And since the filmmakers were under great pressure to release their films while China dominated the headlines, they did not take the time to study their subject matter. Instead, they simply recycled familiar stereotypes and plotlines from the extensive lore of Anglo-Indian confrontations. In June of 1900, the Lubin Company filmed *Chinese Massacring the Christians*. In this film, the Boxers batter down the door of a missionary home and force the family outside. One Boxer takes a child by the feet, throws her over his shoulder, and stomps off with his human plunder; a second drags the screaming mother

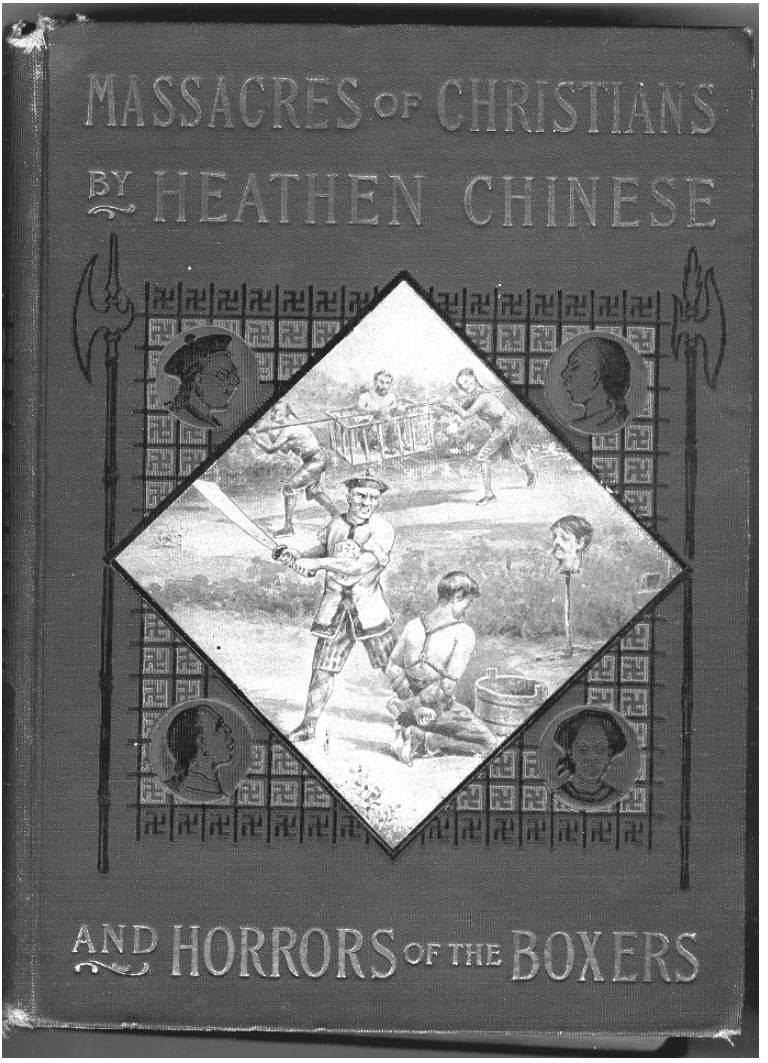

Figure 4: Cover. Harold Cleveland, *Massacres of the Christians by the Heathen Chinese and Horrors of the Boxers* (Chicago: Horace Fry, 1900).

away by her hair, presumably to be raped or murdered; and a third forces the father to kneel before a block and proceeds to decapitate him.[69] In creating this rather simple plot, filmmakers simply appropriated the formulaic western plot of the attack by Indians on a pioneer cabin, which, much like a missionary home in China, stood as a remote outpost of civilization in an otherwise savage land. In fact, previous editions of the Wild West show had included a dramatic rendering

of this stereotypical western story entitled, "The Raid on the Settler's Cabin."[70] As the only major difference, filmmakers replaced the obligatory Indian scalping with a Boxer beheading.

Also in 1900, American Mutoscope and Biograph released *Tortured by Boxers*. At the film's start, two Boxers drag in a white American prisoner, who struggles heroically but in vain to free himself from his captors. They then strip him down to the waist, tie him to a stake, and gleefully build a fire at his feet.[71] This plot probably ringed familiar to anyone who had seen films or read stories about pioneer confrontations with Indians. In fact, we find this archetypal scene in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*. The same studio produced *Rescue of a White Girl from the Boxers* (1900). Here, a Boxer villain materializes out of the shadows wielding a long knife and approaches the innocent "white girl" with malevolent intent. At the last moment, American soldiers rush in to save the damsel from the clutches of her assailant.[72] This film employed the standard western theme, involving the threat to white womanhood posed by Indian savagery. Though the theme appeared repeatedly in literature and art, it found perfect distillation in John Vanderlyn's "The Death of Jane McCrea" (1804) (Figure 5). In all of these moving pictures, filmmakers who knew little about the Boxers arrived at story lines by poaching in areas of popular culture where Indians had previously been depicted. Thus, we see the same blending of Indians and Boxers in film as we do in the Wild West: Indians literally became Boxers by wearing queues, and Boxers figuratively became the new Indians by assuming traits historically imputed to the latter. They were, after all, "used to dying."

A Savage Audience

Imagined similarities aside, one real parallel between Chinese Boxers and one particular tribe of North American Indians involved the use of rituals within larger revitalization movements. As was alluded to earlier, the Spirit Possession of the Boxers resembled in key ways the Ghost Dance of the Sioux, which in 1890 provoked the tragic massacre at Wounded Knee. As part of the Ghost Dance, Sioux dancers donned special ceremonial garments, ghost shirts, painted with sacred symbols. These garments, they believed, possessed a talismanic quality that protected the ritual participants from the bullets of American soldiers and Indian agents. In this way, both Sioux and Boxers invoked a supernatural power during ritual-induced states of altered consciousness to bolster their resistance to encroaching civilizations.[73]

During "The Rescue at Pekin," audiences also worked themselves into a frenzied state, one that is worth describing in detail. Newspaper accounts attest to the reenactment's strange ability to rouse the spirit of bellicosity within spectators. The *Allentown Chronicle* wrote that the "capture of Pekin . . . aroused the fighting blood of the audience to the highest pitch." A reporter for the *Chicago American* claimed that the reenactment "gives you an idea of a real war, as among real men."

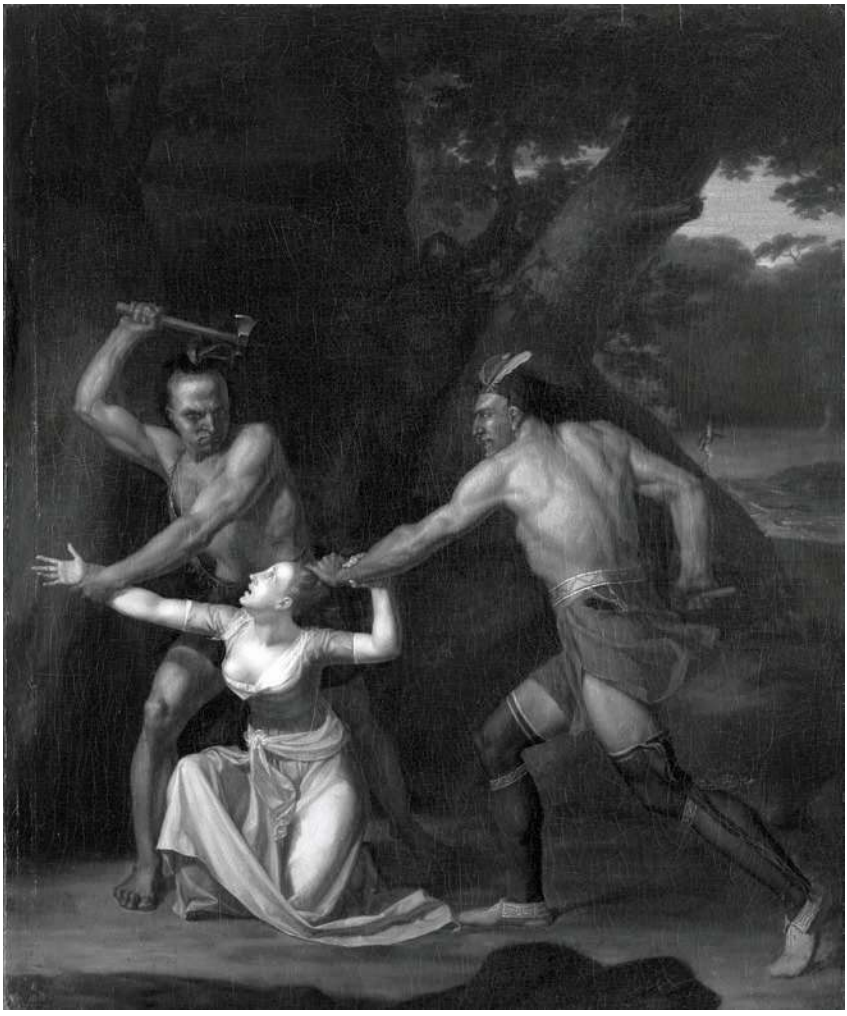

Figure 5: John Vanderlyn, "The Death of Jane McCrea" (1804). Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art. Hartford, Connecticut. Purchased by Subscription.

He also admitted to being physically affected by the "heart sickening rattle of the rapid fire guns." A reporter for the *Waterloo Daily Courier* observed that, with the "crack of the small arms" and the "roar of cannon," the finale was "realistic enough to make the blood in one's veins almost stand still." The *Evening Sun* in New York described the finale as "thunderous and blood curdling." In Pittsburgh a headline captured the audience's crazed desire for a rousing, ear-deafening experience: "WE DEMAND NOISE, AND BUFFALO BILL SUPPLIES THE DEMAND." Indeed, the combination of pyrotechnic explosions, rattling machine

guns, and thrilling combat action seemed to electrify audiences, induce a rapid heart beat, and trigger the flow of adrenaline.[74]

But to what effect? David A. Curtis, writing for the *Criterion* in 1899, asserted that the Wild West's staged warfare roused "the hidden savage" that lay dormant in men. However, once that "savage instinct" was activated, the excited individual found no genuine battle in which he could give expression to his thirst for blood; after all, the "fighting is not real."[75] Curtis's claim notwithstanding, newspaper accounts suggest that audiences, more than merely becoming wildly excited, entered a state of altered consciousness in which staged war became real to them. The *Chicago Record-Herald* noted that the show had delivered "such a good imitation of actual warfare that everybody forgot the time." The reporter from Waterloo described not just the deafening sounds, flashing lights, clouds of smoke, and scenes of mass slaughter, but also the ability of these to enrapture audiences. Audiences appeared to forget that they were spectators at a staged performance, he wrote, and instead formed empathetic bonds with the soldier-actors, whom they perceived as being in a real life-threatening situation: "genuine cries of sympathy are heard for the men supposed to be wounded and who are carried from the field." A reporter in Belleville, Illinois described the spectacle as having a strange and unique hold over audiences; it generated a "magnetism . . . that reaches to and effects [sic] the public in a manner never noticeable in other entertainments." After the Americans scaled the wall and routed the Boxers, the audience's built-up emotions were at last released. "As the stars and stripes ascend the wall," the reporter from Waterloo wrote, "the enthusiasm of the audience is vented in mighty cheers."[76]

In some venues, the final climax provoked more than just cheers. In New York, William Cody invited the city's orphans to attend a special charity performance. On April 16, 1901, the bleachers of Madison Square Garden were packed with nearly six thousand children and adolescents. The early acts in the program apparently bored the youthful audience. "Those things" a reporter for the *New York Sun* observed, failed to satisfy a group that hungered for "gore and war paint." Yet as the allied soldiers stormed into the arena and rushed the towering Peking wall, the orphans' level of arousal surged to new heights. While watching the American unit begin to climb the wall in the face of heavy Boxer fire, their passions reached a feverish pitch. They became so enraptured by the display of heroism, that they could not bear to watch from afar and spontaneously decided to cross the line between spectator and performer. A "mob of blood thirsty orphans," the dumbfounded reporter wrote, "rose from their seats and rushed down over the side of the arena like a mill dam breaking loose." They cascaded past the bewildered guards and onto the arena floor where they sprinted to the base of the wall. Their eyes gleaming with the thrilling prospect of making a kill, they shouted up at the incredulous American soldiers halfway up the wall, begging for a chance to "plug a chink." The following day, the *New York Sun*'s headline read, "Orphans Fed Full of War."[77]

Orphans were not the only ones to become consumed by the martial spirit. A show in Pittsburgh erupted into a similar scene of bedlam, only this time adults as well as youths stampeded onto the arena floor. On this occasion, the cast of the Wild West should have seen the outburst coming since the entire crowd had risen to its feet and applauded continuously from the moment the allied forces entered Tientsin. And as the fighting at the wall of Peking reached its crescendo, the impassioned spectators finally gave into their emotions. "At the pitch of the battle," wrote a journalist for the *Pittsburgh Dispatch,* "the crowds surged from the benches into the arena to see the finish, being carried away by excitement." In an attempt to explain the bizarre occurrence, the astonished journalist could only conjecture that the "rapid-firing gun in action . . . stirs the blood of anyone."[78]

This is not normal behavior for audiences observing a performance—not even the rollicking brand of entertainment offered by the Wild West. How should we interpret the audience's total rejection of conventional spectatorship in favor of this ecstatic participatory behavior? It is tempting to classify Roosevelt's "strenuous life" as a revitalization movement, conceived as a response to the threat of modernity, and then to comprehend this audience behavior as a ritual functioning within a larger movement. Indeed, Roosevelt's prescription for America's ills, in that it attempted to recapture the martial spirit of an earlier era, seems to exemplify what Anthony Wallace termed a "revivalistic" variety of revitalization movement. One could then cast the indomitable Roosevelt in the role of charismatic leader, one who could inspire a following with his forceful personality, bottomless reservoirs of energy, unfaltering vocal chords, and well of personal experience. Lastly, the impending crisis was, at least in Roosevelt's opinion, severe enough to merit a revitalization movement: if Americans did not take drastic measures, they risked annihilation at the hands of barbaric hordes.

All that said, I do not think the "strenuous life" qualifies as a revitalization movement. While Roosevelt may have descried a grave national crisis on the horizon, most Americans did not. Their perceptions here are critical because, according to Wallace, members of a group must *collectively* feel that stress has reached intolerable levels as a pre-condition for accepting revitalization as the cure. And though one does not want to minimize the challenges Americans faced in their profoundly altered economic and cultural landscape, these cannot be compared with those confronting the Chinese or the Sioux, both of whom were forced to respond to foreign ideas, technologies, and militaries imposed upon them from external agents. In short, all three groups necessarily had to cope with modernity, but the similarity ends there.

Audience Ritual and Liminality

To understand the predicament of Americans in 1901, one might instead draw a parallel to the growing pains experienced by individuals making the transition from adolescence into adulthood. In many cultures, such individuals undergo what anthropologists call a "rite of passage"—a ritual designed not just to mark

entry to a new life stage, but also to foster a sense of continuity by helping ritual subjects settle with the past while becoming acclimated to their future roles. As has been discussed, many Americans struggled to accept a modern way of life and all that it entailed—the punch-clock, the assembly line, the business suit, the desk job, or all of what Frederick Remington called the "the slavery of our modern social system." I would like to suggest here that Wild West audiences, through their peculiarly exuberant behavior, may have been transforming Wild West spectatorship into a rite-of-passage ritual that could aid their adjustment to life in a modern industrial state.

I derive my understanding of rite-of-passage rituals from the work of anthropologist Victor Turner (1920-1983), who became interested in these rituals while studying the Ndembo Tribe of Central Africa in the 1950s. For Turner, rituals helped engender both cultural continuity and regeneration at perilous transitional stages, where the risk of social breach was high. These rituals functioned, in his words, "as distinct phases in social processes whereby groups become adjusted to internal changes and adapted to their external environment."[79] Indeed, a cultural adjustment in response to an altered economic and cultural environment is precisely what Americans needed at this juncture—not the radical reconfiguration of culture that a revitalization movement would have brought. In studying rite-of-passage rituals, Turner built upon the foundation laid by Arnold Van Gennep (1873-1957), the French folklorist who observed the rituals as possessing three distinct phases: separation, margin (or *limen*, which means "threshold" in Latin), and aggregation. In the first phase, the ritual subject is detached from the social structures of everyday life; in the second, he or she enters into a "liminal period" that possesses none of the characteristics of either the "past or coming state;" in the third, the subject is reintegrated with society, having now accepted a new role.[80]

Victor Turner isolated the intermediate or "liminal" phase as supplying the overall ritual with its transformative power. Given its status as being, in Turner's famous phrasing, "betwixt and between," liminality occupies an "interstructural" moment: it seems to exist "in and out of time" and lacks the structures (rules, hierarchies, behavioral roles, and conventions) that organize society. With the rigid order and certainty that these structures once provided having temporarily fallen away, the liminal phase is characterized by indeterminacy, flux, variability, and creativity. For ritual subjects, this indeterminacy yields an opportunity for conflict resolution. Confronting the architecture of society broken down into its constituent elements, they may reassemble these elements into new patterns and configurations. In doing so, they can resolve the conflicts attending their transition to a new life stage.[81] In this pursuit, they are guided by figures Turner calls "ritual liminars" or "edgemen." Often prophets, artists, or shamans, edgemen possess the unique ability to inhabit two different structural situations at once. Ever "betwixt and between," these individuals personify liminality and so can reveal to ritual subjects "the freedom, the indeterminacy underlying all culturally constructed worlds."[82]

According to Turner, the liminal phase can also propel ritual subjects into a state of "spontaneous communitas," a spirit of collective unity and egalitarianism made possible by the temporary suspension of social distinctions and hierarchies.[83] For those who feel frustrated by civilization, or what Turner calls "life in 'structure,'" the complete leveling of structure found in spontaneous communitas offers welcome respite. It may also empower those involved. During communitas, the minds of ritual subjects become flooded with a "feeling of endless power," providing them with an irresistible, almost "magical," sense of euphoria. The feeling is only transient, however, and cannot be transported out of the ritual space and into everyday society, where desired outcomes result more from "lucid thought and sustained will." Yet the experience is not without enduring value. Since life in civilization can become "arid and mechanical," one can benefit from occasional immersion in "the regenerative abyss of communitas."[84]

At this juncture, we should stress one crucial point: the overarching goal of the rite-of-passage ritual is cultural continuity—not rupture. Though liminality provides a temporal space in which ritual subjects may manipulate society's structures, the ritual intends neither to radically reinvent society (as a revitalization movement would seek to do) nor to undermine or subvert society's rules and customs. The hope is instead that subjects will move on to the third phase, in which they become reintegrated with society. "I see liminality, in tribal societies," Turner wrote, "as the provision of a cultural means of generating variability, as well as of ensuring the continuity of proved values and norms."[85]

Though Turner studied "tribal societies," he saw potential applications for his theory in industrialized societies. He noted that religious groups, musical performers, or various social groups (such as the beats and hippies) sought to foster liminality and communitas in their services, performances, and ceremonies. Scholars have applied his theories to a diverse range of performances and spectacles, including rock concerts and the olympic games.[86] My intention here is to suggest that Turner's theories can aid our interpretation of audience behavior during "The Rescue at Pekin." Indeed, for our "edgeman," we need look no further than William Cody himself. Often called "King of the Border Men," Cody seemed to effortlessly straddle different temporal eras and physical zones. He was celebrated as a man of the frontier, a physical space that epitomized liminality, it being defined as neither "civilized" nor "savage" but "betwixt and between" the two. While Cody's dexterity with guns and horses was the stuff of legend, Americans also saw him as adept at harnessing the forces of modernity. He was a "Gilded Age businessman" who invested in land development and mining projects, who served as the president of five companies, and who headed a Wild West enterprise that employed over 4,000 people. And while Americans appreciated Cody's frontier credentials, they attributed the Wild West's success more to his masterful handling of the railroads, his management skills, his logistical knowledge, and his shrewd use of modern marketing and advertising. In the words of biographer Robert Carter, Cody

was a "child of the nineteenth century" who saw the direction of "prevailing winds," and thus "was perfectly positioned to thrive in the new century."[87]

In applying Turner's model, we should first identify the conflict in need of resolution and its symbolic representation in "The Rescue at Pekin." As the mock-battle begins, audiences meet with a simple binary of opposites: civilization and savagery. As allied soldiers parade behind their colorful flags, the audience perceives them as noble knights embodying all the virtues of "the civilized world." Conversely, the Boxers represent, in the words of the show's program, "a savage, unreasoning and uncompromising hostility to foreigners."[88] Though audience members experience little difficulty in choosing a side, some may experience the unsettling feeling of ambiguity because the Boxers, however loathsome they may appear, are known above all else for their ferocious resistance to modernity—a trait that some audience members recognize in themselves, though in a far less extreme form. James Ricalton, who witnessed the Boxer Uprising, understood this point well. "Western countries," he wrote, "are full of Boxers."[89] Since this resistance was preventing many from accepting their roles in a modern industrial state, it provides the ritual with the conflict in need of resolution.

As allied soldiers storm the walls, the intense sound and action succeed in pushing audiences into the liminal phase: the previously unbending structures of society fall away, yielding a space of indeterminacy. Realizing that the rules governing spectatorship no longer apply, audience members act as they please, with most engaging in standing, shouting, and violent fist-shaking. Some lose track of minutes and hours as the temporal organizers of human experience (recall one reporter's noting that "everybody forgot the time"). Other structures that collapse include the following three partitions: that which separates the real from the staged, the self from others, and spectatorship from performance. Concerning the first, the convincing nature of the reenactment helps audience members to temporarily suspend their disbelief and feel as if they are witnessing an actual battle. Second, that many in the stands seem to slide out of their own identities, achieving an empathetic connection to the soldier-actors, is evidenced by the tears they shed for the wounded and dead. Within the confines of the ritual space, they are no longer themselves, having become warriors engaged in a life and death struggle against murderous Boxers. Third, this impulse to erase one's own identity, so as to merge temporarily with others, prompts some audiences to transgress the boundary between performer and spectator. In at least two cities, the reenactment triggered a spontaneous emptying of the stands.

That members of the audiences behave as a single entity suggests they achieve communitas. For just a few minutes of altered consciousness, the social distinctions and class-affiliations that defined and structured their everyday lives disappear, and they enjoy the feeling of complete unity with one another and with the soldier-actors charging the wall. Acting as one, members of the audience become an army of reinforcements that must courageously surge to the aid of their comrades. One can only imagine what audience members must have felt when, having emerged from communitas at the show's end, they found

themselves standing on the arena's dirt floor in the company of baffled Wild West performers.

The "spontaneous communitas" effected by the spectacle provides a healthy catharsis for members of audiences, regenerating them before their return to society, or "life in 'structure.'" However, a rite-of-passage ritual should offer participants more than just an unfocused emotional release; it should also aid their passage through a tough transition by helping them to view their culture as broken down into constituent elements and symbols. By playing with the building blocks of their culture, they eventually produce a "recombination" that will "make sense with regard to the new state and status" they are about to enter.[90] Of course, we possess only newspaper accounts of people's outward behavior and cannot access their thoughts. That said, we can explore the set of cultural symbols presented by the "The Rescue at Pekin" and speculate as to how audience members might have manipulated these during the performance.

As has been stated, audiences appeared to establish a psychological connection to the allied soldiers, who were seemingly engaged in a life or death struggle with the Boxer menace. However, in the symbolic space of the ritual, the Boxers are more than just a xenophobic Chinese movement since they also represent an abstract concept: an extreme hostility to modernity. So when audiences play a role in subduing the Boxers, they are also crushing, at least symbolically, their own resistance to modern industrial life. Yet neither we nor they can comprehend the battle's outcome simply as the victory of forward-looking civilization over hidebound savagery. After all, the beleaguered people said to inhabit the legations also stand for forward-looking civilization, and they exhibit only helplessness in the face of Boxer savagery. Instead, the Boxer foe can only be vanquished by American soldiers who evoke the same fierceness, bravery, and martial prowess that their ancestors used to great effect on the frontier. In this way, the ritual does *not* convince participants to relinquish the rugged ways of previous generations because these are not obsolete. Instead, it perhaps encourages a fusion. For if the United States is to successfully come of age, the American people need to graft the frontier values of the past onto their national character. Rugged individualism, once thought to be something Americans *practiced*, becomes something Americans *are*. Assured that these cherished values will endure, ritual subjects move without reservation into the modern era.

Once the Americans soldiers have breached the walls, the Chinese citadel is taken and the ritual approaches its conclusion. At this point, audiences meet with one final moment of symbolic importance: the lowering of the Chinese flag followed by the raising of the Stars and Stripes. The use of the American flag is crucial, for had Cody and Salsbury adhered strictly to the historical record and hoisted the Union Jack, they would have created a factually accurate yet symbolically useless conclusion that would have detracted from the final phase—aggregation. "The Rescue at Pekin" perhaps succeeded as a rite-of-passage ritual not only because it compelled Americans to cope with savagery (both Boxer

savagery and their own), but also because their ultimate triumph takes place in the presence of the nations of Europe—the several parent civilizations of the United States. As France, Germany, England, and other nations look on almost like tribal elders, the young Americans proudly raise their flag, signaling to the "civilized" world that their nation has come of age. The "closing spectacle . . . aroused great enthusiasm," wrote the *Wheeling Intelligencer*, "especially when the Americans carrying their emblem of glory, were first in scaling the walls of the Benighted City."[91]

Conclusion: Mock War's Effect on Real War

Mark Twain never witnessed this moment. When he attended the Wild West in Madison Square Garden on April 2, 1901, the opening night of the new season, he must have been nearly alone in viewing the conflict from the perspective of the Boxers. "[M]y sympathies are with the Chinese," he wrote a friend in the summer of 1900. "I hope they will drive all the foreigners out and keep them out for good. I only wish it; of course I don't really expect it."[92] In a speech that same fall, Twain made his affiliation emphatically clear in declaring, "I am a Boxer too."[93] Since Twain and Cody were friends, the former sat in a box reserved for distinguished guests. He also received a personal wave from Cody as the showman addressed the crowd at the start of the show. And as one act followed another, Twain offered modest applause. Then, just before the finale was set to begin, he rose from his seat and exited the arena. "When the battle of Tien Tsin began," wrote a reporter with *New York World*, Twain "expressed his disapproval of our foreign policy by abruptly leaving the Garden" with a face "as sour as a German pickle." A reporter with the *Evening Sun* corroborated this account. "This was the part that Mark Twain did not see," he wrote, referring to the grand finale. "The famous convert to anti-imperialism departed before the number was called and left the people sitting in the darkness."[94]

As a member of the Anti-Imperialist League, Twain joined other notables such as William Lloyd Garrison, William Dean Howells, and Andrew Carnegie in protesting American military objectives abroad.[95] In fact, the reporter's phrase, "sitting in darkness," referred to an indignant essay Twain wrote for the *North American Review* entitled, "To the Person Sitting In Darkness." In the essay, Twain excoriated a Congregational missionary for demanding excessive reparations from the Chinese in return for property damaged during the Boxer Uprising. In Twain's view, missionaries should not be turning a profit from the "pauper peasants" of China. Since their arrogant and aggressive evangelical activity had provoked the Boxers in the first place, missionaries had only themselves to blame for their losses.[96]

Though Twain never explained his early exit, he almost certainly objected to "The Rescue at Pekin" on the grounds that it fanned the flames of jingoism. The reenactment, he probably believed, dishonestly draped heroic garb over ugly western imperialism and dangerously promoted overseas wars as the

glorious extensions of Manifest Destiny. In this way, Twain's protest leads us to an important question: did "The Rescue at Pekin" induce a destabilizing militarism in audience members? Put differently, did mock war make real war more attractive and, therefore, more likely? Quite possibly, some American men walked away from the show with a burning desire to fight in the next war. If so, they would have encountered great difficulty in matriculating back into the routines, schedules, and responsibilities that shaped their lives at home and at work.

Yet this study, in focusing on crowd behavior, posits a contrary theory. Mock war might have worked, paradoxically, to mitigate Americans' desire for real war, not inflame it, and to facilitate their adjustment to modern civilization, not impede the same. When we understand Wild West spectatorship as a ritual, we see how audiences in the liminal phase could enjoy a warlike experience that seemed psychologically real to them. The Wild West's brilliantly convincing simulacrum combined with the ritual liminal phase to produce virtual war; spectators felt the intensity of combat in a fashion that perhaps obviated participation in the real thing. Indeed, if one could scream at the top of one's lungs, shed true tears for an actor-soldier's feigned death, and storm an artificial wall on a fake battlefield, why bother to seek out real war? Then, at the show's end, one could return home feeling renewed, ready to face one's role as a parent, spouse, and company employee. Mark Twain perhaps had less to worry about than he supposed.

Notes

1. Diana Preston, *Besieged in Peking: The Story of the 1900 Boxer Rising* (London: Constable and Company, 1999), 21-29.

2. *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, May 29, 1901.

3. Theodore Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life" and "Expansion and Peace," *The Strenuous Life: Essay and Addresses* (New York: The Century Company, 1900), 1-38.

4. *The State* (Columbia, South Carolina) October 24, 1901.

5. William H. Goetzmann has written that Cody "visualized worldwide imperialism as merely an extension of the Western spirit of Manifest Destiny." *The West of the Imagination* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1986), 295. Similarly, Richard Slotkin identified an "evolution" in the Wild West "from a memorialization of the past to a celebration of the imperial future." Richard Slotkin, "Buffalo Bill's 'Wild West' and the Mythologization of the American Empire," in Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (eds), *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 176.

6. Scholarship in this area is both abundant and growing. See T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981); Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996); Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); and John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001).

7. Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 94-97. Slotkin also discusses the presence of rituals in the Wild West. However, in his conceptualization, these rituals were performed by the cast of the show and only observed passively by audiences. In my formulation, active audience participation is precisely what freights the rituals with meaning.

8. Judy Crichton, *America 1900* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998), 4-6; Kimmel, 81-82; Lears, 98-117. The *New York Times* editorial is quoted in Robert A. Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody: The Man Behind the Legend* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2000), 390. For an overview of America's industrial growth in the Gilded Age, see Sean Dennis Cashman, *America in the Gilded Age: From the Death of Lincoln to the Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: New York University Press, 1984), 10-46.

9. Elliot Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 192.

10. Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 6-8.

11. The McCracken Library at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center owns a complete run of the Street & Smith series of dime novels. It should be noted that the Street & Smith dime novels were not the first devoted to recounting the life and exploits of Buffalo Bill; that distinction belongs to Ned Buntline who, in 1869, published *Buffalo Bill: The King of the Border Men* in the story paper *New York Weekly.* Louis Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and the Wild West Show* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 112-113.

12. John Milton Edwards, *The Fiction Factory* (Ridgewood, NJ: The Editor Company, 1912), 43, 53-54, 63-64, 115-118; Michael Denning, *Mechanical Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America* (New York: Verso, 1987), 21-22.

13. Bill Brown, *Reading the West: An Anthology of Dime Novels* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997), 5.

14. William Wu, *The Yellow Peril: Chinese Americans in American Fiction, 1850-1940* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1982).

15. "Buffalo Bill's Grim Guard, or The Chinaman in Buckskin," *Buffalo Bill Stories* No. 119 (August 22, 1903). Henry Nash Smith called Leatherstocking the prototype of the western hero. *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), 96.

16. "Buffalo Bill's Heathen Pard," *Buffalo Bill Stories* No. 240 (December 19, 1905). The McCracken Library at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center.

17. Joseph Schwartz, "The Wild West Show: 'Everything Genuine,'" *Journal of Popular Culture* 3, no. 4 (Spring 1970), 662.

18. Richard Walsh, in collaboration with Milton Salsbury, *The Making of Buffalo Bill* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1928), 260-261.

19. Theodore Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life," *The Strenuous Life; Essays and Addresses* (New York: The Century Company, 1900), 1-21. See also Arnaldo Testi, "The Gender of Reform Politics: Theodore Roosevelt and the Culture of Masculinity," *The Journal of American History* 81 (March 1995), 1509-1533.

20. Roosevelt, "Expansion and Peace," *The Strenuous Life,* 25-38.

21. Louisville *Courier-Journal*, May 9, 1901.

22. Joy Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 119-120.

23. Robert Muccigrosso, *Celebrating the New World: Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1993), 78-114.

24. Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in Martin Ridge, ed., *Frederick Jackson Turner: Wisconsin's Historian of the Frontier* (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986).

25. Joy Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 6.

26. Slotkin, "Buffalo Bill's Wild West," 169.

27. Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life," 6.

28. Diana Preston, *Besieged in Peking: The Story of the 1900 Boxer Rising* (London: Constable and Company, 1999), 21-29; Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), xiii-xiv, 14-17; Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton), 231-235.

29. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 232.

30. Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, 21-29; Esherick, *Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, xiii-xiv, 14-17; Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 231-235.

31. Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, 29, 34-37; Peter Conn, *Pearl S. Buck: A Cultural Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 28-29.

32. The description of the theory comes from Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," *American Anthropologist* 58 (April 1956), 264-281. Alice Beck Kehoe applied Wallace's theory to the Ghost Dance. *The Ghost Dance: Ethnohistory and Revitalization* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983), 11, 121-124. See also Anthony F.C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969).

33. Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, 23-24, 29-30; Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 234.

34. Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, 35, 148-151; William Duiker, *Cultures in Collision: The Boxer Rebellion* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1978), 124.

35. *Outing Magazine* wrote that Ricalton's "life's work is a romance of that hardy out-door world, which calls the men whom convention can never tame nor bind." "Heroes of the Camera," *Outing* (September 1905), 729; James Ricalton, *China Through the Stereoscope: A Journey through the Dragon Empire at the Time of the Boxer Uprising* (New York: Underwood and Underwood, 1901), 234.

36. Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, 175-185; Anne Skelly, "The Eagle and the Dragon," *American History Illustrated* (January, 1988), 44.

37. Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, 215-217.

38. Ricalton, *China through the Stereoscope*, 252, 233.

39. Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, 215-217.

40. The following summary makes use of clipped newspaper articles pasted into William Cody's personal scrapbook. I have included specific dates and the names of cited newspapers whenever it has been possible to do so. However, due to the nature of the source, full citations are not always possible. In such cases, I have simply cited Cody's scrapbook itself, which is owned by the McCracken Research Library, Buffalo Bill Historical Center.

41. *Buffalo Review*, August 26, 1901.

42. Walsh and Salsbury, *The Making of Buffalo Bill*, 327.

43. *Reading Herald* (June 4, 1901); attendance estimates come from averaging numbers appearing in newspaper accounts. Cody's scrapbook.

44. *Daily Times and Dispatch* (Reading, Pennsylvania), June 4, 1901.

45. In Buffalo, a reporter joined a group of soldier-performers and soon had the men swapping war stories and showing discharge papers proving they had fought in China. "Real Soldiers Among Buffalo Bill's Riders," *Buffalo Evening News*, August 30, 1901.

46. These words and phrases reappear with striking regularity in the newspaper clippings contained in Cody's scrapbook.

47. *Chicago American*, July 16, 1901.

48. Official program for the 1901 Wild West Show, McCracken Research Library, Buffalo Bill Historical Center.

49. *The Daily Times and Dispatch* (Reading, Pennsylvania), June 4, 1901.

50. Indiana section of the scrapbook.

51. See the Baltimore, Maryland section of the scrapbook.

52. See the official program, Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, 168-170.

53. The dime novel, *Buffalo Bill's Heathen Pard*, uses this same joke. *Buffalo Bill Stories* No. 240 (December 19, 1905), McCracken Research Library, Buffalo Bill Historical Center.

54. John L. Cutler, "Gilbert Patten and His Frank Merriwell Saga," *The Maine Bulletin* (May, 1934), 89-91.

55. See the official program. See also the Baltimore and New York sections of the scrapbook.

56. *Allentown Chronicle*, June 6, 1901. The quotation from the *New York Herald* appeared in the New York section of Cody's scrapbook.

57. *Elmira Telegram*, June 16, 1901; *The New York Sun*, April 7, 1901; *Collier's Weekly*, April 13, 1901.

58. A journalist from Pittsburgh added that the show "lacked . . . a quarrel among allies." New York and Pittsburgh sections of the scrapbook.

59. New York section of the scrapbook.

60. *Evansville Courier,* May 11, 1901.

61. Baltimore section of the scrapbook.

62. "Wild West Show No Fake," *New York Sun*, April 7, 1901.

63. *Collier's Weekly,* April 13, 1901.

64. *New York Evening Sun*, April 3, 1901; *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, May 13, 1900; *New York Sun*, April 7, 1901.

65. *Chicago Record-Herald*, July 16, 1901. See also the Cleveland section of the scrapbook.

66. See chapter "The Resurrection of the Romantic Red Man," Goetzmann, *The West*, 228-234; Slotkin, "Buffalo Bill's Wild West," 172.

67. Ronald Takaki has argued that during the second World War, Americans understood the Japanese in terms of an earlier racial history. Using a mode of perception that had evolved during centuries of Anglo-Indian conflict, Americans saw the Japanese as savages cut out of the Indian mold. This article agrees that a transfer of Indian traits to Asians took place in the minds of many Americans, but it situates the transfer in an earlier era—the turn of the century. See Ronald Takaki, *Hiroshima: Why America Dropped the Atomic Bomb* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 74-76.

68. Harold Cleveland, *Massacres of the Christians by the Heathen Chinese and Horrors of the Boxers* (Chicago: Horace Fry, 1900); Henry Davenport Northrop, *Indian Horrors; or, Massacres by the Redmen* (Philadelphia: National Publishing Company, 1891); "The Cruelty of the Chinese," *Leslie's Weekly*, July 28, 1900.

69. Charles Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990), 284, The George Eastman House in Rochester, New York owns Chinese Massacring the Christians, Elias Savada, *American Film Institute Catalogue: Film Beginnings, 1893-1910* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press). See the Lubin Catalogue, reproduced in Charles Musser's Microfilm Collection, (ed.) *Motion Picture Catalogues by American Producers and Distributors, 1894-1908* (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1984).

70. Slotkin, "Buffalo Bill's Wild West," 169.

71. American Mutoscope and Biograph's catalogue (November, 1902). Musser, *Motion Picture Catalogues*.

72. *Ibid.*

73. Kasson, *Houdini*, 181-183; William S. E. Colemen, *Voices of Wounded Knee* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 36-44; Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1970), 434.

74. *Allentown Chronicle*, June 5, 1901; *Chicago American*, July 16, 1901; *Waterloo Daily Courier*, August 1, 1901; *Evening Sun*, April 3, 1901; *Elmira Telegram*, June 16, 1901. See the Pittsburgh sections of the scrapbook.

75. Richard Slotkin, "Buffalo Bill's Wild West," 174.

76. *Waterloo Daily Courier*, August 1, 1901; *Belleville News Democrat*, September 24, 1901; *Chicago Record-Herald*, July 16, 1901.

77. *New York Sun*, April 17, 1901.

78. *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, May 29, 1901.

79. Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 20.

80. Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 94-97.

81. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 105-106.

82. Donald Weber, "from Limen to Border: A Meditation on the Legacy of Victor Turner for American Studies" *American Quarterly* 47 (September 1995), 528; Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 128; Victor Turner, "Process, System, and Symbol," *On the Edge of the Bush: Anthropology as Experience* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985), 161.

83. Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 94-97.

84. *Ibid.*, 139.

85. Turner, *On the Edge of the Bush,* 162.

86. Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 137-139; Bruce Harrah-Conforth, "Rock and Roll, Process, and Tradition," *Western Folklore* 49 (July 1993), 306-313; John MacAloon, "Olympic Games and the Theory of the Spectacle in Modern Societies," *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1984), 241-280.

87. Ned Buntline, author of the earliest dime novels to cover the life and exploits of William Cody, first employed the descriptive epithet, "King of the Border Men," in 1869. Carter, *Buffalo Bill Cody*, 390-391, 147-149; Kasson, *Houdini*, 123, 130-131.

88. See the official program.

89. Ricalton, *China Through the Stereoscope*, 178-180.

90. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 106.

91. *Wheeling Intelligencer*, May 27, 1901.

92. Twain to Reverend J.H. Twichell, August 12, 1900, Albert Bigelow Paine (ed.), *Mark Twain's Letters,* Vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1917), 699.

93. "Address at a Meeting of the Berkeley Lyceum," November 23, 1900, *Mark Twain's Speeches* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1910), 144-146.

94. *Evening Sun*, April 3, 1901; *New York World*, April 3, 1901.

95. Jim Zwick (ed.), *Mark Twain's Weapons of Satire; Anti-Imperialist Writings on the Philippine-American War* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992), xix-xxi.

96. Mark Twain, "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," *North American Review* 172, no. 531 (February, 1901). One can also find Twain's opinions encapsulated in "The Fable of the Yellow Terror," a thinly veiled criticism of Western imperialism in China. In this short fable, a nation of proud Butterflies (the Western powers) seeks to become richer and holier by foisting its civilization upon a vast nation of Bees (China). Over the course of the civilizing process, they teach the Bees both how to make honey (mining, railroads, and factories) and the art of stinging (military technology). At one point, the Butterflies send out missionaries to Bee country hoping they will be massacred, which they promptly are. The Butterflies can then justify battering the Bees with their superior stingers and, after scoring a victory, demand both property and money from the losers. John Tuckey (ed.), *Mark Twain's Fables of Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 426-429.