GERMS, BODY-POLITICS AND YELLOW PERIL: RELOCATION OF BRITISHNESS IN *THE YELLOW DANGER*

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Introduction: Yellow Peril as Counter-Imperialism

Listing the master criminals of British 1890s popular fiction – Professor Moriarty in Doyle's *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1893), Svengali in Du Maurier's *Trilby* (1894), Dr. Nikola in Boothby's *A Bid for Fortune* (1895), Count Dracula in Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), the Martians in Wells's *War of the Worlds* (1898) – John Sutherland pointed out that all of them are aliens, from Ireland, Middle Europe, Italy, Transylvania, and Mars (Introduction ix). With the suggestion of their un-Englishness, he also demonstrated that their names end in vowel sounds. Of course, no one knows the Martians' name, but Sutherland noted that "their one identifiable vocalisation 'Ulla Ulla'" was not common in the "Anglo-Saxon tongue."

M. P. Shiel's *The Yellow Danger* (1898) also belongs to the same xenophobic sub-genre of popular fiction in the late Victorian era. Its half-Chinese and half-Japanese Dr. Yen How was one of the earliest Oriental villains, prototype of the Chinatown crime kingpin who intrigues the western world. The main story is about this half-Chinese and half-Japanese mastermind's battle with the British midshipman John Hardy. Dr. Yen How, upon his sexual advances being rejected by an English nursemaid, tries to take revenge on Western society. He goes to China and Japan to arrange a secret alliance between the two countries and presents the rulers with his plot. His plan is to set the European powers against Britain and, taking advantage of the war, ensure that China could conquer the world with little effort. Yen How becomes a virtual leader of China and cedes large regions to France, Germany, and Russia without any conditions. This topples the British supremacy over these three European powers and they declare war against a splendidly isolated Britain. When Britain defeats them in a naval battle, a horde of Sino-Japanese allied forces conquers the European continent. But Hardy saves British independence, and he wages a final war against the yellow Napoleon, Yen How. In the modern battle of Trafalgar, Hardy makes all Sino-Japanese warships sink into the Poe-like "Maelstrom" and he dies like Nelson. Prior to his death, however, Hardy prepares to send Chinese captives injected with pestilence back to their camp. After wiping out the invaders, Pax Britannica spreads all over the world.

Even to Victorian readers, the novel seemed "a farrago of absurdities" (Diósy 337). As the reviewer of the *Times* suggested, possibly we had better "laugh at *The Yellow Danger*, as he [Shiel] must certainly expect us to laugh, but we laugh with him rather than at him" (13 September 1898). We should not overlook, however, the fact that *The Yellow Danger* was so popular that it developed into several different impressions with the author leaving two similar novels, *The Yellow Wave* (1905) and *The Dragon* (1913). Actually *The Yellow Danger* was the first influential yellow peril fiction in Britain. The novel intensified the yellow peril, a terror of the combination of a mass of Chinese soldiers and Japanese modern armament. I will take up this notion as an anxiety against counter-imperialism which was commonly found in other late Victorian xenophobic novels. In other words, I will consider the historical background of *The Yellow Danger* and how Britishness was recreated and represented through the construction of the other, China and Japan.

Xenophobia and Germ-phobia: Fire to Fire, Germ to Germ

In this section I would like to locate *The Yellow Danger* in the history of popular future war novels dealing with propaganda about the yellow peril as germ-phobia against British body-politics. As the pioneering work in this area, I. F. Clarke's *Voices Prophesying War* (27-56), shows, these novels were propagated after the publication of G. T. Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* (1871). This novel takes the form of "reminiscence" by an old volunteer who relates the story of the Prussian invasion of Britain to his grandchildren. Needless to say, it is the vehicle to show the necessity of British defence against Prussia, reflecting the impact of the Prussian victory in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. In the 1880s in England, most of the invasion-scare novels seemed to have nothing to do with Asia; the visible enemy was still European countries, more precisely, Prussia and France.

It is America which appropriated *The Battle of Dorking* as a vehicle for the yellow peril scaremongers. As Wu's pioneering work illustrated, Sinophobic novels had been churned out around 1882 when the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed. These works of fiction cannot be separated from anti-Chinese immigration propaganda: "The Chinese Must Go!" The agitation by Irish immigrant Denis Kearney, founder of the Workingmen's Party, was supported by white workers, particularly Irish people, considered as "white negroes" at the bottom of the social pyramid, who were feeling anxiety about Chinese cheap labour's encroachment on their territory (Tchen 167-195). The Chinese in these American Sinophobic novels, therefore, were represented mainly as a nameless mass; they were a cultural, racial, and economic menace, and too strange to assimilate and naturalise. It deserves special mention that Irish people, traditionally stereotyped and represented as simian figures, according to Curtis, due to their ambiguous place in the British and American racial hierarchy, played a key role in "fighting for the broadening of the

Anglo-American identity and for the formation of a new, pan-European race of 'whites'" (Tchen 221) by constructing and exaggerating Chinese differences.

More or less appropriated from these images of China, similar anti-Chinese immigration novels were published in Britain by several authors who had faced directly Chinese immigration at the borderland of the empire. William Delisle Hay, for example, who was from New Zealand, expounded a pre-eugenic vision of holocaust in *Three Hundred Years Hence* (1881). The novel's projected world government, according to Hay, decreed the "Great Extermination" and sterilisation of overflow "Mongols and Negroes, the Inferior Races," "in order that the fittest and best may eventually survive" (271). And the anxiety about the "exceedingly proliferous" (Hay 23) Chinese race cast more political and military shadows on Australian Kenneth Mackay's *The Yellow Wave: A Romance of the Asiatic Invasion of Australia* (1895).

However, these sensational novels, emphasising Chinese penetration around the edge of the British Empire, were rather exceptional and unpopular at the turn of the century, perhaps due to the lack of direct immigration on a massive scale. As *The Yellow Wave* carried few references to London, in spite of its imperial conflict story, the centre of the empire did not take the Chinese horde in Australia seriously. It was this lack of imagination, imperial bonding and consciousness that John Seeley criticised in his popular lectures entitled *The Expansion of England* in 1883 because "Our politicians, our historians still think of England not of Greater Britain as their country" (356). While England "conquered and peopled" the world, according to Seely, "in a fit of absence of mind" (10), the hybrid colonies also spread and became accessible with the development of the transport system in the late Victorian age.

Certainly Shiel might have read *The Yellow Wave* (Walker 107), as he appropriated its vehicle in order to articulate a more serious menace for Britain, germs. The outbreak of Asiatic cholera over Europe around the end of the nineteenth century made British people realise that they did not live on an isolated impregnable island, but that it was openly contaminable by these hybrid contacts or contagious zones. Just as Count Dracula penetrates and colonises the hub of the empire through the modern transportation system, the flow of civilisation from Britain to the colonies was subject to the change of the tide, and the Thames, therefore, could be regarded as leading into the heart of an immense darkness. *The Yellow Danger* might share the same fear about a symbolical contagious disease with Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.[1]

Actually pandemic cholera contributed to the definition of British body politics because immigration or oriental pilgrimage was regarded as transmitting it (Arnold 183-189). A prime example of this fear is Ernest Hart, Chairman of the National Health Society and Editor of *The British Medical Journal*. At the outbreak of cholera in 1892 he maintained that "we as a nation might expect to protect

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[1] For the recent discussion of Dracula as a mirror of the contemporary anxieties, see Byron.

ourselves from the ravages of epidemic cholera" (538). In 1894, he proclaimed that cholera in 1892 had been disseminated by pilgrims presumably from the well at Mecca, and proposed mutual international co-operative sanitation as one of "our Imperial responsibilities" in order to "save Europe from cholera invasions" (538-554). In that sense, the discourse about the necessity of sanitation amplified not only the connection between germs and immigration but also the connection between the individual body and body politics in the name of "ourselves" against "the common enemy."[2]

This binary discourse of germs against body politics was closely related to contemporary popular novels such as H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* which was published in the same year as *The Yellow Danger*. As the invasion of the aliens and their extinction by unknown contagious germs show clearly, *The Yellow Danger* seems to be influenced by *The War of the Worlds*. But an even earlier example of the same connection between germs and aliens can be found. In a review of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, the alleged model of the detective, Dr. Joseph Bell, suggested in 1892 that if someone threw the cholera bacillus in the well at Mecca, the disease would spread into Christendom through Oriental pilgrims who brought the water from it (Green 364). Possibly his idea inspired H. G. Wells to write "The Stolen Bacillus" in 1894. This was a short story about a foreign anarchist who forcibly takes Asiatic cholera from a bacteriologist in order to spread it in London. Bell's fear and "The Stolen Bacillus" implied the metaphorical connection between the concept of epidemics and the reality of the anarchist coming from the outside to contaminate the British nation-state (Hashimoto 18-21). Shiel similarly depicted the Asian horde as a spreading germ, which was stopped by an actual germ in Paris, or the New Peking:

> As soon as an idol-less Chinaman was griped by the malady [. . .] his first instinct was to rush toward the one place of hope–the temple at Paris. And as he rushed, he went spreading far and wide that winged plague, that more putrid Cholera, dissipating it among thousands, who, in their turn, rushed to infect wide millions. Within three weeks Europe was a rotting charnel-house. (343)

The author of *The Yellow Danger* was not alone in displaying germ-phobia and employing the metaphor of the enemy as a germ. Other nineteenth-century writers articulated the notion of the invader as a biological entity to be combated with biological weaponry. As fire should be fought with fire, so germ-like invaders should perish by the germ itself. Although it does not refer directly to germ theory,

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[2] Although it deals with American cases, my discussion of the metaphor of immigration as germ is indebted to Kraut, particularly Chapter IV about Chinese immigration, "A Plague of Nativism: the Cases of Chick Gin and 'Typhoid Mary.' "

antecedents to Shiel's germ metaphor can be found in Charles H. Pearson's *National Life and Character* (1893). Pearson predicted in his controversial work that the rapidly increasing population of yellow and black people, particularly the Chinese, would lead to the decline of Western civilisation. Two influences feed into this pessimistic vision. First of all, Pearson had seen the Chinese thrive in the scorching tropics and Australia, an environment lethal to "the white race." Complementing this, the second law of thermodynamics predicting the heat death of the sun and the earth was extrapolated at the end of the century (Buckley 66-93). Put in Lévi-Strauss's terms, Pearson believed "hot" society would be diluted and dissipated by the overflow of "cold" society. He thought "our civilisation" would bring upon itself "the eternal calm," otherwise referred to as the day when "the higher races will lose their noblest elements" while "the lower races will predominate the world" (Pearson 363). His racial dichotomy, of "white" girdled with a fatally tainted "Black and Yellow Belt" (138), is echoed in the discourse on Asiatic cholera by his contemporary Ernest Hart. Similarly, the propagation of the idea of race or nation as a biological life found in *National Life and Character* is underscored by Benjamin Kid's *Social Evolution* (1894) and *Control of the Tropics* (1898), and Karl Pearson's *National Life from the Standpoint of Science* (1901). This fear for the global survival of the fittest race was articulated as "yellow peril." According to a *Spectator* reviewer, the foremost yellow peril propagandist, the German Kaiser, Wilhelm II, derived his views from Pearson (847). A contemporary reviewer of Shiel, L.F. Austin in the *Illustrated London News*, pointed out the resemblance between Pearson's prediction of "the conquest of Europe by the Chinese hordes" (30 July 1898) and *The Yellow Danger*.[3]

The idea of fighting fire with fire in *The Yellow Danger* was re-imported in America and generated anti-Chinese immigration propaganda novels. As Bruce Franklin suggested, Jack London's short story, "The Unparalleled Invasion" (1910) was an appropriation of *The Yellow Danger* (37). Following the tradition of war-scare novels, this story purports to be an extract from a history book of a future world. After the successful modernisation helped by Japan, China expels its Japanese instructor, just as Japan had expelled the Westerner, and begins to spread over Asia and the other continents, so that the American president decides to launch a bomb filled with a deadly germ. After this "sanitation of China," the survivors are slaughtered, and the western countries internationalise the land of China, and furthermore decide not to use the bomb again. This interrelation within the English speaking world indicates that *The Yellow Danger* is a seminal novel uniting anti-Chinese immigration novels in America and germ-phobia discourses in Britain against Asia. Interestingly both of these two interrelated texts see the world in white and yellow as if there are no hybrid people or places which challenge the dual

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[3] It was also reprinted from the press notice in front of Shiel's *The Weird O'It* (London: Grant Richards, 1902).

discourses between "we" and "they." In the next section I will move on to discuss how these ambiguous hybridities are whitewashed and subordinated in order to delimit British identity in *The Yellow Danger*.

The Chinese as the menace to British Identity

As John Seeley's criticism indicates, *The Expansion of England* into empire created the marginal hybrid spheres where English identity was seriously challenged. The late Victorian age generated "the great uniting forces" and "disuniting forces" (355) which were respectively fuelled by new imperialists and little Englanders. This tug-of-war between expansionism and contraction is also reflected in late Victorian debates about the desirability of "free trade," an economic credo which itself harmonises with belief in "the survival of the fittest." In terms of the historical context at the end of the nineteenth century, these controversies were emulated by America, the British ex-colony, and Japan, "the Britain of the East" (Shiel, 11). At this turning point, in the face of these two "enfants terribles," New Imperialists struggled to curb the decline in free trade, while Little Englanders attempted to reduce the cost of the colonies by reducing trade to the minimum.[4] The British-led free competitive market across the world was also undermined by Chinese "cheap labour." Through the two Opium wars (1840-42 and 1856-60), Britain's involvement with China brought it into the framework of the global economy, which destabilised the Chinese social and economic order and caused mass immigration to America and parts of the British Empire, such as the Malay Peninsula and Australia. As a reaction, America, land of freedom and immigration, revised its national policy and introduced another form of protectionism, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. In a similar vein of revisionism, Hay, a visionary writer, sought to incarnate the invisible hand of God and described the extermination of "the inferior races" as being due to European superior propagation efforts. Likewise, Pearson did not think that "the survival of the fittest" caused the survival of the "best" and considered that laissez-faire policy only resulted in anarchy and degeneration.

British anxiety, particularly about the Far East at the time, was expressed in *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* (1881) at the height of the anti-Chinese immigration movement in America. The author, purportedly a Chinese historian called Lang-Tung, his name probably to be seen as a pun for "lantern," depicted a junior school textbook set in China in "2881." Rather than "the story of the Chinese conquest of Britain" (Walker 100), what this witty pamphlet indicated was Britain's questionable position as a primary agent for imperialism and civilisation. According to its "history," the change of the sea tide, possibly due to the completion of the Panama Canal around the year "1981," caused Britain to have a fatally cold climate,

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[4] However, the relationship between New Imperialism and protectionism was more complicated. For further discussion, see Cain.

followed by an earthquake in London, which led to a regression into barbarism. Christianised and civilised China then sent "Chinese missionar[ies]" who devoted themselves to rebuilding Britain. This "textbook" was written in a catechism-like question-and-answer style with the final statement filled with irony insinuating the optimism of the Chinese missionaries: "in a few years' time, the blessings of Christianity and civilisation will once more be diffused throughout these interesting islands." China is represented as the copy of the coloniser by the colonised, Britain "almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha 86). In this sense, it is highly suggestive that the opening of a canal and the subsequent change of the sea tide brought down British hegemony because the opening of China changed the tide of human traffic from white emigration to yellow immigration.

From the late 1880s, these threatening mimicries were projected onto the faces of the enemy in the romances of Haggard, Kipling, Doyle, Bram Stoker. Patrick Brantlinger named their novels adventure stories with elements of the "imperial Gothic." One of the principal themes of this imperial Gothic was, according to Brantlinger, "an invasion of civilization by the forces of barbarism or demonism" (230). Stephen Arata developed the idea of decline at the hands of something primitive as "the anxiety of reverse colonization." On the other hand, Arata distinguished invasion novels, which were about invasion by non-Europeans such as *Dracula* (1897) or *The War of the Worlds* (1898), from future war novels, which depicted invasion by other imperial powers of that age. *The Yellow Danger*, however, is a good example of mixing these two types of invasion novels as it displays anxiety toward the European and Eastern countries. In the novel, Britain fights European allied forces, France, Germany, and Russia, and then unites Asians, Chinese and Japanese.

Certainly, Count Dracula also had elements of the Oriental villain as Arata has demonstrated while the earlier Sinophobic novels depicted Orientals as a horde, but Yen How in *The Yellow Danger* was virtually the first individualised villain from the Far East. This conflict between the British intelligent masculine hero and the Oriental insidious mastermind of a secret society was probably influenced by Sherlock Holmes and Professor Moriarty. Actually this yellow Moriarty in *The Yellow Danger* transmigrates into Quong Lung, a graduate of Yale and ruler of San Francisco's Chinatown, depicted in C. W. Doyle's less known novel *The Shadow of Quong Lung* (Spence 139-140), and was disseminated on both sides of the Atlantic through the most notable embodiment of yellow peril, Dr. Fu Manchu, in Sax Rohmer's novels. This theme has survived in modern times in movies.[5]

Alien villains continued to land in the heart of the British Empire in these novels. More interestingly, however, the authors themselves tended to be from the

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[5] One of its modern descendents, for example, is Dr. No in Ian Fleming's James Bond series. For Fu Manchu as a stereotype of East Asian people in the modern English speaking world, see Isaacs and Clegg.

periphery of the Empire. Conan Doyle was born in Edinburgh as a son of an Irish father. C. W. Doyle (no relation to Conan Doyle), the author of *The Shadow of Quong Lung* (1900), was Anglo-Indian like Kipling. Guy Boothby, the popular adventure story writer who wrote stories set in the Pacific or China like the Dr. Nikola series, one of the alleged models for Fu Manchu (Bronowski 49; Dixon 162), was from Australia. The "Master of Villainy," creator of Fu Manchu, Sax Rohmer, was a son of Irish parents (Van Ash 13). The author of *The Yellow Danger*, Mathew Phipps Shiel was from the West Indies, the son of an Irish father and a black mother.

Shiel's biographical details remain unknown because his autobiographical articles such as "My Life" were filled with mystification. According to *The Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Shiel was born in Montserrat in 1865, coincidentally the same year as the Jamaican Rebellion. His Irish father, according to him, holding the status of a descendant from a king, treated his only son as a king and anointed him the ruler of a small deserted island, Redonda, near Montserrat. This episode suggests that his Irish father felt the need to elevate his possibly oppressed situation just as other persecuted diasporas in America had wanted "white myths." His mother, on the other hand, was "a native of the island who appears to have been at least partially descended from slaves" (DLB 269) although Shiel hardly referred to her. Educated in Barbados, he moved to London in 1885.

One simple motivation for Shiel and other authors, as well as for Shiel's father, seems to have been the need for an Empire to compensate for their marginality and to blur the borderline of their hybrid identity. In fact, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the problems of the "nation," particularly class conflict, as John M. MacKenzie has indicated, were externalised as the problem of "empire" or race (204-5). Stereotyping the Other was transferable from class to race or gender, and vice versa, just as Irish people were racialised as beasts. Later the image of the Chinese people followed the same path. As a result, "The world became a vast adventurous playground in which Anglo-Saxon superiority could be demonstrated vis-à-vis all other races, most of whom were depicted as treacherous and evil" (MacKenzie 204).

The elimination of the Chinese race in *The Yellow Danger* is, in fact, transposed from the elimination of degenerate elements *within* British society in his first novel, *Prince Zaleski* (1895). "The S. S.," in the third story of *Prince Zaleski*, is a secret society that exists to purify humankind by killing "unfit" people; Zaleski attacks recent developments in medicine for changing the "balance" within humankind:

> Do you know that at this moment your hospitals are crammed with beings in human likeness suffering from a thousand obscure and subtly-ineradicable ills, all of whom, if left alone, would die almost at once, but ninety in the hundred of whom will, as it is, be sent forth 'cured,' like missionaries of hell, and the horrent shapes

of Night and Acheron, to mingle in the pure river of humanity the
poison taint of their protean vileness? (96-7)

The recurrent themes of the *Prince Zaleski* stories were to curse the family as the
origin of defilement combined with ambivalence about rights to wealth from the
colonies and the origin of ancestors – both crucial problems for the late Victorians in
terms of the rightful heritage of the empire. A Eugenic cull or selection after
catastrophes was also fore-grounded as the cure for and hope against degeneration.

This anxiety over disease and degeneration still prevalent in the British nation-
state at the turn of the nineteenth century caused an obsession with a "healthy body"
and a current of anti-intellectualism. In 1895, the translation of Max Nordau's
Degeneration, judging contemporary culture as morbid, gave impetus to this anti-
intellectual movement. Such a pathological dichotomy was repeated in *The Yellow
Danger*, between old evil Dr. Yen How, a graduate of English, French and German
Universities and young midshipman John Hardy, an active but uneducated genius
like Nelson. "Hardy was not a book-man; he had even a secret contempt for book-
men and book-learning" (79), but this anti-intellectualism was precisely his proof of
brilliance: "What Nelson was to the ship of wood and sails, that, it is already clear,
is this young man to the ship of steel and steam.[. . .] John Hardy is himself a
modern Battleship" (73-4). As the several references to Nelson suggest, John Hardy
was perhaps named after the well-known "Kiss me Hardy" who had heard Nelson's
will. In this sense, John Hardy was reincarnated to do his duty according to the
wishes of Nelson. Shiel repeatedly confirmed John Hardy's Englishness and the
jingoism which is exemplified in the famous line "Rule Britannia! Britannia, Rule
the waves." But interestingly, Hardy is represented as the mixture of "black" and
"white," which might be seen as the unconscious expression of Shiel's own sense of
ambiguity:

> [H]e is as essentially an English thing as the cliffs of Dover, or the
> smuts of the Black Country. No other land could have given birth
> to anything at all resembling him. He is doubly the child of
> England; for he is the child of the sea also. The sea is part of
> England. The oceans are not her boundary – they are her
> continuation. If one were to ask Mr. Hardy, "What is the breadth
> of England?" he would probably reply, "Her breadth is the
> distance between the Poles." (74)

As John Hardy is Nelson, Dr. Yen How is Napoleon in yellow, the embodiment of
the East. In addition, Yen How, "the son of a Japanese father by a Chinese woman"
(4), is predictably depicted as a hybrid chimera because "His skin was more yellow
than the yellow man's, and his brain was more white than the white man's" (11-12).

In spite of this hybridism, the "tussle between the Chinese Napoleon and the British Nelson" recycled the image of the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo, and polarised the conflict between a British hero and an Oriental villain. These relations became even more simplified and xenophobic in a later age. Sax Rohmer's Fu Manchu stories were the most infamous example. They were the representative yellow-peril literature, depicting the Oriental villain Dr. Fu Manchu's conspiracy to overturn the Western world and his battle with his rival Nayland Smith. Interestingly the first Fu Manchu novel was published in 1913 one year before World War I, using the framework of *The Yellow Danger* to portray European civil war. Considering the context, the heroic duel and the germ metaphor, it is no exaggeration to say that *The Yellow Danger* is a link between the Sherlock Holmes stories and their more xenophobic version, the Fu Manchu stories. That this Anglo-Saxon centred cartography persisted in many popular novels in the English-speaking world is attested by George Orwell's criticism of the anachronism of magazines consumed by youths in the commonwealth in his "Boy's Weeklies" (1940). However, after the duel between Holmes and Moriarty, it is noteworthy that as foreign villains such as Dracula, Yen How and Fu Manchu became more lively and impressive, the British heroes became less attractive. This suggests that British national identity was so seriously undermined by this hybridism at the turn of the century that it could not be upheld without the contrast with the un-British enemy.

Sino-Japanese Alliance: "combating originality"

I will now move on to discuss the idea that there existed a secret alliance between China and Japan, the source of yellow peril, an idea which was generated between and exacerbated by Britain and Japan. Just after the peace treaty between Japan and China in 1895 such a rumour started to emerge from China. In fact, it became so widespread in Germany and France through exaggerated propaganda that the German Kaiser Wilhelm II led the Triple Intervention to Japan in 1895 to ask for the return of Liaotung peninsula to China.

In England, there were arguments both for and against the news of an alleged union of China and Japan. For example, the *Times* reported that the secret alliance between China and Japan was largely conjectural, but later, the leading sinologist Robert K. Douglas wrote a letter opposing this idea, arguing for a review of the situation (20 April 1895). Coincidentally this letter appeared next to a review of Shiel's first novel, *Prince Zaleski*, and this perhaps helped to insinuate the idea of *The Yellow Danger* in Shiel's mind.

Returning to the newly written peace treaty between China and Japan, the assumed terror of an alliance between the two countries is clearly seen, for example, in *St. James's Gazette* for 6 October 1894.

> Consider what a Japan-governed China would be. Think what the
> Chinese are; think of their powers of silent endurance under
> suffering and cruelty; think of their frugality; think of their patient
> perseverance, their slow, dogged persistence, their recklessness of
> life.[. . .] And under him [the Mikado, Japanese emperor] the
> dreams of the supremacy of the Yellow Race in Europe, Asia, and
> even Africa, to which Dr. Pearson [author of *National Life and
> Character*] and others have given expression, would be no longer
> mere nightmares. (Norman 398)

As mentioned previously, a similar idea was repeated in *The Yellow Danger*,
particularly in the half-Chinese and half-Japanese character of Dr. Yen How. More
importantly, this article was reprinted in one of the representative English papers in
Japan, the *Kobe Chronicle*,[6] and quoted by the authority on the Orient Henry
Norman in his influential book *The People and Politics of the Far East* (1895).

The chapter of Henry Norman's book was suggestively entitled "Asia for the
Asiatics?" Moreover, a series of articles, in particular about the Triple Intervention,
contributed to the articulation of a Japanese anti-Western sentiment in the name of
"Asia for the Asiatics." One of the earliest examples of this Pan-Asianism was in
1895, when an anonymous Japanese writer contributed a letter, written in English, to
the *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, about a Far Eastern Triple alliance between Japan,
Korea, and China supposedly formed to oppose Western powers. In fact, such a Pan-
Asian movement was getting so powerful that on February 25, 1898 the *Times*
reported:

> Much interest appears to have been excited in Japan by an article
> recently contributed to a leading Japanese periodical by Prince
> Konoye, the president of the Upper House of the Diet or
> Parliament, on the necessity for an alliance between Japan and
> China to resist the aggression of Western nations and their
> growing aggrandizement in the Far East. His view is that the
> struggle of the future in that region will be between the yellow and
> white races, and not merely between nations. [. . .] Another
> Japanese journal, the Kokumin ["Nation," named after the
> American journal *Nation*] discussing the same topic, also urges
> that Japan should pursue towards China the policy of Prussia to
> Austria after 1866, and should seek to heal past wounds and bind
> the two countries together by friendship and commerce.

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[6] Lafcadio Hearn, well-known interpreter of Japan, discussed the article in his "Dr Pearson's Real
Views about China"; see Hearn, 145.

Probably based on contemporary political awareness of the above-mentioned articles about yellow peril, *The Yellow Danger* projected Britain's anxiety about this mimicry of "the Britain of the East." But Shiel may have seen Japan "the copyist" as appropriating and adopting the genre of invasion-scare novels like *The Yellow Danger*. For instance, published in 1898, the same year as *The Yellow Danger*, the second edition of *Things Japanese* by Basil Hall Chamberlain, which was regarded as an authority in this area, explained Japanised British "yellow peril" novels as follows:

> Sometimes the future is peered into, after the example of Lytton and the author of "The Battle of Dorking." In 1895, while Japan was busy beating China, and had convinced herself that she could beat the world, one of the Toîkyoî papers achieved a success by the publication of a serial novel entitled *Asahi-Zakura*. The heroines of this book were two Red Cross nurses, and the story that of the coming defeat of England by Japan, who, after annexing Hongkong, India, Malta, and Gibraltar, sends her fleet up the Thames to raze the fortresses there and to exact from the cowering Britishers an enormous indemnity. (263)

However, such anxiety was exorcised in *The Yellow Danger*. Oriental imitation of Western civilisation itself was keenly caricatured in *The Yellow Danger* when Dr. Yen How approaches the Japanese prime minister, Marquis Ito, with an offer of a "League of the yellow races." Yen How predicts that "the yellow" will be defeated in the coming conflict with "the white" and ridicules Ito's boasting about the strength of the Japanese navy:

> "The white and the yellow – there are no others. The black is the slave of both; the brown does not count [. . .] when the day comes that they stand face to face in dreadful hate, saying, 'One or other must quit this earth,' shall I tell you which side will win?"
> "Which do you think?"
> "The white will win, Marquis."
> "Perhaps I differ from you," said the Marquis Ito.
> "Ah! you differ from me. [. . .] You great men in Japan are trying to copy them[the white], straining your poor necks to come up with them; but I have passed my life in studying them, – and I've got something to tell you; listen to it: you cannot, Marquis, you cannot, you cannot!"
> "Our Navy already–" began the Marquis.

> "Poh! your navy! Who built for you? It was they. Your Navy is
> like a razor in the hands of an ape which has seen its master use it.
> The brute may or may not cut its own throat with it." (11-12)

The folly of an ape imitating its master may allude to the orangutan in Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and this would reinforce the ironic metaphor of the mission of civilisation. Applying this metaphor to the eventual eradication of the Asian forces by germs in *The Yellow Danger*, the ape's attempt to kill its master is foiled, resulting in its own death. This theme was repeated again in Hardy's final war against Yen How; "the enemy were imitators, acquainted with tactics recommended in books, incapable, he [Hardy] conceived, of originating, incapable of combating originality" (322). Identity crisis was thus avoided by an old fable. *The Yellow Danger* relieved the audience of anxiety by confirming that an imitation of Britain could never emulate the original however much the copyist would long for it.

Conclusion

As we have seen, M.P. Shiel's *The Yellow Danger* was the archetypal yellow peril novel in Britain. It mixed elements of the standard anti-Chinese immigration propaganda novels in America with British future war fiction, which had emanated from British anxiety about European powers. Appropriating the metaphor of the enemy as a germ, it articulated the danger of germs to the healthy body, while portraying immigration as germ-like invasion only in turn to be exterminated by germs, which were then in turn to be themselves regarded as a kind of elementary biological weapon. This xenophobic dichotomy fuelled by a sense of germ-phobia, however, reflected the way late Victorian identity was challenged and mutated with the expansion of England by colonised mimicry. The free trade policy, which had confirmed and glorified the British mission to civilise, was revised by the realisation that "the survival of the fittest" could bring about racial and cultural degeneration. I have argued that these crises of domestic degeneration and imperial anxiety were polarised and simplified to a battle between a British hero and a foreign villain in popular novels. Through the likening of Chinese hordes to germs personified in the Oriental villain Dr. Yen How, John Hardy was constructed as an embodiment of Britishness. In other words, in order to relieve the British reader of anxiety over ambiguity towards their national identity *The Yellow Danger* contributed to portraying an ambiguous sphere as a black-and-white situation by constructing a hybrid imitation that could not successfully emulate the original Britain. Nevertheless, this claim of the text's Anglo-centricism, British superiority over the hybridity, became less assertive when the author's multi-national background was considered. The author of *The Yellow Danger* succeeded in copying earlier sinophobic and germ-phobic discourses to create an original novel, and yet he was

from the West Indies. This contradictory interrelatedness between the text and the author aptly represents late Victorian national identity and its crisis.

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