***Boxers and Saints* Test Review**

1. Why is it that we categorize certain actions based on beliefs as fanatical or manic while we see others as more justifiable or pure? Discuss Bao, Four-Girl/Vibiana, and at least two contemporary world issues.
2. Many classical tragedies deal with the role that divine justice plays in the lives of the protagonists. Defying the gods or breaking an oath brings about justifiable suffering, while maintaining beliefs or standing up for what is right brings a “reward”. Bao’s “tragic story” is subverted when it is revealed that he didn’t die for his cause ***or*** die for his crimes, so he is neither a tragic hero (martyr) nor tragic villain (with a death justified by his infractions). **Pick one of the following** questions about ***justice*** to answer…

* We have a tendency to sympathize with people who feel strongly enough about their beliefs to die for them. But in Boxers & Saints, both Little Bao and Viviana die (or in Bao’s case, seem to die). For whom do you feel most strongly for, and why?
* Why did one of Little Bao’s oaths survive, but not the others?
* Discuss Father Bey. Does Bey’s willingness to insult the religion of others while trying to promote and convert others to his own religion may make his execution more justifiable than the death of Four-Girl/Vibiana or the seeming death of Little Bao? What justice is expressed in this death?

1. Make a chart to define the following literary terms. How does each fit Boxers and/or Saints? How does it fit another tragic story with which you are familiar?

Hamartia

Peripeteia

Anagnorisis

Foil

1. **Choose one of the following** questions about love and isolation in *Boxers & Saints*.

* How were Bao and Four-Girl’s actions driven by love?
* What do you feel is more important, love for another person, or love for your country? Do you feel differently about this at the end of *Boxers* than you did at the end of *Saints*?
* Just as Saint Joan was seen as a fanatic for her beliefs, what is the degree to which Vibiana’s beliefs are faith, obsession, or fanaticism? What about Little Bao’s?

1. **Choose one of the following** questions about death and violence in *Boxers* & *Saints*

* Bao engages in violence as a means to rid his country of foreign influence. Are there occasions in which engaging in violence is appropriate to achieving your goals? Would we see Bao differently if he were not the protagonist of *Boxers*? For instance, if we looked at the story form the point-of-view of the colonists and missionaries, would Bao’s violence be seen as unprovoked and unnecessary? Would the colonists’ violence be seen as solely as self-defense and thus more justifiable than Bao’s? When that opposite story is told in *Saints*, what did you then think of Little Bao?
* Four Girl/Vibiana’s life ends when she is unwilling to relinquish her faith. In Bao’s quest to rid his country of foreign infestation, he feels that she has surrendered herself to the filth of the colonists and missionaries and betrayed her people. Throughout history, traitors have been sentenced to death. Is Four-Girl/Vibiana’s death a noble death? Would she be seen as a martyr? Is Bao wrong in execution Four-Girl/Vibiana? To arrive at your answer, consider the following ways language may influence your answer: Is Four-Girl/Vibiana’s death a murder or an execution? Does she die a traitor or does she die a martyr?

1. **Choose one of the following** questions about nationalism and knowledge in *Boxers & Saints*.

* Boa and Huang are both discomforted by the thought that China will no longer be pure because of the influence of missionaries and colonists. While the history of colonial occupation – as tied to missionary endeavors – shows that their fears may be well placed, can purity ever really exist in any country? Consider that borders ultimately are ideas and not physical objects, and that people migrate both within and between countries. However, we are also looking at the question through a lens influenced by twenty-first century knowledge and the influence of globalization. Is it right to want to fight for purity in the form of nationalism? Would it have been more justifiable to do so in the 1800s than in today’s world? What is it that purity means anyway, and when can someone become impure (or even a traitor)?
* Can a desire for purity really be a fear of knowledge and new ideas? Huang is a notorious figure in world history because of his desire to cleanse China of all scholars and knowledge. Which of Boa’s actions gained Huang an ultimate victory? How and why does Four-Girl turn her back on Chinese culture and embrace foreign culture and knowledge? Is it ever acceptable to turn your back on knowing more about one’s own culture in order to learn more about another? Should we ever fear exposure to new ideas that challenge our existing beliefs, even if these beliefs are the foundation of our national ideology? Is there ever an occasion when destroying knowledge – even if to help us destroy and enemy – is acceptable? Should leaders determine what knowledge people in their county have access to?