

THE CRITICAL RECEPTION OF LAFCADIO HEARN OUTSIDE JAPAN

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Preface

Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904) is frequently depicted in the Japanese language literature as the “best” foreign interpreter of Japan. His reputation in the West today, however, is very different. To most Western readers Hearn is either forgotten or obscure, while Western Japanologists often dismiss him as unworthy of serious study because of his poor knowledge of Japanese and the non-academic nature of his work.¹

In his *Rediscovering Lafcadio Hearn* (1997) and *Lafcadio Hearn in International Perspectives* (2007), Hirakawa Sukehiro, a leading Japanese researcher, has attempted to reconcile the Japanese and Western understandings of Hearn.² It is significant that Hearn’s international lapse into critical obscurity is a postwar development. He was once popular in the West, especially after Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05). His works were translated into several European languages, and were widely read in Europe in the 1920s. Hirakawa takes issue with the negative image that Western readers have of Shintô, Japan’s native religion. Since Shintô was used and abused by Japan’s wartime militaristic ideology, it has become largely taboo in the postwar West (as indeed in Japan) to speak favorably of it. This is one reason why Hearn, who celebrates Shintô as the core of Japanese culture, came to be discredited.

Yet, it is naïve to suggest that Hearn’s celebration of Shintô is the only cause of his contemporary obscurity outside Japan. After all, Hearn is not always identified as a militaristic propagator of Shintô. Indeed he has not infrequently been regarded as a romantic folklorist. Moreover, criticisms of Hearn may even originate from stereotyped perceptions of him rather than from any close reading of his works. Whatever the reason, Hearn is today obscure in the West, and is rarely subjected to major criticism. The real significance of Hirakawa’s books therefore lies in the fact that they were written in

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- 1 Hirakawa Sukehiro, *Rafukadio Hân – Shokuminchika kirisutokyôka bunmeikaika* (Lafcadio Hearn: Colonization, Christianization, Civilization), Kyoto: Mineruva shobô, 2004, pp. 89-104.
- 2 Hirakawa Sukehiro ed., *Rediscovering Lafcadio Hearn: Japanese Legends, Life and Culture*, Folkestone: Global Oriental, 1997. Hirakawa Sukehiro ed., *Lafcadio Hearn in International Perspectives*, Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2007.

English to make Hearn known to a non-Japanese readership. In this paper, I will examine the history of the overseas interpretations of Hearn in an attempt to identify the origin of this critical decline. I will demonstrate that Hearn played an important role in the overseas reception of Japan in the early decades of the twentieth century as well as demonstrate how his reputation has fluctuated with the socio-political realities of modern Japan.

A brief explanation may be necessary of terms such as “Old Japan” and “New Japan”. The former is a construct that was once widely used to indicate the values and traditions of pre-Meiji Japan, while the latter was used for the Westernized and increasingly industrialized Japan of the Meiji era (1868-1912) and beyond. Echoing a paradigmatic contrast between an organic *Gemeinschaft* and a mechanical *Gesellschaft*, writers such as Lafcadio Hearn are sometimes said to have idealized what they saw as Japanese “traditions”. These traditions were thought to embody an innocent and humane sensibility, which was then contrasted with the pragmatism and cold rationality of the Western civilization which has been adopted by modernizing Japan. Following the Orientalist dichotomy of a “masculine” West and a “feminine” East, “Old Japan” was perceived to be “feminine” while “New Japan” was seen as a more “masculine” construct. Needless to say, in the genderized Orientalist discourse (if not necessarily in the writings of Hearn), the “masculinity” of the West represented virtues such as cool rationality and diligence, while the “femininity” of the East represented vices such as emotive irrationality and laziness.³ Modern readers are far too sophisticated to genderize nations and geography. However, the terms “masculine” and “feminine” will be used here because they are so central to writings on and interpretations of Hearn.

1. Pre-1930s: General Reception Among the Non-Japanologists

The period before the 1930s was the era during which Hearn was most favorably received overseas. By the time he published his first book on Japan, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894), a demand for books on Japan had struck root in the Western world. An exotic interest in and thirst for knowledge about Japan, familiar or otherwise, had been evoked by the *Japonisme* that had been triggered by various international exhibitions.⁴ As Berger notes, “Novels on Japanese themes and travel books about Japan were much in demand”.⁵ Reflections of *Japonisme* include Edmund de Goncourt’s (1822-1896) monographs on *ukiyo-e* artists such as Utamaro (*Outamaro*, 1891) and Sir W. S. Gilbert (1836-1911) and Sir A. S. Sullivan’s (1852-1900) popular opera, *The Mikado* (1885), to mention only few. It is no coincidence that Hearn’s first (notable) encounter with Japan was at the exhibition in New Orleans in 1884. Moreover, Japan’s victories in the

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- 3 For a genderized reading of Orientalism, see Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity, and Representation*, New York: Routledge, 1995. Revathi Krishnaswamy, *Effeminism: The Economy of Colonial Desire*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998.
 - 4 On this matter, see, for instance, John de Gruchy, *Orienteering Arthur Waley: Japonism, Orientalism and the Creation of Japanese Literature in English*, Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2003, Chapter 1.
 - 5 Klaus Berger (David Britt trans.), *Japonisme in Western Painting from Whistler to Matisse*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 7.

Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 stimulated a curiosity about, and, in some circles, a fear of, the newly-rising nation. Hearn's books on Japan published in the 1890s and the early 1900s were well-timed to meet this new demand.

As his works were written in English for Western (largely American) readers, Hearn was not widely known by the Japanese reading public, apart from a small group of well-educated Japanese who were able to read his works in English, until the late 1920s. In the West, on the other hand, he was regarded as a reliable expert on Japan.⁶ Indeed, in 1903, he was asked to travel to the United States of America to give a series of lectures at Cornell University on Japanese culture. This trip was eventually cancelled, but the manuscript prepared for the lectures was published posthumously in 1904 as *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*. The Russo-Japanese War served to broaden greatly the range of Hearn's readers. For instance, in 1904, he was asked to give a series of ten lectures at London University (although he died before his trip was realized).⁷

While Japan's victory over a Western Power, Russia, provoked a "Yellow Peril" backlash in countries like Australia, it was well received in some intellectual circles in the West, and even interpreted as the emergence of a "Yellow Hope".⁸ It was thought that Japan's chivalrous spirit could be held up as a model for the West. Nitobe Inazō's (1862-1933) work, *The Bushidō* [Chivalry]: *The Soul of Japan* (1900) was not widely read until Japan's victories on the battlefield came to be reported in the West, but did well afterwards. Indeed, together with Hearn's works, *The Bushidō* sold, in Tsuchiya's term, "explosively" (*bakuhatsuteki*).⁹ Okakura Tenshin's (1862-1913) *Japanese Spirit* was also published in 1905 with an introduction by George Meredith (1828-1909). According to Earl Miner, it "told the English about the spiritual basis for the courage of the Japanese soldiers at Port Arthur".¹⁰ Jawaharlal Nehru's (1889-1964) account below, written in 1905, illustrates the breadth of Hearn's readership:

Japanese victories stirred up my enthusiasm and I waited eagerly for the papers for fresh news daily. I invested in a large number of books on Japan and tried to read some of them. I felt rather lost in Japanese history, but I liked the knightly tales of old Japan and the pleasant prose of Lafcadio Hearn.¹¹

6 A Japanese translation of Hearn's works was first published from 1926 to 1928. See Koizumi Yakumo (Tanabe Ryūji *et al.* trans.), *Koizumi Yakumo zenshū* (The Complete Works of Koizumi Yakumo), eighteen volumes, Tokyo: Daiichi shobō, 1926-28.

7 Sekita Kaoru, "Rafukadio Hân, Koizumi Yakumo, nenpu" (Lafcadio Hearn, Koizumi Yakumo, A Chronological Record), in Hirakawa Sukehiro ed., *Koizumi Yakumo jiten* (Koizumi Yakumo Encyclopedia), Tokyo: Kōbunsha, 2000, pp. 703-31, at pp. 724-25.

8 De Gruchy, *Orientalizing Arthur Waley*, pp. 26-27. For the Yellow Peril in Australia, see, for instance, Alison Broinowski, *The Yellow Lady: Australian Impressions of Asia*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992.

9 Tsuchiya Naoto, "Hân no hen'yō" (Hearn's Transition), *Mugendai* (Infinity), no. 88, 1991, pp. 137-144, at p. 138.

10 Earl Miner, *The Japanese Tradition in British and American Literature*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1958, p. 39.

11 Jawaharlal Nehru, *Toward Freedom: Autobiography of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1941/1963, pp. 29-30.

The Spanish author, Enrique Gomes Carillo (1873-1927), who visited Japan in 1905 inspired by Japan's victory over Russia, also mentions Hearn favorably in his *El Japon Heroico y Galante* (Japan, Heroic and Gallant).¹² Such was the general enthusiasm about Japan that Hearn gained a wide readership. Here, however, questions emerge. Why did those readers who became interested in Japan because of its victory in war read Hearn? Why did those interested in this newly rising power take so much pleasure in Hearn's idealization of "Old Japan"? One possible answer is that the victory in the Russo-Japanese War was not attributed to the modern technology or advanced weaponry that Japan had recently acquired. Rather, it was attributed to the ethos of Japanese culture. As de Gruchy notes, "Bushido was among the Japanese cultural traits most frequently cited in contemporary discourse as explanation for the stunning Japanese military victory".¹³ This is why Hearn's depiction of Japan did not disappoint the demands of the age. Nevertheless, as will be discussed below, even after the martial aspects of Japanese culture were acknowledged, a majority of Hearn's Western readers continued to view "Old Japan" as representing an "Eastern femininity" that had little to do with *Bushidô*.

Hearn's popularity continued into the next decade. Ichikawa Sanki, a leading researcher of Hearn, mentions the European enthusiasm for Hearn during the 1910s and 1920s, and claims that quite a few people he met in Europe were familiar with Hearn's works and had a favorable image of Japan.¹⁴ This might also be related to Japan's favorable image in England, brought about by the Anglo-Japan Alliance (1902-1921). Although Hearn was not popularly read among Japanese at this time, Japanese travellers abroad, as Hirakawa notes, "were often accosted by those who had read and loved Hearn's writings".¹⁵ Ichikawa, who started to research Hearn after his experience abroad, was one such traveller.

Moreover, as Hirakawa notes, Hearn's works were translated into several languages after the Russo-Japanese War. From the 1900s through to the 1920s, almost all of his works were translated into French.¹⁶ In his *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise* (1924),

12 Enrique Gomes Carillo, *El Japon Heroico y Galante*, n.d./1959. Kojima Keiko, "Yakusha atogaki" (Translator's Comment), in Enrique Gomes Carillo, *El Japon Heroico y Galante*, Kojima Keiko trans., *Hokori takaku yûga na kuni, Nihon – kaima mita Meiji Nihon no seishin* (Gallant and Gracious Country, Japan: A Glance at the Spirit of Meiji Japan), Tokyo: Jinbun shoin, 2001, pp. 213-16, at p. 213.

13 De Gruchy, *Orienteering Arthur Waley*, p. 26.

14 Ichikawa Sanki, "Hân ni kansuru kotodomo" (On Hearn), in Ichikawa Sanki, *Konchû kotoba kokuminsei* (Insects, Language and National Character), Tokyo: Kenkyûsha, 1939, pp. 135-45.

15 Hirakawa Sukehiro, "Rediscovering Lafcadio Hearn", in Hirakawa ed., *Rediscovering Lafcadio Hearn*, pp. 1-57, at p. 3.

16 Hirakawa Sukehiro, "Yume no Nihon ka genjitsu no Nihon ka – Hân 'Eigo kyôshi no nikki kara'" (A Dream Japan or A Real Japan? Hearn "From Diary of an English Teacher", *Mugendai* (Infinity), no. 88, 1991, reprinted in Hirakawa Sukehiro ed., *Sekai no naka no Rafukadio Hân* (Lafcadio Hearn from a Worldwide Perspective), Tokyo: Kawade shobô, 1994, pp. 12-54, at p. 15.

Louis Cazamian mentioned Hearn favorably.¹⁷ Indeed, such was the enthusiasm in France that when Tokyo Imperial University dismissed Hearn in 1903, a French newspaper, *l'Aurore*, criticized the university for its “national ingratitude”.¹⁸ In Germany, too, his works were widely read following the Russo-Japanese War.¹⁹ By 1925, fourteen works including *Kokoro* and *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* had been translated into German. As of 1923, forty thousand copies of Berta Franzos’s translation of *Kokoro* published under the same title in 1905, and sixty thousand copies of her *Das Japanbuch* (1911), a collection of Hearn’s works, had been published. This makes a sharp contrast with the two collections of Hearn’s works that were published in German after the Second World War in 1973 and 1978, of which 10,000 and 15,000 copies were published, a small number in absolute terms when compared with the figures from the mid-1920s, but even more so considering the larger population and higher literacy rate of postwar Germany.²⁰ By 1908, Hearn had become “somewhat of a sensation” in Vienna, where a “Hearn-Gemeinde” (Hearn community) had been established.²¹ According to Webb, Hearn’s German popularity originated in doubts about “the unlimited progress of science, liberalism and human reason”.²² For example, one German critic noted in 1908:

Read the three books by Lafcadio Hearn (...) In short, pamper yourself apart from the dirty bustle of Berlin for a week (...) In these Anglo-American times, the danger of becoming paralyzed by rage and shame can be thereby postponed for a considerable time.²³

Note that modernization here is attributed to Anglo-American culture. (As we will see below, this has much in common with one interpretation of the Irish idea of modernization.) In 1922, the influential Frankfurt school philosopher, T. W. Adorno (1903-1969), wrote a play, “Kimiko”, an adaptation of a short story by Hearn of the same title about a self-sacrificing Japanese girl named Kimiko (Adorno’s play remains unpublished). This too can be read as a criticism of modern Germany.²⁴

17 Hirakawa, “Rediscovering Lafcadio Hearn”, p. 11.

18 Joseph de Smet, *Lafcadio Hearn: L’homme et l’oeuvre*, 1911, Nishimura Rokurô trans., *Rafukadio Hân – sono hito to sakuhin* (Lafcadio Hearn: The Man and His Works), Tokyo: Kôbunsha, 1990, p. 6.

19 Kathleen M. Webb, *Lafcadio Hearn and His German Critics: An Examination of His Appeal*, New York: P. Lang, 1984, p. 69.

20 Webb, *Lafcadio Hearn and His German Critics*, pp. 15-20.

21 Webb, *Lafcadio Hearn and His German Critics*, p. 69.

22 Webb, *Lafcadio Hearn and His German Critics*, p. 54.

23 Rene Schickele, “Hanako”, *Die Schaubühne*, vol. 4, no. 11, 1908, pp. 291-93, cited in (and translated by) Webb, *Lafcadio Hearn and His German Critics*, pp. 49-50.

24 Tokunaga Matoko, “Tetsugakusha Adoruno ni gikyoku – Hân gensaku ‘Kimiko’ o hon’an” (The Philosopher Adorno’s Play: An Adoption of Hearn’s “Kimiko”), *Asahi shimbun*, Evening issue, 17 May 2000, p. 15.

Hearn's works also stimulated the imagination of other notable Western intellectuals such as Albert Einstein (1879-1955) who visited Japan in 1922, invited by the Japanese publisher Kaizōsha. Upon his arrival in Kobe, Einstein remarked that he wanted to see with his own eyes the beautiful Japan that he had read about in the works of Hearn.²⁵ Einstein's writings on Japan resemble those of Hearn, in his admiration for what he saw as traditional virtues struggling to survive in the face of modernization. "Japan was wonderful" he wrote. "Refined customs, lively interest in everything, intellectual naivety but good intelligence – a splendid people in a picturesque land".²⁶

The legendary film star, Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977), also moved by Hearn, visited the country a decade later. In his autobiography (1964), he describes his motives, saying "I had read a book about Japan by Lafcadio Hearn, and what he wrote about Japanese culture and their theatre aroused my desire to go there".²⁷ Chaplin was, however, disappointed not to find "the reputed mystery" that he had been led to expect.²⁸ What he saw instead was a modernizing Japan, slavishly imitating the West. While the Anglo-Irish poet W. B. Yeats (1865-1939) never visited Japan, he was interested enough to correspond with Hearn, whom he admired. In the "Introduction" to his drama "The Resurrection" (1934), Yeats comments that "All nations believed in the re-birth of the soul and had probably empirical evidence like that Lafcadio Hearn found among the Japanese".²⁹ Having similar interests such as "a longing to repudiate industrialized life", Yeats superimposed the spirituality of "Old Japan" (as depicted by Hearn) on that of the Ancient Celts.³⁰ Yeats' stance stimulated a later mobilization of Hearn to promote an Irish nationalism (see below). Another example of Hearn's wide readership in the pre-war West can be seen in the example of the Bloomsbury novelist, E. M. Forster (1879-1970). He mentioned Hearn, together with Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), Comte de Mirabeau (1749-1791) and others, in his short story criticizing the mechanization of society, "The Machine Stops", as one of "ten great minds".³¹

What is the significance of Hearn's popularity during the 1910s and 1920s? De Gruchy's explanation of the popularity of Arthur Waley's (1889-1966) 1925 translation

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- 25 Albert Einstein, cited in Kaneko Tsutomu, *Ainshutain shokku – Taishō Nihon o sawagaseta 43 nichikan* (The Einstein Shock: 43 Days that Stirred Taishō Japan), vol. 1, Tokyo: Iwanami gendai bunko, 2005, p. 31.
- 26 Einstein, letter to M. Solovine, 1923, cited in Albrecht Fölsing (Ewald Osers trans.), *Albert Einstein: A Biography*, New York: Viking, 1997, p. 528.
- 27 Charles Chaplin, *My Autobiography*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1964, p. 362.
- 28 Chaplin, *My Autobiography*, p. 366.
- 29 W. B. Yeats, "The Resurrection", *Wheels and Butterflies*, London: Macmillan, 1934, pp. 106-07.
- 30 R. F. Foster, "Foreword", in Paul Murray, *A Fantastic Journey: The Life and Literature of Lafcadio Hearn*, Folkestone: Japan Library, 1993, pp. xi-xiv, at p. xii.
- 31 E. M. Forster, "The Machine Stops", in E. M. Forster, *Collected Short Stories of E. M. Forster*, London: Sidwick and Jackson, 1947, pp. 115-58, p. 146. Though published after the Second World War, "The Machine Stops" (and other stories included in this collection) were, in Forster's own terms, "written at various dates previous to" the First World War. E. M. Forster, "Introduction", in Forster, *Collected Short Stories of E. M. Forster*, pp. v-viii, at p. v.

of *The Tale of Genji* provides a hint.³² De Gruchy explains the success of Arthur Waley's translation as due to the fact that it functioned as "a romantic escape in prose from the aftershock of war and what Lafcadio Hearn called 'the monstrous machine-world of Western life'"'.³³ After the technological slaughter of the First World War, many Europeans became disenchanted with mechanical civilization and sought a haven from it. Indeed, as Mark Mazower notes, the First World War forced a reevaluation of the definitions of and links between concepts such as Westernization, modernization, and civilization.³⁴ Meiji Japan had believed that to be recognized as "civilized", it had no choice other than to Westernize and modernize. Now, however, the non-Western world, and in particular Asia, seemed to provide an alternative model of civilization – one that was civilized but not modern and certainly not Western. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), Mazower continues, "described the European conflict as suicidal, the product of excessive competitiveness and a love of violence fed by an addiction to industry and science".³⁵ The "peaceful, civilized, and nonindustrial" world of *The Tale of Genji* matched the emotional needs of Europeans after the war, and presented an "alternative order" which might replace the modern "masculine" civilization that had caused such devastating disaster.³⁶ The praise of "femininity" and "feminine" virtues emerged from this postwar backlash against "masculinity" and martial virtues. This marked a significant step away from the values embedded in the Orientalist dichotomy of a "masculine" West and a "feminine" East. In the years following the First World War, the West came to represent negative values such as violence and destruction, while positive values such as sensibility and pacifism came to be attributed to Japan (or the East). This explains the favorable reception of Hearn during this period. Admiration for Hearn was based on his avocation of the "feminine" virtues of Japan. Einstein and Forster were interested in Hearn because they harboured grave doubts about modernization and mechanization. Adorno's interest in Hearn too, according to Tokunaga, is due to his criticism of a mechanical modernization.³⁷ The Western reception of Hearn during this period had much in common with its later reception of Japan, in that both stress the problem of modernization.

2. Pre-1930s: Among Japanologists

How did contemporary Japanologists respond to Hearn? Unlike postwar Japanologists who have deemed Hearn as unworthy of serious attention, those of the pre-1930s era viewed him favorably. Hearn's close friend and noted English Japanologist, Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850-1935), famously praised him in 1905 as follows:

32 Lady Murasaki (Arthur Waley trans.), *The Tale of Genji*, London: Allen, 1925.

33 De Gruchy, *Orienteering Arthur Waley*, p. 119.

34 Mark Mazower, "Paved Intentions: Civilization and Imperialism", *World Affairs: A Journal of Ideas and Debate*, Fall 2008, pp. 72-84.

35 Rabindranath Tagore, cited in Mazower, "Paved Intentions", p. 79.

36 De Gruchy, *Orienteering Arthur Waley*, p. 119.

37 Tokunaga, "Tetsugakusha Adoruno ni gikyoku", p. 15.

Never perhaps was scientific accuracy of detail married to such tender and exquisite brilliancy of style (...) Lafcadio Hearn understands contemporary Japan better, and makes us understand it better, than any other writer, because he loves it better.³⁸

Here, Hearn is depicted as a reliable observer of Japan who combines “scientific accuracy” with an “exquisite brilliancy of style”. Another noted Japanologist, Edward Morse (1838-1925), also speaks highly of him. Morse was a biologist who was an early promoter of Darwinism in Japan. Morse’s sympathy with Hearn is partly due to this Darwinian stance. In the Japan of the late nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries, there was a strong antagonism in Japan’s Western community between Christian missionaries on the one hand and Darwinians (and other proponents of evolutionism) on the other.³⁹ Hearn and Morse, as proponents of evolutionism, were much more sympathetic to “pagan” Japan than were the missionaries. In a paper published in 1900, Morse notes:

Lafcadio Hearn, of all writers on Japan, has successfully portrayed the spirit of the Japanese. He has for the first time defined the more subtle thoughts and emotions of this people. Those who are most familiar with the Japanese had recognized these qualities, but were utterly unable to transcribe them into English utterance, or even formulate them, and the marvelous way in which Hearn has recognized and expressed these delicate emotions places him far above all other writers on the subject.⁴⁰

Though it is true that, as a result of Hearn’s evolutionary stance, “the majority of the large contingent of [contemporary] missionaries spoke of him with horror”, some missionaries were sympathetic to Hearn.⁴¹ William Elliot Griffis (1843-1928), the author of *The Mikado’s Empire* (1876), was an American missionary who admired Hearn.⁴² In a book review (1905) of Hearn’s *Japan*, he praised Hearn as:

38 Basil Hall Chamberlain, *Things Japanese: Notes on Various Subjects Connected with Japan*, fifth edition, London: Kelly and Walsh, 1905, p. 65.

39 Ôta Yûzô, *E. S. Mōsu – “Furuki Nihon” o tsutaeta shin-Nichi kagakusha* (E. S. Morse: A Pro-Japanese Scientist Who Introduced “Old Japan”), Tokyo: Liburopôto, 1988, p. 209. John Ashmead also notes that “[t]he Japanese very quickly discovered European arguments against Christianity and used them with the missionaries”. John Ashmead, *The Idea of Japan 1853-1895: Japan as Described by American and Other Travellers from the West*, New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1987, p. 376.

40 Edward S. Morse, “A Valuable Work on Japan”, *Boston Herald*, 10 January 1900.

41 Margaret Emerson, “Lafcadio Hearn’s Funeral”, *The Critic*, vol. 46, no. 1, January 1905, pp. 34-38, at p. 34.

42 William Elliot Griffis, *The Mikado’s Empire: A History of Japan from the Age of Gods to the Meiji Era (660 BC – AD 1872)*, New York: Harpers & Brothers, 1876, reprinted Berkley, California: Stone Bridge Press, 2006.

keenly sensitive to beauty and extraordinarily rich in emotional life, while his intellect, superbly disciplined, controlled his being, his career, and his work (...) In a word, Lafcadio Hearn outdoes the missionaries in dogmatism, exceeds even the hostile propagandist in telling the naked truth. Devoted friend of Japan, he excels the sworn enemies of her religions in laying bare, though with admiration, the realities.⁴³

Despite their differing view of Christianity and paganism, Morse and Griffis share in common the idea that Hearn's depiction of Japan reflects "the naked truth" and "the realities".

The only notable criticism of Hearn by a contemporary Japanologist was published by the American philosopher and noted connoisseur of traditional Japanese art, Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908). Though he admits to the "unique beauty and value" of Hearn's writings, he claims his vision of Japan is limited. Fenollosa is unhappy about "the absence of the faculty which sees the relations of part to whole", thinking of Hearn's interest in the common people and his purported neglect of high culture or the "national ideals" of Japan. According to Fenollosa, the *ukiyoe* pictures like those of Hokusai and Hiroshige in which Hearn took such delight, depict "the life of the moment, charming and sweet, but with no outlook". In these pictures, there is none of the "aspiration and splendor of eleven centuries of Japanese art". Thus "Hearn's picture of Japan is of but one half only", and misses "the heart of its significance".⁴⁴ These remarks echo those of Inoue Tetsujirō (1855-1944), a leading pre-war philosopher, who noted in 1943 that Hearn "could not go so far as to understand the real greatness of Eastern spirit" and "did not reach the supreme state of Eastern spirit".⁴⁵ It may not be a coincidence that Inoue was one of Fenollosa's students.

Japanologists of this era thus consistently took Hearn seriously, in accordance with the general mood that welcomed Japan as a newly rising power, but at the same time emphasized its "feminine" sensibility. This again may be linked with the post-war Western aversion to materialism and modern mechanical civilization. When Hearn is criticized, as is seen in the example of Fenollosa, it is not because Hearn appreciated Japan, but because Hearn did not appreciate Japan deeply enough.

43 William E. Griffis, "Two Books on the New Japan", *The Critic*, vol. 46, February 1905, pp. 185-86, at p. 185.

44 Ernest Fenollosa, "Recent Books on Japan", *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 75, June 1895, pp. 830-41, at p. 834. This paper was originally published anonymously, but later research demonstrated that it was by Fenollosa. See Murakata Akiko, "Fenollosa to Hân no shinshutsu tokumei shohyô" (Fenollosa and Hearn's Anonymous Reviews Uncovered), *Lotus*, vol. 11, 1991, pp. 1-21.

45 Inoue Tetsujirō, "Koizumi Yakumo to kyû Nihon" (Koizumi Yakumo and Old Japan), in Inoue Tetsujirō, *Kaikyûroku* (Memoirs), Tokyo: Shunjûsha shuppan kyôyô zôsho, 1943, pp. 232-58, at p. 258.

3. Post-1930s and Postwar: General (Non-Japanologists)

The popularity of Hearn in the West, however, started to decline in the 1930s when Japan embarked on a new and sustained period of foreign aggression. Both the softer, “feminine” Japan of *Japonisme* and the brave, chivalrous Japan lauded as the “England of the East” were replaced in the Anglo-Saxon imagination by a German or Prussian Japan, a brutal, fascist, and imperialistic Yellow Peril with Nazi characteristics.⁴⁶ Indeed, Arthur Waley, the translator of *The Tale of Genji*, who used to speak favorably of Japan, began to call the Japanese “the Nazis of the East”.⁴⁷ The dichotomy of the East (Japan) and the West (Anglo-Saxon nations) had now become a contrast between the negative “masculinity” of a savage nation and the positive “masculinity” of civilized nations. Such being the case, Hearn’s works came to be regarded as “enemy literature” (*tekisei bungaku*) in England and America because of his excessive praise for “Old Japan”.⁴⁸ Moreover, as Hirakawa notes, Japan and Hearn were treated as one, and the Anglo-Saxon hatred of Japan was (automatically) directed to Hearn.⁴⁹ In his well-known essay, “An Enemy of the West: Lafcadio Hearn” (1930), Matthew Josephson depicts Hearn as “a belated romanticist” who opposed the white race and their civilization, and instead romanticized the “primitive” societies of “colored people”, including that of the Japanese.⁵⁰ He notes:

He [Hearn] had been interested from the first, through his studies in folklore, in the forms of human society and the evolution of customs, and this had led him, with troubled mind, to question Western civilization in all its aspects. Where others had complacently accepted the elevated railway or the underground as monuments to human intelligence, he had preferred the “backwardness” of tropical people.⁵¹

Thus Josephson’s essay captures the mood of the era which was hostile to Japan and Hearn. Ironically, however, Hearn gained new readers in China due to Japan’s foreign aggression. According to Ryû, it was during the 1930s, when the Sino-Japanese relationship was in decline, that Hearn was most widely read in China.⁵² Like the wartime American Japanologists, the original purpose of Chinese readers was “to know

46 Ironically, this does not mean that Nazi Germany had a positive image of Japan. Hitler, for instance, viewed the Japanese as a second-class people. See Alvin D. Coox, “The Pacific War”, in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 6, *The Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 315-382, at p. 336.

47 Arthur Waley, “Worse than People Think” (1942?), cited in De Gruchy, *Orienteering Arthur Waley*, p. 161.

48 Ikeno Makoto, *Koizumi Yakumo to Matsue jidai* (Koizumi Yakumo and the Matsue Period), Tokyo: Chûseikisha, 2004, p. 290.

49 Hirakawa, “Yume no Nihon ka genjitsu no Nihon ka”, p. 15.

50 Matthew Josephson, “An Enemy of the West: Lafcadio Hearn”, in *Portrait of the Artist as American*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1930, pp. 199-231, at p. 199.

51 Josephson, “An Enemy of the West”, p. 219.

52 Ryû Gan’i, *Koizumi Yakumo to kindai Chûgoku* (Koizumi Yakumo and Modern China), Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2004, p. vii.

the enemy”.⁵³ However, Hearn’s works were received as something more than a simple means of knowing the enemy. Hearn came to appear not only as a propagator of Japan, but as “the Interpreter of the East” or “the first Westerner who could understand the Eastern heart”.⁵⁴ Behind this positive view lies a conflict faced by modern China as well as modern Japan. Ryû explains:

In examining the transition of Chinese society after the nineteenth century, the rejection and acceptance of Western culture has always been a significant theme. In the face of the overwhelming power of Western civilization, the Chinese were obliged to move away from their traditional culture.⁵⁵

Thus the Chinese reception of Hearn was an ambiguous one: Hearn’s works were often regarded as propaganda for Japanese imperialism, yet he was also accepted with much sympathy as “the Interpreter of the East”. He appeared as a defender of Chinese (or broadly Eastern) values threatened by modernization and Westernization. Here lies modern China’s paradoxical view of Japan. On the one hand, Japan stands as a carbon copy of Western imperialism. On the other, it appears as an Oriental comrade in the fight to protect Eastern values against the destructive impact of Western civilization.

Hearn’s reputation in the West further declined in the 1940s, when Japan attacked the United States. Arthur Kunst explains his declining reputation during the war as follows:

The great Pacific war with Japan in the 1940s seemed for a time to have obliterated Hearn from the American consciousness, a kind of guilt over a youthful infatuation. The misleading notion of Hearn as a spokesman of Japan left him without literary defenses when Japan and things Japanese became the enemy.⁵⁶

According to Kunst, Hearn came to be discredited not only because Hearn and Japan were treated as one, but because readers found Hearn’s writings “misleading”. It was thought that nothing in Hearn’s depiction of a “feminine” Japan had prepared his readers for its militaristic aggressiveness. As Daniel Stempel notes, “Nearly two decades of Japanese military aggression in China and the Pacific have destroyed the romantic picture of the quaint, childlike Japanese”, which was replaced with the “view of the Japanese as subhuman barbarians”.⁵⁷ Here there was no room for Hearn’s depiction of the “good” Japanese. As Joseph Grew, the last pre-war American ambassador to Japan, noted in 1944, the American public was “in no mood to hear anything good about Japan

53 Ryû, *Koizumi Yakumo to kindai Chûgoku*, p. x.

54 Ryû, *Koizumi Yakumo to kindai Chûgoku*, pp. 10, 134.

55 Ryû, *Koizumi Yakumo to kindai Chûgoku*, pp. ix-x.

56 Arthur Kunst, *Lafcadio Hearn*, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1969, p. 126.

57 Daniel Stempel, “Lafcadio Hearn: Interpreter of Japan”, *American Literature*, vol. 20, no. 1, March 1948, pp. 1-19, at p. 1.

or the Japanese”.⁵⁸ Thus, Hearn’s Japan came to be discredited as unrealistic and his reputation in the West, as one of his biographers notes, “went into eclipse” after the Second World War.⁵⁹ We can see the reflection of the general view of Hearn as a mere romanticist in the remarks of the noted American critic, Edmund Wilson (1895-1972), who mentions Hearn in his book, *Patriotic Gore* (1963) as “romantic and atmospheric” and with “no scientific interest in social phenomena”.⁶⁰

Not everyone, however, ceased to take Hearn seriously. For example, William W. Clary, American lawyer, author, and university administrator, published a paper titled “Japan: The Warnings and Prophecies of Lafcadio Hearn” in 1943.⁶¹ This paper regrets America’s failure to grasp “the significance of Japan’s rise to world power”, in that America had failed to study the enemy well enough.⁶² By introducing what he thought was a reliable source on Japan, that is, the works of Hearn, Clary tried to enlighten the American people. What is notable here is that, unlike many of his contemporaries who dismissed Hearn as an unrealistic romanticist, Clary finds in Hearn a “prophecy” about Japan’s military aggression. He notes:

This important body of [Hearn’s] writings which might have created in America an informed and intelligent opinion about Japan has been strangely ignored except by a few book collectors and others whose interests were primarily in literature and folklore.⁶³

According to Clary, it was not Hearn’s writings that were problematic, but rather the way in which they were read. Despite the fact that Hearn is a “masculine” political figure who warns Americans to prepare to face Japan’s awakening military might, his works had only been the object of an exotic curiosity in a “feminine” culture. It had been possible to read Hearn’s works as a warning about Japan, however, from the beginning of the twentieth century. In “The Future of the Far East” (1894) and other works, Hearn insisted that the Japanese (and the “Oriental” generally) could survive better than the Westerner because they could live on a poor diet and in much worse conditions.⁶⁴ This opinion was read as a warning about the “rising tide” of Asia by some Westerners such as Lothrop Stoddard. In Stoddard’s *The Rising Tide of Color: Against White World-*

58 Grew, cited in Nakamura Masanori (Herbert P. Bix *et al.* trans.), *The Japanese Monarchy: Ambassador Joseph Grew and the Making of the “Symbol Emperor System”, 1931-1991*, Armonk, New York and London: M. E. Sharp, 1992, p. 35.

59 Murray, *A Fantastic Journey*, p. 23.

60 Edmund Wilson, *Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War*, London: Andre Deutsche, 1962, p. 560.

61 William W. Clary, “Japan: The Warnings and Prophecies of Lafcadio Hearn”, *Claremont Oriental Studies*, no. 5, April 1943, pp. 1-17.

62 Clary, “Japan”, p. 1.

63 Clary, “Japan”, p. 2.

64 Lafcadio Hearn, “The Future of the Far East”, a speech given at Kumamoto Daini High School on 27 January 1894, available at http://www.kumamotokokufu-h.ed.jp/kumamoto/bungaku/y_future.html.

Supremacy (1920), Hearn's work is cited as a warning about the influx of "the Asiatics" into "white lands" such as America and Australia. Stoddard notes, "[t]he whole problem is summed up in Lafcadio Hearn's pregnant phrase: 'the East can *underlive* the West'". In other words, the "white race" would lose the Darwinian competition for survival if such an efficient competitor were allowed into their lands.⁶⁵ According to Hashimoto, Stoddard influenced California's Immigration Act of 1924 (1924-1952) – known as the *hainichi iminhô* (literally the Anti-Japanese Immigration Act) in Japan.⁶⁶ It is ironic that those such as Clary and Stoddard who did not dismiss Hearn as unrealistic but took him seriously, did in fact harbor anti-Japanese sentiments. This makes a contrast with Hearn's readers in the previous era whose admiration of Hearn was inseparable from their admiration of Japan.

Hearn's works were also received seriously and politically by an individual sympathetic to Japan. After the war, one member of the GHQ (General Headquarters) in charge of the Allied Occupation, Bonner Fellers (1896-1973), used Hearn's works as a grammar book to "read" Japan and the Japanese.⁶⁷ One of the greatest debates in the period leading up to and during the early occupation of Japan revolved around the issue of whether or not to abolish the Emperor System. On the one hand, the Emperor System was perceived as a despicable symbol of wartime Japanese militarism and therefore, it was said, it was crucial to abolish it in order to democratize Japan. On the other hand, however, it was seen as a useful means to rule Japan, and democratization policies, it was claimed, might be carried out more smoothly with, rather than without, it.⁶⁸ It has been argued that Fellers, who had been recommended by a Japanese friend to read Hearn, drew on Hearn's books in finding a solution. Having discovered how important

65 Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color: Against White World-Supremacy*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920/1921, pp. 275-76. Stoddard also cites the following lines from Hearn: "A people of hundreds of millions disciplined for thousands of years to the most untiring industry and the most self-denying thrift, under conditions which would mean worse than death for our working masses – a people, in short, quite content to strive to the uttermost in exchange for the simple privilege of life" (p. 29).

66 Hashimoto Yorimitsu, "Rafukadio Hân to kôka ron – Hân no jiji hihiyô to sono juyô o megutte" (Lafcadio Hearn and Yellow Peril: On Hearn's Political Essays and their Reception), *Herun* (Lafcadio Hearn), extra edition, 2004, pp. 50-52, at p. 51. Though the Immigration Act aimed at restricting the migration not only of Japanese but also Southern and Eastern Europeans and other Asians, it was primarily aimed at Japanese immigrants. See Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1977.

67 See Okamoto Shirô, *Heika o osukui nasaimashi – Kawai Michi to Bonâ Ferâzu* (Please Save the Emperor: Kawai Michi and Bonner Fellers), Tokyo: Shûeisha, 2002 and Hirakawa Sukehiro, *Heiwa no umi to tataikai no umi – 2.26 jiken kara "ningen sengen" made* (Sea of Peace and Sea of War: From the February 26 Incident to the "Renunciation of Divinity"), Tokyo: Shinchôsha, 1983, Chapter 3.

68 On this matter see Yamagiwa Akira and Nakamura Masanori eds., *Shiryô Nihon senryô 1 – Tennôsei* (Materials on the Occupation of Japan 1: The Emperor System), Tokyo: Ôtsuki shoten, 1990. This is a collection of materials on the occupation from various libraries and archives in America, Australia, Britain and Japan.

the Emperor System was in Japanese culture, he advised the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers in occupied Japan, General Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964), to preserve it. According to Whelan, this is one of the reasons the GHQ decided to preserve the Emperor System as the Symbolic Emperor System and to protect the Emperor.⁶⁹ While historians such as Nakamura Masanori demonstrate that internal GHQ politics were much more complex than Whelan allows for, and decisions about the Emperor may have been made long before MacArthur arrived in Japan, Fellers does seem to have played a role in influencing McArthur about the fate of the Emperor in the face of opposition from other allies such as Australia.⁷⁰ (Any impact Hearn may have had on Fellers's thinking, of course, remains open to debate.)

During the occupation, it has been reported that the branch office of the GHQ in Shizuoka Prefecture made inquiries to the local library about Hearn's books.⁷¹ Though it is not known whether their interest in Hearn was due to the influence of Fellers, it seems certain that the GHQ tried to read Hearn in order to learn about Japan.

Thus Hearn came to be interpreted in two very different ways: he was either a romantic blind to the realities of modern Japan, or a realist who saw the essence of the nation and understood how dangerous it could be.

4. Post-1930s and Postwar: Japanologists

The general mood of antipathy to militarism also impacted on the opinions of Japanologists. Though Basil Hall Chamberlain had previously spoken highly of Hearn, he changed his views in the 1930s. In the 1939 edition of his *Things Japanese*, he criticized Hearn as a person who "in righting the Japanese", seems to have continually "wrong[ed] his own race".⁷² Moreover, he concluded that the Japan Hearn depicted in early works such as *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, was nothing but what "he [Hearn] imagined he saw".⁷³ Chamberlain continues:

Pity only that Lafcadio lacked the sense of reality, or rather he saw details very distinctly while incapable of understanding them as a whole. Not only was this the case mentally but also physically. Blind of one eye he was extremely short-sighted of the other (...) His life was a succession of dreams which ended in nightmares.⁷⁴

69 Charles V. Whelan, "A Profile of Lafcadio Hearn", in Sean G. Ronan ed., *Irish Writing on Lafcadio Hearn and Japan: Writer, Journalist and Teacher*, Folkestone: Global Oriental, 1997, pp. 12-29, at pp. 28-29.

70 Nakamura, *The Japanese Monarchy*.

71 Kitayama Hiroaki, "Yakumo kinenhi (Ekimae) ni tsuite" (On The Yakumo Memorial (In Front of the Station)), *Yakumo*, no. 1, 1988, pp. 16-19, at p. 18.

72 Basil Hall Chamberlain, "Lafcadio Hearn", *Things Japanese*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1939, pp. 295-298, at p. 297.

73 Chamberlain, "Lafcadio Hearn", p. 296.

74 Chamberlain, "Lafcadio Hearn", p. 296.

Whereas Chamberlain had once extolled Hearn's "scientific accuracy", he now dismissed Hearn as a mere dreamer, blind to realities. Hirakawa attributes the change to the fact that Chamberlain's younger brother, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, "who had married Eva, the daughter of Richard Wagner, (...) became a naturalized German citizen and was extremely vocal in his anti-British propaganda" after the outbreak of the First World War.⁷⁵ Hirakawa argues that Chamberlain, being a patriotic Englishman, "began to detest any Britisher who renounced their British nationality to become a naturalized citizen of an enemy country" and "could well have developed an animosity towards Lafcadio Hearn, who had detested Great Britain, when Japan in the 1930s became increasingly aggressive towards the British Empire".⁷⁶ As was the case with his feelings toward Japan, Hearn's feelings towards Britain were also much more complex than allowed by Chamberlain's depiction. Nevertheless Chamberlain's remark had a great influence upon views of Hearn, and many books on Hearn today mention this "bitterness of disillusionment" as a characteristic of his later years.⁷⁷

Among American Japanologists, Hearn came to be regarded as a romantic unworthy of serious attention. For example, in a co-authored book, *A Selected List of Books and Articles on Japan in English, French and German* (1940), Edwin O. Reischauer depicts

Hearn as a writer who "is responsible for the traditional romantic view of Japan".⁷⁸ Donald Keene, who also attributes to Hearn the Western image of Japan as the "mysterious East", refuses to take Hearn seriously.⁷⁹ In an interview held in 1993, Keene says:

I do not think much of Koizumi Yakumo [Lafcadio Hearn]. He is not studious. His stories are nothing but a dictation of what his wife told him, as he did not study the Japanese language. What is more, he spoke ill of Japan in letters to his British friend. At one time, there were some who called me the second Koizumi Yakumo. This is outrageous.⁸⁰

"The second Koizumi Yakumo" is a term used to describe foreign interpreters of Japan who are identified as being as good as Hearn who is the "best". In other words,

75 Hirakawa, "Rediscovering Lafcadio Hearn", p. 10.

76 Hirakawa, "Rediscovering Lafcadio Hearn", p. 11.

77 Hirakawa, "Rediscovering Lafcadio Hearn", p. 11.

78 Edwin O. Reischauer, Hugh Borton, and Serge Eliseeff, *A Selected List of Books and Articles on Japan in English, French and German*, Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1940, p. 56.

79 Donald Keene, *Aoi me no Tarô kaja* (Tarô with Blue Eyes), Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 1976, p. 33. Also see Donald Keene, *On Familiar Terms: A Journey Across Cultures*, New York: Kôdansha, 1994.

80 Ôhira Kazuto, "Donarudo Kîn – Watashi wa dai-ni no Koizumi Yakumo de wa nai" (Donald Keene: I am not a Second Koizumi Yakumo), *Ushio* (Tide), no. 407, February 1993, pp. 372-77, at p. 377.

this is a term of compliment. Yet Keene, who takes pride in his knowledge of Japanese and the academic nature of his own Japanese studies, is clearly displeased with this description, and is eager to differentiate himself from Hearn. This contempt for Hearn is shared by many British Japanologists, who hold up Hearn as an example of what to avoid. As George Hughes notes, in some circles in Britain, “Hearn represents exactly what a mediator and commentator on Japan should *not* be”.⁸¹ In the collection of essays, *Britain and Japan 1859-1991* (1991), there is pointedly no chapter on Hearn. Instead, he is mentioned incidentally in the chapter on Chamberlain as follows:

[I]n comparison to a man like Lafcadio Hearn, who actually became naturalized as a Japanese citizen, he [Chamberlain] never lost sight of his own Europeaness. It was precisely the lack of balance in Hearn, the way in which the villain was always either the westerner or Christianity, with which he [Chamberlain] took issue.⁸²

Arthur Waley dismissed Hearn, in Keene’s terms, “as a hopeless romanticist who had never understood Japan”.⁸³ It is interesting to note that those who dismissed Hearn as unworthy of attention began to emphasize Hearn’s poor knowledge of the Japanese language, which was clearly not so significant an issue in the pre-1930 era. As Hirakawa notes, postwar Japanologists take pride in their knowledge of the Japanese language, and believe that their study of Japan is more “scientific” than that of Hearn.⁸⁴

Nevertheless, it is not true to say that Hearn was completely ignored by postwar Japanologists. In fact, one of the most influential post-war books on Japan, Ruth Benedict’s *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946), is said to have been heavily influenced by Hearn.⁸⁵ According to Tsukishima Kenzō, though Benedict cites Hearn only once in the text, her view of Japan is heavily influenced by him.⁸⁶ Benedict’s Japan is a society which is completely “different” from the West because of its inscrutable *samurai* ethic, such as loyalty and self-sacrifice. Unlike Hearn, who extolled these characteristics, Benedict, who wrote her book during the war, naturally sees them as dangerous. Here Benedict follows the tradition of reading into Hearn’s writings a warning about the “Yellow Peril”.

81 George Hughes, “Lafcadio Hearn: Between Britain and Japan”, in Hirakawa ed., *Rediscovering Lafcadio Hearn*, pp. 72-82, at p. 74.

82 Richard Bowring, “An Amused Guest in All: Basil Hall Chamberlain”, in Sir Hugh Cortazzi and Gordon Daniels eds., *Britain and Japan 1859-1991: Themes and Personalities*, London and New York: Routledge, 1991, pp. 128-36, at pp. 133-34.

83 Keene, *On Familiar Terms*, p. 145.

84 Hirakawa Sukehiro, “Atogaki” (Afterword), *Koizumi Yakumo Seiyō dasshutsu no yume* (Koizumi Yakumo: The Dream of Escaping from the West), originally published by Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1981, reprinted, Tokyo: Kōdansha gakujuetsu bunko, 1994, pp. 399-411, at pp. 408, 410.

85 See, for instance, Stempel, “Lafcadio Hearn”. Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture*, Singapore: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1946/1974.

86 Tsukishima Kenzō, *Rafukadio Hân no Nihon kan* (Lafcadio Hearn’s View of Japan), Tokyo: Keisō shobō, 1964, pp. 366-67.

In Earl Miner's *The Japanese Tradition in British and American Literature* (1958), Hearn is not only mentioned favorably and frequently, but a section is also dedicated to him.⁸⁷ John Ashmead's *The Idea of Japan 1853-1895: Japan as Described by American and Other Travellers from the West* (1987) favorably mentions Hearn.⁸⁸ Scott Wright's *Japan Encountered: A Brief (and Highly Selective) Survey of Famous Westerners in the Land of the Rising Sun* (1996), favorably treats Hearn and devotes one chapter to him.⁸⁹

Other admirers of Hearn remind us of the pre-1930s mindset. C. W. Nicole (1940-), a Welsh author who was naturalized as a Japanese in 1995, first came to Japan in 1962 inspired by Hearn's works.⁹⁰ Nicole says that "he came to wish to mingle with Japanese, reading the stories [by Hearn] that mention the gentleness, honesty, and loyalty of the Japanese".⁹¹ Unlike the admirers of Hearn in the pre-1930s era, when the general image of Japan was favorable, Nicole fell in love with Japan in early postwar Britain when negative images of a brutal and sadistic Japan were rampant. Indeed, his mother discouraged Nicole from becoming involved with Japan, asking him to keep away from the culture of such a "cruel and dreadful nation".⁹² Bernard Leach (1887-1979), an English potter who is sometimes called a "modern Hearn", also first came to Japan in 1909 inspired by Hearn's works (Leach stayed there until 1920 and visited Japan occasionally after).⁹³ His admiration for Hearn remained undiminished even after the war. In 1973, when he made his last visit to Japan, he wrote a poem expressing his personal gratitude to Hearn.

Poor Hearn!
 When he died
 He had no Friend
 I have grown old (86)
 With so many Friend (*sic*)
 I may not come

87 Miner, *The Japanese Tradition in British and American Literature*. See especially, "Hearn's Synthesis of Science and Impressionism in Japanese Buddhism".

88 Ashmead, *The Idea of Japan 1853-1895*.

89 Scott Wright, *Japan Encountered: A Brief (and Highly Selective) Survey of Famous Westerners in the Land of the Rising Sun*, Maryland: University Press of America, 1996.

90 See C. W. Nicole, *Hokori takaki Nihonjin de itai* (I Want to be a Noble Japanese), Tokyo: Art Days, 2004. See especially, the section (in the first chapter), "Rafukadio Hân to hajimete no Nihon" (Lafcadio Hearn and My First Trip to Japan), pp. 28-66. In a Special Edition of the literary magazine, *Bungei shunjû* (Literary Spring and Autumn), "Watashi ga aisuru Nihon" (The Japan I Love), published in 2006, one Greek individual says that he came to Japan inspired by Hearn's works. Andreas Tsiamakias, "Rafukadio Hân ni kyôkan" (Feeling Sympathy with Lafcadio Hearn), in *Bungei shunjû* (Literary Spring and Autumn), Special Edition, "Watashi ga aisuru Nihon" (The Japan I Love), vol. 84, no. 10, August 2006, pp. 137-39.

91 Nicole, *Hokori takaki Nihonjin de itai*, p. 42.

92 Nicole, *Hokori takaki Nihonjin de itai*, p. 17.

93 Suzuki Sadahiro, "Bânâdo Rîchi" (Bernard Howell Leach), in Hirakawa ed., *Koizumi Yakumo jiten*, pp. 676-79.

This way again
Before it is too late
Thank you Hearn!⁹⁴

This pre-1930s mindset can still be seen. In his *Japan Through the Looking Glass* (2007), the noted British anthropologist Alan Macfarlane praises Hearn's depiction of Japan as "a mysterious world of magical otherness" and compares his own Japanese experience to that of Alice in Wonderland. He heavily relies on Hearn (and other contemporaries of Hearn) as reliable interpreters of Japan rather than the more "scientific" postwar Japanologists.⁹⁵

Thus there are three views of Hearn. The first dismisses him as a romantic dreamer, the second takes him seriously and politically without any sympathy, and the third emphasizes the literary and "feminine" side of Hearn, yet nonetheless takes him seriously.

5. The Literature on Hearn and Recent Trends in Research

In this last section, I will briefly mention the literature on Hearn outside Japan. Literary criticism in book form includes works from soon after his death and continues to the present.⁹⁶ There are also a large number of papers on Hearn including works from the early postwar years and pieces much more recently published.⁹⁷ The first biography is *The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn* by Hearn's friend, Elizabeth Bisland, published in 1906. This was followed by several major works.⁹⁸

94 Cited in Suzuki, "Bânâdo Rîchi", p. 678.

95 Alan Macfarlane, *Japan Through the Looking Glass*, London: Profile Books, 2007, p. 9.

96 See, for instance, Edward Thomas, *Lafcadio Hearn*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1912, Carl Dawson, *Lafcadio Hearn and the Vision of Japan*, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992, Beongcheon Yu, *An Ape of Gods: The Art and Thought of Lafcadio Hearn*, Toronto: Wayne State University Press, 1964, Vera McWilliams, *Lafcadio Hearn*, New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1970, Webb, *Lafcadio Hearn and his German Critics*, Ronan ed., *Irish Writing on Lafcadio Hearn and Japan*, and Ryû, *Koizumi Yakumo to kindai Chûgoku*.

97 See, for instance, Stempel, "Lafcadio Hearn", Allen E. Tuttle, "Lafcadio Hearn and the Ethics beyond Evolution", *English Poetry*, no. 2, December 1949, Roger Pulvers, "A Divided Reputation, Lafcadio Hearn: Interpreter of Two Disparate Worlds", *The Japan Times*, 19 January 2000, pp. 17-21, Rodger Steele Williamson, "Contemporary Perspectives of Lafcadio Hearn's America", *Herun* (Lafcadio Hearn), 2004, extra edition, pp. 114-17, and Roy Starrs, "Lafcadio Hearn as Japanese Nationalist", *Japan Review*, no. 18, 2006, pp. 181-213.

98 See Elizabeth Bisland ed., *The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn*, Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1906, Nina H. Kennard, *Lafcadio Hearn*, London: Nash, 1911, Edward Larocque Tinker, *Lafcadio Hearn's American Days*, New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1924, Orcutt William Frost, *Young Hearn*. Tokyo: Hokuseido, 1958, Elizabeth Stevenson, *Lafcadio Hearn*, New York: Macmillan, 1961, Kunst, *Lafcadio Hearn*, Robert A. Rosenstone, *Mirror in the Shrine, American Encounters with Meiji Japan*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988, and Murray, *A Fantastic Journey*.

Contrary to the common romantic image of Hearn, several researchers deal with Hearn's more scientific aspects. Allen E. Tuttle's "Lafcadio Hearn and the Ethics beyond Evolution" (1949) focuses on Hearn as an evolutionist, and Roy Starrs' "Lafcadio Hearn as Japanese Nationalist" (2006) depicts Hearn as an advocate of political nationalism in Japan. Moreover, Beongcheon Yu's *An Ape of the Gods* (1964) stands out for its full-scale analysis of Hearn as a thinker with the socio-political realities of the Japan of his day in mind.

What is notable as a recent trend is the portrayal of Hearn as an Irish nationalist in *Irish Writing on Lafcadio Hearn and Japan* (1997) edited by Sean G. Ronan. Although the book does not necessarily discuss politics *per se* and in fact discusses Hearn as a folklorist, the depiction of the author is not entirely devoid of politics. For example, Dunne stresses how important Hearn's "Irish background" was to his life and literature.⁹⁹ O'Reilly, another contributor, notes that Hearn's works are "undoubtedly influenced by Irish folklore".¹⁰⁰ Hearn is mobilized in an attempt to re-evaluate traditional Irish culture and to fight English imperialism. Until recently Hearn researchers in Japan and the West have either ignored his Irish background or have attributed his hatred for the West to that for his Anglo-Irish father.¹⁰¹ Here, however, the hatred is only directed at England or Anglo-Saxon culture. For example, Hayley says that Hearn detested "all that was cold, Anglo-Saxon, [and] northern", which obviously implies that which is opposed to Irish or Celtic values.¹⁰² In Paul Murray's critical biography of Hearn, *A Fantastic Journey*, Hearn is depicted as a figure who opposed Western imperialism and appreciated Japanese culture with the help of a Celtic sensibility.¹⁰³ Murray understands Hearn's Japan to be "morally and spiritually superior" to the West.¹⁰⁴ By that he clearly implies an Irish moral superiority over England. What is interesting here is the use of Hearn as a vehicle of nostalgia in defense of a native culture that was either neglected or denigrated by Western (English) imperialism. This trend has certainly affected Hearn studies in Japan. Although, as Tsuruoka notes, "it has been a taboo to discuss Hearn in

99 Sean Dunne, "Preface", in Ronan ed., *Irish Writing on Lafcadio Hearn and Japan*, pp. xiii-xx, at p. xvii.

100 Anthony J. F. O'Reilly, "Opening of the Lafcadio Hearn Library in the Embassy of Ireland, Tokyo", in Ronan ed., *Irish Writing on Lafcadio Hearn and Japan*, pp. 97-99, at p. 98.

101 For example, see Hirakawa Sukehiro, "Seiyō shijōshugi o yurugasu Hân" (The Hearn who Threatens "Euro-centrism"), *Yomiuri shimbun*, March 1994, reprinted in Hirakawa Sukehiro, *Chūgokujin erito gakusei no Nihonkan* (Elite Chinese Students' Views of Japan), Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 1997, pp. 198-202.

102 Barbara Hayley, "Lafcadio Hearn, W. B. Yeats and Japan", in Ronan ed., *Irish Writing on Lafcadio Hearn and Japan*, pp. 75-96, at p. 77.

103 Murray, *A Fantastic Journey*, pp. 156, 157.

104 This emphasis on Hearn's Irishness is viewed by some as a forced interpretation. For example, George Hughes, an English Japanologist, once sarcastically mentioned Murray as a "fervent nationalist (...) biographer" who "hope[s] to claim him [Hearn] as a true born Irishman". Hughes, "Lafcadio Hearn: Between Britain and Japan", p. 74. In another paper, Hughes claims that "Hearn himself was not a Celt" and "had no interest in Irish nationalism". George Hughes, "'Hearn as Critic' and Other Articles", in *Hikaku bungaku kenkyū* (Studies on Comparative Literature), no. 60, November 1991, pp. 18-33, at p. 25.

relation to Ireland, simply because he hated his [Anglo-Irish] father”, Japanese critics have begun to identify Hearn as Irish.¹⁰⁵ For example, Hirakawa Sukehiro, who used to stress Hearn’s (alleged) hatred of his Irish father, started to attribute Hearn’s anti-materialism and spiritual nobility to his Celtic background. In 1998, he noted:

although Hearn hated to admit it, what he called Greekness in him was in reality often something Celtic. For as Lévi-Strauss argued recently, Celtic things form the old layer and have taken a much deeper root in European culture than any superficial knowledge of classical Greece.¹⁰⁶

Another notable trend is discernable in those who treat Hearn as an object of intercultural interest and depict Hearn as a sensitive, “feminine” figure. Members of this group tend to write for a popular rather than an academic audience, and, unlike the critics above, completely depoliticize Hearn. They are interested in the intercultural problems that Hearn purportedly experienced in Japan and treat Hearn as a symbol of an individual who experienced suffering and self-alienation in his adopted country. For example, Rosenstone’s *Mirror in the Shrine* (1988) depicts Hearn’s life in Japan – from his early infatuation to his later disillusionment – in the form of a narrative. Christopher Benfey’s *The Great Wave* (2003) devotes a chapter on Hearn, focusing on his intercultural experience in Japan.¹⁰⁷ Roger Pulvers’s *Tabi suru bôshi* (Traveling Hat, 2000) is a novel that focuses on Hearn’s life in Japan.¹⁰⁸ What is notable about these three works is that the romanticized, intercultural experience of Hearn rather than biographical accuracy is emphasized. Kenneth M. Roemer’s *A Sidewalker’s Japan: Matsue, Hearn, Hiroshima* (2002) is Roemer’s own travelogue in Japan and has nothing directly to do with Hearn.¹⁰⁹ However, he dedicated his book to Hearn and superimposes Hearn’s life in Japan on his own Japanese experience, calling Hearn his “shadow sidewalker” (*kage no dôkôsha*). Here again, what matters to Roemer is Hearn as a symbol. This view of Hearn has permeated the West to a degree. Alison Broinowski,

105 Tsuruoka Mayumi (a talk with Nishi Masahiko), “Keruto no nishi, Shinshinai no minami – Kureôru suru peiganisuto” (West of the Celts and South of Cincinnati: A Creole Paganist), in *Yuriika* (Eureka), vol. 27, no. 4, April 1995, pp. 170-89, at p. 170.

106 Hirakawa Sukehiro, “Girishajin no haha wa Nihon kenkyûsha Hân ni totte nani o imi shita ka” (What did it mean to Hearn, the Japanologist, to have a Greek mother?), *Kokubungaku* (National Literature), vol. 43, no. 8, 1998, pp. 6-18, at p. 15. In a letter to his brother, Hearn attributes the “good” in himself to the “dark race-soul” that is his Greek mother. That is, it is “[m]y love of right, my hate of wrong; – my admiration for what is beautiful or true; – my capacity for faith in man and woman: my sensitiveness to artistic things” which makes [me] “the nobler man”. Elizabeth Bisland ed., *The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn*, vol. 1, Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1906, pp. 10-11.

107 Christopher Benfey, *The Great Wave: Gilded Age, Misfits, Japanese Eccentrics and the Opening of Old Japan*, New York: Random House, 2003, p. 213-37.

108 Roger Pulvers (Uesugi Hayato trans.), *Tabi suru bôshi – shôsetsu Rafukadio Hân* (Traveling Hat: A Novel on Lafcadio Hearn), Tokyo: Kôdansha, 2000.

109 Kenneth M. Roemer, *A Sidewalker’s Japan: Matsue, Hearn, Hiroshima*. First written in 1995 and translated into Japanese by Ichikawa Hiroyoshi as *Michibata de deatta Nihon – Matsue, Hân, Hiroshima*, Tokyo: Sairyûsha, 2002.

an Australian commentator, uses the term “Hearn syndrome” to indicate a foreigner’s early infatuation with an adopted country which ends with a later disillusionment.¹¹⁰

Though Hearn studies are not as lively in the West as in Japan, some good, balanced research does attempt to cover Hearn’s more pragmatic, political aspects. Recently he has been mobilized in discussions of Irish nationalism and intercultural conflict. The Western reception of Hearn, though only little by little, is changing.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the history of the overseas reception of Lafcadio Hearn. His works were sometimes read favorably, and other times unfavorably. Hearn has been depicted as a romantic figure *and* as a pragmatic thinker. His works have been appreciated by lovers of Japan, but also denounced by them. There were times when his works were treated seriously by those antagonistic to Japan, and times when they were scorned by them. His Japan has been seen as “masculine” as well as “feminine”. Some stopped reading his works because of his pro-Japanese stance, others discovered in them a warning about the Yellow Peril. Hearn’s evaluation thus fluctuated, while the individual texts this evaluation was based on remained the same. I believe that the fortunes of few other authors have been as closely related to changes in the socio-political realities in Japan and elsewhere and received in as many various ways.

Judging from the history of the receptions of the author, the obscurity of Hearn is not so much due to Hearn and his works *per se*, but to his image and reputation as well as the changes of fashion in the thinking of overseas intellectuals. Japan is no longer as beguiling a topic as it was during the “golden age” of *Japonisme* or after the Russo-Japanese War. Western readers today no longer sympathize with Hearn’s soaring praise of Japan. Another reason Hearn fails to appeal to today’s readers is that his works are considered to be overly and naively romantic. Indeed, a general shift in interest and emphasis from the humanities to the social sciences is one notable characteristic of postwar Japanese studies. Even works that might traditionally be categorized as belonging to the humanities are often imbued with strong political arguments, as is seen in the example of two recent prize-winning books on modern Japanese history, John Dower’s *Embracing Defeat* (1999) and Herbert Bix’s *Hirohito* (2000).¹¹¹ As we have seen above, however, Hearn’s works have not always been dismissed as romantic. Basil Hall Chamberlain in 1905 praised Hearn for his “scientific accuracy”, and many other

110 Broinowski, *The Yellow Lady*, p. 103. Referring to the Australian author, Hal Porter, Broinowski notes:

Like Hearn, he [Porter] had ingested an image of Japan that was part propaganda, part wish-fulfillment. Any slip from this idealized perfection would bring disillusionment, as it did for Hearn. The phenomenon became known as the Hearn Syndrome.

111 John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Allen Lane, 1999. Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*, New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 2000.

pre-1930s Japanologists admired his depiction of Japan. Moreover, his works were read as a warning against the “Yellow Peril” and they had a great impact on the anti-Japanese movement in the West later on. After the war, they were read as texts which arguably helped the United States to successfully negotiate the Occupation of the Japan.

The most dominant factor responsible for Hearn’s obscurity, however, is the impact of the Second World War. The memory of Japan’s wartime calumnies is so strong in the West (and elsewhere) that Hearn’s Japan seems out of place. For Western readers, Japan’s appreciation of him is nothing more than an example of national narcissism. Indeed, it was because of this narcissism that Ôta Yûzô authored *Basil Hall Chamberlain* (1998) as a counter-argument.¹¹² Here Ôta criticized Hearn’s romanticized view of Japan, saying that Hearn’s “works appealed to the [Japanese] reader’s emotion more than his intellect”.¹¹³ Hirakawa too is aware of the shortcomings of Japanese narcissism, saying that “the more local Yakumo fans idealize Hearn blindly and worship him, the more suspicious the West becomes about Hearn and his Japanology”.¹¹⁴ Here, there seems no room for a Hearn who praised Shintô, Japan’s native religion, and the worship of the Emperor. Hirakawa is perhaps right in attributing Hearn’s obscurity in the West to its negative image of Shintô. Despite his initial problematization, however, Hirakawa’s discussion on Shintô does not go beyond mentioning the Western prejudice. Those who want to revive Hearn’s reputation, like Hirakawa, need to show what Shintô really is so as to correct its association with brutal militarism.

Over the years of appreciation and depreciation of Hearn, a fresh approach is required to reconcile the differences between the Western and the Japanese receptions of the author. Fortunately the West’s view of Japan seems to be entering a new phase over six decades after the war. That is, the West has become more willing to take Japanese views into account. For example, in the academic world, Ian Buruma’s *Occidentalism* (2004), and A. C. Grayling’s *Among the Dead Cities* (2006) can be seen as attempts to take Japan’s position seriously.¹¹⁵ Buruma’s *Occidentalism* attempts to seek a rational explanation of the behavior of those who oppose the West and who have been dismissed as “evil” by the West. He questions why some people dislike and even hate those liberal industrial societies whose wealth and freedom everyone is supposed to enjoy. Buruma found the answer in the general social lack of high ideals or something “heroic” in such societies. Grayling’s *Among the Dead Cities* discusses the moral relevance of bombing enemy cities like Hiroshima and introduces the wartime argument for and against the killing of citizens (non-combatants). John Breen’s *Yasukuni, the War Dead*

112 Ôta Yûzô, *Basil Hall Chamberlain: Portrait of A Japanologist*, Surrey: Japan Library, 1998.

113 Ôta, *Basil Hall Chamberlain*, p. 179.

114 Hirakawa Sukehiro, “Koizumi Yakumo no kon`nichiteki imi” (The Contemporary Relevance of Koizumi Yakumo), in Hirakawa Sukehiro ed., *Koizumi Yakumo kaisô to kenkyû* (Koizumi Yakumo: Recollection and Study), Tokyo: Kôdansha gakujutsubunko, 1992, pp. 11-24, at p. 20.

115 Ian Buruma and A. Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of its Enemies*, New York: Penguin, 2004. A. C. Grayling, *Among the Dead Cities: The History and Moral Legacy of the WWII Bombing of Civilians in Germany and Japan*, New York: Walker & Company, 2006.

and the *Struggle for Japan's Past* (2008) is a collection of essays which are for and against Yasukuni.¹¹⁶ As Breen notes, the book “sets out neither to attack Yasukuni nor, indeed, to commend it”, but asks readers to judge for themselves, offering arguments for and against the topic.¹¹⁷ This is a fresh, detached approach to an issue which has long been demonized. In the world of popular culture, Clint Eastwood’s motion picture, *Letters from Iwojima* (2007), is a groundbreaking American attempt to look at the Second World War from Japan’s viewpoint. All mark a significant step away from the traditional dichotomy of a faultless and therefore morally perfect West versus an evil and subhuman Japan. What is more important is that these sympathetic representations are *not* the works of so-called revisionists, but of those who are highly critical of the totalitarianism of wartime Japan. In this new phase of Western representation of Japan, it is possible that Hearn will come to be re-examined and even re-evaluated in the West again. What is needed is something beyond the extremes of praise and denunciation that have dogged his various receptions in the past.

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116 John Breen ed., *Yasukuni, the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan's Past*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

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