

Diplomats and Poets: “Power and Perceptions” in American Encounters with Japan, 1860

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Over sea, hither from Nippon come,
Courteous, the Princes of Asia, swart-cheek'd princes,
First-comers, guests, two-sworded princes,
Lesson-giving princes, leaning back in their open barouches,
bare-headed, impassive,
This day they ride through Manhattan.¹

With these words, Walt Whitman's “A Broadway Pageant” started its description of the Japanese embassy, then visiting the United States in 1860. For Americans, Japan indeed represented “a civilization profoundly unlike their own.”² Charles Haswell later recalled “the novelty to [Americans], in that day, of things Japanese and the first appearance here of representatives of that ancient empire . . . the sense of absolute strangeness which this meeting with Japanese civilization imposed

¹ W. Whitman, “The Errand-Bearers,” *New York Times*, 27 June 1860; reprinted as “A Broadway Pageant. (Reception Japanese Embassy, June 16, 1860),” in *Walt Whitman's Drum-taps (1865): And Sequel to Drum-taps (1865-6): A Facsimile Production* (1865; repr., Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1959), pp. 61–65. This is the version cited in this study. It subsequently appeared as “A Broadway Pageant. (Reception Japanese Embassy, June 16, 1860),” in *Leaves of Grass*, 4th ed. (New York: 1867), with slight modifications in *Leaves of Grass*, 5th ed. (Washington: J. S. Redfield, 1871–1872), pp. 243–247. Final shorter title “A Broadway Pageant,” in *Leaves of Grass*, 7th ed. (Boston: James R. Osgood & Company, 1881–1882), pp. 193–196; repr. in Whitman, *Complete Poetry & Selected Prose and Letters*, ed. E. Holloway (London: The Nonesuch Press, 19—), pp. 224–227.

² W. Lafeber, *The Clash: A History of U.S.-Japan Relations* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), p. 5.

upon our most accomplished citizens in 1860.”³ Whitman’s literary style was typically soaring and multilayered, but it is not the focus of this study, which instead looks at two connected themes applicable to the 1860 events highlighted by him and others. One is the role of perceptions (also misperceptions) and “images” between countries. This has become a general concern of international relations “constructivism” theory.⁴ It has also been stimulated by scholars such as Akira Iriye and his “inner history” of “relations . . . across the Pacific.”⁵ Second is civilizational encounter, a theme made famous elsewhere by Samuel P. Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations* (1997) thesis. In 1860, the Pacific was the avenue bringing the East (Japan) to the West (the United States) and with it, issues of “geopolitics and geo-culture,” international relations “culture and identity.”⁶

Whitman’s observations in “A Broadway Pageant” followed the envoys (“guests,” verse 3) from Japan headed by Shimmi Masaoki, Lord of Bujen. They had just crossed the Pacific in the USN *Powhatan* (skippered by James Johnston) and in their own vessel the *Kanrin Maru* to formally seal the 1858 “Harris” Treaty at the White House. The subsequent Japanese processional “pageant” on 16 June down New York’s Broadway formed the other ceremonial high point of their visit to America. *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* (23 June) matched Whitman’s verses with its own visual portrayal of the massed ranks of that parade. The *New York Times* (16 June) forecast that it would “probably form one of the most novel and imposing spectacles ever witnessed in this City.” Its front page (18 June) proclaimed, “the procession was one of the finest displays of the kind ever witnessed in the City,” a “sea of humanity” of around half a million New Yorkers. For Whitman, “million-footed Manhattan, unpent, descends to its pavements . . . I

³ C. Haswell, *Reminiscences of New York by an Octogenarian (1816 to 1860)* (New York: Harper 1896), chap. 27: “1860.-Fernando Wood, Mayor”; repr. <http://www.earlyrepublic.net/octo/octo-27.htm>.

⁴ E.g., T. Hopf, “The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory,” *International Security* 23, no. 1 (1998): 171–200; J. Checkel, “The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory,” *World Politics* 50, no. 2 (1998): 324–348.

⁵ Akira Iriye states, “all international relations . . . are relations among ideas, among images people and nations have of themselves and each other. The human mind must always intervene between the world and a given policy. The role of ideas and their images, however seems particularly significant in American-Asian relations.” *Across the Pacific: An Inner History of American-East Asian Relations* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967), p. 326; Idem, ed., *Mutual Images: Essays in American-Japanese Relations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975).

⁶ I. Wallerstein, *Geopolitics and Geoculture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Y. Lapid and F. Kratochwil, *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996).

too, arising, answering, descend to the pavements, merge with the crowd, and gaze with them" ("A Broadway Pageant," verses 11, 22).

Nevertheless, the event has subsequently been underplayed. Apart from a relatively obscure article by Kearney, scant attention has been given to American perceptions in 1860 of the Japanese embassy, despite the diversity of available primary sources.⁷ This is all the more noticeable when compared to other related topics that have been more fully analyzed, such as Japanese perceptions of their 1860 embassy visit, American perceptions of Japan's "Iwakura Mission" of 1871, and the rising anti-Chinese sentiment in California during the 1850s. Similar neglect is discernible with Whitman's "A Broadway Pageant." As befitting his status as "the greatest poet America has yet produced," Whitman has had many contextual observations passed on him.⁸ However, they have usually focused on what he had to say about America and American society rather than what he had to say about other cultures and civilizations encountered across the Pacific. Even when treatment is given to his Asia-related material, it has been works such as "Passage to India" (1871) that have attracted attention, while "A Broadway Pageant" remains comparatively neglected. Nevertheless, the Japanese embassy of 1860, as reflected in Whitman's "A Broadway Pageant" and other sources, deserves serious attention precisely because it was the first embassy ("first comers," verse 3) from Japan to arrive in America—indeed, the first from the Orient.

Any talk of the West and the Orient brings into view Edward Said's influential *Orientalism* paradigm, "images" that were a "western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient . . . a discourse . . . by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically . . . militarily, ideologically . . . imaginatively."⁹ As such, *Orientalism* demonstrates the entwined nature of "power political . . . power intellectual . . . power cultural."¹⁰ Said's thesis was primarily focused on British and French

⁷ R. Kearny, "Reactions to the First Japanese Embassy to the United States," *Hito-subashi Journal of Social Studies* 26, no. 2 (1994): 87–99. P. Duus, ed., *The Japanese Discovery of America: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: St. Martins, 1997); as his title suggests, the book is mostly Japan-focused, that is, most of the materials deal with either their encounter in Japan or Japanese perspectives on the experiences of their ambassador's trip to the United States.

⁸ G. Allen and C. Davis, "Introduction to a Critical Study of Walt Whitman's Poems," in *Walt Whitman's Poems* (New York: New York University Press, 1955), pp. 1–51, quotation from p. 1.

⁹ E. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (1978; London: Penguin, 1995), p. 3. See also L. Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991).

¹⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, p. 13.

images of the Arabs and Islam in the Middle East and North Africa. There may, however, be applications from it regarding American responses in 1860 to the Japanese embassy. Joseph M. Henning's focus on nineteenth-century American observations "in Japan" of Japanese culture and society was precisely because of "the relations of power [between the two countries] inherent in these acts of observation."¹¹ John Kuo Wei Tchen's *New York before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776–1882* (1999) has looked at *Orientalism* with regard to America's encounter with China and the Chinese. Andrew J. Rotter applied the *Orientalism* paradigm more widely to American foreign policy during the twentieth century.¹² Abouali Farmanfarmaian applied Said's *Orientalism* paradigm to the 1991 Gulf War "by tracing constructs, events, images, and words to a connected accumulation in which sexuality, race, and imperialism form a coherent system."¹³ Christina Klein's *Cold War Orientalism* used "imaginative" (in her case, film) materials that help "to bridge the gap that divides the realm of foreign policy from the realm of popular culture,"¹⁴ in effect, Said's "cultural archives" or Raymond Williams's "structures of feelings."¹⁵ This study's use of poems, ballads, cartoons, and newspaper reportage aims to also bridge such a gap. Such materials also reflect Iriye's focus on "Culture and Power: International Relations as Intercultural Relations."¹⁶

"Power political" relations between countries and across regions are fluid categories, subject to change. The point then also arises of how far the arrival of the Japanese embassy in 1860 was linked to (reflecting

¹¹ J. Henning, *Outposts of Civilization: Race, Religion, and the Formative Years of American-Japanese Relations* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), p. 30.

¹² A. Rotter, "Saidism without Said: Orientalism and U.S. Diplomatic History," *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 4 (2000): 1205–1217.

¹³ A. Farmanfarmaian, "Sexuality in the Gulf War: Did You Measure Up?" *Genders* 13 (1992): 1–29; reprinted as "Did You Measure Up? The Role of Race and Sexuality in the Gulf War," in *The Geopolitics Reader*, ed. G. Tuathail, S. Dalby, and P. Routledge (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 286–293, quotation from p. 291. Cf. M. McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

¹⁴ C. Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945–1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 6–7. Also, M. Bernstein and G. Studlar, eds., *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

¹⁵ E. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), p. 51; R. Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

¹⁶ A. Iriye, "Culture and Power: International Relations as Intercultural Relations," *Diplomatic History* 3 (1979): 115–128; Also Iriye, "Culture," *Journal of American History* 77 (1990): 99–107.

and affecting) structural shifts taking place in the international system. How far were epochal changes and transitions taking place with regard to America and Japan's role in the world and also with regard to their shared arena of the Pacific, which the embassy had just traversed? Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* comes to mind, as do Admiral Alfred T. Mahan's late nineteenth-century geopolitical speculations on maritime destinies.

Bearing these geopolitical geocultural issues of power and perspectives in mind, this study looks at the "context" of "A Broadway Pageant" through three interconnected lenses: American views of their Japanese visitors, American views of Japan, and Whitman's vision of Asia and the Pacific.

AMERICAN VIEWS OF THEIR JAPANESE VISITORS

Perhaps the first point to emphasize is the interest shown in 1860 in these visitors from afar, despite a looming Civil War. Indeed, their Pacific odyssey attracted front-page treatment in the United States.¹⁷ Remsey Roe Jr.'s ballad "The Great Japanese Embassy" commenced "Hark! we hear the Zeino drum, The Japanese, they come, they come!"¹⁸ By July, Thomas Swan was telling Abraham Lincoln about the vogue for "Japaneseism . . . [a] modern *ism*."¹⁹ The *Boston Evening Transcript* (3 September 1860) was disappointed that the Japanese party had not visited New England, since "anything from Japan awakens interest and excites examination at the present time." For Whitman, the Japanese ambassadors were "celebrities of the time."²⁰

In part, the interest in the previously isolationist Japanese was because they were virtually unknown. The exotic and the curious could merge for Americans. In part it was because of the high politics involved, that is, their formal presentation at the White House, where, the *National Intelligencer* reported, "much excitement prevailed through the city all the morning, from a hope of having at least a

¹⁷ D. Winter, "The Arrival of the United States War Steamer Conveying the Japanese Embassy, at Honolulu, Sandwich Islands," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 19 May 1860, cover.

¹⁸ R. Roe, *The Great Japanese Embassy* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1860), song sheet pamphlet, verses 1–2.

¹⁹ Thomas T. Swan to Abraham Lincoln, 15 June 1860, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/malhome.html>.

²⁰ W. Whitman, "Broadway Sights," in *Specimen Days & Collect* (1882–1883; New York: Dover Publications, 1995), pp. 17–18, quotation from p. 17.

passing view of these distinguished visitors.”²¹ Similarly, from afar, the *Illustrated London News* judged that “the arrival at Washington of the Japanese Ambassadors to the United States occasioned, as might be supposed, an extraordinary sensation, not only in that city, but throughout the whole of the States.”²² Orville H. Browning told Abraham Lincoln, “of the politicians there is in this city very little care or talk about party or candidates . . . the Japanese overshadow.”²³ *Harpers Weekly* (26 May) thought “in every point of view, the visit of the Japanese is an important event . . . a matter of the highest national . . . importance.” *Scientific American* (June) stressed “the importance of the events which are now transpiring in our midst” with “our curious eastern visitors.”²⁴

One invention, a sign of Western scientific and technological prowess, was involved in this Japanese wave: “photography has enabled the people to know just how the most notable of the Japanese Embassy appear.”²⁵ Consequently, “our enterprising photographers in San Francisco, Washington and New York availed themselves of every opportunity of practicing their captivating art, and the Embassy have been taken almost en masse, in detail, and in all sorts of grouping. Whenever daylight falls on a Japanese, some photographer is watching to bring his camera into range. In Broadway the Embassy will run the gauntlet of a hundred cameras.”²⁶ The Japanese party noticed this at the Potomac Naval Yard, where “photographic lenses had been set up on the second floor of the building across from the landing place, so as to take the pictures of our arrival.”²⁷ Various individual and group photographs were taken at Charles D. Frederick’s studio in New York, with the Japanese procession down Broadway also photographed for posterity.²⁸ Did this new technology affect the type of images being generated in the American mind? As always, such matters are virtually impossible to measure or quantify, so we are left with suggestions and

²¹ “Official Reception of the Japanese,” *National Intelligencer*, 1860, p. 637.

²² “The Japanese Embassy at Washington,” *Illustrated London News* 36 (16 June 1860): 581.

²³ Orville H. Browning to Abraham Lincoln, 29 June 1860, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/malhome.html>.

²⁴ “The Japanese, Their Proficiency in Mechanics, Agricultural Sciences, etc.,” *Scientific American* 2 (23 June 1860): 407.

²⁵ “Photography and the Japanese,” *American Journal of Photography*, repr. *Photographic Journal* 6 (16 July 1860): 289.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 289–290.

²⁷ Muragaki Norimasa, *Kokai Nikki* (Diary of a Voyage Abroad), extracts in Duus, *Japanese Discovery of America*, pp. 150–161, quotation from p. 152, 25 March 1860 entry.

²⁸ E.g., <http://www.personal.psu.edu/staff/r/r/rms216/1860embassy.htm>, inc. flags.

possibilities. Perhaps the modern medium (photography) gave some association of modernity to the subject (Japan)?

The press reflected and heightened public perceptions through its plethora of reports, ballads, ditties, cartoons, and drawings. The *Southern Literary Messenger* recorded that “for weeks past the newspapers have teemed with accounts of the nation’s tawny guests.”²⁹ The Japanese seemed slightly bemused by their encounter with a vigorous “public” American press, “‘newspapermen,’ who rushed around scribbling some notes on paper, which we were told later, were to be printed and sold out on the very same day.”³⁰ Subsequently, Japan’s Iwakura Mission (1871) could indeed conclude “America is a country where many newspapers are published, and New York, especially is a city in which newspapers are widely read . . . journalists often have greater influence than politicians . . . newspapers and journals play a very vital role in the United States” as the “Fourth Estate.”³¹ American reporters followed the 1860 embassy with persistence. One *Southern Literary Messenger* journalist passed “the ‘Japs,’ as the people of Washington call them familiarly, on their way up the Potomac . . . at full speed, flags flying and drums a beating. There was a simultaneous hurrah from both boats, a fleeting glimpse of some yellow faces, and all was over. We afterwards had a better view of them at Willards [hotel] . . . and even went so far as to follow them up the Avenue until our curiosity, like that of the good people of Washington, was thoroughly satisfied.”³² Newspaper editors were also involved; for example, “a matinee was given by Mr. Bennett of the *Herald* at his residence on Washington Heights, which was held to have been a very sumptuous and successful entertainment.”³³

Humorous plays on words were created regarding the Japanese embassy. Admittedly, such puns may not have been of the highest order, as with *Vanity Fair*’s “Question: Why have the Japanese more need of Liberty than other nations? Answer: Because they lack(h)er more” or “Question: Why is the Japanese Embassy destined to accomplish its object? Answer: Because it is feted to do so.”³⁴ In a similar vein, *Harpers Weekly* (26 May) explained its spoof cartoon “NY alder-

²⁹ “Life and Literature in Japan,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 31 (July 1860): 27–35, quotation from p. 27.

³⁰ Muragaki, *Kokai Nikki*, p. 152.

³¹ Kume Kunitake, *The Iwakura Embassy 1871–73*, trans. M. Collcutt (Matsudo: The Japan Documents, 2002), 1:370–371.

³² “Life and Literature in Japan,” p. 27.

³³ Haswell, *Reminiscences of New York*.

³⁴ *Vanity Fair* 1 (31 March 1860): 215; *Vanity Fair* 2 (30 June 1860): 5.

man and Japanese visit” as concerning “Alderman Toole, who is to have charge of the Japanese in New York finds . . . in case any thing goes wrong with the reception, Japanese [samurai] etiquette requires him to perform the Happy Dispatch, i.e., rip his bowels open [*hara kiri*].” Readers would have spotted the “irony” in the advice from *Vanity Fair* that “citizens are requested, as the procession passes, to do the Kou-tou [*kow tow*].”³⁵ All this indicates that the embassy was becoming familiar enough in America for the media to use as a focus of humor for its readership.

It is of course difficult to fully ascertain what Manhattan made of the Japanese processional “pageant” down Broadway on that hot summer day. *Harpers Monthly Magazine* noted the importance of the event while being uncertain over what it would actually bring, since “no one can calculate” what “will flow from the opening of the country of Japan to the rest of the world. We can only wait, watch, and note it down upon our journal.”³⁶ The procession would have been striking and “exotic” enough, in “A Broadway Pageant” headed by its “two-sworded” (verse 3) envoys, carrying samurai swords as required by their high *daimyo* noble rank as “Princes of Asia” (verse 2).³⁷ Appropriate military honors were paid to the Japanese envoys, “thunder-cracking . . . round-mouth’d . . . fire-flashing guns . . . spit their salutes” (verses 12–14). George Templeton Strong similarly described “an imposing turnout of horses, foot, and artillery. Ditto of aldermen in barouches.”³⁸ The *New York Times* (18 July) recorded some “six thousand men of our First Division of Militia . . . besides the long lines of carriages.”

As envoys of the Japanese Empire, and determined to appropriately impress these powerful strange Western “barbarians,” Whitman would have seen the envoys “bare-headed” (verse 4) in samurai style, and quite possibly “leaning back” and “impassive” as their procession went down Manhattan. Strong’s recollection was also of how the “Japanese sat in their carriages like bronze statues, aristocratically calm and indifferent.”³⁹ Johnston noticed their similar self-control while crossing the

³⁵ “The Japanese Embassy,” *Vanity Fair* 1 (21 April 1860): 264.

³⁶ “Editor’s Easy Chair,” *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* 21 (August 1860): 411.

³⁷ E. Miner, “The Background, Date and Composition of Whitman’s ‘A Broadway Pageant,’” *American Literature* 27, no. 3 (1955): 403–405, quotation from p. 404, viewed the replacement (1871–1872 *Leaves of Grass*) of the term “Princes of Asia” with “envoys” and “nobles” as them being revealingly “demoted” by Whitman. Actually, it was a more accurate rendition of their status as still honorable envoys of the ruling Tokugawa Shogunate at Edo (Tokyo), but not of Mikado imperial bloodline at Kyoto.

³⁸ G. Strong, *Diary of the Civil War 1860–1865*, ed. A. Nevins (New York: Macmillan, Company, 1962), p. 33.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

turbulent Pacific in the *Powhatan*, where “the Japanese gave no indication of fear . . . they never uttered a syllable of complaint.”⁴⁰ Shades of the “inscrutable” image of the Japanese in America were perhaps also emerging here?

Lavish official entertainment was laid on for the Japanese embassy, in Haswell’s eyes “at extravagant prices . . . far in excess of that of any previous entertainment of the kind.”⁴¹ For Strong, the Grand Ball on 23 June “in honor of the Japanese embassy” was one where “tickets are in great demand and hardly to be got by any one who has not got an uncle or a confederate in the City Councils. It will be a showy and lavish affair.”⁴² The *New York Times* (26 June) considered it “decidedly the most magnificent display our city has ever seen.” Balladeers also noticed this, as did Roe in “The Great Japanese Embassy”: “our city fathers make these spree’s, / and fill their purse on Japanese. / . . . Uncle Sam has given spree’s, / To Ranzie-Merz-No-Kame, / Prince of all the Japanese. / . . . drink Champagne and oyster-messes.”⁴³ Similarly, “An Ode to the Japanese” had: “we’ll put you through; We’ll trot you out, / . . . Will have a grand procession down Broadway,” whilst flippantly asking, amidst champagne-flowing receptions, “Tell us in sweet communion what you think / Of all you’ve seen, and with a latent wink / Tell us, sub rosa, what you’ll take to drink— / Sweet Pagans, tell us that!”⁴⁴

Images of romance and love could be associated with these “Sweet Pagans.” *Vanity Fair* described the delegation, albeit ironically, as “pretty pretties.”⁴⁵ Similar exotic imagery came from “An Ode to the Japanese”: “We greet you as we greet the Orient breeze / Whose rustling robes have swept the perfumed seas.”⁴⁶ Sensual frissons were suggested by some observers. The *New York Illustrated News* (26 May) talked of the party becoming “quite smitten with the beautiful ladies staying at Willards” and ogling “the splendid women of Washington.” Roe’s *The Great Japanese Embassy* noted, “this copper race, with cues

⁴⁰ J. Johnston, *China and Japan: Being a Narrative of the Cruise of the U.S. Steam-Frigate Powhatan, in the Years 1857, '58, '59, and '60* (1860; repr., London: Ganesha Publishing Ltd, 2003), <http://myoutbox.net/cajhome.net>, chap. 14, 18–19 February 1860 entry.

⁴¹ Haswell, *Reminiscences of New York*.

⁴² Strong, *Diary of the Civil War*, p. 36.

⁴³ Roe, *Great Japanese Embassy*, verses 3–7, 13.

⁴⁴ “An Ode to the Japanese,” subtitled “By the Bard that Sang of Heenan” and attributed there to “C.H.W., *New York Times*,” *Living Age* 65 (9 June 1860): 611, verses 14–18, 9–12.

⁴⁵ “Boston Relieved of a Cruel Doubt,” *Vanity Fair* 1 (2 June 1860): 355.

⁴⁶ “Ode to the Japanese,” verses 1–4.

and curls, astonished Buck and Yankee girls.”⁴⁷ Consequently, in “A Week of Excitement,” *Vanity Fair* announced “women are perfectly frantic . . . There is only one woman in the city who has not seen the Japanese, and she is blind!”⁴⁸ Strong’s recollection of the Broadway procession was of how the junior members of the delegation “waved their fans to the ladies in the windows,” while the *New York Times* (8 July) considered that “the display of gaily dressed females lent a brilliancy to the scene rarely equalled.”⁴⁹

Such media “constructions” seem in retrospect a harbinger of subsequent film imagery, where Gina Marchetti argued that “Hollywood has long been fascinated by Asia . . . mysterious and exotic,” complete with its “erotic fantasies . . . sexual liaisons;” though “Hollywood’s romance with Asia tends to be a flirtation with the exotic rather than a genuine attempt at any genuine intercultural understanding.”⁵⁰ Similar flirtation seems at work in much of the media portrayal of 1860. Moreover, there was the way, for Marchetti, in which “these fantasies tend to link together national-cultural and personal fears,” becoming in its extremer forms “the threat posed by the Asian male to white women . . . a metaphor for the threat posed to western culture as well as rationalization for Euroamerican imperial ventures in Asia.”⁵¹ Here, one can note Mari Yoshihara’s *Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism* (2002), where white women’s attraction to Asia, post 1870s, involved a complex mix of “seductive” exoticism (sometimes subliminally verging on eroticism?) for the foreign Other, admiration for the refined, desire for power and control, and love and compassion for the people of Asia, whereby they found new forms of expression, power, and freedom, “a liberating potential” amidst restrictions elsewhere in their American lives.⁵² Perhaps her 1870s start point could be pushed back to the 1860 encounter with the Japanese?

Race and gender barriers could bend with Tateishi “Tommy” Noriyuki, a junior translator, who attracted particular media recognition and some hype. *Vanity Fair* judged “from Washington Heights to East Broadway, TOMMY is already a household word . . . thousands of young misses have lately undergone a thorough course of training for

⁴⁷ Roe, *Great Japanese Embassy*, verses 8–9.

⁴⁸ “A Week of Excitement,” *Vanity Fair* 1 (23 June 1860): 404.

⁴⁹ Strong, *Diary of the Civil War*, p. 33.

⁵⁰ G. Marchetti, *Romance and the “Yellow Peril!”* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 1.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵² Mari Yoshihara, *White Women and American Orientalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 17.

the purpose of developing a high order of good-looks, winning ways, graceful carriage, and irresistible smiles, against his advent.”⁵³ Consequently, it could report, “the ladies are in a state of excitement bordering on despair. They are fairly wild about Tommy.”⁵⁴ For the *Southern Literary Messenger*, “‘Tommy’ is the principal object of attraction . . . and makes himself prodigiously, agreeable to the ladies.”⁵⁵ A *New York Times* (20 August) reporter described how “he [‘Tommy’] has read many articles in the different papers speaking of the Embassy and himself” and retained hopes of “getting a Yankee wife”; he has several daguerreotypes, photographs, etc., of feminine individuals.” *Harpers Weekly* (2 June) showed a scene of “Tommy and the ladies of Washington.” Johnston, the skipper of the *Powhatan*, recognized how “he [Tommy] took captive so many of his fair admirers in our novelty [!] loving country.”⁵⁶ Saxon similarly remembered that “the highest New York women went wild over the almond-eyed young ‘Tommy,’ until one day, made bold by so much attention, he began kissing their bare shoulders right and left, creating as much consternation as a hawk in a barnyard.”⁵⁷ Tommy became “an instant sensation and the darling of the ladies” when he kissed the hand of one lady at Willards; though it is also worth noting Kearney’s serious point that “for a great many white [male] Americans, the picture of a non-white man kissing the hand of a white women was violation of one of the most sacred taboos; a black man guilty of such audaciousness would forfeit this life.”⁵⁸ Indeed, the *New York Times* eventually “pricked itself into a state of howling virtue about TATEISH ONJERO (‘Tommy’) and the love-letters of that risky young person.”⁵⁹

By 30 July, *Harpers Weekly* considered Tommy so well known that he was the subject of cartoon caricature, as with “Natural Mistakes,” where he appeared in Japanese regalia with a traditional Japanese pill-box style hat, looking at a pile of bricks, captioned “Tommy (a little how came you so [i.e., drunk]). ‘One of dem (hic) is my Hat me know; but me be (hic) if me can tell which him is.’” One could ask if familiarity was beginning to shift toward some dismissal of him and his fel-

⁵³ “Vanity Fair Welcomes the Embassy on Behalf of the Ladies,” *Vanity Fair* 1 (16 June 1860): 392.

⁵⁴ “Week of Excitement,” p. 404.

⁵⁵ “Life and Literature in Japan,” p. 27.

⁵⁶ Johnston, *China and Japan*, chap. 14, in “Tommy.”

⁵⁷ E. Saxon, *A Southern Woman’s War Time Reminiscences* (Memphis: Press of the Pilcher Printing Co., 1905), p. 12.

⁵⁸ Kearney, “Reactions to the First Japanese Embassy to the United States,” p. 93.

⁵⁹ “The Last of the Japanese,” *Vanity Fair* 2 (1 September 1860): 114.

low Japanese. Dismissive undertones were perhaps discernible over initial Japanese grappling with American culture and language. A *Southern Literary Messenger* journalist sniffed about “their broken English.”⁶⁰ *Vanity Fair* mocked, “if the Anglo-Saxonified Indian is gone, how much gone-er the Japanese man similarly adulterated! . . . MORYAMA [Murayama Atsushi] has written ‘koktail’ all over the walls of the White House.”⁶¹ The *New York Times*’s “Our Parting Guests” (30 June) had become somewhat offhand, feeling that “we are glad they have gone. Their visit has not been without a certain interest to us, but we have had enough of it.” In part, there was a feeling of the cultural, and indeed basic linguistic gulfs, since “their social intercourse with us has not been especially fascinating. When persons can neither speak nor understand a syllable of each other’s language . . . their intercourse must lack something of the ease and grace essential to cordial and protracted delight in each other’s society. The pantomime of the Japanese is expressive enough, but pantomime at the best is a very unsatisfactory style of conversation.”

Such sentiments were part of what Kearney considered “a certain cultural arrogance” creeping into responses to the Japanese.⁶² Their very clothing, as well as their language, attracted some adverse comments and “vulgar mumblings.”⁶³ *Vanity Fair* had described the Japanese robes as “silk petticoats,” but for many Americans, the traditional Japanese style could slide from the exotic to the ridiculous.⁶⁴ Said’s *Orientalism* could lead into Cannadine’s *Ornamentalism*.⁶⁵ One anonymous reporter mused “we afterwards had a better view of them at Willards, inspected their dresses and their visages . . . wondered at the odd method of dressing.”⁶⁶ *Vanity Fair* asked, “we are waiting to see MOOROOM OKATORO in a black dress coat and satin vest.”⁶⁷ As the Japanese party arrived in Washington, the *New York Illustrated News* (26 May) noted how they were “surrounded by a mob” who “passed all sorts of comments among themselves upon the appearance of the stranger.”

Some “subtle displays of contempt” (or “ridicule and burlesque,”

⁶⁰ “Life and Literature in Japan,” p. 27.

⁶¹ “Lo! The Poor Japanese,” *Vanity Fair* 1 (2 June 1860): 365.

⁶² Kearney, “Reactions to the First Japanese Embassy,” p. 94.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁶⁴ “A Japanese Curiosity,” *Vanity Fair* 1 (26 May 1860): 344.

⁶⁵ D. Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (London: Penguin, 2001).

⁶⁶ “Life and Literature in Japan,” p. 27.

⁶⁷ “Lo! The Poor Japanese,” p. 365.

Philadelphia Enquirer, 15 June) were discernible.⁶⁸ One reporter from the *New York Illustrated News* (26 May) regaled his readers that the Japanese envoys “looked a comical group” and made him feel like “laughing heartily at their appearance . . . excessive titillations which agitated my diaphragm . . . with internal convulsions.” *Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* (6 June) admitted “it is true that the mass of the people failed to take the Japanese seriously and persisted in treating them with the condescending familiarity bestowed upon children.” In Baltimore, a fireman was reported “taking off his heavy and dripping fire-cap and clapping it . . . on the head of the Chief Ambassador. This was received with such shouts of laughter that two other facetious firemen dropped their caps on the heads of the other Ambassadors, and the applause was terrific. The Japanese took the matter with great philosophy, but we have no doubt the historian of the party will make his own comments upon these practical jokes.” Such was the often dismissive reactions to the Japanese that *Harpers Weekly* (23 June) acknowledged that “the Japanese . . . during their visit here” encountered “the gentleman who smashed his hat over their eyes in Baltimore; the lady who filled up the window in Philadelphia; the shouting, staring, insulting mob which has dogged them everywhere . . . we speak of the Japanese as if they were barbarians and savages . . . The barbarian and savage behavior has been entirely upon our part.”

Indeed, American responses were at times “rather chilling, if not shocking in racial terms.”⁶⁹ Strong’s diary casually referred to the “ugly heads” of the junior members of the delegation as they went down Broadway, with the crowds at the Metropolitan Hotel waiting for “a vision of some ugly Mongol mug.”⁷⁰ The *New York Times* (30 June) judged that “the Japanese, moreover, have very little of that personal beauty—that majesty of demeanor . . . they are small of stature, tawney in complexion, sleepy and feeble in their physical appearances and habits.” This dismissive comment evoked some of Henning’s “hierarchical taxonomy” applied by American observers in Japan.⁷¹ *Harpers Weekly* (23 June) could report crude incidents; for example, a naval commissioner accompanying the Japanese party was met with “the most disgusting and brutal language” from crowds, such as, “is that your monkey you have got with you?” *Vanity Fair* also blithely described

⁶⁸ Masao Miyoshi, *As We Saw Them: The First Japanese Embassy to the United States* (1860) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p. 66.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁷⁰ Strong, *Diary of the Civil War*, pp. 33, 34.

⁷¹ Henning, *Outposts of Civilization*, p. 30.

Tateishi Noriyuki ("Tommy") as a "monkey."⁷² For many white Americans, the Japanese were but black "niggers," for example, "Japanny Nagurs" (*Weekly Anglo-African*, 7 July) or "nayger Japs" (*Vanity Fair*).⁷³ *Harpers Weekly* (30 July) cartoon "Natural Mistakes" concerned a black waiter and white customer, captioned "Gentleman. 'Hi! Here, you Nigger, come here!' Colored Gentleman. 'Nigger!-no Nigger, Sar, me Japanese, Sar!'" Perhaps this was an early example of what Lee later called (in connection with the *Yellowface* cartoon of 1997) "a tradition of racial grotesques that had illustrated broadsides, editorials, and diatribes against Asians in America since the mid-nineteenth century."⁷⁴

Ironically, this labelling as "niggers," while originally an insult, could give hope in black American circles that their common "stigmatization formed a bond between blacks and Japanese."⁷⁵ For the black abolitionist Frederick Douglass, there was some "satisfaction in seeing the epithet always insultingly applied to us, extended to persons of such distinctions as those who make up this famous Embassy" (*Principia*, 14 July). The *Weekly Anglo-African* (30 June) thought that "the colored people are now in high honor . . . prejudice against a dark complexion seems to be vanishing" thanks to the reception being given to envoys, and it hoped "the colored men of the East" might pave the way for future embassies from the Sudan and Dahomey.

However, the situation was complicated. The Japanese party was quite ready to show antiblack sentiments. Meanwhile there was not a blanket "Yellow Peril" monolithic picture of the East. Matthew Frye Jacobson's sense of the "fluidity" within the "invented categories" of race forming in nineteenth-century America comes to mind here.⁷⁶ In Louisiana, the 1860 census classified Chinese as "whites" before giving them their own category in the 1870 census.⁷⁷ The *Philadelphia Press* (11 June) described Tommy as "almost Caucasian in appearance." Some Americans could consider the Japanese as somewhat honorary whites, ready (in the case of ex-ambassador William Preston) to pass

⁷² "The Japanese Ball," *Vanity Fair* 2 (30 June 1860): 6, albeit as a "young and innocent monkey."

⁷³ "Paddy's Ode to the Prince," *Vanity Fair* 2 (8 September 1860): 126.

⁷⁴ R. Lee, *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), p. 1.

⁷⁵ Kearney, "Reactions to the First Japanese Embassy," p. 98.

⁷⁶ M. Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 4.

⁷⁷ G. Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), "Is Yellow Black or White?" chap. 2, pp. 31-63.



crude derogatory comments about passing blacks to the accompanying Japanese envoy Morita Kiyoyuki.⁷⁸

The Japanese tended to be favorably distinguished from the Chinese. This was particularly striking on the West coast, where part of the Japanese party had stayed longer.⁷⁹ Anti-Chinese sentiment and calls for immigration bars had mushroomed there during the 1850s. Yet *Harpers Weekly* (26 May) went so far as to argue that “the Japanese—if good relations be established between the two countries—will send out some of their people to plant Japanese colonies in our territory . . . the benefit will be obvious and mutual.” The underlying geocultural question was whether the Japanese should be equated with or distinguished from their “Yellow” Asian neighbors. Was Japan part of the East (China’s Asia) or part of the West (America’s Pacific)? The latter view was discernible. The *San Francisco Daily Alta California* (18 March) judged that “the countenance of these people wore a far more intelligent look than any Chinese that we have seen” when (23 March) “the admiral was dressed richly, but with none of the Chinese flashiness.” Similar comments were made by the *San Francisco Herald* (4 April), about how “the distinction between the Japanese and the Chinese is very marked, the former [Japanese] being a superior race, intellectually.”

AMERICAN VIEWS OF JAPAN

Behind the Japanese lay their state, the newly encountered Empire of Japan. American responses then (and afterward) were twofold, welcoming approval mixed with signs of underlying uncertainties and longer-term concerns.

Japan was very much an unknown Other for America in 1860. Before 1860, there had been no such direct contacts on American soil with Japan, save for the two rescued Japanese fishermen Manjiro (1843–1850) and Heco (1850–1859), who had remained relatively unnoticed and uncommented on in America.⁸⁰ This wall between America and Japan reflected the deliberate Tokugawa isolationist pol-

⁷⁸ Morita Kiyoyuki as cited in Masao, *As We Saw Them*, p. 62.

⁷⁹ G. Hinkle, “Samurai in San Francisco, the Japanese Embassy of 1860,” *California Historical Society Quarterly* 23 (December 1944): 335–347.

⁸⁰ K. Plummer, *The Shogun’s Reluctant Ambassadors: Japanese Sea Drifters in the North Pacific*, 3rd ed. (Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1991), “Manjiro: The Stodious Fisherboy,” pp. 138–160; “Joseph Heco: The First Japanese-American,” pp. 186–205.



icy pursued for more than two hundred years. The midcentury situation and image for America was evocatively summed up in *The Living Age* (1852) as how “even educated persons know little or nothing about Japan . . . As far as general impressions go, the ordinary floating feeling—we cannot call it knowledge—about Japan is . . . of some Atlantis of the East; a mystery and marvel seldom or very partially revealed to the sons of men.”⁸¹ More prosaically, the *New York Courier and Enquirer* (1852) considered “give the civilized world access to the harbours of Japan, and that great empire will no longer remain a *terra incognita*.”⁸² More thoughtfully, *Bentley’s Miscellany* (1852) could voice concerns by “some” Americans over civilization misunderstandings, “giving or taking offence when two nations, neither of them understanding the other, are brought into dangerous proximity . . . to make allowances for differences of national character and usage.”⁸³ Commodore Perry’s opening up of Japan in 1853–1854 was then greeted in America with interest because of Japan’s previous remoteness and consequent air of mystery, so that *Putman’s Magazine* (1855) felt that “the reports of their civilization are so new and curious, that one peruses them with an unusual degree of attention.”⁸⁴

Consequently, the 1860 Japanese embassy “aroused tremendous curiosity” in America.⁸⁵ Its arrival brought wider recognition in America of these “new” openings, announced with a flourish by Whitman’s “A Broadway Pageant” call, “Comrade Americanos!—to us, then, at last, the Orient comes” (verse 24). It was also reflected in the *Atlantic Monthly* where “The arrival in this country of an embassy from Japan, the first political delegation ever vouchsafed to a foreign nation by that reticent and jealous people, is now a topic of universal interest.”⁸⁶ Interest was intertwined with American pride, *Harpers Monthly Magazine* feeling that “to America belongs the honor of again opening communication with this interesting people, so long shut out from the rest of the world.”⁸⁷ Thus, for the semi-official *National Intelligencer*, amidst “the curiosity to behold men from a region so distant” there

⁸¹ “Japan: An Account, Geographical and Historical,” *Living Age* 35 (13 November 1852): 324–335, quotation from p. 324.

⁸² Repr. “The American Expedition against Japan,” *Times*, 26 March 1852, p. 8.

⁸³ “What Do We Know about Japan?” *Bentley’s Miscellany* 31 (May 1852): 545–552, quotation from pp. 550–551.

⁸⁴ “Hildreth’s Japan,” *Putnam’s Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Science and Art* 6 (October 1855): 437–438, quotation from p. 437.

⁸⁵ Iriye, *Across the Pacific*, p. 31.

⁸⁶ “Japan,” *Atlantic Monthly* 5 (June 1860): 721–733, quotation from p. 721.

⁸⁷ “Editor’s Easy Chair,” *Harpers New Monthly Magazine*, 21 (August 1860): 411.

was “something flattering to our national pride in the fact that this country should be the first to receive the distinction of an embassy from this ancient and almost unknown people.”⁸⁸ A “tumultuous welcome” was given to them.⁸⁹

In 1860, Japan could be welcomed in America as something of a Western protégé. *Harpers Weekly* (26 May) called the Japanese “the British of Asia,” while the *Washington Evening Star* (14 May) claimed that “no nation possesses so many elements of the Anglo-Saxon mind as the Japanese.” The *New York Times* (6 October) simply saw Japan as “young America.” *Harpers Weekly* (26 May) thought that across the Pacific, “Japan is the one best worth cultivating. The Russians of Northern Asia are hardly more than semi-barbarous, and the Chinese are such a peculiar race, and so entirely foreign to us in every sense of the word, that neither can compare, in respect of the neighborly value, to the Japanese.”⁹⁰

In contrast to the situation in the rest of Asia, the United States had taken a leading role in Japan, wrenching it open to the outside world with the Perry expedition. From its position of “power across the Pacific,” the United States could act as “Pacific patron” for its “geopolitical protégé” Japan.⁹¹ Consequently, for the *Southern Literary Messenger*, “ever since Consul-General Harris began [1858] to reside in that far-off country [Japan], the American people have looked upon Japan as a Yankee province. And not without cause. For it cannot be denied that the masterly diplomacy of Consul Harris has already placed the United States in a commanding position before the Japanese.”⁹² Similarly, the *Atlantic Monthly* stressed how it was “needed to preserve to this country the superior advantages it now holds” in Japan.⁹³ Such a commanding position was being gained, for *Vanity Fair*, in a setting of developing imperial rivalries in the Far East, where amid “British jealousy . . . upon Japan’s far hills have we unfurled our [American] starry banner.”⁹⁴ As America was striding into Japan, so Japan was respond-

⁸⁸ “Official Reception of the Japanese,” p. 637.

⁸⁹ W. Beasley, *Japan Encounters the Barbarians: Japanese Travellers in America and Europe* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 62, “The Mission to America,” pp. 56–70, focused on the Japanese perception of America rather than on American perceptions of them.

⁹⁰ “Our Japanese Visitors,” *Harpers Weekly*, 26 May 1860, p. 322.

⁹¹ W. Nestor, *Power Across the Pacific: A Diplomatic History of American Relations with Japan* (London: Macmillan, 1996), chap. 1, “Pacific Patron, 1853–94,” pp. 13–58.

⁹² “Life and Literature in Japan,” p. 27.

⁹³ “Japan,” *Atlantic Monthly*, p. 731.

⁹⁴ “British Jealousy,” *Vanity Fair* 1 (19 May 1860): 332. Also, “John Bull and the Japanese,” *Vanity Fair* 1 (19 May 1860): 328.

ing by sending its diplomatic envoys to America on the *Powhatan*, that is, with *Vanity Fair*'s ditty "England's Serenade to Japan" noting "Powhatan's advancing, the Yankees abroad."⁹⁵

American prowess was underpinned by its emerging technological and economic strength and projection across the Pacific, "a new vision of the United States as a future commercial and naval power."⁹⁶ Some such as Ralph Waldo Emerson (1859) could decry this cross-Pacific expansionist bent, acknowledging that "the earth is shaken by our engineries. . . . We have the power of territory and of seacoast . . . lengthened lines of railroad and telegraph," though criticizing "we interfere . . . at Canton and in Japan; we are adding to an already enormous territory."⁹⁷ For *Vanity Fair* (June 1860), it was "the American mind which invented the steamship—annihilated distance with the telegraph and late still, laid bare the mysteries of Japan."⁹⁸ America's technological prowess was one reason the Japanese envoys made a point, as noticed by their hosts, of making several visits to the patent office in Washington.⁹⁹ Technological superiority and industrialization provided a sense of economic opportunities as well. Whereas American economic interest in Asia had previously been more concerned with the India trade organized through the "Boston Brahmin" network of New England, cross-Pacific trade with Japan (and China) was now to increasingly impact the American economic consciousness.

In such a commercial vein, the Harris Treaty of 1858, which the Japanese envoys were coming to America to conclude ratification of, was deliberated and specifically termed a "Treaty of Amity and Commerce." USN *Powhatan* skipper Johnston looked forward to the "trade with this long secluded people, on which our farseeing Yankee race are beginning to found such brilliant hopes," where "iron and steel . . . and various other Yankee [industrial finished] productions, will meet with a ready sale in the ports of Japan."¹⁰⁰ *Harpers Weekly* (26 May) judged that "this Japanese embassy is a matter of the highest national and commercial importance . . . they consume many articles which we produce. Satisfy them that commercial intercourse with us would be ben-

⁹⁵ "England's Serenade to Japan," *Vanity Fair* 1 (19 May 1860): 324.

⁹⁶ Duus, *Japanese Discovery of America*, pp. 10–11.

⁹⁷ R. Emerson, lecture (1859), repr. *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. E. Emerson, 12 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1904–1905), vol. 7, chap. 11, "Success."

⁹⁸ "Preface," *Vanity Fair* 2 (30 June 1860): ii.

⁹⁹ "The United States Patent Office," *Scientific American* 2 (16 June 1860): 386.

¹⁰⁰ Johnston, *China and Japan*, chap. 16, "Speculations on the Probable Results of the Embassy to the United States."

eficial to them, and a valuable trade will be created." Consequently, the *New York Times* (27 June) thought it fitting that the Japanese came to New York, the "Edo [Tokyo] of the West," which "represents the full grandeur of that mighty American commerce" that had opened up the hitherto impregnable East.

California, annexed in 1848, was frequently seen as a particular beneficiary of Pacific trade. Felix Paul Wierzbicki (1849) immediately enthused about California as "a country now engrossing the attention of the civilized world with its future importance," saying, "California is capable of becoming an important centre of the commerce of the Pacific . . . the trade with China, with the islands of the Pacific."¹⁰¹ *Harpers Monthly Magazine* (1856) marked Perry's opening up of Japan (the biggest of all "islands of the Pacific") by emphasizing "the change in the geographical position of the United States in relation to the East, by the acquisition of the golden territory of California" facilitating "commercial relations with a people known to be industrious and wealthy; and eager to expand a profitable intercourse with Asia, toward which the newly-acquired shores of California directly pointed."¹⁰² The *New York Times* (3 December 1858) considered that "the newly-Opened Trade with the East," China and Japan, "give great importance to our possessions on the Pacific slope . . . the western coasts of the Pacific Ocean are about to become as active with the hum of commerce as the northern slopes of the Atlantic . . . immense marts of commerce will soon grow up on our Pacific coast."

Amid such Pacific vistas, it is not too surprising to hear *Scientific American* writing in 1860 that "the people of San Francisco are delighted with the arrival of the Japanese [envoys], and are doing everything in their power to entertain their visitors, hoping thereby to stimulate the lucrative trade already commenced with Japan."¹⁰³ In 1860, Horace Greeley's hopes were to "build up, on our Pacific coast, a traffic with China, Japan, Australia, such as Tyre or Carthage never conceive," through San Francisco as "the emporium wherein the farthest East will exchange its products with the remotest West."¹⁰⁴ *Hunt's Merchant Magazine* felt that following "the settlement of Cali-

¹⁰¹ F. Wierzbicki, *California as It Is & as It May Be* (1849; repr. New York: Burt Franklin, 1970), pp. 1, 2, 8.

¹⁰² "Commander Perry's Expedition to Japan," *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* 12 (March 1856): 441-466, quotation from p. 441.

¹⁰³ "The Japanese Steamer," *Scientific American* 2 (21 April 1860): 260.

¹⁰⁴ H. Greeley, *Recollections of a Busy Life* (New York: J. B. Ford & Co., 1868), pp. 384, 387, 388.

fornia . . . now our ports on the Pacific are within thirty days sail of the ports of Asia . . . far seeing men predict that the development of this great [cross-Pacific] commerce must produce as great a revolution in the commercial world as did the discovery of the passage to India by the way of the Cape of Good Hope."¹⁰⁵ Similarly, *Harpers Weekly* (26 May) judged that amid such "immediate commercial benefits, the establishment of friendly relations with the Japanese can not fail to be of marked advantage to our Pacific States."

These sentiments strengthened during the 1860s. Fitz Hugh Ludlow (1864) felt that "with the development of our Japanese relations, still another stream of wealth, still incalculable, must flow through the Golden Gate [of San Francisco]."¹⁰⁶ Fessenden Nott Otis (1867) noticed how "the islands of Japan, distant about 5000 miles from their Pacific terminus, had heretofore merely a nominal connection with the United States," but now "Japan had . . . opened its ports, and guaranteed to the United States unexpected facilities for trade with that country."¹⁰⁷ Here, steamship routes used by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company were funneling "an important share of the Pacific trade into the new and more direct channel," in "this grand field" where San Francisco had become "the great commercial entrepot of the United States possessions on the Pacific."¹⁰⁸ By the end of the 1860s the Japanese were themselves commenting on this trans-Pacific network, where "the eastern rim of the Pacific Ocean is now flourishing . . . San Francisco, because of its location and safety as a port, enjoys lively trade throughout the Pacific . . . the cities to co-operate with San Francisco would be Yokohama . . . it now looks from Japan across the Pacific Ocean . . . East and West look to each other and are open to the opportunities available to trade with Japan."¹⁰⁹ In short, a "Pacific Rim."

While America gained immediate export opportunities in the opening up of Japan, in 1860, *Scientific American* was already noting moves by Japanese entrepreneurs to adopt modern Western industrial modes, where in "the short time the embassy has already been with us, shows how eager they are to profit by the experience of foreigners,

¹⁰⁵ "Explorations of the Amoor River," *Hunt's Merchant Magazine* 39 (August 1860): 176–182, quotation from p. 176.

¹⁰⁶ F. Ludlow, "Through-Tickets to San Francisco," *Atlantic Monthly* 14 (November 1864): 604–617, quotation from p. 607.

¹⁰⁷ F. N. Otis, *Isthmus of Panama: History of the Panama Railroad and of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company* (New York: Harper, 1867), p. 158.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 158, 309.

¹⁰⁹ Kume, *Iwakura Embassy*, 1: 94–95.

and to imitate their useful arts.”¹¹⁰ More specifically, “the inhabitants of Japan are already supplied with microscopes, telescopes, clocks, watches, knives, spoons, etc., made by themselves from European models . . . At Nagasaki, works have been erected for the manufacture of steam-engines without European assistance, and a screw steamer built, which has been successfully navigated from Nagasaki to Yeddo, by native seamen and engineers.”¹¹¹ Similarly, examples and implications were drawn by *Hunt’s Merchant Magazine*, where “the power of adaptation is great, and every species of European product is speedily reproduced” in Japan.¹¹² Consequently, they were cautious over the long-term prospects for trade. Although recognizing how “the arrival of the Japanese ambassadors in this country with the [Harris] treaty for ratification marks a new era in the commerce of the world, and one which may be productive of great advantage in the future,” nevertheless it finished its profile with the warning that “it is quite probable, however, that the expectations of the great nations now flocking thither, to share the fancied advantages, may to some extent be disappointed.”¹¹³ This readiness by Japan to adopt Western technology in the short term boosted European and American trade exports, but in the longer term, it made Japan an increasingly effective and acknowledged economic competitor with Europe and then America in the wider markets by the end of the century.

Indeed, Japan could also be seen as a potential military threat, a premonition of the “Yellow Peril” image of Japan that was to emerge in the 1890s. *Scientific American* noted moves by Japanese entrepreneurs to adopt modern Western industrial modes, where “they manufacture Colt’s revolvers and Sharp’s rifles, and it is said that they have made improvements upon them.”¹¹⁴ The *New York Times* (30 June) was even more blunt in its concern over how “the embassy takes back complete models of our best howitzers and Dahlgren guns, with full instruction as to the manufacture and use of everything required, both in offensive and defensive warfare . . . we can only hope that we may not find ourselves among the earliest victims of our over-zealous and mistaken benevolence.”

Geopolitical drives were bringing both countries out into the

¹¹⁰ “The Japanese, their Proficiency,” p. 407.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 407.

¹¹² “Japan: Its Resources, Trade, and Currency,” *Hunt’s Merchant Magazine* 43 (July 1860): 60–67, quotation from p. 62.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

¹¹⁴ “The Japanese, their Proficiency,” p. 407.

Pacific. During the 1850s, Senator William H. Seward provided vociferous “persistent and energetic leadership” in the Senate about Pacific opportunities.¹¹⁵ “A sense of mission” was emerging, “which was often related to an image of America’s future as a Pacific nation.”¹¹⁶ A sense of “Manifest Destiny” projecting outward across the Pacific from the American continent was apparent, a seminal phrase already used by *De Bow’s Review* in 1853 in relation to America’s emerging role in Asia.¹¹⁷ The Pacific was the scene of wide-ranging, empire-building rivalries, as Henry T. Cheever’s *The Island World of the Pacific* (1856) put it, “a ball for the bigger nations of the earth to play with.”¹¹⁸ In that setting, “the Pacific Rim in the nineteenth century was a realm of formal empire for the European powers” but also in effect for the United States.¹¹⁹ The Perry mission to Japan (and surrounding Pacific islands) in 1853–1854, was followed by American occupation of various small Pacific islands in 1857 (Baker, Howland, and Jarvis Islands) and 1858 (Kingman Reef, Johnston Atoll). Meanwhile, Japan occupied the southern Kurile Island chain in 1855. Furthermore, on her return from San Francisco, the *Kanrin Maru* was dispatched by the Japanese government to occupy the Bonin Islands in 1861.¹²⁰ This was, in part, to forestall American occupation, mooted in Perry’s travel accounts, of which a copy had been given as a present to the Japanese ambassadorial party during their 1860 stay in America. Lincoln’s appointment of Seward to the State Department brought a still more active Pacific and East Asia involvement by the United States. In 1867 was the purchase from Russia of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, as well as the annexation of Midway Atoll to the west of Hawai‘i and east of the Bonins.

Geoculture ran alongside geopolitics, where the United States could project its own values. Seward told the Senate, “certainly no one expects the nations of Asia to be awakened by any other influence than our own from the lethargy into which they sunk nearly three thousand

¹¹⁵ T. Dennett, “Seward’s Far Eastern Policy,” *The American Historical Review* 28 (1922): 45–62 (still a useful study), quotation from p. 47.

¹¹⁶ Iriye, *Across the Pacific*, p. 17.

¹¹⁷ “China and the Indies. Our Manifest Destiny in the East,” *De Bow’s Review* 15 (December 1863): 541–71.

¹¹⁸ H. Cheever, *The Island World of the Pacific* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1856), p. 114.

¹¹⁹ B. Cummings, “Rimspeak; or, The Discourse of the ‘Pacific Rim,’” in *What Is in a Rim? Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea*, ed. A. Dirlik, 2nd ed. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), pp. 53–72, quotation from p. 60.

¹²⁰ H. Kublin, “The Ogasawara Venture (1861–1863),” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 14 (1951): 261–284.

years ago.”¹²¹ Equally strongly, though enigmatically, Johnston (1860) thought “the elements of progress have been introduced [by America], and the ambition of the [Japanese] people to acquire knowledge of every description, affords an infallible guarantee that they will develop this uncontrollable principle [of progress] with a degree of intelligence and power hitherto unknown among the nations of the East.”¹²²

Democratic political reform was an area for American commentators to claim superior values. *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* (1860) asked, “look at the Japanese princes . . . their system represent one political principle . . . abject . . . despotism . . . We . . . represent the other . . . choose between them.”¹²³ Conversely, the Meiji restoration of 1867 prompted celebrations by American commentators about “social reforms which lead us to hope that Japan has rejected the Asiatic, and adopted the European, ideal of civilization.”¹²⁴ Henry Field rejoiced “it has taken it [Japan] out of the stagnant life of Asia, to infuse into its veins the life of Europe and America. In a word, it has, as it were, unmoored Japan from the coast of Asia, and towed it across the Pacific to place it alongside of the New World, to have the same course of life and progress.”¹²⁵

Did America have something to learn from Japan, in 1860 or afterward? After all, Whitman described the envoys, in his original version of “A Broadway Pageant,” as “lesson-giving princes” (verse 4).¹²⁶ *Putman’s Monthly* (1855) had already considered that “they open to us a new language, a new literature.”¹²⁷ *Harpers Weekly* (26 May) admitted, somewhat ambiguously, that though “many of their customs seem absurd to us,” nevertheless “civilized as we boast of being, we can learn much of the Japanese—if nothing more, we can learn the duty of obeying the laws.” *Scientific American* (June 1860) acknowledged Japanese craftsmen were “skillful in carving . . . silk fabrics of every kind, lac-

¹²¹ Seward as cited in Dennett, “Seward’s Far Eastern Policy,” p. 47.

¹²² Johnston, *China and Japan*, chap. 16, “Speculations on the Probable Results of the Embassy to the United States.”

¹²³ “Editor’s Easy Chair,” *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* 21 (August 1860): 411.

¹²⁴ W. Griffis, “The Recent Revolutions in Japan,” *North American Review* 120 (1875): 281–315, quotation from p. 282.

¹²⁵ H. Field, *From Egypt to Japan* (1877), as cited in Iriye, *Across the Pacific*, p. 26.

¹²⁶ Admittedly, Miner, “Background, Date and Composition,” p. 404, considered that “the idea that the ambassadors are royal guests who have lessons to teach America is forgotten” by Whitman with his dropping the phrase “lesson-giving” in the 1871–1872 *Leaves of Grass*. However, this goes against the ongoing openness that Whitman continued to show to the East, and can instead be put down to Whitman’s habit of constantly reworking materials.

¹²⁷ “Hildreth’s Japan,” p. 437.

quered articles.”¹²⁸ The arrival of “Japan as an aesthetic vogue” was signaled by Charles Baudelaire’s phrase “*Japonaiserie*” (1861) for this emerging craze for Japanese prints and refined handicrafts in the West. This was reflected in 1864 by the American artist James Whistler (Yoshihara’s “artistic Orientalism”), who used Japanese themes and style derived from Kiyonaga and Hokusai in his *The Princess of Porcelain Country, Purple and Pink*, and *Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen*.¹²⁹

Although some subsequent artists such as John Lafarge praised Buddhist artistic aesthetics, and Ernest Fenollosa formally converted to Tendai Buddhism, in reality, any artistic currents of appreciation were overshadowed by Christian evangelical assumptions of missionary expansion.¹³⁰ Thus, in the immediate wake of Perry’s arrival in Japan, *Putnam’s Monthly Magazine* (1853) looked forward to overthrowing “dogmas as corrupting as the Buddhist and Sinto doctrines” and “irradiating the Eastern Archipelago with the sanctified light of the pure Gospel from a Protestant Japanese church of Christ!”¹³¹ *Vanity Fair* (1860) could somewhat mock the Japanese envoys and their traditions, with its call that “Broadway be filled up with little josh houses at intervals, and Trinity Church will be made to represent a porcelain tower as much as possible.”¹³² Johnston concluded his profile of the Japanese embassy with “much is, also, to be hoped for from the judicious and zealous efforts that are being made by the able representatives of the Missionary cause” in Japan.¹³³ In turn, Japanese could decry such “missionaries, often ignorant and blundering persons . . . from California.”¹³⁴

During these “formative years of American-Japanese relations,” geopolitics and geoculture (“race, religion”) entwined themselves: “white Americans had brimmed with confidence. They envisaged

¹²⁸ “The Japanese, Their Proficiency,” p. 407.

¹²⁹ E. Wilkinson, *Japan versus Europe: A History of Misunderstanding* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1983), chap. 3, “Japan as an Aesthetic Vogue,” pp. 43–56. Also S. Wichmann, *Japonisme: The Japanese Influence on Western Art since 1858* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999).

¹³⁰ See S. Thomson, “Meiji Japan through Missionary Eyes: The American Protestant Experience,” *Journal of Religious History* 7 (1973): 248–259.

¹³¹ “Japan,” *Putnam’s Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Science and Art* 1 (March 1853): 241–252, quotation from p. 251.

¹³² “Japanese Embassy,” *Vanity Fair*, p. 264.

¹³³ Johnston, *China and Japan*, chap. 16, “Speculations on the Probable Results of the Embassy to the United States.”

¹³⁴ A Japanese Student, “Christian Missions in Japan,” letter, *Times*, 15 January 1873, p. 7.

themselves atop a hierarchy of races . . . the first Americans in Tokugawa Japan thought they knew exactly what 'civilization' meant. The United States represented its pinnacle."¹³⁵ J. C. Nott and George R. Gliddon's widely distributed *Types of Mankind* (1854) typified this hierarchical view of race in and across the world, while Herbert Spencer's *The Principles of Biology* (1866–1867) popularized notions of social Darwinian competition, coining the phrase "survival of the fittest." At the time, Robert Pruyn (1862), the American Minister to Japan, could tell Seward that he considered American presence in Japan as being superior "sentinels in the outposts of [a backward] civilization."¹³⁶

WHITMAN'S VISION OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Amid such sentiments, how did Whitman stand? Whitman's poem focused on the immediate setting of the Japanese procession down Broadway, but then opened up into much wider vistas. Whitman's sensing of a wider significance to this Japanese arrival was itself the subject of comment. *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* (1860) reflected "The thing' was not to see the Japanese, but [what] Walt beheld. . . . He looks at the Princes [of Japan] . . . in the pageant procession. And the vision expands as he gazes."¹³⁷ As such, Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Gospel According to Walt Whitman* (1878) reckoned Whitman to be "a prophet . . . of the world and the world's meanings."¹³⁸ Roy Harvey Pearce considered 1860 to have been the year where Whitman's "power of the poet," acting as a "sage, a seer, a sayer," was coming into full expression in his first revision and expansion of his *Leaves of Grass* collection, but perhaps also expressed that year in "A Broadway Pageant."¹³⁹ Whitman's observation of the Japanese envoys echoes his "Song of Prudence" (1856), in which he writes that on "Manhattan's

¹³⁵ Henning, *Outposts of Civilization*, pp. 1–2. Cf. R. Rosentone, "Learning from those 'Imitative Japanese': Another Side of the American Experience in the Mikado's Empire," *American Historical Review* 85 (1980): 572–595.

¹³⁶ As cited in Henning, p. 2, n.2.

¹³⁷ "Editor's Easy Chair," *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* 21 (September 1860): 555, citing varied verses from Whitman's "A Broadway Pageant."

¹³⁸ R. Stevenson, "The Gospel According to Walt Whitman," *New Quarterly Magazine*, October 1878, repr. as "Walt Whitman" in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882; repr., London: Chatto & Windus, 1912), pp. 63–88.

¹³⁹ R. Pearce, "Whitman Justified: The Poet in 1860," in *Walt Whitman*, ed. H. Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1985), pp. 65–86.

streets I saunter'd pondering, on Time, Space, Reality."¹⁴⁰ In Whitman's own words ("To a Historian," 1860), "outlining what is yet to be, / I project the history of the future."¹⁴¹

Through crossing the Pacific Ocean, the Japanese envoys heightened Whitman's sense of the Pacific future, where across its deep waters East-West encounter was taking place in terms of ideas and structures, power and culture, hopes and fears. Whitman was sensitive to these Pacific currents. On the eve of the arrival of the Japanese embassy, Whitman had penned "Facing West from California's Shores" (1860): "looking off the shores of my Western sea [Pacific]" to those coming "from Hindustan, from the vales of Kasmere, from Asia."¹⁴² Within "A Broadway Pageant" loomed the Pacific, "the great Sea, the brood of islands, Polynesia, the coast beyond [Asia]; the coast you, henceforth, are facing—you Libertad from your Western golden shores" (verses 44–45) of California. In "Democracy" (1867) there was the vision of California and Oregon as "the group of powerful brothers [looking] toward the Pacific (destined to the mastership of that sea and its countless Paradises of islands)."¹⁴³ Whitman returned to this theme in his "Song of the Redwood Tree" (1873), in which amid "the flashing and golden pageant of California . . . the New arriving . . . ships coming in from the whole round world, and going out to the whole round world, to India and China and Australia and the thousand island paradises of the Pacific."¹⁴⁴ Given Whitman's internationalism, humanitarianism, and democracy, perhaps Christopher L. Connery's distinction between "Orientalism" and "Pacific Rim Discourse" with regard to the 1980s can be seen in Whitman's earlier frameworks, where "Pacific Rim Discourse presumes a kind of metonymic equivalence. Its world is an interpenetrating complex of interrelationships with no center: neither the center of a hegemonic power nor the imagined fulcrum of a 'balance of power.'"¹⁴⁵ This was also Whitman's Pacific, an

¹⁴⁰ Whitman, "Song of Prudence," in *Complete Poetry & Selected Prose*, pp. 341–343, quotation from p. 341 (verses 1–2).

¹⁴¹ Whitman, "To a Historian," in *Complete Poetry & Selected Prose*, p. 5 (verses 6–7).

¹⁴² Whitman, "Facing West from California's Shores," in *Complete Poetry & Selected Prose*, pp. 104–105 (verses 4–6).

¹⁴³ Whitman, "Democracy" *Galaxy* 4 (December 1867): 929.

¹⁴⁴ Whitman, "Song of the Redwood Tree," in *Complete Poetry & Selected Prose*, pp. 191–202, [2], p. 194 (verses 9–92).

¹⁴⁵ C. Connery, "Pacific Rim Discourse: The U.S. Global Imaginary in the Late Cold War Years," in *Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production*, ed. R. Wilson and A. Dirlík (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 1–38, quotation from p. 32. See Dirlík, "Asia Pacific Studies in an Age of Global Modernity," *Inter-Asian Cultural Studies* 6, no. 2 (2005): 158–170, for focus on civilizations and oceans.

example of “cultural cross-fertilization” and “nondomineering cultural potential” that went “beyond Orientalism” and indeed beyond Huntingtonian “clashes of civilizations.”¹⁴⁶

In Whitman’s “A Broadway Pageant,” the Japanese envoys were a wider portal on the Orient, where (verses 51–54) “from all directions—/ From Thibet—from the four winding and far-flowing rivers of China, / from the Southern peninsulas, and the demi-continental islands—from Malaysia; / These, and whatever belongs to them, palpable, show forth to me, and are seiz’d [with interest] by me.” Consequently, the procession included “not the errand bearing princes, nor the tann’d Japanee only; / Lithe and silent, the Hindoo appears—the whole Asiatic continent itself appears” with its “wonder and fable, inscrutable, / The envelop’d mysteries . . . / . . . all of these, and more, are in the pageant-procession” (verses 37–40, 42). One could ponder on the distinctions arising in Whitman between his “tann’d” Japanese and “lithe and silent” Hindus, but what is also clear is the general enigma of the mysterious Orient, mysterious in the sense of not being known, mysterious in the sense of holding esoteric wisdoms within its sphere, mysterious in the sense of paradoxical or at least non-Western Otherness.¹⁴⁷ Whitman encapsulated it, with interest, (Otto’s “numinous” *fascinas*) as “the mystic Orient.”¹⁴⁸

The Transcendentalist movement, especially Emerson and Thoreau, had already looked to Oriental wisdom during the 1840s, albeit from a distance.¹⁴⁹ In turn, Transcendentalists welcomed Whitman’s wider vision and incorporation of Asian themes. Emerson considered Whitman’s first *Leaves of Grass* collection (1855) “so extraordinary for its oriental largeness of generalization, and American Buddh,” “the best piece of American [philosophy] Buddhism.”¹⁵⁰ Thoreau thought it was

¹⁴⁶ A theme pursued in a non-Whitman context by F. Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism: Essays on Cross-Cultural Encounter* (New York: State University of New York, 1996), pp. xviii–xix.

¹⁴⁷ See R. King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and the Mystic East* (London: Routledge, 1999).

¹⁴⁸ “Poetry To-day in America—Shakespeare—the Future,” in *Specimen Days*, pp. 288–301, quotation from p. 301.

¹⁴⁹ A. Versluis, *American Transcendentalism & Asian Religions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 51–78 for “Emerson’s ‘Asia Mine’” and pp. 79–118 for “Thoreau Sauntering Eastward.” Also D. Scott, “Rewalking Thoreau: ‘Light from the East’ for a Very ‘Yankee Sort of Oriental,’” forthcoming in *Philosophy East & West* 57, no. 1 (2007).

¹⁵⁰ Emerson to Ward, 9 July 1855, and Emerson to Tappan, 17 July 1855, in *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. VIII, 1845–1859, ed. E. Tilton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 442–445.

“wonderfully like the Orientals.”¹⁵¹ “A Broadway Pageant” reflected some of the religious richness of Asia, from Japan through India, Tibet-Mongolia, and China; with its “bonze, Brahmin, and lama” (verse 47), and “the divine Buddha . . . Confucius himself” (verse 50) present in the procession.¹⁵² Asia was a repository of wisdom for Whitman, whereby “the Originatress comes, / The nest of languages, the bequeather of poems, the race of eld” (verses 28, 29–30). Interest and awareness of Oriental wisdom is a recurring strand in Whitman, shown, for example, in “Song of Myself” (1855), “Chanting the Square Deific” (1865), “Passage to India” (1872), and in one of his last poems, “A Persian Lesson” (1891).¹⁵³ Quite simply, for Whitman, “I see that the east is greater than the west . . . how spirit is greater than matter.”¹⁵⁴

Asia’s ancient spiritual texts gave Asian culture “high praise” and “laudatory representations of Asia and Asians” from Whitman.¹⁵⁵ In his words, “I not only commend the study of this literature, but wish our sources and supply and comparison vastly enlarged” to bring in “the great poems of Asian antiquity” on which “I rejoice at the feeling for Oriental researches and poetry, and hope it will go on.”¹⁵⁶ Literature and culture were important legacies in his “Democratic Vistas” (1871), “shaped, bred by orientalism . . . in primal Asia . . . countless product, bequeath’d to the moderns, bequeath’d to America as studies. For the men, Yudishtura, Rama, Arjuna . . . [Indian] models . . . of priceless value to her. Among women, the goddesses of . . . Indian . . . mythologies.”¹⁵⁷ Thus, Whitman commended (1857) Emerson’s “mystic song” “Brahma” on account of its “grace and melody,” even though “some of

¹⁵¹ Thoreau to Blake, 7 December 1856, in *Familiar Letters of Henry David Thoreau*, ed. F. Sanborn (Boston: Mifflin Company, 1894), p. 347.

¹⁵² Whitman dropped the “divine Buddha” phrase in the 1871 *Leaves of Grass* version of “A Broadway Pageant.”

¹⁵³ V. Chari, “Whitman in India,” in *Walt Whitman and the World*, ed. G. Allen and E. Folsom (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1995), pp. 396–405; M. Farzan, “Whitman and Sufism: Towards ‘A Persian Lesson,’” *American Literature* 47 (1976): 572–582.

¹⁵⁴ Whitman, *Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts*, ed. E. Grier (New York: New York University Press, 1984) 1: 62, dated ca. 1847/1854.

¹⁵⁵ G. Huang, “Whitman on Asian Immigration and Nation-Formation,” in *Whitman East & West: New Contexts for Reading Walt Whitman*, ed. E. Folsom (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002), pp. 159–171, quotation from p. 159. Also J. McCormick, “Walt Whitman: Orientalist or Nationalist?” *Tamkang Review* 10 (1979): 79–96.

¹⁵⁶ Whitman, “British Literature,” in *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose*, ed. J. Kaplan (New York: Library of America, 1982), pp. 1058–1060.

¹⁵⁷ Whitman, “Democratic Vistas,” in *Specimen Days*, p. 228.

the papers are poking fun at Emerson.”¹⁵⁸ Whitman’s positive “orientalism” was a far cry from Said’s negative *Orientalism* paradigm.

In “Passage to India” (1871) “Whitman’s spiritual exploration leads . . . to the ‘innocent intuitions’ of the East, where vision spurns the ‘separations and gaps’ of history,” a “mystic journey” discernible in the increasingly metaphysical and spiritual second half.¹⁵⁹ There, Asia had its “flowing literatures, tremendous epics, religions” (verses 134), of “old occult Brahma interminably far back, [and] the tender and junior Buddha” (verse 135), which went “back to wisdom’s birth, to innocent intuitions” (verse 173). Mysticism beckoned to the reader, in a “passage to more than India! O secret of the earth and the sky” (verses 233–234), so that “have we not darken’d and dazed ourselves with books long enough? Sail forth—steer for the deep waters only” (verses 247–248). Indeed, mysticism (Hindu-Buddhist, pantheist, Sufi, etc.) seems to have been a common denominator (as it had been for Emerson and Thoreau), able to cut across East-West divides. Whitman, the composer of “The Mystic Trumpeter” (1872), could talk of “floating on vast and mystic currents,” reaching across the Pacific to Asia’s inner depths.¹⁶⁰ Edward Dowden (1871) termed Whitman a “mystic” (and also “democrat”), with an ability to reach across races as well as ideas.¹⁶¹ Consequently, Stevenson (1878) described Whitman as one who “wishes to drag with a larger net, to make a more comprehensive synthesis . . . his cosmology must subsume all cosmologies . . . include all religion . . . Christ and Boodha.”¹⁶² Spirituality could bridge the East-West divide, his “serene brotherhood of philosophers” in “Salut au Monde” (1856).¹⁶³ Here it can be noted that, with some reason, Philip A. Mellor sees Said’s *Orientalism* paradigm as having “a particularly unhelpful approach to religion,” given its own selectivity, sweeping generalizations, general impoverishment, and ethnocentric limita-

¹⁵⁸ Whitman, “Emerson’s ‘Brahma,’” in *Complete Poetry & Selected Prose*, p. 613.

¹⁵⁹ B. Erkkila, *Whitman the Political Poet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 271; see pp. 265–274 for general analysis of “Passage to India.”

¹⁶⁰ Whitman, “The Great Unrest of Which We are Part,” in *Specimen Days*, pp. 196–197, quotation from p. 196. Though, for Yu Beongcheon, “Whitman’s mysticism complicates his Orientalism” given the “difficulty of detaching the Oriental from the shadowy depths of his psyche,” *The Great Circle: American Writers and the Orient* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983), pp. 55–74, quotations from pp. 58, 62.

¹⁶¹ E. Dowden, *Westminster Review* 96 (1871): 33–38.

¹⁶² Stevenson, “Gospel According to Walt Whitman,” p. 74.

¹⁶³ Whitman, “Salut au Monde,” in *Collected Poetry*, pp. 125–136, quotation from p. 133 (verse 158).

tions.¹⁶⁴ Instead, religion operated for Whitman as a bridge between America and the Oriental East.

One of the few direct treatments of Whitman's relationship to Said's *Orientalism* has been Malini Johar Schueller's *U.S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature, 1790–1890*. On the one hand, she did not consider Whitman's material as "subversive Orientalism" in the mode of Herman Melville and others.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, "traces of nineteenth century racial discourses in Whitman's poetry are undeniable."¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Schueller recognized that Whitman "shared the cosmopolitan outlook of the United States at mid-century and was fascinated with the Oriental cultures;" with some "subversiveness" acknowledged for "Salut au Monde" (verse 11, "each of us unlimited, each of us with his or her rights upon the earth").¹⁶⁷ However, Whitman's interest and estimation of Asian ideas, culture, and religion was seen as somewhat secondary since "his Oriental poems exclude the contemporary realities of Asia, for to include them would be to once again foreground issues of oppression and questions about the intellectual stature of different races . . . Whitman's poetry creates the spiritual Orient as a conscious construction based on the exclusion of contemporary colonialism."¹⁶⁸ However, it could be argued that there is no inherent reason why political matters should be seen as more important than cultural-religious matters. For Schueller, "Whitman's discourse on the Far Eastern Orient employs a strategic language of political innocence" but one could ask should "political innocence" (idealism?) necessarily be condemned or read as support for cynical imperialism?

Asia was of course the land and territory of many peoples. Whitman could use some stereotypical-sounding language in "A Broadway Pageant," with his talk of the countries there, with "their populations—the millions en-masse" (verse 46), within which were "the swarming market places" (verse 47) and varied groups there "trooping up, crowding from all directions" (verse 51). Similar imagery was also seen in "Salut au Monde" (1865) and "the swarms of Peking, Canton, Benares,

¹⁶⁴ P. Mellor, "Orientalism, Representation and Religion: The Reality behind the Myth," *Religion* 34, no. 2 (2004): 99–112, quotation from p. 99.

¹⁶⁵ M. Schueller, *U.S. Orientalism: Race, Nation and Gender in Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), chap. 4, "Subversive Orientalism: Edgar Allan Poe, Harriet Prescott Spofford, and Herman Melville," pp. 109–140. Cf. chap. 7, "Whitman, Columbus, and the Asian Mother," pp. 175–198.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 175, 182.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 183, 194.



Delhi, Calcutta, Tokio.”¹⁶⁹ Such talk partly reflected the fact that the populations in China (ca. 350–400 million) and India did greatly outnumber America’s more modest population of ca. 25 million, a “teeming” demographic feature noted in later decades. However, such demographic images were influential in the Yellow Peril imagery forming in American (and Australian) circles; though Whitman seems not to have feared such population shifts, where “‘A Broadway Pageant’ powerfully [and positively] eroticizes the racial-cultural mixture.”¹⁷⁰

Said’s eroticization of the Orient was apparent with Whitman’s description of the envoys as “florid with blood, pensive, rapt with musings, hot with passion, / Sultry with perfume” (verses 29–30). Indeed this image lasted with Whitman, where he still mused (1878) on “THE EAST—What a subject for a poem! Indeed, where else a more pregnant, more splendid one? Where one more idealistic—real, more subtle, more sensuous—delicate? The east, answering all lands, all ages, peoples; touching all senses, here, immediate, now—and yet so indescribably far off—such retrospect! The East—long-stretching—so losing itself—the orient, the gardens of Asia, the womb of history and song-forth-issuing all those strange, dim cavalcades—[and using his “A Broadway Pageant” verses] Florid with blood, pensive, rapt with musings, hot with passion, Sultry with perfume, with ample and flowing garments, With sunburnt visage, intense soul and glittering eyes. Always the East—old how incalculably old!”¹⁷¹

However, the *Orientalism* paradigm of such sensual eroticism signifying decadence and as a reason for wholesale dismissal of Oriental culture and peoples, as well as legitimizing imperialism, does not seem apparent in Whitman. After all, Whitman’s advice in “A Broadway Pageant” was “be considerate with her, now and ever, hot Libertad . . . / Bend your proud neck to the long-off mother, now sending messages over the archipelagoes to you; / Bend your proud neck low for once, young Libertad” (verses 78–81).

Whitman undoubtedly had his own time period limitations with regard to “black” African Americans and “red” Native Americans.¹⁷² Nevertheless for Betsy Erkkila, Whitman “the political poet . . . draw-

¹⁶⁹ Whitman, “Salut au Monde,” p. 132 (verse 142).

¹⁷⁰ Schueller, *U.S. Orientalism*, p. 187.

¹⁷¹ Whitman, “Hours for the Soul,” in *Specimen Days*, pp. 118–121, quotation from p. 119.

¹⁷² E.g., K. Peeples, “The Paradox of the ‘Good Gray Poet’ (Walt Whitman on Slavery and the Black Man),” *Phylon* 35, no. 1 (1974): 22–32.

ing on revolutionary ideology . . . adopted increasingly radical postures” before 1860, as with the “insurrectionary sentiment that inspired Whitman’s poem ‘A Boston Ballad’” (1854).¹⁷³ Similarly, for Martin Klammer, there was Whitman’s “new and sympathetic poetry about slaves” that was noticeable “from 1848 on.”¹⁷⁴ In “Years of the Unperform’d” (1865), Whitman rejoiced “I see not America only, not only Liberty’s nation but other nations preparing, / I see tremendous entrances and exits—I see new combinations—I see the solidarity of races; / I see that force [identified there as ‘Freedom’] advancing with irresistible power on the world’s stage.”¹⁷⁵ Such was the tone of racial fraternity that those verses were later approvingly cited by the black radical activist William du Bois.¹⁷⁶ Though Dana Phillips has argued for complex racist undertones in Whitman’s multiculturalism, as being “considerably less admirable than his reputation for a broad and easy tolerance of others suggests,” her analysis ignores the noticeable religious and cultural openings toward Asia seen in Whitman.¹⁷⁷

Whitman’s invocation in Japanese circles is noticeable.¹⁷⁸ Sadakichi Hartmann was inspired by his conversations with Whitman, and the internationalist sentiments in “Salut au Monde,” to attempt founding an International Whitman Society.¹⁷⁹ Soseki Natsume’s essay *On the*

¹⁷³ Erkkila, *Whitman the Political Poet*, pp. 45, 63. Conversely, Beach considered Erkkila “understates . . . Whitman’s ambivalence,” where “he continued throughout the 1850s to express racist beliefs” and “latent acceptance of racial stereotypes”; “The Invisible Discourse: Slavery and Subjectivity in Leaves of Grass,” in *The Politics of Distinction: Whitman and the Discourses of Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. C. Beach (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1996), pp. 55–101, quotations from pp. 78, 87, 80.

¹⁷⁴ M. Klammer, *Whitman, Slavery and the Emergence of Leaves of Grass* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), p. 4; “to include blacks and other marginalized peoples in a diverse and united democracy, and he seeks to make it so” (conclusion, p. 157).

¹⁷⁵ Whitman, “Years of the Unperform’d,” in *Complete Poetry & Selected Prose*, p. 438 (verses 3–5). Also verse 6, “I see Freedom, completely arm’d and victorious [and also ‘very haughty’] . . . with Law on one side and Peace on the other, a stupendous trio all issuing against the idea of caste.”

¹⁷⁶ W. du Bois, “A Chronicle of Race Relations,” *Phylon* 4, no. 4 (1944): 362–387.

¹⁷⁷ D. Phillips, “Nineteenth-Century Racial Thought and Whitman’s ‘Democratic Ethnology of the Future,’” *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 49 (1994): 289–320, quotation from p. 290.

¹⁷⁸ Kodaira Takashi and A. Marks, “Whitman in Japan,” in Allen and Folsom, *Walt Whitman and the World*, pp. 429–436.

¹⁷⁹ Sadakichi Hartmann, “Salut au Monde: A Friend Remembers Whitman,” *Southwest Review* 12 (1927): 262–267. Hartmann, *Conversations with Walt Whitman* (1895). Li Xilao, “Walt Whitman and Asian American Writers,” *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 10 (1993): 179–194, explores Whitman’s attitudes toward Asian Americans and the work of several Asian American writers, such as Sadakichi Hartmann and Yone Noguchi, in the context of Whitman’s poetry and vision of democracy.

Poems of Walt Whitman (1892) was subtitled “The Representative of Equality in Literature.” Kanzo Uchimura’s *Walt Whitman the Poet* (1909) and *The Poet of the Common People* (1914) saw the theme of international brotherhood as a crucial and welcome underpinning of Whitman’s poetry. Takeo Arishima, Yone Noguchi, Shigetaka Naganuma, Seigo Shiratori, Yoshinori Yoshitake, and Takashi Sugiki carried on this Whitman flame from the late nineteenth century into the twentieth century. Saburo Ota (1959) felt “attracted by Whitman’s concept of humanity . . . the democratic thought of Whitman.”¹⁸⁰ It is no coincidence that Takaki, in looking at the history of Asian Americans, considered that alongside white supremacism, “America also has a counter tradition and vision, springing from the reality of racial and cultural diversity . . . as Whitman celebrated so lyrically.”¹⁸¹

As Whitman stood watching the Japanese envoys process down Broadway he could then well hearken back to his concluding “Antecedents” verses of January that “where I am or you this present day, there is the centre of all days, all races, and there is the meaning to us of all that has ever come of races and days, or ever will come.”¹⁸² Whitman embraced racial contacts in a way that was striking for his era, “I like well our polyglot construction—stamp, and the retention thereof, in the broad, the tolerating, the many sided, the collective. All nations here . . . in all languages—on our shores.”¹⁸³ Movement was something to be embraced: “travel, reciprocity . . . intercommunion of lands—what are they but Democracy’s and the highest Law’s best aids.”¹⁸⁴ Immigration was a source for American vitality, but unlike many compatriots, Whitman could welcome such movements from Asia as well as Europe. In “A Broadway Pageant,” movement of peoples across the Pacific from Asia to America “are justified—they are accomplish’d . . . to travel toward you thence” (verse 84). In retrospect, Huang sees Whitman as “nineteenth century American culture’s most creative

¹⁸⁰ Saburo Ota, “Walt Whitman and Japanese Literature,” *Asia and the Humanities*, ed. H. Frenz (Bloomington: Comparative Literature Committee, Indiana University, 1959), pp. 62–69, quotation from p. 69.

¹⁸¹ R. Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1989), p. 16; with Whitman’s “a teeming nation of nations” (Preface, *Leaves of Grass*, 1855) and “tying the Eastern to the Western” (“Passage to India,” 1871).

¹⁸² Whitman, “You and Me and Today,” *New York Saturday Press*, 14 January 1860; retitled “With Antecedents” in 1867 *Leaves of Grass*; repr. in *Complete Poetry & Selected Prose*, pp. 222–223 (verses 40–41).

¹⁸³ Whitman, “The Last Collective Compaction,” in *Specimen Days*, p. 338.

¹⁸⁴ Whitman, “Our Eminent Visitors,” in *ibid.*, pp. 1135–1139, quotation from p. 1139.

and threatening critic" ready to accept "global diasporic movements" from East to West as "even more clear . . . necessary and even instrumental" in his "vision of world unity and equality."¹⁸⁵ Huang saw a dual purpose in "A Broadway Pageant," whereby "the East has been marching westward to America for diplomatic missions and immigration purposes; the West therefore, needs to reciprocate by journeying eastwards for the benefit of liberty."¹⁸⁶

Whitman's "Darwinism" was no racial White "survival of the fittest;" instead it was what he dubbed "the commonalty of all humanity."¹⁸⁷ Quite simply, in "This Moment Yearning and Thoughtful" (1860/1865) "there are other men in other lands yearning and thoughtful; / . . . far away, in China . . . or Japan talking other dialects, / It seems to me they are as wise, beautiful, benevolent, as any in my own lands; / I know we should be brethren and lovers, / I know I should be happy with them."¹⁸⁸ Internationalism was in the air for Whitman by the 1860s, with him wondering in "Years of the Unperform'd" (1865), "on land and sea everywhere . . . / the Pacific, the archipelagos . . . / What whispers are these O lands, running ahead of you, passing under the sea? / Are all nations communing? Is there going to be but one heart to the globe? / Is humanity forming en-masse? . . . / . . . such portents fill the days and nights: / Years prophetic . . . / Unborn deeds, things soon to be."¹⁸⁹

Whitman's "commonalty of all humanity" was helped by emerging global economic links, being created "with steamships, factories, electric telegraphs, cylinder presses—to the thought of the solidarity of nations, the brotherhood and sisterhood of the entire earth."¹⁹⁰ In "The Eighteenth Presidency" (1856), across the Pacific "frontiers and boundaries are less and less able to divide men . . . the world spreading instruments of peace, the steamship, the locomotive, the electric telegraph, the common newspaper, the cheap book, the ocean mail, are interlinking the inhabitants of the earth together as groups of one

¹⁸⁵ Huang, "Whitman on Asian Immigration and Nation-Formation," pp. 163, 161.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

¹⁸⁷ Whitman, "Darwinism—(Then Furthermore)," in *Specimen Days*, pp. 326–327, quotation from p. 327.

¹⁸⁸ Whitman, "This Moment Yearning and Thoughtful," in *Complete Poetry & Selected Prose*, p. 119 (verses 2, 4–7). Absent in the 1860 *Leaves of Grass*, "Or Japan" was inserted in the 1865 collection. The line "It seems to me they are as wise, beautiful, benevolent, as any in my own lands" was dropped in the 1881 *Leaves of Grass* edition.

¹⁸⁹ Whitman, "Years of the Unperform'd," p. 439 (verses 17, 20–22, 24–26).

¹⁹⁰ Whitman, "Ventures on an Old Theme," in *Specimen Days*, pp. 322–324, quotation from p. 323.

family.”¹⁹¹ Consequently Whitman could rejoice, in “A Broadway Pageant,” that “sail-ships and steam-ships threading the archipelagoes [of the Pacific across to Asia]; / . . . stars and stripes fluttering in the wind; / . . . commerce opening . . . commencing from this day, surrounded by the world” (verses 64–66, 68). Incipient globalization, rather than American imperial territorial expansionism, was in the air for Whitman, whereby in “Years of the Unperform’d” (1865), “on land and sea everywhere . . . the Pacific, the archipelagoes; / . . . the steamship, the electric telegraph, the newspaper . . . / . . . the world spreading factories . . . interlinks all geography, all lands.”¹⁹² Whitman’s use of the phrase “commerce” may have been a relatively minor aside in “A Broadway Pageant,” but others noticed it. For Richard J. Hinton (1869), it signaled “a future, too, not so far distant, when Western material civilization and energy shall be wedded to the subtle Eastern intellect [!], and together we shall see, as Walt Whitman says in his picturesque and suggestive ‘Broadway Pageant,’ ‘Commerce opening [. . .] commencing from this day, surrounded by the world.’”¹⁹³ The first half of Whitman’s “Passage to India” (1871) emphasized recent technological achievements like the Suez Canal (1869), the Union Pacific transcontinental railway-telegraph network (1869), and the laying of cables across the Atlantic (1865), where Whitman saw an underlying “purpose” in such developments, in fostering a universal brotherhood with “the earth to be spann’d, connected by network, the races, neighbors, to marry and be given in marriage, the oceans to be cross’d; the distant brought near. The lands to be welded together.”¹⁹⁴

Whilst Whitman was more than ready to sing the joys of America and affirm its worth against European reactionary snobbery, this was a “humanistic nationalism . . . far removed from a petty nationalism . . . a vision of brotherhood.”¹⁹⁵ Emory Holloway judged that “Whitman’s is a religion of humanity” a “vision of mankind . . . and his fervent championship of its rights and potentialities” in a “friendly affirmation of the solidarity of the human race,” with “an internationalism based

¹⁹¹ Whitman, “The Eighteenth Presidency,” in *Complete Poetry & Selected Prose*, pp. 586–602, quotation from pp. 601–602.

¹⁹² Whitman, “Years of the Unperform’d,” pp. 438–439, quotation from p. 439 (verses 17–19). Retitled in 1881 as “Years of the Modern.”

¹⁹³ R. Hinton, “A Talk with Mr. Burlingame about China,” *Galaxy* 6 (November 1868): 613–623, quotation from p. 619.

¹⁹⁴ Whitman, “Passage to India,” in *Complete Poetry & Selected Prose*, pp. 372–381 (verses 32–35).

¹⁹⁵ G. Bluestein, “The Advantages of Barbarism: Herder and Whitman’s Nationalism,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24, no. 1 (1963): 115–126, quotation from p. 125.

on a religion of humanity” that had “outgrew the typical [narrow] nineteenth century conception of nationalism.”¹⁹⁶ Such a vision by this “internationalist poet” was exemplified, for Harry R. Warfel, in “Salut au Monde” (1856) by “the democratic ideal of human brotherhood and its ultimate extension throughout the world.”¹⁹⁷ In “The Eighteenth Presidency” (1856) “races are marching and countermarching by swift tens of millions of followers. Never was justice so mighty amid injustice; never did the ideas of equality erect itself so haughty and unpromisingly, as today . . . never was the representative man more energetic, more like a god, than today . . . he colonizes the Pacific, the Asiatic Indies . . . on all sides tyrants tremble.”¹⁹⁸

Admittedly, Miner argued “A Broadway Pageant” has “an increasing emphasis on the more jingoistic later sections of the poem,” on “America, the Mistress,” and “a greater supremacy,” of “imperialism.”¹⁹⁹ Schueller considered that “in ‘A Broadway Pageant,’ the contrast between the dynamic, active, contemporary United States and the passive Asia of the past is made clear” in his juxtaposition of “Young Libertad, with the venerable Asia, the all-mother” (verse 76).²⁰⁰ The crux of Schueller’s case was “with empire being the natural outcome” of Whitman’s juxtaposition, in effect “an attempt to naturalize imperialism.”²⁰¹ Whitman indeed exulted in “A Broadway Pageant,” “I chant the new empire, grander than any before. / I chant America, the Mistress—I chant a greater supremacy” (verses 61–62).²⁰²

However, the question then leads to what sort of “supremacy” and with what consequences, to which the answer is that Whitman’s

¹⁹⁶ E. Halloway, “Introduction,” in *Leaves of Grass*, by Whitman (London: Dent, 1968), pp. vii–xxxii, xix, xxii.

¹⁹⁷ W. Grunzweig, “‘For America—For All the Earth’: Walt Whitman as an International(ist) Poet,” in *Breaking Bounds, Breaking Bounds: Whitman and American Cultural Studies*, ed. B. Erkkila and J. Grossman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 238–250; H. Warfel, “Whitman’s *Salut au Monde*: The Ideal of Human Brotherhood,” *Phylon Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1958): 154–156.

¹⁹⁸ Whitman, “The Eighteenth Presidency,” in *Complete Poetry & Selected Prose*, pp. 586–602, quotation from pp. 601–602.

¹⁹⁹ Miner, “Background, Date and Composition,” p. 404. Miner did though note that Whitman “however qualified this imperialism . . . with condescending praise of ‘the venerable Asia, the all-mother,’” p. 405. Perhaps this is a somewhat condescending phrase for Miner to use?

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 188–189.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² These verses were the spur for Grunzweig, “The New Empire Grander Than Any Before: Nineteenth-Century American Versions of a Democratic Imperialism,” in *Empire: American Studies*, ed. J. Blair and R. Wagnleitner (Tübingen, Germany: Gunter Narr, 1997), pp. 243–250, examining Whitman’s translation of “the rhetoric of manifest destiny to a global level” and his awareness of “the problematical implication of ‘empire.’”

“empire” does not really fit the empire-building paradigm of Said’s *Orientalism*. Certainly there was “supremacy” but a supremacy of international trade and also of the spread of ideas, liberty. It was in this sense that Asia could be renewed, a process in “A Broadway Pageant” (verses 63–65) where “the sleep of ages having done its work—races, reborn, refresh’d; Lives, works, resumed—The object I know not—but the old, the Asiatic, renew’d, as it must be, Commencing from this day.” Whitman considered “the peculiar glory of our lands” lay “not in . . . their military or naval power . . . but more and more in a vaster, saner, more surrounding Comradeship . . . uniting all nations and all humanity, every nation, each after its distinctive kind . . . the fraternity over the whole globe—that dazzling, pensive dream of ages.”²⁰³ Whitman did indeed talk in “Democratic Vistas” (1871) of imperial power, but it was the power of ideas, where “the fruit of democracy, on aught like a grand scale, resides altogether in the future . . . when it [‘Democracy’], with imperial power, through amplest time, has dominated mankind.”²⁰⁴ Consequently, in the international sphere Whitman, more benignly, saw “the role of America as the mistress of a new world-democracy. In this sense ‘A Broadway Pageant’ is a precursor of [Whitman’s] ‘Passage to India.’”²⁰⁵

Whitman’s geocultural outlook was still one in which democracy was at the core of his worldview. On his death, John Burroughs judged him “the poet of democracy,” while Walter Blackburn Harte thought him “a great democrat . . . a revolutionary in the eternal rights of mankind.”²⁰⁶ In such a vein, Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* (1855) preface asserted, “the idea of political liberty is indispensable . . . numberless brothers answering our equal friendship and calling no man master.”²⁰⁷ Democracy was not just an abstract idea, it was also a question for Whitman of “living democratically.”²⁰⁸ Emerson (1863) recommended Whitman to Secretary of State Seward as someone whose “writings . . . show extraordinary power, and are more deeply American, democratic & in the interests of political liberty, than those of any other

²⁰³ “Poetry To-day in America,” p. 297.

²⁰⁴ Whitman, “Democratic Vistas,” in *Specimen Days*, pp. 226–227.

²⁰⁵ Bradley and Blodgett, eds., Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, nn. 242–243.

²⁰⁶ J. Burroughs, “The Poet of Democracy,” *North American Review* 154 (May 1892): 532–541; W. Harte, “Walt Whitman’s Democracy,” *The New England Magazine* 12, no. 6 (1892): 721–725, quotation from p. 722.

²⁰⁷ Whitman, *Leaves of Grass: The First (1855) Edition*, ed. M. Cowley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), pp. 15, [16] 40–41.

²⁰⁸ G. Kateb, “Walt Whitman and the Culture of Democracy,” *Political Theory* 18, no. 4 (1990): 545–571, quotation from p. 560.

poet. He is indeed a child of the people, & their champion."²⁰⁹ Consequently, in *Democracy* (1867), Whitman considered that "the mission of government" was "to train communities through all their grades, beginning with individuals and ending there again, to rule themselves."²¹⁰ At this international level, "Democracy, this most alluring record, that it alone can bind . . . all nations, all men, of however and distant lands into a brotherhood, a family. It is the old, yet ever-modern dream of earth."²¹¹ Whitman provides a powerful libertarian "American" alternative to conventional Pacific imperialists who were gathering force in America.

The Japanese visit of 1860 was reaffirmed in 1871, when the "Iwakura mission" sailed across the Pacific from Japan to spend some six months in America. Both countries had gone through dramatic domestic transformations, America with its Civil War (1861–1865) and Japan with the fall of the Shogunate and the Meiji Restoration of 1867. Henceforth, both countries were to push further out into and across the Pacific, toward each other. With the Iwakura Mission leaving American soil, Whitman composed "As A Strong Bird on Pinions Free" (June 1872). The Japanese ship "carriest great companions, venerable priestly Asia sails this day with thee," with America remaining as a beacon "ship of democracy" creating in America a "land tolerating all, accepting all."²¹² In his preface to the poem, Whitman's America was far removed from colonialist annexations, for she was "not to become a conqueror Nation, or to achieve the glory of mere military, or diplomatic, or commercial superiority."²¹³ Rather she was "to become the grand Producing Land of nobler Men and Women—of copious races, cheerful, healthy, tolerant, free—To become the most friendly Nation (the United States indeed,)—the modern composite Nation, formed from all, with room for all, welcoming all immigrants."²¹⁴ This formed the counterpart to his own poetry "aiming at the widest sub-bases and inclusions of humanity."²¹⁵

²⁰⁹ Emerson to Seward, 10 January 1863, in Whitman, *The Correspondence: Volume I: 1842–1867*, ed. E. Miller (New York: New York University Press, 1961), pp. 65–66, letter 29, p. 66.

²¹⁰ Whitman, "Democracy," pp. 919–933, quotation from p. 923.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 924.

²¹² Whitman, "As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free" (subsequently appearing in the 1881–1882 edition of *Leaves of Grass* as "Thou Mother with Thy Equal Brood"), in *Complete Poetry & Selected Prose*, pp. 410–415 (verses 54–55, 47, 98).

²¹³ Whitman, "Preface, 1872, to 'As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free,'" in *Complete Poetry & Selected Prose*, pp. 722–727, quotation from pp. 723–724.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 724.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 725.

CONCLUSIONS

The arrival of the Japanese embassy on American soil can, in retrospect, be seen as an important harbinger of two themes. First, it brought Japan into the American consciousness and into its international diplomacy. Japan was to hereafter maintain itself as a distinct and important element for the American consciousness alongside the already “known” cultures of India and China. Such an awareness of Japan was new for America, for whom “Asia” had changed forever. The *Atlantic Monthly* saw immediate significance for America vis-à-vis China, “the imagined attractions of China disappear, those of Japan become only more definite and substantial. The old interest in China is transferred to its worthier neighbor.”²¹⁶ China (“corrupt . . . degraded . . . enfeebled by misgovernment . . . sunk in decay”) was to be contrasted with, “on the other hand, the real vigor, thrift, and intelligence of Japan, its great and still advancing power, and the rich promise of its future.”²¹⁷ In effect, a new Asian element was introduced into American horizons in 1860, where over the next decades China and Japan were to rise and fall in their relative importance and estimation of closeness by America. The presence of Japan in the American psyche—political, military, diplomatic, cultural, religious, or otherwise—saw an American encounter of greater intensity than seen in Europe vis-à-vis Japan. Geopolitics was mixed with geoculture. Whereas for Britain “Asia” was foremost India, for America “Asia” was after 1860 to be increasingly Japan (as well as China). Ambiguities abounded in this ongoing American-Japanese relationship, in which for America the coming of the Japanese in 1860 was a “pageant” riddled with some ambiguities and uncertainties, fears and hopes, foreboding and wonderment then and afterward.

Whitman’s “A Broadway Pageant,” in its witting and unwitting testimony, also stands as vivid record to the new Pacific dynamics opening up, between Japan and the United States, a cross-Pacific relationship that went on to dominate and still dominates Pacific economic, military, and political ties. Indeed, the events of 1860 stand as an early pointer of growing interest in what later came to be called the “Pacific Age” or “Pacific Century.”²¹⁸ Thoreau talked (1849) of “the tempting

²¹⁶ “Japan,” *Atlantic Monthly*, p. 722.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ P. Korhonen, “The Pacific Age in World History,” *Journal of World History* 7 (1996): 41–70.

but unexplored Pacific Ocean of Futurity,” beckoning to “an American reader, who can . . . see over that strip of the Atlantic coast to Asia and the Pacific,” and later (1862) that “there is perhaps one more chance for the race left . . . and that is the Lethe of the Pacific.”²¹⁹ In the U.S. Senate, Seward famously asserted in 1852, on the eve of Perry’s expedition to Japan, that the Pacific Ocean would become the “chief theatre in the events of the world’s great hereafter.”²²⁰ E. Herzen (1858) mused on “the Pacific Ocean, that ‘Mediterranean of the future.’”²²¹

Two examples of the varied, yet converging geocultural and geopolitical strands can be shown from *Vanity Fair* in 1860. First came its profile of “The Dream of Shimme Boojsen No-Cami,” replete with the Japanese envoy’s nightmarish dreams of international cultural misunderstandings at play in his official receptions; profiled on the same page as its separate snippet picking up on how there was talk in some quarters that the “necessity of war between America and England could arise out of the San Juan difficulty . . . a question limited to the Pacific.”²²² Second was their joking report “C’est l’amour, l’amour” whereby “‘Tommy,’ said a young lady in Washington, ‘is such a love that he must have been born on the banks of the Amoor.’”²²³ On one level, it was a play on words of the French word “*amour*” (love) and romantic-sensual images of Tateishi “Tommy” Noriyuki. On another level, it was a reference to Russia’s occupation of the Amur Basin and Maritime Provinces during 1858–1860. In Russia, Romanov (December 1860) saw this expansion as part of “the shift of the world historical field to the Pacific,” where “the events of our day indicate that it is here, on this vast ocean, that the tasks of the intercourse of peoples will be solved and new, broader interests will be drawn together . . . California and Panama from one side, newly opened China and Japan from the other, the Australian continent now being settled in the south, a multitude of various countries touching on the ocean from all

²¹⁹ H. Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, ed. C. Hovde (1849; Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 294, 142, 143; Thoreau, “Walking,” *Atlantic Monthly* 9 (June 1862): 657–674, quotations from p. 662.

²²⁰ W. Seward, *The Works of William H. Seward*, ed. G. Baker, 5 vols. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1884), 3: 618.

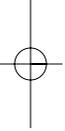
²²¹ E. Herzen, “Amerika i Sibir [America and Siberia],” *Kolokol*, 1 December 1858, as cited in M. Bassin, *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imaginations and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840–1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 14.

²²² “The Dream of Shimme Boojsen No-Cami”; “No ‘Casus Belli,’” *Vanity Fair* 1 (26 May 1860).

²²³ “C’est l’amour, l’amour,” *Vanity Fair* 1 (23 June 1860): 405.



sides: all this must necessarily call for the new relationships and situations.”²²⁴ Chih and Shimakawa’s “growth of ‘Pacific Rim’ discourse in the latter decades of the 20th century” was already prefigured around 1860.²²⁵ In short, the Pacific had arrived in the field of geopolitics as well as geoculture. The Pacific Age was beckoning for diplomats as well as poets.



²²⁴ D. Romanov, *Poslednie sobytia v Kitae I znachenie ikhdliia Rossii* (December 1860), as cited in Bassin, *Imperial Visions*, p. 145.

²²⁵ K. Chuh and K. Shimakawa, *Orientations: Mapping Studies in the Asian Diaspora* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), “Introduction,” pp. 1–20, quotation from p. 3.



