

Henna-Riikka Pennanen

Material, Mental, and Moral Progress

American Conceptions of Civilization
in Late 19th Century Studies on
“things Chinese and Japanese”



JYVÄSKYLÄ STUDIES IN HUMANITIES 241

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ABSTRACT

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The thesis is about 19th century American conceptions – and the concept – of *civilization*. By the late 19th century, the concept had become indispensable in American discussions about politics, society, religion, and culture. However, the meanings various discussants gave to the concept were manifold, ambiguous, and even antithetical. Therefore, the concept resembled closely what Reinhart Koselleck has called a *Grundbegriffe*, or a key concept.

The thesis is a study on how six American experts on China and Japan used this key concept in their studies on “things Chinese and Japanese,” what changing meanings they gave to it, and how the authors viewed and explained the world around them through this concept, and the ideas it embodied. In attempting to understand, interpret, and represent the foreign civilizations and cultures they encountered in China and Japan, these six experts found the concept of civilization eminently useful. They devised material, mental, and moral gauges with which they measured the level of Civilization a given nation had attained. At the same time, they became quite reflective about their own civilization, about the idea in general, and about the related contemporary concepts of *progress*, *evolution*, and *race*.

The methodological approach of the thesis draws partly from cultural history, or theoretical and methodological discussions about images, representations, cultural encounters, and power relations. On the other hand, the thesis draws from intellectual and conceptual history, or discussions about language, concepts, and the role of different contexts in the interpretation of texts. With the help of these methodological insights, the thesis aims to show the practical importance and complexity of the concept of civilization in popular scientific writing, and the extent to which the concept had become democratized and established in the 19th century American society.

Keywords: civilization, history, 19th century, Japan, China, the United States

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In Tove Jansson's Moomin novel (*Moominpappa at Sea*, 1965), the Moomin family embarks on a journey through sea at night, in order to grant Moominpappa's wish of starting a new life and a new adventure. Like the Moomin journey, my journey to the completion of the thesis has had its share of excitement, obstacles, and unexpected results. And like Moominpappa, I have not been on this journey alone. The people who have accompanied me have been many, and I owe all of them my sincerest appreciation and thanks.

First, I wish to thank my supervisor Satu Matikainen, who persuaded me to begin this search for "new life and adventure" in the first place. Together with my second supervisor, Markku Hokkanen, Satu has always been there for me, for better and for worse. Satu and Markku have tirelessly read, commented, and discussed my texts, and proved to be considerate, intelligent, and humorous persons both in and outside the context of work.

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Jyväskylä 15.12.2014
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ABSTRACT

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1 INTRODUCTION

During the latter half of the 19th century, what had previously been the “Far East” for Americans was gradually reconstructed as the “Near West”,¹ as the United States expanded westwards with acquisitions such as California (1846), Hawaii (1898), and the Philippines (1898). Technological innovations and improvements in transportation² accelerated the movement of people, commodities, and information across the Pacific Ocean, and treaties concluded with China, Japan, and later Korea, also increased American access to these nations. Due to diminishing distances, ever greater contact, and an accumulation of knowledge, East Asia became the western neighbour of the US, both physically, and in the American imagination.³

The process of familiarisation with East Asia was slow, however. At first, little was known about China and Japan and they were of little concern to the young republic. The few times American attention would stray from domestic affairs, it would be drawn across the Atlantic rather than the Pacific Ocean. Yet, the commercial, religious, nationalistic, and employment prospects of East Asia lured some individual Americans into taking the sea journey ‘further west’ into the unknown.⁴ What they encountered there were curious cultures different from their own and begging for explanation.

The focus of the present thesis is on six such American individuals who ended up settling in East Asia, and who resolved to study and comprehend the foreignness they encountered there. Besides trying to understand the East Asian cultures, these six Americans also interpreted and translated them for their compatriots at home. Hence they lectured and wrote extensively and, in effect, they succeeded in composing some highly influential and authoritative publications.

¹ See e.g., Griffis 1900, 210.

² Particularly significant was the completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad (1863-1869).

³ “Japan, once in the far-off Orient, is now our nearest Western neighbor.” (Griffis 2006a, xi.)

⁴ Chun 2005, 9; Fairbank 1961, 251-252; Latourette 1955, 5; Metraux 2002, 12; Tyrrell 2007, 94-96.

In their attempts to comprehend and convey a picture of what they saw and experienced in China and Japan, the six authors turned to the concept of “civilization”. This process is the central theme of this thesis. The main research questions address the following topics: (i) what civilization or ‘being civilized’ meant for Americans at the time; (ii) the actual meanings given to the concept by the selected authors; and (iii) how the authors viewed and explained the world around them through this concept and the ideas it embodied. These questions will be considered in the methodological frameworks of intellectual, conceptual, and cultural history.

The 19th century American conceptions of “civilization” were by no means uniform, and debates about the concept had been ongoing in Europe and the US since the 18th century. However, these conceptions often rested on certain shared assumptions, such as the notion of civilization developing ever upwards and onwards in a linear trajectory. This notion had triumphed with the Enlightenment, while the classical notion of development as something cyclical and death-bound, like the life cycle of an organic being, was fast becoming obsolete. Thus far, there was a general convergence of opinions among the Americans. But the sentiments with which the process of civilization was viewed ranged from enthusiasm to regret, from positive to negative. There was also some uncertainty whether there would be one single civilization in the future, or civilizations in the plural. And also the question of the mechanisms of the process of civilization lacked a definitive answer.

Espousing the idea of accumulative linear development, the Americans meshed the concept of civilization to progress, and consequently, they placed civilizations in a hierarchical fashion. On this ladder of progress, 19th century Americans claimed to occupy the highest rung, or were content to at least share this position with the British, fellow inheritors of “Anglo-Saxon” cultural traditions.⁵ But how about all the other peoples of the world lower down on the ladder of progress? Were they also capable of a higher level of civilization, or was it only possible for certain races and cultures? These varied perceptions about the nature of civilization will be explored further in the thesis using the published sources of the six American authors.

In order to render East Asia more intelligible for their readers, the authors complemented their descriptions by comparing China and Japan with other cultures and nations. The concept of civilization proved useful as a means for both defining and comparing, and the latter activity usually involved the notion of grading civilization. But how could something like civilization be measured? Drawing on contemporary opinions and discussions, the sextet devised several yardsticks, such as the form of government, society, religion, morals, the education system, scientific attainments, the position of women, and family values. The possibility that these systems might be so evidently different was of no consequence for the writers, as the differences were interpreted as being merely separate stages in the universal process of development. However, there was no

⁵ Adams 1998, 12; Iriye 1967, 6; Tyrrell 2007, 136.

clear consensus on how these features were related to civilization, or whether all of them could even be used as indications of civilization.

There were major contending points of view about the essence and contents of civilisation, which surfaced in the writings of the six authors on 'things Chinese and Japanese'. Notwithstanding the flexibility of the concept, or precisely because of it, they frequently employed it. In fact, it was difficult not to do so, because by the late 19th century, civilization had become an inescapable part of American vocabulary in discussions about societies, cultures, time, history and politics. As such, civilization, as a concept, meets Reinhart Koselleck's definition of a *Grundbegriffe*, or 'key/basic concept': something which by its very nature is unstable, complex, polysemic, contested, and yet impossible to do without.⁶ The texts of the six authors support the assumption that civilization was a key concept at that particular juncture in time and place. It is this status as a key concept that makes the study of civilization worthwhile, as it provides invaluable insights into 19th century American thought, world-views, values, attitudes and encounters with the 'Other.'

1.1 Time frame of the study

It is a well-worn truism that all periodisations in history are largely arbitrary. Yet, in order to make a historical study manageable, and prevent its focus from dissipating, a justifiable time frame needs to be established. In this study, the chosen time frame begins with the 'opening' of China and Japan in the 1840s and 1850s, and ends with the Boxer Uprising and ensuing Boxer Protocol in 1901. The selected dates are based on what later became known as 'the unequal treaties',⁷ which brought China, Japan, and the US into contact, and also involved discussions about civilization.

The unequal treaties gave the Americans and other treaty nations extraterritorial privileges and a control over tariffs in China and Japan. The 'most-favoured-nation' clause ensured that the privileges gained by one Western signatory were extended to all the other treaty partners, but not for the Chinese or Japanese in Western countries. The 19th century 'family of nations' consisted of 'civilised' states, that is, the states of Europe and other nations peopled by persons of European origin, who conducted their mutual relations according to the stipulations of international law. The unequal treaties effectively tied China and Japan to this international community, but designated them as inferior when compared to the fully sovereign and 'civilised' countries.⁸

Thus, the unequal treaties became a symbol for civilization, or perhaps more for a lack of it. The exclusion of China and Japan from the procedures and

⁶ Richter et al. 2006, 345, 350.

⁷ The first of the US's 'unequal treaties' with China was the Treaty of Wanghia in 1844. With Japan, they were the Convention of Kanagawa (1854) and the Treaty of Amity and Commerce (1858).

⁸ Auslin 2004, 1; Iriye 1967, 12; Horowitz 2004, 448; Iriye 2005, 204; Takii 2007, 6.

norms of the 'law of nations', operated by sovereign and equal states, was a clear sign that China and Japan were considered semi-civilized. If China and Japan wished to be released from the grip of the unequal treaties, and to gain parity with the 'civilised' nations, the two empires needed to show that they fulfilled the standards that European nations had set for civilization. In short, China and Japan were expected to adopt Western civilization. As the American geologist Raphael Pumpelly, who had worked in East Asia and spoke on behalf of many of his contemporaries, put it: China had "only the alternative of gradual reorganization and progress in the track of civilization with which she is coming every day more and more into contact, or of retrogression and disintegration". And the same went for Japan. Some Chinese and Japanese, though certainly not all, came to the same conclusion, and during the latter half of the 19th century, both China and Japan took steps along a similar 'path of modernisation' as the West.⁹

To assert and maintain their independence, the Chinese and Japanese therefore carried out military, political, governmental, institutional, technological and educational reforms – Japan on a more extensive and radical scale than China. By the end of the century, the Japanese reforms had sufficiently convinced Britain and other treaty powers that Japan had attained the required level of civilization, and could thus be admitted into the family of fully autonomous nations. Japan's unequal treaties were revised in 1894, and eventually its autonomy restored. China, however, had a longer wait ahead before the Western powers abrogated its treaties, mostly during and after World War II.

The 19th century has been called the century of humiliation for China.¹⁰ This was largely due to the Opium Wars and unequal treaties, but perhaps the climax to this perceived humiliation was the emergence of Japan as victorious in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95. Traditionally, China's view of the world had been Sinocentric, with neighbouring Japan as a subordinate, tributary state. But when Japan teamed up with the Western powers on an equal footing to suppress the Boxer Uprising, joined in the scramble for 'spheres of influence', and participated in the unequal treaty system in China, the tables seemed to have turned in East Asia.

The Sino-Japanese war also concretised American distinctions between Japan and China so that, by the turn of the 20th century, westerners generally considered Japan to have risen above China in terms of both modernisation and military achievement. The Americans tended to see the Japanese as having progressed from 'barbarism' to 'civilization', confirmed by their defeat of the more 'barbaric' China in the war.¹¹ As American attitudes came to increasingly fa-

⁹ Auslin 2004, 195; Pumpelly 1868, 602; Takii 2007, xviii, 5-6, 131.

¹⁰ Scott 2008, 2.

¹¹ This tendency to perceive the Sino-Japanese war as a battle between the forces of civilization and barbarism was visible in the primary sources of this thesis, as well as in American newspapers like the *New York Times*. (See e.g., "China Will Eventually Win", *New York Times*, 28.10.1894; "Japanese Accused Unjustly", *New York Times*, 30.12.1894.) Officially, the US remained neutral, but the sympathies of many observers were on the side of Japan. However, there were also voices suspecting that the pro-Japanese American news coverage was manipulated by the Japanese and their

your Japan, the attitudes toward China hardened. Benjamin Elman has called this development the “grand narrative” of Chinese failure and Japanese success¹², which culminated in the Sino-Japanese war. China’s loss was interpreted as a failure of efforts at modernisation, and all of a sudden, the huge empire appeared to both foreigners and Chinese alike as hopelessly weak, with a bleak future. However, as Elman has emphasised, this narrative stemmed more from disappointment, and underestimation of China’s resources and development, than from the reality in China itself.¹³

In addition to this grand narrative, and the unequal treaties, this period of roughly half a century brought together several significant and related historical phenomena, events, and discussions. There was, for example, a growth in the adoption of modernisation and industrialisation; consolidation of the Euro-centric power-system; the recognition of the US as a great power; domestic and foreign disturbances in all three countries under study here; more active and aggressive American involvement in the Pacific; encroachments into Chinese territory; increased Chinese and Japanese emigration to the US; shifts in the way China and Japan were perceived in the US; and a nascent professionalization and scientification of Chinese studies.

This period also witnessed the emergence of civilization as a transnational key concept. The concept was adopted by many different nations and languages as a watchword for progress and modern world-view. Despite the universalistic assumptions inherent in it, Americans also regarded civilization as a national concept. To quote the early 20th century historians Charles and Mary Beard, civilization was the “American spirit” – a distinct American world-view of destiny, opportunity, and responsibility, which encompassed such ideals as republicanism, freedom, self-government, and the right to pursue happiness.¹⁴

The selected primary sources for this thesis were written and published between the 1870s and 1901, at a time when the number of American specialists and their published accounts of China and Japan began to multiply. Although this time period does not coincide exactly with the framework of unequal treaties, the narratives and discussions in the selected sources often covered the time period directly following the treaties. Living and writing at the turn of the century, five of the six authors could discuss past and present events alike. And if they were not in a position to eye-witness and personally experience the whole span of time, they could resort to previous publications, magazines, newspapers, conference papers, lectures, and discussions with other specialists for material and inspiration.

government. This accusation has also received support from later historians of American relations with Pacific nations. William F. Nimmo, for example, has argued that Japan possessed an effective propaganda machine which fed favourable images of Japanese manoeuvres to the American press during the war. (Nimmo 2001, 19–20, 22.)

¹² Charles Wordell has termed this as “Japan is up; China is down” scenario. (Wordell 1998, xxviii.)

¹³ Elman 2004, 285, 326; Elman 2006, 14, 191, 197.

¹⁴ Beard et al. 1948, v, 98, 100; Den Boer 2007, 212.

1.2 Primary sources

The primary sources of this thesis consist of publications written by six American experts on things Chinese and Japanese. Now, the relevant question of course is whether such sources are conducive for the examination of 19th century American conceptions of civilization.

The obvious place to start studying American conceptions of civilization would be the intellectuals of the day and the theories they formulated about the idea. The classics they produced were highly influential, significant, and relevant for a long time after they were written. However, a sole focus on the texts of intellectuals would not reveal the extent to which civilization had become a 'key concept' in the society, or the "American spirit", as Charles and Mary Beard worded. Democratisation, or filtering down from the specialised elite strata into the level of everyday speech, is an important aspect of a key concept,¹⁵ and a focus on the intellectual elite would ignore that aspect. On the other hand, a study of that everyday speech – private discussions and language of the 'ordinary people' in their homes, schools, clubs, and workplaces – would be virtually impossible. As Olavi K. Fält has suggested, often the best we can do in order to determine the ideas and conceptions of 'ordinary people' is to "examine the ideas contained in the books which such people read".¹⁶

Therefore, the sources selected for this thesis concentrate on the "intermediary level," that is, somewhere between the intellectual and the man on the street. The six authors of the primary sources were somewhat educated and aware of the intellectual currents of the day, although they were not necessarily taking part in discussions about them. What separated them from 'average' educated Americans was that they had landed in East Asia, that they attempted to translate the 'Otherness' they encountered there in widely-read publications, and that they had consequently earned a reputation for being 'experts' on China and Japan.¹⁷

These authors were not specifically writing about the concept or idea of civilization itself. They were attempting to analyse and represent Chinese and Japanese cultures and societies. However, in doing so they repeatedly evoked the word and idea of civilization, and presented a variety of interpretations of the concept. Thus, their texts are actually a fertile ground for investigation of the usages, meanings, and democratisation of the concept in 19th century United States.

¹⁵ Richter et al. 2006, 350.

¹⁶ Fält 2002, 9.

¹⁷ Although these experts were not intellectuals according to the dictionary definition of being highly intelligent persons who pursue learning, academic and cultural interests, Colin Mackerras thinks that they were intellectuals "in the sense of being literate people capable of constructing images in written form." ("intellectual, adj. and n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, 2012. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/97387?redirectedFrom=intellectual>. Accessed November 29, 2012; Mackerras 1989, 8.)

But why should one study American conceptions of civilization via representations of *foreign* civilizations? These representations do potentially reveal a lot about one's concept of civilization, but what about texts written by American authors about their *own* civilization? Surely these would reveal more? The fact is that coming face to face with East Asian civilizations made these six writers quite reflective about their own civilization and about the idea in general.

The six authors admitted that China and Japan were puzzles for them, and yet they were determined to try and solve these puzzles.¹⁸ One simple method for rendering the puzzle more comprehensible was to compare it to something they knew well, and hence Lafcadio Hearn's *Kokoro*, an interpretation of Japan and East Asia, dealt implicitly as much with the West as with the East. East Asia lent itself admirably for comparison, since for centuries it had been perceived as the "antipode" of Europe – a point from which to either eulogise or criticise the West.¹⁹

Clichés such as "you can't see the wood for the trees", usually contain a seed of truth in them. Edward Beauchamp makes the same point in the following fashion: "one can understand his own society with greater clarity by standing outside of it and looking back from a foreign perspective".²⁰ Hearn was also certainly aware of this when he noted that a long journey among people who were differently disposed offered an invaluable opportunity to "best learn our own temperament".²¹

Towards the end of the 19th century, an increasing number of Americans travelled to the treaty ports of East Asia. Many of them were tourists, carried by regular steamship lines from San Francisco to Yokohama and then later China.²² Many of them wrote down their observations and experiences, and got them published in magazines or in book form. Several factors ensured that there was a steadily growing audience with the interest and means to consume the narratives: improving American literacy rates, the swelling ranks of the middle class, printing innovations that lowered the price of publication, and the fact that those who travelled were a comparatively tiny group to those staying at home. Perceiving their own country as already settled and civilized, the American readership had a thirst for something different, exotic and exciting.²³

Thus, with time, American descriptions about China and Japan accumulated. Representations of Japan, for example, were featured in magazine articles, newspapers, popular yellow press, fiction, geography texts, and history books.

¹⁸ Griffis 1892, 41; Griffis 2006a, xi; Smith 1890, 116.

¹⁹ Franke 1995, 12–13.

²⁰ Beauchamp 1976, xii.

²¹ Hearn 1894b, 657.

²² Tyrrell 2007, 95, 97.

²³ Haddad 2008, Introduction, paragraph 6; Tyrrell 2007, 98. The official figures suggest that, in 1885, approximately 100,000 Americans engaged in foreign oceanic travel, and that in the early 1890s the figures dropped due to an economic crisis and depression. These travellers often belonged to the affluent and elite strata of society, and were both men and women. They travelled to Europe, in particular, but also to many other corners of the earth. Of course, as historian Ian Tyrrell reminds us, travelling and tourism were reciprocal phenomena, since foreigners also travelled to the US. (Tyrrell 2007, 96, 99–100.)

These representations were written by specialists, scholars, theorists, and popular and travel writers alike.²⁴

Clearly, there is no shortage of potential sources for a historian. But which of these sources should one focus on? This question has occupied the mind of many a scholar examining western perceptions of East Asia. Some scholars have resolved the question by lumping together authors from all over Europe and the United States, whether they be adventurers, travellers, diplomats, foreign advisers, fiction writers, Jesuits, or Protestant missionaries. Often such works also cover time periods of centuries. Jonathan Spence's *The Chan's Great Continent* (1998), Colin Mackerras' *Western Images of China* (1989), and Ian Littlewood's *The Idea of Japan* (1996) are examples of this kind of comprehensive approach.

Other writers, such as Susan Thurin in her *Victorian Travelers and the Opening of China* (1999), have concentrated on a certain nationality (British), a specific genre of texts ("travel and description" books), and a shorter time frame (1842–1907). And finally, some scholars have adopted an even narrower approach. Nicholas Clifford, for example, has devoted his study of China – *A Truthful Impression of the Country* – exclusively to British and American travel writing in the period of 1880 to 1949.

Clifford has argued that travel writers from this time tended to represent a more "authentic" China in their texts, with a truthfulness and directness unusual for journalists or scholars. Moreover, Clifford has suggested that readers could identify themselves with travellers more closely than they could with professionals.

According to Clifford, another observational advantage over other writers was the brevity of their stay. Clifford quotes the statement of one such American traveller, Elisa Scidmore (1856–1928), for support: "[t]he longer we stay here, the less we see, the less we are fitted to judge"²⁵. This is clearly at odds with Ian Tyrrell's observation about the superficiality of traveller's accounts. Tyrrell has reasoned that brief sojourns often compelled the travellers to resort to second-hand sources, such as guidebooks, for material.²⁶

"It is by no means always the case, that the impressions of the casual traveller and those of the old residents are the same, [...]" declared Arthur Smith, a prominent American living in China. Similarly, Lafcadio Hearn, who resided in Japan, believed that the observations of tourists tended to be superficial and unconsciously misjudged. Residence and mastering the local language were seen to be prerequisites for becoming an expert on China or Japan. Studying the subject from different angles and sources, mingling with 'natives' of all ranks and occupations, travelling away from (and staying beyond) the touristy treaty ports, eye-witnessing great national developments – these qualities separated the genuine experts from both the travellers on the one hand, and the arm-chair

²⁴ Kowner 2000, 108; Wordell 1998, xxvii–xxviii.

²⁵ Clifford 2001, xix–xx, 7–10.

²⁶ Tyrrell 2007, 100.

scholars on the other.²⁷ But travellers in the 19th century adopted a rival view, and considered that it was precisely this “going native” that distorted the ken of the residents.²⁸

The problem with Nicholas Clifford’s formulation is that the boundary he has drawn between travellers and experts is rather inconsistent, as he has also incorporated texts written by “old China-hands” into his source materials. And the authority he has ascribed to the travellers has an emotional rather than factual basis, the indication being that it mattered very little whether the travellers were actually being truthful in their representations or blatant liars.²⁹

However, the question of who gave the most faithful representation of China or Japan is of far less importance to this thesis than the question of which group of writers could give us the most comprehensive view on American notions of civilization in the 19th century?

In this thesis, the texts of ‘experts’ of East Asia are chosen over the texts of travellers and other short-term visitors, because the former had the means and willingness to dig deep into Chinese and Japanese cultures, and the time to pause and think about what they had discovered. In other words, the experts were in a position to carefully reflect on their conceptions of both Eastern and Western civilizations.

The six experts have been selected with the following criteria in mind. First of all, they not only spent time or lived in East Asia, but also ventured outside the treaty ports, which were far more westernized than any other parts of China and Japan. They also had contact with locals and could draw on their assistance when necessary. They were interested in more than just a superficial glance at the culture which surrounded them – they wanted to understand and explain it. And finally, they succeeded in capturing something of a lasting value about both East Asia and contemporary American thoughts and attitudes; something that at once appealed to their audiences and led to the near canonization of their accounts.

Due to restrictions that the Japanese government placed on foreign travel and access to their country, it was the shores of China that first attracted ships from the ports of the American republic. The 18th and early 19th century visitors were primarily merchants and naturally the purpose of their journey was trade³⁰. But as the means and opportunities for travelling to East Asia increased, a wider variety of Americans arrived in China, including missionaries, teachers, engineers, diplomats, journalists, advisers, physicians, tourists, adventurers, scholars, novelists, soldiers, and even filibusters. As Jonathan Spence and John K. Fairbank have noted, the 19th century Americans perceived China to be a place where they could freely express their individualism, make a name for themselves, achieve fame and wealth, and perhaps even influence history.³¹

²⁷ Bertuccioli 1995, 67; Chun 2005, 7; Griffis 2006a, xi-xiv; Hearn 1894b, 349; Hearn 1914, 41; Smith 1890, 6, 36; Sorokin 1995, 111.

²⁸ Clifford 2001, 7.

²⁹ Clifford 2001, 6-7, 9.

³⁰ Beckmann 1965, 119.

³¹ Fairbank 1961, 251-252; Spence 2002, 292.

More importantly, many of those who decided to remain in China for a longer period were driven by a desire to improve, as they saw it, the condition of the Chinese in a material or spiritual sense. In other words, they were engaged in either evangelical missions, ‘civilizing missions’, or often both. The idea of a civilizing mission was based on the assumption that American civilisation had something valuable to offer East Asia. Because the US occupied the highest rung on the universal ladder of progress, it was the moral obligation of Americans to share their good fortune and enlightenment with other peoples, that is, to modernise and even westernize them.³² All three of the China experts discussed in this thesis shared these motivations.

The pioneering one of the three, was Samuel Wells Williams (1812–1884), born in Utica to a family proud of their Puritan stock. His family’s financial situation prevented him from entering Yale University, which he later regretted, as he had missed the opportunity for learning the methods of scholarly thinking and expression. However, Williams attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, a school dedicated to ‘applying science for the common purposes of life’. Williams enjoyed the lessons on natural sciences, loved reading history, and envisioned a career as a botanist. His father had different plans for him though, and he proposed that Williams should take over the printing press of the American Board of Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in China. Williams’ mother was a deeply religious woman, and had long wished that two of their sons would become missionaries. Williams assented to his parents’ wishes, forgot botany, and landed in China in 1833, a little over ten years before the US established official relations with the East Asian empire.³³

Williams started his career as a missionary, but soon he was more occupied with other activities. He made good use of the language skills he had acquired, and published dictionaries, textbooks and manuals for learning Chinese. He also wrote articles for periodicals such as *The Journal of the American Oriental Society* and for *The Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, and co-edited *The Chinese Repository*, which was established in 1832 and became the leading channel for informing the western public about China. By 1858, Williams had resigned from the ABCFM, and accompanied the US legation to Tianjin (Tientsin) for treaty negotiations. Williams served the legation for 21 years in total, alternately as a Secretary and a Charge d’Affaires.

By that time, Williams had also toured US, lectured there, and compiled these popular lectures into a book. This book has been lauded as “the earliest scholarly comprehensive account of China to be written by a citizen of the United States,”³⁴ and was entitled *The Middle Kingdom* (1848). *The Middle Kingdom* was an erudite, vast compendium that touched on almost every aspect of China imaginable, drawing from countless foreign and translated sources. As one reviewer summarised, the book included a “survey of the geography, history and

³² Adas 2006, 8; Dunch 2002, 310; Iriye 1967, 6–7; Spence 2002, 291–292; Varg 1979, 257.

³³ Williams 1889, 1, 3, 10–11, 14, 27–28, 30–31, 38–39.

³⁴ Latourette 1955, 3, 5. On a few occasions, Samuel Williams’ 1877 publication *Our Relations with the Chinese Empire* will also be referenced in this thesis, but unlike *The Middle Kingdom*, it will not be closely analysed.

antiquities, arts, manufactures, games, religions, literature, education, government, customs, science, and ten thousand other things which enter into the civilization [...] of the Celestials." As time went by and China, and its relations to other countries, changed, Williams felt a need to revise his treatise. He set to work with his son Frederick and the result was published in 1882. The new revised edition was even more ambitious and colossal than the earlier one, expanded as it was from two to three volumes. This prompted one reviewer in *The Atlantic monthly* to judge it as encyclopaedic and "unreadable".³⁵

A more scathing criticism was levelled, however, not at the size of the book, but at Williams' own personal convictions. The same reviewer felt that the treatise suffered from Williams' "missionary prejudices" and a "perverse" mental twist, which made him explain "all deficiencies in the Chinese by the word idolaters, and of all excellences by the formula God's purposes."³⁶ The criticism notwithstanding, Williams was selected to occupy the first American chair in Chinese studies at Yale University in 1878, thus becoming the first great American Sinologist. Williams' professorship was short, and a rather nominal one, but nevertheless, with the revision of *Middle Kingdom* complete, and Sinology on its way to becoming a serious subject of study, he felt that he had completed his service to God.³⁷

Another American missionary who sailed for China was Indiana-born William Alexander Parsons Martin (1827-1916). He entered China in 1850, and journeyed to the Presbyterian mission station at Ningbo (Ningpo). Martin tried his hand in diverse pursuits, especially excelling in Chinese language studies. He translated and composed religious and scientific texts for the Chinese, such as Henry Wheaton's *Elements of International Law* (1836). He attempted new printing methods, devised a new system for romanising the Chinese alphabet, and served as an interpreter for William B. Reed who had been sent to negotiate on behalf of the US government the Treaty of Tientsin (Tianjin) in 1858.³⁸ Yet, what he did not accomplish, was converting the Chinese to Christianity, and his ideas about Christianity and missions in China often did not coincide with those of his superiors.³⁹ Eventually, Martin decided to adopt a different approach for reaching and converting the Chinese, and to concentrate on the intellectual side of the civilizing mission instead of the spiritual one.

William Martin's two attempts at establishing schools in China proved abortive, but in 1865 he was offered a post as teacher of English at the *Tongwen-*

³⁵ "Williams's *The Middle Kingdom*," *The Atlantic Monthly* 1883, 832; Haddad 2008, Conclusion, paragraph 9, 16-17; Williams 1913a, ix. The edition used in this thesis is the revised one from 1882. Besides being even more comprehensive than the first, the second version benefited from the improved opportunities and sources available for research on China, and it's time of publication is more in line with the publications selected from other China and Japan experts. When relevant, however, the first edition will be examined and compared against the revised edition.

³⁶ "Williams's *The Middle Kingdom*," *The Atlantic monthly* 1883, 832.

³⁷ Haddad 2008, Conclusion, paragraph 19; Latourette 1955, 3.

³⁸ In the negotiations William Martin collaborated with Samuel Williams, which indicates that the two experts came to be familiar with each other and that they were part of the same network of experts.

³⁹ Spence 2002, 130-133.

guan ("School of Combined Learning," the Chinese government school for Western languages and sciences in Beijing, established in 1862). Martin accepted the offer, and later added to his responsibilities the teaching of international law and political economy. He also acted as an adviser to the Chinese officials in matters relating to international law. In 1869, Martin was promoted to president of the college. In a sense, his devotion to education was not surprising, as he himself had had a distinguished academic career. He had graduated from Indiana College in 1846, studied theology at the Presbyterian seminary, received a Doctor of Divinity degree from Lafayette College in 1860, and ten years later, a Doctor of Law degree from New York University.

But William Martin could not content himself with teaching just the Chinese; he also wished to educate Americans about China. To this end, he published works such as *The Chinese: Their Education, Philosophy, and Letters* (1881)⁴⁰, *A Cycle of Cathay* (1896), and *The Lore of Cathay* (1901). Martin's focus was on topics such as Chinese education, philosophy, religion, Christian missions, history, literature and international relations. He aimed to rely exclusively on Chinese sources, and to produce original research⁴¹. In *The Cycle of Cathay* he also recounted his own experiences and observations, writing in a more personal, subjective, humorous, or sarcastic tone, sometimes even bordering on condescension.

The Cycle of Cathay received a warm welcome. Reviewers of both *The American Journal of Theology* and *The American Historical Review* agreed that William Martin's contacts with Chinese statesmen and intellectuals, his activities, and long acquaintance with China had made him a uniquely competent and "universally acknowledged" observer. Accordingly, the reviewers were convinced that Martin was in a position where he could provide information that was fresh, comprehensive, intimate, authoritative and accurate. Martin's judgement of the Chinese and their character was seen to be impartial and correct, although the critic of *The American Historical Review* suspected that his impartiality did not always extend to his estimations of some fellow American residents in China.⁴²

While Samuel Williams was appreciated as a pioneering and professional Sinologist and William Martin as an influential and exceptional commentator on China, Arthur Henderson Smith (1845–1932), our third expert on China, did not lag far behind in reputation for knowledge on the subject. Smith was born in Vernon, served in the Civil War, graduated from Beloit College, attained a degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York, and then became a Congregational minister. In 1872 he then journeyed with his wife to Shandong

⁴⁰ The first edition of the book was published in Shanghai in 1880 and was titled *Hanlin Papers*. The book was complemented with a second volume, *Hanlin Papers: Second Series. Essays on the History, Philosophy, and Religion of the Chinese*, published also in Shanghai in 1894. The first and second series of Hanlin Papers were taken up again in *The Lore of Cathay*, with much revision and additions.

⁴¹ Martin 1901a, 1.

⁴² "A Cycle of Cathay, or China South and North, with Personal Reminiscences. By W. A. P. MARTIN," *The American Historical Review* 1897, 521; Buckley 1897, 475; Burton 1897, 153.

province and started what was to become a 54 year-long career as an ABCFM missionary in China.

Arthur Smith represented a younger generation of American evangelists and observers of China. The United States he left behind was fast becoming industrialised, modern, and self-confident. And the missionaries the country sent forth were perhaps more interested in the social and material uplifting of their future converts than their older colleagues.⁴³ As for the commentators and interpreters of China, they no longer had the need to write enormous summaries of all things Chinese, as the likes of Samuel Williams had already provided these. So, when Smith started writing about China around the turn of the twentieth century, he needed a new perspective. This he found in sociology and psychology. In his treatise, *Chinese Characteristics* (1890/1894),⁴⁴ his grand objective was to reveal the workings of Chinese society and the 'Chinese mind'.

A *New York Times* reviewer credited Arthur Smith's subject as interesting and his volume as timely, entertaining, and "showing uncommon shrewdness, with keen analysis of character". What his book, however, could not be credited for, was generosity towards the Chinese. The reviewer felt that Smith's estimation of the Chinese character was generally unfavourable. The reviewer seemed to think that Smith's missionary background might have something to do with the negative tone of his analysis. He hinted that the disappointment and frustration missionaries must have felt when their attempts at converting the Chinese repeatedly came to nothing might well have also affected Smith's judgement. On the other hand, the reviewer, at least partially, absolved Smith from blame when he noted that Smith *was* a long-standing resident of China, his message being that Smith should therefore have enough knowledge and experience to judge fairly. The reviewer concluded that "[i]f we are not to accept studies that missionaries have made of the Chinese, whose are we to accept?"⁴⁵ Biased account or not, *Chinese Characteristics* made Arthur Smith known,

⁴³ Fairbank 1985, 17.

⁴⁴ Originally *Chinese Characteristics* was a collection of papers prepared for the *North-China Daily News of Shanghai*. It was first published in a book format in Shanghai in 1890. However, the book attracted wider attention, and four years later a revised edition was published in New York. Some chapters (or 'characteristics') were taken out of the second version, or merged with other chapters. Also two new ones were added, for example, a chapter about "The Real Condition of China and Her Present" was evidently deemed necessary for the American audience, but unnecessary for the foreign residents in China, who were the majority readership of the first version. Other treatises by Arthur Smith discussed in the thesis are *Village Life in China* (1899) and *China in Convulsion* (two volumes, 1901).

⁴⁵ "Traits of the Chinese," *The New York Times*, 1894. Much later, in 1907, Henry William Rankin considered the missionary writers on China in *The American Journal of Sociology*, and reviewed Arthur Smith's treatise *China in Convulsion*. Rankin championed Smith as one of the "first rank of writers" on China, praising him for his knowledge of conditions, events, and influential factors in China. Of Samuel Williams, Rankin wrote that he had evinced an outstanding knowledge of Chinese institutions and history, and that his works had "placed under lasting obligation every foreign missionary, merchant, scholar, and diplomat in China". Rankin also mentioned William Martin, and pointed out that Martin was "considered by many to be the most learned scholar and the foremost American in China today". Rankin lauded the work Martin had done for his country as a diplomat and as an expert on China, as well as for the

and in John K. Fairbank's words, was "of legendary importance" in the education of the Americans and the international public.⁴⁶

After three China experts with missionary backgrounds, our American experts on Japan appear a more heterogeneous lot. The first one of them to arrive at Japan was William Elliot Griffis (1843–1928). He was born in Philadelphia, to a family connected with seafaring, with modest incomes, and had a pious Sunday-school teaching mother. Griffis, too, grew up to be a deeply religious man and his Protestant beliefs remained firm and intact throughout the rest of his life. An adherence to religion and an intention to study for the ministry, however, did not prevent Griffis from choosing scientific as well as classical subjects to study at Rutgers College. Indeed, his wide array of study interests at college ranged from mathematics and chemistry to philosophy and history⁴⁷. By chance, the Dutch missionary Guido Verbeck (1830–1898) was searching for somebody to fill a teaching position in Fukui on behalf of the *daimyo*⁴⁸ of Echizen, and preferably someone belonging to the same Dutch Reformed Church as Verbeck himself. As part of his search, Verbeck turned to his friends at Rutgers, where he was introduced to Griffis who fulfilled the requirements. It also just so happened that Griffis had already tutored some Japanese students at Rutgers, and so the post was offered to him.⁴⁹

After first declining, Griffis reconsidered, accepted the offer, and landed in Japan in 1871 as an *oyatoi gaikokujin*, or 'hired foreigner' working for the Japanese Meiji government. As well as offering him a salary and the chance to travel, the position attracted Griffis because it provided him a once in a lifetime opportunity to participate in the mission of 'civilizing'. Griffis was unfalteringly committed to science, progress, individualism, and the idea of education as self-improvement, and he was eager to transplant his values in Japanese soil. Although not a missionary as such, Griffis felt that he was working towards God's ends, having been chosen to act as an instrument for modernizing and educating the Japanese. Griffis' educational efforts were not inconsequential, but arguably he had a tendency to exaggerate to what extent he had personally influ-

work he had done for China as an adviser and "veteran pioneer" teacher of the Chinese. (Rankin 1907, 146–149, 168.)

⁴⁶ Fairbank 1985, 17.

⁴⁷ In his biography of William Griffis, Edward Beauchamp has noted that Griffis followed the scientific curriculum that was offered when the Rutgers Scientific School was established in 1864. However, Robert Rosenstone has claimed that there is no indication in Rutgers' records of which curriculum Griffis chose. However the records do show that Griffis studied theology, moral philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, physics, botany, geology, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, French, logic, political economy, and history. (Beauchamp 1976, 13; Rosenstone 1988, 46.)

⁴⁸ During the Tokugawa period (1603–1868), Japan was divided into several *han*, or fiefs. Each *han* was presided over by a *daimyo*, or a Japanese military lord and landholding magnate. Despite being nominally under control of the central government, domains were practically autonomous and self-sufficient. The *daimyo* exercised exclusive military and civil control over the *han*, although later they chiefly delegated the actual governance to their subordinates.

⁴⁹ Beauchamp 1976, 2, 11–13; Rosenstone 1988, 40.

enced the transformation of Japan.⁵⁰ In the end, Griffis' decision to turn his three and half year-stay into the basis for a career as an expert on Japan proved far more consequential.

While living and teaching in Fukui, and later in Tokyo, William Griffis met and discussed with contemporary and future statesmen and intellectuals, devised ideas and collected materials for his forthcoming magnum opus – *The Mikado's Empire* (1876)⁵¹. This publication established Griffis as “one of the earliest ‘Japan hands,’ [...] one of America’s leading experts on Japanese history and culture, [and] an authority on things Japanese”. The book had numerous print runs as well as supplemented and revised editions. For a long time it remained the most acknowledged and widely read American book on Japan.⁵² *The Mikado's Empire* was essentially an outline of Japanese history spanning several centuries, drawing on original and Japanese sources as well as writings from other foreign Japan experts, and blending them with personal accounts.

One critic in the *North American Review* (1877) focused on ‘the exotic’ in Griffis' treatise on the Japanese, applauding the descriptions of “wild and weird superstitions, their tales, fables, and proverbs”.⁵³ At this point there existed little knowledge about Japan in the United States.⁵⁴ Consequently, Griffis' work had

⁵⁰ Beauchamp 1975, 7-8, 23-25, 57, 120; Beauchamp 1976, 2-3; Rosenstone 1988, 12, 47, 91, 93.

⁵¹ *The Mikado's Empire* was divided into three books, the first covered Japanese history, government, society and religion. The second comprised of William Griffis' personal experiences and observations of Japan during the 1870s, and the third book contained supplementary overviews regarding the current situation in Japan at the time of publication, a new chapter being added every time a new edition came out. The edition of the first book used here is from 1895. And for the second and third books, it is the tenth edition from 1903, chosen primarily because it includes Griffis' supplementary perceptions up until the twentieth century. William Griffis' other publications, which are not mentioned in the introduction, but are referred to in this thesis, include *Japan in History, Folk Lore and Art* (1892) and *America in the East: a Glance at Our History, Prospects, Problems, and Duties in the Pacific Ocean*, (1899). Griffis also wrote biographies, compilations of stories and folk tales, and books relating to China, Belgium, and the Netherlands. He also wrote the first thorough history of Korea in English: *Corea, the Hermit Nation* (1882).

⁵² Beauchamp 1976, 2, 4, 7, 120; Metraux 2002, 15; Rosenstone 1988, x, 251; Wordell 1998, 54, 57.

⁵³ “The Mikado's Empire. By William Elliot Griffis,” *The North American Review* 1877, 151.

⁵⁴ Available knowledge about Japan in English was scarce, haphazard, and inaccurate in the decades before the conclusion of first unequal treaties. For long, the staple source of European and American knowledge of Japan had been Engelbrecht Kaempfer's (1651-1716) famous treatise *History of Japan*, which had been translated into English and published in London in 1727. Also British geography books provided some information, and articles on Japan appeared in American newspapers every now and then from the 1810s onward. For example, in 1818 and 1820 American magazines printed translated summaries of Russian narratives of a naval officer who had been held captive in Japan. In 1841, the texts of Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796-1866), were compiled and published in English under the title *Manners and Customs of the Japanese, in the Nineteenth Century: From Recent Dutch Visitors of Japan, and the German of Dr. Ph. Fr. Von Siebold* (1841). Siebold's texts were based on personal experiences and contacts with the Japanese, unlike the books of Scottish author Charles MacFarlane (1799-1858) and American historian Richard Hildreth (1807-1865) in the 1850s. MacFarlane's *Japan: An Account, Geographical and Historical, [...]* (1852) and Hildreth's popular *Japan As It Was and Is* (1855) were largely based on European

undeniable exotic and novelty value. As the *North Atlantic* reviewer stated: “[t]he mystery which overhangs what is distant in time and place must, especially in the case of this barbaro-civilized race, make all fresh matter acceptable.”⁵⁵

Overall, perhaps the greatest negative criticism *Mikado's Empire* received concerned the text's originality and Griffis' failure to make proper academic references to the sources he had borrowed from. However, there were some unusual and commendable features of Griffis' study that have been generally overlooked. Edward Beauchamp has noted that Griffis was a pioneer in challenging traditional Japanese historiography, which accepted Japanese sources like *Kojiki* (Records of Ancient Matters) and *Nihongi* (Chronicles of Japan) as valuable historical source materials despite of their clearly mythical contents. Griffis also drew attention to the role of the emperor as an institution and force in Japanese history.⁵⁶

In the twenty years that followed the publication of *The Mikado's Empire*, William Griffis graduated (in 1877) from the same Union Theological Seminary that Arthur Smith had, entered into the ministry, published several texts on East Asian topics, and wrote another remarkable book on Japan: *The Religions of Japan* (1895). This book was a compilation of Griffis' Morse lectures⁵⁷, and as the title indicates, it traced the history of Japanese religion in an ostensibly scientific and objective manner. Like *The Mikado's Empire*, it relied heavily on second-hand sources, yet Griffis' personal familiarity with the subject added that spark of authenticity it needed, according to one reviewer in *The Atlantic Monthly*. The same reviewer went on to say that the book's strength was precisely its unoriginality, and its comprehensive coverage of a subject previously only touched upon in a fragmentary and unsystematic fashion by earlier treatises. The major flaw of the book, according to reviewers in both *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The Biblical World*, was the moral contrast Griffis drew between Christianity and religion in Japan. Both reviewers thought that Griffis exaggerated the vices of the Japanese and downplayed their virtues.⁵⁸

William Griffis targeted his texts primarily at the American masses, and he complemented his writings with numerous lectures. According to Edward Beauchamp, Griffis was actively involved in interpreting Japan for the Ameri-

books, letters, and articles from the 13th century onwards as well as on the accounts of the members of the Perry expedition. Before Commodore Perry embarked on his mission to Japan, his agents had perused the bookshops of New York and London and found fifty or sixty books containing knowledge about Japan for the Commodore to read. The accounts of Perry expedition were also published as a book called *China and Japan: being a narrative of the cruise of the U. S. steam-frigate Powhatan* (1860), written by Lieutenant James D. Johnston. (Adas 2006, 1-2, 29; Chaiklin 2010, 254; Dulles 1965, 17; Wordell 1998, 1, 3, 7, 33, 40.)

⁵⁵ “The Mikado's Empire. By William Elliot Griffis.” *The North American Review* 1877, 151.

⁵⁶ Beauchamp 1976, 124-125, 128-129, 134.

⁵⁷ The Morse lectures were given in association with the Union Theological Seminary at New York. The scholars giving the lectures generally treated questions relating to science and religion, or the science of religion. The lecturers also frequently touched upon matters relating to philosophy and evolutionary theory.

⁵⁸ Burton 1895, 313-314; “Recent Books on Japan,” *The Atlantic Monthly* 1895, 835-836.

cans for over sixty years, and he succeeded in producing a range of deep and valid cultural observations and analyses. Like Samuel Williams, he had the distinction of being a pioneer in his field, and to thus provide his audience with their first impressions. Griffis retained his expert status for the rest of his life. Robert Rosenstone has noted that in the 19th and early 20th centuries if one wanted to know something about Japan, Griffis was “one of the men to ask.”⁵⁹

A decade after William Griffis’ first encounter with Japan (in the 1870s), a man with a relatively different background and ideology travelled around East Asia, and made longer stays in Japan. This man was Percival Lawrence Lowell (1855–1916). He was a descendant of the wealthy and influential Lowell family, that is, a member of the “Boston Brahmins,” or upper class families with Protestant British origins and long roots in the New England area.⁶⁰ Percival Lowell graduated from Harvard University in 1876, excelling especially in mathematics. Unlike Griffis, Lowell was not a particularly religious man. Possibly for his family’s sake, he kept up the appearance of “sticking to church”, but privately he gravitated toward agnosticism, if not sometimes outright hostility to Christianity. And unlike Griffis, he was rather sceptical about the American ‘mission to civilize’.⁶¹

In 1882, Lowell broke off an engagement with a Bostonian woman, left his investment business behind, and took off on a journey which kept him away from the US for the next eleven years of his life.⁶² Lowell can be easily categorised as a travel writer, and in fact, he identified himself as a traveller, which he defined as the opposite of a tourist or “globe-trotter”.⁶³ He also wrote a travel book about Japan, *Noto: An Unexplored Corner of Japan* (1891), which alluded to perennial themes of travel literature, such as conquering secluded and virginal places, and a fairy-tale language. *Noto* was essentially about adventure and romance, but in his two other books, *The Soul of the Far East* (1888) and *Occult Japan or the Way of the Gods* (1894), Lowell had something more in mind than writing travel literature. In these two books, his objective was to observe, study, and learn about Japanese culture, society and people. At this point, rather than being a traveller, he appears to have become more of an anthropologist⁶⁴.

In *Occult Japan*, Percival Lowell strove to describe and explain Japanese religious practices in a rational and scientific manner. More precisely, Lowell’s focus was on Shintoist and Buddhist invocations and spiritual possessions. A

⁵⁹ Beauchamp 1976, 4–5, 7, 97, 136; Burns 1999; Rosenstone 1988, 251.

⁶⁰ That Percival Lowell belonged to the Bostonian elite did not necessarily mean that he had adopted the values and traditions of the Brahmins. It has been argued that Lowell challenged and rejected many of the social expectations his family and background placed upon him, whether the question was about marriage and raising a family (Lowell married at a late age), or about the sense of collectivism and common identity (Lowell emphasised his personal autonomy and individual identity even to the point of egotism), or the choice of career in business (after trying out a business career, Lowell chose travel, writing, and later in life, astronomy, instead). (Strauss 2001, 2–4.)

⁶¹ Strauss 2001, 121–122, 280.

⁶² Strauss 2001, 9.

⁶³ Strauss 2001, 59.

⁶⁴ Strauss 2001, 59–60.

reviewer in *The Atlantic Monthly*⁶⁵ described the book as a pioneering work on a difficult and elusive subject, which had real sociological interest. In the reviewer's estimation the book was revelational, instructive, and touched on some very profound truths, with only a few minor errors and omissions. But the same reviewer did reserve some serious criticism for the topic itself, and Lowell's tone in treating it, accusing him of being unsympathetic, satirical, and harsh. He also thought that the main subject of the book, spiritual possessions, might appear simply curious, ludicrous, or even repellant to a cultivated readership.⁶⁶

Percival Lowell's main treatise, which brought him recognition among Japan enthusiasts of that time, and in years to come, was *The Soul of the Far East*. This book was an original synthesis of the theories of Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), social Darwinism, and prevailing American notions about civilization, race, and development. Lowell's aim was to represent the past, present, and future of Japanese and East Asian peoples, cultures, institutions, and intellectual currents. In short, he attempted to fit Japan and East Asia into the frame of world history and progress. Lowell's book was widely read and discussed, but it was received with mixed feelings.⁶⁷

A Japanese critic, Nakashima Rikizō (1858–1918), who resided in the US at the time, and had a doctoral degree from Yale University, found the book defective and, at times, even offensive. Nakashima thought Lowell's knowledge of Japan was superficial and that he had an inadequate understanding of the spirit of the Japanese people. In his review of *The Soul of the Far East*, Nakashima concentrated on the concepts of personality, individualism, and imitation, and attempted to prove that the way Lowell had applied them in his analysis of Japanese society was fundamentally mistaken. Nakashima justly felt that Lowell had lumped together all the different populations of East Asia without discrimination. Lowell had overlooked class-distinctions and the inherent differences between the Chinese and Japanese. Nakashima's final assessment of Lowell's work was a negative one:

It is beyond doubt, that his interpretation of those facts which he mentions is fanciful and unreal in the extreme. His inference, in many cases, is totally groundless, and entirely unjustifiable. He reads his own ideas into those facts, and draws out undreamed of inferences from them.⁶⁸

Nakashima Rikizō subjected Percival Lowell's treatise to severe criticism, and the book has not fared much better in later estimations. For example, historian Joseph Henning has described Lowell's formulation as the most "condescending framework for understanding Japanese culture" ever developed in the 19th century.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ *The Atlantic Monthly* was a periodical established in Boston in 1857, and its first editor was, in fact, James Russell Lowell (1819–1891), a member of the same family as Percival. Under his editorship, the periodical was aimed at an educated and intelligent American readership (Beard et al. 1948, 274).

⁶⁶ "Recent Books on Japan," *The Atlantic Monthly* 1895, 837–841.

⁶⁷ Henning 2000, 27–28.

⁶⁸ Nakashima 1889, 97–102.

⁶⁹ Henning 2000, 27.

Nevertheless, our third Japan expert, Patrick Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904), espoused Percival Lowell’s treatise wholeheartedly. Although Hearn refuted some of Lowell’s principal arguments, he regarded the book as “beautiful” and exemplifying “consummate genius”. And eventually, Hearn also came to accept some of Lowell’s assertions that he had disputed at first.⁷⁰ Lafcadio Hearn was born in Greece, the son of a Greek mother and Irish soldier. He spent his childhood in Dublin and attended the Roman Catholic Ushaw College in Durham, England. In 1869 Hearn emigrated to the US, supporting himself there as a journalist in Cincinnati. Seven years later, he moved to New Orleans and continued to write articles, but now he also began to author books. *Harper’s Weekly* magazine sent Hearn to the West Indies to work as a correspondent and then to Japan in 1890. Before moving to Japan, Hearn had begun to gain a nationwide reputation for his literary talents⁷¹, but it was in Japan that he finally settled down to write his best known work. In Japan he started a family, and to support them he also worked occasionally as a journalist; taught classes in Matsue, Kumamoto, and Tokyo; and finally he procured a professorship of English literature at Waseda University in 1904 (then called Tōkyō Senmon Gakkō).

The Japanese woman that Hearn married, Koizumi Setsu (1868–1932), was of a former samurai family. They had a son together, and in order to protect his son’s inheritance rights, Hearn took Japanese citizenship. He also adopted a Japanese name, Koizumi Yakumo, and became fascinated with the tenets of Buddhism, although one gets a feeling that his greatest allegiance was to Herbert Spencer’s Synthetic Philosophy, and not to any religion.⁷² If Percival Lowell is to be seen as an uncompassionate observer of Japan, Hearn’s approach to the subject was the exact opposite. As one reviewer put it, Lafcadio Hearn was a sympathetic mouthpiece of alien races.⁷³ Hearn hoped to document the *kokoro*, or heart, spirit, and mind of the people by studying the everyday life of the Japanese, and treating their customs and rituals with respect. He wanted to step into the shoes of an ordinary Japanese person, and write from the point of view of someone within the culture, and not without.⁷⁴ Hearn was, in fact, attempting to become precisely the kind of interpreter that travel writers tended to be suspicious about.

Instead of alienating his readership by ‘going native’, Hearn’s writings actually attracted a substantial following in the US and his influence came to equal that of William Griffis.⁷⁵ Hearn’s major contribution to American knowledge of Japan was his two volume treatise, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*

⁷⁰ Hearn 1894a, 259; Hearn 1894b, 682; Henning 2000, 110. Lafcadio Hearn and Percival Lowell appear to have been familiar with each other’s works and the two also corresponded with each other.

⁷¹ Rosenstone 1988, 30.

⁷² Hearn’s admiration of Herbert Spencer was a well-known fact, which he made no attempts to conceal in his texts, quite the contrary. Joseph Henning has mentioned that Hearn also propagated Spencer’s ideas for the Japanese, and vigorously countered the attacks against Spencer by western missionaries. (Henning 2000, 86.)

⁷³ Henning 2000, 109; Littlewood 1996, 24; “Recent Books on Japan,” *The Atlantic Monthly* 1895, 830; Rosenstone 1988, 29, 171.

⁷⁴ Rosenstone 1988, 31, 157, 171.

⁷⁵ Henning 2000, 85; Metraux 2002, 15.

(1894). By this time, the American audience was already rather well informed about Japan through books, articles, lectures, international expositions, fiction, arts, knick-knacks, and even some personal contacts. What Hearn added to this, was a rich, quaint, and sentimental record of 'old Japan' – a world that was swiftly disappearing in an age of modernisation. *Glimpses*, as well as the treatises that followed⁷⁶, were a mixture of personal reminiscences, dialogues, reflections, stories, details, and sociological research.

Robert Rosenstone has described Hearn's writings as putting "[a]lways the stress on the odd, the picturesque, the extreme". In other words, Hearn tended to emphasise romance and drama.⁷⁷ This brings us to the crux of Hearn's writings. As an anonymous reviewer⁷⁸ on *The Atlantic Monthly* noted, Hearn's books were essentially works of literary art. He was more of a painter or poet than a scientist, since his texts lacked the rigour of a more scientific and philosophical study. Hence his texts told only half the story. And yet, the reviewer made the point that the sociological data Hearn provided was invaluable for science.⁷⁹ In effect, Hearn's style of writing was seen both as a blessing and a curse. The Japan he represented was charming. It appealed to the American audience, who eagerly endorsed the idea of Japan as a fantastic "Madame Butterfly" nation⁸⁰, as Daniel Metraux has put it. But Hearn's style also raises some questions, namely, did he perhaps mould the reality he encountered, or leave out some important aspects of it, in order to make it fit the image of Japan he wished to represent?

Now, if we take the texts of these six writers all together, we can say that they were received and reviewed with both criticism and favour. We also know that there were several editions of the books, and that they had numerous print runs. Some are, in fact, still being reprinted today. In addition to books, a flood of articles flowed from their pens too. The authors contributed to both exclusive scholarly journals, and popular journals with a more extensive circulation.⁸¹ Also, parts of their books were first published or later reproduced in magazines, thus reaching an even larger audience of Americans. Yet, it is difficult to assess the exact nature and extent of the impact their writings had on American read-

⁷⁶ Hearn wrote prolifically until the time of his death in 1904. Besides *Glimpses*, the following treatises are included in the present thesis: *Out of the East* (1895), *Kokoro* (1896), and *Exotics and Retrospectives* (1898).

⁷⁷ Metraux 2002, 15; Rosenstone 1988, 149, 151. Charles Wordell has found Lafcadio Hearn's works on Japan to be characteristically "romantic," or having an emphasis on emotions, sensation, supernatural, horror, and beauty – all skillfully mixed with detailed knowledge of Japanese customs and society. (Wordell 1998, 99–102.)

⁷⁸ Hearn's biographer, Paul Murray, informs us that Hearn was convinced this anonymous reviewer was, in fact, the famous Orientalist Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908). (Murray 1993, 182.) Even if this was not true, however, it would seem that the reviewer was himself also a specialist on Japan.

⁷⁹ "Recent Books on Japan" *The Atlantic Monthly* 1895, 830–832.

⁸⁰ Metraux 2002, 15.

⁸¹ Some of the journals in which articles from these six writers were published were: *The Century*; *North American Review*; *New England Magazine*; *The Atlantic Monthly*; *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York*; *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*; *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*; *The Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*; and *The Chinese Repository*.

ers. For example, it would be impossible to assess the number of people who actually read the books or magazines. In a society where a text could, and most probably was, widely circulated – a single copy eventually being perused by multiple readers – mere sales figures would not convey the whole truth.

Considering the vacuum of knowledge about China and Japan in the US before the end of the 19th century, it is reasonable to expect that the pioneering texts of writers such as Samuel Williams and William Griffis effectively moulded the images and attitudes that American readers would henceforth have of China and Japan. In Harold Isaacs' words, they produced some of the first "scratches" on American minds. However, there is also evidence that the late-comers had a profound impact. Arthur Smith's critical approach to Chinese society, and its lack of modernisation, buttressed the hardening of American attitudes towards China that was happening at the time, while Hearn's romantic interpretation of Japan attracted quite a different kind of following in the US. The book reviews of the time clearly suggest that, in contrast to the "instant experts" who were writing travel books,⁸² the opinions of writers like Smith and Hearn were perceived as adding to the subject and carrying weight because of their long experience and intimate familiarity with China and Japan. There is also some indication that these writers established their name among the more restricted circles of China and Japan specialists and enthusiasts. For example, although not necessarily acquainted in person, the six writers read and cross-referenced each other's texts. And sometimes their texts prompted action: for example, Hearn decided to venture into Japan after his curiosity was aroused by Percival Lowell's *The Soul of the Far East*.⁸³

However, apart from the obvious consequences of selecting this particular time frame, and having certain criteria for choosing the primary sources, there are some other evident biases that must be clearly spelt out from the start in this thesis. To begin with, all three China experts had a missionary background. Quite simply, the kind of Americans who stayed in China in the 19th century, who established themselves as specialists on Chinese issues, and who represented China for their home audience, tended to be predominantly missionaries. Some critics thought this led to a distorted view about the "heathen Chinese," and some thought it of little consequence. Behind this difference in opinion, however, loomed a larger question about the relationship of science and religion. As the 19th century progressed in the US, the traditionally held idea of scientific information serving utilitarian, moral and religious purposes, and the idea of theology and science going harmoniously hand in hand, became increasingly contested.⁸⁴

In this respect, the American representations of Japan present an interesting comparison. Japan attracted a large amount of missionaries too and yet, perhaps because the country provided broader opportunities for employment in engineering and education, for example, it drew in a more varied bunch. A

⁸² Metraux 2002, 14.

⁸³ Fairbank 1985, 17; Metraux 2002, 15; Rosenstone 1988, 174.

⁸⁴ Butts 2000, 803; Daniels 1967, 160–162.

handful of this group proceeded to use their experience of being a resident to become acknowledged experts on Japan. Consequently, with more variety in individuals and individual attitudes toward science and religion, there was more variety in the representations of Japan.

The six authors published texts containing impressions of China and Japan that were scholarly in tone, combined objective and subjective voices, and were written with the American readers in mind. These images, then, stood for the *public* opinions of the writers and did not necessarily correspond with the opinions they held in private. For example, in Lafcadio Hearn's case, the gap between his public and personal views would sometimes grow unbridgeable, as he chose to publicise only the love and admiration he felt for Japan, and reserve his criticism instead for letters or diaries⁸⁵. The same might hold true about Hearn's aversion towards western civilisation. It is conceivable, that he painted it with darker colours in public than he would have done in private. Without recourse to the private records of the experts, such as diaries and letters, it is difficult to know. And even with those records, we cannot be sure. They might have not documented their personal thoughts at all, or if they did, they might have experienced an unrecorded change of heart over time. Including the private opinions of the authors to this study could perhaps shed more light on the subject and expose the potential contradictions. On the other hand, the public images – those which the writers intended to convey to their readers – provide an ample set of sources in itself. For the purposes of this thesis therefore, the additional value of private records seems negligible.

Other obvious biases in the thesis are gender and ethnicity, as all the selected authors were white 'Anglo-Saxon' males. The exclusion of women follows quite inevitably from the focus of the thesis on the late 19th century. American women did travel to East Asia during this time, but very few of them rose to the status of being an 'expert' on East Asia. Perhaps the most notable exception was the American traveller Elisa R. Scidmore (1856–1928), who went to China and Japan, following in the footsteps of the famous British female travel writers, Isabella Bird (1831–1904) and Constance Gordon-Cumming (1837–1924). Scidmore was a member of, and regular correspondent for, the National Geographic Society, and her journeys resulted in a number of travelogues and magazine articles. However, Scidmore's overall influence and specialisation in Chinese and Japanese culture was not quite as deep as the male writers selected here. Another distinguished American female expert was Pearl S. Buck (1892–1973), who was a fiction and non-fiction writer and received the Nobel Prize in Literature for her representations of rural China, but she wrote beyond the chosen time frame for this thesis.

One American female author who did fit the time frame and fulfils all the required criteria of an expert is Alice Mabel Bacon (1858–1918). Like William Griffis, she was a Christian and a foreign employee in the Japanese education system. Her familiarity with Japan, and writings in the 1890s on Japanese culture and women, won her recognition. Still, Griffis has been chosen over Bacon,

⁸⁵ Rosenstone 1988, 176.

because of his position as a recognised pioneer and the greater breadth of material he produced.

But were the representations of American female and male writers significantly different in content, emphasis, and values at the time? Settling this question would require a broad, systematic, and comparative study of its own, but studies focusing on representations in general, or on female writers in particular, have already yielded some conclusions. For example, Nicholas Clifford has denounced the idea that women were more sympathetic observers than their male counterparts, or less entangled in Orientalism, imperialism, and feelings of Western superiority. Often men and women espoused corresponding ideas, ideologies, and beliefs, and as Clifford reminds us, the country they observed was the same for both genders.⁸⁶ Still, it remains questionable whether the male and female observers encountered quite the same culture and society. Some parts and institutions of a culture may well have been out of reach for women, like the official and political circles of China, or for men, like the inner domestic circles of Chinese women and children. And sometimes, the women observers themselves claimed that their impressions and interpretations were markedly different from those of their male counterparts.⁸⁷

Gail Bederman has convincingly argued that the 19th century middle and upper class American men effectively used the idea of civilization to uphold male dominance and white supremacy.⁸⁸ However, white women, too, were perceived fit for speaking on behalf of American civilization. They were part of that civilization and had a role to play in it, which was more than was generally granted for non-white Americans.⁸⁹ Nonetheless, the largest bias emanating from this selection of primary sources is that it presents the compromises and contestations of the concept from *within* the white American male group, not from without. Interpretations and discussions of the concept of civilization by women and the non-white population⁹⁰ are clearly missing. Without their perspective, the picture inevitably remains incomplete.

⁸⁶ Clifford 2001, 30–31.

⁸⁷ Spence 1999, 104–105; Tyrrell 2007, 101.

⁸⁸ Bederman 1995, 23.

⁸⁹ In the early 19th century, race was more a social than biological category, and it did not necessarily exclude non-white ethnicities from becoming ‘American’. In addition, as Ian Tyrrell has shown, politics was constantly a factor in the American discussions and debates over whether certain peoples should be included, excluded, removed, exterminated, or subjugated. Tyrrell has recounted that the Native Americans were generally thought eligible for becoming almost equal members of white society, as long as they were properly assimilated and civilized, at least insofar as their assimilation served the larger political purpose. However, later in the century racial categories tended to become more rigid, hierarchical, and ‘scientifically validated’. As a result, some Americans increasingly rejected the idea of a multiethnic society, even a culturally assimilated one. (Tyrrell 2007, 77–81.)

⁹⁰ Frederick Hoxie has perceptively called this process as “talking back to civilization” in his similarly titled book (2001). In this book, Hoxie has described how the Native Americans appropriated, and then criticised and attempted to refashion the concept of civilization in the Progressive Era. Elsewhere, Asian peoples and nations have also adopted, and participated in a discourse to counter Western hegemony over definitions of ‘civilization’. (See Duara 2001; Duara 2004; Hoxie 2001; Korhonen 2008.)

With all these omissions and deficiencies in mind, it is inevitable that we question the representativeness of the authors. Can six writers be enough for establishing anything substantial about American conceptions of civilization? We have already seen that these authors, rather well educated, hailing mainly from the east coast of the United States, and travelling in East Asia, hardly represented the full variety of American people of all classes, local identities, occupations, gender, ethnicity, and convictions. But perhaps, capturing the whole diversity of 19th century American thoughts on the matter might prove elusive however large the sample.

The experts were born in the US, or were at least Americanised through living there, and they catered for the American audience. And yet, besides this, to what extent did these six authors represent Americanness towards the end of the 19th century, and to what extent did they actually represent only their individual circumstances and thoughts at that time? We will return to this awkward dialectic between individual and national representations in the section discussing the methodology of the thesis.

Finally, one last issue concerning the selected primary sources should be acknowledged. This is when many texts are used from the same writer over a long period of time, so that the treatment of their corpus, as Dominick La Capra has described it, becomes practically like “a single text writ large”. LaCapra has admitted that there is often a certain perceivable unity between author’s texts: either a “developmental unity,” that is, continuity and linear development of the texts; or “two discrete unities,” a change or break between texts written at different times; or a “higher unity,” a synthesis of earlier and later thoughts, which rises to a whole new level of insight. However, LaCapra goes on to say that the problem with this approach is its excessive simplicity.⁹¹ Therefore, in order to reduce the risk of oversimplification in this thesis, an attempt is made to pay attention both to recurrent ideas and intentions, and changes over time. In other words, to alternate between the examination of the corpus at large and the examination of unique arguments tied to a specific time and place.

1.3 Review of the research literature

Earlier, we mentioned that the six experts devised certain yardsticks with which to measure the ‘level of civilization’ achieved by a people, such as religion and the status of women. At that point, however, one critical indicator was left unmentioned – technology. This brings us to previous research made on the topics treated in this thesis. Michael Adas has devoted his impressive treatise *Machines as the Measure of Men* (1989) to the study of the technology⁹² as one such gauge.

⁹¹ LaCapra 1980, 268.

⁹² In Michael Adas’ works technology denotes to a broader whole, which includes not only material attainments and technical proficiency, but also such ‘American’ values as discipline, efficiency, precision, work ethic, punctuality, and self-reliance. (Adas 2006, 11.)

As the title of Adas' book suggests, material civilization loomed large in the consciousness of 19th century Europeans and Americans. Adas has claimed that before industrialisation, differences between European and East Asian material civilization had been insignificant. But as material advantages reaped from industrialisation were accrued and combined with military force to be translated into global hegemony, the contrast between the technological achievements of nations such as Britain, US, and China became apparent for the globetrotting westerners. Consequently, Adas has argued that westerners took scientific and technological differences as evidence of the peerless superiority of their civilization. However, as this thesis seeks to demonstrate, and as Adas readily admits, this was by no means the whole picture.⁹³

The material touchstones of civilization were indeed more easily quantifiable than social or cultural ones. Also, some of the leading intellectuals of the age, such as Lewis H. Morgan (1818-1881), advocated categorisations of progress based on inventions and modes of subsistence. Yet, both Morgan and the selected primary sources of this thesis affirmed that something more crucial than the level of material accomplishment was involved. Technology no doubt gave the European nations and US an upper hand, but the causal forces behind innovation, that is, the actual progress of mankind, were actually perceived to be spiritual, intellectual, and moral.⁹⁴ Thus, even while the adoption of western material civilization was generally regarded as necessary or unavoidable for nations at a lower rung on the ladder of progress, it was not enough. Like many of their contemporaries, the six American writers discussed in this thesis believed that there was no hope of becoming a truly mighty and progressive civilization if the people lacked specific mental or moral qualities, such as Christianity, honesty, analytical thinking, individualism, originality, or imagination.

Following the emphasis of the six experts, the focus in the present thesis is on the more immaterial criteria of civilization. Nevertheless, this thesis aims not to contradict, but to complement, Michael Adas' study. Ultimately, it should be remembered that the line perceived to exist between the material and mental side of progress and civilization was very thin indeed. For example, Joel Mokyr has argued that economic development in 18th and 19th century Britain depended on the interaction of ideas, ideologies, culture, intellectual changes, knowledge and beliefs, as well as institutions and technology.⁹⁵ Therefore, even though the emphasis of the thesis is on thoughts and ideas, the developments in technology and the global economy cannot be overlooked, and hence Adas' *Machines as the Measure of Men* is an invaluable source of information for the thesis.

Michael Adas has also taken a particular interest in the 'civilizing mission' ideology that accompanied most of the 19th century ideas about civilization, and

⁹³ Adas 1989, 3, 6, 12, 27, 134, 143-144. Michael Adas has remarked that the technological and scientific gauges of civilization were often combined with other indicators in the 19th century, but he insists that by the end of the century, science and technology were considered the most prominent, verifiable, and reliable measures for progress. (Adas 1989, 144-145.)

⁹⁴ Morgan 1877, 3-4, 9-12.

⁹⁵ Mokyr 2009, 1-2, 7-12.

scholars such as Joseph Henning and Jonathan Spence have studied the westerners from earlier centuries who were on a mission to civilize China and Japan. On the other hand, scholars such as Prasenjit Duara, among others, have focused on the 20th century decolonisation and the challenges non-western peoples have created for the ideas of civilization and ‘missions to civilize’.⁹⁶ While the works of Henning and Spence offer us glimpses as to the thoughts and actions of individual westerners in East Asia, the works of Adas and Duara reveal how the concept of civilization has been expropriated from the original European and American assertions of hegemony that were an intrinsic part of the western mission to civilize. The works of all four scholars have been instrumental in the contextualisation of this thesis, but Joseph Henning’s *Outposts of Civilization* deserves a special mention as it is the work that comes closest to the present thesis, both in subject matter and manner of treatment.

What makes Joseph Henning’s treatise especially remarkable is his attempt to not just reproduce and categorise the various American views on the mission to civilize Japan, but also to describe how those views changed in interaction with Japan and the Japanese. In a similar vein, Robert Rosenstone has studied in his *Mirror in the Shrine* how the lives, ideas, and attitudes of three 19th century Americans were altered by their residence in Japan.⁹⁷ Two of them are also primary sources for this thesis: William Griffis and Lafcadio Hearn. However, unlike this thesis, Rosenstone has also used unpublished sources such as diaries and private letters. Consequently, his treatment of Griffis and Hearn could be seen as being more biographical and intimate. He has recorded the everyday joys and anxieties of Griffis and Hearn, as much as their changing views of Japan.

It is hardly surprising that the writings of William Griffis, Lafcadio Hearn, Percival Lowell, Samuel Williams, William Martin, and Arthur Smith feature in many other studies on American or western views on China and Japan. Given the wealth of material these writers poured out, and their lasting reputation as experts, their views on all things Chinese and Japanese could not have been easily overlooked by either history, linguistics, or literature scholars. As a consequence, their thoughts have often been quoted as examples of certain phenomena, such as ethnocentrism (in the case of Samuel Williams and Arthur Smith)⁹⁸, or foreign employees hoping to change China and Japan from the inside (in the case of William Martin and William Griffis)⁹⁹. In other cases, the texts of the six writers have been used in a particular context to support certain claims. For example, Ian Littlewood validates his argument that westerners generally characterised Japanese women as “butterflies” (that is, perfect wives, pretty objects of

⁹⁶ See e.g. Adas 2004; Duara 2004; Henning 2000; Spence 2002.

⁹⁷ Rosenstone 1988.

⁹⁸ Mackerras 1989, 48–49, 51.

⁹⁹ Beauchamp, Edward, “William Elliot Griffis: The Tokyo Years, 1872-1874.” *Foreign Employees in Nineteenth-Century Japan*. Eds. Beauchamp, Edward R. & Iriye, Akira. Boulder: Westview Press, 1990; Spence 2002, 129–160.

romance and passion) by referring to suitable statements from Hearn and Griffis¹⁰⁰.

Because the chosen method here for examining American views on civilization is to analyse depictions of foreign cultures, this study naturally bears a close affinity to the multitude of volumes written on western representations of East Asia. Many of them have already been mentioned: Ian Littlewood's *The Idea of Japan*; Jonathan Spence's *The Chan's Great Continent*; Colin Mackerras' *Western Images of China*; Susan Thurin's *Victorian Travelers and the Opening of China*; and Nicholas Clifford's *A Truthful Impression of the Country*. Other works on western representations of East Asia have not yet been properly introduced, but deserve a mention: Harold Isaacs' *Scratches on Our Minds* (1958); William Appleton's *A Cycle of Cathay* (1951); Jeffrey N. Dupée's *British travel writers in China* (2004); and *A Century of Travels in China* (2007), edited by Douglas Kerr and Julia Kuehn. The list could also be extended to include the wealth of treatises on representations and encounters of the 'Other' in a variety of general and other contexts, and with treatises dealing with such issues as Orientalism, exoticism, imperialism, colonialism/post-colonialism, race, literary criticism, and travel literature.

What, then, differentiates this thesis from the multitude of other studies that address the topic of representations? Obviously, the biggest difference concerns the focus and research questions. In most of the works mentioned above, the object of study has been the representations themselves, whereas in this study the representations are simply tools for elucidating the main problem: American conceptions of civilization. There are, nevertheless, certain similarities. As we have seen, the sources selected for this thesis are also used in other studies and the themes taken up in the studies of representations overlap with the present thesis.

Nevertheless, there are some marked differences as well. For one thing, the quantity of, and the criteria used for selecting primary sources differ. More often than not, representation studies examine the outsider views of one country at a time, the exception being, for example, *Asian Crossings* (2008), edited by Steve Clark and Paul Smethurst, which covers foreign views on China, Japan, and South-East Asia. Still, a systematic comparison of western views on China and Japan has rarely been attempted, although 19th century observers often took it upon themselves to make comparisons between the Chinese and Japanese nations.¹⁰¹ Also, the representation studies tend to refer to a larger number of

¹⁰⁰ Littlewood 1996, 121–123.

¹⁰¹ On the one hand, as Lafcadio Hearn noted, foreigners generally tended to consider Japan as "a sort of miniature of China". This perceived similarity naturally led to comparisons being made between the two neighbouring empires, since foreigners needed to explain how these two cultures that appeared to be from the same stock nevertheless followed entirely different courses in their national development. On the other hand, Hearn himself maintained that the Chinese and Japanese were entirely separate races, and this too was a conducive starting point for comparison, as the foreigners then attempted to enumerate and account for the differences of the two peoples. (Hearn 1896a, 460.)

authors than the six referred to in this thesis, and also perhaps to fewer source texts from each individual author.

In such studies, the large quantity of sources is frequently employed to build a more general thematic, chronological, or descriptive series of categories for American/western representations. These can often be sweeping categorisations, such as Daniel Metraux's and Thom Burn's 'three phases' concerning American images of Japan; or Ian Littlewood's 'four stereotypical images' of the Japanese.¹⁰² The conventional method of citing source texts may be to take one or two sources at a time, to ignore opinions that deviate from the point being made, and to provide insights into large trends, commonplace occurrences, and recurring ideas. However, they may also run a risk of overly essentializing western ideas about the Chinese and Japanese. In comparison, a focus on just six writers and a detailed analysis and comparison of their ideas, potentially diminishes that risk. Taken together with the accounts treating western representations on a more general level, this relatively specific micro-treatment may reveal more convergences and divergences and introduce a more nuanced picture.

Studies on representations constitute a firm point of reference for this thesis, and naturally, previous research on the concept of civilization constitutes another. Considering the latter, no other publication outweighs the value of the multivolume series *Civilization: Critical Concepts in Political Science* (2009), which has been edited and compiled by the political historian Brett Bowden. In this series Bowden, himself an expert on the study of the concept, has brought together a wide array of researchers, who have carefully examined the concept from many different angles and in many different contexts. The stated aim of Bowden's compendium has been to "give a comprehensive overview of the origins, contested meanings, contextual applications, general history and the intellectual baggage that is associated with the concept of civilization"¹⁰³. The present thesis aims to add yet another dimension to the multitude of those already contained in Bowden's series.

The list of other relevant and essential literature is longer than there is scope to mention further here, but it can be found in the bibliography. The histories of concepts such as progress, evolution, Social Darwinism, race, and gender; histories of religion, science and education; histories of relations between China, Japan, and the US; biographies of the six authors - all these genres of scholarly investigation have been conducive to the contextualisation of this thesis and will be specified and referenced in the forthcoming discussion chapters. But first let us turn to the existing literature with methodological relevance for the present thesis, and attempt to formulate a viable approach for the examination of American conceptions about civilization.

¹⁰² Burns 1999; Littlewood 1996; Metraux 2002.

¹⁰³ Bowden 2009, 6.

1.4 Methodological and theoretical approach

The present thesis draws on methodological insights made in the areas of cultural history, particularly in studies on “images” and “cultural encounters,” as well as intellectual and conceptual history.

In some of the aforementioned studies on representations, scholars have reached the same conclusion as many cultural historians in general, that even though representations mirror actual experiences, they are not simple and straightforward replications of reality. Representation always involves someone doing the observation, and a reproduced description of this observation. The image and the representation of it do not develop in a vacuum, but in the presence of a great many variables at play. As a result, it has become doubtful whether objective, truthful, and accurate representations are even remotely possible. To overcome this stumbling block, some scholars have turned their attention to the actual act of representation, and to the individual or group performing it. By shifting the focus, the relevant questions are no longer what the image tells us about reality, or how correctly the two correspond, but instead what this image tells us about the person who created the image. In short, the images become more effective at telling us about the observers than about the objects being observed.¹⁰⁴

These insights on the nature of representation form the premise for this study. By representing Chinese and Japanese civilizations, the six authors came to reveal something about their own conceptions about civilization. The realities of China and Japan were necessarily conducive to these representations. Or perhaps more accurately, what mattered was the real China and Japan the authors perceived themselves to be in. Both Colin Mackerras and Nicholas Clifford have reminded us that although reality and image do not always coincide, the reality encountered is, nevertheless, a weighty component in the representational equation¹⁰⁵.

As Nicholas Clifford has emphasised, the finished textual representation was always a result of finding a balance between the hard facts (that is, the realities of China, Japan, and the US), how the observer observed, and for whom he was writing for. The process was complex, and it was clearly, and significantly, a two-way street. The Chinese and Japanese were not just passive objects to be observed. The American writers could appropriate the power to represent and apply counter-concepts, but the Chinese and Japanese were not altogether deprived of their chance to project their own self-image directly onto the American public via magazines, exhibitions, art, or personal contact. Moreover, what the Chinese and Japanese did, or did not do, had a potentially huge impact on representations of them.¹⁰⁶ The reality of East Asia provided tools for imagining

¹⁰⁴ Burke 2008, 77-78; Clifford 2001, 11; Mackerras 1989, 1-2; Schwantes 1955, 38; Schwartz 1994, 1-2.

¹⁰⁵ Clifford 2001, 34; Mackerras 1989, 270.

¹⁰⁶ Clifford 2001, 13-15, 21; Ledderose 1995, 178; Mackerras 1989, 269.

one's own civilization, but at the same time, it could also complicate and alter the mind-set of the observer. Interacting with the Chinese and Japanese was a process that caused the Americans to reflect, and while for many this process only confirmed their preconceptions about civilization, some were forced to reformulate their perceptions.

Now, besides the encountered reality, there are other variables that might affect the formation of images. Some scholars, such as Peter Burke and Colin Mackerras have employed the idea of mental 'grids' or 'filters,' which create expectations and determine the aspects of reality that are allowed through and the ones that are excluded in the observation process. Such filters are, for example, the observer's cultural and personal background, which include ideologies, world-view, values, attitudes, suppositions, and experiences.¹⁰⁷ However, as Dominick LaCapra reminds us, the relation between the author's personal background and representations is not a straightforward one. Seeing the text as a mere symptom of events and processes going on in the author's life tends to oversimplify it, and it is usually impossible to prove conclusively that a person's life and text were developing in parallel.¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, to set out to deliberately ignore the bearing of personal backgrounds on representations might be just as inadvisable as solely concentrating on the psychological or mental explanation of texts. The writings of the six authors appear to confirm this. Later in the thesis, for example, we will encounter instances in which unduly negative assessments of either East Asian or Western religions seem to reflect the personal religious convictions of some of the authors studied here. And in the case of Lafcadio Hearn, feelings of dissatisfaction and nonconformity to the West were channelled into writing praise for Japan, and critiquing Western societies and values. All in all, it appears that personal intellectual and occupational orientations played a key role in directing the interests and focus of all six writers.

Sometimes, quite simply, the pleasantness of their encounter with East Asia could have its effect, as Samuel Williams noticed: "[t]he observations of a foreigner upon Chinese society are likely to be modified by his own feelings, and the way in which he has been treated by natives there [...]"¹⁰⁹. In a similar vein, if the observer took part in the civilizing or evangelising mission, but his vision for change did not seem to materialise, the frustration he experienced could find its way into the observations and finally into the text. In such cases, there was an apparent interplay between the reality of China or Japan, and the personal circumstances of the authors. Nevertheless, the main focus of this thesis is the *texts* of the individual writers, not their lives or psychological makeup. Hence their life stories, both within and outside East Asia, are incorporated only insofar as the texts suggest that this might help in the analysis. And even then, one should be wary of there being a direct causal relationship.

¹⁰⁷ Burke 2003, 177-178; Mackerras 1989, 2; Schwartz 1994, 3.

¹⁰⁸ LaCapra 1980, 256-257.

¹⁰⁹ Williams 1913a, 782.

The second filter potentially shaping one's perceptions of others – the cultural – overlaps with the personal one. Philip D. Curtin has argued that individuals who share a common cultural background are likely to be affected by the same educational, ideological, and intellectual influences. Consequently, it is probable that they hold a similar set of personal beliefs, values, attitudes, sentiments, and suppositions about their own culture and the cultures of others. According to Curtin, these shared (mostly unstated) assumptions make it feasible to talk about national images – images held by the members of one nationality.¹¹⁰ Nationality could also come into play in the process of image-creation in a political sense. Colin Mackerras has suggested that major power concentrations in the West have had a determining effect on the creation of images, and that at certain junctures of time, the US government has had the power to override popular perceptions with its own propaganda and to create “a regime of truth” about China.¹¹¹

Verifying Colin Mackerras' proposition with the sources at hand would probably end in failure, but it seems sensible to accept that national politics and international relations have had some relevance in the representations of China and Japan. The power of each country relative to the other has been particularly pertinent. According to Michael Adas, this power was determined by both cultural and technological factors, but after the turn of the 19th century, the emphasis was on the latter. Shifts in how China's political, military, and economic power was perceived in global terms undoubtedly produced alternate waves of negative and positive attitudes towards the country.¹¹² Consequently, the national background, relating to both culture and power politics, conceivably had an impact on the what, why, and how of the six writers' representations of East Asia. And in all probability, national background also affected the way they perceived civilization. Obviously, in the case of Hearn's multiple and unclear national identities,¹¹³ the situation was more complex.

Here we touch on the question of representativeness. Whom or what did these writers represent with their texts: themselves as individuals, or the US and a certain 'Americanness'? Philip Curtin's and Colin Mackerras' ideas about a dominant national image seem plausible, but these national views should not be understood as monolithic, as lacking competing alternatives. The diversity of opinion among the six writers clearly undermines this proposition. Mackerras, too, has granted that even though the dominant national view might affect the perception of groups and societies, it does not necessarily affect individuals.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Curtin 1964, vii–viii.

¹¹¹ Mackerras 1989, 263, 266, 268.

¹¹² Adas 1989, 3, 15, 134, 144, 177, 183, 186, 198; Mackerras 1989, 266, 274.

¹¹³ It is rather difficult to decipher from the sources at hand the nationality or culture Lafcadio Hearn identified himself with. When speaking of “we” or “our,” he seemed to alternately refer to the westerners in general, to all foreigners in Japan, to the Englishmen, and to the Americans. Nevertheless, Charles Wordell has titled Hearn as “truly an American author,” as he wrote of American topics for an American audience, and was at the time of his death planning on returning to the United States. But Wordell thinks that rather than projecting American values upon the Japanese in his narratives, Hearn projected his own inner emotions. (Wordell 1998, 104–105.)

¹¹⁴ Mackerras 1989, 265–266.

Ultimately, it is worthwhile to remember, as Pekka Korhonen has noted, that it is not nations, but individuals who hold opinions and images.¹¹⁵ First and foremost, the six writers therefore represented themselves, with their individual stances, and personal circumstances. But as the cultural and national circumstances were embedded within the personal ones, they also represented a plurality of 19th century American views.

One should, however, speak with caution of ‘Americanness’, or of a uniquely American identity, with specific values, and ideas, as this was a time when the residents of the US preferred to adhere to their local state-level identities, and were only just beginning to forge a collective national identity¹¹⁶. One fitting question might therefore be to ask to what extent this ‘Americanness’ actually differed from the British and European traditions, or from sentiments prevailing amongst the international population residing in the Chinese and Japanese treaty ports. An answer to those questions would necessitate a more comprehensive and comparative study than the present thesis has scope for, but even raising those questions reminds us that the idea of “19th century American conceptions” of something is an inherently problematic one.

Yet another factor, related to the national and cultural background of the authors, and having a bearing on representations, was ethnocentrism, or judging East Asia by American standards and values. Edward Said has drawn our attention to this feature in his popular, ground-breaking, and highly controversial book *Orientalism* (1978). Oversimplifying the argument, Said has claimed that European observers of the East have been bound by a system of truth he calls Orientalism, and that consequently their representations have been markedly racist, imperialist, and ethnocentric. And negative, as Colin Mackerras has added.¹¹⁷ Interestingly enough, the six authors in the thesis seem to have been somewhat aware of this phenomenon. Samuel Williams noted that foreign writers had a tendency to measure China by their own “higher” standards, while Lafcadio Hearn announced ethnocentric estimations as “erroneous,” yet “natural”.¹¹⁸ For the purposes of this thesis, a comparative lack of cultural relativism is actually fortunate, because what we are trying to make visible is precisely those own standards and value judgments.

Edward Said’s discussion about Orientalism brings us to one final “filter” – previous knowledge. Information about East Asia began to accumulate after the first European contacts were made with the region. As time passed on, this information was reviewed, organised, synthesised, and increasingly published. Before long, images hardened and crystallised. And when following generations travelled to East Asia, they had this prior information in the back of their minds, instructing them about what they could expect to find, and potentially it even steered their experiences so that they ended up finding precisely the things they had anticipated. Said’s Orientalism could be defined as a “filter”

¹¹⁵ Korhonen 2008, 396.

¹¹⁶ Tyrrell 2007, 118–121.

¹¹⁷ Mackerras 1989, 269; Said 2003, 204.

¹¹⁸ Hearn 1894b, 657; Williams 1913a, 464; Williams 1913b, 210.

similar to this previous knowledge, or a frame through which people have described the Orient, made statements about it, and tried to justify those statements – a frame that has thereafter delineated all thinking and writing about the Orient.¹¹⁹

We have already hinted that neither this filter of previous knowledge, nor the frame of Orientalism, were so rigid as to resist change. Even the ‘pioneers’ among the six writers were filling the vacuum in American knowledge by taking earlier European information that they added to or revised. But they were also able to open up new fields of enquiry and invent new perspectives. Once the knowledge they contributed crystallised, the latecomers could, in turn, either build on their predecessors work or pursue something new, and the process would thus repeat for each new generation of observer. As Peter Burke has posited, “[i]n the case of cultural encounters the perception of the new in terms of the old [...] generally proves impossible to sustain over the long term”.¹²⁰

Drawing inspiration from Michel Foucault’s idea of “power/knowledge” (*pouvoir-savoir*) and Antonio Gramsci’s notion of hegemony, Edward Said has argued that the Orientalist frame is closely connected to power and hegemony. We have already referred to Colin Mackerras’ study of Western images of China, in which he has applied both Foucault’s and Said’s notions to the effect that neither of the theories is proven right or wrong. Mackerras has concluded that power and ethnocentric Orientalism have determined images of China, and that those in power used their power to shape images, but this was only in certain situations and during certain periods of time. Meanwhile, Michael Adas has seen “ideologies of dominance” in operation, particularly in the 19th century. He has stated that during that century, Western depictions of China were essentially expressions of power relationships. Also Sybille Fritzsche has raised Orientalism as one of the two main frames which confined the observations of foreign travellers in China after the Opium Wars.¹²¹

Edward Said’s notion of Orientalism has been nevertheless criticized for creating a fixed opposition between the hegemonic West and colonised ‘Other,’ and for drawing connections between Orientalism and imperialism that are not sustainable upon closer inspection. The theory of Orientalism has also been discredited for being ahistorical, for oversimplifying Western representations of the East, and for failing to recognise the diversity of voices and opinions that in fact existed. Furthermore, it does little to account for those incidents when Western judgements voiced from without were, in fact, consistent with those voiced from within Asian societies.¹²² The thing is, as we have already noted, and as will become increasingly evident later on, the ‘Other’ was not necessarily excluded from the act and process of representation. In other words, Europeans and Americans could not represent East Asia independently of the Asians

¹¹⁹ Curtin 1964, vi; Said 2003, 3, 39–43, 46.

¹²⁰ Burke 2003, 206.

¹²¹ Adas 1989, 14; Clifford 2001, 23; Mackerras 1989, 2–4, 263, 266; Said 2003, 3–5, 7–8.

¹²² Clifford 2001, 17, 58, 69–70; MacKenzie 1995, xv–xix.

themselves, for particularly the Japanese actively participated in discussions about Japan at home and abroad.¹²³

To be sure, when speaking of Orientalism and the Orient, Edward Said was referring mainly to the Arabic and Islamic world, not to China or Japan. And for good reason, as Nicholas Clifford has convincingly argued that China deviated markedly from Orientalist categories in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Firstly, despite being subject to imperial ventures, China remained formally independent. Secondly, unlike its relationship with Islamic countries up to that point in time, the West did not have a long-running history of conflict with China. Clifford has thus concluded that the power relations with 19th century China did not conform to Said's formulations, and for this reason Westerners were less likely to view China with the imperialist "monarch-of-all-I-survey"-gaze.¹²⁴ This was even more the case for Japan, as it had never been colonised.

Thus, we see that the notions of Orientalism should not be systematically applied to representations of East Asia, but on a case by case basis. The question becomes further complicated with the often-heard postulation that the power to describe and to create knowledge – power denied from the observed itself – necessarily implies power to control.¹²⁵ Creation of knowledge was the stated objective of the six writers, they wished to arouse American interest in China and Japan, and to lift the prevailing veil of ignorance.¹²⁶ Their aim was to counter and revise earlier images, to correct misconceptions and excessive generalisations. Samuel Williams, for example, wanted to "divest the Chinese people and civilization of that peculiar and indefinable impression of ridicule which has been so generally given them by foreign authors", and William Griffis equally wanted to contradict the exaggeration, mystification, exoticism, "lush rhetoric and rank flattery, which shows ominous signs of selfdeception" of the observers of Japan.¹²⁷ So if we were to accept the claim that knowledge is, or implies, power, these contributions to American knowledge about China and Japan were, in fact, manifestations of a power relationship.

William Griffis and Arthur Smith maintained that they were objective observers, "not consciously prejudiced," simply reporting what they saw, and only after the truth. As Griffis assured his readers: "I give the true picture of Japan in 1871."¹²⁸ It seems that for Percival Lowell and Lafcadio Hearn, writing was primarily an intellectual and literary exercise, and for Hearn, it was also a way to make a living. But in spite of the claim for objectivity, the other four writers made no effort to conceal that they had other motives for writing than simply distributing knowledge. For example, Arthur Smith and William Martin were concerned about the present and future relations between China and the US. They wished to promote mutual understanding and intellectual interaction,

¹²³ Josephson 2012, 193–194.

¹²⁴ Clifford 2001, 15–16; Scott 2008, 7.

¹²⁵ Clifford 2001, 2; Said 2003, 283.

¹²⁶ Hearn 1894a, v; Smith 1901a, 64, 168.

¹²⁷ Griffis 1900, 92; Griffis 2006a, xi; Martin 1881, 228; Smith 1890, 345; Williams 1913a, xiv; Williams 1913b, 423.

¹²⁸ Griffis 1903, 361; Griffis 2006a, xi; Griffis 2006b, 119; Smith 1890, 4–5.

because, as Smith made clear, the Chinese were, and would continue to be, a significant determinant of the world's course as well as world peace.¹²⁹ Another explicitly stated motive for writing was for the "well-being" and 'advancement' of the Chinese and Japanese, which from the perspective of our Protestant writers meant introducing Christianity. Hence Christian missions figured largely in the texts of the four Protestant authors, who hoped that their work would promote the missionary cause, even if Arthur Smith did vouch that his intention was not to present a missionary perspective on China.¹³⁰

Related to the evangelising mission was the mission to civilize and modernise China and Japan, and the avowedly Protestant experts were just as keen to produce knowledge for the civilizing mission as for the Christianisation of the East Asians. Both of these aims were essentially connected to power relations and relative power positions, and indicated that the authors advocated, or were involved in, a kind of cultural imperialism. In turn, cultural imperialism by definition implies coercion, as it denotes a situation in which a cultural product succeeds in attaining a dominant position through links to political or economic power¹³¹.

However, Ryan Dunch has shown various flaws in the concept of cultural imperialism, particularly in the context of missionary activities in China. For example, it has often been asserted that missionaries were one of the three 'M's of imperialism, that is, merchants, missionaries, and the military. But Dunch maintains that, upon closer inspection, missionary interests in China were more often than not contrary to the interests of merchants and imperial governments. Moreover, Dunch reminds us that even though missionaries were a significant medium through which Western culture could be disseminated, their actual effect on China remained relatively small. Dunch's conclusion is that if we are to subscribe to the notion of culture as "a field of ideological domination, in which cultural change comes about through coercion by outside forces", then it is feasible to see all aspects of culture as products of imperialism, and all definitions as an exercise of power. But rather than do this, Dunch thinks it is a better idea to cast aside the concept of cultural imperialism, and move beyond it, as it is an unsatisfying analytical model.¹³²

The six authors were entangled in power relations simply because they were American citizens. They were protected by their government in China and Japan through treaties, which were established by coercion or a threat of it, and backed up by the American and European navies.

In their texts, there were occasional calls for a more active American political involvement and stronger military presence in the Pacific region. William Griffis even recommended outright colonisation as the best policy for the US once the question of the future of Philippines became impending at the end of

¹²⁹ Martin 1901a, 2; Smith 1899, 5; Smith 1901a, xi.

¹³⁰ Griffis 2006b, 2-4; Martin 1881, 148-149; Martin 1901a, 195-196; Smith 1890, 4-5; Williams 1913a, xv, 1-2.

¹³¹ Dunch 2002, 302.

¹³² Dunch 2002, 302, 305, 307-308, 315-316, 318.

the 19th century¹³³. These were calls for the use of ‘hard power’ against the Pacific nations, and such statements clearly manifested a feeling of superiority, but they hardly affected actual decisions made in Washington. But it is probable that their writings were used by others for political, economic, or religious gain over China and Japan. And it is probable that the authors, at least to some extent, knew this would be so.

There is no denying that their residence in, and their representations of, East Asia involved and exhibited power relations, but does this exclude the possibility that the authors were also motivated by the expressed desire to pursue knowledge in a scientific fashion for its own sake? Ultimately, to base the whole thesis on the study of motives, power relations, and power discourse seems rather reductionist. It seems more reasonable to discuss these issues in terms of them having an explicit bearing on the representations.

On the other hand, in the field of intellectual history, Quentin Skinner has denounced motives in general as fairly irrelevant for the interpretation of texts. Skinner has insisted that when attempting to interpret texts, a scholar should keep in mind a clear distinction between the author’s motives and author’s intentions. According to Skinner, motives precede the text, have nothing to do with the meaning of it, and consequently, they are not, and cannot be, necessary for understanding the meaning of a text.¹³⁴

But whereas motives are irrelevant, intentions are essential for comprehending a text. Skinner has adopted J. L. Austin’s notion of a speech act to explain what he means by intentions. Speech acts are divided into locutionary, perlocutionary, and illocutionary acts, the latter of which corresponds to Skinner’s idea of intentions. Illocutionary act, or an intention, is something a writer is doing in making a statement, such as warning or promising. The intentions are embodied in the text and hence recoverable for a scholar. Skinner has argued that to know the illocutionary intention of the writer, is to know the meaning of a text. Or to be more precise, it is to know the relevant meaning for understanding a text, since texts can have several other meanings, such as a meaning for the individual reader.¹³⁵

Quentin Skinner’s formulation of intentions provides a key to the question of paramount importance for this thesis: why did someone write something, at a certain time, and with that specific audience in mind? Skinner has proposed that the primary intention of a writer is usually to communicate something, to contribute to some discussion, to answer a problem, or to make a move in an argument, for or against.¹³⁶ Skinner has pointed out that in order to recover an author’s intentions, a scholar should delineate “the full range of communications that could have been conventionally performed on the given occasion”. In other words, a scholar should study the prevailing linguistic, intellectual, and social conventions. These conventions provide the context for finding the possi-

¹³³ Griffis 1900, 6–7.

¹³⁴ Skinner 2006, 95–99.

¹³⁵ Skinner 2006, 96–97, 99–100.

¹³⁶ Skinner 2006, 86–87.

ble intentions, for assessing whether the intentions ascribed to an author are plausible, and as evidence to support these claims.¹³⁷

However, Skinner's theoretical reflections cover a lot more than just authorial intentions. Rhetoric, truthfulness, and the rationality of how we account for our beliefs have all come under his close scrutiny, as well as the causal and non-causal explanation of actions. He has defined and redefined many useful concepts in the study of intellectual history, and proposed a holistic methodology for studies attempting to identify and explain beliefs. In particular, Skinner has striven to counter earlier approaches, such as Arthur Lovejoy's history of unit ideas, and the precarious explanations of beliefs by received influences.¹³⁸ Nonetheless, Skinner's methodology has attracted its share of criticism, too. For example, Robert Lamb has challenged Skinner's assumption that 'social power' is a consistent human motivation for speech acts. Lamb has expressed doubt whether one can really presuppose that the intentions behind political speech are fixed and invariable, and that speech is always geared towards a certain ideological end.¹³⁹

Mark Bevir has also found fault with the notion of authorial intentions. According to Skinner, an author's intention is to contribute to contemporary arguments and these arguments can be recovered by applying one's knowledge of prevailing linguistic and intellectual conventions. But Bevir has questioned whether authors are always out to contribute to contemporary debates. And even when they are, Bevir doubts whether it is really possible for a scholar to grasp their intention if he has not already studied precisely those texts or speeches which the author is responding to. Bevir has found it more reasonable to expect authors to *explicitly* state their position in the text. Furthermore, if it really was impossible to recover the author's intentions without recourse to the prevailing social and linguistic conventions, then this would rule out all intentions expressed in an unconventional way, as they would be utterly incomprehensible.¹⁴⁰

However, neither Robert Lamb nor Mark Bevir have rejected intentionalism altogether. They simply propose a form of 'weak intentionalism', instead of Skinner's strong intentionalism. The central point of weak intentionalism is what Bevir has called procedural individualism, or the idea that meanings are always specific to individuals. Bevir has emphasised that meanings are not the innate properties of texts or languages, and neither are they deducible solely from social or linguistic conventions, such as a discourse or paradigm. On the contrary, all meanings arise from the intentional states, especially beliefs that individuals attach to texts. Bevir has argued that it is irrelevant whether the individuals who attach meanings are the authors or the readers, and whether or not their intentions are conscious.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Skinner 2006, 42, 87.

¹³⁸ Skinner 2006, 4-5, 40-41, 50-51, 62, 75-76.

¹³⁹ Lamb 2009, 67.

¹⁴⁰ Bevir 1992, 288-292.

¹⁴¹ Bevir 1999, 27, 54, 72; Bevir 2000, 385, 387, 390, 398; Bevir 2002, 212-213.

Bevir reminds us that historians clearly do not have direct access to the beliefs expressed in a text that they are trying to recover. Moreover, there might be a gap between the expressed beliefs they want to convey and those which the individuals actually act upon. However, historians can generally distinguish between these two kinds of beliefs, according to Bevir, even if the evidence for such disjunctures typically derives not from the studied text itself but from other texts. Nevertheless, Bevir has especially maintained that these beliefs are potentially recoverable, even with a faulty preconception of the social conventions at play, or no knowledge of those conventions whatsoever. According to Bevir, historians can justify their interpretation of a text's meaning for a certain individual by making use of the best possible explanation, that is, if ascribing a said intention to a certain individual best explains the evidence, it is therefore legitimate to do so.¹⁴²

For Quentin Skinner, the primary context for studying authors' beliefs, intentions, and meanings of their texts is the linguistic one, while the intellectual and political contexts come in second. The idea that a text needs to be put into the correct linguistic context if we are to recover its meaning has gained ground among scholars, although in several variations. Mark Bevir has distinguished between soft linguistic contextualists, such as Quentin Skinner, and hard linguistic contextualists, such as J. G. A. Pocock, and he has objections to both. We will turn now to his treatment of Pocock, as we have already looked at some of his grounds for rejecting Skinner. According to Pocock, in order to understand the meaning of a text, we must grasp the paradigm to which the utterance belongs. So for the hard linguistic contextualists it is the paradigm which determines the meaning of a text, while the language determines what an author can utter. Bevir has contended that Pocock's approach tends to reduce the human mind to a mere social construct. It is not that Bevir has denied the influence that social structures can have on ideas or on the contents of the mind, but he insists that structures do not determine ideas.¹⁴³ Neither does Bevir have any objections to studying the linguistic context as such, he just reminds us to be wary of making it the only context from which meanings can be deduced.¹⁴⁴

Since the representations, thoughts, and intentions of the six authors were necessarily expressed through language, it would seem a fruitful approach to turn our attention to the linguistic features of 19th century American English. There are a variety of plausible ways to examine language and its use. One way is to focus on conventions and paradigms, as previously mentioned. Another approach is to focus on the discourse. One of the most prominent schools of discourse analysis has been critical discourse analysis (CDA), notably represented by Norman Fairclough. Fairclough's social theory of discourse suggests that we should concentrate first on the linguistic features of discourse, such as vocabulary, metaphors, grammar, cohesion and text structure; then on the con-

¹⁴² Bevir 1992, 290; Bevir 2002, 210-214.

¹⁴³ Bevir 1992, 276-277; Bevir 1997, 167, 169-172; Bevir 1999, 34-35; Burke 2002, 170; Burke 2008, 94.

¹⁴⁴ Bevir 1992, 278, 297.

texts of the text, speech-acts, and intertextuality; and finally we can examine the ongoing ideological and hegemonic processes within social practices of which discourse is a feature.¹⁴⁵ Historians and anthropologists have also come to examine the relationship between modes of thought and modes of communication, finding, for example, the study of recurring metaphors very useful.¹⁴⁶

Certain vocabulary and metaphors recur in the texts of all six experts. Those with a missionary background, for example, tended to use similar expressions to distinguish between Christianity and 'native' religions and practices. For example, Christianity and Western society became to stand for light and health, while other religions were perceived to stand for darkness and sickness. Meanwhile, when writing about personal experiences in Japan a kind of fairy-tale language was used, or words that implied something exotic. For example, William Griffis referred to Japan as a "moonland," and the Japanese as Lilliputians, while Lafcadio Hearn and Percival Lowell used adjectives such as strange, beautiful, bewitching, and enchanting. They also called Japan "another planet," "fairy-world," and "elf-land." Ian Littlewood has encountered similar expressions in his study of Western representations of Japan, and has argued that they are part of an old tradition of drawing boundaries between oneself and the Japanese 'Other.' According to Littlewood, by defining Japan as "a realized fairy-land," the Westerners could class the Japanese as "aliens" and thus turn them into the 'Other.'¹⁴⁷

Another linguistic device tended to have the same effect, namely, the 'Orientalisation' of Chinese and Japanese languages in representations. Instead of simply translating Chinese and Japanese words and dialogues into English, the writers often used Pidgin English, reverse word orders in sentences, and affixes such as "august" and "honourable" to mark the honorifics used in Chinese and Japanese speech. For example, a conversation Lafcadio Hearn had with his rickshaw man (*kurumaya*) in Japanese, took the following form in his book: "'O kurumaya! the throat of Selfishness is dry; water desirable is.' He, still running, answered: - 'The Village of the Long Beach inside of -not far- a great gush-water is. There pure august water will be given'".¹⁴⁸ However, as noted above, the experts did not use this exoticised style of writing throughout their works, only in conjunction with personal reminiscences such as dialogues and travel

¹⁴⁵ The program for studying discourses advocated by Norman Fairclough and CDA is also concerned with social and ideological structures, hegemony and power. The objective of critical discourse analysis is not merely to uncover the interplay of hegemonic structures and discourses which they determine, but also to intervene in the process. CDA scholars often have explicit ideological commitments and engage in left-wing politics, which makes the following of their approach somewhat problematic for historians. (Blommaert, Jan & Bulcaen, Chris, "Critical Discourse Analysis". *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 29, 2000: pp. 447-449; Fairclough, Norman, *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman 1999 [fourth ed., original 1995]: pp. 4-7). For a critique of CDA, see e.g., Blommaert, Jan, *Discourse: A Critical Introduction*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

¹⁴⁶ Burke 2003, 178.

¹⁴⁷ Littlewood 1996, 9, 45, 61-63.

¹⁴⁸ Hearn 1895, 17.

descriptions. It was perhaps as much a device for creating an artistic or authentic effect as it was a device for othering.

In addition to these common metaphors, words, and expressions, there are also concepts and a conceptual history that need to be considered. Ultimately, it is both conceptions and a concept we are studying here. In this thesis the terms 'concept' and 'idea' are used more or less interchangeably, although the term 'concept' perhaps predominates. Michael Richter has argued that, in general, it makes little sense to differentiate between concepts and ideas, because in both German and English philosophical traditions the two terms are often used interchangeably. The precise meanings of a 'concept' or 'idea' depend on the theoretical contexts. Conceptual history can be distinguished as its own discipline, distinct from intellectual history or the history of ideas, having its own focuses, research questions, subject matter and methods.¹⁴⁹ However, for the purposes of this study there is no rigid demarcation drawn between conceptual and intellectual approaches, rather, the two are seen as complementing each other.

In the next chapter, we will provide a definition and a short history of the concept of civilization. We will outline how the six writers defined, interpreted, and used the concept of civilization. A way to do this is to mark out a conceptual, or semantic, field. Sketching out a conceptual field for civilization entails tracking down every reference to 'civilization' in the primary sources, and noting which words were tagged together with it, which other concepts were related to it, and which concepts were its antonyms. These mechanical searches naturally fail to reach those instances when the idea was discussed without explicitly referring to the term. For instance, when we say "it is cloudy and windy," people generally understand that we are talking about weather even if we do not mention the term 'weather' itself. Thus, while the conceptual field can offer valuable hints and guidelines as a tool, it is only a starting point for an analysis of the sources.

In the field of conceptual history the 'German school' represented by Reinhart Koselleck and the 'Anglo-American,' or 'Cambridge school,' represented by Quentin Skinner and J. G. A. Pocock, are usually regarded as the two opposing extremes.¹⁵⁰ The unit of analysis in Koselleckian studies of language is the 'key concept'. Koselleck has defined this as a product of long-term semiotic processes and diverse historical experiences, which has crystallised into a word, but which still contains multiple, controversial, and contested meanings. Accordingly, Koselleck has explained that the difference between a word and a concept is that words can be defined, but concepts need to be interpreted. Koselleck's hypotheses were put into practice in the seven volume lexicon project he edited, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*,¹⁵¹ in which a considerable number of

¹⁴⁹ Richter 1987, 247, 258-259.

¹⁵⁰ Valkhoff 2006, 83.

¹⁵¹ Full title of the treatise: *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* (Basic Concepts in History: A Dictionary on Historical Principles of Political and Social Language in Germany).

authors combined to map out the birth, the history, the transformations, and the struggles over German social and political key concepts.¹⁵²

Quentin Skinner has emphatically denounced Reinhart Koselleck's lexicon project, and described the Koselleckian approach to conceptual history as being neither conceptual nor historical. According to Skinner, the Koselleckian approach is a history of words at best, but definitely not a history of concepts. Instead of a Koselleckian diachronic analysis of key concepts at the macro-level, Skinner has advocated a micro-analysis of authorial intentions in particular temporal and linguistic contexts.¹⁵³

The majority of conceptual historians tend to fall somewhere between the German and Anglophone camps, the lowest common denominator for them all being a focus on language, linguistic changes, and concepts. However, Melvin Richter has suggested that there are enough convergences between the two camps to enable the practitioners to have a meaningful dialogue with each other. This dialogue, combined with a joint implementation of methodological insights from Koselleck, Pocock, and Skinner, could result in a more satisfactory historical account of ideas and language. In fact, according to Pasi Ihalainen, some scholars have already attempted to transcend the methodological differences and bring the two extremes together in practice. These scholars, Ihalainen himself included, have selectively adapted and combined semantics and pragmatics, and studied both the long-term semantic changes and unique speech acts.¹⁵⁴ This will be the path that is roughly followed in this study too, although

¹⁵² Richter 1987, 252–253; Richter 1997, 28, 30–31; Richter et al. 2006, 349–351. In his introduction to *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Reinhart Koselleck made a hypothesis of a *Sattelzeit*, a notion of modernity as a major rupture and discontinuity. According to Koselleck, during this *Sattelzeit* in the 18th and 19th centuries, there were four major shifts in German social and political basic concepts: temporalisation, democratisation, ideologisation and politicisation. Consequently, the lexicon mainly concentrated on this period. The basic idea of the study was to identify and demonstrate conceptual continuity and change, and to seek connections between political and social concepts and political, social, and economic structures. (Richter 1987, 253; Richter et al. 2006, 346–348.)

¹⁵³ Fernández Sebastián 2007, 114–115; Ifversen 2003, 64; Richter 1987, 260. The other notable representative of the 'Anglo-American' school, J. G. A. Pocock, has stated that his and Quentin Skinner's methodologies sufficiently account for change, and that the historian of language should focus primarily on the synchronic study of language. Yet, despite being at the other extreme of the methodological spectrum, Pocock has not totally ruled out the potential usefulness of the study of basic concepts and lexicon projects conducted in the Koselleckian camp. Rather, Pocock has stated that he could learn much from Koselleckian long-term historical studies that focus on one component of language at a time. However, Pocock also argues that language, or discourse, is too complex and ever-changing to be reduced to the study of individual concepts and their history. And in this way, he sides more with Skinner in that he believes concepts cannot, and should not, be detached from the overall history of language, and that in practice they cannot have their own, independent, histories. (Pocock 1996, 48–51.) Kari Palonen has pointed out that Skinner's intention has not been to deny the value of concepts as such. Instead, Skinner has wished to show both the way concepts create a frame in which agents have to formulate their speech and politics, and the way in which agents can strategically use and revise the conceptual frame for their own political ends and purposes. (Palonen 1999, 47.)

¹⁵⁴ Ihalainen 2006, 115, 120–124; Richter 1997, 34–35.

this choice does expose the thesis to criticism and to the problems associated with synthesising these two perspectives.¹⁵⁵

The last notion of conceptual history that has proved fruitful for this study, is the idea of asymmetrical counter-concepts. Counter-concepts are sets of words used for drawing distinctions between one's own group and the 'Other.' They are used for representing one's own culture in terms of a universal character, and for portraying those who deviate from this image as negations of the universal. The counter-concepts are asymmetrical, in so far as outsiders are denied the opportunity to represent themselves, and their own self-image.¹⁵⁶ Thus far the idea of counter-concepts shares some apparent similarities with Edward Said's theory of Orientalism and the idea that there is a relationship between representations and power.

João Feres Júnior has constructed from Reinhart Koselleck's original classification of these oppositions three revised categories of counter-concepts: cultural, temporal, and racial. Feres Júnior has explained that cultural counter-concepts are used to reveal the 'Other' as a spatially separate entity with contrasting customs, institutions, and ways of life. As for temporal oppositions, they are used to represent the 'Other' as primitive, backward, or incapable of development.¹⁵⁷ As mentioned before, the "Orient" had for centuries served as the opposite of Occidental Europe, that is, the prime example of the 'Other' for Europeans. According to Michael Adas, from the 19th century onwards the Europeans and Americans started to take this opposition, and all difference in general, as a sign of inferiority or backwardness. In other words, the Europeans and Americans used temporal counter-concepts to represent the East as inferior to the West, which in turn justified intellectual and material hegemony, and the 'mission to civilize'.¹⁵⁸

At the same time, the majority of Americans were probably indoctrinated with racially loaded ideologies, which divided humankind into whites and non-whites. Although the 19th century notion of race tended to be culturally constructed and encompassed not just biological, but linguistic and cultural aspects as well, race was still something before and beyond culture. While the cultural and temporal counter-concepts were considered amenable to cultural assimilation, the racial one was irremediable. There was simply no solution for not being white.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Kari Palonen, for example, has argued that both the Skinnerian and Koselleckian approaches are useful and they complement each other, but to include both into one study might be problematic, or even bordering on the impossible. Palonen explains that using both methodologies at the same time necessarily leads to questions as to which perspective is preferable and when or how the two can be made to fit together. (Palonen 1999, 43, 56-57.)

¹⁵⁶ Feres Jr. 2003, 14; Lorenz 2008, 25.

¹⁵⁷ Feres Jr. 2002, 22-24; Feres Jr. 2003, 15-16; Feres Jr. 2005, 97, 101, 103. Reinhart Koselleck's original oppositions consisted of: the Hellene and Barbarian; Christian and Heathen; human and nonhuman; and superhuman and subhuman. (Feres Jr. 2005, 92.)

¹⁵⁸ Adas 1989, 250; Adas 2004, 33; Clifford 2001, 51-52.

¹⁵⁹ Feres Jr. 2003, 15-16; Feres Jr. 2005, 89, 104; Feres Jr. 2006, 271-272.

Feres Júnior's counter-concepts theory links naturally to theories of representation, power, language, and concept. Hence it seems conducive for this thesis to contemplate to what extent did these categories of misrecognition play a part in the representations the six writers produced, and what kind of counter concepts did the writers use. One clear benefit in examining the history of concepts and linguistic conventions in such a fashion, is the awareness of language it raises. The language available to us not only enables us to communicate our ideas, but may also limit the way we think and express ourselves. But to what extent is language a resource or a constraint? That remains to an unsolved question and matter of debate¹⁶⁰.

Essentially, it all boils down to finding the most pertinent contexts for studying both 19th century American representations of China and Japan, *and* conceptions of civilization. We have already established several such contexts: (i) the personal backgrounds of the authors; (ii) their cultural, intellectual and national background; (iii) their motives; (iv) both the real and imagined countries they encountered; (v) their intentions; (vi) the linguistic commonplaces, conventions, concepts, and hegemonic discourses; (vii) the previous literature and knowledge; (viii) the targeted audience; and (ix) 19th century international relations and relative power positions. This list of contexts largely corresponds to Dominick LaCapra's list of six useful contexts for studying texts: (1) the relation between the author's intentions and the text; (2) the relation between the author's life and the text; (3) the relation of society to the text; (4) the relation of culture to the text; (5) the relation of the text to the corpus of the author; (6) the relation between modes of discourse and the text. LaCapra's objective in formulating these six overlapping contexts, or relations, has been to encourage intellectual historians to engage in a dialogue with the past, instead of merely documenting and reconstructing it. In providing this extensive list of cues for contextualisation, he has tried to counter excessively narrow or reductive¹⁶¹ readings of texts.¹⁶²

However, LaCapra has maintained that his list is not exhaustive. Moreover, he has not suggested that the contexts he has categorised are uncomplicated or should be spared from criticism. On the contrary, LaCapra has indicated that a context should always be treated as a problem, not as a blanket solution to the interpretation of texts, because rarely if ever does a scholar find that one single context will explain everything.¹⁶³ Roughly following LaCapra's advice therefore, this thesis combines description with analysis of representations. As a variant of Mark Bevir's idea to find the best possible explanation for intentions, a principle of best possible explanation for arguments and thoughts contained in the primary sources will be adopted here. In other words, analysis in the the-

¹⁶⁰ See e.g. Bevir 1997, 172; Richter 1997, 27.

¹⁶¹ As examples of reductive methods for reading texts, Dominick LaCapra has mentioned, for example, A. O. Lovejoy's history of unit ideas, and the kind of social history that sees a simple causal relationship between texts and social structures (LaCapra 1980, 252–253).

¹⁶² LaCapra 1980, 246, 256, 258, 263, 268–269, 272.

¹⁶³ LaCapra 1980, 254–255, 257.

sis will be based on selective use of the different contexts and theoretical and methodological insights already touched upon.

Not adhering to a specific set of methodological claims like this can be, and has been, criticised for the inherent logical contradictions that sometimes result. As already mentioned, some Anglo-American conceptual historians seriously doubt the compatibility of their views with those of their German counterparts, while the “middle way”¹⁶⁴ approach to intellectual history espoused by Mark Bevir does not accommodate the use of formal classifications,¹⁶⁵ such as counter-concepts.

Nevertheless, some characteristics of the present thesis make it impossible to adhere to any single one of the methodologies previously referred to. For example, the selected primary sources do not match the kind of sources used by Quentin Skinner and ‘the Cambridge School’, or Dominick LaCapra. These intellectual historians have focused on the so-called ‘great texts’ that flowed from the pens of noted intellectuals. Often they have studied one thinker and one text at a time, rather than multiple texts simultaneously from multiple writers. Then again, the selected time frame of few decades and the contextualization of concepts both synchronically and diachronically¹⁶⁶ do not coincide with the longer periods of time studied in the ‘German School’ of conceptual history, nor with the specific points of history studied in the ‘Anglo-American School’.

Hence, to conduct this study without altering its basic premises, it is necessary to adopt a relatively relaxed notion of contextualism, and a flexible methodology. This kind of approach has been explicitly encouraged by Peter Burke, Mark Bevir, and Robert Lamb, who have posited that there are no methods or contexts which are predestined to be the one and only correct ones for interpreting texts. Mark Bevir has argued that a scholar can arrive at a wrong conclusion even with right premises, and at the right conclusion with the wrong premises. On a similar note, Robert Lamb has recommended the abandoning of exclusive methodological claims – claims that only a certain procedure facilitates, or is necessary for, the correct conclusions. Instead, Lamb has proposed that scholars should pay attention to heuristic claims, or *potentially* fruitful ways for getting to the right conclusion.¹⁶⁷

Now, let us move forward, and elaborate further on the 19th century American concept and conceptions of civilization. In chapters 2 and 3 we will use the semantic field to study the meanings and usages of civilization in the contexts of the history of the concept, contemporary language, intellectual currents, diplomacy and politics. Here we will also discuss the 19th century American images of Chinese, Japanese, and Western civilizations, which we will con-

¹⁶⁴ O’Neill 2012, 584, 588.

¹⁶⁵ Bevir 2012, 657.

¹⁶⁶ Reinhart Koselleck has described synchrony as a state of language at a given point of time and place, and diachrony as the long-term transformation of the structures of language and society. However, Koselleck has maintained that theoretically the two can be separated, but not in practice, for synchrony and diachrony exist together in all speech acts. (Koselleck 1989, 317–318.)

¹⁶⁷ Bevir 1992, 278; Bevir 1997, 184, 188; Burke 2002, 173–175; Lamb 2009, 52–54, 69.

tinue in the rest of the chapters. Then, in chapter 4 we will cover the authors' perceptions of the mechanisms, movement, and outcomes of the process of civilization. Finally, in the last three chapters before concluding the thesis, we will turn to the yardsticks used by the authors to measure a nation's and people's level of civilization: religion, morals, science, education, society, government, women, and family. As the authors' discussions concerning civilization were often complex and entangled, they naturally did not follow any neat thematic lines. Consequently, these yardsticks often overlapped. In particular, the discussions about religion and morals frequently figured in connection with the others, since for majority of the experts, and for the Chinese and Japanese alike, these were aspects of civilization that could not be considered separately and independently from politics, science, or philosophy.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ Josephson 2012, 17, 58.

2 THE CONCEPT OF CIVILIZATION

At the beginning of the 19th century, civilization was still a fairly young concept, and a topic of debate among French and British philosophers, who saw the concept as a tool for describing and analysing the pressing social and political questions of the day. As the concept was adopted by an increasing number of people, in an increasing number of places, and was utilized for an increasing number of purposes, it became more and more diversified, complicated, criticized, and contested. In this chapter we will cover the history of this concept from its birth in Europe, through its emergence as a transnational concept, to its consolidation as a key concept in the United States.

Once the concept of civilization had proved its usefulness in discussions about society, history, and the sciences, and established itself as a part of American parlance, it would seem natural to then find it featuring in the texts of our six American experts. To check to what extent this is the case, we can examine its semantic field to find clues about the meanings and definitions the authors gave to the concept, as well as their attitudes towards it. The semantic field also shows us that civilization was intrinsically related to three other concepts: progress, race, evolution. These concepts were equally significant, polyvalent, and a matter of dispute at that time. All three of them would provide ample historical material in their own right, but as we will see, it makes sense to subsume them under the umbrella of civilization.

2.1 History and definitions of the concept

The etymological origins of the concept 'civilization' have intrigued many academics. Despite some ambiguities, a general consensus prevails that the cradle of its birth was mid-eighteenth century France. The word itself is understood to derive from the Latin *civilis* and *civilitas*, and the French renderings *civil* and *civilité*. Historically, this group of words denotes a political community, city, citizen, or civic life; or it refers to humanity and humaneness, as opposed to

non-human, bestial, or barbarian. By the 16th century, the political connotations of *civilitas* and *civilité* became obscured, and the words were mainly associated with courtesy and good manners. Hence the French verb, *civiliser*, came to mean “to bring civility,” “to make manners civil and mild,”¹⁶⁹ and “to polish.” The verb also carried another, jurisprudential, meaning: “to change a criminal case into a civil one.” Finally, during the 18th century the suffix ‘-ation’ was added to the verb to form a noun, *civilisation*. This new noun retained much of the earlier preoccupation with manners, etiquette, and identity.¹⁷⁰

When and where this neologism first appeared in print in its ‘modern’ non-judicial sense is still an open question. Lucien Febvre has suggested that the first recorded appearance of *civilisation* was in a treatise titled *L’Antiquité dévoilée par ses usages* by Nicolas Antoine Boulanger in 1766, whereas later academics, Emile Benveniste, Jean Starobinski, and Philipp Lepenies have found evidence that the word had already been used in a publication ten years earlier. This publication was *L’Ami des hommes ou traité de la population* (*The Friend of Men, or a Treatise on Population*, dated 1756, published in 1757) by the French physiocrat economist, Victor Riqueti, Marquis de Mirabeau (1715–1789).¹⁷¹ The conventional sense of the concept figured prominently in the Marquis de Mirabeau’s treatise. For example, he coupled civilization with sociability and a polishing of manners, and used the word also in a juridical sense to refer to a society in which civil law had supplanted military law.¹⁷²

In *L’Ami des hommes*, Mirabeau attended primarily to economic and moral matters, such as industry, commerce, agriculture, the military, justice, the police, luxury, and the fine arts. Bruce Mazlish has argued that this list of topics represents Mirabeau’s view of the contents of civilization, and that Mirabeau’s formulation of civilization denoted to a form of social structure, which bound the members of the society together and promoted liberty. Mazlish has pointed out that Mirabeau’s idea of civilization was essentially a product of its time and place. For Mirabeau, civilization was an idealistic solution to the most crucial questions of the day, that is, to the various problems connected with an absolutist French monarchy, finance, foreign policy, and reforms.¹⁷³ Mirabeau’s non-judicial definition of civilization also made its way into the French dictionaries, appearing first in the 1771 edition of *Dictionnaire universel françois et latin* (or *Dictionnaire de Trévoux*).¹⁷⁴ This definition of civilization denoted a state of a society or culture, but unlike the earlier terms such as *civilitas*, civilization was not static. Instead, it also described the process that led up to the state of civilization.

¹⁶⁹ The idea of civilizing, in the sense of educating, taming, and refining the manners and appearance of those outside the main cultural sphere, existed also in China and Japan well before the 19th century. This form of civilization the Japanese termed as *kyōka*, and the Chinese as *jiaohua*, and its ideals were mainly derived from Chinese culture and Confucianism. (Josephson 2012, 167.)

¹⁷⁰ Bowden 2009a, 6–7; Den Boer 2005, 51–52; Lepenies 2008, 215–216; Starobinski 2009, 151.

¹⁷¹ Benveniste 2009, 131–132; Febvre 2009, 94–95; Lepenies 2008, 216.

¹⁷² Mazlish 2004, 14; Mazlish 2009, 375.

¹⁷³ Mazlish 2009, 369, 372–373, 375.

¹⁷⁴ Starobinski 2009, 152.

This dynamic sense of the word was used by the Marquis de Mirabeau in his later manuscript *L'ami des femmes ou traité de la civilisation* (*The Friend of Women, or Treatise on Civilisation*, 1768) which he intended to be a complement to the *L'Ami des hommes*.¹⁷⁵

However, the process of civilization that Mirabeau was referring to was not linearly progressive. It was a process destined to eventually cave in and yield to decay, only to reappear at a different juncture of history, time after time. In other words, Mirabeau perceived the development and history of civilization as cyclical. Moreover, each time civilization emerged, it took on a different form. As Jean Starobinski has succinctly summarised, for Mirabeau “[c]ivilization was not one but many.”¹⁷⁶ Only later in the century were the ideas of uninterrupted progress and linear historical development wedded to the concept of civilization. Perhaps most notably and systematically this connection was put forward by the Marquis de Condorcet (1743–1794). In Condorcet’s posthumously published Enlightenment era classic *Esquisse d’un tableau historique des progrès de l’esprit humain* (*Outlines of a Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind*, 1795) civilization appeared as the central conceptual instrument for analysis. Following in the footsteps of Montesquieu and Turgot, Condorcet cast off the notions of history as cyclical, accidental, and occasionally guided by divine intervention. Instead, he adopted the view that history was equivalent to the progress of civilization.¹⁷⁷

Condorcet understood civilization as an ongoing and universal process. He believed that any person or any nation had an inherent capability for civilization, and if left unhindered, that civilization would evolve, build itself up, and perfect itself until one day it would reach its tenth and final stage¹⁷⁸ – reign of reason and liberty. Condorcet’s theory of history and civilization were cordially welcomed in academic, intellectual, and scholarly circles.¹⁷⁹ In fact, by the turn of the century, the idea had become established to such extent that, in his lectures at the University of Paris, François Guizot (1787–1874) confidently declared that civilization was an established historical fact. In the treatise based on these lectures, *Histoire de la civilisation en Europe* (*The History of Civilization in Europe*, 1828), Guizot argued that civilization was formed by social factors such as industry, commerce, and institutions; and moral factors such as religious creeds, philosophies, arts, and sciences. In theory, these social and moral components could be analysed separately, but in practice they were inseparably interconnected, Guizot thought. What the two arenas of civilization had in common was progress, i.e., the forward march of the individual as well as soci-

¹⁷⁵ Den Boer 2005, 51; Lepenies 2008, 216; Starobinski 2009, 155.

¹⁷⁶ Lepenies 2008, 216; Starobinski 2009, 155.

¹⁷⁷ Beard et al. 1948, 77–78, 83; Den Boer 2007, 225.

¹⁷⁸ William Adams has argued that the perception of human history being divided into successive stages was an old, recurrent idea in Western thought that had been present in cyclical models well before it was connected to civilization in the context of unilinear progressive time. (Adams 1998, 31.)

¹⁷⁹ Beard et al. 1948, 78, 83; Lepenies 2008, 218–219.

ety. Guizot was convinced that civilization was the “general destiny of humanity”.¹⁸⁰

The civilization Guizot was defining was universal. And yet, as later scholars such as Pim Den Boer and Philipp Lepenies have remarked, Guizot was also among the first to talk about civilizations in the plural.¹⁸¹ Guizot referred to multiple civilizations, separated by time and/or space. He talked about ancient and past civilizations, which had preceded European civilization; he compared the English and French civilizations; and mentioned “Asiatic” civilizations in passing.¹⁸² However, regardless of the popularity and huge influence of Guizot’s *Histoire de la civilisation en Europe*, the plural form of civilization did not really catch on with his contemporaries. Most of them preferred to view civilization more simply as uniform, and they applied the term exclusively to Europe.¹⁸³

Significantly, French thinkers and writers of the Enlightenment era endorsed the word to such extent that civilization and the Enlightenment came to be regarded as synonyms, and future scholars would describe civilization as “one of the key terms of the French and European Enlightenment”¹⁸⁴. But the road to this point of relatively widespread French acceptance and usage of the term was neither quick nor straightforward. Research into the etymology confirms that civilization did not appear in a number of the greatest works of the period, including treatises by such authors as Montesquieu and Voltaire, although on many occasions, the term would have probably been useful.¹⁸⁵

After the mid-18th century, civilization (in its modern sense) also surfaced in the English language. Relying on the *Oxford English Dictionary*, some academics have traced the emergence of the word to James Boswell and the year 1772. Since these studies however, the entry in the dictionary has been updated, and an even earlier appearance of the word has been added. Apparently, the word was used already in 1760 in John Gordon’s *A New Estimate of Manners and Principle*.¹⁸⁶ That is, only few years later than in France. Nevertheless, neither Boswell nor Gordon has been credited with originating the concept in English. Instead, the credit has been given to the Scottish Enlightenment thinker Adam Ferguson (1723–1816), who used the word in his *Essay on the History of Civil Society* in 1767, and possibly even before that date. Interestingly, there has been some speculation that instead of borrowing the term from French, Ferguson might have coined it independently.¹⁸⁷ In any case, the connotations of the term in Ferguson’s text were quite similar to those in the French.

Adam Ferguson opened his book by likening the general development of humankind to the organic development of plants and animals. But in addition

¹⁸⁰ Guizot 2009, 52–54, 56–57, 59–61.

¹⁸¹ Den Boer 2007, 225; Lepenies 2008, 218.

¹⁸² Guizot 1899, 18–19, 204–205.

¹⁸³ Den Boer 2005, 58; Den Boer 2007, 225.

¹⁸⁴ Lepenies 2008, 216.

¹⁸⁵ Beard et al. 1948, 64, 69; Bowden 2009a, 7; Den Boer 2007, 224.

¹⁸⁶ Bowden 2009a, 7–8; Den Boer 2005, 53; “civilization, n.,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989; “civilization, n.,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2010.

¹⁸⁷ Bowden 2009a, 8; Den Boer 2005, 52–53; Starobinski 2009, 154.

to progressing from childhood to adulthood, Ferguson argued that humankind also advanced “from rudeness to civilisation.”¹⁸⁸ Like the intellectuals on the other side of the English Channel, Ferguson connected the concept to polished manners and refinement. And like Condorcet, Ferguson defined successive stages on the path of human advancement, based on economic factors and the mode of subsistence. A savage state was followed by a nomadic pastoral state, which was then supplanted by sedentary agriculture, and finally by a commercial and industrial state, or in other words, “civil society”. Ferguson believed that the necessary precondition for the civil society was a government capable of maintaining peace, enforcing laws, and protecting the individual and property alike. However, Ferguson used the actual word “civilisation” only eight times in his *Essay*, which implies that, unlike “civil society,” the concept of civilization was not indispensable for his theories.¹⁸⁹

Later generations have tended to take Ferguson’s term “civil society” as a synonym for civilization, and his sociological analysis as an account of the history of civilization.¹⁹⁰ However, civilization truly entered English vocabulary only at the dawn of the 19th century. Raymond Williams has argued that this breakthrough happened when John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) took it on himself to address the subject.¹⁹¹

John Stuart Mill noted that civilization had a “double meaning”. It was synonymous with general human improvement and it was the opposite of savagery and barbarism. In other words, Mill’s civilization was both a process and the result of that process. Mill listed the interrelated characteristics of a high state of civilization as follows: dense populations living in fixed habitations, that is, urbanisation; commerce, manufactures, and agriculture; co-operation and social intercourse; law, administration of justice, peace, security, and protection of persons and property; and finally the diffusion of wealth and intelligence.¹⁹² Mill was also among the first proponents of the idea that one major indication of the height of civilization was the position and treatment of women.¹⁹³

Once coined in French and in English, the term was quickly translated into other European languages, and thus it became a transnational concept. But there were some notable rejections of the concept, too. The concept did not enter the Dutch language, and in time, the German variant of the concept, *Zivilisation*, assumed rather different, more pejorative connotations than its English and

¹⁸⁸ Ferguson 1768, 1–2.

¹⁸⁹ Bowden 2009a, 8; Den Boer 2005, 53; Lepenies 2008, 217; Starobinski 2009, 154.

¹⁹⁰ Adams 1998, 24–25; Bowden 2009a, 8. Considering, however, that the main topic and analytical tool in Ferguson’s book was “civil society,” not civilization, it might be an over-interpretation or even anachronistic for later scholars to equate the two. Then again, an academic could insist that the concept of civilization was present in Ferguson’s text even though the word itself was not. This proposition is however, also a bit problematic. Would Ferguson have implicitly referred to a concept he mentioned explicitly only rarely in the same text, and which had probably not yet been widely adopted into the speech of his late 18th century English audience?

¹⁹¹ Beard et al. 1948, 65; Williams 2009, 20.

¹⁹² Mill 2009, 66–67, 70.

¹⁹³ Mazlish 2004, 14.

French counterparts.¹⁹⁴ According to Pim Den Boer, in German, *Zivilisation* actually became the counter-concept for *Kultur*. *Zivilisation* was used to denote to the degenerated West and *Kultur* to the pure German culture.¹⁹⁵ Consequently, it was *Kultur*, not *Zivilisation*, which approximated more closely the English and French notions of civilization. It differed, however, in that *Kultur* emphasised intellectual, artistic, and religious aspects and values, and disparaged the political, social, and economic elements of civilization present in the English and French concepts.¹⁹⁶

Quite rapidly, civilization took root on the other side of the Atlantic, too.¹⁹⁷ Charles and Mary Beard have argued that the concept of civilization entered the consciousness of American writers and leaders of public opinion as early as the Revolution era. Proponents of the North American Enlightenment, such as Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine not only used it, but also elaborated upon it, and popularised the idea.¹⁹⁸ One indication of the growing acceptance of the word was its inclusion in the first edition (1828) of *Webster's Dictionary*. The dictionary defined the word as follows:

1. The act of civilizing, or the state of being civilized; the state of being refined in manners, from the grossness of savage life and improved in arts and learning.
2. The act of rendering a criminal process civil.¹⁹⁹

The entry in *Webster's* cited both the meaning we are concerned with, as well as the juridical meaning, whereas for the French, by the fifth edition *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (1798), the juridical sense of the term had already been discarded.²⁰⁰ Nevertheless, the French influence on the American adoption and usages of the word was considerable from the very beginning, and increased further in the early 19th century when the widely-read translations of works from French authors such as Alexis de Tocqueville and Guizot were published.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁴ Den Boer 2005, 55, 58; Den Boer 2007, 226; Bowden 2009b, 351.

¹⁹⁵ Den Boer 2005, 57; Den Boer 2007, 226.

¹⁹⁶ Bowden 2009b, 352.

¹⁹⁷ Recent studies into the history of concepts and ideas have tended to focus on a comparison of European translations, and e.g. East Asian, translations of the word, paying relatively less attention to the role of the concept in the US. Perhaps one explanation for the scarcity of current, systematic studies on the subject lies in the close linguistic, cultural, and intellectual ties Americans had at that time with the countries in which the concept had originated (France, Britain). Consequently, much of the following discussion on the American history of the concept civilization is based on a source which is somewhat outdated, but as it consists of citations and interpretations of texts from a variety of 19th century American philosophers and intellectuals, it does retain much of its relevance. The study in question was co-authored by Charles and Mary Beard, and entitled *The American Spirit* (1942). It was the fourth and final volume of Beards' book series *Rise of the American Civilization*.

¹⁹⁸ Beard et al. 1948, 65–66, 107; Mennell 2009, 419.

¹⁹⁹ "Civilization, n.," *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828.

²⁰⁰ Starobinski 2009, 151–152.

²⁰¹ Beard et al. 1948, 87, 90, 93; Den Boer 2007, 225.

The word also appeared in the 1830 *Encyclopaedia Americana*, where the definition was given a thorough treatment. The entry began with the following remark: "Civilization is one of those comprehensive words which are most used and least understood"²⁰². Then the author proceeded on expounding the variety of meanings given to civilization:

1. Some people believe in the possibility of constant advancement and the ultimate attainment of perfect civilization, a consequence of which will be perfect happiness. 2. Others believe that every nation which arrives at a marked intellectual development goes through certain stages of civilization and after reaching the highest point which it is capable of attaining, declines, that moreover, the march of improvement in different nations shows itself in different ways, [...]. 3. Some believe in a general progress of the intellect to a certain point after which an equally general decline commences, thus making the race subject to the same laws as the individual. 4. Some persons cannot discover any regularity in the march of civilization.²⁰³

It would seem from this entry that the main bone of contention regarding civilization was whether it followed a steady linear progression ever upwards or whether, after a certain point, the rise would be followed by a decline. The author of the entry seemed to plump more for the latter hypothesis, and he also envisaged civilization as being measurable and having stages. He also shrewdly noted that the standards used for measuring usually derived from the time and place of those doing the measurement. Interestingly, in the entry civilization was more often than not equated with intellectual advancement rather than with developments in society, the mode of subsistence, or manners. Furthermore, the entry emphasised that this intellectual development was largely owing to Christianity, and only lately to science as well.²⁰⁴

Following the common pattern of emerging key concepts, civilization, as a term, gradually spread out from its original use in academic treatises and discussions into the mainstream vocabulary of popular culture and mass media, eventually becoming disseminated among the general reading public. Written references to civilization multiplied, and its meanings and contents were considered with a greater thoroughness. Meanwhile, public education improved literacy rates, making the concept available for an increasing number of readers. But at what point precisely did civilization become a widely employed and understood concept with a more or less shared and specific meaning within the US? Or to put it another way, at what point did civilization become a contested, yet indispensable Koselleckian key concept in American speech? In addition, when exactly did civilization become the ambiguous "American spirit"? Charles and Mary Beard have admitted that they are unable to provide a conclusive answer to this question.²⁰⁵ And likewise, the primary sources of this thesis are unfortunately unlikely to fare any better in pinpointing that moment.

²⁰² *Encyclopaedia Americana* 1830, 225.

²⁰³ *Encyclopaedia Americana* 1830, 226.

²⁰⁴ *Encyclopaedia Americana* 1830, 225–226.

²⁰⁵ Beard et al. 1948, v, 66, 168, 273–274; Den Boer 2005, 51.

In both Europe and the US, the evolving concept of civilization became entangled with science²⁰⁶. The late 17th century brought the realisation to Europeans that their model of society was neither unchanging, unique and nor were they alone in the world. This had, in turn, encouraged the Europeans to immerse themselves in the concepts of “social,” “public,” and “sociability”. As we have seen, these ideas were eventually brought together within the umbrella concept of civilization, as this not only complemented them, but also served as a sort of blueprint for social organisation. The same ideas were of course also important for the nascent social sciences. Civilization gradually became connected with the natural sciences too, as the process of civilization and the operation of social forces were seen as comparable with physical forces that had been discovered in the 18th century, such as magnetism, electricity and energy.²⁰⁷

The same methods as were used in the natural sciences were generally also applied to the study of society and civilization.²⁰⁸ But perhaps it was the appearance of anthropology as a new academic discipline in the 19th century that was most responsible for lifting civilization out of the sphere of philosophy and into the sphere of science. With the rise of anthropology, civilization came to be perceived as suitable for scientific study, i.e., based on facts that could be either validated or falsified, rather than as simply a topic of philosophical speculation.²⁰⁹ The pioneering and pre-eminent American anthropologist of the day, Lewis Henry Morgan (1818–1881), took on the subject of civilization, elaborated on the existing theories about it, and focused on studying the stages in the progress of civilization in his influential magnum opus *Ancient Society* (1877).²¹⁰

Lewis Henry Morgan summarized the basic proposition of his treatise in the following manner:

[S]avagery preceded barbarism in all the tribes of mankind, as barbarism is known to have preceded civilization. The history of the human race is one in source, one in experience, one in progress.²¹¹

Morgan was therefore clearly arguing for a universal human history, like many of his predecessors. But he reduced the number of developmental stages to just three, instead of Condorcet’s ten or Ferguson’s and Turgot’s four²¹². According

²⁰⁶ The first half of the 19th century witnessed the emergence of science as an organized body of knowledge distinct from philosophy, and in 1840 the English theologian and philosopher William Whewell (1794–1866) proposed that the title “scientist” ought to replace the title “natural philosopher”. Thus, what had previously been the pastime of amateurs became increasingly professionalised, specialised, and institutionalised. (Butts 2000, 803; Daniels 1967, 151–152, 154, 157; “Scientist, n.,” Oxford English Dictionary, 2012.)

²⁰⁷ Mazlish 2009, 371–372, 375.

²⁰⁸ For example, just as there were zoological and geographical classifications, so were there classifications of men and manners; and it was believed that the methods of logic and induction could be used, just as in the physical sciences, to discover social laws in the social sciences. (Butts 2000, 804; Mazlish 2009, 370.)

²⁰⁹ Beard et al. 1948, 387, 397.

²¹⁰ Beard et al. 1948, 398; Bowden 2009a, 13.

²¹¹ Morgan 1877, v–vi.

²¹² In much a similar vein to Ferguson, the French physiocrat economist, Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot (1727–1781), theorized that despite their unequal rates of progress, all

to Morgan, the societies of mankind were ceaselessly working their way from lower conditions up to higher ones through “slow accumulations of experimental knowledge.”²¹³ Although Morgan’s progressive scheme was generally favourably received in the US, the book did encounter some objections from fervent Christians and other readers who detested the Darwinist or social evolutionist implications of the work. Particularly the British reviewers tended to take a dim view of the treatise and dismiss it as unscientific and poorly founded.²¹⁴

All in all, civilization provided the social and human sciences with a tool and a unit for analysis. In return, the sciences consolidated the position of the concept in the English, French, and American vocabularies. From Mirabeau’s coining of the concept to the turn of the 20th century, the term swept through several continents and historical contexts, to acquire a myriad of meanings and connotations. The term became associated with the dynamic, ever-changing process of progress, and the last stage of history. And this was seen to be the opposite of the preceding stages of nature, savagery, and barbarism. Progress meant, for example, material and moral improvements such as advances in social and political organisation, comfort, knowledge, education, manners, arts, sciences, commerce, industry, and luxuries. It also meant a diminution in violence and aggression, and could be equally applied to the individual, society, the nation, and ultimately the whole of mankind. It was inherently Eurocentric, yet at the same time ‘universal’. It took on a sacred aura and authority, either in conjunction with religion, or in order to supplant traditional religious values. Civilization was charged with virtues and normative qualities, and hence it became the ultimate criterion for measuring the desirability of all kinds of social, intellectual, and political movements, acts, and formulations. Finally, contending parties in these various spheres came to claim that they spoke on behalf of civilization, and so the concept virtually lost any specific or agreed-on meaning.²¹⁵

In fact, right from its inception the concept ran into criticism. Civilization was described as either true or false, it was accused of corruption and hypocrisy, and, paradoxically, of being ‘barbarous’. In other accounts, civilization remained an ideal, and therefore always far from reality.²¹⁶ But Jean Starobinski has remarked that it was precisely this plastic nature of the concept (that is, its ability to embrace a wild variety of new and old, or supportive and contradictory ideas) which facilitated its rapid adoption and acceptance. Being a container

societies would necessarily pass through the same four stages of economic and social development before eventually achieving the last, “civilized” commercial state. (Livingstone 2006, 565.)

²¹³ Apparently, these ‘accumulations’, or contributions, to civilization comprised of technological inventions and scientific discoveries; political, social, legal, and military institutions; art; philosophy; and Christianity – in other words, matters relating to all parts of a society, rather than to just the mode of subsistence and economy. (Morgan 1877, vi, 3, 29–31, 58.)

²¹⁴ Adams 1998, 56; Stocking Jr. 1996, 19, 23.

²¹⁵ Beard et al. 1948, 64; Bowden 2009a, 9; Den Boer 2005, 58; Mazlish 2004, 14; Mazlish 2009, 375, 369; Starobinski 2009, 153, 164–165; Szakolczai 2004, 88.

²¹⁶ Starobinski 2009, 155–157.

concept apparently was the secret to success in becoming a key concept.²¹⁷ The success proved to be fluctuating, but nevertheless, lasting. In the early 20th century, the concept featured heavily in a range of academic discussions. Notable sociologists such as Marcel Mauss, Norbert Elias, and Max Weber turned their attention to definitions of the concept, its history, and determining factors for Western civilization.²¹⁸ At approximately the same time, the British historian Arnold Toynbee composed a twelve-volume book *A Study of History* (1934–1961) on the comparative history of the world’s past and present civilizations.

However, much of the 20th century was also a time of disillusionment with the concept in Western countries. In Germany for example, Oswald Spengler wrote *The Decline of the West*, in two volumes, (1918 and 1922). Elsewhere civilization was turned on its head against the original Western definition. In China, India and Japan, for example, the concept was redefined and linked to self-determination, decolonialisation, and nationalism²¹⁹. After a few decades of relative silence, when *civilization* was largely replaced with *culture* as an analytic conceptual unit, the concept of civilization resurfaced in the early 1990s with Samuel Huntington’s provocative *Clash of Civilizations* (1996).²²⁰ During the early 21st century, civilization has continued to be a popular subject in conceptual history²²¹ and it has been studied in new contexts²²². There have also been some serious efforts to revive the concept as an analytical tool for sociology.²²³

2.2 The semantic field

We have now outlined some formulations of the concept from the 18th and 19th centuries, and established that the term civilization had a broad spectrum of meanings. But how about our China and Japan experts, what kind of definitions did they adopt, formulate, and use? The aim of these authors was not specifically to theorize about civilization, but to describe the civilization before them.

²¹⁷ Den Boer 2007, 225; Starobinski 2009, 153.

²¹⁸ See e.g. Mauss’ *The Gift* (1925) and essay “Civilizations: Elements and Forms” (1929); Elias’ *The Civilizing Process* (1939); and Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930).

²¹⁹ For further discussion, see Duara 2001; Duara 2004.

²²⁰ Since Samuel Huntington’s publications, the concept has resurfaced again in politics. For example, President George W. Bush defined the war against terrorism as “a fight for civilization.” (Bowden 2009a, 4–5).

²²¹ See e.g. Den Boer 2005; Ifversen, Jan, “The Meaning of European Civilization – A Historical-Conceptual Approach.” Working Paper no. 51-97, Centre for Cultural Research, University of Aarhus, 1997; Monnier, Raymonde, “The Concept of Civilisation from Enlightenment to Revolution: An Ambiguous Transfer.” *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, 4, 2008; Fernández Sebastián, Javier, “The Concept of Civilization in Spain, 1754–2005: From Progress to Identity.” *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, 4, 2008.

²²² For example, David N. Livingstone has examined the relationship between progress, civilization, and geography. (See Livingstone 2006.)

²²³ See e.g. the anthology *Rethinking Civilizational Analysis* (2004), edited by Edward Tiryakian.

Therefore, instead of giving any coherent definition of the concept, they tended to take civilization as somewhat of a given. They were not bothered about the origins, historical baggage, or the problems associated with such a concept; rather, they considered and treated 'civilization' as self-explanatory in exactly the way it was criticised for in its entry in the *Encyclopaedia Americana*. Civilization was clearly felt to be established to such extent that it needed no preamble or further explanation. One method for gaining a better idea of their definitions of the concept is to sketch out a semantic field, that is, to make a systematic and mechanic inquiry into the words and language the authors used in their texts. By tracking down how frequently the concept appeared in the texts, the frequency of other words linked to it, other concepts related to it, and the concepts which were seen as opposites to it, we can start off the analysis of the meanings given to the concept and discussions in which it was evoked.

Let us begin with the statistical frequency of the word in all its variants: the noun *civilization*, its adjectival form *civilized*, and the verbal form *to civilize*. These appeared most frequently in William Griffis' treatises: 55 times in *Book I* and 77 times in *Books II and III of The Mikado's Empire*; and 60 times in *The Religions of Japan* (for the complete list of figures, see table 1 in the appendix). There was also a relatively high number of occurrences in William Martin's *Lore of Cathay* (47 times) and Arthur Smith's 1890 edition of *Chinese Characteristics* (49 times). The date of publication did not seem to affect the number of times the concept featured in texts (on average 31), whether they were published in 1881 or 1901. For example, in the revised edition of Samuel Williams' *The Middle Kingdom, vol. I* published in 1883, there was only one more occurrence than in the original edition from 1848 (39 as opposed to 38). So it seems safe to say, as the concept featured quite significantly in most texts, that civilization was a useful concept by the latter half of the 19th century, at least in discussions relating to societies and cultures.

In two instances however, the count was conspicuously low: the word appeared only twice in both Lafcadio Hearn's first volume of the *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, and Percival Lowell's *Occult Japan or the Way of the Gods*. This was in spite of the fact that Lowell and Hearn used the concept in their other works treating similar topics. Perhaps a hint at why the concept was absent from these two treatises can be found from the words attached to civilization in those few instances in which it was used. For example, in *Glimpses*, Hearn paired the term with "Western" and "period of the new," thus insinuating that he linked civilization to the present time and to Europe and US. However, his objective in this book was to offer glimpses of the unfamiliar and invisible "inner life" of the Japanese,²²⁴ which temporally and spatially fell outside the sphere of 19th century Western civilization.

In those cases where civilization featured more heavily in the text, there were understandably more words connected to it (see table 1 in the appendix), which means there is more material from which to work out the author's particular take on the concept. From these related words, certain general, yet over-

²²⁴ Hearn 1894a, v.

lapping, categories of connotation and usage can be made. Firstly, civilization was clearly used to denote to a collective, macro-level unit. This unit could be a vast geographical and cultural entity with rather vague boundaries, such as the aforementioned Western, Occidental, or European civilizations, or the corresponding Eastern or Far Eastern civilizations. Civilization was also used in conjunction with one particular nation or a society, i.e., Chinese, Japanese, English, and American civilizations, but there were also mentions of other civilizations long since vanished, such as Ancient Greece and Rome.

These national civilizations were thought to embody qualities and characteristics which separated them from other peoples. This was evident, for example, in William Griffis' descriptions of Japanese civilization:

Besides the rare exhilaration felt in treading soil virgin to alien feet, it acts like mental oxygen to look upon and breathe in a unique civilization like that of Japan.²²⁵

Early Japanese civilization was not Chinese, but distinct and original.²²⁶

Yet, these national civilizations were merely subcategories of larger wholes, of civilizations of "the Far East" and "West," tied to their umbrella categories with 'cultural' connections on the one hand, and 'biological' connections on the other. The unifying cultural element could be, for example, Confucian philosophy (at the heart of the "civilization of the sages"), or religion (with regard to the "civilization of Christendom"). Meanwhile, the unifying biological element might be common ancestry, as exemplified in this excerpt from William Griffis:

Both the Dutch and the British have displayed an aptitude for governing Asiatic peoples; the former in a good, the latter in a better way. We are their children. What they have done we can do. Their history is our mirror. The same general elements in their civilization are in our own, and 'blood is warmer than water.'²²⁷

This brings us to one particular 19th century concept that was often closely associated with civilization: race. As a consequence, words such as Turanian, Aryan, and Anglo-Saxon featured in conjunction with civilization at various points in the text. However, like civilization, race was not a simple, clearly defined, and uncontested concept at the time, as we will see later on in this chapter.

Secondly, the authors applied the concept to the micro-level, that is, to individual members of the various macro-level units. William Griffis, for example, discussed the "highly civilized Chinese and Japanese,"²²⁸ using the word to describe the accomplished process of what Arpad Szakolczai has referred to as "intellectual, cultural or moral refinement".²²⁹ At the micro-level, the traditional affiliation of civilization with manners is readily apparent:

²²⁵ Griffis 1903, 417.

²²⁶ Griffis 1892, 40.

²²⁷ Griffis 1900, 25.

²²⁸ Griffis 1900, 204.

²²⁹ Szakolczai 2004, 87.

The people are civilized, polished in manners, [...].²³⁰

But little need be said to prove the civilization of a land where ordinary tea-house girls are models of refinement, and common coolies, when not at work, play chess for pastime.²³¹

However, the macro and micro-level applications of the concept did not necessarily go hand in hand. Samuel Williams referred to members of Western civilization in China “whose coarse remarks, rude actions, and general supercilious conduct toward the natives ill comport with their superior civilization and assumed advantages”.²³² And according to William Griffis, a similar group of individuals composed an “army of hard-heads and civilized boors” with “rough manners”²³³ in Japan. In the micro-level sense, then, the writers often considered the Chinese and Japanese to be civilized, and Europeans and Americans to be uncivilized, that is, unrefined and unpolished. On the other hand, the Euro-Americans owed a “superior civilization” in the macro-level sense of the word.

There was also a third category of meaning for civilization in the authors’ texts. This was the universal process of civilization, the one intimately connected to another 19th century watch-word: progress. To be sure, the universal civilizing process of increased sophistication and growing social and political complexity operated on the micro and macro-level of civilizations too. However, the crucial difference between the third category of civilization and the other two was that, whereas micro- and macro-levels allowed the use of a plural form when talking about civilization, or the idea that there were many forms of civilization, the third was understood to be uniform and therefore singular. This was Civilization with a capital letter.

The progressive nature of this kind of Civilization was indicated in the texts with nearby words such as “onward march”, “advance”, “improvement”, “ever-increasing”, and “progression” of civilization. This progress could also be likened to evolution – another key concept of the century. Civilization was perceived as something a people or race inherited and transmitted to future generations, as is clear in this passage from Lafcadio Hearn’s *Kokoro*: “Transmitted civilization works [...] slowly, requiring even hundreds of years to produce certain permanent psychological results”.²³⁴ Hearn’s implication was that while civilization was passed on, it accumulated, advanced and also moulded the complexion of the people whose property it was. Now, in the past this evolution may well have taken on diverse forms and produced diverse results, but for all six of our China and Japan experts, this time had now passed. William Griffis declared that the major difference between ancient and modern civilization was that the “latter, looked upon as the common property, or at least the possibility, of the whole race, tends to a single type”²³⁵. That is, Civilization

²³⁰ Griffis 1892, 5.

²³¹ Lowell 2007b, 6.

²³² Williams 1913a, 783.

²³³ Griffis 1903, 342.

²³⁴ Hearn 1896b, 8–9.

²³⁵ Griffis 1900, 30.

with capital letter proceeded in a consistent and undeviating manner, along a certain “course” or “path” (two words often connected to Civilization in the texts).

More specifically, the experts were referring to “the path of modern civilization”,²³⁶ or “the path of Western civilization”.²³⁷ Moreover, Lafcadio Hearn and William Griffis dubbed the process “inevitable” and “irresistible”.²³⁸ There was one intriguing exception, though. William Martin called the universal process a “tendency towards homogeneity of civilization,”²³⁹ and yet he seemed to be ambivalent as to whether the process was continuous and whether it would in fact really end in one homogenous civilization. On one occasion, he referred to the decay of old civilizations and rise of new ones, yet this was perhaps because he believed that the cyclical model had been an integral part of civilizational history. He also seemed to envisage that there would be not one civilization in the future, but many, although in closer interaction with each other than ever before, and “moving in the path of progress, knowledge, and civilization” laid out by the West.²⁴⁰ Presumably, Martin gathered that multiple civilizations at the macro-level were here to stay, but not without the sweep of change instigated by the westernizing process of Civilization.

Concurring with earlier theories, the experts presented the process as being stadial. Consequently the semantic field shows that their texts abounded in expressions such as “stage”,²⁴¹ “plane”, and “phase” of Civilization. First of all, there were allusions to stages of civilization and the corresponding modes of subsistence. William Martin, for example, distinguished nomad and agricultural peoples as being at two different stages of Civilization²⁴². More often, though, the authors agreed with Lewis Henry Morgan’s formulation, and described the process as “progress from barbarism to civilization,” or emergence of a society from “its savage state”.²⁴³ By thus dividing the process into stages these authors revealed the two major antonyms of Civilization – savagery and barbarism – to which we will return later.

At the same time, they also established that Civilization was something measurable. They asserted that there was a “scale” of Civilization and progress, and that weighing against the universal process there were higher, better, inferior and lower; refined, polished, and ruder type of; plus more advanced and less advanced, more perfect and semi-civilizations. The highest step in the scale was occupied by peoples from the West, as can be evinced by statements claiming the “superiority of the civilization of Christendom”, or the “higher civiliza-

²³⁶ Griffis 2006a, 373.

²³⁷ Griffis 1903, 660.

²³⁸ Griffis 2006a, 341; Hearn 1896b, 205.

²³⁹ Martin 1881, 285.

²⁴⁰ Martin 1881, 253; Martin 1894, 12, 21; Martin 1900, 432.

²⁴¹ Charles and Mary Beard have argued that 19th century American thinkers referred to “stages” of Civilization merely in an abstract sense, as a convenient tool for understanding the process and its dynamics. Accordingly, these thinkers did not really believe that such a clearly defined succession of stages – e.g., savage, barbaric, patriarchal, or patriarchal – existed in reality (Beard et al. 1948, 67–68).

²⁴² Martin 1894, 59.

²⁴³ Griffis 2006a, 64, 95.

tion of Europe and America,” and descriptions of English civilization being “unparalleled in the history of the world”.²⁴⁴

As for China and Japan, there was no question that they were unique civilizations on the macro-level, and that on the micro-level the Chinese had been “highly civilized before our forefathers had emerged from barbarism”, while a Japanese had been “a highly civilized man for at least a thousand years”.²⁴⁵ But how did they fare on the scale of universal process of Civilization? William Martin estimated China’s standard of civilization as “high grade” and “respectable”,²⁴⁶ but respectable was not enough to reach the highest rung on the ladder. Samuel Williams believed that in terms of “real civilization”, China was no match for Western countries, its civilization being Asiatic and pagan rather than European and Christian.²⁴⁷ Meanwhile, Lafcadio Hearn accorded the Japanese civilization some, mainly moral, qualities of a very high order, but overall the Japan experts denounced Japanese civilization as being less advanced than its Western counterpart.²⁴⁸

Although the six experts largely agreed that Europe and the United States represented the loftiest stage in the progress of Civilization, the majority of them questioned the habit of using Western civilization as the standard against which to measure the progress of all other civilizations. Samuel Williams persuaded his readers that Chinese civilization should be “compared to, rather than judged of” by the inheritors of European civilization, and William Martin suspected that his compatriots tended to lack the ability or will to comprehend a civilization as different as the Chinese one.²⁴⁹ Lafcadio Hearn and William Martin reminded that the Western civilization had its own standards, and Chinese and Japanese civilizations had their own, and each should be judged against their own ideals.²⁵⁰

Civilizations were also being compared to what Percival Lowell called “the eventual possibilities of humanity”. In his *Soul of the Far East*, Lowell opined that, at the moment, “neither system, Western nor Eastern,” was “perfect enough to serve in all things as standard for the other”.²⁵¹ The ultimate standard, then, was the process of Civilization itself, and the nebulous goal of that process loomed somewhere in the horizon.

Assessed against the ever progressive backdrop of Civilization, the Chinese and Japanese civilizations were considered deficient in a temporal sense. In the preceding centuries, the vast antiquity and stability of China had been applauded by a number of people. These had included the Jesuits, philosophers fired up by Sinophilia, and Romantic Era Sinologists²⁵². But in the late 19th cen-

²⁴⁴ Griffis 1892, 72; Griffis 2006a, 341; Williams 1913b, 551.

²⁴⁵ Hearn 1896b, 30; Martin 1881, 277.

²⁴⁶ Martin 1881, 145; Martin 1900, 43.

²⁴⁷ Williams 1913a, 382; Williams 1913b, 455.

²⁴⁸ Griffis 1892, 72; Griffis 1903, 453; Hearn 1895, 104; Hearn 1896b, 204; Lowell 2007b, 79.

²⁴⁹ Martin 1881, 228; Williams 1913a, 46.

²⁵⁰ Hearn 1895, 231; Martin 1894, 350.

²⁵¹ Lowell 2007b, 5.

²⁵² Hung 2003, 275. Ho-Fung Hung has explained the 17th and early 18th century European intellectual fascination and admiration of China by the different political, social,

ture, when Arthur Smith remarked on China's antiquity, it seemed like less of a compliment. Coming from an author who dubbed the civilization to which he himself belonged as "modern," "of the nineteenth century," and "of our day," it sounded more like a reproach.²⁵³ However, Samuel Williams remarked that, "[t]en centuries ago" China had been "the most civilized nation on earth", and William Martin accorded the same distinction to Japan.²⁵⁴ But at some point in the history of the Chinese and Japanese, development had slowed down, and they had been left behind in terms of progress. More significantly, China and Japan were understood to have stagnated, and to have refused to continue along the course of civilization altogether. William Griffis referred to the "paralysis of Japanese civilization",²⁵⁵ but it was Percival Lowell who particularly dwelled on the theme.

Percival Lowell suspected that Japanese civilization had spent its "vital force" ages ago, and he portrayed it as a case of "partially arrested development" or "completed race-life".²⁵⁶ China too received similar treatment from Lowell's pen:

Centre of civilization, as they call themselves, one would imagine that their mind-machinery had got caught on their own dead centre, and now could not be made to move. Life, which elsewhere is a condition of unstable equilibrium, there is of a fatally stable kind. For the Chinaman's disinclination to progress is something more than *vis inertiae*; it has become an ardent devotion to the status quo.²⁵⁷

Thus, Percival Lowell appeared to suggest that China and Japan had deviated from the universal process of Civilization, and the people had become conservative and passive.

These discussions are a prime example of the application of temporal counter-concepts. Describing the Chinese and Japanese civilizations as ancient, old, and stationary, the authors implied that those entities suffered from, in João Feres Júnior's words, a historical handicap. Presumably, the inspiration behind these statements lay in the ardent devotion to the idea of progress, but Lowell and his colleagues were also perpetuating an image of the changeless East that had been put forward by some of the most influential thinkers of the age. For example, the father of modern historiography, Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), maintained that China had a lengthy chronology, but no history – thus insinuating that China had remained in a static condition for centuries.

and historical environments of the two entities. Hung has pointed out that against the European background of religious warfare, political upheaval, economic difficulty, and decreasing population, the prosperity and stability of China seemed remarkable and enticing. But towards the end of the 18th century, the Europeans renewed their economic and territorial expansion. Accelerated by new technological innovations, capitalism, and colonialism, the Europeans tipped the scales of power, and assumed new forward-looking ideas and ideologies. According to Hung, all this was conducive to the clouding of China's image in the West, and to the perception that Chinese antiquity was more of a vice than a virtue. (Hung 2003, 263.)

²⁵³ Smith 1890, 25, 74, 111; Smith 1899, 16.

²⁵⁴ Martin 1894, 382–383; Williams 1913a, 46.

²⁵⁵ Griffis 2006b, 111.

²⁵⁶ Lowell 2007b, 6.

²⁵⁷ Lowell 2007b, 79.

And G. F. W. Hegel (1770–1831) famously depicted China as the land of “eternal standstill”.²⁵⁸ Karl Marx (1818–1883) followed similar lines of reasoning in his published texts and private letters. He argued that due to the “Oriental Despotism” of Asian societies, they had been excluded from the overall human progression, and thus were characterized by stagnation and backwardness.²⁵⁹

Depriving China and Japan of ‘proper’ history with the use of counter-concepts was literally an act social anthropologist Jack Goody has termed ‘theft of history’. But the significant feature of temporal counter-concepts is that they yield the possibility that the ‘Other’ might overcome a historical handicap. However, the chances that China and Japan would become fully historical if left alone were seen to be slight. Instead, the experts believed that in order to become fully historical in the future, China and Japan needed the West to civilize them. They needed to be “affected by their contacts and collisions with the civilization of Christendom”,²⁶⁰ as William Martin argued. At this point it becomes meaningful and revealing to look at the verbs the six experts connected with civilization (see table 1 in the appendix). Verbs such as to “introduce”, “force upon”, “imitate”, “inherit”, “crystallize”, “perish”, and “survive”, provide valuable clues about the perceived flow, direction, and mechanisms involved in the civilization process. We will explore the issue further in the next chapter, but suffice it to say here that Japan, in particular, was judged to be making a conscious effort to rise up from the “low level of semi-civilized states”, as William Griffis put it, and to close the temporal gap separating its civilization from “the highest form of civilization”²⁶¹ – that is, Western civilization.

As representatives of what they considered the highest form of civilization, the experts claimed the right to define the meanings of the concept of civilization and the nature of the civilizational process. The authors also determined the gauges, standards, tests, and criteria by which the place of a civilization in the sense of a socio-political organization could be graded on the scale of Civilization with a capital-C. As the semantic field suggests, the authors called these gauges “the elements”, “root”, “fruits”, “forces”, or “resources” of civilization. In other words, they were terms for the necessary preconditions, the constituent parts, and the results of civilization.

The first precondition of civilization, according to William Griffis, was the ability to read and write. “The dividing line between barbarism and civilization is that of letters,” declared Griffis, and reminded us that it was writing that had “brought Japan into the light of history”.²⁶² Griffis and Samuel Williams also

²⁵⁸ Bastid-Bruguère 1995, 229-230, 233; Iggers 1997, 30.

²⁵⁹ Curtis 1997, 338, 358, 360; Goody 2010, 139; Marx, Karl, “The British Rule in India”. *New-York Daily Tribune*, June 25, 1853). The ideas of Oriental Despotism and Chinese stagnation preceded Karl Marx and other intellectuals, and were grounded in the political and intellectual upheavals of the late 18th century, and in the reactions against the fashionable Sinophilia of the time. Already Condorcet had characterised China as being trapped in a low state of “shameful immobility” and “eternal mediocrity,” and the Encyclopaedists had put forward similar assessments of China (Hung 2003, 262).

²⁶⁰ Martin 1881, 236.

²⁶¹ Griffis 1903, 570, 589.

²⁶² Griffis 1892, 80.

highlighted the role of natural causes, such as temperate climate and fertile soil, in the formation of early civilizations.²⁶³

Another precondition, as well as a result, of civilization was wealth, reminded Griffis, and Arthur Smith joined him in the opinion that civilization was inseparably entangled with commerce – the invaluable “auxiliary of civilization”.²⁶⁴ As was indicated earlier, in Adam Ferguson’s formulation the last stage of social progress was characterised by commerce, and the importance of commerce was maintained also by many other philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment. According to Bruce Buchan, the Scots saw commerce as a civilizing force because it could stimulate new ways of thinking and feeling, ensure individual discipline as well as liberties, and maintain the peace and the military capacity of a society.²⁶⁵ However, unlike the Scottish philosophers, our six American experts were not interested in investigating the connection between commerce and civilization in depth.

Instead, a glance at the semantic field shows that they were keenly interested in the connections between government, society, and civilization. In the semantic field, civilization was accompanied with words such as “political organization”, “institutions”, “the ballot-box”, “liberty”, and connected with the traditional tripartite separation of powers into executive, legislative, and judicial branches²⁶⁶. Diplomacy, or the mutual relations between governments, received attention too, as did the link between jurisprudence and civilization, with references to constitutional government, modern principles of law, and legal safeguards.

Institutions, laws, and governance protected a nation from inner threats and provided the security necessary for maintaining and cultivating civilization, but they were less effective against threats from beyond the state’s borders. Consequently, the continuation of civilization also required a national army, as well as the adoption of the “scientific powers of aggression” and “arts of destruction,” as Lafcadio Hearn argued²⁶⁷. Categorising military power as a significant component of civilization had an effect that warfare came to be seen as a gauge of a civilization. As Samuel Williams stated, the “superior skill in destroying their fellow men” was considered to be one of the “best general criteria of civilization among any people”²⁶⁸.

The American experts also considered social and political qualities, such as a settled life and division of labour, as hallmarks separating civilizations from savage or barbarian entities.²⁶⁹ Moreover, the experts thought that socio-

²⁶³ Griffis 1900, 30–31; Williams 1913a, 57.

²⁶⁴ Griffis 2006a, 284; Smith 1890, 400. William Martin and Samuel Williams also took up the subject of commerce, but they did not link it directly to civilization, instead, they paired commerce with religion and science, or sound knowledge (Martin 1881, 237; Williams 1913b, 336, 511).

²⁶⁵ Buchan 2005, 181–183.

²⁶⁶ Griffis 1903, 620.

²⁶⁷ Hearn 1895, 234, 238.

²⁶⁸ Williams 1913b, 92.

²⁶⁹ These findings are in keeping with Brett Bowden’s notion that some “degree of socio-political cooperation and organization is a basic necessity for the foundation of civilization” (Bowden 2009a, 2).

political spheres of life progressed in a manner analogous to overall civilization. They implied that such political features as suffrage, a constitution, and the separation of governmental powers were characteristic of a higher or modern civilization. As for societies, Percival Lowell asserted that along with social progress and civilization came more complex social relations and an “ever-increasing individualization.” Thus, the level of civilization of a society could be indicated by the complexity of existing social relations, and by the amount of individuality and personality displayed by the members. Conversely, “impersonality” of the members belied “a relatively laggard position in the race”. In the same breath, Lowell also revealed that he thought the chief mechanism for individualization, and hence civilization, was imagination.²⁷⁰ As we will see later on, Lowell’s theory of social progress and civilization corresponded in many respects to contemporary ideas of social evolutionism, particularly Spencerianism.

In the majority of the texts, certain other social elements were raised to the utmost importance. These pertained to domestic life, children, and the status of women in society. As William Griffis asserted: “[i]t is probable that all civilizations, and systems of philosophy, ethics and religion, can be well tested by this criterion the position of woman”²⁷¹. According to Arthur Smith, the fundamental prerequisite of “all progressive civilization” was an acknowledgement of the “essential equality of the sexes,” which was nevertheless apparently not in contradiction with the qualification that the husband was “first of the two in household rank”. In Smith’s opinion, this state of equality had been first achieved in Occidental civilization, which allowed a great freedom of intercourse between the sexes, respected its womenfolk, and allocated a large place “for the energy and the diversified talent of the fair sex”²⁷². Yet, the relation between the condition of women and civilization remained somewhat vague. For example, Griffis and Smith suggested that some societies demonstrated a treatment of women far above or below the standard that their stage of civilization would have led the observers to expect²⁷³. All in all, this semantic level analysis corroborates the notion that the nature and progress of society and government were perceived to play a key role in civilization.²⁷⁴

Two expressions with which we come across frequently in the semantic field outlined from the texts of our six authors are “arts” and “sciences” of civi-

²⁷⁰ Lowell 2007b, 12, 32, 48, 72, 77.

²⁷¹ Griffis 2006b, 79.

²⁷² Smith 1890, 125–126, 211, 246; Smith 1901b, 486.

²⁷³ Griffis 1903, 551; Smith 1899, 258.

²⁷⁴ The idea of government and society being gauges of civilization was nothing new. In fact, in his studies concerning the concept of civilization, Brett Bowden has claimed that similar ideas had been already put forward by Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) in *Leviathan*. According to Bowden, Hobbes had argued that the sub-elements of civilization, i.e., the arts and sciences, required a certain degree of social and political progress to have been made beforehand. (Bowden 2009a, 2.) However, it should be remembered that *Leviathan* preceded the invention of the noun ‘civilization’, and the term ‘civilised’ was itself evoked in *Leviathan* only once (and with its different 17th century connotations). (See Hobbes, Thomas, *Leviathan or the Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill*. London: Andrew Crooke, 1651: p. 146.)

lization. These arts and sciences were what Samuel Williams called the “adjuncts of modern European life”, and Arthur Smith termed as “funded civilization,” or “the material results of the vast development of Western progress”.²⁷⁵ They denoted to “modern inventions” such as railways, telegraphs, telephones, submarine cables, navigation, lighthouses, postal systems and national banks. Much of the list falls under Williams’ summary, “Western machines,”²⁷⁶ which, according to Michael Adas, were the measure of men in the 19th century.

Michael Adas has attributed the idea of using technological and scientific feats as gauges of civilization to the Scottish political philosopher James Mill (1773–1836). Adas has argued that Mill was among the first to connect material culture with civilization and to make it the basis of proclaiming European superiority over the rest of the world. From Mill and similar-minded thinkers the notion then spread, reaching those individuals who travelled the globe for various reasons, those who sketched hierarchies of all the peoples inhabiting the earth, and those who exploited it as a justification for colonialism. It reached social evolutionists such as Herbert Spencer, and the majority of American anthropologists who based their theories of social progress on it.²⁷⁷ Finally, it also reached Samuel Williams, Arthur Smith, and their colleagues, even if it did not receive their unqualified support.

It was not that the six writers did not think that Western machines were of the first order and unrivalled in quality. Quite the contrary, they embraced the view, just as the majority of their American and European contemporaries presumably did²⁷⁸. But the question was whether these machines were the most appropriate indicators of civilization, and whether they could indicate the progress China, Japan, US, or anyone had made in terms of “real civilization.” After all, machines represented only the “external garnish and glitter of civilization,”²⁷⁹ as William Griffis put it. Both William Griffis and Arthur Smith were of the opinion that neither China, Japan nor any other nation, would climb to the highest rung of civilization merely by adopting Western material civilization. Arthur Smith, in particular, criticized his compatriots for using infrastructure or technology as gauges of Chinese civilization, for he thought that such judgments were based on the erroneous and “unphilosophical confounding of civilization and comfort”.²⁸⁰

What China needed was not “funded civilization,” the practising missionary Arthur Smith emphasized, and continued:

No more will funded civilization produce in the Chinese Empire, those conditions which accompany it in the West, unless the causes which have produced the

²⁷⁵ Smith 1890, 402; Williams 1913b, 739.

²⁷⁶ Williams 1913b, 739.

²⁷⁷ Adas 1989, 32, 64–65, 194, 216, 312–313.

²⁷⁸ Adas 2004, 32.

²⁷⁹ Griffis 2006a, 375. Other “superficial amenities” of civilization that the authors mentioned were clothes, food, and, according to Percival Lowell: refinement (Lowell 2007b, 7). Thus, Lowell relegated the importance of courtesies and manners, so central to earlier visions of civilization, to a position of virtual irrelevance in the grand scheme of Civilization.

²⁸⁰ Smith 1890, 171, 174.

conditions in the West are set in motion to produce the like results in China. Those causes are not material, they are moral.²⁸¹

William Griffis put forward a similar argument concerning Japan:

I can not but think that unless the modern enlightened ideas of government, law, society, and the rights of the individual be adopted to a far greater extent than they have been, the people be thoroughly educated, and a mightier spiritual force replace Shinto and Buddhism, little will be gained but a glittering veneer of material civilization and the corroding foreign vices, under which, in the presence of the superior aggressive nations of the West, Dai Nippon must fall like the doomed races of America.²⁸²

Clearly, Smith and Griffis perceived civilization to entail a lot more than the outward material surface. It entailed moral and spiritual force, which for these two particular writers evidently meant Christianity. Smith affirmed that Christianity was “an integral part of modern civilization” and a “moulding force,” and Griffis described the doctrine as a “motor of civilization”.²⁸³ Griffis and Smith were thus arguing that the true strength of Western civilization laid in its inner, not outer, qualities, which they felt were essentially Christian. From two ardent Christians, these statements were not altogether unexpected. In fact, the mechanical search of the semantic field surrounding the term civilization reveals that all four of the men of faith were making the same argument.²⁸⁴

Meanwhile, Lafcadio Hearn, who showed a marked distaste for Christian missions in his books about Japan, was unsurprisingly not of this opinion. Hearn admitted that in order to hold their own against the aggressive Europeans and Americans, the Japanese were compelled to appropriate Western material civilization and science. But they hardly needed Western religious or moral conceptions for the purposes of self-defence.²⁸⁵ The question for Hearn was not whether religions were a component of civilizations in the plural or not, for he seemed to endorse the idea that different religions were active parts of different civilizations. The problem Hearn wished to address was the relation of religion to the level of Civilization. Religions, like societies, were perceived to progress, and what Hearn was out to refute was the claim that a “primitive stage of religious thought” necessarily implied a primitive stage in the scale of civilization.²⁸⁶ In other words, Hearn denied the claim that Japan needed Christianity to attain a level of civilization on a par with the United States and European countries.

In the writings of Percival Lowell and the rest five authors, civilization was accompanied with such, arguably cultural, features as aesthetics, taste, sculpture, architecture, painting, decoration, literature, drama and music. In the words of William Griffis, such features were “the most potent factors in any

²⁸¹ Smith 1890, 171, 402.

²⁸² Griffis 1903, 578.

²⁸³ Griffis 1903, 577; Smith 1890, 404; Smith 1901b, 737.

²⁸⁴ See e.g., Martin 1901a, 229; Williams 1913a, 47.

²⁸⁵ Hearn 1896b, 205–206.

²⁸⁶ Hearn 1896b, 195, 266.

civilization"²⁸⁷. These corresponded to the arts of civilization, while philosophy, history, medicine, sociology, systems of knowledge and freedom of inquiry corresponded to the sciences. Language and education were also considered fundamental to civilization. The large amount of attention these factors received was presumably due to the fact that they were seen as tokens of the "march of mind," of "mental emancipation," and "training of the mind under civilization," in the words of William Griffis, Arthur Smith, and Hearn respectively²⁸⁸. The three authors were hence suggesting that civilization could only advance through mental and intellectual progress, and that both its outward and inward manifestations were the result of an individual and collective progress within.

By discussing the arts and sciences, we approach the problematic relationship between the concepts of culture and civilization. Especially in the budding social sciences, the confusingly similar concept of culture often replaced civilization, at least in its plural sense. For example, instead of civilizations, one could refer to cultural areas or worlds, in the manner of Max Weber. Culture could be either subordinated under the concept of civilization, or the two could be used interchangeably, as in the remark made by Arthur Smith that the Chinese were not in need of "Western culture" for they had been a "cultured nation for millenniums," already "civilized for ages when our ancestors were rooting in the primeval forests."²⁸⁹ And yet the two were not commensurate. As a matter of fact, they were often contrasted with each other by charging the other with positive connotations and the other with all the negative connotations, and by ranking one above the other.

We already alluded to the development of these concepts in Germany where *Zivilisation* became loaded with detrimental, and *Kultur* with approvable attributes, thus making the concepts effectively the rivals and enemies of each other. In a sense, the main demarcation line between the concepts was the same as the one drawn up by the six American experts *within* the idea of civilization. *Zivilisation* was understood to embody material features, whereas *Kultur* consisted of intellectual, religious, and artistic features. Or, alternately, *Zivilisation* could be perceived as making universal claims, whereas *Kultur* was the birth-right of a specific people – particularly valued in the highly nationalistic atmosphere of the 19th century.²⁹⁰

Philosophers then elaborated on the idea of there being a wedge driven between culture and civilization. For example, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) described the chasm that this wedge formed as being "abyssally deep". He placed civilization on the negative side, thinking that it was "nothing but discipline, repression, diminution of the individual" and "man's deliberate and forced domestication." In contrast, Nietzsche saw culture as the mainspring of individual and spiritual energy. This theme had also been taken up by philosophers inspired by German idealism and romanticism, before Nietzsche, such as

²⁸⁷ Griffis 2006a, 84.

²⁸⁸ Griffis 1903, 478; Hearn 1914, 276; Martin 1881, 149.

²⁸⁹ Arnason 2004, 104–105; Mazlish 2004, 18; Smith 1890, 401; Starobinski 2009, 174.

²⁹⁰ Bowden 2009b, 351–352; Den Boer 2005, 57; Mazlish 2004, 15–16.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834). But whereas Nietzsche had depicted culture and civilization as totally incompatible, Coleridge believed that culture was the positive force and the foundation which protected civilization from succumbing to corruption.²⁹¹

Now, when the six American writers condensed both the inner and outer, positive and negative, culture and civilization, into one single concept – civilization – the result was a “Pandora Box of evil and of good,” as Arthur Smith worded, or an aggregate of blessings and banes, as William Griffis presented.²⁹² The downside to the progress of civilization, as Arthur Smith saw it, was the suffering it caused the Chinese in terms of unemployment, for example. Clearly, he was referring to the material side of civilization, to the machines robbing the craftsmen their livelihood. On a similar vein, Samuel Williams added the danger of social and political disintegration, and the conflict between capital and labour to the list of drawbacks of civilization. He saw it as part of the huge cost of adopting a modern material civilization.²⁹³

Lafcadio Hearn, too, noted the threat of social disintegration, and this was just the start of his catalogue of the vices of modern (or Western) civilization. Hearn denounced civilization for being a form of artificial pressure, adopted to gratify “selfish desires”, and of “no benefit to the masses”. He went further to add that it entailed “misery and vice and crime,” and had helped develop forms of “suffering impossible in other eras”. The following citation aptly summarises his view on the subject:

A wondrous creation, indeed, this civilization of ours, – ever growing higher out of an abyss of ever deepening pain; but it seems also to many not less monstrous than wonderful.²⁹⁴

Hearn presented a lengthy catalogue of the shortcomings of civilization, thus showcasing a “regret of civilization”²⁹⁵, or ‘primitivism’, to which we will return later.

All in all, the semantic field furnishes us with an exhaustive list of those features which the six American authors understood to be the components and measures of civilization. It reveals that much of the list corresponded to the formulation Lewis Henry Morgan had proposed in *Ancient Society*,²⁹⁶ and to Norbert Elias’ “triad of basic controls”.²⁹⁷ But the semantic field also tells us of a

²⁹¹ Starobinski 2009, 174; Williams 2009, 20.

²⁹² Griffis 1900, 142; Smith 1901b, 738. Here it should be noted that, in these particular deliberations, the authors understood the notion of civilization as synonymous with European and American civilization.

²⁹³ Smith 1901a, 91; Williams 1913b, 63, 739.

²⁹⁴ Hearn 1894b, 620, 625, 679–680; Hearn 1895, 238–239; Hearn 1896b, 299.

²⁹⁵ Hearn 1914, 216.

²⁹⁶ These ideas and institutions were: inventions and discoveries, the mode of subsistence, government, language, family, religion, domestic life, architecture, and property (Morgan 1877, 4).

²⁹⁷ Norbert Elias argued that assessing a society according to these three criteria, or the triad of basic controls, could verify the developmental stage a society had reached. The criteria Elias presented included the extent of society’s control over non-human

more complex picture painted by the six authors. They accorded civilization inward and outward features, ones that were indispensable and dispensable. Also, virtually all the of these features aroused heated debate among the writers. In these debates, many different senses of the concept of civilization were muddled up: some features were related to civilization at the micro-level, some at the macro-level, and some to the process of Civilization. Finally, the semantic field shows that the proposed features fell more or less within four categories: (i) government and society; (ii) science and education; (iii) women and family; and (iv) religion and morals.

Although the semantic field gives us many important clues regarding the nature and contents of civilization, it tends to gloss over meaningful details, and to raise more questions than it answers. Consequently, we need to push our analysis beyond the level of words and into the level of thorough contextualisation. But before that, we will linger a little longer on the level of concepts, and take a closer look at the ideas intimately related to the 19th century concept of civilization: progress, evolution, and race.

2.3 Progress

Perceptions of time had an essential role in the deliberations of the six experts concerning civilization. How one understood temporal continuity clearly affected one's perspective on the nature of civilization, and the direction in which it was going. The classical notion of time was cyclical, based on the seasonal rhythm of nature in rural societies. From the beginning through a period of development, falling back and then from the start again – everything in the world was seen to experience these endless cycles and remain in them. Another traditional view of time was to see it in terms of linear decadence, that is, to see everything going from birth to inevitable disintegration and extinction.²⁹⁸ Both the cyclical and linear decadence perspectives were basically compatible with civilization in its micro and macro-level senses, but not with the 19th century sense of Civilization as a process. For this notion to succeed, humankind first had to adopt the view of time moving linearly towards some ideal state, either finitely or infinitely.

It has been argued that the more traditional cyclical perspective of time gave way to a more linear version in the wake of Christianity, which incorporated a perception of time moving from Creation towards a predetermined end, the Last Judgment.²⁹⁹ This was later taken up in a secularised form by the Enlightenment thinkers. However, for the purposes of Civilization (with a capital-C), this idea still lacked one essential component. It was not enough for a man or a society to have a goal for history; the history itself had to be continuously

or natural events, interpersonal relationships, and the control each member had over himself as an individual. (Elias 1978, 156.)

²⁹⁸ Lorenz 2008, 28; Marcus 1961, 124; Wagar 1967, 60.

²⁹⁹ Marcus 1961, 124–125; Wagar 1967, 60.

and unfailingly advancing towards something better. Hence, the component missing was the concept of progress, in the dictionary sense of being “advancement to a further or higher stage, or to further or higher stages successively; growth; development, usually to a better state or condition; improvement [...]”. However, when and where this concept of progress originated from, remains somewhat debated. The *Oxford English Dictionary* lists occurrences of this sense of the word from the 15th century onwards,³⁰⁰ while scholars of the subject have dated the emergence and heyday of the concept to be anywhere between classical antiquity and the Victorian era.³⁰¹

Perhaps the idea of progress towards some ultimate good has existed in different forms throughout history, but it was not until the Enlightenment that the concept emerged as a serious academic subject. 18th century philosophers from Adam Ferguson to the Marquis de Condorcet looked forward to a utopian future in which rationality, happiness, liberty, and enjoyment would prevail. This utopian state would come about once the fundamental laws of the human mind had been discovered. Since human nature was seen to be analogous to nature, the philosophers were confident that the laws governing both could be uncovered as scientific knowledge accumulated over time. So, according to the Enlightenment and Romantic thought, the progress of history was a progression towards reason. However, whereas history progressed, nature and the human mind were understood to be in a static state. This became one of the greatest differences when compared to the later nineteenth century thought, which held that time was progressive, that history was progress in time, and that progressiveness of history was parallel to progress in nature, that is, evolution.³⁰²

Around the same time, the idea of progress went through secularization. Robert Nisbet has argued that from the Enlightenment era onwards, there were repeated attempts to dissociate progress from the actively presiding hand of God, and to attribute the process entirely to natural causes. However, this secularisation advanced slowly. Nisbet has indicated that throughout the 19th century there were influential and esteemed thinkers who espoused both progress and the guiding hand of Providence.³⁰³

Both in its Christian and secular variations, the idea of progress received a warm welcome from intellectuals and masses alike. In fact, progress has been described as the “paramount” and “dominant” ideology of the 19th century. As a concept, progress passed through the hands of multitudes of thinkers and propagators. In the process, it acquired a myriad of meanings and interpretations regarding its foundations, principles, sources and goals. It was applied to nearly every conceivable aspect of life, and was adapted to a wide range of different purposes. Like civilization, the concept of progress became embedded in scientific doctrines, especially in anthropology in the form of the idea of social

³⁰⁰ “Progress, n.,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2013.

³⁰¹ Livingstone 2006, 560-561.

³⁰² Beard et al. 1948, 6; Collingwood 2005, 80, 84-86, 99; Wagar 1967, 58.

³⁰³ Nisbet 1980, 172, 178.

evolution. *The American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828) related progress to 'advances in knowledge', and 'intellectual and moral improvement', whereas in other instances the emphasis was on 'material development', 'economic growth', and 'greater specialization'. It became associated with man's control over nature and over himself. Progress was appropriated as a political tenet declaring democracy, equality, and individualism as the universal goals of history, and it became a fertile context for other watchwords of the day, such as 'freedom' and 'popular sovereignty'. It sanctioned them as historical necessities, making them just as inevitable as progress itself. And finally, the association of progress with concepts such as improvement, development, and evolution, resulted in a view that constant change was the desirable and destined lot of the mankind.³⁰⁴

Like civilization, progress was an "essentially contested,"³⁰⁵ and yet unavoidable, key concept of the 19th century. But what was the relationship between the two? In their modern senses, both concepts emerged at around the same time, took Europe and the United States by storm, and came to be closely connected with each other. In principle, progress was conceivable without civilization, although the popular theories of progress took the form of stadial theories in which civilization was the final goal of progress. But civilization was conceivable without progress only to a certain extent. Without progress, it lacked the dynamism, optimism, and orientation towards the future so vital to its existence in the sense of 'being a process'. Perhaps it is meaningless to question whether progress or civilization came first, and to artificially separate the two. For contemporaries, they were essentially inseparable. In the succinct words of Jonathon Bonk: "[i]f progress was the inevitable destiny of mankind, then civilization- Western, 'Christian' civilization- was its visible manifestation, the word of progress made flesh, and dwelling among men".³⁰⁶

The doctrine that history is identical with progress, operating under identifiable laws, and moving towards continuous betterment, is called progressivism. William Adams has divided the proponents of progressivism into three types: idealistic, historical, and partial progressivists³⁰⁷. What unites all three types is a belief that the Golden Age is either in the present or in the future. Adams has argued that progressivism is essentially about optimism, and its proponents are usually self-confident about their relative superiority over others.

³⁰⁴ Adams 1998, 40, 51; Bonk 1989, 238; Koselleck 1989a, 659-660; Livingstone 2006, 560; Marcus 1961, 126-127; Nisbet 1980, 171; "progress, n.," *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828.

³⁰⁵ Livingstone 2006, 560.

³⁰⁶ Bonk 1989, 239.

³⁰⁷ According to William Adams, the idealistic progressivists assume that progress wells up from an innate source, that all men carry the seeds of progress inside them. They generally perceive progress as a victory of mind over matter, quantifiable in intellectual or artistic terms. Meanwhile the historical progressivists see progress essentially in materialistic terms, being driven by technological and scientific development and innovations. They understand progress to be fully demonstrable in history and measurable by material, social, and political means. Finally, the partial progressivists attribute progress only to some specific areas of human life and reject the notion of progress being ubiquitous. (Adams 1998, 10-11.)

Consequently, the idea tends to surge in times and places of prevailing optimism and confidence – such as Enlightenment-era Europe, or 19th century America.³⁰⁸

The progressivist movement did not go unchallenged of course, and had its counterpart, or perhaps more accurately, its flip-side, in primitivism. William Adams has described the primitivists as people who subscribe to the idea of inevitable and ever-increasing progress, but do not share the progressivists' enthusiastic attitude towards it.³⁰⁹

The Victorian era primitivists refused to take part in the celebration over technological and scientific feats of their contemporaries, and they rejected the claim that Western material culture indicated supremacy of West over the rest of the world. They tended to value nature over culture, particularly material culture, and in some cases the heart over mind. Driving these sentiments was a broader movement, gathering momentum towards the end of the 19th century, which was protesting against increasing industrialisation and mechanisation, and the attendant dehumanisation and environmental degradation. The critics, often hailing from Europe, produced a simplified image of the Old World endowed with a literal and intellectual culture versus the New America which had nothing more to offer than practical arts.³¹⁰ Although these critics had some following in the United States, Michael Adas has claimed that they were an insignificant minority in the face of the multitudes who extolled the virtues of new technologies, an industrialised society, and the consequent economic growth. According to Adas, the most vocal and popular American opinion at the time was the one of nationalist pride in American industry, which was quickly surpassing Europe in the production of steel and iron – the prime symbols of progress in the 19th century.³¹¹

Yet, some Americans caught a whiff of nostalgia for a pre-industrial existence after a journey or residence in Asia. We get a hint of this from the semantic field of Lafcadio Hearn's text, although in Hearn's case Japan did not cause his primitivist bent – one could argue that it was already there. But a fascination with traditional Japanese culture nourished Hearn's primitivism, and it also had the same effect on some of the American Gilded Age artists.³¹² The artists and other primitivists feared that trade, industrialisation, and modernisation were destroying the authentic, aesthetic, and spiritual Japan; they felt that they were wreaking havoc on Japan's social and physical existence, and turning the

³⁰⁸ Adams 1998, 9–12, 18.

³⁰⁹ The primitivists tend to turn their gaze wistfully to a somewhat idealised primitive past: to a time yet unspoiled by civilization, and peopled by Rousseauian noble savages. In contrast, the present moment, tarnished by corruption and luxury, they view with misgivings and regret, and the future with pessimism. (Adams 1998, 75–78; Lepenies 2008, 221; Nisbet 1980, 178.)

³¹⁰ Adams 1998, 76; Adas 1989, 348–349, 405–406.

³¹¹ Adas 1989, 405–406.

³¹² These artists, disillusioned by the mechanised nature of modern American society, went to Japan in search of nature and the picturesque, of which they had heard and read, only to find out that there was a serious gap between the idealised image of Japan, and the real Japan, which was actually in a state of flux in the last decades of the 19th century. (Adas 1989, 247; Henning 2000, 91, 93, 102; Jackson 1992, 250.)

country into something average and commonplace. The primitivists agonised over the disappearance of the Japanese noble savage, which, like the native peoples of the American continent, was forced to stand aside to make way for the irrevocable march of civilization and progress. In a sense, these primitivists would have preferred to keep Japan lower down on the so-called 'scale of civilization'.³¹³

Much of this narrative of a simple, pure, and old Japan was in fact presented to the American audience by writers like Lafcadio Hearn. Their narrative served as a convenient backdrop for a critique of American society and its obsession with progress. At the same time however, the narrative was firmly rooted in a belief in the superiority of Western civilization; for if Japan was 'primitive', then modern America was surely the opposite, in other words, 'civilized'.³¹⁴ And thus, in fact, the narrative was actually a backhanded confirmation of the grandiose notion of Civilization (with a capital-C). All the same, the period witnessed only a handful of critics with reservations or antipathies towards the idea of progress, and in general, these voices of dissent were either ignored or muted in public.³¹⁵

So far we have glanced at the overall 18th and 19th century attitudes towards progress. Let us now turn back to the semantic field, and see what it reveals about the usage of the concept in the texts of our six experts. In the sense of 'advancement to a higher or better state', the concept of progress appeared on average around ten times in each publication (see the list of figures in table 2 in the appendix). The term abounded in William Martin's texts, but in many of the other treatises it featured only a couple of times, which is somewhat surprising considering that this was supposedly the prevailing atmosphere. That the concept was practically missing altogether from Lafcadio Hearn's texts may be explained by his conscious attempts to avoid the topic and to concentrate exclusively on the old traditional Japan. That explanation, however, does not cover the absences of the term in most of Arthur Smith's works, or in William Griffis' *Japan in History*, or Lowell's *Occult Japan*. Although one should perhaps be wary of drawing hasty conclusions from mere figures, it is tempting to think that the absences indicate something.

"Progress is everywhere the watchword," affirmed William Griffis the progressivism of his age. William Martin referred to progress as "a doctrine", while Lafcadio Hearn saw progress occurring when the "sum of good exceeds the sum of evil", that is, he took a moral rather than a material view on the subject. As for Arthur Smith, he connected progress effectively with Christianity by

³¹³ Adams 1998, 99; Henning 2000, 104, 107, 112.

³¹⁴ Henning 2000, 91, 113; Jackson 1992, 250.

³¹⁵ Falnes 1954, 312-313. Lafcadio Hearn was one of the notable exceptions, who vocally questioned progressivism and Western superiority, as was the English historian and author, Charles H. Pearson (1830-1894), with his bestselling treatise *National Life and Character: a Forecast* (1893).

arguing that the process had a “divinely contemplated” end, and that the idea was conceivable only with the Christian notion of linear time.³¹⁶

As the semantic field shows, the authors treated the concept of progress in a very similar way to the concept of civilization. For example, they talked about the “path of” and “laws of” progress, just as they talked about the path and laws of civilization.³¹⁷ And like civilization, progress was also connected to modernity and the material sphere.³¹⁸ As in the case of civilization too, the material side of progress was seen as problematic. It involved “merciless competition” according to Lafcadio Hearn, and unemployment and severe poverty according to Arthur Smith.³¹⁹ Nevertheless, material progress was seen as a necessary part of the progress of a race or a nation, even by such proponents of moral progress as Hearn:

Within the memory of men not yet old, Japan has developed her military power to a par with that of more than one country of Europe; industrially she is fast becoming a competitor of Europe in the markets of the East; educationally she has placed herself also in the front rank of progress [...].³²⁰

Other prerequisites for national progress cited by the six experts included politics, government, a social system, education, science, and arts.³²¹ All these elements were thought to progress through a series of stages in the same manner as civilization,³²² and religions and religious thinking were seen to progress in stages too.³²³

When it came to the overall progress of the Chinese as a nation, Samuel Williams repeatedly expressed his anxiety about their future “welfare and progress”.³²⁴ William Martin recounted in 1881 “the progress of Chinese civilization,” and as a proof that China had been developing, he cited an editorial article from the *Shanghai Courier*. Published a year before, the article affirmed that China was “moving in the path of progress, knowledge, and civilization”. However, about two decades later William Martin compared China’s progress unfavourably with Japan’s: “[w]hen a small nation like Japan knows how to enter on a career of progress, what could be a greater disgrace than for China to adhere to her old traditions and never think of waking up?”³²⁵ Meanwhile, Percival Lowell depicted Chinese progress as so slow, that he doubted whether “it can be called progress at all,” and he attributed this fact to “the Chinaman’s dis-

³¹⁶ Griffis 1903, 540; Hearn 1895, 308; Martin 1881, 228; Smith 1890, 404. Arthur Smith’s claim did not go uncontested, though. William Martin, for example, argued that the Chinese, despite their cyclical notion of time, had developed corresponding notions of progress and evolution. (Martin 1881, 167–168.)

³¹⁷ Griffis 2006b, 5; Hearn 1894a, 103; Hearn 1894b, 683; Martin 1894, 11.

³¹⁸ See e.g. Griffis 1903, 473; Williams 1913b, 309.

³¹⁹ Hearn 1896b, 189; Smith 1899, 276; Smith 1901a, 89.

³²⁰ Hearn 1895, 223.

³²¹ See e.g. Griffis 1892, 130; Griffis 1900, 79; Griffis 1903, 371; Griffis 2006a, 235; Griffis 2006b, 45; Hearn 1896b, 150, 238, 241–242, 266; Lowell 1895, 238; Martin 1881, 70, 140, 163; Williams 1913a, 48; Williams 1913b, 67, 74, 117.

³²² See e.g. Martin 1881, 167.

³²³ Griffis 1900, 67; Hearn 1896b, 255; Martin 1901a, 195; Williams 1913b, 213.

³²⁴ Williams 1913b, 637, 660.

³²⁵ Martin 1881, 230, 253; Martin 1900, 303.

inclination to progress". Correspondingly, Arthur Smith remarked that in China nobody knew or cared about progress.³²⁶

This seemed to be the gist of 'national progress' – before it could proceed, it needed to be accepted, instigated, and nurtured by the people. Hence, what China and Japan needed were the pioneers, protagonists, and friends of progress; they needed progressive leaders in government, as well as progressive citizens.³²⁷ In such calls for progress, the experts frequently evoked the adjective form of the word, as well as the opposing word 'unprogressive'. The Chinese and Japanese conservatives and reactionaries were considered as "obstacles" in the way of national progress, and other obstacles included the lack of originality, as Percival Lowell suggested, and the low condition of women, lack of female education, popular superstitions, "enslaving theological tenets," Confucius, and the "despotism of the Chinese classics," as William Griffis enumerated.³²⁸ Arthur Smith added intellectual pride to the list, while William Martin mentioned geomancy, "superstitious reverence for the letter of the canon," "imitation of ancient models," and the Chinese language, and Samuel Williams counted "prejudice, ignorance, and contempt" as the major hindrances.³²⁹ All the obstacles the experts cited were seen to derive from the contexts of Chinese and Japanese societies, cultures, and beliefs. Only William Martin hinted at the possibility that the barrier to China and Japan's "career of progress" might be something external.³³⁰

Progress not only affected peoples, nations, or aspects of culture and society; it also worked at the individual level. As Percival Lowell noted, man was essentially a "progressive animal".³³¹ Religious progress had its counterpart in an individual's spiritual progress, and this was considered to be inescapably governed by certain laws. According to Arthur Smith, it would be futile to try to "reverse the tide of human development" and to "arrest the slow but irresistible progress of a law of man's spiritual nature".³³² It seems that man's spiritual progress was conceived as uniform, as fundamentally the same for everyone. Yet, the semantic field discloses that the broader picture of spiritual progress could also accommodate smaller variations, such as the Buddhist and Daoist conceptions³³³ on the theme.

Beside spiritual progress, the individuals were believed to experience ethical or moral progress, and Hearn, Martin, Lowell and Smith all thought that the individual was affected by continuous mental and intellectual progress as

³²⁶ Lowell 2007b, 79; Smith 1901a, 89.

³²⁷ Griffis 1892, 75; Griffis 1903, 612, 621; Martin 1900, 313, 351; Smith 1901b, 551.

³²⁸ Griffis 1903, 551–552; Griffis 2006b, 56; Lowell 2007b, 7.

³²⁹ Martin 1881, 57, 280–281; Martin 1900, 42; Martin 1894, 255; Smith 1890, 259; Smith 1899, 134; Williams 1913a, 568; Williams 1913b, 579. This impressive list of hindrances is far from complete, as it includes only the co-occurrences of the word 'progress'.

³³⁰ The barrier William Martin was referring to, was the Europe's colonial 'balance of power' policy, which spread into East Asia during the 19th century (Martin 1881, 252). Lowell 2007b, 60.

³³¹ Smith 1901b, 737–738. See also e.g. Hearn 1896b, 235.

³³³ Griffis 2006b, 163; Martin 1881, 184; Martin 1894, 288.

well.³³⁴ Intellectual progress was one of the main themes in Percival Lowell's *The Soul of the Far East*. For Lowell, it was a central feature of civilization, which expressed itself in terms of individualization, and was driven by the force of imagination.³³⁵ Thus, taking the degree of individualization as his main criterion, Lowell declared the Western countries as progressive and embodying the "spirit of progress of the world;" whereas the Eastern countries he denounced as impassive.³³⁶

2.4 Evolution

'Evolution', another watchword of the day, had many aspects in common with progress. Evolution was commonly used in a sense of overall development of life, however, during the century the term took on new, varied, and more specialized meanings. The concept of evolution was appropriated by different fields of thought and applied to various processes. What united most the different perceptions was the conviction derived from astronomy and physics, especially thermodynamics and from the law of conservation of force, that the universe had a cosmic order governed by immutable laws of cause and effect. These laws were considered to be discoverable by scientific inquiry. In the field of natural history, one of the laws discovered was the transmutation of species. Despite the controversies surrounding this theory, it effectively promoted the idea of evolution and around a decade after Charles Darwin's (1809–1882) publication *On the Origin of Species* (1859), the term surfaced to more general usage.³³⁷

The earlier notions of nature as static and creatures as special creations had been discarded in some circles long before the *Origin of Species*, but only after the works and theories of Darwin, Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913), and other natural scientists were disseminated and popularised, were these notions conclusively discredited and superseded. Eventually, evolution came to be understood as an essentially progressive process, even if it was originally not proposed as such. Each form evolution brought to life was an improvement on the previous form, and the end result was something new and better. Man, as a part of nature, was thought to be subject to the same evolutionary processes and laws as the rest of the universe.³³⁸

³³⁴ Also Griffis and Williams subscribed to the idea of progress of the mind, but since they used synonymous phrases like "intellectual development" and "intellectual advancement," these were not picked up in the semantic field for 'progress'. This is one drawback of mechanical searches – unless all the synonyms of a concept are included in the search the risk of omission is great. (Griffis 2006a, 413; Hearn 1894a, vii; Hearn 1894b, 676, 682–683; Hearn 1896b, 150, 201, 256; Lowell 2007b, 77; Martin 1881, 119, 246, 249; Smith 1899, 312; Williams 1913a, ix.)

³³⁵ Lowell 2007b, 77.

³³⁶ Lowell 2007b, 11, 69.

³³⁷ Bannister 1979, 18–19; Bowler 1975, 95; Schrempp 1983, 107.

³³⁸ Bannister 1979, 19; Collingwood 2005, 129, 321–323.

From these ideas it was an easy metaphorical leap to think that not just mankind, but his society and culture, were also affected by evolution. In sociological and anthropological circles during the latter part of the 19th century, the intertwined ideas about civilization and progress were turned into the doctrine of social evolutionism by Herbert Spencer³³⁹ and his followers. In a sense, the optimistic ideology of progressivism was refashioned as social evolutionism, and under this new guise it gained widespread acceptance in Europe and the US in the late 19th century. In general, scientists and the educated public alike subscribed to the theory of genetic continuity, which posited that all forms of life derived from previous life, and that the human race evolved continuously towards higher stages of civilization by genetic inheritance of acquired traits from one generation to the next.³⁴⁰ Thus, biological and social evolution, progress, and civilization came to form a cluster of ideas that together, or separately, could explain the course of history – from the past and into the future.

However, the idea of evolution did not figure prominently in the majority of the experts' texts. Usually, the term was mentioned only from one to six times per publication, and in *Book I* of William Griffis' *The Mikado's Empire*, the term was altogether absent. Yet Griffis referred to the idea of biological evolution with the expression "Darwinian," for example, he noted the "theory called of late years the 'Darwinian' [...]" and he called humans the "Darwinian descendants of the monkey".³⁴¹ Evolution could also be substituted with the concept of progress, as William Martin more or less did when he spoke of the "laws of human progress."³⁴² Indeed, academics such as Lewis H. Morgan or Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917), who later became known as evolutionary anthropologists, often used the term 'progress' instead of evolution³⁴³.

Lafcadio Hearn was an exception. The term evolution appeared frequently in his texts, particularly in *Kokoro*, as well as *Exotics and Retrospectives* (for the exact figures see table 2 in the appendix). Being an avowed Spencerian, Hearn probably found evolution to be a convenient concept for explaining the character of Japanese people and the development of their society. Hearn referred to the biological evolution of plants and "zoological facts in the light of evolutionary science". He then extended the notion of biological evolution from the plant and animal kingdoms to human beings: "the evolution of life, or rather, during the evolution of that series of organisms through which the human organism has been reached". In fact, whatever the organism in question, Hearn believed that there could be "no cosmic limit to evolutionary possibilities". This "new philosophy of evolution" and the doctrine of heredity, Hearn posited, revealed that

³³⁹ Herbert Spencer's main treatise treating evolution and progress was the nine-volume series *The Synthetic Philosophy*. The first volume of the series, *First Principles*, was published in 1862, although one of the volumes included in the series, *The Principles of Psychology*, had already been published in 1855. Herbert Spencer completed the series in 1896.

³⁴⁰ Adams 1998, 40, 50–51; Arnason 2004, 104; Bederman 1995, 29; Collingwood 2005, 323; Marcus 1961, 127.

³⁴¹ Griffis 1903, 485; Griffis 2006a, 17.

³⁴² Martin 1894, 11.

³⁴³ Adams 1998, 51.

the present was indebted to the past and the living indebted to the dead.³⁴⁴ In other words, Hearn subscribed to the idea that the present state evolved through genetic transmission from the past, that evolution touched all life forms, and finally, that evolution knew no bounds.

The traditional sense of the word evolution was the 'unrolling' of events.³⁴⁵ This meaning was carried into biology in the context of embryology, or the idea that life unfolded from a pre-existing embryo³⁴⁶. But the biological evolution to which Lafcadio Hearn was referring to involved the birth of new species, that is, one species altering to become another – an idea inconceivable for embryonic evolution. Hearn was speaking about evolution in the sense of transmutation of species and natural selection, which, in fact, was not a common meaning of the term before the late 19th century. Unlike Charles Lyell (1797–1832), who had already in 1832 used evolution in this manner, Charles Darwin did mention 'evolution' in the *Origins of Species*, and the verb 'to evolve' he used only sparingly in his works. When Darwin did eventually use the word evolution, it seemed to refer more to a general historical process, to the unfolding of things. Nevertheless, gradually the 'theory of evolution' began to be increasingly identified with Darwin and his original theory of the transmutation of species.³⁴⁷

At the centre of Charles Darwin's theory was the idea of natural selection. The idea entailed a process in which random physical variations advantaged some living organisms over others of their kind, helped them to survive and reproduce, and eventually, to form a new species. But this theory did not necessarily involve progress, although Darwin eventually assented that, in the long term, natural selection could create progress. Instead, what was involved was divergence: natural selection producing diversity.³⁴⁸

Already in the first decade of the 19th century, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744–1829) had proposed an evolutionary theory in which simple forms of life produced forms of increasing complexity. According to Lamarck, the process was governed by laws which explained not only the origins of new species, but also the development of organs. For example, Lamarck had proposed that animals could develop new organs according to the needs posed by the environment, and that these organs either dwindled or became more sophisticated according to their disuse or use, and finally, that the parents passed on the useful traits they had developed to their offspring. Thus, the process was in the long term progressive, tending towards increasing complexity and perhaps ultimate-

³⁴⁴ Hearn 1894a, 342, 439; Hearn 1895, 112; Hearn 1896b, 231, 300; Hearn 1914, 204.

³⁴⁵ The original Latin term, *evolutio*, referred to the act of unrolling, and evolution retained this meaning in the American usage throughout the 19th century. (Bowler 1975, 95; "evolution, n.," *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828; "evolution, n.," *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, 1913.)

³⁴⁶ Bowler 1975, 96, 100.

³⁴⁷ Peter Bowler has proposed that the widespread recognition and use of the term in the US came only after Herbert Spencer's evolutionary theories rose to popularity in the 1870s. This popularity lasted for around three decades, until it started to wane from the beginning of the 20th century. (Bowler 1975, 100, 102–103, 105–106, 110, 112.)

³⁴⁸ Bowler 1975, 101, 103; Henning 2000, 14.

ly to perfection. This was the evolutionary model many later 19th century thinkers espoused.³⁴⁹ Arguably, also Percival Lowell's understanding of evolution was partly inspired by the Lamarckian model:

All life, whether organic or inorganic, consists, as we know, in a change from a state of simple homogeneity to one of complex heterogeneity. [...] The immediate force which works this change, the life principle of things, is, in the case of organic beings, a subtle something which we call spontaneous variation. [...] Whether mind be but a sublimated form of matter, or, what amounts to the same thing, matter a menial kind of mind, or whether, which seems less likely, it be a something incomparable with substance, of one thing we are sure, the same laws of heredity govern both.³⁵⁰

Lowell, however, did not content himself in ascribing evolution merely to the physical side of life. He argued that in the case of human beings, nature had shifted its attention from physical evolution to psychological evolution.³⁵¹

Consequently, after he had expounded his version of physical or biological evolution, Lowell then drew a parallel between that and psychological evolution.

Just as spontaneous variation is constantly pushing the animal or the plant to push out, as a vine its tendrils, in all directions, while natural conditions are as constantly exercising over it a sort of unconscious pruning power, so imagination is ever at work urging man's mind out and on [...]. Precisely, then, as in the organism, this subtle spirit checked in one direction finds a way to advance in another, and produces in consequence among an originally similar set of bodies a gradual separation into species which grow wider with time, so in brain evolution a like force for like reasons tends inevitably to an ever-increasing individualization.³⁵²

From these excerpts we find an explanation for Lowell's preoccupation with civilization, individualization, and imagination. Lowell supposed that psychical evolution manifested itself as an ever-increasing individualization, just as physical evolution manifested itself as a development from simplicity to complexity. Moreover, the prime mover of physical evolution, that is, random variation, had an equivalent counterpart in mental evolution: imagination. Borrowing from embryology and the idea of unfolding evolution, Lowell assumed that the force of "soul-evolution" (i.e., imagination) – he often used the words mind and soul interchangeably – dwelled in the soul "like a seed" waiting for its chance to start growing.³⁵³ As Lowell made individualization the measure, and imagination the force, of civilization, it seems plausible to argue that for Lowell psychical evolution was somewhat equivalent to the progress of civilization.

Also Lafcadio Hearn displayed a marked interest towards the "scientific doctrine of psychological evolution." Although the wording was different from Percival Lowell's account, the main idea Hearn argued was the same. Hearn asserted that the personality of a human being was the "sum of countless dead experiences," and that not just personal characteristics, but feelings and impuls-

³⁴⁹ Bannister 1979, 22; Bowler 1975, 96.

³⁵⁰ Lowell 2007b, 71.

³⁵¹ Lowell 2007b, 25.

³⁵² Lowell 2007b, 72.

³⁵³ Lowell 2007b, 77, 80.

es too were inherited from past progenitors. Besides emotional and aesthetic evolution therefore, men were subject to intellectual evolution, or the “unfolding of the brain” – another hint at embryonic theory. Hearn believed that, even though one did not fully understand the scientific intricacies of the process, it was a readily perceptible phenomenon in everyday life, and “fully fathomable” with common sense.³⁵⁴

Lowell’s and Hearn’s versions of psychological evolution followed, more or less, in the footsteps of the popular ‘evolutionary’ theoreticians of the time. In American intellectual circles, it was quite acceptable to believe that evolution was as much a mental and spiritual phenomenon as it was physical. Or perhaps, more accurately, that physical and psychological evolution were stages of development in themselves. As Alfred Russel Wallace explained, at a certain stage of development, physical evolution came to be displaced by the evolution of mind.³⁵⁵

Nevertheless, Lafcadio Hearn was aware that the doctrines of physical and psychological evolution were not universally accepted in the United States or Europe, particularly in the theological circles.³⁵⁶ Indeed, evolutionary ideas were certainly a delicate subject for traditional Christianity, especially in the US where intellectual life was largely dominated by a Christian way of thinking. In the first place, the Darwinian account of birth and alteration of species stood in direct opposition with a literal interpretation of the Bible. But evolution also posed considerable challenges even for the less fundamentalist adherents of Christianity. Firstly, Charles Darwin divested man of his spiritual nature, an essential part of Christianity’s dualist model, and considered man to belong strictly to the animal kingdom. And secondly, Darwinian theory did not support the belief that nature was ultimately a product of intellectual design. In a manner of speaking, Darwin finished off the process, already begun with the Copernican revolution, of decentralising man from his former position at the centre of the universe.³⁵⁷

But evolutionary science did not necessarily need to conflict with Christian religion. Evolutionary arguments could be accommodated within the Christian framework, and they could be formulated so as to serve religious ends. To be precise, the laws of evolution could be understood as a manifesta-

³⁵⁴ Hearn 1894b, 673; Hearn 1895, 113, 115; Hearn 1896b, 244, 271; Hearn 1914, 192, 243, 254.

³⁵⁵ Bannister 1979, 32.

³⁵⁶ Hearn 1896b, 242.

³⁵⁷ Bowler 1984, 1-2; Murphey 1988, 330. Nevertheless, Darwinism was not the only theory undermining the Biblical account of life during the 19th century. For example, during the latter half of the century, discoveries in geology ignited a big debate between the proponents of two schools called Uniformitarianism and Catastrophism. The Uniformitarians argued that the same natural laws and agencies had operated throughout the earth’s lifespan. In other words, same rainfalls, rivers, and earthquakes had moulded the earth’s surface since the beginning of times. Catastrophists, on the other hand, believed that only some exceptional, or supernatural, forces could account for the remarkable alterations the earth’s crust had gone through. Whereas the Catastrophic theory was easily reconciled with Christian beliefs in the Flood etc., Uniformitarianism was understood to be a confrontation against the Biblical Creation. (Bannister 1979, 17.)

tion and mechanism of divine will and purpose.³⁵⁸ For example, the American philosopher John Fiske (1842–1901) declared that:

So far from degrading Humanity, or putting it on a level with the animal world in general, the Darwinian theory shows us distinctly for the first time how the creation and the perfecting of Man is the goal toward which Nature's work has all the while been tending.³⁵⁹

Meanwhile, Alfred Russel Wallace ensured a warm welcome for his theory in the United States by pointing out that evolution was guided by some unknown higher force – thus leaving room for intelligent design.³⁶⁰

Likewise, Hearn and Lowell tended to refrain from statements explicitly affirming or denying the existence of a higher agency in evolution. They rather pleaded to the present unknowability of evolution's ultimate cause. For example, Percival Lowell stated: “[w]hat this mysterious impulse may be is beyond our present powers of recognition.”³⁶¹ However, regardless of the reactions of his potentially Christian American readers, Hearn insinuated that perhaps the higher cause of evolution had no connection with Christianity. Instead, he remarked that evolution was moving “in directions strangely parallel with Oriental philosophy”³⁶², by which he meant Buddhism. Hearn was convinced that ‘karma’, which illustrated the present moment's indebtedness to the past, proved that Buddhists had not only grasped the idea of psychological evolution, but also based their religion on it. Thus Hearn felt that, compared to the West, many aspects of Buddhism were actually more attuned to the scientific notions of evolution.³⁶³

Also William Griffis noted the resemblance between doctrines of Buddhism and evolutionary science; in fact, he called Japanese Buddhism as the “transfiguration of atheistic evolution.” Like Hearn, Griffis thought that the Buddhist principle with closest resemblance to evolution was the principle of *karma*:

The key-word of Buddhism is Ingwa, which means law or fate, the chain of cause and effect in which man is found, atheistic ‘evolution applied to ethics,’ the grinding machinery of a universe in which is no Creator-Father, no love, pity or heart.³⁶⁴

Notable here is Griffis' repeated emphasis on atheism. He clearly denounced both Buddhism and the atheist evolution, or evolution which left no room for God. But this does not seem to imply that he denounced the theory of evolution altogether, for if there was an atheistic evolution, then Griffis surely must have conceived also a non-atheistic evolution, a development consonant with the Christian religion.

³⁵⁸ Bowler 1984, 3; Stocking Jr. 1996, 48.

³⁵⁹ Fiske 1895, 25.

³⁶⁰ Bannister 1979, 32–33.

³⁶¹ Lowell 2007b, 71.

³⁶² Hearn 1896b, 237.

³⁶³ Hearn 1896b, 234, 239; Hearn 1914, foreword.

³⁶⁴ Griffis 2006b, 144, 156, 165.

Practically all six of our authors believed that the idea of evolution was something universally graspable: philosophers everywhere could potentially catch a glimpse of the “progress from the imperfect to the more perfect, including lifeless as well as living nature in an unceasing progression in which all things take part towards a higher and nobler state”³⁶⁵. Consequently, William Griffis referred to Japanese Shintoist ideas about the spontaneous “evolution” of matter and mind, while Lowell referred to the Shintoist concept of a *moral* evolutionary process. Meanwhile, Samuel Williams sketched the “ingenious theory of evolution” the Chinese Daoists had devised, and William Martin echoed the conviction of a contemporary American scientist John William Draper (1811–1882) that the Chinese alchemists had been the “the first to seize the grand idea of evolution in its widest extent.” In fact, Martin saw no reason why the Chinese would not have come up with biological evolution independently, for they had already understood “Cartesian philosophy before Descartes” and “Baconian method before Bacon”.³⁶⁶

What is revealing about these statements is that the manifestations of evolution the authors described were essentially progressive. This implies that their understanding was perhaps more Lamarckian than Darwinian. But in the cases of Hearn and Lowell, it was first and foremost Spencerian. Hence, Lafcadio Hearn’s foremost concern was the theory of “social evolution” formulated by Herbert Spencer. Spencer’s comprehensive scheme of evolution covered physical and spiritual development alike. And it did not end in explaining the natural evolution of species, it explained the whole universe, Hearn emphasised³⁶⁷. In the US of the 1860s, social science and the study of social laws were all the rage, and it was into this receptive American atmosphere, that the English philosopher Herbert Spencer made his timely entrance. Spencer adopted the idea from Lamarck that traits could be acquired, improved upon, and passed on to offspring. He used it to prove that evolution produced continuous advance.³⁶⁸ Progress was at the centre of his theory, and this “law of all organic progress,” Spencer explained, manifested in the following manner:

[T]he series of changes gone through during the development of a seed into a tree, or an ovum into an animal, constitute an advance from homogeneity of structure to heterogeneity of structure. [...] This is the course of evolution followed by all organisms whatever.³⁶⁹

Evolution, then, was progress from simplicity to complexity, just as Lamarck had proposed. Moreover, following the doctrine of German philosopher Friedrich Schelling (1775–1854) that the tendency of life was toward individuation,

³⁶⁵ Martin 1881, 167–168.

³⁶⁶ Griffis 2006b, 34, 38; Lowell 1895, 29; Martin 1881, 167–168; Martin 1901a, 31, 41; Williams 1913b, 200–201.

³⁶⁷ Hearn 1895, 167. In a private letter Hearn argued that in comparison with Spencer’s *Synthetic Philosophy*, the theories of Darwin and other evolutionary philosophers were minor details, capable of explaining some aspects of evolution, but not all of them (Tweed 2000, 106).

³⁶⁸ Bannister 1979, 66; Henning 2000, 14–15.

³⁶⁹ Spencer 1901, 8–10.

Herbert Spencer proposed that “in becoming more distinct from each other, and from their environment, organisms acquire more marked individualities”.³⁷⁰

This reads much like the earlier excerpt from Percival Lowell, who saw individuation as an indicator of psychological evolution, but it also resembles a text from one of the most popular American representatives of Spencerianism,³⁷¹ John Fiske. Fiske concurred with Alfred Russel Wallace that human evolution was markedly separate from animal evolution. In 1884, Fiske wrote that “when Humanity began to be evolved an entirely new chapter in the history of the universe was opened”. He argued that in the human evolution, an infinite evolution of the soul had displaced the physical evolution and variation, and that this soul-evolution had raised the human species “to a totally different plane from that on which all life had hitherto existed.” He continued that thenceforth the “dominant aspect of evolution” had not been “the genesis of species, but the progress of Civilization.” Thus, Fiske connected evolution and civilization, and he also suggested that the faculty of imagination underlay all human progress from savagery to civilization.³⁷²

Both Herbert Spencer and John Fiske accommodated the Darwinian idea of transmutation of species and the mechanism of natural selection in their frameworks of evolution. Spencer coined the catchphrase “survival of the fittest” to avoid naming some ultimate selector involved in the process.³⁷³ He emphasised that evolution was due to purely natural causes, and that the idea of a special creation was essentially absurd.³⁷⁴ As already mentioned, this was not the path John Fiske chose, for he was well aware of the Christian sensitivities of his American audience. Instead, Fiske propagated a theistic version of evolution.³⁷⁵

Besides the role of a creator in evolution, an equally, if not more, controversial subject concerned the scope of natural selection: did it operate universally, in both the realms of nature and men? And if so, did it operate on all stages of human evolution, or only on those preceding civilization? The question was, if natural selection operated in the human realm, would it not then lead to brutal competition and ruthless individualism in society?³⁷⁶ This was certainly Lafcadio Hearn’s opinion, as he referred to “human competition, according to the law of evolution” and characterised the “history of social evolution in the West” as “merciless competition”.³⁷⁷ Then, if the proposition that natural selection and competition were the mechanisms of social evolution was accepted,

³⁷⁰ Spencer 1864, 149-150.

³⁷¹ Bannister 1979, 63.

³⁷² Fiske 1895, 30, 99.

³⁷³ Bannister 1979, 28, 64; Bowler 1975, 114; Henning 2000, 14-15.

³⁷⁴ Spencer 1901, 4. To support his thesis that the modifying process from simple to complex operated throughout nature, and to counter the claim of Creation, Spencer cited the growth of a tree: “A tree differs from a seed immeasurably in every respect [...]. Yet is the one changed in the course of a few years into the other changed so gradually, that at no moment can it be said - Now the seed ceases to be, and the tree exists.” (Spencer 1901, 4-6.)

³⁷⁵ Bannister 1979, 64-65.

³⁷⁶ Bannister 1979, 4, 51, 66.

³⁷⁷ Hearn 1896b, 37, 189.

more questions followed. For example, what exactly were the characteristics that made a person “the fittest to survive”? And what was the purpose of all the unavoidable misery the competition would produce, was it all for some ultimate good, or was it fundamentally meaningless?³⁷⁸ And finally, should governments intervene in the process to lessen its negative effects, or let natural selection do its work and weed out the weak?³⁷⁹

Initially, Spencerians tended to downplay the role of natural selection once ‘civilization’ had been reached. Conflict and competition prevailed at lower stages of development, but on the higher stages, evolution of man tended towards perfection and happiness, and societies towards a Utopian equilibrium.³⁸⁰ Following this proposition, Lafcadio Hearn argued that:

Man's evolution is a progress into perfection and beatitude. The goal of evolution is Equilibration. Evils will vanish, one by one, till only that which is good survive. Then shall knowledge obtain its uttermost expansion ; then shall mind put forth its most wondrous blossoms ; then shall cease all struggle and all bitterness of soul, and all the wrongs and all the follies of life. Men shall become as gods, in all save immortality [...].³⁸¹

However, Spencer’s critics were quick to point out that such an equilibrium was in stark contrast with other scientific findings which indicated that life was in a state of constant flux. Consequently, Spencer had to redefine the goal of evolution as a “moving equilibrium.” He was also forced to acknowledge that progress from savagery to civilization was not as linear as he had presumed, for the evolutionary stages coexisted even within a modern European society. Finally, Spencer revised his initial theory to acknowledge that it was *adaptability to the environment* that ensured survival, not intelligence or strength. Rather than strengthen a theory however – that was already seen by many critics as illogical, vague, or patchy – ‘adaptability’ added implications of a certain moral depravity.³⁸²

In spite of much confusion, misinterpretation and criticism surrounding his theories, Herbert Spencer nevertheless became a household name among educated Americans, and his name became closely associated with evolution during the last decades of the 19th century. Spencer’s texts received wide publicity as they were published in prominent American journals and magazines, and during the latter half of the century, somewhere between 300,000 and half a million copies of his books were sold in the US. Some intellectuals (especially from New England) came to wholeheartedly adopt, promote, and interpret Spencer’s views, and their enthusiasm evidently struck a chord with people such as Hearn and Lowell.³⁸³

³⁷⁸ Rogers 1972, 279–280.

³⁷⁹ Bannister 1979, 50–51; Rogers 1972, 280.

³⁸⁰ Bannister 1979, 42, 47, 81.

³⁸¹ Hearn 1895, 165.

³⁸² Bannister 1979, 42, 48, 52.

³⁸³ Bannister 1979, 59, 61–62, 68, 70; Bowler 1975, 114; Hannaford 1996, 335; Henning 2000, 14; Rogers 1972, 279–280.

In the *Principles of Sociology* (three volumes, published between 1874 and 1896) Herbert Spencer took the notion of civilizational stages of societies, already familiar from the texts of such thinkers as Adam Ferguson, and connected it to evolution. Spencer argued that societies evolved from ‘military’ types to predominantly ‘industrial’ ones³⁸⁴. He also noted that evolution resulted in material progress, such as new and improved appliances, manufactured products, and other articles satisfying human wants, thus contributing to their overall happiness. Other by-products of evolution, as he saw it, were increased security and freedom, and advances in knowledge, science and the arts.³⁸⁵ All these material, political, social, and intellectual spheres were understood as being subject to evolution – that is, steadily becoming better adapted to their environment. This was an understanding of evolution which received unqualified support from William Griffis, Arthur Smith, and William Martin.³⁸⁶ As we will see later on, the more controversial Spencerian suggestion was the idea that evolution affected the sphere of religion, too.³⁸⁷

It seems that even though the grand idea of evolution posed serious challenges to traditional American world-views and values, it was nevertheless hard to totally avoid.³⁸⁸ Evolution had not only become caught up in the idea of civilization, but also progress. One way or another, this revolutionary idea had to be taken into account, either by studiously dodging the whole complex issue of civilization, progress, and evolution, or by clearly adopting or rejecting some, or all, parts of it.

³⁸⁴ Spencer 1900, 568.

³⁸⁵ Spencer 1901, 8–10.

³⁸⁶ William Griffis, for example, wrote about both the evolution of Japanese politics and society, and the evolution of Chinese government “from patriarchal to regal government, then feudalism, and finally centralization”. Arthur Smith referred to institutions which had evolved from “antecedent causes by an inevitable sequence, as every other development of human history is known to do”, and William Martin discussed the overall national evolution of China. (Griffis 1900, 68, 118, 135; Griffis 1903, 600, 608, 666; Martin 1881, 254; Smith 1901a, 5.)

³⁸⁷ Lafcadio Hearn explicitly subscribed to the “general law of religious evolution” traced by Herbert Spencer, which ran parallel to the law of social evolution. Spencer’s account emphasised how conceptions of the supernatural conformed to the prevailing cultural, social, and intellectual state of a man. Consequently, religious thinking evolved in stages, the first of which was “ghost-propitiation” and ancestral worship, followed by fetishism and worship of animals, nature, heaven, and the sun. From polytheism, prevalent in the more primitive types of society, Spencer saw religion evolving into monotheism, still current in the modern Western societies, but also coexisting with the next stage of ‘non-conformity’. Hearn interpreted the last stage of religious non-conformity to mean that religion would ultimately pass away “as a mere doctrine”. However, this final suggestion was unacceptable to writers like Griffis and Martin who were professed Protestants. Hence they gravitated towards alternative versions of the development of religious thought, and questioned the Spencerian account. (Hearn 1894b, 394; Hearn 1895, 207; Hearn 1896b, 243; Spencer 1897, 4–5, 7, 12, 14–15, 17–19, 21, 69–70, 75, 77, 134, 164.)

³⁸⁸ The concept of evolution was carried to other continents, too. For example, the Japan experts remarked that Darwinian and Spencerian evolutionary theories, and their ramifications to civilization, were discussed by the Japanese as much as the Americans. (Henning 2000, 28–29.)

2.5 Race

One result of lumping biological, social, and mental evolution together with progress and Civilization, was the growing tendency to interpret cultural differences in terms of race.³⁸⁹ The notion of civilization and progress as the social counterparts to biological evolution rose around the same time as scholarly debates on human races and the popular tendency in Europe and the United States to divide the peoples of the world into white and non-white races. These discussions became enmeshed to such extent, that historian Gail Bederman has described the 19th century concept of civilization as “explicitly racial.” European and American observers examined the histories of ‘racial stocks,’ and their nearly unanimous conclusion was that the white races had progressed the most and fastest. However, some difficult questions ensued from this conclusion. Did it mean that the white races were superior to others in every conceivable way? Were some races more endowed to progress than others, or were all races of man equally capable in this respect, provided they followed the path of Civilization laid down by the white races? And finally, would the white races continue to be the vanguard of progress in the future?³⁹⁰

The semantic field shows that, on average, the six writers referred to race quite frequently in their texts (see table 2 of the appendix for the precise figures).³⁹¹ Mainly it was Lafcadio Hearn’s *Kokoro* and *Out of the East*, Arthur Smith’s *Chinese Characteristics*, and Samuel Williams’ *The Middle Kingdom* that were responsible for the high average occurrence of the word. The majority of references conformed to Griffis’ description of the “races of men”, who were either tied together by common ancestry, “ethnic stock,”³⁹² or “language, temperament, character, and physique”.³⁹³ Griffis’ exposition was telling in many

³⁸⁹ Adams 1998, 49–50.

³⁹⁰ Bederman 1995, 25; Bonk 1989, 240; Henning 2000, 17; Lake et al. 2008, 9; Starobinski 2009, 166.

³⁹¹ Only those instances were counted when the meaning of ‘race’ was one of the following:

“a. A group of people belonging to the same family and descended from a common ancestor; a house, family, kindred.

b. A tribe, nation, or people, regarded as of common stock. In early use freq. with modifying adjective, as British race, Roman race, etc.

c. A group of several tribes or peoples, regarded as forming a distinct ethnic set.

d. According to various more or less formal systems of classification: any of the major groupings of mankind, having in common distinct physical features or having a similar ethnic background.” (“race, n.6,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2013.)

³⁹² “Ethnic” here in the sense of “pertaining to race; peculiar to a race or nation; ethnological. Also, pertaining to or having common racial, cultural, religious, or linguistic characteristics[...]”. However, the word also had non-Christian or pagan connotations. (“ethnic, adj. and n.,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2013.)

³⁹³ Griffis 1900, 35. On relatively few occasions the word was applied to the plant or animal kingdom, and to things non-human or superhuman, such as gods or monsters. Likewise, references to race in the sense of human groups united by hereditary occupations or family ties, were few and far between. For example, Griffis mentioned a “race of warriors,” Martin a “race of alchemists,” and Hearn termed the *Matsudaira* and *Kamiya* families as races. (See Griffis 2006a, 129; Hearn 1894a, 284–285; Hearn 1895, 72–73, 241; Hearn 1896b, 181; Martin 1881, 119, 171; Williams 1913a, 243, 334.)

respects, but the one question to which this description did not explicitly take a stand on, was where and how these races of men had originated in the first place.

There were two contending schools of thought regarding the origin of races: monogenism and polygenism. The supporters of monogenesis advocated the original unity and homogeneity of the human race. They assumed that humans had evolved, or been created according to the biblical account, or brought into existence by some other force, in one place, at one point in history, and thereafter spread and developed according to the climate and conditions of their habitat. Advocates of polygenesis, however, assumed that separate creations or evolutions had taken place on a number of occasions and in a number of places. This contention was especially prevalent among the 19th century American anthropologists, who used measurements of skulls and cranial capacities to support the polygenist stance.³⁹⁴ Even though none of the six experts deemed it necessary to choose between monogenesis and polygenesis, one might presume that the four Protestants subscribed to monogenism. Samuel Williams, at least, clearly tended towards the literal Biblical interpretation, assuming as he did that the “black-haired race”, that is, the progenitors of the Chinese, were the postdiluvian descendants of Noah’s son Shem. William Griffis also argued that the human race had begun with the “first couple.”³⁹⁵

One of the most renowned 18th and 19th century classifications³⁹⁶ regarding human races was presented by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840). In his dissertation *De generis humani varietate nativa* (On the Natural Variety of Mankind, 1775), Blumenbach had described four divisions of mankind, following a previous classification formulated by Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778). Some years later, Blumenbach revised his taxonomy, and stated that mankind was one species, but it included “five principal varieties”, which were the “white” Caucasian; “yellow” Mongolian; “black” Ethiopian; “copper-coloured” American; and the “tawny-coloured” Malay. What primarily distinguished Blumenbach’s classification from Linnaeus’ version was its hierarchical nature. Blumenbach’s contention was that the Caucasian variety was “the primeval one,” the one from which all the others diverged, and it was also the “most handsome and becoming” one.³⁹⁷

During the 19th century, Johann Blumenbach’s taxonomy was generally accepted in American scientific circles as well as among the general public.³⁹⁸ The six authors mentioned a variety of human races in their publications,³⁹⁹ but they

³⁹⁴ Adas 1989, 296; Henning 2000, 11–12; Kemiläinen 1993, 31; Lorenz 2008, 40.

³⁹⁵ Griffis 2006a, 34; Williams 1913b, 144.

³⁹⁶ Scientists of the Enlightenment era tended to consider classification as an eminently useful and reliable method for studying and ordering nature (Halmesvirta 1990, 37).

³⁹⁷ Blumenbach 1865, 264–267.

³⁹⁸ Henning 2000, 11.

³⁹⁹ William Griffis, for example, posited that two distinct races inhabited Japan: the Ainu and Japanese. The Japanese, he argued, were a mixed race, since underneath their present homogeneity, they were a fusion of “Aino, Malay, Nigrito, Corean, and Yamato” races. Arthur Smith referred to the Chinese as “an incomparably numerous and homogeneous race,” while William Martin elaborated that, during their career, the Chinese race had absorbed and assimilated other races. Samuel Williams noted

tended to label the Chinese, Japanese, and other 'races' of eastern Asia collectively as the "yellow branch of the human race" or the "yellow races".⁴⁰⁰ In an article published in the *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York*, William Griffis described the Japanese in terms of Blumenbach's theory as a "sort of 'missing link' between the Mongolian and the Caucasian races,"⁴⁰¹ thus distancing the Japanese from the "yellow" race, but without granting them the appellation "white." Griffis emphasised that the Chinese and Japanese peoples were distinct from each other "ethnologically, physically, and morally", despite the fact that they were generally assigned to the same varietal category,⁴⁰² and largely shared the same Chinese civilization. In the same article, Griffis noted that some foreigners considered "the Chinaman as the man of superior race" compared to the Japanese, and that most Americans were "apt to like the Japanese best", but he refrained from making any judgments on the issue himself, at least at this point.⁴⁰³

As was the custom in the 19th century, the term "American" was not used by any of the experts to describe the indigenous population of North America. The term designated those settlers who were of the same Anglo-American, or 'Anglo-Saxon,' stock as the English. This much was evident from the alternate references to Anglo-Saxon and American, when the writers alluded to themselves, or to "us", in relation to other peoples and races.⁴⁰⁴ But even though the English and Americans were of the same stock, occasionally the writers implied that the two formed their own individual American and English races.⁴⁰⁵ Could it be then that race was just another name for a nation? This seems to be the case in some instances, and it has also been the contention of historians Michael Adas and Joseph Henning. Adas has claimed that race was used synonymously with people or nation, and Henning has concluded that for 19th century Americans the category of race included nationality as well as skin colour, ethnicity, and language.⁴⁰⁶

that the Chinese formed "the leading family", but were not the only race populating the Chinese empire. For example, in the southwest resided the Tibetans, while in the north and north-eastern outskirts of the empire dwelled the Mongols, Manchus, and Tartars. Other 'races' the six authors mentioned were, e.g., Aryan, Germanic, Greek, Teutonic, Saxon, Danish, Norman races. (Griffis 1892, 16; Griffis 2006a, xviii, 16, 89; Griffis 2006b, 5, 22; Hearn 1894a, 210; Martin 1881, 32, 58, 250; Martin 1894, 16, 70; Smith 1899, 351, 306; Smith 1901a, 3; Williams 1913a, 41, 44-45.)

⁴⁰⁰ Lowell 2007b, 16; Smith 1890, 41. Alternatively, they called the Chinese and Japanese as Turanian, Altaic, or simply Oriental races (Griffis 1903, 366; Hearn 1894b, 554; Lowell 2007b, 81; Smith 1899, 42).

⁴⁰¹ Griffis 1878, 79.

⁴⁰² According to Rotem Kowner, the American observers often emphasised that the Chinese and Japanese bore only a very distant relation to each other, even though they were classified under the same category of "Mongolian race." (Kowner 2000, 113).

⁴⁰³ Griffis 1878, 79; Griffis 1903, 351-352; Griffis 2006a, 89.

⁴⁰⁴ See e.g. Griffis 1900, 26, 56, 222, 226, 230; 235; Griffis 1903, 428; Hearn 1895, 220; Lowell 1895, 283; Smith 1890, 187; Smith 1901a, 5.

⁴⁰⁵ Griffis 1903, 428; Griffis 2006a, 225; Hearn 1896b, 122.

⁴⁰⁶ Adas 1989, 339; Henning 2000, 145. On the other hand, we have statements from people like Griffis, who maintained that the Chinese were a race, but not a nation (Griffis 1900, 177).

But how did the races, whether the original stocks or the more national variations, differ from each other? One commonplace assumption at the time was that environment accounted for the various traits different peoples displayed. For example, the fertility of the soil and abundance of food in the tropical climate was understood to be conducive to laziness, passivity, and an incapacity for inventiveness,⁴⁰⁷ whereas the harsher climate of Europe was believed to have made Europeans energetic, industrious, and dominant.⁴⁰⁸ Samuel Williams evidently subscribed to this environmental explanation, as he noted that the Mongol and Manchu races, originally “springing from the same stock”, had separated and developed in different directions “under different circumstances”.⁴⁰⁹

As already mentioned, Herbert Spencer proposed that racial characteristics were acquired and passed on to future generations, and thus races diversified as they evolved. This view of inherited racial, and even national, characteristics was more or less explicitly advocated by all six authors. Lafcadio Hearn took what he considered to be the scientific stance. He argued that “the whole life of a race” was stored in each tiny human cell. Considering that he attributed “almost every phase of public and private life” to the national character, it can be inferred that Hearn assumed racial characteristics to exist in the human embryo,⁴¹⁰ waiting to eventually unfold in life. William Griffis and Samuel Williams also made an attempt to explain how national temperaments developed. Griffis assumed that the “unique Japanese character” had been “molded by nature, circumstances, and original bent”. Williams, on the other hand, made no reference to the role of the environment at this point, citing divine intervention instead. He proposed that “[a] survey of the world and its various races in successive ages leads one to infer that God has some plan of national character”.⁴¹¹

The study of racial and national characters was by no means seen as a trivial exercise. Samuel Williams saw it as important for understanding the human species as a whole, and for ascertaining God’s plan in creating all the racial variations. Meanwhile, Lafcadio Hearn suggested that racial character was the key to understanding the natural inclinations and capabilities of a people, and it was this “race instinct” more than any government which steered a nation for-

⁴⁰⁷ However, apparently the authors thought that ‘tropical inertia’ did not affect those races that had originated in other climates and then moved to the tropics. William Martin observed that the Japanese were “capable of thriving in a tropical climate”, while William Griffis pointed out that Anglo-Saxons already had a “foothold in the tropics,” and he saw no reason why the race would not prosper there in the future. (Griffis 1900, 56; Martin 1900, 406.)

⁴⁰⁸ Adas 1989, 255–257; Kemiläinen 1993, 40.

⁴⁰⁹ Williams also claimed that the people living in the cooler, more temperate southern provinces of China possessed a “greater vigor and size” compared to other races dwelling on the same parallel, but in a hotter, tropical climate. (Williams 1913a, 44, 51.)

⁴¹⁰ For more information on 18th and 19th century theories about embryos, cells, epigenesis, and preformationism, see Amundson, Ron, *The Changing Role of Embryo in Evolutionary Thought: Roots of Evo-Devo*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

⁴¹¹ Griffis 2006a, 89; Hearn 1895, 111; Hearn 1896b, 272; Williams 1913a, 47.

ward.⁴¹² It was generally assumed that race exerted an influence on all spheres of human life and activity.⁴¹³

But what, then, were these traits that constituted a race character? Obviously, physical traits were high up on the list, as is evident from Samuel Williams' description of the Chinese race:

The physical traits of the Chinese may be described as being between the light and agile Hindu, and the muscular, fleshy European. Their form is well built and symmetrical; their color is a brunette or sickly white, rather approaching to a yellowish than to a florid tint, but this yellow hue has been much exaggerated.⁴¹⁴

The other authors were less keen on enumerating the *physical* differences of the Chinese and Japanese, as perhaps their appearance had been long-familiar to Americans, but they did mention other less immediately visible traits they felt were peculiar to each race.⁴¹⁵ Once written down for all to see, many of these national/racial traits began to appear like truisms. For example, the suicidal tendency of the Japanese, which also Hearn remarked, had been reiterated in texts relating to Japan ever since the 16th and 17th centuries⁴¹⁶. Now, such traits as loyalty, disregard for life, or conservatism were clearly cultural, not physical traits. And yet they were seen to be genetically transmitted just like hair and skin colour. Evidently, for the 19th century observers, there was no need to think in terms of biological, cultural, and social traits, for race covered all those things – both in the popular imagination and in academic circles since Linnaeus.⁴¹⁷

Lafcadio Hearn and Percival Lowell argued that a race shared one mind or mental character. As Lowell explained, each individual mind was “an isolated bit of the race mind”.⁴¹⁸ Ethical, moral, and religious characteristics were all seen to be conditioned by race. Religion, Hearn posited, was the “synthesis of the whole ethical experience of a race [...] the record, as well as the result, of its social evolution”. And Lowell argued that an esoteric cult of divine possession was at the “core of the Japanese character and instinct”, while religion was not just part of the race's character, it was also its “outgrowth”.⁴¹⁹ Hearn even went so far as to claim that imagination was shared by a race, as were the emotions, impressions, and “tendencies accumulated through all the immense life of the race”. In other words, Hearn believed in the existence of “race memory”.⁴²⁰ Not only that, but Hearn and Lowell believed there was also a mutual, inborn soul

⁴¹² Hearn 1895, 190, 217; Williams 1913a, 48.

⁴¹³ Lorenz 2008, 41.

⁴¹⁴ Williams 1913a, 41.

⁴¹⁵ For example, Lafcadio Hearn cited a fine taste and readiness to sacrifice oneself for loyalty's sake as being decidedly Japanese, while Arthur Smith ascribed commercial instinct and conservatism to the Chinese, and William Martin thought that the Chinese were particularly prudent, patient, and firm (Hearn 1894b, 390; Hearn 1895, 200; Martin 1900, 368; Smith 1890, 33; Smith 1899, 103).

⁴¹⁶ Littlewood 1996, 35–36.

⁴¹⁷ Adas 1989, 274; Bederman 1995, 28; Henning 2000, 10–11.

⁴¹⁸ Hearn 1894b, 388; Hearn 1895, 205; Hearn 1896b, 8; Lowell 2007b, 80.

⁴¹⁹ Hearn 1894b, 388; Hearn 1895, 207; Lowell 1895, 13; Lowell 2007b, 12.

⁴²⁰ Hearn 1894b, 348, 388–389; Hearn 1914, 202, 256–257.

belonging to the race – the “soul of the Far East”, as Lowell put it.⁴²¹ However, the one trait the six authors did not impute to shared race mind or character was intellect. Instead, they thought that intellectual abilities were subject to stimulus and training.⁴²²

As mentioned earlier, race character was understood to be immutable, and yet, it was not altogether unchanging. Hearn was concerned to see if the Japanese race character and “race brain” could cope with the sudden and heavy shock of “Occidentalization” in the latter half of the 19th century. Hearn thought that an “Oriental race” would have difficulty adopting the characteristics of the West at such a short interval, and he feared that the moral and mental powers of the people would suffer in the process. It was not that the Japanese could not change, it was just that they could only change along lines dictated by their race character.⁴²³ Lowell was much of the same opinion, believing that the Japanese could only emulate Western social and mental forms superficially: “Take away the European influence of the last twenty years, and each man might almost be his own great-grandfather. In race characteristics he is yet essentially the same”⁴²⁴.

But if progress and civilization were something incontrovertibly European and American, did this not mean that an incapability to ‘westernise’ ones race character counted as an incapability to attain civilization?⁴²⁵

Those of the six experts, who had personally invested their time and energy in the missions to civilize China and Japan, could not logically support the argument that some races were excluded from civilization. Nor could they very well apply the racial category of counter concepts. Only the fundamental psychological unity of mankind⁴²⁶ assured that their efforts to promote Chinese and Japanese progress were not in vain. Therefore the four Protestant experts involved in the civilizing mission: William Griffis, Arthur Smith, Samuel Williams, and William Martin, made it clear that there was ultimately only one “human

⁴²¹ Hearn 1894b, 346; Hearn 1896b, 58; Lowell 1895, 278, 287; Lowell 2007b, 70. It seems that *soul* was a comprehensive and ambiguous concept for Lowell. It not only pertained to mental evolution and the sense of self and individuality, but it was also something essentially impersonal, cosmic, and collective, with a hint of the spiritual in it, though not in the traditional Christian sense.

⁴²² See e.g. Martin 1881, 60.

⁴²³ Hearn 1894b, 665; Hearn 1896b, 9, 11.

⁴²⁴ Lowell 2007b, 8.

⁴²⁵ Arnold Toynbee forcefully rejected the idea that there was one process of Civilization (with a capital-C), synonymous with the West. As he saw it, this was “the misconception of the unity of Civilization” and he attributed it to the fact that Westernisation and unification had certainly happened in political and economical terms, even if *culturally* the world was still diverse and manifold. He also discarded the idea that civilizations formed a historical continuum, or that one civilization was the direct descendant of another. In other words, they were *not* stages in an ultimate process of Civilization (Toynbee 1963, 151-157).

⁴²⁶ According to Anssi Halmesvirta, the majority of early 19th century anthropologists subscribed to the notion of fundamental uniformity of human mind. But for some scholars the physical differences between various peoples suggested that races had been created, or they had developed into being, different and that they had been endowed with varying degrees of intelligence. (Halmesvirta 1990, 85.)

race"⁴²⁷, and thus they echoed the monogenist stance. They granted that there were different branches, varieties, and parts of the whole,⁴²⁸ but essentially these branches were, as Arthur Smith said, "all members one of another"⁴²⁹. Curiously, then, the experts used the concept of race both as a way to distinguish and as a way to unite people. In the final event, they believed that mankind was one and equal before God, and that all branches of men were capable of improving themselves, and could accommodate aspects of the higher civilization, as William Griffis affirmed⁴³⁰.

By using Civilization as the scale for comparing races, the four Protestant authors could imply a racial hierarchy, without implying that racial characteristics themselves were fixed. In this way, the superiority of Caucasian, Aryan, or Anglo-Saxon races was based on social, cultural, political, intellectual, and moral premises,⁴³¹ not on biology. These premises were accessible and attainable to everyone. Also Lafcadio Hearn promoted the essential unity of the human race and its singular path of progress.⁴³² Percival Lowell, too, assumed that there was a common human race, divided into branches,⁴³³ but he was less optimistic about the ability of all the branches to progress. Lowell believed that each race had its share of "evolving force". If this share was comparably small, the result was that the race in question was less advanced than others with a larger share; that its rate of progress was slower; and that the individual members of that race would be "nearer together." Percival Lowell was certain that this had happened to the East Asian peoples, and especially to the Japanese. Lowell contended that the Japanese were lacking in psychological development, abstract thinking, self-consciousness, and originality. This he took for evidence that the Japanese share of evolving force must have been small to begin with, and that by the 19th century, the race had already used up the whole of it, and subsequently stagnated.⁴³⁴

Percival Lowell's account followed closely the theory Herbert Spencer had presented in his article called "The Comparative Psychology of Man," first published in the journal *Mind* in 1876. Spencer argued that the races of mankind

⁴²⁷ See e.g. Griffis 1892, 13; Griffis 1900, 30, 59; Griffis 2006a, 181; Martin 1881, 161; Martin 1894, 173, 254; Smith 1890, 5, 145; Smith 1899, 179; Williams 1913a, 45, 582.

⁴²⁸ Martin 1900, 61; Smith 1890, 5; Williams 1913a, 45, 582.

⁴²⁹ Smith 1901b, 515.

⁴³⁰ Griffis 1900, 16; Griffis 1903, 629. However, Arthur Smith concurred with Hearn and Lowell in their opinion that races were capable of improving only along their own, inherent tendencies. Smith went on to clarify his argument further with the following curious metaphor: "If the planet on which we dwell be considered as a head, and the several nations, as the hair, the Chinese race is a venerable cow-lick, capable of being combed, clipped, and possibly shaved, but which is certain to grow again just as before, and the general direction of which is not likely to be changed." (Smith 1890, 41, 104.)

⁴³¹ It was a commonplace assumption in American Protestant circles that external factors, particularly religion, rather than internal racial characteristics, were behind the accomplishments of a race, and accounted for its position on the ladder of civilization. (Bonk 1989, 241.)

⁴³² Hearn 1894a, 199; Hearn 1896b, 251; Hearn 1914, 158.

⁴³³ Lowell 2007b, 11, 16.

⁴³⁴ Lowell 1895, 20, 72, 329, 370-371; Lowell 2007b, 78-79.

differed in mental mass, and consequently, in the quantity of energy in which this greater mental mass manifested itself. According to Spencer, races also differed in their mental complexity, that is, in their ability to generalise and think abstractly. It was “like the difference between child and adult minds”, Spencer explained.⁴³⁵ Thirdly, Spencer thought that races differed in the rate of their mental development. He claimed that, in keeping with the “biological law that the higher the organisms the longer they take to evolve”, the members of “the inferior human races” could be expected to “complete their mental evolution sooner than members of the superior races”.⁴³⁶ Through inheritance, these traits were passed on from generation to generation, and consequently, the characteristics of a race became more or less fixed.

Lowell and Spencer were not the only one with such convictions. The European and American anatomists, phrenologists, and social evolutionists had created a scientific aura over racial stereotyping and categorization according to perceived hereditary distinctions and innate abilities. These speculations had diffused into American society via literature that was very popular at the time; so much so, in fact, that finally those who believed in the ultimate unity of mankind were likely to have found themselves in the minority.⁴³⁷

In effect, the Europeans and Americans reserved the highest level of development solely for the white race. Such argument had been made, for example, in Josiah Nott and George Gliddon’s publication *Types of Mankind* (1854), which became the leading authority in American discussions of race in the 19th century. Nott and Gliddon proposed that, during the history of the mankind, only intrinsically superior “Caucasians” had succeeded in building civilizations. Meanwhile, the “Mongolian” variety had managed to construct only semi-civilizations, and the “Negro” had developed no civilizations whatsoever. Around the same time, similar thoughts were espoused in France, by Arthur de Gobineau (1816–1882), who claimed in his *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races, 1853–1855) that the “pure” Aryan race was the main wellspring of civilization.⁴³⁸

Lafcadio Hearn, for instance, seemed to accept the proposition that the English and Americans were inherently “masterful races”.⁴³⁹ Eventually, arguments like these were used to legitimize colonization. “Inferior” races were seen to be incapable of civilization and unfit to rule themselves, while “superior” white races were portrayed as civilized and destined to rule. Chances were that, after an indefinite period of tutelage, the non-white races would someday gain the eligibility to govern themselves.⁴⁴⁰ William Griffis, at least, was certainly echoing this line of argument in his call for an American colonisation of the

⁴³⁵ Spencer 1901, 351, 353–355.

⁴³⁶ Other racial variables Spencer devised were the plasticity of mind, variability, and impulsiveness. (Spencer 1901, 355–357.)

⁴³⁷ Adas 1989, 318.

⁴³⁸ Adas 1989, 318; Beard et al. 1948, 214; Bonk 1989, 240; Henning 2000, 12.

⁴³⁹ Hearn 1896b, 122.

⁴⁴⁰ Adas 1989, 275; Lake et al. 2008, 9, 62.

Philippines.⁴⁴¹ But there were also voices predicting an impending doom for “inferior races” before the Anglo-American conquest of the world. Hearn pointed out that already “various weaker races had vanished or were vanishing under Anglo-Saxon domination.” The English were a “race of prey,” sucking the life out of other races, Hearn described.⁴⁴² Lowell and Griffis expressed less harsh views of the actions of the Anglo-Saxon race, but they too were of the opinion that, unless other races strived for civilization, they would inevitably perish.⁴⁴³

But there was one major obstacle standing in the way of a wholesale adoption of Western civilization by the Chinese and Japanese. Hearn and Smith called it “race antagonism.” Hearn asserted that during the latter part of the 19th century, mutual dislike between Oriental and Occidental races had steadily grown, and anti-foreignism had gained a foothold in the archipelago. Smith observed that, in the Chinese empire too, the same phenomenon of “race hatred” and prejudice prevailed.⁴⁴⁴ But Hearn and Smith prophesied that if the Chinese and Japanese would only overcome their apprehensions towards adopting Western civilization, one day they might be able to beat the Anglo-Saxons at their own game.

As we have seen, 19th century American conceptions of race were confused and tangled up with both scientific and theological theories. Yet, the concept was mutually intelligible to the authors as well as their readers, otherwise the authors would have taken greater pains to define the concept more explicitly. Judging by the way it was presented, the concept was also considered as useful and having explanatory power. One important thing to note here is that the fascination with race was not, in itself, racism as we understand it today. Moreover, Michael Adas has argued that, at the time, racism was more of a subordinate than dominant theme in the Western intellectual discourse on non-Western peoples.⁴⁴⁵ This seems to be the case also in the writings of our six experts. The primary point of reference for these observers was civilization and progress, not race. Although they held that race was a contributing factor in the civilization of men, it was not the ultimate measure.

⁴⁴¹ Griffis 1900, 10, 25, 226.

⁴⁴² Hearn 1895, 220; Hearn 1896b, 189–190, 200–201.

⁴⁴³ Griffis 1903, 578; Lowell 2007b, 81–82.

⁴⁴⁴ Hearn 1896b, 131–132, 137; Smith 1901a, 63, 137.

⁴⁴⁵ The dominant theme being the fundamental conviction of Western material superiority. (Adas 1989, 12, 274, 291, 339–341.)

3 THE 'OTHER' OF CIVILIZATION

In a sense, civilization was the ultimate counter-concept in the 19th century. It comprised of all the three types of opposition that João Feres Júnior has classified: cultural, temporal, and racial. Civilization was a concept that allowed one to make spatial and cultural distinctions between macro-level entities, as well as distinctions pertaining to manners and customs of individual members of a culture. One could also make temporal distinctions between “modern” and “ancient” civilizations, distinctions between the levels of civilization, and distinctions between the abilities of human races and nations to make progress in the track of Civilization. Thus, the concept proved to be a highly expedient and useful tool for ‘othering.’ It could be effectively used for distinguishing oneself from those who were different from one’s own reference group, and for constructing essentialised binary dichotomies between oneself and the ‘Other.’

In this chapter we will first look at the obvious ‘Others’ of civilization: savagery and barbarism. We will then turn to the descriptions the six authors formulated of their own civilization, and the civilizations of China and Japan, and how in this process of representation they designated the Chinese and Japanese as civilized ‘Others.’ Using the concept of civilization for ‘othering’ was fundamentally something more than just a mere rhetorical exercise or casual choice of words. As we will see by the end of this chapter, the effect that the concept of civilization had on politics and international relations, and vice versa, were momentous.

3.1 Savagery and barbarism

The logical opposite of civilization, “uncivilization”, was defined in the *Webster’s Dictionary* of 1828 as a “state of savageness; rude state”⁴⁴⁶. However, the six authors employed this word only very rarely. Rather than use this unwieldy

⁴⁴⁶ “Uncivilization, n.,” *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828.

term, the authors seemed to prefer the terms “barbarism” and “savagery”. Nevertheless, uncivilization, uncivilized, barbarism, and savagery were used synonymously by all six to refer to customs, tribes, regions, and historical periods that were thought to represent a low stage in the process of Civilization.⁴⁴⁷

In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “barbarism” is described as a social or intellectual condition of ignorance, rudeness, and absence of culture, or a feature of such a condition. According to the dictionary, the word has had this meaning in English since the 16th century. As for the term “barbarian”, according to the *Webster’s Dictionary* of 1828, it signified a man in his rude state, a cruel and brutal man, or a foreigner, in the Roman or Ancient Greek sense of the word.⁴⁴⁸ Although these meanings for “barbarism” and “barbarian” crop up in the texts of all six authors, Lafcadio Hearn and Percival Lowell used the word barbarism and its derivatives very little, if at all, compared to the other four (see list of figures in table 2 of the appendix).

As a way to distinguish the polished and cultivated “us” from the uncultivated and rude “others outside,” the concept of ‘barbarian’ has existed much longer than the concept of civilization. In fact, the dichotomy itself has probably been nearly universal, crucial for the existence of human societies everywhere, even though the exact word ‘barbarian’ has not been in use. However, in order to be effective and intelligible, this concept requires an opposition, a counterpart embodying the meaning “non-barbarian.” As Jean Starobinski has noted, without civilization there would be no barbarism, and vice versa. But as civilization is a relatively new concept, other ones, usually relating to civility and cultivation, had to be employed before it entered into usage.⁴⁴⁹ But after the concept of civilization had been coined and circulated, it became the proper antonym of barbarism.

However, in the 19th century, the term barbarian was used to describe part-civilized rather than uncivilized peoples. Michael Adas has argued that the word was reserved for those peoples who were seen to have initially progressed, but had then stagnated or degenerated, those in China and India being prime examples.⁴⁵⁰ However, the semantic field suggests that our authors rarely used “barbarian” in direct reference to the Chinese or the Japanese, which then begs the question as to where they *did* use the term.

One usage was when referring to the ‘second stage’ of progress – the step higher than savagery, but lower than civilization.⁴⁵¹ Barbarism was a stage before letters, arithmetic, chronology, and husbandry. It was a stage which Arthur Smith felt the Saxon, Danish and Norman “race-stocks” had left behind, and

⁴⁴⁷ Griffis 1892, 89, 220; Griffis 2006a, 305; Griffis 2006b, 93, 192; Williams 1913a, 25, 184.

⁴⁴⁸ “Barbarian, n.” *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828; “Barbarism, n.” *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2013.

⁴⁴⁹ Lepenies 2008, 214; Mazlish 2009, 365, 367; Starobinski 2009, 157.

⁴⁵⁰ Adas 1989, 195.

⁴⁵¹ See e.g. Griffis 2006a, 15, 64; Griffis 2006b, 36.

from which the Chinese and Japanese had also emerged, according to William Griffis and William Martin.⁴⁵²

Secondly, the authors used 'barbarian' to refer to the 'Other,' that is, something the observer was unwilling or incapable of understanding. This type of 'othering' could also have suggested that the barbarian was less developed in certain respects than the author and his reference group, but chiefly it was intended to denote something foreign. For example, William Griffis noted that Japanese items tended to be considered as mere "barbarous curiosities" in Western lands,⁴⁵³ presumably because Japan was distant and unfamiliar, and also because many Westerners looked down on foreign cultures.

Most of the experts noticed that the same connotation of 'foreigner as barbarian' was one that the Chinese and Japanese also held. The Chinese and Japanese made a distinction between inner and outer peoples, that is, their own civilization and the prevailing barbarism outside. This was nothing new, Arthur Smith explained, as they were, in fact, following "the attitude of the ancient Greeks to every nation not Grecian, to consider and to treat them as 'barbarians'". Samuel Williams also made it clear that outsiders were seen by the Chinese to be barbarian and less civilized, due to the simple fact that they lacked knowledge about the language and customs of China.⁴⁵⁴ Following this line of reasoning, Americans and Europeans were just as 'barbaric' as other non-Chinese and non-Japanese peoples. This inversion of the roles of just who was civilized and who was barbarian was one of the favourite themes among our experts. For example, William Griffis pointed out that the Japanese had called Commodore Perry a barbarian; when in fact, by concluding the Convention of Kanagawa with the Japanese and opening the country to Western influences, the same Commodore Perry had been, as Griffis saw it, the first in a succession of Americans to "break down Japanese barbarism"⁴⁵⁵.

Sometimes, the authors assumed a humorous tone in treating the subject of inversion. Griffis, for example, played with the idea that, in Japan, the civilized were actually the barbarians⁴⁵⁶. But more often than not, there was a touch of alarm or irritation. Griffis commented frequently on the initial Japanese hostility towards the Europeans and Americans who had intruded upon their country. He described how the Japanese aristocrats in the emperor's court had opposed the opening of their country to the "ugly barbarians," how these nobles had been driven by a "hatred to barbarians," and how they had longed for a "sweeping-away of the barbarians."⁴⁵⁷ Arthur Smith reported that conservative Chinese officials used a similar rhetoric. To them, a Westerner seemed like a "wild and untameable barbarian," and, according to Smith, one had even wished to "have a rug made of the skin of a Western Barbarian." Although Wil-

⁴⁵² Griffis 1892, 80; Griffis 2006b, 150; Martin 1900, 243; Martin 1901a, 29, 405; Smith 1899, 351.

⁴⁵³ Griffis 1892, 41.

⁴⁵⁴ Martin 1894, 144; Smith 1890, 124; Williams 1913b, 461.

⁴⁵⁵ Griffis 1900, 104, 119; Griffis 2006a, 203.

⁴⁵⁶ Griffis 1903, 414.

⁴⁵⁷ Griffis 1892, 214; Griffis 1903, 585; Griffis 2006a, 203.

liams indicated that there was some justification for the Chinese to refer to the Westerners as “devils and barbarians” after the Opium Wars, the experts were mostly alarmed at being treated in such a dehumanising fashion. Especially since the threats did materialise at times, perhaps most notably during the Boxer uprising, the leitmotif of which, Smith noted, was the extermination of “the foreign barbarians”.⁴⁵⁸

It seems that the authors did not question their own representations of Chinese and Japanese perspectives, or to be more precise, their ability to translate Chinese and Japanese ideas into English. Usually the experts failed to mention the original Chinese and Japanese source-words they were translating into “barbarian”, but it can be inferred that they were generally referring to either *yi* in Chinese, or *i* and *ebisu* in Japanese – all readings of the same character (夷)⁴⁵⁹. But even knowing that William Griffis was translating the word *ebisu* into ‘barbarian’, in this case with regard to the Ainu people of northern Japan, still ignores a crucial problem. By translating this word into such an already loaded concept, he was associating Chinese and Japanese thoughts with his own preconceptions of what ‘barbarian’ actually meant, according to his own culture’s conceptual framework. Similarly, when William Martin paralleled “successive sackings of Rome by Gaul and Vandal” with Manchu and Mongol attacks of China, he was interpreting Chinese history and society through the historical lens of Europe.⁴⁶⁰ This meant there was a serious risk of losing something in translation, and this was a problem that also affected other conceptual categories – such as religion.

Lydia Liu has demonstrated that such acts of translation could have serious political repercussions. The choice of translating the Chinese *yi* into “barbarian” in the first half of the 19th century – instead of “foreigner”, as had been the custom before – lumbered the word with Greek and Christian etymologies. Consequently, the word lost the Chinese meanings of “stranger” and “non-Chinese”, and assumed an emphasis that it did not carry in the Chinese language. Westerners perceived that *yi* had pejorative and humiliating implications, which resulted into much confusion and resentment. The usage of *yi* in official documents was seen as an insult to foreigners. In fact, one could argue that this particular translation of the word became the basis for many clashes between the Chinese and foreign residents, which ultimately resulted in the Opium Wars.⁴⁶¹ The concept of ‘barbarian’ could therefore lead to violence, such as when the Chinese and Japanese tried to drive foreigners out of the treaty ports, or when foreigners tried to assert their superiority and civilization over the peoples of China and Japan.

Then again, violence was considered to be an inherent quality of barbarism. All the authors, except for Lowell, qualified certain brutal acts, such as cruel punishment, torture, and the inhumane execution of prisoners, as barbari-

⁴⁵⁸ Smith 1901a, 100, 270, 316; Williams 1913b, 401.

⁴⁵⁹ See e.g., Griffis 2006a, 150, 160, 186.

⁴⁶⁰ Griffis 2006b, 163; Martin 1894, 17, 72.

⁴⁶¹ Liu 2004, 31–35.

ties. Other such acts included human sacrifice, political assassination, mutilation, and slaughter (in times of both war and peace). William Griffis also listed religious persecution as an act that belonged to societies still at a barbarous level, and contrasted it with the tolerance shown in the civilized lands of Christendom.⁴⁶² The impression one gets from the texts of the experts is that the single most distinguishable feature of civilization – the one that raised it above barbarism – was its ability to effectively curb violence. However, it was acknowledged that barbarous acts were not strictly confined to the state of barbarity. In this way, the authors could admit that, although the Chinese and Japanese still harboured some outdated barbaric customs, and vestiges of brutal conduct, they had nevertheless risen above the level of barbarism.

Barbarous practices and attitudes could perhaps exist alongside civilization,⁴⁶³ but William Griffis lauded the efforts of the Japanese government to remove and reform these. Meanwhile, Lowell and Hearn took a more relativistic stance, questioning the assumption that civilization inevitably meant westernisation. Lowell believed that the Japanese government should not be deluded into the wholesale adoption of ‘civilized’ western customs, that is, into thinking that everything “not in keeping with foreign manners and customs” was automatically barbarous. Not to mention the fact, as Hearn pointed out, that from the Japanese point of view, some western practices seemed just as barbaric as certain Japanese practices appeared to the Westerners. Furthermore, Hearn felt that, when it came to manners and morals, it was actually Westerners who were the barbarians.⁴⁶⁴ In this way, Hearn turned the concepts of barbarism and civilization into a convenient rhetorical device for criticism.

All six experts seemed to assume that they represented the viewpoint of the civilized. From this perspective, William Griffis and William Martin could criticise Japan and China for the uncivilized features of their societies, while Lafcadio Hearn could denounce civilization itself by claiming that the civilized were actually the barbarians in some respects.

‘Savage’ (and its derivatives) was the other antonym to civilization that cropped up in the texts of the six experts, although it was used substantially less. With the exception of William Griffis, the word featured only ten times or less in any one book of our authors. *Webster’s Dictionary* of 1828 defined the noun ‘savage’ as a “man of extreme, unfeeling, brutal cruelty”, or a “human being in his native state of rudeness”. And the adjectival form of savage was synonymous with “uncivilized”, “inhuman”, “fierce”, “wild”, and “un-

⁴⁶² Griffis 2006a, 296; Griffis 2006b, 190; Hearn 1894a, 163; Martin 1894, 33; Martin 1900, 1; Smith 1899, 319; Smith 1901a, 83, 110; Smith 1901b, 612, 655; Williams 1913a, 392; Williams 1913b, 436, 555, 702, 730.

⁴⁶³ William Martin, for example, thought that the major flaw in the otherwise immaculate shield of Chinese civilization was the “disesteem of the female sex,” which “stamps a people with barbarism.” Similarly, Griffis was questioning the treatment of women when he commented on the “foolish and barbarous customs of the past ages” still practised in 19th century Japan. (Griffis 2006a, 83; Martin 1900, 108.)

⁴⁶⁴ Griffis 2006a, 83–84; Hearn 1894a, 168, 190; Hearn 1895, 99; Hearn 1896b, 201; Lowell 1895, 103.

tamed".⁴⁶⁵ Clearly, the concept of 'savage' had much the same connotations as 'barbarian'. Both concepts referred to a violent, uncivilized stage of mankind's development. The one notable difference was the closer association of savage with nature and its various associated phenomena.⁴⁶⁶

As mentioned before, savagery was perceived to be the first stage in the process of Civilization. Nevertheless, William Griffis treated it more as a stage equivalent to barbarism. "Society emerged from its savage state, and civilization began"⁴⁶⁷, he wrote, leaving an intermediary stage of barbarism out of the picture, and making it clear that the Japanese had progressed beyond the stage of savagery. Arthur Smith, too, believed that this stage had belonged to Japan's ancestors – just as it belonged to the past of the European and American peoples. And for his part, also Percival Lowell deemed it necessary to state emphatically that "the Japanese are not a savage tribe".⁴⁶⁸ So if the Chinese, Japanese, Europeans, and Americans most definitely were not savages, then who were? Griffis and his colleagues believed the answer lay with such people as the untamed, unlettered, and aboriginal tribe of Ainu from the northern tip of Japan, as well as the tribes of Africa, "the southern seas," and North America.⁴⁶⁹

Percival Lowell thought that a "savage is but little of an imaginative being", meaning that savages lacked the ability for abstract and innovative thinking. However, he added that "Far Orientals" were in general a "particularly unimagined set of people," and as the "spirit of imitation" was "common in the minds that lack originality," he posited that the Japanese and other Orientals were necessarily imitative. Oddly enough, these notions of the Japanese as unimagined, and the unimagined as savages, did not seem to conflict in Lowell's mind with his former statement that the Japanese were not savages. Apparently, other Western observers were more consistent in their assessments, as Lafcadio Hearn remarked that usually those who believed that the Japanese were imitative also took them to be savages.⁴⁷⁰

When it came to the treatment of savagery in association with violence, the savage acts the experts enumerated were largely the same as the acts they called barbarous – the most notable addition to this list being cannibalism.⁴⁷¹ And like barbarism, savagery was often used in conjunction with warfare. The Taiping Rebellion (1850/1851–1864) and the Boxer Uprising, in particular, were mentioned as savage conflicts.⁴⁷² These were examples of Chinese savagery, and yet William Griffis also made it clear that westerners were just as capable of com-

⁴⁶⁵ "Savage, a., n.," *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828.

⁴⁶⁶ "The aspects of nature in Japan, as in most volcanic countries, comprise a variety of savage hideousness, appalling destructiveness, and almost heavenly beauty", remarked William Griffis, and also both Lafcadio Hearn and Samuel Williams used the term 'savage' in their portrayals of Chinese and Japanese landscapes (William Griffis remarked Griffis 2006a, 11; Hearn 1894b, 597; Williams 1913a, 195).

⁴⁶⁷ Griffis 2006a, 95.

⁴⁶⁸ Griffis 1892, 44; Lowell 2007b, 5; Smith 1899, 211.

⁴⁶⁹ Griffis 1892, 15–16, 80; Griffis 2006a, 15; Griffis 2006b, 16, 63; Lowell 1895, 102; Martin 1881, 276; Martin 1894, 15; Smith 1899, 198.

⁴⁷⁰ Hearn 1895, 202; Lowell 2007b, 7, 77.

⁴⁷¹ Griffis 1900, 108; Griffis 2006b, 36, 40; Martin 1894, 33; Smith 1890, 225.

⁴⁷² Smith 1901a, 84, 317; Smith 1901b, 426, 498, 726; Williams 1913b, 597, 622, 629, 684.

mitting savage acts in battle. He was referring in particular to the bombardment of Kagoshima, and the Shimonoseki Campaign, between the British, American, French, and Dutch troops, and the Japanese domains of Satsuma and Chōshū in 1863 and 1864. For Griffis, these conflicts served as proof that Europeans and Americans were also capable of performing inhumane deeds. They involved “the horrible injustice of the so-called indemnities, the bombardments of cities, the slaughter of Japanese people, and the savage vengeance wreaked for fancied injuries against foreigners.”⁴⁷³

Meanwhile, Lafcadio Hearn also strove to prove that Westerners were savages in many respects. Hearn described a western teacher, who had treated his Japanese students condescendingly, as a “vulgar, ignorant, savage bigot.”⁴⁷⁴ He used the words ‘barbarian’ and ‘savage’ interchangeably when proclaiming that Westerners were uncivilized in refinement and morals.⁴⁷⁵ Hearn was adamant that savagery lurked not in the rainforests, on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, or the plains of Africa, but in the civilization of the United States. Moreover, he claimed that the “cannibals of civilization” were “unconsciously more cruel than those of savagery.”⁴⁷⁶ Nor was Hearn alone in these thoughts. William Griffis, too, agonised over the fact, as he saw it, that the Americans had “enough of savagery, ignorance, and low types of humanity” within their own country.⁴⁷⁷ These concerns that savagery and barbarism were threats *within* civilization, and not without, had been a major topic of political and philosophical debate in Britain and America since at least the French Revolution. And with industrialisation, both the proletariat of industrial cities and the so called “masses” increasingly came to be considered as the savage, “dangerous classes.”⁴⁷⁸

Thus far we have seen that, in practice, the meanings and usage of the concepts barbarian and savage often overlapped, although they did retain certain distinctive and unique nuances. They were both the conventional opposites of civilization, in all the term’s senses, that is, on the macro-level, on the micro-level, and as a process. On the other hand, we saw that barbarism and savagery could also be understood to coexist with civilization. In the following section we will see that, compared to the universal process of Civilization, also macro-level civilizations could actually be assigned to the category of the uncivilized, and thereby be denounced as the opposites, and the ‘Others,’ of Civilization.

⁴⁷³ Griffis 1903, 377; Griffis 2006a, 151.

⁴⁷⁴ Hearn 1894b, 470–471.

⁴⁷⁵ Hearn 1896b, 201.

⁴⁷⁶ Hearn 1896b, 292.

⁴⁷⁷ Griffis 1900, 12.

⁴⁷⁸ Girardot 2002, 247; Starobinski 2009, 168–169.

3.2 Western encounter with the civilized 'Other'

Jean Starobinski has noted that as soon as the Western civilization discovered itself, that is, as soon as the Europeans and Americans conceived themselves as a macro-level civilization, they also began to understand that they were not alone in the world; that there were other civilizations around them. These other civilizations aroused their curiosity, and soon ethnographic and theoretical accounts of them proliferated. To be sure, European studies on societies, both own and foreign, vastly preceded the invention of the concept of civilization,⁴⁷⁹ but once invented, the concept provided a useful framework for such studies. However, and this cannot be emphasised enough, this framework was fundamentally Eurocentric. Thus, the evaluations and comparisons made in the name of civilization were by no means impartial and objective, as the norms of civilization were determined by Europeans and, by the late 19th century, Americans too. Westerners assumed the right to assess what did and did not constitute a civilization, as well as who was and was not civilized. They withheld this right on the grounds that it took a civilized to know one, as Brett Bowden has remarked.⁴⁸⁰ Or in other words, that only a civilized person could recognize a civilization.

In writing their treatises, the six American experts exercised their right, as civilized people, to "study," "comprehend," and "compare" other civilizations (see Table 1. for the full list of verbs attached to civilization). The experts tended to find the civilizations they were studying very different from their own⁴⁸¹. This premise of China and Japan being different was the fundamental basis for their work. Consequently, their treatises alternated between acts of 'othering' and attempts to understand the 'Other'. In fact, understanding the 'Far Eastern Other' was the aim of an increasing number of European and American intellectuals and members of the educated public by the late 19th century⁴⁸². This was facilitated by the open treaty ports, and innovations in communications and transportation, which made these countries more accessible for Western observers than ever before.

On the other hand, this was also the period when studies relating to other cultures began to undergo "scientification." The overall scientification of various fields of study entailed their specialization, professionalization, and institutionalization. In other words, what had earlier been the pastime of gentlemen, amateurs, and the 'learned-in-general,' gradually developed into a livelihood for the specially qualified professionals in academic settings.⁴⁸³ Consequently, as the six authors embarked on their careers as specialists on all things Chinese and Japanese, they had to skilfully navigate between the age of gentlemanly pursuits and the age of professional scholarship.

⁴⁷⁹ Mazlish 2009, 369–370; Starobinski 2009, 177.

⁴⁸⁰ Bowden 2009a, 9–11, 12; Mazlish 2009, 375; Starobinski 2009, 177.

⁴⁸¹ See e.g. Griffis 1892, 168; Martin 1881, 228.

⁴⁸² Clarke 2003, 71.

⁴⁸³ Butts 2000, 803; Daniels 1967, 151–152, 154, 157.

In the case of William Griffis and Samuel Williams, ending up in China and Japan had been more accidental than premeditated. But once the two had landed in East Asia, they started to fulfil the prerequisites for becoming experts: to learn the language and study the culture, people, and institutions.⁴⁸⁴ Although the language part of this proved somewhat challenging to our experts,⁴⁸⁵ and they had to rely on interpreters and translations at the beginning,⁴⁸⁶ Griffis believed that fluency in Japanese was necessary to become an expert on the Japanese empire⁴⁸⁷. Griffis also argued that living in Japan, eye-witnessing events, and socialising with the people there, differentiated Japan specialists such as himself from arm-chair scholars back home. It also enabled such specialists to develop a fuller understanding of the uniqueness of Japanese psychology.⁴⁸⁸ While residing in China and Japan, the six authors formulated ideas and gathered materials for their forthcoming publications. They studied the works of Western, Chinese and Japanese scholars, and discussed with people from all walks of life.⁴⁸⁹ By and large, their expertise was built on accidental beginnings, personal experiences, and chance encounters on one hand, and from determination, self-studying, and ambition on the other. Insofar, their scholarship conformed to the age and practices of gentlemanly scholarship.

But things were changing. In Europe, the scientification of ‘Sinology’ had already begun,⁴⁹⁰ and the Americans were not far behind. In 1878 a chair in

⁴⁸⁴ Bertuccioli 1995, 67; Chun 2005, 7; Sorokin 1995, 111.

⁴⁸⁵ For example, when Samuel Williams arrived in China, the Chinese were prohibited from teaching foreigners their language. The “books to aid in learning the language were as few as the opportunities to use it”, Williams described. Consequently his “progress was slow”. However, he was intent on amending the situation, and in the negotiations of the Treaty of Tientsin (1858) he got his chance. Williams can probably claim much of the credit for the inclusion of article XXV of the treaty, “Facilities for learning the Chinese language”, which permitted the employment of Chinese language teachers and purchasing Chinese books. This clause made it much easier for our other experts later on, such as Arthur Smith, to learn Chinese. (*Treaties between the US of America and China, Japan, Lewchew and Siam, Acts of Congress, and the Attorney-General’s Opinion, with the Decrees and Regulations Issued for the Guidance of U. S. Consular Courts*. Hong Kong: Authority, 1862. P. 46; Williams 1889, 58–60).

⁴⁸⁶ Percival Lowell had to rely on interpreters throughout his studies and journeys in Japan, since he never achieved fluency in Japanese (Strauss 2001, 62).

⁴⁸⁷ Language skills were considered to be a necessary tool also in the missionaries’ toolkit. Learning the local language was a pre-requisite for evangelization, and in addition, it had the side-effect of facilitating the missionaries’ understanding of the local culture and people. (Hastings, Adrian. *The Church in Africa 1450–1950*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994: p. 281.)

⁴⁸⁸ Beauchamp 1975, 40, 94, 447; Griffis 1900, 21; Griffis 2006a, xi–xiv, 375; Griffis 2006b, 34. Lowell saw no value in being intimate with his subject, preferring to keep a distance, and find a golden mean between the Western scholars of Japan who “went native,” and the tourists who merely scratched at the surface of Japanese culture (Strauss 2001, 62, 134).

⁴⁸⁹ Hearn, for example, used essays he assigned to his students as materials for his texts, as did Griffis, though he was less explicit about it. Griffis also understood the value of networking, as he actively sought the company of Japanese intellectuals, scholars, and statesmen. (Beauchamp 1975, 440; Beauchamp 1976, 124; Griffis 2006a, xiii, xv.)

⁴⁹⁰ The history of European Sinology began with the Jesuits, who were understandably more interested in promoting their religion than scholarship as such. By the Age of Enlightenment, “stay-at-home” philosophers had also taken up the subject, some of whom entertained rather “Sinophilic” views. After the 18th century however, a peri-

Chinese studies was established at Yale, and Sinology was introduced to American classrooms. By virtue of his pioneering work and enormous experience in the field, the first appointment to this post was Samuel Williams.⁴⁹¹ He therefore played an important role in the professionalization of Sinology in the United States. Overall, however, the process was slow, and even by the beginning of the Second World War, most American experts on China and Japan were amateurs, or those without a formal academic training. Sinology and Japanology would have to wait until after the Second World War before being fully accepted by academia.⁴⁹²

Besides the academia, learned societies were elemental in the professionalization of sciences in general, and Chinese and Japanese studies in particular. These societies functioned as platforms both for presenting research results and promoting these subjects. For example, most of our authors were members of the *American Oriental Society*, established in 1842, and they contributed to the society's journal. And some of the authors were also active in societies based in China and Japan, such as the *Asiatic Society of Japan* and *The North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*.⁴⁹³ Through academic affiliations and involvement in such 'learned societies', the six authors worked towards gaining credibility and a scholarly aura for Chinese and Japanese Studies in the United States. And yet,

od of relative silence ensued until 1814, when a chair in Sinology was established at the Collège de France, followed by one in Russia. In Britain, the first professor of Chinese, Reverend Samuel Kidd (1797-1843), served from the year 1837 onwards, and soon certain distinguished diplomats and missionaries, such as Sir Thomas Wade (1818-1895) and James Legge (1815-1897), received China-related professorships at Cambridge and Oxford Universities, respectively. The latter two posts, though, were denounced as mere sinecures by contemporaries like John Fryer (1839-1928), who was appointed as the first Agassiz Professor of Oriental Languages and Literature in 1896 at Berkeley, California. (Chun 2005, 8; Franke 1995, 12-14; Hung 2003, 265).

⁴⁹¹ It has been argued that Williams' professorship was a nominal one, and that he had little or no students before his health started to fail him (Latourette 1955, 3).

⁴⁹² Some observers at the turn of the 20th century noted that Americans tended to not really value Sinology, and so it remained largely in European hands until the Second World War. As for American Japanology, it had to wait even longer than Sinology for professionalization. There were few academic opportunities for studying the Japanese language or culture, and often if a university had to make a choice between incorporating either Sinology or Japanology into their curriculum, they would choose the former. (Chun 2005, 3, 12; Franke 1995, 16; Hardacre 1998, vii-viii)

⁴⁹³ *The American Oriental Society* was reputedly the oldest scholarly association in the US devoted to a specific field of learning. However, the scholarly attention in the Oriental Society did not focus exclusively on East Asia, instead, it encompassed historical and geographical entities from India, Persia, Syria, and Africa too. Williams was a member, and from 1881 onwards its president. Griffis was elected as a member in 1888, and he contributed reviews to the journal. Martin published his texts in the journal as a correspondent member, and Lowell was elected as a corporate member in 1893. Griffis was also a member of *Meirokusha* (the "Meiji Six Society"), established in 1873 to discuss topics such as (Japanese) politics, economics, and education; the *Asiatic Society of Korea*, founded in 1900 by a group of mainly Protestant missionaries; and the *Asiatic Society of Japan*, founded in Yokohama in 1872. Lowell, was also familiar with the Asiatic Society of Japan, whose activities were carried out in English, and included lectures, debates, and an annual journal. The purpose of the *North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (established in Shanghai in 1857), that Williams and Martin were involved with, was similar. (Bastid-Bruguière 1995, 234; Strauss 2001, 63; Suleski 1998, 15; Varley 2000, 242.)

majority of them remained amateur experts in their respective fields,⁴⁹⁴ as opportunities to become a professional were still rare in the United States. However, this did not preclude them from gaining popularity and respect for their views of the oriental 'Other.'

While trying to make sense of other civilizations, the experts consciously and unconsciously sought to define and understand also their own civilization. In general, Europeans and Americans may have perhaps considered their civilization to be one among many, but not among equals. They believed Europe and the US were in the last stages of a uniform social evolution, while others were at its lower stages. In a sense, this perceived superiority made the study of other, 'inferior', civilizations the study of Western civilization, too. It was argued that by studying a 'less progressed' society, the Western scholars could explore the customs and cultures of a developmental stage their societies had already passed. In this way, the scholars presumed that they could observe and study the beginning of times in the present day, and thus reconstruct the history of their own civilization.⁴⁹⁵

So what was Western civilization? On the one hand, Western civilization was seen to conform to some arbitrary geographic boundaries following the continent of Europe and North America. This geography might have induced the evolution of certain characteristics of the civilization, in the same way as human races evolved as adaptations to their environment. Whether developed as responses to environment or not, the singular social, cultural, and technological features of Western civilization were seen to mark it off from other civilizations. But the impression conveyed by the semantic field is that the six experts were far from unequivocal when it came to the specifying what were the essential and what the extraneous traits of Western civilization.

One method for distinguishing the Western civilization from the coexisting civilizations was to equal the West with Christianity.⁴⁹⁶ The four Christian writers were understandably tempted to do this. In the 19th century, Christendom corresponded to the geographical and cultural boundaries of Western civilization, but with time it would cover all four corners of the earth, the Protestant authors believed.

Lafcadio Hearn, on the other hand, evidently subscribed to the idea that modern Western civilization was a continuous cultural unit, which had its roots

⁴⁹⁴ In fact, Percival Lowell found amateurism more to his taste, as his Harvard education had prepared him to be more of a generalist than specialist. He was multitalented, and saw himself as more of a theory-driven philosopher, as someone able to connect the dots and see the overall bigger picture, rather than a data-collecting scientist. (Strauss 2001, 46–48, 74.)

⁴⁹⁵ This idea belonged to the so-called 'comparative method', which Auguste Comte (1798–1857) devised for scholars studying social phenomena. Comte divided human development into three stages: the theological-military, metaphysical-judicial, and scientific-industrial. He believed that by comparing these different stages, as well as past and present societies, and human societies with animal collectives, one could gain invaluable insights into man's social systems and the natural laws governing them. (Turner, Jonathan; Beeghly, Leonard; Powers, Charles, *The Emergence of Sociological Theory*. Seventh Edition. Newbury Park: Sage, 2012: pp. 39, 41, 44–45.)

⁴⁹⁶ Mazlish 2009, 370; Szalkolczai 2004, 87.

in Ancient Greece and Rome. This narrative overlooked the facts that the lineage from Greek antiquity to European modernity had been interrupted, and that the classical heritage had been as much, if not more, the property of the Byzantine and Islamic civilizations. Yet, it seems that most of the authors were persuaded by this proposition, all the more because it did not inevitably clash with the idea of Christianity as the essence of civilization. For example, William Griffis argued that Western civilization had come indirectly from India and China, via the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, taking its final shape in the form of the Christian civilization of Europe and America.⁴⁹⁷

Whether intrinsically Christian or not, Western civilization was perceived to be the measure of Civilization (with a capital-C). Hence, it took on a universal countenance and was seen as the model for non-westerners to emulate. However, this universality was soon challenged by the nationalisation of the concept at the end of the 19th century. Western civilization began to fragment into the distinct civilizations of nation states, each posing as the vanguard of overall Civilization. Pim Den Boer has argued that at this point the concept lost its cosmopolitanism. It became synonymous with the nation state, for the express use of distinguishing one's own nation from those around it, and establishing its superiority.⁴⁹⁸ In these circumstances it made sense for our authors to therefore talk about American, as distinct from Western, civilization. American civilization was the heir of 'occidental civilization' and, although part of that larger category, not a mere imitation of the European.⁴⁹⁹

The United States was geographically isolated from Europe, far removed from the conflicts, problems, and traditions of that continent. Consequently, it could become a laboratory for unique social experiments based on reason, a home for liberty, an exemption from civil and religious tyranny, and a seedbed for people infused with revolutionary spirit. It was, essentially, the "new Europe." These were staple American contentions. Such was also the idea that, in contrast with Europe, the American common people enjoyed a high standard of living. Major breakthroughs in science and the arts in the US were seen to be directly conducive to general well-being and comfort, not to mention the generation of wealth – the necessary bedrock of civilization. The American nationals were also supposed to be born equal, and to be well-protected by their representative government and freedom of speech.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁷ Birken 1992, 452–455; Griffis 1900, 31; Hearn 1894b, 683.

⁴⁹⁸ Den Boer 2005, 56, 58.

⁴⁹⁹ Beard et al. 1948, 163. This idea of America being the offspring of Europe, and yet a civilization in its own right, has persisted ever since the Federal Republic of the US saw the light of day and combined them. For example, in the 1950s, American journalist, Max Lerner, defined American civilization as a distinct offshoot of the Western civilization, i.e., the New World born of the old. He described American Man as a "concentrated embodiment of Western man", and as a "restless, classless, secular, materialistic, ambitious, progressive and conquering New World man". (Lerner 1987, 62–63, 919).

⁵⁰⁰ Beard et al. 1948, 97, 103, 162–165, 248–251; Countryman 1997, 5. These views were aired already in the 18th century and summarised, for example, in the influential and popular geography textbook *American Geography* (1789) written by Jedidiah Morse (1761–1826). Morse placed the US in the final stage of Civilization, one in which all

Moreover, the majority of Americans assumed that they practised exceptionally spiritual and pure forms of the Christian religion, in other words, higher forms of the religion they also believed to be the mainspring of Civilization. The Americans also thought that their espousal of Christian ethics was a guarantee of good life and civilized manners.⁵⁰¹ All these features were perceived to set American civilization apart from European and other civilizations. And not just apart, they raised it to a higher plane. Americans tended to pride themselves for their accomplishments, and they were confident that all the virtues of a higher civilization were inherent in their constitution, citizenry, and society.⁵⁰² However, American civilization had yet to attain perfection, and it was naturally the subject of criticism from both foreign and domestic quarters. Ralph Waldo Emerson, for example, noted that the United States was lacking in such democratic qualities as universal suffrage, and thus could not yet be qualified as having reached the supreme stage of Civilization.⁵⁰³

However, the Americans were optimistic that one day they would reach the ultimate level of Civilization. They were confident that destiny and Providence was on their side, and some Americans, such as the geographer Jedidiah Morse, even believed their nation was called upon to become the kingdom of God on Earth. Either way, it was widely believed that the United States would take the lead in Civilization and spread it across the continent and beyond. And it was the duty of all Americans to share in their fortune with others.⁵⁰⁴

We noted in the last chapter that the 'Other' for civilized was 'barbarian' and 'savage'. Perhaps the most familiar and archetypal savage 'Others' to white settler Americans were the Native Americans. But the categorical opposite of Occidental civilization was not Native American savagery or barbarism; it was the Oriental civilization. East Asia was the "longitudinal antipode"⁵⁰⁵ of the United States and West, Percival Lowell argued. And true to its antipodal nature, East Asia promptly evoked the idea in Lowell's mind that everything there was inverted: "[t]he boyish belief that on the other side of our globe all things are of necessity upside down is startlingly brought back to the man when he first sets foot at Yokohama".⁵⁰⁶ To Lowell, Japan seemed to be fundamentally "topsy-turvy", and "one huge, comical antithesis" of the American world. The Japanese carried out their activities backwards, he affirmed, and continued that

the forms of other civilizations (both past and present) were being perfected and improved upon. (Livingstone 2006, 562.)

⁵⁰¹ This emphasis on morality set the tone in the writings of one of the leading American Transcendentalists, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882). Emerson argued that a deep moral sense was required for regulating and encouraging genius, talent, society and politics. In other words, morality was required for Civilization. (Beard et al. 1948, 81, 101, 193, 250; Mazlish 2009, 375.)

⁵⁰² Mennell 2009, 419–420. Although the Americans considered themselves to be the representatives of the West *par excellence*, the Chinese and Japanese often associated the West with the nations of Europe, not the US (Iriye 1967, 71).

⁵⁰³ Beard et al. 1948, 193–194, 482–483.

⁵⁰⁴ Beard et al. 1948, 108, 163, 482; Livingstone 2006, 562–563; Mazlish 2009, 370; Mennell 2009, 419.

⁵⁰⁵ Lowell 2007b, 16.

⁵⁰⁶ Lowell 2007b, 4.

there seemed to be no such everyday action that did not find its “appropriate reaction—equal but opposite” from Japan.⁵⁰⁷ The same went for China and the Chinese. For example, William Martin noted that with their magnetic compass, the needle pointed to the south instead of the north, while their laws of inheritance allowed ancestors to receive titles and honours due to the noble actions of their offspring, rather than the other way round.⁵⁰⁸

But the differences, which were seen to separate the Eastern and Western ways, were not confined to petty and trifling matters. More profoundly, Percival Lowell, Lafcadio Hearn, and Arthur Smith contended that the peoples of the East and West were also mental and intellectual opposites. “To speak backwards, write backwards, read backwards, is but the a b c of their contrariety. The inversion extends deeper than mere modes of expression, down into the very matter of thought”⁵⁰⁹, Lowell asserted. He then went on to argue that Japanese mental attitudes, intuitions, and observations were antipodal to the extent as to defy gravity. Smith, equally, posited that Chinese and Western instincts were at “opposite poles” to each other.⁵¹⁰ Hearn’s particular focus was on the emotional dissimilarities between Japanese people and Westerners, and this included the expressions given to dreams, aspirations, and feelings. Hearn perceived that the Anglo-Saxon race were a grave people. He thought that seriousness and solemnity were inscribed to the very bedrock of their race character, and had only grown under the pressures of industrialisation. In contrast, he saw the Japanese as being not very serious, as the “happiest people in the civilized world” and forever smiling. But the degree of levity prevailing in society and among its members was not the whole story. The biggest difference was that the Japanese kept smiling even when they encountered adversities. They smiled “at life, love, and death alike”, Hearn noted.⁵¹¹

The authors conjectured that the profound differences in Eastern and Western thinking, inclinations, and emotions were mirrored in the constitutions of the Chinese, Japanese, and Western civilizations. Samuel Williams believed that the Chinese civilization breathed a spirit “totally different from the writings of Western sages and philosophers,” while Smith perceived a “wide interval between the civilizations of the west and of China”.⁵¹² It would seem, there-

⁵⁰⁷ Lowell 2007b, 4, 6.

⁵⁰⁸ Martin 1900, 152. According to Ian Littlewood, such reactions and expressions had been literary commonplaces in texts on Japan ever since the 16th century Jesuit writers, and it would seem that this also applied to texts on China. (Littlewood 1996, 8–10.)

⁵⁰⁹ Lowell 2007b, 4.

⁵¹⁰ Lowell 2007b, 4, 58; Smith 1890, 91.

⁵¹¹ The Japanese smile, Lafcadio Hearn argued, was the source of incalculable misunderstandings, suspicions, fears, and difficulties in mutual comprehension. The Westerners, Hearn posited, generally failed to understand the logic behind such unfamiliar manifestations of the emotions. They did not grasp that smiling in both joy and sorrow was a Japanese social duty, it was a way of showing consideration towards others. Or maybe Westerners simply did not care, Hearn surmised, for it did seem quite apparent that the treaty ports teemed with Western “Philistines” who did not trouble themselves with such matters. (Hearn 1894b, 656–657, 659–660, 667–669; Hearn 1896b, 13.)

⁵¹² Hearn 1896b, 203; Smith 1899, 323; Williams 1913a, 578.

fore, that European and American writings on Japan and China generally tended to be structured along the lines of these easy-to-grasp polarisations that made the differences between Western and Eastern civilizations stand out more clearly.

According to Ian Littlewood, such systematically antithetical accounts had a definite aura of Edward Said's (1978) "Orientalism" around them. Arguably, these accounts were manifestations and constructions of power relations in the Saidian sense. But they also stemmed from the natural human urge to make sense and define the world through more or less strict categories and boundaries. Such boundaries, Littlewood has noted, were a significant source of security and identity, and hence dividing the world into East and West was crucial for the self-understanding of the Westerners, for without the East there would not have been the West, and without "them" there would not have been "us".⁵¹³ Turning the East into the antipode thus helped to define and strengthen a sense of Western identity. On the other hand, those who viewed Western civilization and identity rather unfavourably, such as Lafcadio Hearn, used the antipodal discourse, not in order to extol its virtues, but to criticise it. Keeping Japan as different and alien, or the East as opposite, therefore suited both the purposes of those who admired Japanese civilization and those who held it in little regard.

In the last analysis, as Ian Littlewood has pointed out, the effect of this polarisation was to distance Japan and China from the rest of humanity.⁵¹⁴ Another effect may well have been to dehumanise the Chinese and Japanese, but arguably this was not the effect our American experts wished to produce. Griffis, for example, seems to have been more interested in bridging the gulf between the Japanese and American civilizations. And Martin pointed out that even though the Chinese and Western civilizations formed two separate streams, they were united by the "pulsations of a common tide", that is, they were both subject to the same universal laws of history and Civilization. Meanwhile, Lowell explicitly reminded us that the Japanese were human beings, and that in spite of "all their eccentricities" they were nevertheless men, and together the peoples from earth's two hemispheres complemented each other, and combined to form humanity.⁵¹⁵

Yet, although he vouched that neither Western nor Eastern civilization was yet "perfect enough to serve in all things as standard for the other"⁵¹⁶, Percival Lowell, like the other experts, nevertheless held up Western civilization as the benchmark for others. Michael Adas has attributed this to Europeans and Americans becoming increasingly aware of their material superiority and of the notion of 'progress'.⁵¹⁷ The six American experts of the "Far East," captivated

⁵¹³ Bonk 1989, 248; Littlewood 1996, xiii, 8, 11, 55.

⁵¹⁴ Littlewood 1996, 9, 11, 24, 57.

⁵¹⁵ Griffis 1903, 428; Lowell 2007b, 4-5; Martin 1894, 19-20.

⁵¹⁶ Lowell 2007b, 5.

⁵¹⁷ Michael Adas has argued that before the mid-19th century, only a handful of travelers and intellectuals were aware of any Western superiority in material achievements. But once the expanding industrialisation, unrivalled weaponry and training

by the entangled notions of progress and civilization, came to interpret Japan and China largely through this division between the progressive and the unprogressive world – perhaps the greatest and most definitive of all the antipodal relations the 19th century thinkers and writers devised.

In the beginning of *The Soul of the Far East* (1881), Percival Lowell claimed that the West was essentially progressive,⁵¹⁸ and the semantic field for ‘civilization’ reveals other similar assertions in the texts of the experts. The attributes attached to Chinese and Japanese civilizations in the semantic field included expressions such as ‘slow rate of movement’, ‘arrested development’, ‘laggard position’, ‘decay’, ‘failure’, ‘paralysis’, and adjectives such as ‘stationary’ and ‘conservative’ (see table 1 in the appendix). Although such designations were to be found in the texts of *all* six authors, Lowell was particularly forthright on the subject. The Japanese civilization had, without a doubt and in his humble opinion, stagnated:

In the civilization of Japan we have presented to us a most interesting case of partially arrested development; or, to speak esoterically, we find ourselves placed face to face with a singular example of a completed race-life. For though from our standpoint the evolution of these people seems suddenly to have come to an end in mid-career, looked at more intimately it shows all the signs of having fully run its course.⁵¹⁹

Lowell argued that the Japanese civilization had first progressed, but soon exhausted its “vital force,” and then halted at a point “not very far” from the one “at which we all set out”. Like a human being, the civilization of Japan had reached old age, a second infancy of sorts, and begun to wither away.⁵²⁰

According to Percival Lowell’s account in *The Soul of the Far East*, the movement of Japanese civilization had been paralyzed and the society had been left lingering on a primitive stage of development. Yet, the Japanese people had carried on, and persisted in a perpetual condition of unchangingness ever since. For him, the Japanese people represented a veritable “survival of the unfittest”.⁵²¹ He attributed the same phenomena of conservatism and arrested development to the Korean and Chinese civilizations too. He claimed that, like Japan, the Middle Kingdom had stopped “at the medial point of rest,” and that the Chinese had refused to move any further. Subsequently, their progress had

of the Western military forces, and the innovations in transportation and communications became widely recognized facts, and once the knowledge about the conditions of societies outside Europe and North America accumulated, the realization was driven home. According to Adas, the achieved scientific and material superiority visibly put Europe and the United States in the class of their own, and enabled them to strive for global commercial, financial, or political hegemony, if they so wished. Consequently, also the progress of the Western half of the world suddenly seemed dramatic and accelerated, and in comparison, the other half appeared to be hopelessly stagnated. (Adas 1989, 143–144, 152–153.)

⁵¹⁸ Lowell 2007b, 11.

⁵¹⁹ Lowell 2007b, 6.

⁵²⁰ Lowell 2007b, 12.

⁵²¹ Lowell 2007b, 6, 8, 16–17.

been so slow that it had hardly been progress at all, Lowell described, and eventually, the Chinese conservatism had “passed into a proverb.”⁵²²

Arthur Smith also took note of the immobility of the Chinese in his treatises *Village Life in China* (1899) and *China in Convulsion* (1901). “A Chinese village is physically and intellectually a fixture”, he asserted, and contrasted the Chinese conservativeness with the progressiveness of the Western peoples, whose mental processes had continued to be versatile and virile even through occasional periods of slow development in their history. Smith claimed that this was the point at which it was “next to impossible for the Chinese and the Anglo-Saxon to come to terms” with one another. For the Westerners, it was inconceivable how “a civilized, cultivated, prolific, and enterprising race of creatures” such as the Chinese could “exist upon the planet and yet have no thirst to modify existing conditions so as to bring in some state of things more nearly ideal”.⁵²³

In the texts of the six experts we are examining, this perceived developmental gap between East Asia and the West was often accentuated with imagery presenting the East as childlike and the West as adult. Childhood represented not only the early stages of a human being’s development, but also of the human race in general. In evolutionary and anthropological accounts of the day, children were repeatedly equated with savages,⁵²⁴ and Lafcadio Hearn followed suite. He did not use the analogy merely in the sense of an organic metaphor. Instead, he explained that the primitive instincts and uncultivated aesthetic sense of savages were actually the same as the instincts of a child, and hence a child resembled a savage both “by his faults and by his virtues”. Until a child matured and outgrew his rudimentary notions, he was essentially a savage, and vice versa.⁵²⁵

Using the same dichotomy of child and adult, Percival Lowell maintained that the nation of Japan had grown into a “man’s estate,” but that it had kept “the mind of its childhood”, and that the Japanese had not “really grown up”. Lowell believed that every human being was born twice, “once as matter, once as mind”. The birth of the mind stood for the moment when man woke to the consciousness of the self within him, to the revelation that he had an individual personality. As mentioned earlier, according to Lowell the “most distinctive feature” of the Japanese, and other “Far Oriental” peoples, was impersonality. Everywhere in Japanese culture he saw proofs of this childish impersonality. It was reflected in the Japanese language and speech, which Lowell described as

⁵²² Lowell 2007b, 6, 79.

⁵²³ Smith 1899, 312; Smith 1901a, 5. The idea of Eastern civilizations frozen in their evolutionary course was not a novel one. We noted before that 18th century philosophers such as Hegel and Johan Gottfried von Herder had depicted Eastern peoples as eternally static, changeless, and fundamentally ahistorical. Later theorists expounded on the imagined temporal opposition between the East and West, and when Karl Marx, in particular, famously excluded Asia from his works on material progress, the historical handicap of China and Japan was further consolidated. (Collingwood 2005, 90-91; Feres Jr. 2002, 22-24; Goody 2010, 139; Iriye 1967, 6-7; Mackerras 1989, 7.)

⁵²⁴ Schrempp 1983, 100; Tylor 1903, 31.

⁵²⁵ Hearn 1894a, 199; Hearn 1894b, 366; Hearn 1914, 181, 228, 253-254.

lacking gender forms, plural forms, subjects in sentences, and as being grammatically primitive and resembling “baby-talk.” For Lowell, these linguistic features were a showcase that the human element had been glossed over from the Japanese language, and that the Japanese mind was childish reverse of abstract, that is, concrete “to a primitive degree.” Consequently, Lowell insisted that the Japanese were “still in that childish state of development before self-consciousness has spoiled the sweet simplicity of nature”, and this lack of self-consciousness he took as a sign that neither the “race” nor their civilization had yet attained full maturity.⁵²⁶

It has been argued that the child/adult dichotomy was also a staple part of the 19th century Christian and missionary language.⁵²⁷ Hence, it is not unsurprising then, that our four Protestant writers often likened the peoples of East Asia to children in many respects. Technological and scientific shortcomings, in particular, were attributed to the childlikeness⁵²⁸ of Asian peoples. For example, William Martin recounted the day in 1896 when he showed his scientific instruments to Chinese officials, and they played with them as children would play with toys. This led Martin to suggest that, although the Chinese were men of letters, in science they were mere children.⁵²⁹ A decade and a half earlier, he had described one Chinese man as an intellectual giant, but “[i]n knowledge, according to our standard” as a “child”.⁵³⁰ The American experts also characterised some of the Chinese and Japanese philosophical formulations and religious imaginings as either childish or primitive, and belonging to the childhood of humanity.⁵³¹ Moreover, in his 1882 edition of *The Middle Kingdom*, Samuel Williams considered the Chinese self-imposed isolation from other nations as “stupid” and “childish”, and he denounced Chinese ignorance of international relations and world politics similarly. Seventeen years later, William Griffis agreed with these same opinions espoused by Williams in his own treatise *America in the East*.⁵³²

In the mid-1890s, Lafcadio Hearn discussed the gentle nature of Japanese people in general, and Japanese women in particular. He conjectured that this gentleness made the more aggressive Westerner perceive the Japanese as “boys”, or children. In the same way, Hearn could have attributed the Japanese gentleness as womanliness, for he, and undoubtedly many of his contemporaries, associated gentleness intrinsically with femininity.⁵³³ The dichotomy of femininity and masculinity entailed much the same connotations as child and adult. Western, white, adult, and male were all seen as attributes associated with the

⁵²⁶ Lowell 2007b, 7, 9–10, 12, 35–41, 70.

⁵²⁷ Mudimbe 1988, 50.

⁵²⁸ Michael Adas has remarked that contemporary European and American observers made similar comments on similar grounds about African peoples as well (Adas 1989, 306).

⁵²⁹ Martin 1900, 300.

⁵³⁰ Martin 1881, 29.

⁵³¹ See e.g. Griffis 2006b, 14; Hearn 1894a, 102–103; Lowell 1895, 19–20; Williams 1913b, 140.

⁵³² Griffis 1900, 86; Williams 1913b, 642, 660.

⁵³³ Hearn 1894a, 227; Hearn 1894b, 478, 667; Hearn 1895, 114, 147.

culmination of civilization, progress, modernity, and self-governance, while women (whether civilized or not), non-white peoples, and children were at a lower stage in the scale of civilization and lacked the ability or right to govern. Parallels were often drawn between women's perceived idiosyncrasies and dominated peoples, especially in the 19th century colonial and civilizing mission discourses.⁵³⁴ And our experts were no exception. For example, Percival Lowell pointed out that impersonality was a feature of the Far Oriental and feminine mind alike, but not of the mind of a Western man. Meanwhile, William Griffis characterized Buddhism and Roman Catholicism as feminine religions in contrast with the more masculine Confucianism and Protestant Christianity.⁵³⁵

All in all, however, the experts made less use of the feminine/masculine dichotomy than the child/adult one. Both conveyed the notion of difference and opposition, but presumably the latter embodied better the idea of discrepancy between Western and Eastern evolution and progress. Michael Adas has argued that the predisposition of an average 19th century Westerner was to translate any kind of divergence from Western culture as inferiority.⁵³⁶ Accordingly, Lafcadio Hearn noted that Westerners tended to automatically interpret the differences between Japanese and Western emotions and thought processes as a sign of mental inadequacy of the Japanese, and consequently to denounce them as a "race of children".⁵³⁷

Once the question of *how* the Chinese and Japanese were different from Westerners was settled, the question *why* they were different naturally followed. If man was "a progressive animal," as Percival Lowell claimed, and if particularly the Chinese were a people "so favored by nature," as Griffis contended, why had China and Japan stagnated "like a stone in a moist place, gathering the moss of ages"?⁵³⁸ Arthur Smith set forth the same question, "[w]hat the Occidental insists upon knowing, however, is why the Chinese did not continue to improve when they had once entered upon the upward path." Smith noted the Chinese explanation for their motionlessness: "when a thing is as good as it can be, you cannot make it any better," but this did not suffice for Smith.⁵³⁹ The six experts were not alone in their quest for keys to this mystery. The question plagued other European and American observers as well, and often it took the form of the question: why non-European peoples had failed to start and carry out scientific and industrial revolutions of their own? Answers to the question were offered by all kinds of people from social theorists and ethnographers to explorers, and disseminated everywhere from the popular press to fiction novels.⁵⁴⁰

As we already know, Percival Lowell's answer to the question was the "great quality of impersonality" of the Chinese and Japanese. He thought that

⁵³⁴ Adas 2004, 34–35; Bederman, xi, 20, 22; Henning 2000, 98; Kowner 2000, 112.

⁵³⁵ Griffis 2006b, 164; Lowell 1895, 283, 297.

⁵³⁶ Adas 1989, 250.

⁵³⁷ Hearn 1895, 85–86.

⁵³⁸ Griffis 1900, 65; Lowell 2007b, 60.

⁵³⁹ Smith 1901a, 5–6.

⁵⁴⁰ Adas 1989, 153.

this 'impersonality' was the primary cause for stagnation, as well as the "natural measure of the height of civilization which a nation has reached."⁵⁴¹ The farther towards the east one looked, Lowell claimed, the less intense was the degree of individualisation: "America, Europe, the Levant, India, Japan, each is less personal than the one before. We stand at the nearer end of the scale, the Far Orientals at the other".⁵⁴² Because the tendency towards individualization had come to a halt in the East, China and Japan had failed to follow the natural course of evolution and progress, Lowell claimed. Moreover, besides personality, the Chinese and Japanese were deficient in the faculty of imagination. It was a "well-recognized fact", Lowell stated, that the "lack of any fanciful ideas is one of the most salient traits of all Far Eastern races, if indeed a sad dearth of anything can properly be spoken of as salient."⁵⁴³

According to Percival Lowell, imagination was the chief force at work in the process of Civilization. Without it, man was incapable of changing his environment or himself, that is, incapable of evolving. The latter half of the 19th century had proven to be the "most imaginative period the world's history has ever known" for the Europeans and Americans, as he saw it, but for the Chinese and Japanese such imaginative periods had been in the distant past. Lowell ascertained that now, in the absence of that vital force and motor of civilization, they had contented themselves with substituting originality with imitation. In evolutionary terms, this substitution was something akin to "unnatural selection", he thought, and thus the "orderly procedure of natural evolution" had been "disastrously supplemented by man". Being both particularly impersonal and unimaginative peoples, the Chinese and Japanese were thus necessarily at a less advanced stage of development than the Europeans and Americans, and their pace of progress was also less rapid, Lowell concluded.⁵⁴⁴

Percival Lowell's account of the Chinese and Japanese having run out of 'the energy to evolve' closely resembled the Spencerian theory about differences in "mental mass," which we touched on in chapter two. According to this theory, mental mass affected the mental complexity of a race, the rate of development, and the ability to abstract and generalise. A greater "mental mass" meant there was more energy to evolve. The fate of those races, which had less "mental mass" and energy to begin with, was arrested development. Their mental complexity was low, and hence they completed their career of mental evolution sooner than the "superior races" with more complex minds.⁵⁴⁵ Lowell appeared to be well versed in these ideas. He explicitly referred to this "law too well known to need explanation" that, the one which "has less to grow up to, naturally grows up to its limit sooner," and used it to explain the "abnormally early development of the Chinese race, and its subsequent career of inactivity."⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴¹ Lowell 2007b, 8, 77.

⁵⁴² Lowell 2007b, 8.

⁵⁴³ Lowell 2007b, 78.

⁵⁴⁴ Lowell 2007b, 6-8, 76-79.

⁵⁴⁵ Spencer 1901, 351, 353-358.

⁵⁴⁶ Lowell 2007b, 18.

The concept of 'arrested development' had a wide circulation among the late 19th century intellectuals. It was often applied in discussions about Africans, and yet somehow it also provided a plausible explanation for the idea that the Asians had broken free of the shackles of savagery and barbarism well before the Europeans, and then stagnated or regressed. Spencer understood stunted mental development to be a biologically determined syndrome, endemic to certain races of the human species. According to this view, it was possible to construct racial hierarchies on the scale of Civilization by determining the point of development at which the mental energy of a race had been exhausted. Many other 19th century thinkers also attributed the stagnation of China to race, although it must be remembered that the concept was a complex and contested compound of national, religious, biological, and linguistic factors.⁵⁴⁷ The Scottish anatomist, Robert Knox (1791-1862), for example, alleged that the "dark" and Asian races were lacking in the power of making generalisations, thirst for knowledge, and desire for improvement. He believed that whatever advances the Chinese had made in technology, for example, had been borrowed from some other race. For Knox, stagnation and an unadventurous conservatism were inherently racial attributes.⁵⁴⁸

But if conservatism was the cause for stagnation, and imbedded in the racial character of certain peoples, then were higher civilization and mental evolution reserved only for the Europeans and Americans, who apparently were immune to this syndrome of arrested development? William Griffis was not convinced, although he granted that Chinese people outside the central regions were not much given to progress and enlightenment, and that in Japan, the south-west regions and the countryside were inhabited by "narrow and unprogressive men".⁵⁴⁹ But still, the conservatives and progressives alike were Chinese and Japanese - they were of the same race. Indeed, not all intellectuals were persuaded by racial arguments. The Spencerian idea that biological evolution, man's individual progress, and societies' civilizational progress were analogous, that is, gradual, continuous, and governed by certain natural laws, was widely adopted in the emerging social sciences.⁵⁵⁰ But instead of ascribing to Herbert Spencer's notions about racial incapacities for development, social theorists often preferred the idea that all human races inevitably passed the same stages of development, in evolutionary and civilizational terms, sooner or later.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁴⁷ Adas 1989, 304; Clifford 2001, 24.

⁵⁴⁸ Adas 1989, 299-300.

⁵⁴⁹ Griffis 1900, 63-64; Griffis 2006a, 115, 383, 387.

⁵⁵⁰ Henning 2000, 15.

⁵⁵¹ For example, the English anthropologist E. B. Tylor premised that social development was like organic evolution: consistent, stadial, and guided by fixed laws. In the first volume of his *Primitive Culture* (1871) Tylor declared that "the uniformity which so largely pervades civilization may be ascribed, in great measure, to the uniform action of uniform causes: while on the other hand its various grades may be regarded as stages of development or evolution". He advocated the study of different modes of culture, i.e., knowledge, religion, and customs, from a historical perspective. He proposed that data accrued from such studies could then be used for making comparisons, classifications and generalisations, all of which would assist in formulating the probable course of social evolution and characteristics of its different stages. Be-

And it was not just the social theorists who disputed the notion that race played a part in civilization. William Martin, for example, empathically denied that the Chinese were deficient in mental capacities, or that differences between Westerners and Chinese could be “accounted for by a difference of race”.⁵⁵² As noted in the last chapter, a belief that race condemned a people to eternal inferiority and stagnation would have nullified the efforts of missionaries and teachers to bring about European and American-style progress to other peoples. Also Lafcadio Hearn’s texts from around the mid-1890s were rather relativistic. Race was an important concept in his writings, and he used it to argue that hereditary characteristics had made the Oriental peoples the opposite pole of the Occidental peoples, and that the thoughts and emotions of the Orientals had no real correspondence in the Occidental lives, and the other way around. But the inference he drew from the racial difference was not that the Orientals were inferior – they were merely *different*. It was because of this difference, that Westerners could never fully comprehend the logic behind the way of life in the Far East, and that there could never be any real sympathy between the Chinese, Japanese, and Westerners.⁵⁵³

In his article, “China and the Western World,” published in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1896, Lafcadio Hearn argued that Chinese and Japanese conservatism was one such issue that had been thoroughly misunderstood in Europe and the United States. “All the modern tales about the former rigidity of Japanese society about the conservation of habits and customs unchanged through centuries are mostly pure fiction,” Hearn asserted. He offered the “assimilative genius” of the Japanese as a proof for his argument. A race that had the power to receive and assimilate influences, and adapt itself according to circumstances, could not be immobile and incapable for change. And, as for Chinese conservatism, Hearn admitted that it existed, but was not all-encompassing. Chinese conservatism, he thought, prevailed mainly in the fields of beliefs, morals, and customs, but it did not extend to such spheres of activity as trade, industry or commerce, which were conducive to a nation’s advancement.⁵⁵⁴

cause mankind progressed through the same phases, because they shared many cultural features and the same psychological makeup, and because they were subject to the same causes, Tylor reached the conclusion that biological race was no variable in this process. His contention was that: “it appears both possible and desirable to eliminate considerations of hereditary varieties or races of man, and to treat mankind as homogeneous in nature, though placed in different grades of civilization”. (Tylor 1903, 1, 4-7.)

⁵⁵² Martin 1901a, 284. Interestingly, Nicholas Clifford has claimed that actually most 19th century travel writers from the West also rejected the idea of racial inferiority of the Chinese. The travel writers might have referred to race, but they did not lean towards biological determinism. Moreover, according to Clifford, even when the travellers listed the differences between Chinese and Western societies and constructed China as the ‘Other,’ they rarely presented China as inferior. (Adas 1989, 330; Clifford 2001, 25.)

⁵⁵³ Hearn 1894b, 667; Hearn 1896b, 12, 36, 123. A couple years before Lafcadio Hearn, the French sociologist Gustav Le Bon (1841-1931) had reached the same conclusion that, because the races of humankind were unable to think and feel the same way, they were also unable to understand each other (Lorenz 2008, 40-41).

⁵⁵⁴ Hearn 1896a, 460-461.

Lafcadio Hearn proposed that instead of brushing aside or condemning these differences and considering them as evidence for mental incapacity, Westerners should see them as an opportunity to seriously reconsider their own notions.⁵⁵⁵ Hearn seemed to put forth the idea that Easterners were “different, but equal.” Yet, it appears that despite of his relativistic outlook and efforts to understand the difference of the Chinese and Japanese, Hearn’s own thinking set out from characteristically Western notions. For example, the whole idea of linear progress of civilization was a notion, which had little correlation with the Chinese outlook on time and history. The classically trained Chinese intelligentsia believed that the values of the ancient sages represented the highest moral ideas attainable, and consequently any deviance from these would lead to degeneration, not advancement. Thus, the Chinese aim was to maintain the state of things, to preserve balance and harmony.⁵⁵⁶ Even though Hearn showed an appreciation for the past, ideas, and the conservative mind-set of the Far East, he nevertheless seemed unable to shake off the conviction that a Western perception of unilinear progress was more accurate. In fact, he was unflinchingly sure of evolution and the irrefutable laws of progress⁵⁵⁷.

However, unlike Lafcadio Hearn, the Protestant authors on a ‘mission to civilize’ were perhaps less inclined to see the Chinese and Japanese civilizations on equal terms with their own, since the former lacked the most fundamental quality of higher civilization: Christianity. In fact, William Griffis attributed Chinese stagnation to precisely that factor. Because of the “Chinese vagueness of thought in regard to this universe and the Maker of it,” Griffis claimed, there could be “little worthy of the name of history,” that is, little progress made in China.⁵⁵⁸ It was not merely that Griffis held Christianity to be the necessary requirement for progress, he also thought that the non-Christian religious and philosophic notions actively hindered progress, and were accountable for the paralysis of China and Japan. Griffis asserted that Buddhism had a tendency to curb active engagement in society and hence it caused arrested development, as did Confucianism, which fostered an intense conservatism, and hence effectively “cut the tap-root of all true progress”.⁵⁵⁹

Also William Martin and Arthur Smith blamed Confucianism for conservatism, which was, according to Martin, the “unenviable distinction of the Chinese race.” Martin felt that Confucianism had taught the Chinese to superstitiously revere antiquity, while Smith claimed that it condemned the majority of Chinese to a “lifetime of intellectual stagnation”.⁵⁶⁰ If Christianity and non-Christianity were not inherently racial qualities, and Christianity was the cause

⁵⁵⁵ Hearn 1895, 87.

⁵⁵⁶ Marcus 1961, 123–124.

⁵⁵⁷ Hearn 1894a, 103.

⁵⁵⁸ Griffis 1900, 65.

⁵⁵⁹ Griffis 2006b, 56, 111. William Griffis noted incidentally that the importation of these Chinese ideas to Japan had stunted the Japanese imagination, at least in the sphere of religious thinking. However, unlike Percival Lowell, Griffis made no explicit claims that the stunting of imagination would in itself have an effect on progress. (Griffis 2006b, 44.)

⁵⁶⁰ Martin 1894, 254–255; Smith 1899, 257.

of progress, then neither progressiveness nor conservatism depended on race. With race out of the equation, the whole idea of a civilizing mission thus became substantially more defensible.

In order to prove and emphasise that the Chinese were not incapable of receiving such civilization as Westerners were offering, William Martin made a great effort to show that the Middle Kingdom had in fact made progress during its history. Like Lafcadio Hearn, Martin believed that the Chinese had been gravely misunderstood in this respect, mainly because Westerners and Chinese lacked an efficient medium of communication. Martin admitted that the Chinese were veritable "worshippers of antiquity," and "strongly conservative in their mental tendencies". But if the Chinese had perhaps not been "so much given to change as their more mercurial antipodes," their institutions had nevertheless gone through various changes, and their national mind had "advanced from age to age with a stately march" and recorded "a decided gain". As compared with the recent rate of Western progress, the Chinese advance had been slower and it had proceeded in smaller steps at a time, Martin granted, but in the next breath he reminded his readers that the Chinese also known to have come up with a number of radical innovations and revolutions during their career.⁵⁶¹

Even after his lengthy account of Chinese historical progress and their innovations, Martin still, however, suspected that some of his readers remained unconvinced:

This proposition will be received with distrust by some who are skeptical as to the doctrine of human progress. It will be questioned by others, who deride as visionary the efforts of Christian enterprise. Nor will it be readily admitted by that large class who are wont to regard the Chinese mind as hopelessly incrustated with the prejudices of antiquity.⁵⁶²

But he did his utmost to persuade them otherwise. In a book first published in 1880, Martin was adamant that there had been transformations in the past, and that there would continue to be transformations in the future.⁵⁶³ His opinion remained unaltered even after the abortive Hundred Days' Reform of 1898, and the subsequent reactions which culminated in the 1901 Boxer Uprising. Later on we will discuss both these events in more detail, but suffice it to say here that Martin believed that the progressive spirit of the Hundred Days' Reform represented the real Chinese attitude, not the reactionary Boxer Uprising after it.⁵⁶⁴ Nevertheless, both in 1880 and in 1901, Martin also firmly believed that things had to change in the Far East. If China and Japan wished to attain the same level of Civilization as the West, the antipodal stance would no longer do.

⁵⁶¹ Martin 1881, 236; Martin 1901a, 7-13, 15.

⁵⁶² Martin 1901a, 7.

⁵⁶³ Martin 1881, 236.

⁵⁶⁴ Martin 1901a, 8-9.

3.3 The 'Other' in international relations: China

Next we will see that being designated as a not fully civilized antipode of the West had certain substantial consequences for China and Japan in terms of their international relations on one hand, and in terms of their domestic politics on the other.

By the mid-19th century, the British, French, and Americans, among others, had set their minds on establishing diplomatic relations with China and Japan. However, these two East Asian nations had quite different views on the world order and the way international relations should be conducted. Moreover, those views were interwoven with very different understandings of who the 'barbarian', or 'Other,' was. As the Europeans and Americans strove to impose their world order on the Chinese and Japanese with diplomatic relations, treaties, and international law, these diverging views and the nations holding them were set on a collision course.

At the beginning of both editions of *The Middle Kingdom*, Samuel Williams gave his interpretation of the Chinese view of the world and its place in it:

The Chinese have many names to designate themselves and the land they inhabit. One of the most ancient is *Tien Hia*, meaning 'Beneath the Sky,' and denoting the World; another, almost as ancient, is *Sz' Hai*, i.e., '[all within] the Four Seas,' while a third is *Chung Kwoh*, or 'Middle Kingdom'. This dates from the establishment of the Chan dynasty, about B.C. 1 150, when the imperial family so called its own special state in Honan because it was surrounded by all the others. The name was retained as the empire grew, and thus has strengthened the popular belief that it is really situated in the centre of the earth [...]. All these names indicate the vanity and ignorance of the people respecting their geographical position and their rank among the nations; they have not been alone in this foible, for the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans all had terms for their possessions which intimated their own ideas of their superiority; [...].⁵⁶⁵

As Williams described, the appellations of China implied a Sinocentric world order in which China occupied the central stage. The names also made it clear that the Chinese considered themselves to be a highly cultured and polished nation: "the expressions *Hwa Yen*, the 'Flowery Language', and *Chung Hwa Kwoh*, the 'Middle Flowery Kingdom', are also frequently used for the written language of the country, because the Chinese consider themselves to be among the most polished and civilized of all nations"⁵⁶⁶. Essentially, what Williams was outlining, was the Chinese idea of Civilization, also with a capital-C, embodied in the concept of *wenming*.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁵ Williams 1848a, 3–4; Williams 1913a, 4.

⁵⁶⁶ Williams 1848a, 4–5; Williams 1913a, 5.

⁵⁶⁷ *Wenming* was an idea that incorporated the whole Chinese worldview. It was based on histories, Confucianism, and classical texts, and institutionalised through education. For the 19th century literati, it denoted to the expanding Chinese imperial lordship, and to the superior Chinese enlightenment and virtue, that were extended to all who acknowledged the universal sovereignty of the emperor. And it also referred to a "civilizing" man, who was well-versed in classical texts and behaved according to the Confucian precepts. Korea, Japan, and other neighbouring states participated in

In the preceding centuries, China had secured a preeminent position in East Asia. Not only did it outrank its neighbours in terms of 'hard power', or military and economic power, but it also possessed a significant amount of 'soft power,' since its Confucian culture and norms were generally held in high esteem in the adjacent states.⁵⁶⁸ But in essence, the Sinocentric world order was based on the idea that the Chinese emperor represented all humanity as the 'Son of Heaven,' and that the rest of the world revolved around him. This rest of the world was divided in hierarchic spheres according to the geographical proximity of a people or nation, and their commitment to Chinese culture and its values, which were thought to be universal.⁵⁶⁹ Trade was a constitutive part of this framework, and private trade was regulated according to the place one held in the Sinocentric system.⁵⁷⁰ As the 19th century dawned, the Chinese were confident of their superiority. The sheer size of the Chinese territory, its population and resources, as well as its values and institutions, had won them admiration both near among neighbours, and far among the Sinophile philosophers of Enlightenment Europe. Within their own sphere of influence, the Chinese firmly held the power to dictate the terms of all political, cultural, and economic relations. However, outside the East Asian region, their power and relevance was less acknowledged.⁵⁷¹

For those peoples that the Chinese designated as being in the farthest orbit from the centre, the terms of relations with China were strict. Foreign trade had been confined to Canton (Guangzhou) and Macao. The lion's share of the trade fell to the British East India Company, while the Americans came in second⁵⁷².

this ideology by sending tribute missions, and they adopted and shared the many elements and rituals of the Chinese Civilization. (Howland 1996, 7, 13–15, 43, 55, 57.)

⁵⁶⁸ Scott 2008, 13–14.

⁵⁶⁹ The closest sphere consisted of those who lived under the direct rule of the emperor and paid taxes to the Chinese government, as Kenneth Pomeranz and Steve Topik have outlined. The peoples in the next closest sphere partially shared Chinese culture, but lived under the rule of their own chiefs or kings, who brought tribute to the emperor of China at frequent intervals. The third closest sphere was made of peoples who were less assimilated to the Chinese cultural system and brought tribute to the emperor only infrequently. The relation of these other states to China was effectively the relation of a vassal to the suzerain. The fourth sphere consisted of "barbarians" from outside, who did not partake in the Sinocentric tribute system. (Pomeranz et al. 2006, 12; Svarverud 2007, 1, 9.)

⁵⁷⁰ The closest states could trade freely, whereas trade opportunities for states in the outermost circle were very limited. Economic gain, or the importation of foreign goods, was of secondary importance for the Chinese. Far more important were the ritual and symbolic dimensions of the tribute missions and trade. By participating in the tributary system, and performing the rituals and formalities involved in imperial audiences, the envoys of neighbouring peoples acknowledged and confirmed the ultimate supremacy of China and the Chinese emperor. To be sure, trade was not wholly confined within the tribute system, as was evident from maritime trade between the European nations and China. Indeed, for the Manchu Qing Dynasty, the question in this case was not so much about the political, ritualistic, and symbolic value of the trade, but about the economic benefits accruing from the commercial intercourse. (Beckmann 1965, 57–58; Pomeranz et al. 2006, 12; Svarverud 2007, 9–10, 13–14.)

⁵⁷¹ Scott 2008, 14–15.

⁵⁷² Beckmann 1965, 59–60, 119; Dudden 1992, 4. The first ship to fly the American flag in Chinese waters was called *The Empress of China*. The ship reached Macao and Canton

In Canton, foreign trade was monopolised by the Chinese merchants' guilds called *cohong*. The foreign merchants opposed the *cohong* system, as it curtailed their freedom to choose with whom they could do business, and they grieved over the irregular tariffs, which were beyond their control. Not only were their trading options circumscribed, but also their physical movement was restricted to the warehouse district, and foreign women were prohibited from entering the city. Finally, because there were no official diplomatic relations between China and the countries or trading companies the foreigners represented, the merchants had no formal standing in the eyes of the Chinese government. The foreigners were also particularly unwilling to abide by Chinese jurisdiction, for they considered the trials biased, methods to get confessions cruel, and the punishments too harsh.⁵⁷³

The foreigners soon wished to rid themselves of both the limitations placed on their trading activities, and the tributary system, which obliged them to ceremonially demonstrate their subordination to the Chinese emperor. Hence, the foreigners sought the opening of diplomatic relations with China.⁵⁷⁴ This had already been attempted by the British Macartney Mission (1792–1794), but it had failed.⁵⁷⁵ But soon after the Macartney Mission, the scales began to tip in favour of Britain. While the power of the Qing Dynasty was slowly declining, Britain was technologically, militarily, and economically forging ahead. With industrialisation came a growing global and colonial presence.⁵⁷⁶

In 1833, the monopoly rights of the East India Company expired, and the British parliament chose not to renew them. Commercial activities in China therefore became permissible for all British subjects, and all matters relating to this trade were now the responsibility of the Crown. From this moment on, Chinese relations became state matters for Britain, and so the Chinese treatment of foreigners as inferior barbarians became an insult to the dignity and prestige of the monarchy, and the nation as a whole. By the end of the same year, Lord Napier (1786–1834) was sent as a representative of the British crown to supervise British trade. His instructions were to establish formal diplomatic relations with the Chinese empire, and as with Macartney, the only satisfactory point of departure for the negotiations was to be the equality between nations.⁵⁷⁷

in 1784, and soon China became part of the regular commercial routes for American merchants (Dudden 1992, 3).

⁵⁷³ Beckmann 1965, 121, 124; Dudden 1992, 5.

⁵⁷⁴ Scott 2008, 16.

⁵⁷⁵ The envoy leading the mission, George Macartney (1737–1806), had been instructed by the East India Company to open diplomatic and trade relations with China, preferably by a formal treaty, to secure extraterritorial rights for British merchants, but the Chinese turned down the proposal and insisted that the tributary system be adhered to. The British, however, would not accept this. There was no other starting point for relations with China than the equality between sovereign nations. There was a stand-off, but as the Chinese did not need British commerce in the same way the British needed Chinese markets, they could afford to reject the Macartney Mission and send the Britons home empty-handed. Indeed, many Chinese observers considered the trade proposed by the British, which largely concentrated on opium, only harmful. (Beckmann 1965, 123; Scott 2008, 16–17.)

⁵⁷⁶ Scott 2008, 20.

⁵⁷⁷ Beckmann 1965, 122; Lowe 1998, 49–50; Scott 2008, 20.

The term international law had emerged in the late 18th century, although Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) had laid the groundwork for the idea already in the 17th century. Grotius had envisioned a set of rules governing the relationships between nations, the so-called law of nations. After the Congress of Vienna (1814–1815), the concept was incorporated into the workings of the Concert of Europe, the prime objective of which was to devise general principles, rights, laws, and treaties to ensure peace, and to maintain the balance of power in Europe.⁵⁷⁸ The system of laws and theories the Europeans put into practice after the Congress of Vienna was by no means a very rigid and exact one. Its workings were based on treaties and diplomacy between nation states, the details of which were gradually codified and regularised. By and large, however, it was open to interpretation and negotiation, and eventually it came to include and govern states far beyond the initial European context.⁵⁷⁹

Bilateral treaties, public law, nation states, and sovereignty – to the Chinese, these concepts were as outlandish as they were unacceptable. As John K. Fairbank has noted, China was a world in itself, not a nation among other nations⁵⁸⁰. There was no understanding of a ‘nation state’ or of sovereignty that corresponded to the European notions. Nor was there a conception of competing centres of power, or a balance of material power, for the Chinese considered themselves as the sole ‘navel of the world,’ and the power the Chinese held was thought to be the power of virtues and ideas, not material power.⁵⁸¹ As Samuel Williams explained, the Chinese wielded power over the bordering states by providing an example of proper conduct and governance: “The precepts of Confucius taught the rulers of China to conquer their neighbors by showing the excellence of a good government, for then their enemies would come and voluntarily range themselves under their sway [...]” And thus, Williams concluded, the “weaker nations looked up to China, since they could look no higher”.⁵⁸²

The Chinese and European frameworks for international relations were wholly inconsistent, and as both parties intransigently held their own framework to be the only viable and morally righteous one, the differences were unbridgeable. Both the Chinese and British could have pronounced the same judgement of each other as Samuel Williams did when he judged the Chinese as vain and ignorant for ranking themselves so highly among nations. Meanwhile, tensions grew between the two nations as trade in general, and opium trade in particular, generated friction. Grievances accumulated on the Chinese and British sides alike. Some British representatives in the country were ready to take up arms, and the incentive for doing so came in 1839. In that year the emperor of China decided to ban the importation of opium. To enforce the ban, Chinese officials seized and destroyed stocks of opium, and detained the British trading community at Canton.⁵⁸³ British politicians denounced the Chinese for breach-

⁵⁷⁸ Neff 2003, 9, 12–13.

⁵⁷⁹ Svarverud 2007, 21, 45–46.

⁵⁸⁰ Fairbank 1961, 13.

⁵⁸¹ Beckmann 1965, 58; Svarverud 2007, 22.

⁵⁸² Williams 1913b, 13, 93.

⁵⁸³ Lowe 1998, 50; Scott 2008, 20.

ing international law, and regarded Chinese refusal to acknowledge Britain's status as an intolerable insult, which threatened Britain's national honour and her international ascendancy. As a result, several public figures called for a demonstration of British power in the region.⁵⁸⁴

In the addresses advocating war, the actual pretext for the clash, the opium question, was often downplayed, and the question of international law emphasized. Despite some opposition, some ambivalence over the justness of the cause, and some disagreement on the methods of dealing with problems in China, the conflict escalated into naval warfare by 1840. The Chinese might have had the advantage of considerable demographic power, but it was not enough to match British naval power, and consequently the First Anglo-Chinese War, or Opium War, ended in Britain's victory in 1842.⁵⁸⁵ This moment was the beginning of what David Scott has called "China's Century of Humiliation". This was the century in which China fell from being the revered Middle Kingdom, and became instead the belittled object of European colonial and semi-colonial designs.⁵⁸⁶ The war exposed China's weaknesses, military and otherwise.

The war also served as a watershed in the way Europeans saw and represented China. In the preceding centuries, the Jesuit missionaries had produced a fair amount of laudatory accounts of the empire, and on those accounts the 18th century philosophers had based their admiration of Chinese culture, art, morality, institutions and society. For these Sinophiles, China had represented an exemplary state – one from which the Europeans could learn a lot.⁵⁸⁷ Neither the Jesuits' nor the Sinophilic philosophes' representations had gone uncontested at their time, but only towards the turn of the 19th century did criticism against China mount considerably, and the representations assume more negative undertones.⁵⁸⁸

In 1804, for example, a treatise called *Travels in China* was published. This treatise was written by a member of the Macartney Mission, John Barrow, and it described his observations as he travelled around China, as well as the humiliations and frustrations the mission had experienced in dealing with the Chinese officials. His travelogue started off with rather positive remarks about the empire, but ended in Barrow renouncing the Jesuit writings as fabrications and declaring the Chinese as degraded and barbarians. What was later to become the standard image, Barrow depicted China as having once flourished, and then stagnated and decayed.⁵⁸⁹ Barrow's China was not only the very opposite of Western civilization, but it was the 'Other' of Civilization with a capital letter, too.

Michael Adas has argued that John Barrow's account was the turning point from favourable to unfavourable in Western imaginings of China. Ac-

⁵⁸⁴ Scott 2008, 15, 21.

⁵⁸⁵ Lowe 1998, 50; Scott 2008, 22–23.

⁵⁸⁶ Scott 2008, 2, 14.

⁵⁸⁷ Adas 1989, 79–80.

⁵⁸⁸ Adas 1989, 89.

⁵⁸⁹ Adas 1989, 178–180.

According to Adas, Barrow's treatise contained all the elements of criticism that were to abound in later European and American texts on China.⁵⁹⁰ However, David Scott has suggested that it was only after the First Opium War that the image of an unprogressive and uncivilized China crystallised in the United States.⁵⁹¹ To be sure, American assessments of China turned from largely favourable to unfavourable during the 19th century.⁵⁹² But arguably this happened long after the publication of Barrow's book, and perhaps even well after the end of the First Opium War, because, according to Daniel Metraux, the early part of the 19th century was a time when the Americans did not even know much about East Asia, nor did they much care⁵⁹³.

At the beginning of the century, the actual contacts between Americans and the Chinese were still few and far between, and the reading public had little material on which to base their opinions of China. Only after some Americans, mostly missionaries, had stayed there for a longer period, and jotted down their studied observations and memoirs, did informed American accounts of the Chinese empire become available. Samuel Williams' *The Middle Kingdom*, published in 1848, was one of the earliest of such undertakings. Williams' treatise was not particularly harsh, nor did it particularly condemn the Chinese civilization, although there was no question that he held Christian civilization to be superior to that of China. And the same could be argued about the texts of William Martin, written from the 1880s onwards. Of the three China experts, it was perhaps only Arthur Smith, writing in the 1890s and early 20th century, whose texts were considered critical and even ungenerous⁵⁹⁴ towards China. It seems quite plausible therefore, that China's image became negative later on in the United States than in Europe, or Britain in particular.

Another consequence of the war was that China was introduced to the sphere of international law. The conflict was wrapped up by the Treaty of Nanjing (Nanjing), and ratified in 1842. This became the first in the series of so called 'unequal treaties' for China. By this treaty, Hong Kong was ceded to Britain, five treaty ports opened up to foreign commerce, tariffs for imports set up, and the principle of extraterritoriality⁵⁹⁵ adopted. These features of the Nanjing treaty, and the treaties that were to follow, contributed to China's century of

⁵⁹⁰ Adas 1989, 183.

⁵⁹¹ Scott 2008, 26.

⁵⁹² Metraux 2002, 11.

⁵⁹³ Metraux 2002, 12.

⁵⁹⁴ "Traits of the Chinese," *The New York Times*, 1894.

⁵⁹⁵ Extraterritoriality meant that the foreign citizens of the treaty ports enjoyed immunity from Chinese legislation, which they distrusted. The foreigners were instead governed according to the laws of their nation of origin. Consular courts administered the law, although it took some time before foreign nations actually met the stipulated obligations of establishing consular courts and jails for their citizens in China. The perceived need for extraterritorial rights emanated from juridical problems foreigners faced in China and other non-Christian lands. Fundamentally, foreigners thought that Christian and non-Christian civilizations had entirely different views about man, laws, and society. This difference, in their opinion, justified the existence of the consular court system, for the higher form of law and civilization, the Christian one, would necessarily have to prevail over lower forms (Beckmann 1965, 138; Brune 1985, 278; Dudden 1992, 115; Svarverud 2007, 55-57).

humiliation. As Scott has explained, the Chinese were deprived of their territory and basically subjected to economic exploitation. Furthermore, their sovereignty was violated by the presence of Western military forces in the treaty ports. They were also divested of the right to enforce their own laws on foreigners in China.⁵⁹⁶

The Americans generally wished to disassociate themselves from British policies in China, but they agreed that relations with China should be subject to the dictates of international law and based on equality. Also, they were more than willing to share in the benefits that Britain had secured through use of force, and to partake in the treaty system the British had established. Congressman Caleb Cushing (1800–1879), the American diplomatic representative appointed to negotiate with China as the British, had before him a rather easy task. Britain had done the groundwork, and the Chinese officials had decided to grant equal rights to all foreign nations who sought them. Thus, in 1844 the Treaty of Wang Hiya or (or Wanghia, Wangxia) was signed, providing some further advantages, that the British treaty had not included.⁵⁹⁷

However, Samuel Williams thought that the treaties had no effect on the attitudes and ideas of the Chinese people as a whole. The Chinese needed to be reminded of “the existence and nature” of the treaties, Williams claimed, and still they “did not usually feel themselves under much obligation to obey them”. The responsibility thus usually fell to the British consuls to make sure the Chinese mandarins understood the treaties and abided by them. According to Williams, this “colossal undertaking” ensured that the treaties “did not become a dead letter,” and it was needed to break down “the hoary wall of prejudice, ignorance, and contempt which had so long kept China out of the pale of progress”. Williams respected the work of the British in ‘educating’ the Chinese, just as he respected the treaty system itself, but he reminded the reader that the Chinese mandarins were the ones who had to bear most of the responsibilities, risks and costs of the treaty system. He felt that the foreign nations, protected by their “immense undefined rights of extraterritoriality”, were merely waiting “to take advantage of every faux pas” the Chinese made in order to “compel them to conform to their interpretation of the treaties”. Williams disapproved of the fact that foreigners made little effort to understand the Chinese people’s “ignorance of international law,” and China’s “consequent disinclination to accept the new order of things so suddenly forced on them”.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁶ Beckmann 1965, 126–127; Brune 1985, 202; Scott 2008, 24, 27.

⁵⁹⁷ Beckmann 1965, 127; Brune 1985, 196, 198–199, 206–207, 211–212; Dudden 1992, 8.

⁵⁹⁸ Williams 1913b, 578–579. As a matter of fact, some foreigners thought it a waste of time to even try and inform the Chinese of the niceties of (European) international law, thinking that it would only backfire and cause “endless trouble” as the French chargé d’affaires, Count Michel Klecskowsky, put it in the early 1860s. Interestingly, Lydia Liu has noted from the American diplomatic records that Samuel Williams also questioned the wisdom of fully educating the Chinese in international law, as he thought it might give them tools for undermining the treaties. William Martin, on the other hand, was entirely in favour of enlightening them as to the workings of the in-

Neither the Chinese nor the foreigners were thus entirely satisfied with the situation in China after the treaties.⁵⁹⁹ In a few years, the foreigners wanted to extend the trade and diplomatic relations. They also wished to compel the Chinese officials to fully abide by the existing treaties, which they regularly refused to do.⁶⁰⁰ The relations between foreigners and the Chinese therefore became strained again, and in 1856 the so-called “Arrow Incident” took place.⁶⁰¹ British officials in China adopted a hard line in dealing with the incident, and once they had done so, it was difficult to back down.

Back at home, the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston (1784–1865), announced that Britain should not permit the Chinese to resume “their former tone of superiority” and advocated measures to counter this. In Parliament, opinions on the way to handle the incident were divided. Some members were critical of employing the politics of “might is right”, considering it unjust, and they sided with China. Some also warned against any actions that would weaken the Chinese empire, and thus shake the precarious balance of power in the east. Meanwhile, the others claimed that turning a blind eye to the Chinese insults would damage Britain’s image, not to mention violate the principles of international law. Nonetheless, whatever personal attitudes they had to the question, the Britons were confident of their strength and ascendancy over the underdog China. At the same time, many Chinese were equally assured that British power was largely illusory and no match for China’s. They also believed that in the worst case scenario, they could use the mutual enmities and disagreements of foreign nations to their own advantage, and thus weaken Brit-

ternational law. Martin actually served as an interpreter during the Second Opium War and became convinced that the Chinese desperately needed instruction in international relations. Hence he took on the task himself of translating the popular *Elements of International Law*, written by an American diplomat Henry Wheaton, into Chinese. Initially, Martin’s translation encountered opposition among Chinese officials, but in 1864 its publication was sanctioned, as the text had proved its usefulness to the Chinese in resolving certain problems with foreign nations. According to Martin, with the help of his students at *Tongwenguan*, he also translated “De Martens’ *Guide Diplomatique*, Woolsey’s *Elements of International Law*, Bluntschli’s *Völkerrecht*, and a manual of the laws of war compiled by the European Institute of International Law”. He added that most of these treatises were subsequently reprinted in Japan as well. (Liu, Lydia, *The Clash of Empires: the invention of China in modern world making*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004: pp. 121–122; Martin 1900, 235; Neff 2003, 16; Svarverud 2007, 48, 88–91.)

⁵⁹⁹ What the Europeans and Americans lamented most was the fact that China still refused to grant the foreigners a full diplomatic recognition (Lowe 1998, 50).

⁶⁰⁰ Beckmann 1965, 139–140; Lowe 1998, 50; Scott 2008, 37.

⁶⁰¹ The *Arrow* was a ship owned by a Chinese citizen of Hong Kong, but registered under the British flag and commanded by a British captain. Chinese officials, suspecting that the crew on the ship had engaged in smuggling and piracy, arrested nearly all the members of the Chinese crew. The British consular officer Harry Parkes (1828–1885) took the arrest as an insult to the British flag and extraterritorial rights, although the ship was not under British ownership and the detained sailors had not been British citizens. Parkes protested, threatened the Chinese officials with severe consequences, and demanded an apology. The arrested crew members were released, but Parkes refused to accept the release as a proper apology. (Beckmann 1965, 140–141.)

ain.⁶⁰² In many ways, the arguments and the circumstances were similar to the First Anglo-Chinese War.

Ultimately, the hard line prevailed in Britain, and subsequently the Royal Navy bombarded the forts near Canton. The Chinese then took revenge by attacking Canton itself and the British commercial area there. The war escalated, and soon the French joined in against the Chinese, on the pretext that a French missionary was executed.⁶⁰³ The Second Anglo-Chinese, or Opium, War was afoot. The war resulted in the Treaty of Tientsin (Tianjin) in 1858: a set of agreements with Britain, France, Russia, and the US, in which the foreigners gained the diplomatic recognition they had sought. Also new treaty ports were designated for commerce, missionaries were allowed to teach and preach Christianity, the interior as well as the capital of China were thrown open to foreigners, and the opium trade was authorized. The most-favoured nation clause ensured that any future privileges that one treaty nation wrested from China would also be extended to the other treaty nations. In Samuel Williams' opinion, the "four treaties signed at Tientsin [...] brought China into the family of nations - much against her will, and smarting under a sense of injury, indeed, but doubtless for her good and her future safety". However, the Chinese delayed ratifying these treaties and soon a second round of fighting began. Once this war was over, the treaties were finally ratified in 1860, at the Convention of Peking (Beijing). Thus, the system of unequal treaties in China became firmly fixed, and in the forthcoming decades it was gradually extended.⁶⁰⁴

Samuel Williams insinuated that the Chinese may not have understood the full consequences of the treaties they had signed. The features that gave the treaties their moniker 'unequal' were the following. First of all, they were introduced at gunpoint. Secondly, the extraterritoriality clause deprived China of the right to administer law to foreigners in its own country. This was a huge breach of Chinese sovereignty, both in principle and in practice. According to Arthur Dudden, extraterritoriality was to eventually cover 115 treaty ports and around 350,000 foreign nationals⁶⁰⁵. And thirdly, as foreign goods started to flow freely into the Chinese markets, the fixed tariff prevented the Chinese from raising the percentage of duties payable on these goods. Consequently the government lost any potential revenue and could not protect its own industry and manufactures against the otherwise cheap foreign products.⁶⁰⁶ From the Chinese point of view, the treaties reflected the contempt in which foreign nations held them. The treaties not only made China's inferiority palpable, but they were detrimental to national unity and nation building, and generated feelings of hopelessness. They were thus a powerful symbol and vehicle for China's humiliation.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰² Scott 2008, 36–38, 40.

⁶⁰³ Beckmann 1965, 140–141; Lowe 1998, 50–51.

⁶⁰⁴ Beckmann 1965, 128, 141–143; Brune 1985, 278–279; Dudden 1992, 8, 115; Lowe 1998, 51; Williams 1877, 8.

⁶⁰⁵ Dudden 1992, 116.

⁶⁰⁶ Beckmann 1965, 128; Horowitz 2004, 455.

⁶⁰⁷ Scott 2008, 27–29.

By force, and against its will, China had been introduced to the 'family of nations' and international law. Despite the profligate use of terms such as 'equality', 'reciprocity', 'friendship', and 'respect' in the treaties between the United States and China, it turned out that those terms only applied to the Americans, not the Chinese.⁶⁰⁸ In reality, the principle of equality between states was nowhere to be seen in the much-touted 'family of nations'.⁶⁰⁹

All this had everything to do with the concept of civilization. During the 19th century, the hierarchy of civilizations extended to cover international relations, and it provided justification for the asymmetrical relations within the international system. The level of civilization became the chief criterion as to whether a nation was to be included in the international community, and if so, at what position in it. Full membership of the so-called 'comity of nations'⁶¹⁰ was reserved for 'civilized nations' only, and it entitled them to inviolable sovereignty and the protection of international law.⁶¹¹

As we have seen, the Europeans and Americans had assumed the right to determine what civilization was, and they promoted their own nations to be the standards for civilization and progress.⁶¹² Now they had also assumed the right to determine who could be counted as a civilized nation in the arena of 'international relations'. First and foremost, a civilized nation adhered to the requisites of international law and to the principle of formal diplomatic relations. In other words, it was an agreeable member of the international community.⁶¹³ But embracing internationalism was not enough for full diplomatic recognition, full rights, or as proof of being fully civilized. Besides internationalism, a nation also had to embrace nationalism to be, as Akira Iriye has noted, a modern nation state. The social and political organisation of a modern, civilized nation had to show a capability for self-government and self-defence; guarantee the basic rights of person and property; maintain diplomatic relations; and rest upon comprehensive and codified laws.⁶¹⁴ For some Europeans and Americans the capability for civilization and self-government depended on the 'race' of the people and hence, in that case, their position in the comity of nations also hinged on their ethnicity.⁶¹⁵

Those states that were deemed as not fully civilized, the 'Others' of Civilization, were denied full membership to the family of nations. They were also divested of their right to full self-government. For them, a period of Western tutelage was prescribed, either in the form of a 'civilizing mission' or outright colonisation. The peoples of the Western nations used the notion of a 'historical handicap' to justify intervention and subjugation, and considered it their duty

⁶⁰⁸ Iriye 1967, 12; Scott 2008, 23, 36, 41.

⁶⁰⁹ Neff 2003, 13.

⁶¹⁰ In the texts of the six experts, the 'comity of nations' appeared to refer to a group of civilized nations observing international law and giving credence and respect to each other's laws, usages, and institutions.

⁶¹¹ Bowden 2009a, 14; Horowitz 2004, 452–453; Lake et al. 2008, 67–68.

⁶¹² Feres 2006, 270; Scott 2008, 50.

⁶¹³ Iriye 2005, 204.

⁶¹⁴ Bowden 2009a, 14; Horowitz 2004, 453; Iriye 2005, 204.

⁶¹⁵ Lake et al. 2008, 69.

to relieve uncivilized nations of their backwardness.⁶¹⁶ These ideas were clearly reflected in William Griffis' *America in the East* (1899), in which he declared that the Anglo-Saxons should govern the more tropical regions "as a trust for civilization and with a full sense of the responsibility of such a trust involved".⁶¹⁷

As Stephen Neff has remarked, international law was a law between states, but for states denounced as semi-civilized or uncivilized, it was effectively a law above them.⁶¹⁸ International law and its rules were seen to operate only on the level of civilization, that is, in the United States and the European countries with their colonial extensions. These rules did not apply to those at the level of savagery, barbarism, or semi-civilization.⁶¹⁹ In other words, they did not apply to China. The unequal treaties incorporated the Chinese into the family of nations, but simultaneously they made it clear that China was not seen as fully civilized, and consequently it did not deserve a full membership.⁶²⁰

As the American government had no intention to make the Chinese empire a colony, our individual Americans opted for the strategy of civilizing China instead. These 'missionaries of civilization' decided to teach China the manners and laws that constituted a civilized nation, and in some cases to go further and mould China in the image of Western civilization. William Martin considered this to be necessary for international relations to fully function, because otherwise dialogue would not be any more effective "than a compulsory mingling of oil and water".⁶²¹ In his own writings, Martin strove to show that the task of making China a full member of the comity of nations would not be an overwhelming one, for either the foreigners who chose to help, or the Chinese. Martin granted that, during the period in which China had been the self-proclaimed Middle Kingdom, the conditions had not been favourable for any notions of international law to be in place: "it was not to be expected that China, acknowledging nothing like reciprocity in her intercourse with [neighbouring states], should learn from them the idea of a community of nations possessed of equal rights."⁶²²

Thus, international law had also come as a new subject to be taught to the Chinese along with the treaties. But the Chinese were not wholly new to this business, William Martin maintained, for the Chinese had devised comparable norms and procedures for inter-state dealings in the past.⁶²³ The point Martin

⁶¹⁶ Bowden 2009a, 15; Feres 2002, 40; Feres 2006, 270.

⁶¹⁷ Griffis 1900, 46. See also pp. 48–49 and 56 for similar notions.

⁶¹⁸ Neff 2003, 15.

⁶¹⁹ Takii 2007, 6.

⁶²⁰ Svarverud 2007, 54.

⁶²¹ Martin 1900, 432.

⁶²² Martin 1894, 113.

⁶²³ William Martin was referring to the so-called 'Warring States' period (circa 5th - 3rd century BC), when communication between independent Chinese principalities had resulted in, as he put it, "a system of usages which might be regarded as constituting for them a body of international laws [...]. Treaties of all kinds known to modern diplomacy were in use in ancient China [together with] the interchange of embassies, with forms of courtesy, indicative of an elaborate civilization". He also found parallels to the Concert of Europe from the frequent "meetings of the princes for the purpose of forming or renewing treaties of alliance". (Martin 1894, 111, 114, 116–117, 127,

was making was that the Chinese adoption of international law would essentially be a “revival of a lost art.”⁶²⁴ He rooted international law firmly in China’s past, thus, he hoped, making it seem less threatening to the Chinese, and more acceptable for the mandarins who so respected tradition. At the same time, he was assuring his American readers that the Chinese would be able to adopt the principles of civilized international intercourse. It seems that his efforts were at least partly successful. According to Rune Svarverud, Martin’s texts found support among Chinese intellectuals and bolstered China’s confidence in matters relating to international affairs⁶²⁵.

After initial resistance, a group of Chinese intellectuals and politicians decided to take heed of the warning Robert Hart⁶²⁶ had uttered in 1865 that if China refused to change its policies, she would become “the servant of all nations”. This group began to propose the adoption of international law to guide China’s dealings with foreigners. They noted the inherent power structures in the comity of nations, the strong states dominating the feebler states in spite of a professed ‘equality’. Nevertheless, they thought it would be the safest bet for a militarily and economically weak China to be accepted into the community, to secure protection, and ultimately to regain sovereignty.⁶²⁷ Consequently, the Chinese established the General Affairs Office (Zongli yamen) in 1861, to handle and supervise relations with foreigners. And a year later, the School of Foreign Languages (Tongwenguan) was set up for diplomatic training purposes.⁶²⁸

Robert Hart also urged the Chinese to embark on a mission to observe the workings of international relations abroad. In 1867, the American diplomat Anson Burlingame (1820–1870) was appointed as Chinese envoy to head the first Chinese mission to the US and Europe. “Few persons can now appreciate the excitement and discussion in China and elsewhere caused by this first diplomatic effort of the imperial government to take its place among the family of nations”⁶²⁹, Samuel Williams reported. However, William Martin acknowledged that, in spite of the good intentions, the mission merely “made a great noise, [and] its objects were misunderstood and its results disappointing”. Martin believed that the Americans had understood the mission to mean that China was opening herself fully to missionaries, engineers, Western appliances, and foreign businesses, whereas the real objective of the Chinese had been to “obtain delay, to set forth the embarrassments of China impoverished by a foreign war and wasted by intestine rebellions, to crave the indulgence of Western powers and induce them to recognise the right of China to take her own time

130.) In fact, also the Qing dynasty had concluded international treaties with Russia and Moslem kingdoms of central Asia (Howland 1996, 30).

⁶²⁴ Martin 1894, 142.

⁶²⁵ Svarverud 2007, 158.

⁶²⁶ Sir Robert Hart (1863–1911) was a British consular official in China. In 1863 he was appointed as the Inspector General of China’s Imperial Maritime Custom Service, an agency of the Chinese government which had been established in 1854 by foreign diplomats to collect taxes from the maritime trade.

⁶²⁷ Scott 2008, 52; Svarverud 2007, 133–135, 138.

⁶²⁸ Beckmann 1965, 157; Elman 2004, 301–302.

⁶²⁹ Williams 1913b, 696.

and proceed in her own way".⁶³⁰ In other words, China was negotiating with the foreigners to buy time, and to keep further concessions at a minimum.

Out of the Burlingame mission came a new treaty with the United States to supplement the Treaty of Tientsin. The Americans welcomed the Burlingame Treaty, which was signed in 1868, as a "formal recognition of the Chinese Empire as one of the family of nations".⁶³¹ However, after the mission, fresh conflicts with the foreign powers erupted, namely the Tianjin Massacre and Margary Affair.⁶³² In the wake of these incidents, the Chinese stationed legations in the principal European nations and the US in the late 1870s, as was stipulated in the unequal treaties and international law. However, the Chinese diplomats posted as ministers abroad felt that they were ridiculed and not taken seriously in their host countries.⁶³³ Meanwhile, more humiliations and Western demonstrations of contempt for China's civilization awaited.

Since the California Gold Rush in 1849, a steady flow of Chinese migrants had arrived in the United States, and mainly California. The supply of Chinese labourers met a demand for cheap workforce to construct railroads and mines, and this immigration became officially facilitated by the Burlingame Treaty.⁶³⁴ "[E]verything has been done on our side to encourage and regulate the immigration of Chinese into this country," Samuel Williams depicted, adding that the "Burlingame Treaty only expressed its approval of what existed".⁶³⁵ The US Secretary of State William Seward, who had negotiated this treaty with the Chinese, regarded Chinese immigration as beneficial to American commerce and contributing to the nation's wealth and strength. But Seward's favourable assessment, and the generally positive image of China inherited from the Enlightenment era, was fast being outweighed by more negative ones. Increasingly, the Americans came to view the Chinese migrants with suspicion and disparage their culture and civilization. Some thought that the migrants were an economic 'yellow menace', and adopted essentially racist views,⁶³⁶ going so far as thinking the Chinese a threat to America's society, institutions, people, and perhaps the whole of Western civilization. California became the hotbed for anti-

⁶³⁰ Martin 1900, 376.

⁶³¹ Beckmann 1965, 158; Scott 2008, 56.

⁶³² In 1870 the Chinese became embroiled in an armed conflict with the French after the so called Tianjin Massacre - a violent attack on French Catholics in Tianjin. Five years later, a British official, Augustus Margary, and his retinue were murdered on their way to Shanghai, which also brought on a diplomatic crisis with the British. Both incidents were eventually settled with an indemnity and a Chinese mission to Britain and France to offer an apology.

⁶³³ Scott 2008, 75-76.

⁶³⁴ Brune 1985, 315; Dudden 1992, 62; Scott 2008, 34, 59.

⁶³⁵ Williams 1877, 11.

⁶³⁶ The American attitudes to immigrants were often entwined with notions about race and culture. The need for an immigrant labour force may have been acknowledged, but some immigrants were considered more desirable than others. White Protestant Europeans were preferred, while non-Protestant and non-white incomers encountered heavy prejudice and discrimination, especially after the 'scientification' of racial theories in which hierarchies of races figured prominently. (Tyrrell 2007, 62)

Chinese feelings and agitation, and the Chinese were often severely and violently assaulted.⁶³⁷

Some American politicians were quick to exploit the prevailing anti-Chinese sentiments among their voters and campaigned for a halt to 'the flood' of Chinese immigrants. The American government eventually responded to the calls from the West Coast and, in 1880, free emigration was suspended by the Treaty Regulating Immigration from China. Further restrictions would follow in the coming years. Thus, domestic discontent joined with popular antagonistic images of the Chinese to have a decisive effect on American international policy, and all the while, attacks on Chinese lives and property in the US continued.⁶³⁸ The Chinese representatives regarded the American treatment of their citizens as humiliating, unjust, and violating the spirit and the letter of the treaties and international law.⁶³⁹ William Griffis and Arthur Smith agreed with the Chinese on this,⁶⁴⁰ and Samuel Williams, in particular, lashed out against the discriminatory American policies, and even wrote a short book about the topic, *Our Relations with the Chinese Empire* (1877).

Samuel Williams noted that the Chinese had been "treated reasonably well in California as long as our citizens could make money out of their cheap labor, and when the hopes of getting a large portion of the China and East India trade were encouraging." But all this changed once the Americans became familiar with what to them seemed the "thrifty and economical habits of the laborers whom they invited in to compete with native workmen". As Williams saw it, the American government retracted from its treaty obligations, which, as far as he was concerned, were "the most solemn obligations a nation can impose on itself, and whose infraction always ought to involve loss of character and moral power". The US government was basically denying the Chinese the same rights that American nationals enjoyed in China. Williams pointed out to the readers at home that "the contrast between, the way in which the Chinese have treated us in their country into which we have forced ourselves, and the way we have treated them in this country, into which we have invited them" was an embarrassment.⁶⁴¹

Samuel Williams believed that the question was fundamentally one of civilization:

Comparing the civilization of one side with the other in this singular condition of things, what do we see? The first has been nurtured under the highest standards of moral principles, and claims to be guided by elevated sentiments and an intelligent public opinion; and yet all this has failed to secure the commonest rights of humanity to the second, who are weak, ignorant, poor, and unprotected.⁶⁴²

⁶³⁷ Dudden 1992, 118; Scott 2008, 33–34, 62, 96.

⁶³⁸ Dudden 1992, 118; Scott 2008, 33, 72, 77, 97, 99–100.

⁶³⁹ Scott 2008, 32, 72, 100.

⁶⁴⁰ See e.g. Griffis 1900, 87; Smith 1901a, 21.

⁶⁴¹ Williams 1877, 13–16.

⁶⁴² Williams 1877, 12–13.

Williams effectively put in doubt the religious and moral strength of the American civilization, which was unable and unwilling to operate on the international stage as a civilized nation should. However, Williams' opinions were not enough to stop these policies or prevent the image of China in the United States from deteriorating further.

3.4 The 'Other' in international relations: Japan

In many important ways, Japan's experiences with foreigners during the 19th century resembled those of China; but in many ways they were wholly different. Traditionally Japan had conformed to the Sinocentric world system and regarded China as the home of a superior culture worth emulating. Between 600 and 900 AD, the Japanese sent tributary envoys and students to China to gain protection and knowledge, as much out of fear of Chinese conquest as of admiration for Chinese culture and institutions. But eventually, as the Japanese absorbed Confucianism, they came to think that their country was fully equal to China, and once the Manchus had conquered China, perhaps even superior. Subsequently the Japanese restricted their relations with the Chinese to mainly trade.⁶⁴³

Power in Japan had passed from the imperial court to the *daimyo* (lords of feudal domains), and the Shogun⁶⁴⁴ and his officials (the shogunate or *bakufu*) formed the central government. During the reign of the Ashikaga Shogunate (1338–1573), the Japanese resumed tribute missions to China, but then dropped them again. At this point, the Chinese political institutions no longer seemed like a relevant model for feudal Japan. Also, the Japanese could now study Chinese teachings without engaging in the tributary system. Hence, in 1549 even Sino-Japanese trade relations became to an end.⁶⁴⁵

In spite of having an imperial court, a shogun, and the *bakufu*, the Japanese rarely considered themselves as a single unit during the feudal era. Instead, they held the feudal domains to be autonomous countries in themselves. But insofar as they saw a comprehensive "land of the rising sun," the Japanese believed that theirs was a divine and superior country. Much like the Chinese had formed a Sinocentric world view, the Japanese came to form a Japanocentric one, in which outsiders were considered as inferior and barbarous.⁶⁴⁶ This in-

⁶⁴³ Beasley 1995, 2–3, 7, 17, 21; Miyoshi 1979, 59.

⁶⁴⁴ Shōgun, short for *seii taishōgun* (great barbarian-subduing general), had been a title given to chief military commanders from the late 8th century onwards. In 1192, the emperor gave the title to Minamoto no Yoritomo, who came to be the first in line of hereditary military rulers and the founder of Kamakura Shogunate. The American experts also called the Tokugawa Shoguns as "tycoons," according to their title *taikun* (Great Lord or Great Prince).

⁶⁴⁵ Beasley 1995, 7–8.

⁶⁴⁶ This feeling was bolstered by the fact that occasionally the kingdom of Ryukyu and the Koreans sent envoys to Japan, which the Japanese interpreted and treated as tribute missions (Beasley 1995, 22; Miyoshi 1979, 58–59).

cluded the Europeans who were starting to appear on the shores of Japan around the 16th century. The period of European presence in Japan was short-lived, though. The Tokugawa Shogunate was fearful and suspicious of the Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch merchants that first arrived, as well as the Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries. To protect Japan from possible occupation, and to strengthen their own power, the Shogunate decided therefore to increase the degree of exclusion already put in place in 1587, and to close the door on almost all foreigners in 1639. The Dutch merchants were allowed to stay, but they were confined to the artificial island of Dejima.⁶⁴⁷ As Japan detached itself from the world, for most Americans, and Westerners in general, it was as if the whole country had ceased to exist.⁶⁴⁸

By the 19th century, Japan had once again become the focus of curiosity, with the Russians and British, in particular, intent on opening the country to commerce and diplomacy. The Japanese, however, had managed to rebut all their attempts to negotiate. The Americans, too, began to eye on the possibilities Japan could offer. First of all, Japan was important simply because of its proximity to China and the China trade; and it was thought that the island empire itself could hold out many opportunities for trade as well. Secondly, the increased maritime use of steam vessels required regularly placed coaling stations, and Japan was perfectly positioned to provide such ports of call for the Americans.⁶⁴⁹ Thirdly, there were the grievances of American whalers, who had been inhospitably or cruelly treated in Japan, when their ships had been wrecked off the coast. These stories had made their way into newspapers in the US, and incensed the reading public, many of whom denounced the Japanese as inhuman barbarians.⁶⁵⁰ Increasingly the people, especially those involved in shipping and whaling industries, began to demand that the government should take action and force the Japanese to treat the shipwrecked Americans well.⁶⁵¹

The Japanese were determined to keep their isolation intact. And the Americans were equally determined to take the lead in opening the secluded country to the world community, as this would not only solve European and American grievances concerning Japan, but also enhance American national

⁶⁴⁷ Beckmann 1965, 99–101; Nimmo 2001, 2.

⁶⁴⁸ Littlewood 1996, 5.

⁶⁴⁹ Beckmann 1965, 108–109; Chaiklin 2010, 250; Dulles 1965, 17; Varg 1979, 280.

⁶⁵⁰ The Americans were accustomed to thinking that they had certain rights everywhere they went, and the Japanese, by not recognising those rights, were therefore inhumane. The Japanese had reasonable grounds for thinking that the shipwrecked foreign sailors were spies or had aggressive designs however, and so they thought it safest to arrest and deport them. The Japanese were only following the laws and customs of their country, and from their perspective, the treatment of the sailors had thus not been particularly harsh. In some cases the sailors had also caused harsh treatment due to their own actions. The American public, however, gave little consideration to such redeeming factors. (Dulles 1965, 24–25, 32, 35.)

⁶⁵¹ The practice that the Americans found especially outrageous was ‘treading on a *fumi-e*’. Christianity was an outlawed sect in Tokugawa Japan, and so as a sign of renouncing Christianity, anyone who was suspected of being a Christian was forced to step on a *Fumi-e*, an image of the cross, Virgin Mary, or Christ. (Beckmann 1965, 108–109; Dulles 1965, 24–26, 35.)

prestige.⁶⁵² After a couple of unsuccessful ventures, Commodore Matthew Perry (1794–1858) was appointed to head an expedition to open Japan in 1853. Perry made a show to impress the Japanese to conclude a treaty. He presented the US as a first-class military might, his embassy as imposing, and himself as intransigent and powerful. He threatened the use of force against the Japanese, whether American or European, if they would not come to the table. The Tokugawa Shogunate, having watched in alarm as the First Opium War unfolded in China, realised that they could not afford to stave off the Americans any longer. Thinking they would probably not be able to withstand a foreign armed attack, the Shogunate resolved to make some concessions to the Americans, although they were also worried that through trade they would also face the danger of foreign conquest.⁶⁵³ Perry's bluff proved successful, and in the following year, "the long-closed doors of feudal Japan" as William Griffis put it, were finally "open to commerce and civilization".⁶⁵⁴

The Perry expedition resulted in the Treaty of Kanagawa, signed in 1854. The treaty addressed the need for treaty ports and the better treatment of the shipwrecked sailors. It was followed by similar treaties with the British, Russians, and Dutch. These treaties, however, were not yet the full commercial treaties the foreigners wished for. They did not, for example, give them the right to obtain coal from Japan, or the right to extraterritoriality.⁶⁵⁵ However, the Kanagawa treaty did make an irreparable hole in the armour of Japan's seclusion policy. This led to domestic disturbances between two political factions, one of which coalesced around the Shogunate, and the other around the imperial court.⁶⁵⁶ All the while, the Americans clamoured for additional commercial privileges, and in 1856, Townsend Harris (1804–1878), appointed as the first American Consul general to Japan, arrived to negotiate a full commercial treaty. Harris viewed Japan as an undemocratic, uncivilized, and unchristian nation, which for its own good, had to be brought under the sphere of international law.⁶⁵⁷

Japanese officials attempted to stall negotiations and to frustrate Harris so that he would give up, whereas Harris resorted to rhetorical weapons, and used the Treaty of Tientsin as a deterrent. He warned that if the Japanese refused to

⁶⁵² Beckmann 1965, 109; Dulles 1965, 17–18; Fairbank et al. 1965, 198.

⁶⁵³ Adas 2006, 2; Chaiklin 2010, 250; Dudden 1992, 18; Dulles 1965, 30, 57–59, 62; Fairbank et al. 1965, 202.

⁶⁵⁴ Griffis 1900, 168. The Dutch at Dejima had informed the Tokugawa Shogunate of the arrival of Perry expedition, and the Dutch also provided their advice for the ensuing negotiations. Martha Chaiklin has argued that Perry's success was largely owing to the groundwork the Dutch had made, their increasingly liberal and laissez-faire attitudes, and ambitions to serve as a middleman between Japan and other nations. In the decades preceding Perry's arrival, the Dutch had actively promoted the idea of opening Japan to free trade to the Japanese. On the other hand, the Dutch assisted and informed the United States too, although some Americans remained suspicious of the Dutch motives and questioned the sincerity of their willingness to give up the monopoly they held over dealings with Japan. (Chaiklin 2010, 251–255, 257–259, 266–267.)

⁶⁵⁵ Brune 1985, 260; Fairbank et al. 1965, 204.

⁶⁵⁶ Beckmann 1965, 248–249.

⁶⁵⁷ Miyoshi 1979, 16.

negotiate a treaty, they would be eventually forced to make one, and would end up much worse off than by dealing peacefully with the Americans.⁶⁵⁸ The Shogunate decided to sign the treaty under foreign pressure and without the consent of the imperial court in 1858. Harris' treaty followed the same model as the unequal treaties in China – the only model the foreigners found acceptable. It included the opening of treaty ports, extraterritoriality, diplomatic exchange, fixed tariff, free practice of religion at treaty ports, supply depots, and 'the most-favoured nation' clause. The Japanese, at the time unaware of the stipulations of 'international law', did not initially understand the breaches of sovereignty involved in the treaty, or the harm the fixed tariffs would inflict on them economically. In fact, accustomed as they were to the tributary system, the whole concept of a treaty was quite possibly unintelligible.⁶⁵⁹

William Griffis hailed the treaties and the introduction of Japan into the comity of nations as a triumph for both the Americans and Japanese. He noted that the earlier "efforts to force the seclusion of the hermit nation, and coax or compel the Japanese to be more sociable and more human" had all been in vain. It had taken "the peaceful armada, under the flag of thirty-one stars, led by Matthew Calbraith Perry" to break "the long seclusion of this Thorn-rose of the Pacific", and "the unarmed diplomacy of Townsend Harris" to bring Japan into "the brotherhood of commercial and Christian nations".⁶⁶⁰ The Americans were evidently hoping that these feats signalled that a new great power had entered the international scene of world politics.⁶⁶¹ Griffis predicted that the Japanese had a promising future, now that they had established relations with the civilized nations.⁶⁶² In contrast to Samuel Williams' thoughts on bringing China into the 'comity of nations', the legitimacy of the Opium Wars, and the unequal treaties that used international law to undermine Chinese sovereignty, Griffis did not seem to be overly worried.

This did not mean, however, that William Griffis regarded the Japanese treaties as entirely just. The Japanese were soon to find that the treaties marked Japan out as backward, inferior, uncivilized, and incapable of being equal and of having full sovereignty.⁶⁶³ They realized that, as long as the foreigners deemed Japan uncivilized, the Japanese could not expect to receive the treatment accorded to the civilized nations.⁶⁶⁴ Hence, it was one of the top priorities of the Meiji government, which rose to power in 1868, to seek the revision or termination of the unequal treaties. From the 1870s on, the Japanese strove vigorously to gain national strength, secure international respect and recognition, attain parity in the American and European eyes, and to achieve territorial and political independence. The Japanese intended to rid themselves of the elabo-

⁶⁵⁸ Beckmann 1965, 249; Brune 1985, 275, 279; Miyoshi 1979, 17.

⁶⁵⁹ Beasley 1995, 38, 41; Brune 1985, 280; Fairbank et al. 1965, 205; McMaster 1967, 308; Miyoshi 1979, 27.

⁶⁶⁰ Griffis 2006b, 184.

⁶⁶¹ Adas 2006, 6; Varg 1979, 279.

⁶⁶² Griffis 1892, 6.

⁶⁶³ Dudden 1992, 142; Henning 2000, 2.

⁶⁶⁴ Neumann 1963, 30.

rate discrimination and injustice they faced, to escape the fate of colonised eastern countries, and to become a great power themselves.⁶⁶⁵

One of the first steps of the Meiji government was to start studying international law, to dispatch embassies⁶⁶⁶ to the major capitals of Europe and the United States, and to appoint resident ministers to the same capital cities. The Japanese also adopted the rhetoric of progress and civilization, and in the name of civilization, the government embarked on a series of reforms to prove that they were a modern, civilized nation and deserved a revision of the treaties.⁶⁶⁷ All these efforts William Griffis followed closely and with much sympathy.

After the opening up of Japan, the American image of it turned from either negative or indifferent to mainly positive. At first Japan had appeared as uncivilized, but the Americans were enthusiastic about the task ahead and their special duty to nurture the nation to become a civilized country. They were therefore flattered that Japan had chosen to emulate some aspects of American civilization.⁶⁶⁸ Thus, when Griffis wrote in 1892 that: “[w]ith her changed ideals of civilization, hearty acceptance of modern principles of law and justice, [...] Japan now asks to be acknowledged and received by the treaty powers as an equal among civilized nations”,⁶⁶⁹ many readers in the US, as well as missionaries, merchants, and diplomats in Japan, were sufficiently impressed to grant Japan its wishes.⁶⁷⁰ In fact, the American government had concluded a commercial treaty with Japan already in 1878, which would have restored Japan’s tariff autonomy, had it not been for an article stating that the contents of the treaty needed to be approved by *all* treaty nations. The British however, who had much more to lose in trade revenues, opposed the relinquishing of tariff control.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁵ Beasley 1995, 215; Benson et al. 2001, 57; Hackett 1972, 245.

⁶⁶⁶ Already in 1860 the Shogunate had sent a mission to the US in order to exchange the ratifications of the Harris treaty. The mission had been instructed to perform the necessary formalities and then to return home immediately. In 1862, the Shogunate dispatched a mission to Europe with an objective to persuade the foreign powers to postpone the opening of certain treaty ports so that it could pacify the mounting anti-foreignism in Japan. In 1865, the domain of Satsuma sent its own mission to Europe, which was an illegal one, since the Japanese were not yet permitted to leave, or enter, the country freely. In 1871, it was the turn of the Meiji government to send the Iwakura embassy to the US and Europe. This embassy was headed by men of name and authority, and its objectives were to gain recognition for the new imperial government, observe Western institutions, make preliminary discussions about revising the treaties, and to consult Westerners about the reforms Japan needed to make to be able to do this. (Beasley 1995, 57, 59, 71, 105, 157–159.)

⁶⁶⁷ Beasley 1995, 119, 145; Benson et al. 2001, 58; Fairbank et al. 1965, 226; Henning 2000, 115–117, 119; Miyoshi 1979, 93. Some Japanese accepted the status of semi-civilization the foreigners had accorded to Japan, urging the nation to become fully civilized. Meanwhile, others had a strong sense that they were in fact more civilized than, for example, several of the independent eastern European states. (Beasley 1995, 214–215; Benson et al. 2001, 57.)

⁶⁶⁸ In fact, British observers criticised the Americans for portraying Japan too favourably (Fält 1990, 94; Henning 2000, 92, 122; Metraux 2002, 11, 15).

⁶⁶⁹ Griffis 1892, 227.

⁶⁷⁰ Dudden 1992, 142–143; Henning 2000, 4, 92, 122, 130–132; Iriye 1967, 48.

⁶⁷¹ Brune 1985, 342; Henning 2000, 120–121.

As the European framework of international relations was imposed on East Asia, also the mutual relations between China and Japan changed. China and Japan cemented their relations by the Sino-Japanese Treaty in 1871, which was the first treaty between two East Asian nations. The treaty was founded on equality, and it included reciprocal extraterritoriality.⁶⁷² Two years later, Japan dispatched an embassy to China to exchange ratifications of the treaty. The Soejima Mission, led by the Foreign Minister Soejima Taneomi, also had other objectives. The Japanese wanted to settle disputes that had arisen between the Japanese and Koreans⁶⁷³ on one hand, and inhabitants of the Ryukyu Islands and the Formosans (Taiwanese)⁶⁷⁴ on the other. Moreover, escorted by two naval warships, the Japanese wished to demonstrate their modernisation to the Chinese and foreigners alike, and to dispel any remnants of Sinocentric feelings of superiority China might still be harbouring.⁶⁷⁵

One final objective of the Soejima mission was to resolve the so-called audience question, which had chafed relations between the Chinese and foreigners for quite some time. It concerned the ceremonies required to gain an imperial audience in China. More specifically, it referred to the kowtowing required in the front of the Chinese emperor. This *kotow* was required from all persons approaching the emperor. The Chinese saw it as a sign of reverence and respect, but many foreigners, including Soejima,⁶⁷⁶ alleged that it was an assertion of supremacy on the part of the Chinese. Hence, after the Macartney mission, foreigners had refused to take part in an audience if *kotow* was a required component in the ceremony.⁶⁷⁷ In the end, Soejima succeeded in this objective and became the first foreign envoy to be received by the Chinese emperor according to

⁶⁷² Brune 1985, 325; Dudden 1992, 140; Scott 2008, 67.

⁶⁷³ Japan wished to negotiate a treaty with Korea as well, but the Koreans repeatedly rejected Japanese overtures. The Koreans claimed that, according to the traditional tributary system, the Japanese sovereign could not hold the title "emperor," since there could be only one emperor – that of China. The Japanese regarded such rebuttals as political insults. (McWilliams 1975, 239–240; Schencking 2004, 79).

⁶⁷⁴ In 1872, Japan had officially informed the representatives of Western treaty powers that it had assumed administrative control over the Ryukyu islands and incorporated them into Japanese territory. The complication here was that China had also laid claim to Ryukyu, and historically the kingdom had been very much part of the Sino-centric tribute system. In 1871, over fifty shipwrecked Ryukyuan sailors had been murdered in Formosa, an event that came to be called the Mudan Incident. As the Japanese had now annexed Ryukyu, and the Ryukyuan people had thus become Japanese, the Soejima mission sought redress from China for the incident. China refused to take responsibility, and consequently in 1874, the Japanese invaded Formosa and occupied it until the Chinese made a financial compensation for the incident. Eventually, China officially confirmed that the Ryukyu Islands had become a part of Japan. (Beckmann 1965, 165; McWilliams 1975, 238, 240; Scott 2008, 68.)

⁶⁷⁵ McWilliams 1975, 237–238, 244.

⁶⁷⁶ Interestingly, the question about ceremony and rituals in imperial audiences had arisen also in the Japanese court, when the British envoy had petitioned an audience to present his credentials to the Japanese emperor in 1872. The British minister hoped to be received so that both the emperor and the minister would be standing, as a sign of mutual reverence. Soejima vehemently rejected the idea, and insisted that foreign envoys would have to abide by the customs of the foreign country they were visiting. (Keene 2002, 226.) Apparently, Soejima did not think that the Chinese had the right to insist the same.

⁶⁷⁷ Biggerstaff 1950, 125–126, 135; McWilliams 1975, 243.

international, that is, mainly European and American diplomatic conventions. The next Japanese “diplomatic triumph”⁶⁷⁸, as William Griffis phrased it, was to conclude the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1876. The treaty was effectively, though indirectly, a result of Japanese gunboat diplomacy, and it included similar features to the unequal treaties, such as extraterritoriality and the opening of treaty ports.⁶⁷⁹ “Japan thus peacefully opened this last of the hermit nations to the world”, rejoiced Griffis.⁶⁸⁰

It had become the basic assumption for Japanese politicians, that Japan’s national security relied on the independence of Korea, and so it was vital for Japan to prevent Korea from being dominated by China, Russia, or any other possibly antagonistic nation to Japan.⁶⁸¹ The Japan-Korea treaty affirmed that Korea was independent and not a vassal state of China.⁶⁸² The Chinese, meanwhile, were equally worried about Korea falling into the hands of Japan, and so they urged Korea to conclude treaties with the United States and European powers, and in each of these negotiations, the Koreans were required to state that although they were acting as an independent nation, they were dependent on China. China certainly did not want to relinquish its claim that Korea was a tributary state, and in a commercial treaty with Korea, the Chinese secured privileges that other nations did not have, due to the former tributary relationship between the two. China also strove to counteract Japanese influence in the country in other ways.⁶⁸³

At the time, Korea was plagued by domestic political turbulence and conflicts. The country was divided between warring factions, China and Japan lent support to each of the opposing parties, and troops of both countries were on standby in the Korean peninsula. In 1885, China and Japan signed a convention in Tianjin, in which they agreed to withdraw their troops and notify each other if they were to send them there again in the future. For a while, tensions eased, and China strengthened its hold on Korea. Meanwhile, the Chinese and Japanese came to view Russian actions in the region as a threat to Korea, and thus also to the national security of China and Japan. Some Japanese politicians even believed that it would be best for Japan to fight China to gain full control over Korea so as to defend it more easily.⁶⁸⁴ The incident that provided a pretext for intervention was the Donghak (Eastern Learning) Rebellion, an armed insurrection, half religious and half political, which took place in Korea in 1894. Both China and Japan sent in their troops allegedly to restore order, but in fact both

⁶⁷⁸ Griffis 2006a, 381.

⁶⁷⁹ A year before the treaty, Koreans had clashed with a Japanese warship. The Koreans were given two choices for making up for this Ganghwa Incident: either they would have to pay a heavy indemnity or conclude a commercial treaty with Japan. (Beckmann 1965, 167; Nimmo 2001, 12; Neumann 1963, 99; Scott 2008, 68.)

⁶⁸⁰ Griffis 1903, 576.

⁶⁸¹ Iriye 1967, 66.

⁶⁸² Beckmann 1965, 167.

⁶⁸³ Beckmann 1965, 167–168.

⁶⁸⁴ Beckmann 1965, 168–170; Schencking 2004, 81.

were prepared for a potential conflict against each other. In August, Japan formally declared war against China.⁶⁸⁵

William Griffis sympathised with the Japanese decision to go to war. To him, the war was justified, because the Japanese were on the side of international law.

The Japanese, having opened the once Hermit Nation to the diplomacy and commerce of the world, having created her modern trade and incipient industries, having interests outweighing and outnumbering those of all other foreigners within her borders, resented the action of China in virtually outlawing the treaties which Korea had made, and in practically keeping her subject and vassal to the Middle Kingdom.⁶⁸⁶

Griffis noted that war was tempting to the Japanese statesmen as a means to divert people's attention away from the problematic internal political situation, too. Then, he remarked that the population pressure made "a colonizing nation like the Japanese to look longingly afield for expansion."⁶⁸⁷ The last decade of the 19th century was a period marked by high imperialism, and the Japanese did not want to be left out from this race to secure overseas resources, raw materials, military bases, and markets. Hence, in 1875, Japan exchanged Sakhalin for the Kurile Islands with Russia, and a year later the Japanese annexed some smaller islands too. The reasons for Japan adopting an expansionist strategy were economic and military, but as expansionism was also seen as the sign of a great power, it is conceivable that the Japanese were trying to convince the treaty nations that Japan was actually an imperialistic power on a par with them, rather than a target of imperialism like India or China.⁶⁸⁸

The Chinese intellectual and journalist Wang Tao (1828–1897) noted in 1881, that Japan wished to "humiliate China in the same way Westerners have been doing it, securing from China everything they wished", because they considered "themselves being next to the Western states" and consequently followed "the same arrogant and violent line towards China".⁶⁸⁹ The Japanese were advocating a policy of treating their neighbours in the same way as the Europeans and Americans did. Japan's drive to make an impression on the Western nations and to attain a treaty revision was quite apparent to William Griffis. To him, it spoke volumes "of her desire to impress the world at large with her abilities as a military power". And these were ones "which her intelli-

⁶⁸⁵ Beckmann 1965, 170–171; Schencking 2004, 81.

⁶⁸⁶ Griffis 2006a, 450.

⁶⁸⁷ Griffis 2006a, 450–451.

⁶⁸⁸ Beckmann 1965, 165; Benson et al. 2001, 59; Dudden 1992, 143; Fairbank et al. 1965, 312; Nimmo 2001, 8, 20. If the unequal treaties of Japan were revised, the country was to be thrown open to the foreigners, and quite perceivably to economic exploitation and fervent missionary activity. Probably this was also one reason why it was so important for the Japanese to gain national strength on one hand, so that it could resist Western encroachments, and to gain Western respect on the other, so that the foreigners would not meddle in Japanese domestic politics and economy.

⁶⁸⁹ Wang Tao quoted in Scott 2008, 68.

gent friends already knew she possessed".⁶⁹⁰ A few pages later, Griffis went on by saying that Japan had called forth her military strength in order to:

assert her imperilled rights and dignity; to make proof of her duty and power to graduate from foreign tutelage and dependence; [...] and to impress the world with her ability to hold and maintain her place as equal among the great nations of the world.⁶⁹¹

Like many of his compatriots, Griffis was confident that Japan had attained the required level of progress and civilization that treaty revision called for.⁶⁹² But the revision hinged upon the opinions of the British, not Americans.

Before the Sino-Japanese war erupted, Britain had already sat on the formal negotiation table, and in the summer of 1894, the British acquiesced to revise the commercial and tariff treaty. Britain ratified the treaty later in the same month as Japan had declared war on China. Other European nations and the United States followed this example.⁶⁹³ This diplomatic victory was coupled with a decisive military victory, which took many, though not all, foreign and Chinese observers by surprise. By January 1895, the Japanese had defeated Chinese naval forces around Korea, Manchuria, and the Shandong peninsula.⁶⁹⁴

From the European and American standpoint, the Sino-Japanese war stood as a civilizational test which was measuring the capability of China and Japan to abide by international law in times of warfare.⁶⁹⁵ William Griffis thought the war proved that the "Japanese had adopted civilized rules of warfare."⁶⁹⁶ This was also backed-up by majority opinion in the US. The Americans believed that Japan had generally adhered to the principles of civilized warfare, which meant a formal declaration of war, a civilized conduct in warfare, the treatment of neutrals, and treatment of the wounded. Consequently, also William Martin concluded that the Japanese had "earned for themselves a high place in the scale of civilization". In contrast, China was seen as incompletely civilized and inhumane, as it was thought that the Chinese had not followed the dictates of civilized warfare or fully adopted international law.⁶⁹⁷

However, the Japan's reputation as a civilized combatant did not survive intact through the whole war. In November 1894, the Japanese attacked Port Arthur only to find out that the Chinese soldiers had fled and left behind the mutilated corpses of Japanese soldiers. Infuriated, the Japanese assaulted civilians and those Chinese soldiers they happened to find. News coverage of the massacre quickly made its way into the American press, since the Japanese

⁶⁹⁰ Griffis 2006a, 451.

⁶⁹¹ Griffis 2006a, 457.

⁶⁹² Henning 2000, 130, 132.

⁶⁹³ Brune 1985, 389; Henning 2000, 132-133. The Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation marked an end to the unequal treaty system in Japan. The treaty took effect in 1899, and abolished extraterritoriality. However, Britain did not grant tariff autonomy to Japan until in 1911 by the Anglo-Japanese Tariff Treaty.

⁶⁹⁴ Scott 2008, 117-118.

⁶⁹⁵ Svarverud 2007, 58.

⁶⁹⁶ Griffis 2006a, 458.

⁶⁹⁷ Martin 1900, 405; Svarverud 2007, 59-60.

troops were accompanied by an American war correspondent James Creelman from the *New York World*.⁶⁹⁸ *New York Times* reported the incident in the following manner:

A New York newspaper contained what purported to be a special dispatch from Yokohama, reporting that the Japanese had followed up the capture of Port Arthur by a massacre of the entire population of Port Arthur in cold blood. This was declared to be a relapse of the Japanese into barbarism.⁶⁹⁹

The last sentence was significant. The Japanese had forsaken the rules of civilized warfare, and so perhaps they were not civilized after all. Perhaps, as Percival Lowell had previously suggested in a different context, the Japanese civilization was only a façade⁷⁰⁰. As American revision of the treaties had just been concluded, but not yet ratified, this was an important question. What if Japan was not yet ready to join the civilized nations after all?

William Griffis did not seem much perturbed by such a prospect. He granted that the “outbreak of cruelty” dimmed the “glory of the victors,” but he thought that the reports had been “highly exaggerated in the newspapers of America and Europe.”⁷⁰¹ After hearing James Creelman, Japanese foreign minister, Mutsu Munemitsu, and Lieutenant Michael O’Brien⁷⁰², the American minister to Japan, Edwin Dun, reported to the government at Washington that the story in the newspapers had been an overstatement.⁷⁰³ The *New York Times* was also of the same opinion:

The Japanese Legation here denied the report at once and it has been telegraphing for further information daily since the publication of the report. Perhaps the atrocities will not turn out to have been so bad, after all; and it may be that it will be discovered that there were no atrocities at all.⁷⁰⁴

As the quote implies, the Japanese had been active in spreading propaganda in the US. The Japanese fed the American newspapers with information that tended to gloss over reports that were unflattering from the perspective of Japan. They attempted to mould public opinion and to convince the American public of Japan’s civilized credentials. And the Japanese also had prominent supporters, such as Griffis, who were willing to propagate the same image. As a result, the American media and public were generally blind to the Chinese and Korean sides of the war story, and the Japanese “relapse into barbarism” was soon forgotten.⁷⁰⁵

Ultimately, Japan’s positive image in the United States remained more or less untarnished, and so did the conviction that Japan was the more civilized of

⁶⁹⁸ Henning 2000, 141.

⁶⁹⁹ “Our New Treaty with Japan,” *The New York Times*, 1894.

⁷⁰⁰ Lowell 2007b, 7.

⁷⁰¹ Griffis 2006a, 461.

⁷⁰² Michael O’Brien was a military attaché to the US legation in Japan, who had also accompanied the Japanese troops.

⁷⁰³ Henning 2000, 141–142.

⁷⁰⁴ “Our New Treaty with Japan,” *The New York Times*, 1894.

⁷⁰⁵ Henning 2000, 138, 140–141, 144; Nimmo 2001, 21–22.

the two East Asian empires.⁷⁰⁶ The Americans ratified the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation in February, 1895. In April of the same year, the Sino-Japanese war ended, and the Treaty of Shimonoseki was drawn up. The treaty stipulated that China must recognise the independence of Korea and cede Formosa (Taiwan), Pescadores (the Penghu Islands), and the Liaodong Peninsula to Japan. China also had to pay an indemnity and conclude a new commercial treaty with Japan, which would grant Japan the most-favoured nation status and new treaty ports in China.⁷⁰⁷

For China, the Sino-Japanese war and the Treaty of Shimonoseki, signed in 1896, were humiliations outweighing all other humiliations.⁷⁰⁸ The Middle Kingdom had been drubbed by a former tributary state,⁷⁰⁹ and that same state had become a participant in the Chinese unequal treaty system. Moreover, Japan's victory and annexation of Chinese territory paved the way for the partition of China by the other foreign powers, called the "Scramble for Concessions". Britain, Russia, Germany, France, even the Americans, all demanded their share of China: leases of territory, concessions, naval bases, spheres of interest, and the right to construct railroads. Practically all the Chinese coastal areas fell under one form or another of foreign control by the end of the century.⁷¹⁰

The Chinese side of the story was summed up in 1898 by the scholar Kang Youwei (1858–1927): "though we are called a country, we are losing control of our land, railroads, steamships, commerce and banks ... we have perished".⁷¹¹ Though the country still nominally existed, it seemed like the last vestiges of China's sovereignty had been taken away. Meanwhile, after a victorious war at China's expense, Japan had proven its credentials to become a member of the community of nations, which China had been excluded from. Lafcadio Hearn congratulated the Japanese for their feats:

What none could have predicted in 1893 the whole world recognizes in 1895 with astonishment and with admiration. [...] [Japan's] autonomy is practically restored, her place among civilized nations seems to be assured: she has passed forever out of Western tutelage. What neither her arts nor her virtues could ever have gained for her, she has obtained by the very first display of her new scientific powers of aggression and destruction.⁷¹²

Japan was now officially a sovereign, equal and civilized nation. But the American and European policies indicated that Japan was only considered equal on

⁷⁰⁶ Henning 2000, 142–144. The image of Japan upholding the dictates of international law and rules of civilized warfare were later reinforced by Japan's participation in the Hague Conference of 1899, in which the Japanese signed conventions regarding the laws of warfare and the peaceful settlement of international conflicts (Svarverud 2007, 49).

⁷⁰⁷ Beckmann 1965, 172.

⁷⁰⁸ Scott 2008, 118, 120–121.

⁷⁰⁹ To be sure, however, during the 19th century, the Chinese did not count Japan among the official tributary states (Howland 1996, 11–12).

⁷¹⁰ Beckmann 1965, 175–177; Clifford 2001, 1; Nimmo 2001, 25; Scott 2008, 120–121.

⁷¹¹ Scott 2008, 128.

⁷¹² Hearn 1895, 234.

paper: officially, diplomatically, and politically, and sometimes not even in those respects. In a supplementary clause to the revised treaty, the United States reserved the right to restrict the immigration of Japanese labourers.⁷¹³ The implication was that the Americans held the Japanese to be racially and culturally inferior, and a similar potential threat to American civilization as the Chinese.

Right after the peace treaty of Shimonoseki, Russia, Germany and France decided to intervene. They resented the concessions Japan had wrenched from China, and wanted to curb Japanese influence in the area. Hence, they pressured Japan to give up the rights it had obtained in Manchuria.⁷¹⁴ Japan was strong enough to prevail over its neighbours, but not powerful enough to resist the Western powers. The Japanese inferred from this that they should build up their economic and military strength even further to avoid this happening in the future.⁷¹⁵ The Triple Intervention proved to the Japanese that their parity and membership in the international community was largely illusory. The nation was recognized as civilized, but Japanese civilization was still regarded as the 'Other.'

Civilization in the 19th century was both an evaluative and descriptive concept. It could be used to describe the Chinese, Japanese, and American cultures, societies, and peoples, and it could be used for constructing the two civilizational antipodes: the West and the East. At the same time, it could be used for expressing approval and disapproval, for appraisal and criticism. Brett Bowden has reminded us that language not only reflects, but also shapes the world,⁷¹⁶ and it seems that with the concept of civilization, the Western nations were shaping the 19th century world order, and fashioning international relations to their liking. The concept affected both international politics and national policies of nations. Politics and policies, in turn, affected the definitions and meanings of civilization, and reflected the willingness of people and their leaders to apply the concept. Finally, through politics and movement of ideas, the concept of civilization also had the power to shape the social reality of China and Japan, as it could dictate, for example, the characteristics of societies qualified for the comity of civilized nations. It is this phenomenon that we will treat in more detail in the following chapter.

⁷¹³ Brune 1985, 389; Dudden 1992, 143.

⁷¹⁴ Beckmann 1965, 173; Iriye 1965, 119.

⁷¹⁵ Benson et al. 2001, 62–63; Jansen 1972, 76.

⁷¹⁶ Bowden 2009a, 5.

4 THE FLOW OF CIVILIZATION

Majority of the experts did not explicitly define their understanding of how Civilization worked, moved forward, or transformed itself, but the verbs they attached to the concept give us valuable clues. On the one hand, they presented Civilization as something autonomous, unstoppable, moving forward and operating under its own laws; on the other it was seen as something mankind could create, control, and propagate. Usually the experts portrayed it as the latter, and emphasised human interaction as the chief mechanism behind civilizational change and movement.

In the encounter between East Asian and Western nations, the experts cast the Chinese and Japanese in the role of receivers, and students of higher civilization, while their European and American counterparts were its importers and teachers. China and Japan were expected to reject their own Asian civilizations and to adopt the civilization of the West. Under external and internal pressure, the two East Asian nations eventually embarked on various projects of reform. When the Sino-Japanese War erupted, it was soon taken as a measure of the success of these reforms. Japan emerged as the victor from the war, and the experts greeted with joy the Japanese receptiveness to Western civilization, and their overall 'progress' in Civilization. The experts reiterated the narratives of China's failure and Japanese success, the latter of which was ultimately perceived as a story of the triumph of Western civilization. But by the end of the century, all these three narratives were wearing thin as there were portentous signs that Japan was aiming to challenge the supremacy of their teachers, and to beat the Occidental civilization at its own game. In these circumstances, imitation and receptiveness were no longer positive features; instead, they became tokens of unoriginality, uninventiveness, and even inherent racial incapability for true progress.

4.1 Agency and movement

Looking at the semantic field, the first discernible set of verbs (in Table 1 of the appendix) in the experts' texts featured civilization as the subject, as an actor. These verbs implied that civilization was a living organism with a biological life cycle. The cycle started when civilization "began," or when this state emerged from savagery and barbarism. Then, it would "rise," "progress," and "accumulate." After a period of development, civilization then "attained its stature" and became "crystallized into its permanent [...] shape".⁷¹⁷ Civilization "operated" on society, and shaped it by "producing" variegated "effects" and "conditions".⁷¹⁸ It could also act upon people beyond its immediate provenance, since civilization had a tendency to "advance," "radiate," "filter in," and "penetrate" from the centre to the periphery.⁷¹⁹ Then, gradually, civilization would start to grow old and "decay", until someday, it would finally meet its end. Alternatively, civilization could wither prematurely before reaching old age. It could "die at the top", if it came into contact with some kind of corrosive element or force, or it could "perish", if it lost some vital component.⁷²⁰ Civilizations (with a small-c) could clearly come and go, but Civilization (capitalised) would remain unstoppable, something akin to a force of nature, operating under laws far beyond the control of men.

However, the other set of verbs in the semantic field indicate that a people, a nation, and even the individual, could affect civilization just as civilization affected them. The birth of a civilization was in the hands of men, after all. William Martin recounted how the "primitive Chinese type" had "founded" the civilization of China, while William Griffis claimed that the "white men and their descendants" settling in the tropics were "laying the foundations" of new civilizations.⁷²¹ Men "possessed" civilization, or if not, they could always "acquire" it, and "exchange barbarism" for it. Ultimately it was men who "fixed the forms" and "maintained" the standard of their civilization. By building and improving it, men could also eventually "attain" a higher level, or "rise higher" in the scale of civilization.⁷²²

Who or what then held the reins of Civilization? In other words, was mankind the supreme agent of it, or was Civilization autonomous? This was the 'question of agency' that puzzled many 18th and 19th century intellectuals. For example, the Marquis de Mirabeau attributed agency not to man, nature, or even Civilization itself, but to religion. Meanwhile, Adam Ferguson assumed that Civilization was partly accountable to man's design, but this could have unforeseen results, which were partly due to "circumstances" that man could

⁷¹⁷ Griffis 2006a, 89, 95; Lowell 2007b, 6; Martin 1881, 258; Williams 1913b, 551.

⁷¹⁸ Smith 1890, 130, 402; Smith 1899, 16.

⁷¹⁹ Griffis 1903, 573; Griffis 2006b, 149, 152; Smith 1901a, 91, 201.

⁷²⁰ Griffis 2006b, 111; Lowell 2007b, 65; Martin 1894, 12.

⁷²¹ Griffis 1900, 49; Martin 1894, 82.

⁷²² Griffis 1892, 203; Griffis 1903, 552; Martin 1881, 32, 145; Martin 1894, 68, 83, 251; Martin 1900, 43; Smith 1890, 130.

not wholly control.⁷²³ As mentioned previously, the mechanism behind Civilisation for Percival Lowell was imagination, while for Lafcadio Hearn, Civilization operated much like evolution: it was inherited from one generation to the next. However, with the exception of Lowell and Hearn, the other experts did not explicitly concern themselves with the question of agency. Instead, they left this to be inferred by readers.

Civilization was something contagious, so to speak; it could be transmitted through contact and interaction between two civilizations. However, when writing about “the ferment of ideas induced by the contact of Western civilization with Asiatic within the last two decades”,⁷²⁴ William Griffis was not specifying the nature of this contact. Was it official or private; between individuals or nations; sporadic or systematic; political, religious or commercial; peaceful or belligerent? Perhaps Griffis believed all of the above forms of contact were applicable. The same no doubt also applies to William Martin, who mentioned the profound effect of Chinese “contacts and collisions with the civilization of Christendom”⁷²⁵. The word ‘collision’, in itself, implied a degree of violence and the possibility that some of these encounters between civilizations had perhaps not been amicable. Conceivably, if contact was a mechanism behind the progress of Civilization, there was an implicit assumption that higher civilizations affected lower civilizations through human agency, not in a mechanical, autonomous manner.

One scenario was that a higher level of civilization – in the sense of more developed weaponry, creeds, or ethics – enabled its possessors to conquer and subjugate peoples possessing a lower level of civilization, and consequently the lower civilization would be replaced by a higher one. William Griffis argued that this had been the case in early Japan. From times immemorial, the archipelago had been inhabited by the indigenous Ainu people. But then an influx of immigrants, particularly the Yamato people, entered the islands, and they brought with them certain elements of higher civilization: agriculture, feudal organisation, laws, military power, and most importantly – a superior creed, and its skilful use in politics. Gradually, the Yamato people pushed the Ainu “farther north, just as the white man pushes the Indian before him.” Those Ainu, who stayed on the main islands, were eventually assimilated to the life and civilization of the conquerors.⁷²⁶ The Yamato people absorbed the remaining Ainu due to their optimal combination of both material and cultural elements of civilization.

In China, on the contrary, the foreign conquerors had generally tended to submit voluntarily to the civilization of the conquered. As Percival Lowell explained:

For in spite of the fact that China offers the unique example of a country that has simply lived to be conquered, mentally her masters have invariably become her

⁷²³ Starobinski 2009, 154.

⁷²⁴ Griffis 2006a, 115.

⁷²⁵ Martin 1881, 236.

⁷²⁶ Griffis 1892, 16–17, 20–22; Griffis 2006a, 95; Griffis 2006b, 22–23.

pupils. Having ousted her from her throne as ruler, they proceeded to sit at her feet as disciples.⁷²⁷

William Martin observed the same phenomenon: “[i]n all ages, the Tartar invaders have yielded to the influence of a higher civilization”,⁷²⁸ the Manchu rulers of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911/12) serving as a fitting example of his claim. The experts suggested that, although the Manchu invaders possessed superior military power, the level of their civilization was markedly lower than that of the Chinese, who were the possessors of superior cultural power. And thus, in the contact between the Manchus and the Chinese, it was the higher civilization that imposed itself on the lower civilization.

A contact could also take place between two separate civilizations, with no territorial conquests involved, and result in one civilization affecting the other in its entirety, or in only in certain respects. The latter had been the case with China and Europe, William Martin suggested. He thought that the Chinese and European civilizations, although widely separated, had nevertheless derived influences from each other. Martin added that, in the early centuries, the main flow had been from East to West. William Griffis also noted that “some things on which Occidental civilization sets great store, and which seem almost necessary to its being, are of distinctly Oriental origin, and for many centuries the Chinese had them before they were known elsewhere”. This is something that these two authors clearly wished to emphasise, for as Martin put it, “so little pains have been taken to point out the extent of our indebtedness to the ancient civilization of the Far East”.⁷²⁹

But were the effects of these contacts only a one-way street? Was the higher civilization the only active agent in the interaction, raising the lower civilization upwards, or could the lower civilization also bring the higher one down? William Griffis’ statement, that Americans working among less civilized peoples “must be kept in direct and immediate contact with the standard of that civilization at its best”⁷³⁰, seems to affirm the latter assumption. Griffis was evidently suggesting that long exposure to a lower civilization could have a corrupting influence, at least on the level of individual human beings.⁷³¹ But this statement could equally be read as an exhortation for Americans abroad to keep

⁷²⁷ Lowell 2007b, 6.

⁷²⁸ Martin 1894, 17.

⁷²⁹ Griffis 1900, 68; Martin 1881, 148; Martin 1894, 20; Martin 1901a, 23.

⁷³⁰ Griffis 1900, 46.

⁷³¹ William Griffis thought that such contact could be detrimental to the morals of an individual. In Book II of his *Mikado's Empire*, Griffis reminisced his first experiences of “paganism, feudalism, earthquakes, Asiatic life and morality” in Japan, and pointed out that being in continuous contact with “heathen life and circumstances” could eventually disintegrate “the granite principles of eternal right, once held by men reared in a more bracing moral atmosphere”. Griffis claimed to have met “scores of white men, from Old and New England, who had long since forgotten the difference between right and wrong”. (Griffis 1903, 403.) But some Americans believed that a threat of corrupting contact did not loom only in heathen countries. Particularly the contact between the Chinese migrants and Americans in the United States was singled out as a risk for the morality of the American nation. (McClellan 1969, 477–478).

abreast of progress back home, since after all, they were supposed to exemplify and promote their first-class civilization.

As such, changes to a civilization via contact with others sounds quite fortuitous and haphazard, although in reality the whole affair could have been carefully planned and systematically executed. To convey the idea of more of a deliberate attempt to change one's own civilization, the experts therefore used verbs such as "to import" and "to introduce". These verbs cropped up often with regard to Japan. William Griffis recounted how, from the reign (circa 539 to 571 AD) of Emperor Kimmei onwards, "continental civilization" had been introduced to Japan, particularly in the form of Buddhism. This continental civilization was referring to China, whose civilization the Japanese had "imported" either directly, or via Korea. This was the "first of three great waves of foreign civilization in Japan," Griffis noted, and continued that, in consequence, not many of the elements considered as Japanese were actually of Japanese origin. "Almost all which constituted Japanese civilization," Griffis claimed, "had been imported from the Middle Kingdom."⁷³²

Throughout centuries, the Japanese had borrowed and incorporated many elements of Chinese civilization into their own society, culture, and institutions. These included aspects of technology, science, politics, and religion, which came via books, travel, and Buddhist missionaries.⁷³³ As the counterpart to 'import' is 'export', one might expect our experts to have therefore described China as 'exporting' their culture to Japan, but they did not. "Export" was used by our authors purely in its original figurative sense, for trade and commerce, and not in terms of culture or civilization. The overall impression given is therefore that our experts regarded China, the venerable "mother of civilization in all Asia", as a passive partner in this business. Influences merely "flowed" out of China, and even though some of these influences were channelled directly via the agency of particular individual Chinese who came to Japan, it was the Japanese who were represented as assiduously seeking the innovations that they could "borrow" and "import" from the mighty Middle Kingdom.⁷³⁴

William Griffis described in his treatises how the Japanese had been importing "the inventions and appliances of 'the West' – the West then being Korea and China, and the 'Far West,' India". But he noted that by the latter half of the 19th century, this activity had become a thing of the past, for there was a new West on the scene. Europe and the US held out the promise of a new, modern civilization to Japan. This latest wave of civilization, Griffis enthused, would prove to be for Japan "as general, as far-reaching, as sensational, as electric in its effects upon the Japanese minds" as the introduction of Chinese civilization had been.⁷³⁵ And unlike the Chinese, the Europeans and Americans were dedicated to actively "propagate," "spread" and "extend" their civilization to both Japan and China. Their objective was to "prepare" China and Japan "for

⁷³² Griffis 1892, 24; Griffis 2006a, 85, 110; 2006b, 149–151.

⁷³³ Beasley 1995, 217.

⁷³⁴ Griffis 1892, 75; Griffis 1900, 95; Griffis 2006a, 77; Griffis 2006b, 57, 151.

⁷³⁵ Griffis 1892, 55; Griffis 2006b, 151.

the adoption of a higher form of civilization"; to sow the "seeds of a higher civilization"; and "labor for the uplifting of humanity" to quote Griffis and Martin.⁷³⁶

The harbingers of a new civilization to which William Griffis and William Martin were alluding to were, of course, Westerners such as themselves who had come to the East on a 'mission to civilize'. The civilizing mission was more of an ideology rather than an actual organised movement. It rested on the conviction, laid out by philosophers such as the Marquis de Condorcet, that a conscious and calculated promotion of Civilization would stimulate and guarantee its steady advancement. And because the Europeans and Americans embodied and represented this higher civilization, it was their duty to promote it elsewhere. It was also their duty to discipline less civilized peoples, to inculcate in them 'bourgeois' values such as rationality, scientific thinking, progressivism, diligence, and honesty.⁷³⁷

In this work of "introducing the best elements of civilization," Griffis, and undoubtedly quite a number of his compatriots, believed that the Americans were "foremost", and held a unique and sacred duty to help, in "the interests of civilization".⁷³⁸ The task at hand for those Americans on a civilizing mission in foreign countries was to "instruct" the people "in the arts of civilized life," and to "put in their hands" the "keys that should open the treasures of literature, science, and civilization".⁷³⁹ According to the experts, to do this successfully, the Americans needed to demonstrate the power of their civilization and thereby win the respect of the ones they wished to teach. As Griffis and Smith put it, they had to "give" not only the Japanese and the Chinese, but also to the whole world, an "object-lesson of American civilization"; or to show that "Christian civilization in the mass, and in detail," produced effects unmatched by the civilizations of China and Japan.⁷⁴⁰

One such "object-lesson" would be to showcase the superiority of Western material civilization; and this is precisely what the Americans had done during the very first treaty negotiations with Japan in 1854. William Griffis remarked how Commodore Perry had presented the Japanese with "a model telegraph, a little steam locomotive and railway track, and a great many Yankee notions, tools, inventions, instruments, and books" when he was in Yokohama, thus giving the Japanese "a grand object-lesson in Western civilization".⁷⁴¹ Perry's demonstration had been meant to convince the Japanese of the benefits of commerce and of the excellence of American technology, and the members of his expedition were certain they had achieved that goal. Similar demonstrations of Western technology took place in China too, and as we noted earlier, William

⁷³⁶ Griffis 1900, 22, 57; Griffis 1903, 623; Martin 1900, 453, 457. "Planting the seed" was a recurrent agricultural metaphor in the 19th century missionary language (Hokkanen 2007, 116).

⁷³⁷ Adas 2004, 35-37; Beard et al. 1948, 82; Iriye 1965, 20.

⁷³⁸ Griffis 1900, 7, 222.

⁷³⁹ Griffis 1900, 106; Martin 1881, 276.

⁷⁴⁰ Griffis 1892, 213; Griffis 1900, 230; Griffis 1903, 621; Smith 1890, 130.

⁷⁴¹ Griffis 1892, 213.

Martin tried his hand at demonstrating the wonders and power of Western science to Chinese officials.⁷⁴²

It is evident from many excerpts that all Americans, whatever their occupation, were expected to serve as promoters of the Western civilization. They were all expected to teach the Chinese and Japanese, indirectly at least, by the power of example. And they were expected to uphold in the minds of the East Asians the image of United States as a mentor and symbol of justice and religious zeal, which Commodore Perry and Townsend Harris had helped to create⁷⁴³. But there were two particular groups of Americans and Europeans to whom the task of teaching China and Japan fell most squarely – foreign employees and evangelical missionaries. The Japanese, in particular, seemed to avail themselves of the American zeal to disseminate Western civilization. They hired foreigners in large numbers to build a new education system, to help reform and improve their agriculture, and to counsel their government on a variety of topics. Among these *oyatoi* (hired foreigners) were William Griffis and Lafcadio Hearn, who had been employed as teachers in the newly established schools and universities. In the neighbouring country, William Martin worked for the Chinese as a teacher and adviser on international law.

William Griffis devoted several passages to extolling the virtues of foreign employees in Japan. They were the “creators of New Japan”, he proclaimed, and the Japanese were indebted to them in all branches of science for their “friendly service”. In this way, Griffis gave a little reminder to his audience, who had heard the “song,” that is, witnessed remarkable changes in the Japanese civilization, but forgotten who the “singer” was, or whose handiwork it all had been.⁷⁴⁴ Most foreign employees, however, performed routine labour, requiring little or no qualifications, with only a very few educated specialists in positions which could actually influence the future direction of Japanese society. And as William Beasley has remarked, the role of foreigners was often simply to advise on reforms and implement them, while the decisions themselves were made by Japanese politicians. It was also common knowledge that the role of foreigners was a temporary one, needed only as long as it took to educate Japanese professionals to replace them.⁷⁴⁵

As for the missionaries, their main objective in China and Japan was obviously to spread the Gospel. But a number of them also engaged in other activities, such as in the translation of scientific works, journalism, medicine, and education. The missionary impact on China and Japan in terms of medicine and education was particularly substantial,⁷⁴⁶ and William Griffis applauded this fact. Contact with Americans and Europeans may have resulted in the adoption of “many beneficent details and elements of civilization”, Griffis admitted, but without the additional teaching done by missionaries, the importance of using these elements would have gone unappreciated by the Japanese. Consequently,

⁷⁴² Adas 1989, 231; Adas 2006, 4–5; Henning 2000, 7–9.

⁷⁴³ Iriye 1967, 37.

⁷⁴⁴ Griffis 1900, 116; Griffis 2006a, 435–437.

⁷⁴⁵ Beasley 1995, 146–147, 207–208.

⁷⁴⁶ Beasley 1995, 142; Fried 1987, 95–96.

Griffis credited the missionaries for “some of the very best, most conscientious, though quiet, work in the civilization of Japan”.⁷⁴⁷

In contrast, William Martin’s texts give the impression that the idea of missionaries getting involved in civilizing China was not generally accepted by everyone at home. “The missionary, it is said, is sent forth to preach, and, like St. Paul, he should know nothing beyond the special subject of his mission”, Martin explained, even though he himself roundly disagreed. He therefore felt it necessary to argue the case for their involvement:

[I]n the lapse of ages, the relations of the Church to the heathen world have undergone a complete revolution. In the days of St. Paul, the followers of Christ were few and despised; now they are numerous and powerful, and hold in their hands the destinies of the nations of the earth. Then they were less cultivated than those to whom they were sent, and had but one book to give to mankind. Now it is they who stand upon the higher plane and have possession of the keys of knowledge. When they go to the savage tribes of Africa, or to the still ruder savages of the southern seas, their superiority is at once recognised. They are welcomed as the apostles of civilization, and no narrow prejudice has ever been permitted to deter them from instructing the natives in the arts of civilized life.⁷⁴⁸

According to Martin, missionaries were the apostles not just of Christianity, but also their civilization, simply by virtue of its “superiority”. And because the Chinese took immense pride in their civilization, and would not readily accept Christianity, missionaries must therefore use every means to convince the Chinese otherwise. To effectively argue the case for Western spiritual teachings, it might well prove necessary to first persuade them as to the benefits of Western material civilization. “In the work of converting the nations, religion and science are, or ought to be, a wedded pair, each lending its aid to the other; and what God hath joined together, let man not put asunder,” he concluded.⁷⁴⁹ Martin defended his position further by showing that there was actually no gap between the secular and spiritual civilization of missionaries, since every branch of Western learning was pervaded by Christian sentiments, ethics, and philosophy.⁷⁵⁰

Why did Martin have to go to such length to argue that there was a role for missionaries in the civilizing mission, especially considering that the general disposition in the American missionary circles was quite favourable to the idea of using schools and hospitals as means of reaching prospective converts⁷⁵¹? Perhaps one answer lay in the distinct legacy of the 16th and 17th century Jesuit missions to China, and the shadow it cast over 19th century discussions on the methods of Protestant missionaries. The question which had troubled both the Jesuits then, as it did the Protestants later, was how to split their time between secular and spiritual teaching. Some Jesuits, such as Adam Schall (1592–1666) and Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–1688), had concluded that missionaries should

⁷⁴⁷ Griffis 1903, 345; Griffis 2006b, 177.

⁷⁴⁸ Martin 1881, 276.

⁷⁴⁹ Martin 1881, 277.

⁷⁵⁰ Martin 1881, 275.

⁷⁵¹ Varg 1954, 75.

capitalise on their superior scientific knowledge to reach and convert the Chinese. Following their own advice, these two Jesuits then accepted employment from the Chinese government, and even joined the Mandarinate. But the success they met in their scientific careers did not cause more Chinese to convert to Christianity.⁷⁵²

Because of this 'lack of spiritual results' the conclusion of American Protestant mission boards in the 19th century was that Schall and Verbiest had allowed their technical expertise to obscure their spiritual goal. And this was what the mission boards feared would happen to their own missionaries as well, if they got too involved in the secular mission to civilize. This might explain why, for example, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions warned the medical missionary Peter Parker (1804–1888) in a farewell speech not to follow in the footsteps of the Jesuits.⁷⁵³

William Martin, however, argued that for missionaries in China it was not only manageable, but in the Chinese context, strongly advisable to provide both spiritual *and* intellectual nourishment for people who were curious to know more. Teaching would *not* have a negative effect on their preaching.⁷⁵⁴ And yet, by his own actions, Martin actually proved that the fears of the mission boards were well-founded. He eventually resigned from his missionary career, became a foreign employee of the Chinese government, and focused his energies on education. But even when he worked for the intellectual civilization of the Chinese, he believed he was working for the Christianization of China. Martin and Griffis, like many liberal Protestant missionaries from the United States, were convinced that Christianisation and civilization mutually reinforced each other.⁷⁵⁵

So, if the role of the Americans and Europeans was to teach, the role of the Chinese and Japanese was to "learn" and "study." First, Samuel Williams explained, China and Japan would need to learn the difference between their civilizations and the West's.⁷⁵⁶ In other words, he was implying that the Chinese and Japanese needed to learn that their civilizations were the antipodes of the

⁷⁵² Appleton 1951, 9; Spence 2002, 3–5, 24–26.

⁷⁵³ Peter Parker nevertheless found himself following in the Jesuits' footsteps. His objective was to teach medical science to the Chinese, and from that charitable premise, pave the way for Christianity. Parker was very much occupied with medicine, and he also assumed diplomatic tasks, and thus he eventually had little time for missionary work. Consequently, the ABCFM and others who doubted the religious credentials of medical missions, concluded that Parker was no longer a missionary. On the other hand, his supporters not only insisted that Parker's hospital was a chapel, but that his surgical work equalled to preaching. (Spence 2002, 34–35, 39, 52–53.)

⁷⁵⁴ Martin 1881, 285.

⁷⁵⁵ There was a general consensus among the more liberal 19th century American Protestant missionaries that evangelising and converting were the primary tasks and objectives of missionaries stationed in foreign countries. Most of these missionaries also believed that the education and civilization of "heathens" was conducive, and perhaps even a necessary part of Christianisation. For these missionaries, the only contending point was whether such secular 'civilizing' should be kept strictly as a secondary pursuit, or whether it did not matter, since science and medicine were all aspects of the same "Christian civilization" anyway. (Christensen et al. 1983, 6; Hutchison 1983, 168, 173.)

⁷⁵⁶ Williams 1913b, 460.

West, and of higher civilization. Once they had recognised the backwardness of their position, and the superiority of the West, they could then start to improve their situation by studying what it was that made Western civilization predominant.

To be sure, the Chinese and the Japanese were no strangers to the study of Western science and technology. Europeans had first introduced their intellectual heritage to these countries from as early as the 16th century. And even after the Tokugawa Shogunate had closed Japan to all Europeans save the Dutch in the 17th century, the Japanese stayed informed about developments outside their islands. The Japanese peephole onto the world was the island of Dejima, which was where the Dutch traders were confined. William Griffis gave his readers a glimpse of this period of Dutch Learning, or *Rangaku*:

These were the times of peace, when leisure was abundant, and some of the Samurai began secretly the study of the Dutch language. Pretty soon there were little clubs formed for study, and the government allowed chosen men to learn astronomy, mathematics, medicine, and gunnery from the Dutchmen. [...] As the years passed on, many Japanese doctors and young men, eager to know the secrets of science, openly or furtively made journeys to Nagasaki to ask questions, or get books or ideas.⁷⁵⁷

In general, the Japanese were ready to learn from the West. All knowledge relating to Christianity had been banned and excluded from Japan, but unlike Christian doctrines, the Dutch studies did not seem to compromise the Japanese society and values. Moreover, the Dutch knowledge was considered as having pragmatic value: with it, the samurai could strengthen the *han* (feudal domain) to which they belonged, and better serve their daimyo (feudal lord). Indeed, soon the Shogunate that governed the country took an interest in Dutch studies, as long as it did not threaten government policy.⁷⁵⁸

Once the Japanese policy of foreign exclusion was brought to an end in the 1850s with a series of treaties with the foreign powers, the materials and opportunities for studying the West multiplied, and the Japanese extended their interests to the English, French, and German languages and studies. The Shogunate attempted to concentrate the translation and study of foreign knowledge to the *Bansho Shirabesho* ("Office for the Investigation of Barbarian Books"), which it founded in 1857. The government also sent embassies, first to the United States in 1860, and then to Europe in 1862, which in addition to their diplomatic objectives were supposed to gain first-hand knowledge of conditions in the West. However, it appears that these two embassies were rather half-hearted attempts on the part of the Shogunate. The first mission was poorly equipped for gathering information, and the studies carried out by the second were left to gather dust in the archives. Meanwhile, the efforts of the government to monitor and control foreign learning were beginning to fall short. Local leaders took the initiative to their own hands, and sent students abroad independently from

⁷⁵⁷ Griffis 1892, 197.

⁷⁵⁸ Beasley 1995, 34; Iriye 1967, 10-11; Jansen 1957, 571, 573.

the central government. Simultaneously, the central government faced mounting criticism over their dealings with foreigners.⁷⁵⁹

In the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the Tokugawa Shogunate was ousted from power altogether. With the emperor 'restored' as the head of the nation, the new Meiji government promulgated the so-called Charter Oath, in which its precepts and objectives were articulated. One of the precepts read: "knowledge shall be sought all over the world," and accordingly, during the next decades hundreds of Japanese students, many of them sponsored by the government, went abroad to get an education.⁷⁶⁰ This was what the civilizing missionaries such as William Griffis had been hoping for. The Japanese had "heartily" accepted "the principles of western civilization," and consequently they had sent their young men to "study beyond the seas" in order to learn more.⁷⁶¹ The Meiji government's project of foreign education was carefully planned. Promising students were sent to selected destinations in Europe and the US to study those subjects and acquire selected skills in which the destination country outranked the others. The government laid out rules of conduct for the students, and reminded them that they were expected to gain expertise, to return home, and then further the enlightenment and prosperity of the whole nation.⁷⁶² Like its predecessor, the new Japanese government also sent abroad an embassy with diplomatic and educational goals.⁷⁶³

As the 19th century pushed on, a handful of Chinese Mandarins also began to send their sons abroad to study, particularly to Britain and the United States.⁷⁶⁴ But it was not until 1871, that the Qing court approved a more systematic endeavour to send a select group of students to study in the United States. Led by the first Chinese graduate from an American university, Yung Wing (1828-1912), 120 Chinese students embarked on their journey to the US. Curiously, no Manchu students were among them. These students were supposed to study for fifteen years, come back to China, and take up positions in the government.⁷⁶⁵ William Martin called this "[o]ne of the most remarkable enterprises of that age". However, Martin lamented that the "fruits of that enlightened en-

⁷⁵⁹ Beasley 1995, 44-47, 64, 71-72; Jansen 1957, 568, 581-582, 584.

⁷⁶⁰ Iriye 1967, 45; Nimmo 2001, 6.

⁷⁶¹ Griffis 1903, 599; Griffis 2006b, 190. In general, the Europeans and Americans tended to have certain ulterior motives for urging the Chinese and Japanese nations to study Western knowledge in the schools of the West. For example, the promotion of Western national, diplomatic, and commercial interests in the area would be made that much easier if the Chinese and Japanese were familiar with, and would accede to, the rules of international conduct. And of course it flattered the national pride of the European nations and the Americans when the Chinese or the Japanese opted one of them as their teacher over the others. (Beasley 1995, 57, 140.)

⁷⁶² Beasley 1995, 150; Dudden 1992, 139.

⁷⁶³ William Griffis informed his readers that this Iwakura Embassy of 1872, led by the influential statesman Iwakura Tomomi (1825-1883), was sent by the Emperor to study "the secrets of power and the resources of civilization in the West" (Griffis 1892, 224; Griffis 2006b, 190). Unlike preceding embassies, this one was prepared and committed to learning all the lessons the Europeans and Americans had to teach them about harnessing Japan's resources and modernising the country (Benson et al. 2001, 17).

⁷⁶⁴ Marcus 1961, 129-130.

⁷⁶⁵ Beckmann 1965, 155.

terprise" had been "blighted just as they were beginning to ripen," as the mission was recalled in 1881, "because it was thought these young men were learning too much". What was it that the students learned that was too much for the Chinese government? Republican ideals and Christianity, Martin thought. He also added that some of the students had taken American wives, this "some" referring to Yung Wing at least.⁷⁶⁶ All these things, Martin believed, had led to the Chinese government fearing that the students had lost touch with their Confucian principles and, as a result, the returned students were given only low ranking governmental offices.⁷⁶⁷

After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, there was renewed interest in studying the West and sending Chinese students overseas. William Martin believed that this was because the Japanese victory had convinced many Chinese officials that studying the West was the key to new sources of power. It was a key, which the Japanese had come to possess, and which the Chinese should obtain too.⁷⁶⁸

4.2 Impressing a 'modern' civilization on Asia

Most of our experts presumed that the role of the Americans and Europeans in the Far East was to introduce and import civilization. Consequently, the role of the Chinese and Japanese was to "receive" and to "adopt" that civilization.⁷⁶⁹ This process was seen as a necessary outcome of the encounter between East and West. For example, William Martin claimed that "all ways by which East and West are virtually brought into closer contact, must cause the general, if gradual, adoption of Western ideas [...]".⁷⁷⁰ This adoption of Western civilization meant roughly a process that we would today call 'modernisation': industrialised mode of production, taking up new technologies, society growing more complex, emphasis on scientific thinking, and so on. Strictly speaking, however, to use the word here in the sense of the 1960's sociological theory of modernisation would be anachronistic.

⁷⁶⁶ Martin 1901a, 19; Martin 1900, 382–383. Smith and Williams also told the story of Yung Wing. Smith described him as "at once a Chinese and an American", who loved both his native China and the educational mission he'd been sent on. According to Smith, the mission was actually a victim of its own success. Both Smith and Williams believed that the students had become "Americanized," or would have become so in the end. Smith felt this was because the students had "clearly recognized the error of Chinese traditional ideas" and become "filled with enthusiasm for permeating at once the inert mass of Chinese conservatism with the leaven of their new conceptions and convictions". Smith argued that this was why the students had been recalled home, and were treated as "men without a country" upon their return. The "tyranny of narrow-minded and obstructive Taotais" had made it clear to the students that the Western notions they had acquired were not welcome in China (Smith 1901a, 23–24; Williams 1913b, 740).

⁷⁶⁷ Beckmann 1965, 155–156.

⁷⁶⁸ Martin 1901a, 19.

⁷⁶⁹ Griffis 1892, 55; Griffis 2006a, 85; Williams 1913a, 44.

⁷⁷⁰ Martin 1881, 254.

The expression the six authors used was “modernized,” in a sense of having been made new, or evincing some modern features. They also thought that the 19th century West stood for modernity,⁷⁷¹ and consequently, the measure for being “modernized” was the degree the object in question resembled its Western counterpart. Accordingly, William Griffis described the city of Tokyo as “now thoroughly modernized”, while Lafcadio Hearn characterised “the most elevated class” of Japanese people as “thoroughly modernized”. By the same yardsticks, William Martin found China to be “not yet modernized”, and thought it to be closer to “pagan antiquity” than “modern Christendom”.⁷⁷² The three authors who used the term “modernized” - Hearn, Griffis, and Martin - did so only rarely. Perhaps this was because the term signified the outcome of a process of change, and the authors thought that Chinese and Japanese societies were not quite there yet. Thus, the authors concentrated on the still undergoing process itself, and they talked of reforms being made, and China and Japan being civilized “after Western fashion”.⁷⁷³

The pressure for China and Japan to enter this process of becoming modernized were twofold: external and internal. In *The Mikado's Empire*, William Griffis called for the British and the Americans to forget their squabbles,⁷⁷⁴ and to join forces in exerting pressure on Asia:

Like flint and steel, before the dead cold mass of Asiatic despotism, superstition, and narrowness, it must result in kindling many a good spark into flames of progress and knowledge. Whatever be their petty differences, the English and American ever strike hands for good purposes more quickly than any other two nationalities in Japan; and before the men of every other nation the American finds more to love, to honor, and to admire in the Englishman. It is the two nations cemented inseparably together by the blood, religion, language, history, inheritance, and the love of liberty and law, that are to impress their character and civilization on the millions of Asia, and to do most toward its regeneration.⁷⁷⁵

This ‘impressing a civilization on Asia’ well described the nature of the external pressure, and it also embodied the idea of the civilizing mission. The 19th century verb “impress” had two meanings: to apply pressure, and to have a positive effect on something. In other words, William Griffis argued that the British and the Americans were in the scene to push East Asia to civilization and to cure China and Japan from their backwardness. The premise of their thinking was that the Chinese and Japanese were unable and unwilling to rid themselves of

⁷⁷¹ In the minds of many of the 19th century thinkers, Western civilization stood, first and foremost, for progress. Progress was a fairly modern concept, as Auguste Comte had concluded, and it implied a separation from pre-modern ideas and structures. Hence Western civilization, with its accent on progress, also stood for modernity. (Ifversen 2008, 239; Mazlish 2009, 372; Wagar 1967, 56.)

⁷⁷² Griffis 1903, 563; Hearn 1894b, 664; Martin 1881, 211.

⁷⁷³ Griffis 1892, 183.

⁷⁷⁴ Lowe 1998, 60.

⁷⁷⁵ Griffis 1903, 343. The quoted text is from the 1903 edition of Book II of *The Mikado's Empire*, but it also appeared word for word in the 1876 Harper & Brothers (New York) edition of the book.

their historical handicap and arrested development without outside intervention.⁷⁷⁶

Apart from Lafcadio Hearn, the experts were born, raised, and educated in a society where the popular perception, sanctioned by leading historians,⁷⁷⁷ was that the Americans were an essentially progressive people, occupying the highest rung on the ladder of progress, and hence they, of all peoples, had a duty and a mission to teach civilization to the Asians.⁷⁷⁸ Thus the majority of the experts believed it to be the sacred duty of Americans to “break down” the Chinese bulwarks, “remove” the barriers “erected against the advancing influences of a more enlightened civilization”, and “supersede” all indigenous ways that were hindering the “propagation of civilization”⁷⁷⁹. As Arthur Smith put it, Western civilization would have to struggle and “win its way”⁷⁸⁰ in an environment full of prejudice and impediments.

The Americans did not only think that they were inherently capable of spreading civilization; they also thought that they held a unique position in East Asia from which to conduct the civilizing mission. William Griffis declared that “[e]ver since the American flag was first carried round the world by Major Shaw, of the US First Artillery, the part played by our country towards Asiatic nations has been in the main kindly, honorable, and unselfish”.⁷⁸¹ Essentially, Griffis’ statement reflected the idea of American exceptionalism – the idea that American policies in East Asia, and elsewhere in the world, were uniquely altruistic. The ‘opening’ of Japan by the “peaceful armada” of Commodore Perry was a prime example of this exceptionalism. Griffis narrated how Japan had been asleep like “Princess Thornrose”, until she was finally awoken by a “rousing kiss” from “Prince Perry”. He claimed that the Americans had always carried an “olive-branch” in Japan, and engaged in “unarmed diplomacy”. They had been the “first in showing friendship, giving help and stimulus and example, to the Japanese,” and had “led the way in desire and determination to revise the old treaties in the interests of righteousness”.⁷⁸² Griffis maintained that the Americans were the true friends of Japan. “From no nation of Christendom will Japan receive more hearty good wishes” than from the United States⁷⁸³, he concluded.

⁷⁷⁶ Clifford 2001, 67–68. In general, for those who subscribed to the idea of temporal opposition, intervention from outside was seen as the only way for a backward nation to get back on track to civilization. Observers of China, for example, were confident that, if left to their own devices, the Chinese would not have the ability or the will to mobilise their resources and become a modernised nation. Moreover, it was thought that, without intervention, the Chinese civilization would start to decay, and eventually cease to exist. (Clifford 2001, 68; Feres Jr. 2005, 103.)

⁷⁷⁷ Noble 2002, 2.

⁷⁷⁸ Iriye 1967, 18.

⁷⁷⁹ For more on the obstacles facing the civilizing mission in China and Japan, see e.g., Griffis 1903, 570, 578; Hearn 1894b, 453; Martin 1881, 149; Smith 1890, 5; Williams 1913b, 62–63, 672.

⁷⁸⁰ Smith 1890, 5.

⁷⁸¹ Griffis 2006a, 411.

⁷⁸² Griffis 1892, 130; Griffis 1900, 4, 119, 153; Griffis 2006b, 184.

⁷⁸³ Griffis 1900, 105, 148; Griffis 2006a, 431.

According to Griffis, violence was always the last resort for the Americans, and blood was spilled “only in self-defence or after provocation”.⁷⁸⁴ In a similar manner, Arthur Smith and Samuel Williams claimed that the American policies in China had been nothing but altruistic and peaceable. In the Middle Kingdom, the American exceptionalism was manifested, for example, in assuming a higher moral ground in the question of opium trade. Samuel Williams believed that the Chinese held a favourable opinion of the Americans because they “had nothing to do with the opium trade”⁷⁸⁵. Moreover, China had nothing to fear from the United States, Williams continued, since unlike the “British, French, and Russians”, the Americans were not likely to resort to “force to obtain their demands”.

Many Americans were committed to cultural expansion and spreading civilization, but the main sphere of American expansion and interests in East Asia was commerce and trade. The American government thought of trade as a matter of private individuals and companies. As far as the decision-makers at Washington were concerned, it was enough for American citizens to be guaranteed the same privileges as the citizens of other nations in East Asia, and the most-favoured nation clause in the treaties seemed to ensure this. Since there were no formidable threats to American national interests in the region, and the few national interests the United States had were protected by a treaty system upheld by British and French force, the Americans could afford to be exceptional. They could take pride in their righteousness and charitableness, claim to be above imperialism and power politics, and think that they had a special relationship with the Chinese and Japanese.⁷⁸⁶

To be sure, the exceptionalism of American policies was to a large extent illusory, and the six experts were aware of this. William Martin concurred with Williams and Smith on the amicability of Sino-American relations, but noted that they were often a result of other considerations than the pure goodness of the American people:

⁷⁸⁴ Griffis 1900, 154. Also the American government emphasised the peaceful and defensive nature of the American naval presence in East Asia (Brune 1985, 272).

⁷⁸⁵ Smith 1901b, 725; Williams 1877, 5–6. Although the opium trade was profitable, for the Americans it was never economically as significant as for the British. Before the first Opium War, the American share in the importation of opium to China was less than 10 per cent. Besides, many merchants and missionaries had doubts on the trade. The argument of these Americans ran that the ban on opium trade would not be only the morally right thing to do, but it would also benefit free trade as the Chinese would no longer be weakened by opium, and hence they could concentrate solely on modernization. Consequently, the American government adopted prohibitionist attitude to opium trade as the official US policy in East Asia. In the 1844 Treaty of Wanghia, opium was recognised, according to the Chinese prohibitions, as contraband, and the Americans affirmed that they would not engage in this illegal trade. Also in the 1858 Treaty of Amity and Commerce with Japan, opium trade was prohibited. However, in the same year the Treaties of Tientsin legalised opium trade in China and subjected the imports to a duty. (Beckmann 1965, 142; Brune 1985, 211–212, 280; Dudden 1992, 6–7; Tyrrell 2007, 141–142.)

⁷⁸⁶ Dudden 1992, 8; Fairbank 1961, 246, 253; Hevia 1992, 325; Iriye 1965, 65, 90; Iriye 1967, 14–17; Jackson 1992, 246; Varg 1954, 74–75.

America is neighbor to China only in the sense in which the Samaritan was neighbor to him who fell among thieves: others may wound or rob, we do neither. Not that we are better, but the remoteness of our situation, the form of our government, and the amplex of our domain are such as to keep us out of temptation. This applies equally to our relations with Japan. Both nations are aware of it. A country so remote as to exclude the suspicion of a design on Chinese territory, so separated from other great powers as to be free from entanglements, withal sufficiently powerful and sufficiently enlightened to command respect, was found to fulfil all the conditions for friendly mediation.⁷⁸⁷

William Griffis, too, drew attention to the contingencies behind American policies. He pointed out that, “in certain emergencies”, the Americans had “derived no small advantage from the expensive show of English and French force in the seas of China and Japan, and from the literary fruits of the unrivaled British Civil Service”.⁷⁸⁸

As William Griffis implied, American commercial activities relied on the use of force, even though this force might be the navy of some European power. And when force was not available, or when the policymakers wished to avoid it, often the mere threat of gunboat diplomacy was enough. The ‘peaceful opening’ of Japan, and the treaty negotiations which brought Japan into the “comity of civilized nations”, had been both carried out by convincing the Japanese that if they would refuse, the European powers would in the end bring Japan down with their superior military power.⁷⁸⁹ Although the Americans tried to disassociate themselves from the British gunboat diplomacy,⁷⁹⁰ and to represent themselves as peace-loving philanthropists, they were actually making veiled threats in the name of European powers. And towards the end of the 19th century, the Americans were making sporadic calls for more aggressive policies in the Pacific region. Gunboat diplomacy was advocated for strategic purposes, for retaliation and discipline, and for enforcing the treaties and ensuring that the Chinese and Japanese acquiesced to the rules of international relations. This “old China hand” mentality turned up again and again in the discourse of the American merchants, diplomats, and missionaries alike.⁷⁹¹

Occasionally, some Americans also urged the taking up of arms in the name of educating and civilizing the Chinese and Japanese, or in order to force them to renounce their arrested development and opposition to the Western civilization. Particularly in this respect, the majority of the six experts had no objections to the use of armed pressure, if the pressure of words failed. According to William Griffis, for example, the situation in Japan in the early 1860s had merited such military action. In 1862, the British legation in Japan had been at-

⁷⁸⁷ Martin 1900, 406–407.

⁷⁸⁸ Griffis 1903, 577.

⁷⁸⁹ Miyoshi 1979, 17–18; Neumann 1963, 39.

⁷⁹⁰ British gunboat diplomacy followed Lord Palmerston’s famous maxim: “[w]herever British subjects are placed in danger, thither a British Ship of War ought to be... to remain as long as... may be required for the protection of British interests”. In other words, the British argued that if their interests were violated, and peaceful means would not work, then there were grounds for a ‘just war,’ and use of the Royal Navy (Lowe 1998, 49; Neff 2003, 18–19; O’Connor 1974, 168).

⁷⁹¹ Brune 1985, 272; Dudden 1992, 8–9; Varg 1954, 73

tacked, foreign subjects murdered, and within a year an imperial edict had ordered the termination of all Japanese relations with the West. Some domains took it into their own hands to enforce the edict, with the consequence that the troops of the Daimyo of Chōshū fired at an American merchant ship in an attempt to close the straits of Shimonoseki. At the time, the Civil War was raging in the US and there was little naval power available for gunboat diplomacy in Japan. Yet, the Americans decided to retaliate for the Chōshū strike in 1863, and a year later in a joint expedition with the other treaty powers.⁷⁹² Griffis applauded this American insistence on their treaty rights. In his opinion, it “maintained the American record of valor – so confessedly medicinal and alterative to the Japanese mind”.⁷⁹³

William Griffis was positive that the American “naval exploits” in East Asia had “taught needed lessons” in general. He even thought that, with hindsight, the Chinese and Japanese had been grateful for them.⁷⁹⁴ This ‘teaching a lesson’ through use of force was a recurrent theme in the writings of the three experts on things Chinese. The First Opium War had been the first lesson, in which the Chinese had finally been shown the relative power positions of China and the Western countries. In Arthur Smith’s opinion, it had been a ‘just war’, as it seemed the best way to give the Chinese a much-needed reality check:

It is difficult even to read with patience the recital of what foreigners went through with the Chinese at that early day. The conceit of the Chinese Government and of all its officials from top to bottom was simply colossal and insufferable. [...] Under these conditions it is a wonder that the war of 1840-42 did not come about earlier. [...] For the peace of the world and for the welfare of the Chinese Empire itself, it was indispensable that the intolerable pride of the Chinese should receive a decisive overthrow by the only means which people and Emperor alike were able to comprehend – military force.⁷⁹⁵

Also Samuel Williams thought that the war had proved to be the only way this reality-check, as well as the dictates of international law, could be enforced:

This assumption of supremacy, and a real impression of its propriety, was a higher wall around them than the long pile of stones north of Peking. Force seemed to be the only effectual destroyer of such a barrier, and in this view the war may be said to have been necessary to compel the Chinese government to receive western powers as its equals, or at least make it treat their subjects as well as it did its own people.⁷⁹⁶

Nevertheless, although Williams believed that the war had been necessary, at the same time he was claiming that the war had been fundamentally immoral and waged on unjust grounds; these grounds being the British refusal to give up the illegal opium trade.⁷⁹⁷

⁷⁹² Neumann 1963, 58–60.

⁷⁹³ Griffis 1900, 104.

⁷⁹⁴ Griffis 1900, 119.

⁷⁹⁵ Smith 1901a, 15–16.

⁷⁹⁶ Williams 1913b, 511.

⁷⁹⁷ Williams 1913b, 510–512. Samuel Williams seemed to think that if the British officials would have given China’s haughty refusal of “all equal intercourse with other nations” as a pretext for the war, then the armed struggle would have been as moral as

However, the three China experts were generally convinced that the lesson of the First Opium War had been lost on the Chinese, and consequently a second lesson was impending, as Samuel Williams insinuated.⁷⁹⁸ The grounds for the Second Opium War – the Arrow Incident – Samuel Williams regarded just as untenable as the grounds for the first war. But the Arrow Incident nevertheless had presented an opportunity for taking action about the real cause – international relations.⁷⁹⁹ As Williams saw it, the British had wanted to secure a diplomatic presence in the capital, whereas the Chinese feared that admitting foreigners to Beijing was but the first step in a British attempt to conquer the whole empire. Essentially, Williams blamed the “miserable” Chinese policy of isolation for the conflict, which had left the Chinese “helpless in their ignorance”, and without any “desire to learn what they knew nothing about”. Thus, the reasons he cited for the need to educate the Chinese were their pride, arrogance, and benightedness.⁸⁰⁰

The Americans engaged in military action at the beginning of the Second Opium War, even though they were officially neutral.⁸⁰¹ But otherwise, the Americans preferred to stay out of entangling alliances and gunboat diplomacy – a policy which Samuel Williams criticised:

As one of the British officers pithily stated it, the two powers [Britain, France] had China by the throat, while the other two [US, Russia] stood by to egg them on, so that all could share the spoil. Yet the past sixteen years had proven most conclusively that, unless this pressure was exerted, the imperial government would make no advance, admit no opening for learning its real position among the nations of the world, but mulishly cherish its ignorance, its isolation, its conceit, and its folly, until these causes had worked out the ruin so fondly hoped to be avoided. [...] Happily, Lord Elgin

it had been beneficial for all parties. William Martin somewhat disagreed. He thought that opium question had been only the spark that inflamed the war, whereas in reality the British had entered the contest because of the “indignities” on the part of the Chinese. These deliberate insults had been of a kind “such as a self-respecting people cannot endure forever”, and that “might have furnished ground for a just war”. (Martin 1900, 21; Williams 1913b, 572.)

⁷⁹⁸ Williams 1913b, 633.

⁷⁹⁹ Williams 1913b, 637.

⁸⁰⁰ Williams 1913b, 641–642, 652. In private, Samuel Williams vented his frustration at the recalcitrance of the Chinese officials. In 1858 he wrote that: “nothing short of the Society for the Diffusion of Cannon Balls will give [Chinese officials] the useful knowledge they now require to realize their own helplessness”. (Williams 1889, 257.) Williams was punning here on ‘The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge’, which had operated before the First Opium War with an aim to increase Chinese respect and receptiveness towards the Westerners by distributing knowledge and teaching the Chinese about Westerners and their sciences and cultures. In fact, Songchuan Chen has befittingly called the activities of the society as “information war.” (See Chen, Songchuan, “An Information War Waged by Merchants and Missionaries at Canton: The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in China, 1834–1839.” *Modern Asian Studies*, 46 (6), 2012: pp. 1705–1735.)

⁸⁰¹ In 1856, an American ship on a mission to evacuate American citizens from Canton was fired at, and revenging the assault, the commander of the American Asiatic squadron ordered the Chinese Barrier Forts at Pearl River to be wiped out. And in 1859, the U.S. ships assisted the British in their attack on the Dagu (Taku) Forts, commander Tattnall famously accounting for the act with the statement that “blood is thicker than water”. (Spence 1990, 181.)

then saw the question in all its bearings, and no one ever proved to be a truer friend to China than did he in forcing it upon her.⁸⁰²

Again, Williams was asserting that there had been “no alternative other than the display of force”⁸⁰³, and clearly he respected the British for their willingness and ability to use it, and derided the American unwillingness to step up to the same responsibility.

But Samuel Williams admitted that the Chinese “had to pay dearly for their instruction”.⁸⁰⁴ The Chinese refused to ratify the Treaty of Tientsin, which had been concluded in 1858. They also prohibited foreigners from entering Beijing, and captured, tortured, and executed British and French officials. The result was “the total destruction of the Emperor's Summer Palace, as well as other places of Imperial resort in the neighbourhood”. Arthur Smith then went on to describe this in Lord Elgin's words as “a solemn act of retribution”.⁸⁰⁵ The French and British troops occupied, looted, and burned the Summer Palace as a final act of revenge and ‘education’ to the Chinese. Destroying the repository of Chinese art and civilization was seen as a fitting way of telling the Chinese to renounce any feelings of superiority they may have, and to obey international laws. As David Scott has described, the burning of the Summer Palace was a case of Western ‘hard power’ being used to crush Chinese ‘soft power’.⁸⁰⁶

When “their last army had been beaten, their Emperor had fled, and his palace lay in ruins”, only then, William Martin claimed, did the Chinese awake “to the reality of their situation”. He then continued:

This lesson was decisive—an experience of inestimable value, without which all the attempts of Western nations to benefit the Chinese must have proved like attempting to irrigate the side of a mountain by projecting water from its base. The effect was immediate. The Chinese were, for the first time, convinced that they had something to learn.⁸⁰⁷

Yet, both William Martin and Samuel Williams admitted that even the Second Opium War, or the burning of the Summer Palace, had still not had the desired effect. Williams, for example, recounted that the Chinese “blindness and folly” had continued well after the two Opium Wars, and Martin wrote in 1896, that the Chinese had required “more than one lesson of the rudest sort”.⁸⁰⁸

The idea of teaching civilization through armed force, which is present in the texts of all four missionary-minded authors, echoed those theological theories which defined the ‘just war’ as an act of benevolence. For example, Saint Augustine had claimed that moral punishment was for the good of those receiving it.⁸⁰⁹ It is probably safe to assume that Samuel Williams was familiar with such ideas, which would perhaps explain his conviction that even instruc-

⁸⁰² Williams 1913b, 656.

⁸⁰³ Williams 1913b, 652.

⁸⁰⁴ Williams 1913b, 643.

⁸⁰⁵ Lowe 1998, 51–52; Smith 1901a, 20.

⁸⁰⁶ Scott 2008, 44–46.

⁸⁰⁷ Martin 1881, 238.

⁸⁰⁸ Martin 1900, 379; Williams 1913b, 741.

⁸⁰⁹ O'Connor 1974, 169.

tive and corrective wars would have to be waged on moral and just grounds. At the same time, this idea was also consistent with the proposition that war was the key agent in effecting progress. This proposition was put forward by men of influence such as Stephen B. Luce (1827–1917), the Admiral of the US Navy and the founder and president of the Naval War College. In his article, published in the *North American Review* in 1891, Luce stated that war, an ordination from God, was a necessity in the transition from a military society to peaceful civilization, and would actually bring the latter state about.⁸¹⁰ Finally, the conviction that China and Japan were in need of military object lessons drew on the perception that the Chinese and Japanese were not yet fully civilized, which meant that the only way to get through to them was through the use of force.⁸¹¹

Evidently, majority of the six experts felt that Western civilization had been impressed upon the Chinese and Japanese peoples, who had not asked for it. This image was further accentuated with the utilization of such verbs as “force into,” “thrust upon,” and “obtrude upon.” Samuel Williams wrote about forcing the Chinese into the “desirable condition” of progress in the “path we call civilization,” and Arthur Smith lamented that often “only the worst side” of Occidental civilization obtruded upon the Chinese⁸¹². Meanwhile, Lafcadio Hearn described the American and European involvement in Japan as Western nations thrusting their civilization on the Japanese. And not just upon the Japanese, but on other peoples around the world as well.⁸¹³ Yet, the experts appeared to think that the end justified the means. The Western impact, albeit forced, would ultimately be a blessing for both China and Japan. Even Hearn, although inclined to primitivism, seemed to share this view, as he granted that: “[n]o doubt that change of civilization forced upon Japan by Christian bayonets, for the holy motive of gain, may yet save the empire from perils greater than those of the late social disintegration [...]”⁸¹⁴

“Perils” described the scenario that all six experts envisioned for China and Japan if they did not abandon their conservatism and adopt Western civilization. China and Japan needed to “adapt” themselves to the “changed conditions of modern life,” in words of William Martin, or to the “altered conditions brought about by the impact of Western civilization, with its Pandora Box of evil and of good,” in words of Arthur Smith⁸¹⁵. However, while the Americans could pride themselves and enthuse about their benevolent relationship with China and Japan, the Chinese and Japanese had entered the relations involuntarily. For them, the Americans and the Europeans appeared as a threat; a threat to their way of life and to their whole national existence.⁸¹⁶ Thus, adaptation became a question of self-defence and self-preservation for the Far East, as Lafcadio Hearn noted:

⁸¹⁰ Bannister 1979, 231–232.

⁸¹¹ Hevia 1992, 326.

⁸¹² Smith 1890, 73; Williams 1913b, 695.

⁸¹³ Hearn 1894b, 453; Hearn 1895, 238.

⁸¹⁴ Hearn 1894b, 620.

⁸¹⁵ Martin 1900, 42; Smith 1901b, 738.

⁸¹⁶ Fairbank 1961, 317–318.

Western science whose logic he knew to be irrefutable assured him of the larger and larger expansion of the power of that civilization, as of an irresistible, inevitable, measureless inundation of world pain. Japan would have to learn the new forms of action, to master the new forms of thought, or to perish utterly. There was no other alternative.⁸¹⁷

Percival Lowell also, like Hearn, warned that if the East Asians continued as before, their “earthly career” would end, while William Griffis claimed that the Chinese and Japanese would have to “adopt foreign civilization, or fall before foreign progress, like India”.⁸¹⁸

The external pressure China and Japan received summed up by Lafcadio Hearn as “an impact from European civilization, – partly by armed aggression, partly by commercial impulse, partly by the influence of ideas”⁸¹⁹. Arguably, this pressure had some effect, but without the readiness of the Chinese and Japanese to modernise, no amount of Western enforcement would have been enough, at least while the two nations retained their sovereignty. This was something that William Griffis wished his readers to understand. He pointed out that: “[c]annon-balls, commerce, and actual contact with foreigners” had undeniably helped to remove the “scales” from Japanese eyes, but the same methods had “failed in China, though tried for half a century”. Griffis emphasised that the same methods would have failed in Japan, too, if it had not been for “an impulse from within” that had “urged the Japanese to join the comity of nations”.⁸²⁰

The question of whether China and Japan would accept and acquire a ‘modernized’ civilization depended on the ‘carrot and stick’ interplay between external pressure and incentives on the one hand, and internal pressure and incentives on the other. William Griffis explained that the task of foreigners had been to open these countries, and after that, leave it to the Chinese and Japanese to keep their doors “fully opened to diplomacy, commerce, and civilization”. According to Griffis and Samuel Williams the process thus required the willingness of both the foreigners and locals to “raise” these two nations to “a higher plane of civilization and liberty”.⁸²¹

4.3 The adoption of Western civilization

The so-called “opening of Japan,” the unequal treaties, and the arrival of a notion of civilization fraught with Western values, created the external pressure in the 1850s that forced the Japanese to react. As Bruce Mazlish has noted, the Europeans and Americans challenged other peoples of the world to respond to the

⁸¹⁷ Hearn 1896b, 205.

⁸¹⁸ Griffis 2006a, 358; Lowell 2007b, 81.

⁸¹⁹ Hearn 1895, 217. Hearn’s description was actually a direct quote from Herbert Spencer’s *First Principles* (1862).

⁸²⁰ Griffis 2006a, 370.

⁸²¹ Griffis 1892, 207; Griffis 1900, 168; Griffis 1903, 589; Williams 1913b, 660.

Western civilization; they compelled them to adopt, adapt, or reject it.⁸²² The Japanese contemplated either resisting the intruders and rejecting their civilization by force, or learning the secrets of Western power and adopting them.⁸²³ The latter option was, at first, not very appealing, as most Japanese felt disdain towards foreigners and their civilization. William Griffis recalled that, for the Japanese, it was traditionally thought that Westerners were the barbarians, and consequently, some intellectuals had “bitterly opposed the opening of Japan to modern civilization and the ideas of Christendom”.⁸²⁴ It should be remembered that most of the Japanese ruling class were steeped in Confucian ideas at that time, which indicated that the one true civilization had originated in China.⁸²⁵

The popular reaction to the end of seclusion, forced as it was on Japan, had taken the form of hostilities directed at both parties involved in the treaty: the Shogunate and foreigners. Men harbouring anti-foreign attitudes had centred around the emperor’s court, and adopted the cry, *Sonnō Jōi* (‘Revere the Emperor, expel the barbarians’), as their slogan. During the 1850s and 1860s, foreigners were surrounded by a sense of unease and they feared for their lives.⁸²⁶ And Griffis pointed out that, even after the overthrow of the Shogunate, violent assaults against foreigners continued.⁸²⁷ Under the circumstances therefore, it had been hard for the Japanese to be receptive to Western civilization. But not all of them had been decidedly against the civilization of the West, Griffis maintained. He suggested that direct encounters with the foreigners and their civilization often persuaded individual Japanese to revise their opinion as to who the barbarians actually were.⁸²⁸

Griffis thought that the first seeds of receptivity towards Western civilization had in fact germinated in the late Tokugawa period among the *Rangaku* scholars:

Heartrending is the narrative of these men who studied, who taught, who examined [...]. These men saw that their country was falling behind not only the nations of the West, but, as it seemed to them, even the nations of the East. They felt that radical changes were necessary in order to reform the awful poverty, disease, licentiousness,

⁸²² Mazlish 2004, 17.

⁸²³ Jansen 1972, 44; Mazlish 2004, 17.

⁸²⁴ Griffis 1892, 211, 216; Griffis 2006b, 77.

⁸²⁵ Beasley 1995, 1–2.

⁸²⁶ Dulles 1965, 126–127.

⁸²⁷ William Griffis had been advised by his Japanese students to always carry a gun for his protection in Japan. However, Griffis told his readers that he soon gave the revolver up, as he had become convinced that attacks on foreign lives had usually been provoked: “[i]n every instance, since the restoration of peace after the troubles of the civil war, it was a story of overbearing insolence, cruelty, insult, the jealousy of par-amours, native women, or avarice, or the effect of causes which neither fair play nor honor could justify. During my stay of nearly four years in Japan, several Europeans were attacked or killed; but in no case was there a genuine assassination, or unprovoked assault”. (Griffis 1903, 373, 377.)

⁸²⁸ As an example of such reversal of opinion, William Griffis presented the future Minister of the Navy under the Meiji government, Katsu Kaishū (1823–1899), who had come to admire the foreign civilization when observing the Commodore Perry’s squadron (Griffis 2006a, 355).

national weakness, decay of bodily powers, and the creeping paralysis of the Samurai intellect and spirit.⁸²⁹

These scholars and students, and those who had come after them, had thus provided the internal incentive for the adoption of Western civilization in Japan, Griffis thought. Because of them, the Japanese would have eventually adopted Western civilization even without foreign intervention, Griffis believed. The impulses from within would have been enough even in the absence of impulses from without.⁸³⁰

In the end, to gain the wealth and power of the foreigners became an objective for late Tokugawa statesmen and intellectuals, and after the Meiji Restoration, the pursuit intensified. As travelling abroad was once more permitted, an increasing number of Japanese came to witness Western colonialism, slavery, and domination at first hand just about everywhere they went. The arrogance the Westerners displayed, and the oppression of non-Western peoples, suggested to the Japanese that also their independent existence was in jeopardy. Such observations naturally generated a deep sense of anxiety and urgency. This probably made the Japanese policymakers more receptive to changes, and convinced them that Japan needed to gain strength and match the military challenge the West posed, if it wished to maintain its sovereignty. The Meiji statesmen set the aim even higher. Not only should the Japanese strive to achieve the capability to defend themselves, they should also convincingly demonstrate to the Europeans and Americans that Japan was one of the modern, progressive, and civilized nations of the world.⁸³¹

The new Meiji government came to commit itself to progress and modernisation almost from the start. In what Marius Jansen has called a “disciplined and largely humorless quest” for strength and progress, Western examples of progress were favoured over the many domestic ideas for improvement that also existed. *Bunmei kaika*⁸³² (civilization and enlightenment) became the popular slogan for this quest. It seemed to Japanese intellectuals of the time, such as Fukuzawa Yukichi (1853–1901)⁸³³, that Japan had no other option but to “leave

⁸²⁹ Griffis 2006b, 184.

⁸³⁰ Griffis 2006a, 379. There were doubtless certain domestic social and economic developments in the Tokugawa era which would have necessitated change in Japanese society sooner or later anyway. But it seems plausible that Japan’s isolation from international relations in spite of foreign overtures, as well as the show of foreign power off the shores of Japan and in the Anglo-French wars against China, were the biggest incentives for the Japanese to consider the viability of adopting Western material civilization. (Beasley 1995, 40; Beckmann 1965, 101–102, 107; Iriye 1967, 12.)

⁸³¹ Beasley 1995, 170, 201; Broadbridge 1977, 602; Hackett 1972, 246; Iriye 1967, 65; Jansen 1972, 65; Mazlish 2004, 17; Miyoshi 1979, 58.

⁸³² In a newspaper the statesman, Mori Arinori (1847–1889), attempted to clarify what was meant by this slogan. He explained that enlightenment was a stage of human progress in which men were capable of devising things which fell within the category of material civilization, such as machines and skills for industry. These advances would bring economic expansion along with them, and in the end, they would result in social changes, which would allow civilization to reign. (Beasley 1995, 209–210.)

⁸³³ William Griffis estimated that Fukuzawa Yukichi been the foremost “pioneer and champion of Western civilization,” and that through his popular treatises and articles he had “served powerfully to sway Japan in the path of Western civilization”. (Griffis

Asia".⁸³⁴ Consequently, in the 1870s, the Meiji government began the quest by eradicating Japanese customs⁸³⁵ that might imply Japan was a barbarous country, and by introducing the comforts of Western material civilization, such as the telegraph, steamships, and gas lights. The first railroad line, an indubitable symbol of modernity and civilization, was laid between Tokyo and Yokohama and opened in 1872.⁸³⁶

We noted earlier that becoming modernised and progressive was generally equalled with becoming westernised. But the Japanese, who were journeying abroad and studying foreign nations, quickly realised that the West was not a monolithic unit; that in terms of strength, legal and political systems, religions, and traditions, the nations of Europe and US differed widely. Moreover, these nations disagreed with each other on many things, and their societies were constantly changing. The Japanese concluded that it would be hopeless and superfluous to try and emulate all of them.⁸³⁷ Instead, the Japanese chose to be selective. But what features to select and assimilate from the West? What were the essential qualities behind Western strength? These were the questions preying on the Japanese minds, and there were no clear-cut answers. Consequently, the Meiji oligarchs were unable to draw a detailed master plan for modernizing the country. In practice, the Meiji leaders selected and adopted aspects of Western civilization that would be useful to the nation, and suit the conditions in Japan. They looked for pragmatic solutions, and solved problems as they came along. The policy was to adopt what was best in the foreign ideas and methods and unite them with the best ideas and methods of Japan.⁸³⁸

By studying the Westerners, at home and abroad, the Japanese gathered enough detailed information on which to base their decisions, and conceivably, it gave them the self-confidence to judge for themselves what it was their country needed.⁸³⁹ The emphasis of Meiji policy was on political, economic, and military matters. They sought to remodel Japan's society and political system so that they ran by the same principles that were supposed to govern 'modern' civilizations.⁸⁴⁰ This led to another slogan of the era - *Fukoku kyōhei* (enrich the

1903, 660.) Fukuzawa established his theory of Civilization in the treatise *Bunmeiron no gairiyaku*, in 1875. According to Fukuzawa, Civilization was the development of human mind - not of individual human minds, but of nations. It was the refinement of knowledge and virtue, but it also denoted to material comfort. He characterised Civilization as a universal, stadial - or harmonising with its time and place, relative, dynamic, advancing, and open-ended process. As Western civilization was the highest existing in the 19th century, Fukuzawa argued, attaining it would have to be the first goal for the semi-civilized Japanese. But ultimately, the goal of Japanese endeavours would be the Civilization itself. (Fukuzawa, Yukichi. *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*. Revised translation. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009: pp. 1-3, 17-18, 20, 29, 45-46, 140.)

⁸³⁴ Iriye 1967, 65; Irokawa 1985, 51; Jansen 1972, 66-67.

⁸³⁵ These were mainly practices which offended Western moral sensibilities, such as mixed bathing in bathhouses and the selling of erotic prints. Western dress habits and haircuts were also encouraged and even prescribed for the officials.

⁸³⁶ Nimmo 2001, 6; Shively 1976b, 80-82.

⁸³⁷ Beasley 1995, 200-201.

⁸³⁸ Beasley 1995, 200; Hackett 1965, 250; Hall 1972, 12; Irokawa 1985, 71; Jansen 1972, 71.

⁸³⁹ Beasley 1995, 142, 157.

⁸⁴⁰ Benson et al. 2001, 18.

country, strengthen the military) – an old Chinese adage well suited both to Japan’s situation, and the attitudes of the nation’s officials and scholars.⁸⁴¹

The main political objective of the government was to unite the people, and thus the resources of the country by abolishing the feudal fiefs, a feat that was finally accomplished in 1871. With unification, came the inauguration of compulsory military service; meanwhile economic measures were taken to enable the government to increase its spending on the armed forces. Militarisation was given top priority in the country’s budget, and the funds were channelled to the hiring of foreign experts to drill the Japanese in Western tactics, to purchase arms and warships, and to educate the Japanese in supervising the various branches of the army and navy.⁸⁴²

However, some in Japan felt there was more to national strength than armaments. Japanese intellectuals increasingly proposed that to progress to a higher plane of civilization, Japan would also need to adopt cultural and intellectual aspects of Western civilization. For example, Fukuzawa Yukichi suggested that the power of Western nations derived from the realisation that natural laws governed history and progress. If Japan wished to reproduce and match the progress of the West, the Japanese had to learn and absorb those laws.⁸⁴³ The suggestion that the Japanese should adopt a new intellectual framework and world-view clearly went beyond simply relying on new technologies, industries, and weaponry. Throughout the latter half of the century, there was a constant tug-of-war between those who advocated thorough westernization, and those who wished to preserve the traditional features of Japanese culture and society.⁸⁴⁴

In 1876, William Griffis expressed no concern for the possibility that Japan might be in a process of losing its identity, for the Japanese had “a strong tendency” to conserve their national type, pride, feelings, and religion.⁸⁴⁵ But two decades later, Lafcadio Hearn was seriously worried about whether Japan would be “able to assimilate Western civilization, as she did Chinese more than ten centuries ago” without losing “her own peculiar modes of thought and feeling”.⁸⁴⁶ These statements of quite opposite views from Griffis and Hearn were

⁸⁴¹ The Meiji leaders were nevertheless aware that military, political, economic, and social reforms were interrelated, and that the adoption of one material innovation might well lead to a domino effect, and that this would eventually have repercussions on society at large (Beasley 1995, 111; Hackett 1965, 250; Shively 1976b, 80).

⁸⁴² Benson et al. 2001, 19, 28; Hackett 1972, 252–253, 259.

⁸⁴³ Beasley 1995, 174; Henning 2000, 104–105; Mazlish 2004, 17.

⁸⁴⁴ Some Japanese felt that there was no time to pause and think about such matters. They felt that the nation was in the middle of a crisis and decisions had to be made as fast as possible, with no room for sentimental nostalgia for the trappings of Japan’s past. But others thought that being Western was not a value in itself and that foreign ideas and innovations should only be adopted according to their usefulness for Japan, not just because they were foreign. (Beasley 1995, 223; Henning 2000, 104; Irokawa 1985, 51–52).

⁸⁴⁵ Griffis 2006a, 379.

⁸⁴⁶ Hearn 1894b, 676. Similar concerns were shared by other foreigners, too. One such foreigner, who attempted to persuade the Japanese to preserve their “native ideals and principles of their art”, as William Griffis put it, was Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908), the first professor of philosophy at Tokyo University. However, it was feared

separated by the 1880s – a decade in which major political and institutional reforms took place in Japan.⁸⁴⁷

These years witnessed a boom in all things Western, and the period came to be called the *Rokumeikan* era, after an Italian Renaissance-style building by that name in Tokyo (Deer-cry Hall).⁸⁴⁸ Yet, conservative opinions and criticism never wholly died out. Much that was imported from the West continued to be resented by the people, because it was often regarded as detrimental to existing cultural values. Besides, westernisation did not really catch on beyond the towns or educated upper-classes. People in the villages lived their lives mostly unaffected by the new fashions and modern conveniences,⁸⁴⁹ and Griffis informed his readers of this:

Amidst all the ferment of ideas induced by the contact of Western civilization with Asiatic within the last two decades, the farmer stolidly remains conservative: he knows not, nor cares to hear, of it, and hates it because of the heavier taxes it imposes upon him.⁸⁵⁰

The culmination of Japan's frenzy for westernisation was perhaps the fancy dress ball, hosted by the Prime Minister, Itō Hirobumi (1841–1909) in 1887, which the conservatives saw as an exhibition of immorality, levity, and excess. Henceforth, popular opinion started to turn against overt westernization, and the distinction between modern and western became clearer. The Japanese came to believe that power and progress were not dependent on a superficial similarity with Western nations. Quite the contrary, many now claimed that Japan's uniqueness was its foremost strength. Consequently, an increasing number wished to contain the flood of westernisation in order to preserve the Japan's "national essence".⁸⁵¹

As the century approached its close, Confucianists stepped forward as the defenders of Japan's traditions and values (rather than China's) and spoke out against westernization.⁸⁵² At the same time, nationalism and anti-foreignism

among some in Japan that the foreigners claiming to work for the preservation of Japanese culture, arts, and traditions, actually wanted to hold Japan back, and to keep it as a picturesque museum instead of letting it grow into a modern, civilized nation. (Griffis 1900, 115; Henning 2000, 105; Jansen 1972, 70; Rosenstone 1988, 209–210.)

⁸⁴⁷ The material and cultural superiority claimed by Westerners at every turn quite naturally made some Japanese sensitive to anything the foreigners might consider to be a sign of barbarity. In seeking Western recognition for *not* being barbarians, some Japanese turned their backs on all their traditional arts, customs, and ideas. Societies for improving and westernizing nearly every sphere of life were established, and a catalogue of cultural borrowings from the West was made to give Japan a westernized varnish (Beasley 1995, 218; Dulles 1965, 153, 215–216; Fairbank et al. 1965, 263; Henning 2000, 123; Shively 1976b, 93, 98).

⁸⁴⁸ Completed in 1883, *Rokumeikan* was a place where the Japanese elite gathered to dine, dance, and socialise with Westerners. Consequently, the government's ministers acquired the sobriquet of "the dancing cabinet".

⁸⁴⁹ Beasley 1995, 222; Dulles 1965, 150; Hall 1972, 12.

⁸⁵⁰ Griffis 2006a, 115.

⁸⁵¹ Fairbank et al. 1965, 264; Henning 2000, 105, 123–124; Shively 1976a, 3; Shively 1976b, 5, 80.

⁸⁵² Jansen 1972, 70.

started to rear their heads.⁸⁵³ Critics of the government used this swing of the pendulum as a weapon in the political struggle, and the foreigners added fuel to the fire by the reluctance of their governments to conclude a treaty revision with Japan.⁸⁵⁴ The government patched up the situation by incorporating Confucian values such as piety, obedience, and benevolence into the national education – values which were not just traditional, but also useful as they ensured the unfailing support of the people for the emperor and government. Politicians also embedded uniquely Japanese Shinto notions into the constitution of the nation.⁸⁵⁵ Meanwhile, the advocates of further westernisation now seemed to be violating traditional values, and some of them literally fell victim to the nationalist and conservative heat of the moment.⁸⁵⁶

In the end, the westernisation of Japan was never fully completed. By selectively assimilating only certain aspects of Western civilization, there seemed to be a rather large consensus that what Japan lacked was perhaps some social, political, and material aspects of civilization, but not the moral or spiritual aspects. The precept “Eastern morality, Western technology” (*Tōyō dōtoku, seiyō geijutsu*; literally “Eastern morals, Western arts”) had already been coined in the Tokugawa era by the Japanese statesman Sakuma Shōzan (1811–1864), and the slogan seemed as relevant and worthy of emphasis at the beginning of the 20th century.⁸⁵⁷

William Griffis maintained that the emerging “New Japan” had been brought about by the “consolidation of forces from the inside, on meeting, not with collision but with union, the exterior forces of western civilization”. This modernized Japan was not a direct result of “contact with the higher civilization of Europe and America,” rather it was the result of an “impulse” from within: the Japanese people’s “willingness to change for the better”. Distinguishing himself from the “English writers on Japan”, who implied that the

⁸⁵³ Henning 2000, 135.

⁸⁵⁴ Jansen 1972, 70; Shively 1976a, 3; Shively 1976b, 78, 118.

⁸⁵⁵ Beasley 1995, 222; Benson et al. 2001, 133.

⁸⁵⁶ Mori Arinori, then Minister of Education, was a known critic of Confucianism and ardent proponent of change. During his career he had repeatedly offended the ethical, religious, and social sensibilities of those more conservatively attuned until, finally, these displays of anti-nationalism led to his assassination in 1889. (Beasley 1995, 209.) Percival Lowell wrote the following account of the events surrounding it: “In 1887, Mori Arinori, one of the most advanced Japanese new-lights, then minister of state for education, went on a certain occasion to the Shrines of Ise, and studiously treated them with disrespect. He was assassinated in consequence; the assassin was cut down by the guards, and then Japan rose in a body to do honor, not to the murdered man, but to his murderer. Even the muzzled press managed to hint on which side it was. Folk by thousands flocked with flowers to his grave, and pilgrimages were made to it, as to some shrine. It is still kept green; still to-day the singing-girls bring it their branches of plum blossoms, with a prayer to the gods that a little of the spirit of him who lies buried there may become theirs: that spirit which they call so proudly the Yamato Kokoro, the heart of old Japan.” (Lowell 1895, 18–19.)

⁸⁵⁷ Hackett 1972, 269–270; Mazlish 2004, 17; Miyoshi 1979, 83. The Chinese had made a very similar division between the Chinese *ti*, or the way, virtue, and principles, and the Western *yong*, or methods and technology (Desnoyers 1997, 143–144).

bombardment of Kagoshima⁸⁵⁸ had been “the paramount cause that impelled Japan to adopt the foreign civilization”, Griffis brushed aside the idea that armed aggression or Western coercion had played a determining part in Japan’s transformation into a modern nation.⁸⁵⁹ Thus, unlike many of his contemporaries,⁸⁶⁰ Griffis gave much of the credit for Japan’s reforms to the Japanese themselves.

On the other side of the East China Sea, the contacts between Westerners and the Chinese became decidedly more antagonistic and violent. Like the Japanese in the early 19th century, the Chinese did not conceal their contempt for Western civilization. The majority of the literati harboured anti-foreign sentiments, took pride in resisting Western inroads into China, and were vocally against the adoption of any aspect of foreign civilizations. It was this group that steered the nation for the better part of the 19th century.⁸⁶¹ Samuel Williams explained that the Chinese were “[n]ot unjustly proud of their country in comparison with those near it”. The Emperor, ruling elite, and people alike all believed China to be “impregnable strong, portentously awful, and immensely rich in learning, power, wealth, and territory,” and hence “none of them imagined that aught could be learned or gained from other nations.” According to Williams, the Chinese thought that it was “monstrous” that the “barbarians,” who were “so miserably deficient themselves,” should “attempt to improve the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire”. On a similar note, William Martin pointed out that the Chinese felt they “would be better employed in teaching the Western barbarians than in learning from them”.⁸⁶²

Despite the prevalence of feelings such as those Williams and Martin recorded, not all Chinese were against every kind of reform. Already in the 1840s, some Chinese observers had noticed a discrepancy between the military power of China and the West, and they had secretly come to the conclusion that China needed to procure Western ships and armaments. However, at the time, the attention of the ruling elite was focused on domestic upheavals, such as the large-scale and radical Taiping Rebellion (1860–1864), and confrontations with the foreign powers. Such a state of affairs was both a serious impediment as well as a powerful incentive for military reforms. Eventually, as the situation cooled down in the 1860s, an increasing number of thinkers and officials began to think about ways in which the country could be strengthened. Some were confident that a revival of Confucian principles would suffice to regenerate China, without recourse to borrowing ideas from the West. Meanwhile, some provincial leaders and members of the literati advocated and instigated reform

⁸⁵⁸ This was a reference to the British expedition against the Satsuma domain in 1863. The bombardment was brought on by the failure of the Satsuma officials to satisfactorily comply with British demands for an apology and compensatory payment for the Satsuma retainers assaulting British nationals a year earlier (known as the Namamugi Incident).

⁸⁵⁹ Griffis 2006a, 339, 341, 370–371; Griffis 2006b, 50.

⁸⁶⁰ Clifford 2001, 67.

⁸⁶¹ Levenson 1950, 449–450; Wang 1961, 396; Zheng 2008, 1114–1115, 1117.

⁸⁶² Martin 1881, 95; Williams 1913b, 369, 510–511.

projects with limited and specific ends. The process they eventually set in motion came to be called the Self-Strengthening Movement.⁸⁶³

The aim of this movement was not to westernise Chinese society, for these Neo-Confucianists remained convinced of the superiority of the Middle Kingdom. Their goal was to preserve Chinese civilization and maintain the stability of society by following the guidelines provided by Confucianism. They thought that Western culture, ethics, and arts contained nothing of value for China. However, military and industrial techniques were another thing. They were the only acceptable aspects of Western civilization, and reforms in these fields seemed vital for the self-preservation and sovereignty of the country.⁸⁶⁴ Consequently, the self-strengtheners made efforts to learn foreign languages, navigation, ship-building techniques, and the manufacture of firearms.⁸⁶⁵ Some officials were also quick to note the economic, defensive, military, and political utility of railroads and improved communications.⁸⁶⁶

The architects of the self-strengthening movement were highly eclectic in the reforms they advocated. William Martin noted how one such reformer, a Manchu statesman called Wenxiang (1818–1876), had declared to him that: “I shall be guided [...] by the precept of Confucius: Pick out the good and follow it; pick out the evil and avoid it. We shall learn all the good we can from you people of the West”.⁸⁶⁷ Evidently, the emphasis was on material civilization, but minor reforms were also carried out in administration and education. These reforms, like the technological ones, were implemented with an eye on revitalising and stabilising the Confucian system, on consolidating the government, and generating popular support behind it. Perhaps one of the most notable efforts was the establishment of *Zongli Yamen*⁸⁶⁸ by Prince Gong⁸⁶⁹ in 1861. *Zongli Yamen* was effectively the foreign office of the country, and it became attached to

⁸⁶³ Beckmann 1965, 147–149; Pursiainen 2012, 28. The Self-Strengthening Movement was also called the Foreign Affairs movement (Yangwu Yundong).

⁸⁶⁴ Beckmann 1965, 147, 150; Dudden 1992, 117; Pursiainen 2012, 28.

⁸⁶⁵ Wang 1961, 395.

⁸⁶⁶ For example, a telegraphic connection was financed, built and operated by the Chinese themselves between Tientsin and Shanghai in 1881. Railway connections, however, proved more difficult to set up. The Chinese people worried about the consequences of railroads to their homes, fields, and grave sites. Meanwhile, officials were short of funds, and they refused to accept foreign help and finance for the building of railways, because of the threat it would pose to Chinese military security. Arthur Smith also suggested that the “shrewd Chinese,” although aware of the usefulness of foreign innovations, dreaded with good reason “to see an army of foreigners summoned to introduce the new inventions, fattening themselves upon the hard-earned wealth of the Celestial Empire.” (Beckmann 1965, 151–152; Biggerstaff 1950, 129; Chang 1993, 294–295; Smith 1890, 107).

⁸⁶⁷ Martin 1900, 362.

⁸⁶⁸ Known at the time as *Tsungli Yamen* (Office for General Management) according to the Wade-Giles Romanization that was used at the time.

⁸⁶⁹ Prince Gong (1833–1898), or Yixin, was an influential statesman and a relative of the three successive Qing Dynasty emperors - Daoguang, Xianfeng, and Tongzhi. He also acted as a regent of the Tongzhi emperor, together with the two Empress Dowagers Cixi and Cian.

two other important institutions - the Chinese Maritime Customs Service and *Tongwenguan*.⁸⁷⁰

As for economic considerations, they were rarely on the list of priorities. Still, some advisers of the government made proposals for the development of economy and foreign trade, so that the government could procure the funds necessary for military reforms, while others maintained that economy was the fundamental source of Western power, and thus they recommended the modernising of agriculture, industry, manufacturing, and commerce.⁸⁷¹ In the meantime, treaty ports, missionary schools, studies, and travels abroad gradually familiarised a portion of the Chinese with Western ideas, tastes, and technologies, and persuaded them of some of the benefits of westernisation.⁸⁷²

These were signs of profound change, but the hurdles that remained for the changes were profound as well. The self-strengthening movement caught on well in the port cities in the 1870s and 1880s, but fared more poorly in other parts of China.⁸⁷³ Domestic disturbances and uprisings continued to plague the country on many fronts, and there was a serious shortage of capital for reforms, especially since foreign loans were shunned. The government had no central scheme for modernising the country and no willingness to formulate one; hence the reforms initiated by the government remained sporadic experiments. Popular apprehension regarding reforms could manifest itself in the mismanagement or diversion of government funds into the wrong pockets, or in the case of schools for foreign studies, the social pressure could induce students to avoid even entering them. And all the time the support of the central government for the reforms swung back and forth depending on the prevailing situation and on who held the reins of power. Factionalism in government often turned what should have been reform projects into an arena for political arm-wrestling instead.⁸⁷⁴ “[A]ction and reaction just balancing and neutralising each other, nothing was done”, was how Arthur Smith described the situation, and consequently, “China muddled on in the old way.”⁸⁷⁵

Historian George M. Beckmann has emphasised the profundity of the cultural shock that accompanied China’s encounter with Western ideas, institutions, and aggression. This shock, Beckmann has argued, was all the more severe because China’s cultural continuity, which traditionally had been a source of strength, now effectively complicated the Chinese response and ability to adapt to the challenge,⁸⁷⁶ and yet most foreign observers at the time did not give much consideration as to how difficult it may have been for the Chinese to

⁸⁷⁰ Beckmann 1965, 149–150; Dudden 1992, 116–117.

⁸⁷¹ Beckmann 1965, 152; Desnoyers 1997, 146–147; Eastman 1968, 697, 701; Elman 2004, 290–291.

⁸⁷² Beckmann 1965, 154.

⁸⁷³ Zheng 2008, 1122.

⁸⁷⁴ Beckmann 1965, 149–150, 152–153, 156; Wang 1961, 396.

⁸⁷⁵ Smith 1901a, 25–26.

⁸⁷⁶ Beckmann 1965, 3.

change their strategy.⁸⁷⁷ Samuel Williams, however, empathised with the hesitation of the Chinese, thinking that the cautiousness of the Chinese government was essentially a positive thing, and its “conservative spirit” an effective safeguard “against extravagant and premature adoption of [...] the thousand adjuncts of modern European life which, if too rapidly applied to an effete and backward civilization, push it rather into bankruptcy and overthrow than out into a new existence”.⁸⁷⁸

The Chinese ruling elite saw also other threats in the horizon. One was the possibility that the adoption of Western techniques might undermine the power of the literati and Manchu dynasty.⁸⁷⁹ The other conceivable threat was that even the most innocuous technological reform could have unforeseen consequences in other spheres of life and society. In other words, it was feared that the adoption of Western ways could at some point begin to compromise and undermine the Chinese Civilization. The early advocates of material reforms had appeared to be unaffected by such prospects. These reformers had adhered to the division of matter and spirit. They had argued that Western culture was purely material, while Chinese culture was essentially moral, and hence adopting something from the former would have no adverse effects on the latter. But later reformers came to realise that technologies were products of certain cultural and intellectual environments, and that consequently industrialisation and machines would necessarily entail cultural implications. The reformers were not quite sure what these implications were, though. Hence, they emphasised that the causes of Western wealth and power would have to be carefully examined, and they warned against the blind adoption of innovations that would give China the appearance of being modern, yet lead to unwanted social results.⁸⁸⁰

In general, however, the self-strengtheners remained optimistic. They advocated the adoption of new methods, knowledge, and technologies, in order to recover the country from the humiliations effected by the Western nations, to gain equality with them, and to eventually even compete with the West. Some of them also envisioned the union of Eastern and Western enlightenment, that would bring harmony to the world.⁸⁸¹ The self-strengthening reforms lasted for about thirty years, until in 1895 came the unexpected and violent shock of the Sino-Japanese war. The realisation that Chinese military forces were in poor shape compared to the modernised Japanese navy created an atmosphere of humiliation and panic, aptly illustrated by Tan Sitong (1865–1898), a political thinker and prominent reformer: “[e]xternal threat is deeply entrenched. Our Navy is wiped out; this is extremely frightening.... Our people are let down; our country and our race will be finished. Only reform, alas, can save the situa-

⁸⁷⁷ The Westerners found Chinese refutations of the superiority of Western technology and innovations particularly frustrating, as well as their divergence from Western work ethics, attitudes, and patterns (Adas 1989, 231, 253, 266).

⁸⁷⁸ Williams 1913b, 63, 738–739.

⁸⁷⁹ Beckmann 1965, 148.

⁸⁸⁰ Eastman 1968, 697; Howland 1996, 29; Levenson 1950, 448–449.

⁸⁸¹ Desnoyers 1997, 137, 139, 149, 154.

tion”⁸⁸². Suddenly the achievements from the first phase of reforms seemed to count for nothing, and the so called “long-term defensive program” of China came to be considered a total failure. As Benjamin Elman has suggested, this failure was nevertheless partly imagined, and the accomplishments of earlier reforms were actually downplayed in the light of naval defeat.⁸⁸³ Yet, the sense of crisis felt in some corners of China was real.

Outside pressure on China was growing as the foreign powers increasingly vied for concessions and spheres of influence. Fears of foreign conquest and the subjugation of China continued to escalate, as did alarm that China might cave in on account of its weakness, or the lack of patriotism among its inhabitants.⁸⁸⁴ Consequently, after the Sino-Japanese war, some members of the literary elite exchanged their anti-foreignism for willingness to learn from the West. Earlier, one could display loyalty to the nation by resisting Western civilization, but now patriotism could be expressed by adopting a favourable disposition towards ground-breaking, Western-style reforms.⁸⁸⁵ For provincial leaders, pragmatic and material reforms still ranked high on the wish list. Other reformers proposed domestic changes that would eliminate corruption and misgovernment. Still others put their hopes in European institutions as one possible salvation for the country.⁸⁸⁶ William Martin, for example, believed that all this validated the claim that the Chinese would only concede to Western civilization and reforms through lessons of war. Martin noted in 1896 that all the “accompaniments of civilization”, which officials had initially objected to, had been “subsequently introduced under the pressure of war, actual or imminent”.⁸⁸⁷

The Chinese intellectuals that supported change tended to fall into two factions: reformist and revolutionary. Reformers were represented by such eminent scholars as Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao (1873–1929), and the already mentioned Tan Sitong. Kang and Liang were of a rather moderate strain, whereas Tan urged for a more thorough westernisation program. Meanwhile, Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925) was emerging as the leading spokesman for the revolutionary faction. In the last years of the 19th century, reformist sentiments prevailed over revolutionary ideas.⁸⁸⁸ Arthur Smith believed that among both the foreigners and the Chinese, there were three “mutually inconsistent theories” about how change, or reforms, should proceed in China. The first position was that reforms would not happen in China because they were unnecessary. The second position was that reforms would be impossible anyway in such a vast and antiquated country as China. And the third position was that reforms were both

⁸⁸² Quoted in Zheng 2008, 1123.

⁸⁸³ Dudden 1992, 116; Elman 2004, 290–291; Elman 2008, 191; Zheng 2008, 1123. The Sino-Japanese War also suggested that the Chinese Civilization as a worldview and world order had failed (Howland 1996, 241).

⁸⁸⁴ Clifford 2001, 68; Levenson 1950, 483.

⁸⁸⁵ Zheng 2008, 1117.

⁸⁸⁶ Clifford 2001, 68; Eastman 1968, 697; Zheng 2008, 1124.

⁸⁸⁷ Martin 1900, 233.

⁸⁸⁸ Perhaps the main difference between the reformers and revolutionaries was that while the revolutionaries turned their backs on traditions and the Manchu Dynasty, the reformers were willing to let the Manchu Dynasty hold power, as long as the court would modernise the country (Beckmann 1965, 178–179, 187; Clifford 2001, 68).

“necessary and possible”. In the latter instance, the chief concern was whether reform would be instigated by outside forces, or from within.⁸⁸⁹ Obviously, the Chinese reformers had adopted the latter stance, and Liang Qichao chose to try to persuade his countrymen to agree that in China there was a need for change, the means for it, and plenty of models for change to choose from.⁸⁹⁰

Some reformers, who had adopted variants of Social Darwinism, assumed that all nations were in a struggle, and that only the fittest would survive. These reformers tended to denounce the classical Confucian and Daoist emphasis on harmony, because they had led the Chinese astray and constrained progress. Unlike them, Liang Qichao wanted to preserve Chinese traditions and the importance of classical philosophy. He was searching for a viable synthesis of Western and Chinese culture, in which only those features of Chinese civilization which did not serve any purpose in the modern world could and should be eradicated. Especially Liang’s early writings abounded in rhetorical attempts to harmonise Western modernity with Chinese traditions. He argued that Western values could be located in the stream of Chinese history and that Western-style reforms had their roots in the Chinese past, or that China’s course was tending towards them in any case. Liang justified change by quoting Chinese philosophical classics and, along with Kang Youwei, he reinterpreted Confucianism so that it incorporated the Western ideal of progress.⁸⁹¹

Like the self-strengtheners before him, Liang Qichao preferred a selective approach to modernisation, rather than the wholesale adoption of Western methods. However, he also considered reforms to be a matter of extreme urgency. He feared that if these were delayed any longer, the Chinese would lose the initiative, and the changes would instead be forced upon China by the foreign powers, whether they liked it or not.⁸⁹²

Many of the late 19th century reformers espoused a belief that China needed to learn not merely the arts of science, industry, and warfare, but to study Western social and political organizations as well. Educational reforms⁸⁹³ were considered to be crucial, and the reformers put an emphasis on educating talented, pragmatic and liberal officials for government who would be capable of steering the country and willing to carry out the reforms. Legal reforms were also planned, which would remove the grounds for extraterritoriality and pave

⁸⁸⁹ Smith 1890, 397.

⁸⁹⁰ Levenson 1950, 468.

⁸⁹¹ Clifford 2001, 68; Levenson 1950, 448, 468–469, 472, 482. Liang and Kang were not alone in proposing that Western ways could be accommodated and subsumed under the universal Chinese Civilization, *wenming*. Such ideas show that the 19th century Chinese Confucianism was far more flexible and adaptive than has often been acknowledged. (Desnoyers 1997, 137–138; Howland 1996, 2, 198.)

⁸⁹² Levenson 1950, 483.

⁸⁹³ One blueprint for a conservative and carefully controlled reformation of China was presented in *Exhortation to Learning* (Quanxuepian), written by the provincial governor Zhang Zhidong in 1898. In this work, Zhang emphasised the role of education and learning, and appealed for a new school system. What made Zhang’s plan moderate and cautious, was the insistence that learning was to be both Confucian and Western, classical and modern. Western learning was to be conducted through translations of scholarly treatises and education of the students abroad, ideally in Japan. (Wang 1961, 396–397.)

the way for China to achieve a treaty revision and full sovereignty. Moreover, Kang and Liang pleaded for a constitutional government, following the example of the Japanese, and Kang wanted a cabinet to be established.⁸⁹⁴

Up until now, attempts at modernization had often been local and not led by the government. But by 1898, the zeal and enthusiasm of the reformists had caught the eye of those in power as well. In theory, Emperor Guangxu (1871–1908) had reigned since his inauguration in 1875, but in practice the Empress Dowager Cixi (1835–1908)⁸⁹⁵ had held unofficial control for decades. In 1889 however, she retired leaving the reign to Guangxu, although she continued to watch the actions and policies of the young emperor closely, and advise him. Emperor Guangxu was somewhat familiar with Western studies and was himself interested in the revitalisation of the country through Western sciences and education. Consequently, he called the reformers to court to inform and give advice on the best course the country should take. As a result of these meetings, a series of imperial edicts, around forty altogether, calling for military and educational reforms were issued in 1898.⁸⁹⁶ The period of reform inaugurated by these imperial edicts came to be called the Hundred Days' Reform, because that was the length of time they lasted before they were stopped. Opposition to such reforms had been formidable even before the edicts, but it grew exponentially at this point, as the lives and positions of the ruling elite were at stake.⁸⁹⁷

Reformers and conservatives harboured mutual suspicions about the power each faction held. The reformers relied on the Emperor for support, and the conservatives on the Empress Dowager, and the atmosphere in court became increasingly strained.⁸⁹⁸ Finally, the Empress Dowager Cixi was returned to power in a coup d'état, and the reforms were stopped. The Emperor Guangxu was confined, and the Empress Dowager ordered the arrest of Kang Youwei and the other reformers. Some of the reformers, such as Liang Qichao, managed to escape to Japan, but those who did not, like Tan Sitong, faced capital punishment for their radicalism.⁸⁹⁹ After the reforms were stopped, the government was purged of officials who had reformist sympathies.⁹⁰⁰ From this period on,

⁸⁹⁴ According to Kang Youwei's plans, the cabinet would have had twelve departments to tackle: (i) reformation of the legal system; (ii) adoption of Western methods for raising and supervising the national revenue; (iii) education; (iv) agriculture; (v) manufacturing and commerce; (vi) the railways; (vii) the postal system; (viii) telegraphs; (ix) mining; (x) transport; (xi) the army; and (xii) the navy. The reformers established academies, such as *Shiwu Xuetang* (The Academy of Current Affairs) in 1897, for the teaching of a combination of Chinese and Western studies. They founded societies and newspapers for discussing and studying subjects relating to modernisation, and political societies, such as *Qiangxue Hui* (The Reform Club) in 1895, for the propagation of reforms. (Clifford 2001, 68; Levenson 1950, 455, 458–462, 465; Scott 2008, 129; Zheng 2008, 1124.)

⁸⁹⁵ Cixi was the consort of Emperor Xianfeng, who had reigned from 1850 to 1861; the mother of the following Emperor Tongzhi, who reigned from 1861 to 1871, and also the adoptive mother of Emperor Guangxu.

⁸⁹⁶ Beckmann 1965, 182–184; Levenson 1950, 461; Zheng 2008, 1125.

⁸⁹⁷ Levenson 1950, 465–466.

⁸⁹⁸ Beckmann 1965, 184–185.

⁸⁹⁹ Beckmann 1965, 186; Levenson 1950, 448, 466; Zheng 2008, 1125.

⁹⁰⁰ Beckmann 1965, 185–186.

more extremist views held sway, so both staunch conservatism and the revolutionary cause started to attract more support.⁹⁰¹

Conservatism reached a high point in the Boxer Uprising of 1900 and 1901. Boxer Uprising was the culmination of Chinese hostility to foreigners, which they had exhibited throughout the 19th century in various ways. The missionaries, usually residing in the interior of the country, and dealing with the people on day to day basis, had often been the targets of anti-foreign outbursts. Whereas the merchants and diplomats, who enjoyed the security of the treaty ports, were subjected to more subtle expressions of antagonism, such as the stalling and hampering of negotiations and business transactions. As the century drew to its close, expressions of hostility became all the more frequent and violent.⁹⁰² In these circumstances, a former secret society against the Manchu Dynasty, the Boxers (Society of Harmonious Fists), grew into a popular movement and a peasant revolt. Much of the popular discontent was due to economic factors and natural catastrophes, but as the foreigners and Christianity were made to be the source of all China's troubles, the movement aimed at eradicating the Western religion and all those who professed it, and at expelling all foreigners from the country. The conservative Chinese officials sympathised with the objectives of the rebels. They wished to restore China to the former state of isolation and eminence it had enjoyed in the previous centuries as the Middle Kingdom.⁹⁰³

The Boxers also had supporters in the imperial court, and so once the rebellion reached the capital, and the rebels laid siege to the foreign diplomatic legations there in 1900, the Empress Dowager and her court decided to back the movement. Beijing declared war on the foreigners, and imperial troops joined the Boxers. Officials knew, however, that there was every chance that the besieged foreigners would end up victorious. Consequently, they tried to be as indirect as possible with the foreigners about their commitment to the rebels. Both William Martin and Arthur Smith were among those foreigners (and some 3,000 Chinese who had converted to Christianity) who were left to defend themselves at the legations,⁹⁰⁴ and they published detailed accounts of the events soon after the fifty-five day siege: *The Siege in Peking* (1900) and *China in Convulsion* (1901), respectively.

Eventually the rebellion was put down by an expedition dispatched jointly by the foreign treaty powers. Beijing was divided among the foreign armies to maintain peace, and the foreign powers drew up the "Boxer Protocol" to settle the uprising in 1901. The foreign powers demanded an apology and hefty indemnity from China, required the Boxer officials to be punished, and ceded the control of legation quarters in Beijing as well as thirteen treaty ports to the foreigners. Customs duties were raised, importation of arms and munitions

⁹⁰¹ Beckmann 1965, 179, 188.

⁹⁰² Varg 1968, 746–748.

⁹⁰³ Beckmann 1965, 190; Clifford 2001, 32; Dudden 1992, 119–120.

⁹⁰⁴ Beckmann 1965, 191–192; Dudden 1992, 120.

banned, and the Dagu (Taku) forts demolished. The Manchu government was allowed to retain power, as long as it agreed to uphold the treaties.⁹⁰⁵

William Martin characterised the uprising as a “shocking reversion to barbarism”. He concluded that, by carrying a war on all who held to the “principles of human progress,” the Chinese had placed their empire “beyond the pale of civilization”.⁹⁰⁶ Arthur Smith was on the same lines. He claimed that the uprising had been a step forward from simply rejecting Western civilization. It had been a decided act of war against the “whole civilized world,” and thus against Civilization.⁹⁰⁷ However, Smith tried to look at events from the Chinese perspective, and he was convinced that the uprising was the “outcome of thirty-five years of the compulsory ‘sisterhood of nations’ business.” In other words, it had been the dire consequence of the unequal treaty system.⁹⁰⁸ William Griffis, on the other hand, suggested that the revolt was against the humiliation the foreigners had wrought on China, rather than against the foreigners or their civilization.⁹⁰⁹

After putting down the uprising, the foreigners engaged in a more symbolic kind of warfare, as James Hevia has noted. The foreign armies looted, raped, murdered, destroyed the symbols of China’s sovereignty, damaged places the Chinese considered sacred, tore down city walls and temples, and humiliated the emperor. All this was more than a retaliation and punishment; it was a lesson to the Chinese, a warning not to rise against the foreigners ever again.⁹¹⁰ These acts were criticised by some Europeans and Americans as bloodthirsty and unnecessary, but Arthur Smith was convinced that such criticisms betrayed “a hopeless incapacity to comprehend the real conditions in China, and, what is of more importance, to grasp the aspects in which the matter must present itself to the Chinese mind”.⁹¹¹ He excused the foreign commanders for assuming that “the rules of international law had no application to China at that time”, for war itself was “a repeal of law”.⁹¹² Smith was aware that many of the acts the foreigners committed were monstrous and morally wrong,⁹¹³ but if such action was not taken, he believed that “the inevitable result must be to reawaken in all Chinese officials and people alike a thorough contempt for Westerners who are so easily hoodwinked”.⁹¹⁴ The Court of China deserved every justifiable reprisal

⁹⁰⁵ Beckmann 1965, 193, 196–197; Brune 1985, 449; Dudden 1992, 120; Scott 2008, 150–151; Smith 1901b, 713.

⁹⁰⁶ Martin 1901b, 15, 22.

⁹⁰⁷ Smith 1901a, 269.

⁹⁰⁸ Arthur Smith wrote that, according to the Chinese, all their problems had derived directly from the treaties, which China “did not want but could not escape”, and “the meshes of which were steadily becoming smaller in size and more closely drawn”. Smith thought that from their limited experience, it was hardly surprising that the Chinese hated the treaties, as they were “demanding what was impossible to grant, and then extorting more because something had been refused or left unfulfilled”. (Smith 1901a, 28–29.)

⁹⁰⁹ Griffis 1903, 664.

⁹¹⁰ Hevia 1992, 304–305, 312.

⁹¹¹ Scott 2008, 151; Smith 1901b, 714–715, 726.

⁹¹² Smith 1901b, 715–716.

⁹¹³ Smith 1901b, 530, 546, 716.

⁹¹⁴ Smith 1901b, 726–727.

and bitter humiliation it got in the hands of the foreigners, Arthur Smith thought, because it was the only way to teach the Chinese a lesson.⁹¹⁵

William Martin was willing to go even further. As early as 1896, two years before the Hundred Days' Reform, Martin had thought that the best safeguard against Chinese aggression would be to take "a small strip of territory" in revenge. Martin believed that the threat of being sliced "to death by slow degrees" would be deterrent enough for the Chinese government. This is what Martin proposed also after the Boxer Uprising. Martin believed that the ways to prevent China from relapsing into barbarism again were the following: the foreign powers should restore the emperor, continue reforms, carve up spheres of interest, and withhold full independence from the empire. Or, the foreigners could overthrow the present dynasty, and formally partition the country.⁹¹⁶ Martin was convinced that China could only learn in, what he called, "the school of adversity".⁹¹⁷ This implied that China was not fully civilized, and that it needed constant armed reminders of how to behave in the community of nations and how to abide by international law.

After the Boxer uprising, China was therefore in a shambles and well under the heel of foreign control. It seemed as if it had even lost its status as a 'semi-civilization,' and had somehow regressed to the level of barbarism. Meanwhile, the Japanese had participated in the subduing of the uprising alongside the great powers. In fact, the largest proportion of soldiers in the relief expedition came from Japan, and its troops were among the most disciplined during the occupation afterwards⁹¹⁸. Japan had also participated in the drafting of the Boxer Settlement as an equal member of the civilized nations. These events added another chapter in the narrative of Japanese civilization process as a success, and the Chinese process as a failure.

4.4 Success and failure

Already in the early 1870s, William Griffis declared that Japan had "rejected the Asiatic, and adopted the European, ideal of civilization". Two decades later, he saw the Sino-Japanese war as the final confirmation of this, and went so far as to argue that the conflict itself had been brought on by Japan's embrace of the Western civilization. "Down at the bottom this Chino-Japanese war meant, in its provocation and origin, the right of a nation to change its civilization", Griff-

⁹¹⁵ Smith 1901b, 548–549. Indeed, Arthur Smith believed that, if the massacre of Tianjin had been properly punished back in 1870, "the subsequent relations between China and the West would have been different". In other words, the Boxer uprising had occurred because the West had not been firm enough earlier. But rather than lamenting over this missed opportunity, Smith was calling for the foreigners to ensure that the lesson would not be lost on China this time, so that the future would not have to witness any more atrocities. (Smith 1901b, 572, 727–729.)

⁹¹⁶ Martin 1900, 398–399; Martin 1901b, 143, 146.

⁹¹⁷ Martin 1901a, 472.

⁹¹⁸ Beckmann 1965, 193; Benson et al. 2001, 66.

is explained. He described how the Koreans and the Chinese had “beheld with contempt, jealousy, and alarm” the Japanese deviation “from Turanian ideas, principles, and civilization”, and how “China, with ill-concealed anger” and “Corea with open defiance” had “taunted Japan with servile submission to the ‘foreign devils.’” To the Chinese and Koreans, Japan seemed “colossally wicked --- in turning away from Confucius and the civilization of the sages to adopt and assimilate that of Christendom.” Meanwhile, Griffis believed that from the Japanese perspective, “China and her pupils in Corea had, with unnecessary ostentation, flouted and insulted the newly adopted civilization of Japan”.⁹¹⁹

William Griffis pointed out that the tension between China and Japan had a long history. The “deep-seated rivalry, mutual jealousy, and even contempt” that the two empires felt towards each other was due, he felt, to Japan demanding an equal rank and respect with China, although having formerly been a pupil and tributary state of the Middle Kingdom. The Chinese therefore described Japan as a “conceited young upstart”, while the Japanese saw China as “a decayed old gentleman”. And as the 19th century progressed, the estrangement between, what Griffis called, “New Japan” and “unawakened China” grew wider until it became unbridgeable. Finally, the situation had escalated, as Griffis somewhat dramatically put it, into a “battle between two incompatible civilizations”⁹²⁰ – a battle which revealed the underlying fragility of the Chinese nation:

The inherent weakness of the geographical colossus was exposed. In area and population immense, a venerable patriarchal system but scarcely a political entity, the sham collapsed, and the truth about China is now known to the world.⁹²¹

Also Arthur Smith thought that the war had exposed China as a “hollow sham,” it had pricked the bubble, and showed the world that China was “a giant manacled by a race of ‘pygmy dwarfs.’” Even the truest friends of the country were “speechless with disgust at the revelation of her hopeless corruption”, he added.⁹²² Smith’s words seem particularly harsh, as if he was speaking from personal disappointment and frustration.

In contrast, the victorious Japan emerged as more powerful than ever before. The nation had “regenerated through war,” Lafcadio Hearn opined, and

⁹¹⁹ Griffis 1903, 636; Griffis 2006a, 380. Here William Griffis went to the core of the question: from the Chinese perspective Japan was indeed detaching itself from the Chinese *wenming* and cultural hegemony, and the Chinese scholars tended to find this process disturbing. But what bothered the Chinese was not the Western civilization itself, or the Japanese “imitation of Western ways”. Rather, the Chinese were anxious to see that in the process of westernisation, the Japanese came to question and challenge the universality, hierarchy, and hegemony of Chinese Civilization, and to discard the Chinese moral principles. (Howland 1996, 187, 197–198, 211–213, 235.)

Chinese did not perceive the Western civilization as an alternative to their own Civilization, rather the Western ways were subsumed under the universal Chinese framework.

But eventually it seemed that Western civilization was a cultural entity itself, alternative to Chinese Civilization. Chinese Civilization would lose its universality, become one among many. Also from hierarchy to equality. (Howland 1996, 2, 198)

⁹²⁰ Griffis 1903, 636; Griffis 2006a, 210.

⁹²¹ Griffis 2006a, 462.

⁹²² Smith 1901a, 26–27.

he concluded that the war had been “the real birthday of New Japan.”⁹²³ On a similar note, William Griffis considered the war to have been the apogee of a story of maturation and successful modernisation. Moreover, the war demonstrated that the Japanese “were no longer pupils”; they were now the masters of the secrets of Western civilization.⁹²⁴ In other words, Japan had matured and succeeded by borrowing from the West. Therefore, William Martin likened ‘New Japan’ to the moon, shining as it was by a light borrowed from the Europe and the United States.⁹²⁵

The experts evidently wanted to highlight the contrasts between the way these two neighbouring nations had responded to the outward pressure exerted by the Europeans and Americans. Although the United States did not officially have favourites, it was clear that the comparative eagerness of the Japanese to become ‘civilized’ often tipped the scales of individual Americans in Japan’s favour. William Griffis himself avoided saying which one of the two, the Chinese or the Japanese, was “the better people” or “nobler race”, but he did note that his countrymen tended to prefer the Japanese, because they flattered American vanity. The Japanese had imitated American civilization, and imitation, for Griffis, was the sincerest form “of that delightful science of being tickled”.⁹²⁶

China was seen to have rejected the Western civilization, and consequently it was presented as weak, a failure, and undeserving of sympathy⁹²⁷. Japan, on the other hand, was presented as a veritable success story, because its career fitted admirably into the American scheme of the ‘history of Civilization,’ as Akira Iriye has remarked.⁹²⁸ According to this scheme, the process of Civilization (with a capital-C) had originated in the East, and then travelled to the West. After a while, the process had waned in the East and consequently the Oriental civilizations had stagnated or decayed, meanwhile in the West the process had gathered speed and finally produced the superior Western civilization of the 19th century. As we noted earlier, the Americans generally assumed that once the higher Western civilization was brought into contact with the Eastern civilization, and the elements impeding the progress of Eastern nations were removed, the East would resume its course on the path of Civilization. The transformation of ‘Old Japan’ to the modernised ‘New Japan’ seemed to conclusively verify these notions.

⁹²³ Hearn 1896b, 89–90.

⁹²⁴ Griffis 2006a, 460.

⁹²⁵ Martin 1905, 1–2.

⁹²⁶ Griffis 1878, 79. It should also be noted that the Japanese skilfully made sure that American media presented their nation in a flattering light, or as a civilized and progressive nation like the US (Iriye 1965, 20; Iriye 1967, 23).

⁹²⁷ In 1905, beyond the time frame of this thesis, William Martin looked back at what had happened to China during the course of the 19th century, and noted that it had taken over sixty years and five wars to finally open the empire up to “intercourse on equal terms”, and persuade the Chinese to renounce their opposition to adopting elements of Western civilization. In this “long drama” as Martin called it, he saw “a Divine hand controlling the shifting scenes”. Martin was positive that after the disciplining from the West and with Japan as their model, China was finally about to write the next chapter in the success story of Civilization. (Martin 1905, 4.)

⁹²⁸ Iriye 1965, 18–19; Iriye 1967, 22–23; Metraux 2002, 11; Nimmo 2001, 19–20; Scott 2008, 122.

Eastern and Western civilizations had met at the “ends of the earth”, William Griffis wrote, to produce the “New Japan,” which shared aspects of both civilizations. Japan had managed to “reconcile” the two, and hence Griffis thought that the Japanese were called upon “to interpret to Asia the meaning of European ideas and institutions”.⁹²⁹ In other words, Japan was to export Western civilization to rest of East Asia, and teach the Chinese and Koreans just as the Americans had taught the Japanese. This was not just a vision of Griffis and other likeminded civilizing missionaries; the Japanese themselves also toyed with the idea, often coupling it with the idea of expanding Japanese empire in the East⁹³⁰. After the Sino-Japanese war, also some of the Chinese reformers began to promote Japan as a suitable example of modernisation for China. Despite the political friction between the two empires, the reformers encouraged Chinese students to study Western subjects at Japanese schools, and they also imported large numbers of Japanese translations of Western texts.⁹³¹

Most of the six experts held the highly teleological view that, since contemporary Western civilization was at the zenith of Civilization, the success of Chinese and Japanese societies, and the level of Civilization there, could be measured by the extent to which they resembled the West. Consequently, anything short of being exactly like Europe and the United States could be condemned as failing in terms of Civilization. But Percival Lowell held that a mere resemblance of Western civilization was not enough for success, or even survival. In his view, acts of “copying,” “borrowing,” and “imitating” a higher civilization were not merely unflattering, but deplorable. According to Lowell, the Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese were all guilty of this. “China took from India, then Korea copied China, and lastly Japan imitated Korea”, Lowell explained, and in “this simple manner they successively became possessed of a civilization which originally was not the property of any one of them”.⁹³²

Percival Lowell’s focus in his discussion of borrowing and imitation was Japan. He regarded the Japanese as a nation of imported ideas. They were stationary, if left to their own devices, and yet “perfectly responsive to an impulse from without”, and instantly ready to “copy a more advanced civilization the moment they get a chance.” Lowell claimed that the Japanese evinced “the most advanced free-trade spirit in preferring to take somebody else's ready-made articles rather than to try to produce any brand-new conceptions themselves.”⁹³³ Lowell believed that excessive imitation had paralyzed the whole nation, and that the Japanese had worsened their situation by only slightly modifying, but not thoroughly assimilating what they had borrowed.⁹³⁴ In 1888,

⁹²⁹ Griffis 1892, 13; Griffis 2006b, 87–88.

⁹³⁰ Hackett 1972, 247; Miyoshi 1979, 182; Scott 2008, 119–120.

⁹³¹ Consequently, Japanese schools attracted a number of Chinese students. The Boxer uprising interrupted their studies, but after the conflict, popular sentiment was once more in favour of reforms – although this time along the lines advocated by the revolutionaries. (Beckmann 1965, 179, 188; Elman 2004, 322–323; Elman 2006, 198–199, 216; Levenson 1950, 483–484; Zheng 2008, 1117, 1123.)

⁹³² Lowell 2007b, 7.

⁹³³ Lowell 2007b, 7, 79.

⁹³⁴ Lowell 1895, 328; Lowell 2007b, 16; Lowell 2007b, 7.

in *The Soul of the Far East*, Lowell warned that, without assimilation, the engrafted features and ideas would remain as superficial additions to the Japanese society and culture. A year later, Lowell delivered a lecture on the theme “danger of imitation” at the English Law School of Tokyo. In this lecture, he again maintained that features adopted from other cultures and civilizations had to be adapted to the particular circumstances and developed further.⁹³⁵

Here we have two ideas familiar to us by now. Firstly, that the Japanese were incapable of originality and had substituted imagination with imitation,⁹³⁶ and secondly, that they were thus incapable of making progress on their own. Percival Lowell’s preoccupation with Japan’s conservativeness on the one hand, and unoriginality on the other, was clearly a case of applying negative counter concepts to the ‘Other,’ and the highly valued characteristic of inventiveness⁹³⁷ to his own group. He accentuated the difference further by arguing that imitation, receptiveness, and self-adaptability were not only qualities of East Asian minds, but of feminine minds.⁹³⁸ Lowell proposed that imitation, even though it produced good results in the short run, was detrimental to Japan in the long run. Imitation, he felt, destroyed whatever power the individual Japanese had left of their ability to come up with anything new. In effect, it was “tantamount to killing the goose which lays the golden eggs”, he described.⁹³⁹

This is where we approach the core of Lowell’s warning that if the Chinese and Japanese continued to tread along the same well-worn path as before, they were doomed. Lowell maintained that adoption of a higher civilization was not enough; the Chinese and Japanese would also have to internalize that higher civilization. “Unless their newly imported ideas really take root, it is from this whole world that Japanese and Koreans, as well as Chinese, will inevitably be excluded”,⁹⁴⁰ Lowell argued. However, throughout *The Soul of the Far East*, Lowell seemed to suggest that even assimilation was not enough. Originality, imaginativeness, and individuality – the ingredients that made up a higher civilization – would have to be found from within China and Japan.

William Griffis, on the other hand, thought that the Japanese were an “intensely imaginative people”,⁹⁴¹ while Lafcadio Hearn sided more with Lowell, arguing that the Japanese students showed “little originality in the line of imagination”, and that the “apparent weakness” in Japanese intellectual circles seemed to be “the comparative absence of spontaneity, creative thought, [and] original perceptivity of the highest order”. All in all, the Japanese displayed an “amiable mediocrity of opinion and imagination”, Hearn concluded.⁹⁴²

⁹³⁵ Lowell 2006; Lowell 2007b, 7.

⁹³⁶ Lowell 2007b, 79. Seija Jalagin has concluded that, often in the background of Western accusations of Japanese imitativeness and superficial modernising, was a feeling of regret for the disappearing “Old Japan,” and the idea of Japan as an antipode of the Western nations (Jalagin 2002, 21).

⁹³⁷ Hietala 2003, 95.

⁹³⁸ Lowell 1895, 287.

⁹³⁹ Lowell 2006.

⁹⁴⁰ Lowell 2007b, 82.

⁹⁴¹ Griffis 2006a, 225, 289.

⁹⁴² Hearn 1894b, 458, 673, 683.

Arguably, the discrepancies between Lowell, Griffis and Hearn's opinions on the Japanese imagination arose from their differing respective meanings of the word. In talking about the Japanese, Griffis appears to have had in mind artistic or poetic imagination. Lowell, on the other hand, seemed to be thinking along the more Spencerian lines of 'reminiscent' and 'constructive imagination'. According to Spencer, reminiscent imagination was the lot of artists and poets. It was based on experience and entailed description. Meanwhile, constructive imagination was essential for scientists. Constructive imagination was the ability to create new, original, and abstract ideas; conceive laws; and make comparisons according to them. It was the highest intellectual faculty, Spencer posited, and the property of only few of the most civilized peoples.⁹⁴³ When speaking about the absence of imagination in East Asia, Lowell seemed to be particularly referring to this constructive imagination. Hearn, on the other hand, seemed to talk about artistic imagination in general when he referred to his students, and apply the Spencerian idea of constructive imagination when he referred to the Japanese intellectuals.

But whereas Percival Lowell also claimed that the Chinese lacked originality and inventiveness, William Griffis, Samuel Williams, and William Martin did their utmost to convince their readership otherwise. On the first page of the first chapter of his magnum opus, *The Middle Kingdom*, Williams emphasised that the Chinese civilization had developed under its own institutions. He argued that the Chinese government, literature, and language had all taken a unique form independently from the institutions and ideas of other peoples.⁹⁴⁴ Martin noted that the Chinese were "represented as servile imitators", even though they had "borrowed less than any other people", and as "destitute of the inventive faculty, though the world is indebted to them for a long catalogue of the most useful discoveries [...]."⁹⁴⁵ And Griffis drew a "contrast between the Chinese and Japanese intellect" in favour of the former. He claimed that the Chinese mind had "once at least, possessed mental initiative, and the power of thinking", whereas in the Japanese mind there had been "apparently no such vigor or fruitfulness".⁹⁴⁶

William Griffis concurred with Percival Lowell that the Japanese "dependence on China" had "paralyzed originality and weakened intellect".⁹⁴⁷ However, contrary to Lowell, both Griffis and Lafcadio Hearn countered the claim that the Japanese had merely imitated and borrowed during their history. Hearn thought that the Japanese were not imitative at all. The Japanese were "assimilative and adoptive only, and that to the degree of genius".⁹⁴⁸ Griffis too

⁹⁴³ Spencer 1873, 534–537.

⁹⁴⁴ Williams 1913a, 1. Nevertheless, in the second volume of *The Middle Kingdom*, Samuel Williams somewhat reversed his position, and emphasised Chinese unoriginality, and not their originality. Williams claimed that imitation was a "remarkable trait in the Chinese mind," which had led the Chinese to rest content with what they had, and treat innovations and science with suspicion. (Williams 1913b, 63.)

⁹⁴⁵ Martin 1881, 228.

⁹⁴⁶ Griffis 2006b, 72, 74.

⁹⁴⁷ Griffis 1892, 106.

⁹⁴⁸ Hearn 1895, 202; Hearn 1896a, 460.

maintained that the introduction of Chinese civilization to Japan had not been “a simple act of adoption,” but rather “a work of selection and assimilation”. The same applied to their adoption of Western civilization in the 19th century.⁹⁴⁹ Griffis was confident that the Japanese knew they could not attain the greatness they were pursuing by only copying and mimicking.⁹⁵⁰

The civilizations of the West were of course as much part of this long chain of borrowing as the civilizations of the East. It is therefore pointedly interesting, that so much emphasis was put on the Japanese borrowing from China and the West, while there was so little on the borrowings of Americans from France or Britain,⁹⁵¹ and the Europeans from other continents long before that. Borrowing and imitation had a bad ring to the experts. They were tokens of inferiority, and thus to be frowned upon. As a consequence, the Americans tended to consider many transnational issues and borrowings from Europe, such as slavery or republicanism, as inherently domestic forces.⁹⁵²

When foreign influences were admitted, the Americans emphasised that they had not only assimilated them, but also modified and improved upon them. That should be therefore called development or progress, not copying. And that was what made the United States superior in comparison with mimicking nations, if one followed the lines of thought of Percival Lowell. It is a matter of conjecture whether William Griffis had this idea of higher civilization being the result of adoption, adaption, and improvement in mind when he asserted that the Japanese had improved upon the elements they had borrowed from Korea and China, and that they were about to improve also upon those lately borrowed from the West.⁹⁵³ Intentional or not, this was a powerful argument. As the stereotype was gaining currency during the latter half of the century of the Japanese being mimics incapable of genuine progress,⁹⁵⁴ Griffis was actually going against the current, and arguing that the Japanese had the same abilities for progress and civilization as the Europeans and Americans. He sincerely believed that with the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese had proved to the world that they were certainly *not* “mere imitators.”⁹⁵⁵

In the end, however, it seems that it was difficult for the experts to shake off the idea that the Chinese and Japanese adoption of modern civilization was somehow superficial. Arthur Smith, for example, believed that whatever concessions China was making to the West, was only a temporary giving in to external pressure:

⁹⁴⁹ Griffis 2006a, 226. This was William Griffis’ contention in *The Mikado’s Empire* in 1876. However, in *The Religions of Japan* in 1895, Griffis thought that in relation to philosophical and religious ideas, the Japanese had often contended themselves with simply passively receiving, copying, reciting, and repeating what the Chinese had created. (Griffis 2006b, 72.)

⁹⁵⁰ Griffis 2006a, 431.

⁹⁵¹ Iriye 1967, 9; Tyrrell 2007, 13.

⁹⁵² Tyrrell 2007, 1, 108.

⁹⁵³ Griffis 2006a, 226.

⁹⁵⁴ Henning 2000, 92, 100-101.

⁹⁵⁵ Griffis 2006a, 459.

The ancient and compact civilization of China has been in operation for millenniums, and there is a way and a rule for everything. The Westerner comes in with calm confidence that he will show them a thing (or perhaps two), and he does. The Chinese adapt themselves to the sinuosities of the Occidental temperament as the water fits the boat which rushes through it, or as the air closes about the flying projectile. But when the boat or the bullet has passed, the water and the air are in situ, ready for any number more of the same kind.⁹⁵⁶

Another argument hinting at the superficiality of self-defensively adopting a higher civilization was based in the theory of social evolution. Percival Lowell pointed out that social evolution was a slow, gradual, and continuous process. Nature held on to the past with one hand, while grasping at the future with the other, he explained.⁹⁵⁷ Hence, the notion of 'natural social evolution' could not accommodate such sudden leaps from semi-civilization to civilization in less than half a century as Japan had supposedly done during the 19th century. A leap like that, Lowell reasoned, had to mean that Japanese refinement and civilization was merely an external polish. He was convinced that if one gently scratched at the surface of New Japan, he would find "the ancestral Tartar" underneath.⁹⁵⁸

Also Lafcadio Hearn agreed with Lowell's social evolutionist stance, and concluded that Japan's new civilization was necessarily shallow:

The psychologist knows that the so-called 'adoption of Western civilization' within a time of thirty years cannot mean the addition to the Japanese brain of any organs or powers previously absent from it. He knows that it cannot mean any sudden change in the mental or moral character of the race. Such changes are not made in a generation. Transmitted civilization works much more slowly, requiring even hundreds of years to produce certain permanent psychological results.⁹⁵⁹

In order to be authentic, civilization would have to take root in the psychological character of a nation. It would thus have to become a natural part of man, and flow from the inside, not from the outside.

Percival Lowell's recipe for both individual and national progress was to "take the methods" and "make them a living part of yourselves." This recipe assured that, one day, "in lieu of your copying others, others are copying you."⁹⁶⁰ Here he was arguing that one should not only adopt material manifestations of progress and higher civilization, but also the principles underneath, and internalise them. However, considering that Lowell held these principles – originality and individuality – to be inherited and transmitted racial traits,⁹⁶¹ and that he believed the Chinese and Japanese race characters to be deficient in

⁹⁵⁶ Smith 1901b, 719.

⁹⁵⁷ Lowell 2007a, 16.

⁹⁵⁸ Lowell 2007b, 7. Curiously, a similar argument could be made against American progress. The British tended to view their nation and civilization as a result of gradual evolution, while the US had revolutionary origins and had strived for rapid leaps in its social and political development. According to the British view, the US had therefore not developed along the "healthy path" of evolution, and hence it was possibly also an unadvisable model for the Japanese to emulate (Fält 1990, 92).

⁹⁵⁹ Hearn 1896b, 8-9.

⁹⁶⁰ Lowell 2006.

⁹⁶¹ Lowell 2007b, 72.

these respects, how could the Chinese and Japanese internalise them in practice? Could the Chinese and Japanese somehow alter their race character, and truly make progress in Civilization (with a capital-C)? Lowell concluded both his lecture at the English Law School of Tokyo (later printed in *The Japan Weekly Mail*), and his treatise *The Soul of the Far East* without providing any conclusive answer to these questions.

Thus, Lowell tied the question of progress and higher civilization ultimately to the notion of race, and Lafcadio Hearn did the same. For Hearn, the basic problem was that a nation could not substitute its lower civilization to a higher civilization without tremendous “mental readjustments,” and that human races could not evolve and develop new capabilities overnight. Consequently, Hearn argued that, in adopting a higher civilization, the Japanese could give “good results only along directions in which the race had always shown capacities of special kinds.”⁹⁶² But Hearn pointed out that the Japanese could not afford to wait around until their psychological build-up would enable them to absorb the shock of a higher civilization, or until they would generate a higher civilization themselves. Hearn lamented that, despite the odds and the boundaries nature had set, the Japanese were forced to leap.⁹⁶³

In 1889, a few years before Hearn wrote on Japan, the French anthropologist, psychologist, and sociologist Gustave Le Bon (1841–1931) had suggested that Western civilization was just “too complicated” for “inferior peoples” to accept.⁹⁶⁴ While Hearn could not go quite as far as to say the Japanese were an “inferior people”, he did seem to share in the belief that Western civilization was complex, and that complexity could prove to be disastrous for the Japanese. Consequently, Hearn foreboded that the Japanese would necessarily come to suffer from a severe “mental and moral enervation”. The race simply would not be able to bear the “intellectual overstrain”, caused by their attempt to leap from one level of Civilization to another, beyond their “natural powers”.⁹⁶⁵

Similar arguments about the natural pace of development could be made also without the Spencerian backdrop, but the conclusions drawn from these arguments were remarkably dissimilar. William Griffis, Arthur Smith, and William Martin all contemplated the topic from the point of view of national evolution, or national development, not social or racial evolution. Yet they came to express the same belief that progress, “[l]ike all processes of development”,⁹⁶⁶ was necessarily slow. “Reform does not ride on the Empire State Express”, Griffis asserted, for, in essence, the human nature was “exasperatingly conservative.”⁹⁶⁷ Griffis, like many of his contemporaries,⁹⁶⁸ realised that Western civilization had once been just as barbarous and semi-civilized as any other, and that it had been a long and strenuous process for Westerners to work their way

⁹⁶² Hearn 1896b, 9.

⁹⁶³ Hearn 1894b, 665–666.

⁹⁶⁴ Le Bon 1889, 23.

⁹⁶⁵ Hearn 1894b, 665.

⁹⁶⁶ Smith 1899, 348.

⁹⁶⁷ Griffis 1900, 234.

⁹⁶⁸ Bonk 1989, 243–244.

up to the superior and enlightened position they purported to possess in the 19th century. Hence, it was wholly inconceivable for Griffis to accept the claim many observers made that “the Japanese had reached in twenty years what it took other countries centuries to acquire.”⁹⁶⁹

William Griffis believed that, although it looked like the Japanese had modernised in a very short period of time, the process actually had very long roots. Griffis argued that the “Dutch seed of European civilization” had been growing secretly in Japan for the past two hundred years.⁹⁷⁰ Griffis was saying that the modern civilization of Japan had been the work of centuries, and in saying this, he affirmed that it was therefore genuine, because it had been slow, gradual, and probably by this time, internalised.

As to the development of China, William Martin cited an editorial article published in the *Shanghai Courier* in 1880, which confirmed that China was “moving in the path of progress, knowledge, and civilization”, albeit at a very unhurried “rate of movement.”⁹⁷¹ As slowness was a natural and inevitable characteristic of the process of Civilization, Martin saw nothing reprehensible in the sluggishness of Chinese development. In 1882, Samuel Williams advised that the Chinese should be allowed time to “gradually learn in their own way how to rise in the scale of nations, and adopt such improvements as they pleased.”⁹⁷² Thus, the only thing Westerners could and should do, after they had done all they could to coax China to resume their march on the path of civilization, was to wait. To rush her would do no good. As William Griffis reminded his readers, any social and political transformations that might come as a “hysteria or a hurricane” tended to be “more destructive than wholesome”.⁹⁷³

As noted, by the end of the 19th century, the Chinese narrative had become one of failure. And yet, the accounts of William Griffis and William Martin seem to suggest that, in their opinion, the Chinese had patently *not* failed in Civilization; it was just that they were decidedly behind in the process. There was no hint in these accounts at any inherent incapability of the Chinese to modernise and acquire higher civilization. In contrast, Percival Lowell, from his social evolutionist perspective, appeared ambivalent, and even pessimistic, about the ability of either the Chinese or Japanese to progress. If the East Asians failed to internalise Civilization, they would be “destined to disappear before the advancing nations of the West”. They would vanish off the face of the earth, and leave the planet for “the dwellers where the day declines”.⁹⁷⁴

David Strauss has suggested that Percival Lowell tended to present the Chinese and Japanese abilities, races, and civilizations as inferior, in order to show that the East Asians were incapable of challenging the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race and civilization.⁹⁷⁵ In other words, Strauss has interpreted

⁹⁶⁹ Griffis 1892, 203.

⁹⁷⁰ Griffis 1892, 203.

⁹⁷¹ Martin 1881, 253.

⁹⁷² Williams 1913b, 694.

⁹⁷³ Griffis 1900, 234.

⁹⁷⁴ Lowell 2007b, 82.

⁹⁷⁵ Strauss 2001, 129.

Lowell's tendency to downplay the developmental ability of the Chinese and Japanese as a response to the notion of the 'yellow peril,' or the idea that the 'yellow races' of the East were a threat to the Western world. This notion gained a considerable foothold in American scientific, political and literary discussions towards the end of the 19th century. At first, it was the emigration from China that generated a concern that Chinese labourers were aiming to supplant the American workforce, and that their presence would have detrimental effects for the society as a whole.⁹⁷⁶

Somewhat later, another fear surged into the minds of Americans and Europeans: the menace of a westernized East. Lafcadio Hearn, for example, believed that China would eventually be reduced to the point where it would have to adopt some form of Occidental civilization or another, and that in this form the Chinese would inevitably grow into an industrial threat. The Chinese were capable of learning any industry or science, and they were skilled in trade. Hence, under the direction of an Occidental-type administration, "a civilized Oriental race" like the Chinese, would not only grow, but grow rich, Hearn asserted.⁹⁷⁷ He mused melancholically that perhaps Western civilization had "girdled the earth only to force the study of our arts of destruction and our arts of industrial competition upon races much more inclined to use them against us than for us". What if, Hearn speculated, the Chinese would resolve to adopt the Western civilization like Japan, and decide to "avenge all those aggressions, extortions, exterminations, of which the colonizing West has been guilty in dealing with feebler races". Hearn suggested that perhaps the future belonged to the Orient, not the Occident.⁹⁷⁸

After the Sino-Japanese War, the notion of 'yellow peril' was increasingly applied to Japan as well. Japan had emerged as a modern, imperialist power. Having thus proved its credentials, and that it was no longer a semi-sovereign nation, the Japanese gained confidence, and demanded to be treated with respect. Meanwhile, in the United States, the previous romantic imagery of Japan began to be supplanted in people's imaginations by the 'yellow peril' image.⁹⁷⁹ All of a sudden, the mimicry of Japan seemed like a threat. Japan's rapid transformation shattered the idea that industrialisation was uniquely Western, and that the so-called lower races were not equally capable of material progress and prowess. And the possibility of Japanese expansion in Asia and the Pacific region was anxiously considered at a time when the Americans themselves were expanding and gaining more influence in the area, and when the tide of nationalist feeling was high in both Japan and the United States. Possible rivalry in the region generated friction between the nations and aroused questions about national security, naval strategies, and the balance of power in the East. Particularly the emigration of Japanese labourers to Hawaii concerned the Americans. Emigration had accelerated in the 1890s, and the Japanese had become a con-

⁹⁷⁶ Iriye 1967, 62; Scott 2008, 101, 133

⁹⁷⁷ Hearn 1896a, 453-454, 457-458.

⁹⁷⁸ Hearn 1895, 237-238; Hearn 1896a, 460.

⁹⁷⁹ Iriye 1967, 73; Metraux 2002, 15-16.

siderably large, visible, and notable ethnic group in Hawaii. American settlers in the islands began to fear that the Japanese were about to seize Hawaii, and use it as a stepping stone for reaching the US.⁹⁸⁰ And then, the Boxer Uprising again reminded the Americans of the potential peril of China.⁹⁸¹

In the 1890s, Arthur Smith characterised the Chinese as being adaptable to all climes, able to thrive at all kinds of economic endeavour, and as physically enduring and strong. There were no signs of “race decay” in the Chinese character, Smith pointed out, just as there were none in the Anglo-Saxon character. Consequently, Smith was certain that eventually “the white and the yellow races” would enter into a keen and aggressive competition with each other for the right to exist, and that the outcome of the rivalry would be determined by the Spencerian doctrine of “survival of the most fit”. Which one of the two would be best suited to survive in the 20th century, and which one would have to go to the wall – the “nervous” European, or the “tireless, all-pervading and phlegmatic” Chinese? Smith did not have a straightforward answer, but he pointed out that, with their flexibility, durability, patience, and industry, the Chinese seemed very fit for survival, and enjoyed an evident advantage in such a race.⁹⁸²

Similarly, William Griffis predicted in 1899, that the time would come when China would cease to be a passive instrument of European imperialist ambitions and take control of its own destiny. With regions capable of producing almost anything, and people that could be educated in every Western skill, Griffis believed that the next “cycle of Cathay” would have tremendous repercussions for the world.⁹⁸³ The prospect of China rising as a serious commercial competitor to the Western nations loomed somewhere in the distance; whereas the prospect of Japan accomplishing the same seemed to be materialising in the more foreseeable future. Japan was already in the process of transition from an agricultural to a manufacturing and commercial nation, Griffis noted, and the Japanese clearly aimed to take over the Asian markets. Griffis underlined that the Japanese goal was to score “great victories of peace” in the “honorable competition” of trade, not in warfare. Griffis assured his readers that Japan was not about to become a military threat to the US, for the Japanese knew Americans to be their truest friends.⁹⁸⁴

⁹⁸⁰ Adas 1989, 357; Dudden 1992, 145; Henning 2000, 138; Iriye 1965, 95, 117; Iriye 1967, 74, 78, 82; Neumann 1963, 106–107, 118, 124; Nimmo 2001, 8–9, 26–27; Scott 2008, 122. The relations between the Americans and Japanese became strained in 1897, when the authorities in Hawaii did not allow a shipload of Japanese labourers to enter the islands, and Japan protested by sending a warship to the waters of Hawaii. Soon rumours that the Japanese were about to invade Hawaii began to circulate, and the instance served as one of the main arguments for the American annexation of the territory in 1898. (Dudden 1992, 144; Iriye 1965, 124; Neumann 1963, 116; Nimmo 2001, 26.)

⁹⁸¹ For example, Western texts describing the events frequently used expressions such as “Yellow Crime”, “yellow terror,” and “Yellow Peril at War with the World,” when referring to the Boxer Uprising, the Boxers, or China in general (Scott 2008, 146).

⁹⁸² Smith 1890, 41, 117, 187–188, 192; Smith 1894, 170; Smith 1899, 52–53.

⁹⁸³ Griffis 1900, 213.

⁹⁸⁴ Griffis 1900, 147–148; Griffis 1903, 649.

Lafcadio Hearn treated the theme of competition both in his book *Out of the East*, in 1895, and in an article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, in 1896. In both texts he discussed and derived inspiration from Charles Pearson's publication *National Life and Character* (1893). Pearson claimed that one day China would emerge from weakness and tutelage, take over the Asian markets, and claim its place among the great, civilized powers of the world. Together, "the black and yellow races" would destroy the illusion that world belonged to Christianity and the "Aryan races", and eventually, "the lower races" would prevail and dominate the earth.⁹⁸⁵ The idea, Hearn noted, that "white races and their civilization" could perish in competition with the seemingly "semi-barbarous" Oriental civilization had been a rude shock to Westerners and their "pride of race" – especially the English. He explained that Western readers had been particularly alarmed after the Sino-Japanese War, when Pearson's predictions no longer seemed so far-fetched or remote.⁹⁸⁶

Lafcadio Hearn granted that the Occidentals had a capacity to "overlive" the Orientals under certain circumstances. This meant that, in temperate climates and with an adequate amount of power for aggression, Westerners could master, or even supplant, the "native race" by "crushing opposition, paralyzing competition by enormous combinations of capital, monopolizing resources, and raising the standard of living above the native capacity". Where these conditions prevailed, "weaker races" had already vanished or were about to vanish "under Anglo-Saxon domination," he noted.⁹⁸⁷ But Hearn thought that it was an unfounded delusion that all weaker peoples were bound "to make way for the great colonizing white races, leaving the latter sole masters of the habitable world". Recently, Western civilization had certainly exterminated some peoples "of a very low order of capacity", by which he meant certain North American Indian tribes, but there were just as many examples of peoples thriving rather than perishing under Western domination, he felt. Moreover, the records of history showed that it had been much more common for savages and barbarians to dominate and destroy civilizations than the other way round.⁹⁸⁸

The problem Lafcadio Hearn envisaged for the West was that, although the Anglo-Saxons might be one of the most superior races existing at that time

⁹⁸⁵ Pearson 1913, 89–90, 363.

⁹⁸⁶ Hearn 1896a, 453. Lafcadio Hearn noted that the Sino-Japanese war had startled the Western world with the possibility that Japan might annexe, control, and "Japanize" China; harness its resources, and turn it into the "most formidable of military empires". The Chinese were adaptable, and they possessed "savage daring," and "in-born cunning". All that they needed was the "superior knowledge of civilization", and they would outmatch the Westerners in both warfare and commerce. And this knowledge Japan could impart to them. If such an empire would then embark on a series of conquests, no nation in Asia would be able to resist it, and soon it would be at the gates of Europe. This was a scenario that had been presented in the London newspaper *St. James Gazette*, and Hearn recounted it in his own article. Personally, Hearn thought that the scenario was a realistic, but improbable one, since the European powers were likely to intervene in the situation before it would materialise. (Hearn 1896a, 451–453.)

⁹⁸⁷ Hearn 1895, 219–220.

⁹⁸⁸ Hearn 1896a, 454, 456.

in the 19th century, they were not necessarily the fittest for survival.⁹⁸⁹ This fitness to survive, as Hearn saw it, depended on the ability to adapt to all circumstances and environments, and it also meant “the simple power to live”. In these respects, Westerners were decidedly inferior to the East Asians, he felt. Although Westerners may have had greater energy, physical and intellectual resources, these were acquired and maintained at a great cost. In addition, Western civilization was characterised by a “monstrous egotism.” Its members were greedy consumers seeking never-ending pleasures, luxury, and self-indulgence; and they were incapable of living without wealth and machinery. In the West, people did not struggle to live, inasmuch as they struggled to enjoy, Hearn claimed, citing the English biologist Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–1895).⁹⁹⁰ Finally, Hearn suspected that Westerners had exhausted nearly all their mental and moral capacities for making any further progress in Civilization, which spelt doom to both Western races and their civilizations.⁹⁹¹

So these were the perils within Occidental civilization; while competition was the peril without. The Western peoples might be able to “overlive” the people of the East, Hearn admitted, but the Orientals were capable of “underliving” the Anglo-Saxons. By this he meant that they could master Western science and technology solely on a “diet of rice”, that is, at less cost. They were more patient and less indulgent, and most importantly, they thrived and multiplied. The sheer size of the Chinese population was something that the West could never surpass, Hearn remarked. Thus, with increasing competition for resources as populations grew, Hearn thought it probable that the “underliving” races would in fact exterminate the races capable of only “overliving”. And hence, the only way the West could ensure that the future did not belong to the Orient was to eliminate the Chinese, and perhaps all Oriental races, Hearn concluded.⁹⁹²

⁹⁸⁹ Hearn 1895, 240; Hearn 1896a, 454.

⁹⁹⁰ Hearn 1895, 240–241; Hearn 1896a, 453, 463; Hearn 1896b, 27–28.

⁹⁹¹ Hearn 1896a, 455, 463–464.

⁹⁹² Hearn 1895, 218, 238, 240–242; Hearn 1896a, 31; Hearn 1896b, 455. The Chinese and Japanese each treated the theme of ‘yellow peril’ very differently when addressing their Western audience. Especially during the self-strengthening era, individual Chinese diplomats and other persons declared that China would adopt technological, material, and intellectual means from the West and then drive the Europeans and Americans out of Asian markets, and the Pacific region altogether. The Japanese, on the other hand, used the American press to assure their readers that Japan was no threat to the US: militarily, commercially, or otherwise. (Henning 2000, 139–140; Scott 2008, 73, 114.)

5 RELIGION AND MORALS

Of all the components that made up civilization, religion was probably the most contested by the six experts – not the least because it involved questions about each author’s personal convictions. All six had no doubts that religion and civilization were linked, this much was clear. For example, the evangelical and mission-oriented quartet of William Griffis, Samuel Wells Williams, Arthur Smith, and William Martin used the terms “Christian civilization” or “civilization of Christendom” interchangeably with “Western civilization”. Clearly, they held Christian religion to be inseparable from European and American civilizations. But it was the nature of the link between religion and the process of Civilization that was hotly disputed. The question was: did religions follow a path of progress like individuals and societies? If they did, in what manner? And was there a correlation between the developmental stage of religious thinking and the developmental stage of a society, as influential 19th century thinkers such as Auguste Comte, E.B. Tylor, Herbert Spencer, and James Frazer had suggested?

As the six experts encountered Chinese and Japanese belief systems, it turned out that the concept of religion itself was also fundamentally ambiguous. There was no consensus among the experts which belief systems exactly qualified as religion. Christianity, obviously, was understood as the religion *par excellence*, but the classification of Chinese and Japanese beliefs proved difficult. Also, ethical systems and moral precepts invited debate, and the opinions of the authors became sharply divided over the relations between ethics, religion, and Civilization.

5.1 Chinese and Japanese beliefs and the concept of religion

All six of our authors showed an avid interest in Chinese and Japanese religions, but a clear and comprehensive account of them was difficult to achieve. Samuel Williams remarked that although the religious ceremonies and festivals of the Chinese were relatively easy to describe, “their real belief—that which consti-

tutes their religion, their trust in danger and guide in doubt, their support in sorrow and hope for future reward" eluded simple and straightforward depiction. The problems Williams encountered in describing the Chinese religions were twofold: "the indefinite ideas of the people themselves" and the religious diversity across the country.⁹⁹³

However, Williams did not attribute all the problems one encountered in studying Chinese religions to the intricate reality of China. He noted that the Western observers played their part, too. The foreign inquirer was prone to be hindered by his own prejudices, misunderstandings, and inadequate knowledge, he noted. Williams also thought that it was difficult to describe in any intelligible fashion the "real religious belief and practices of a heathen people" to a readership who had not lived among these people. For all these reasons, he thought, no Westerner had yet "elucidated the true nature" of Chinese beliefs and rituals adequately.⁹⁹⁴ Williams' *The Middle Kingdom*, first published in 1848, was an early attempt to rectify the situation, and his literary effort was followed by a host of others, including publications by both William Martin and Arthur Smith.

Lafcadio Hearn's *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894) was propelled by the same objective of informing the English-speaking audience about East Asian religions – particularly about little-known Shinto and Japanese popular beliefs. But Japanese beliefs, too, presented a puzzle for those who sought to understand them. Although multiform, complex, and elusive, Hearn attempted to describe the Japanese religions, but he found that the historical changes, regional variations, and multiple gods seemed to mock those attempting to study them.⁹⁹⁵ Around the same time, Percival Lowell and William Griffis strove to illuminate the subject even further in their books *Occult Japan* (1894) and *The Religions of Japan* (1895), respectively. Thus, none of the six experts were daunted by the difficulty of the task in the end, and consequently, the better part of their publications covered religious subjects.

For centuries, Chinese religious plurality had been a constant source of bewilderment for Western observers,⁹⁹⁶ and the three China experts quickly noted that the average Chinese person's religion was a complex amalgam of three different faiths. The experts called this amalgam of religions *san kiao* (or *sanjiao*, three teachings). *Sanjiao* had developed in China during the Tang Dyn-

⁹⁹³ Williams 1913b, 191–192.

⁹⁹⁴ Williams 1913b, 191–192.

⁹⁹⁵ Hearn 1894a, 101, 121–122.

⁹⁹⁶ In the Middle Ages, Europeans discussed religious pluralism mainly from the perspective which acknowledged one 'true' religion, Christianity, and a host of 'false' religions. From the 17th century onwards, however, the proposition gained ground that other faiths besides Christianity could be categorised as religions. Consequently, influential European accounts dating from this time, such as Engelbert Kaempfer's *History of Japan*, asserted that the Chinese and Japanese had multiple, coexisting, and overlapping religions. By the 19th century, the religious pluralism of China and Japan was already an established notion. (Josephson 2012, 13–16; Rosenstone, Robert, "Learning from Those 'Imitative' Japanese: Another Side of the American Experience in the Mikado's Empire". *The American Historical Review*. Vol. 85, no. 3, 1980: p. 592.)

asty (618–907), and it consisted of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism⁹⁹⁷. Samuel Williams pointed out that the sects did not interfere with, or exclude each other. On the contrary, “a man may worship at a Buddhist shrine or join in a Taoist festival while he accepts all the tenets of Confucius and worships him on State occasions”.⁹⁹⁸ This notion was not merely perplexing, but it ran counter to the monotheistic conviction, arising from Christianity, that religions were fundamentally incompatible, and that a person could practice only one religion⁹⁹⁹.

How this “curious jumble of religious ideas” had come about, asked William Martin. The explanation he offered was that *sanjiao* had been a result of one religion absorbing the other. Likewise, Arthur Smith assumed that first Buddhism had swallowed Daoism, then Daoism had swallowed Confucianism, and finally Confucianism had swallowed up the other two, so that the outcome had been a fusion of all three. As a sign of this indissoluble unity, the Chinese had erected temples where Confucius and Laozi reigned together with Buddha, Smith noted.¹⁰⁰⁰

Another explanation for the union was that the three creeds had some decisive differences and absences, which made them complementary to each other. William Martin claimed that Confucianism was ethical, Daoism physical, and Buddhism metaphysical. Or, Daoism was purely material, Buddhism ideal, and Confucianism remained neutral to all actual religious questions – in theory at least. According to Martin, the Confucian indifference to gods persuaded people to turn to Daoism, which could offer them an account for the supernatural elements they sensed in the environment around them. Daoism also held out the possibility of a future life, although the effort required was considered too great for an ordinary man. This was an obvious defect in Daoism, and in turn, it had to be remedied by Buddhism, which provided an afterlife everyone could ultimately attain. As a result of the union, the aspects which made each of the creeds unique had become accentuated: Confucianism had become more staunchly atheistic and Daoism more materialistic. Thus, Martin concluded, the

⁹⁹⁷ The three China experts wrote their treatises at a time when the terminology for understanding and representing these Chinese belief systems was a rather recent innovation; for example, the term Buddhism was only introduced in 1801, Daoism in 1839, and Confucianism in 1862. These dates come from Jason Ananda Josephson’s *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (Josephson 2012, 12). The source for the dates appears to be *The Oxford English Dictionary*, however, the late date for the term “Confucianism” is curious, since we can find the term already in the original 1848 edition of Williams’ *The Middle Kingdom*, in which he uses it to denote to the philosophy and state religion of the Chinese: “the doctrines of Confucius, the ceremonies of the Buddhists, the sorceries of the Rationalists [...] all have exerted all the power over the people they could, and all have failed to impart present happiness or assure future joy to their votaries. *Confucianism* is cold and unsatisfactory to the affectionate and inquiring mind; and the transcendental dreams of Rationalism, or the nonsensical vagaries of Buddhism [sic], are a little worse” [italics added] (Williams 1848b, 236, 283–284).

⁹⁹⁸ Williams 1913b, 193–194.

⁹⁹⁹ Josephson 2012, 17.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Martin 1881, 6; Smith 1890, 359, 361–362.

three creeds supplemented each other, but on their own, any one of them was deficient.¹⁰⁰¹

Arthur Smith's explanation of the *sanjiao* looked more closely at Chinese attitudes to religion. He emphasised Chinese conformity to customs as the rationale behind participating in the rituals of all three creeds:

The genesis of Chinese customs being what it is, it is easy to perceive that it is the underlying assumption that whatever is, is right. Thus a long established usage is a tyranny. Of the countless individuals who conform to the custom, not one is at all concerned with the origin or the reason of the acts. His business is to conform, and he conforms. The degree of religious faith in different parts of the Empire doubtless differs widely, but nothing can be more certain than that all the rites of the 'three religions' are performed by millions, who are as destitute of anything which ought to be called faith, as they are of an acquaintance with Egyptian hieroglyphics.¹⁰⁰²

For Smith, the conformity of the Chinese to traditional rituals was a sign that they lacked sincere devotion. The faith of the Chinese was merely an insurance policy of sorts, he argued. It did not matter to the Chinese whether or not gods really existed, but just in case they did, it was worth going through a few rituals in order to avoid divine retribution. The idea was that worship and rituals could do no harm, but might do some good.¹⁰⁰³

Smith also thought that the Chinese did not know which route to their gods was more direct and effective, and hence they relied on both Daoist and Buddhist services to be doubly sure.¹⁰⁰⁴ Finally, Smith asserted that the majority view on faith in China was that "[i]f you believe in them, then there really are gods; but if you do not believe in them, then there are none". These foundations for the whole edifice of Chinese religious thought, as Smith understood it, struck him as something "totally impossible for an Occidental mind to follow".¹⁰⁰⁵ Mindless conformity to custom was, in itself, a thing to be avoided in his book, since it led to stagnation of the Civilization process. But conformity to religious rites, regardless of whether one thought it would bring any blessings, and regardless of whether one actually believed in those gods, was quite beyond Smith's comprehension.

In previous centuries, the Chinese idea of the three teachings, or *sanjiao*, had infiltrated to Japan as well.¹⁰⁰⁶ The Japanese called it *sankyō*, and this eventually came to consist of Shinto (*shintō*), Confucianism, and Buddhism. In the everyday life of the Japanese, the lines between these three creeds were invisible, but William Griffis thought that the creeds were palpably distinct, and that it was precisely this distinctness that made the components of *sankyō* compati-

¹⁰⁰¹ Martin 1881, 118, 122–123.

¹⁰⁰² Smith 1890, 154.

¹⁰⁰³ Smith 1890, 366.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Smith 1899, 192. Samuel Williams pointed out that the purportedly atheist Confucian literati also sought the same kind of divine insurance as the uneducated Chinese masses. Although the Confucians ridiculed Buddhist and Daoist dogmas, they still thought it wise to follow these rituals, in case those creeds did contain some truth. (Williams 1913b, 227–228.)

¹⁰⁰⁵ Smith 1890, 366.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Josephson 2012, 15.

ble and complementary, in the same way that *sanjiao* was in China. Griffis explained that: “Shintōism furnishes the object of worship, Confucianism offers the rules of life, and Buddhism supplies the way of future salvation”. In other words, Shinto gave the Japanese inspiration for patriotism and the gods themselves, Confucianism gave them ethical rules to follow, and Buddhism gave them hope for an afterlife.¹⁰⁰⁷ Percival Lowell reached a similar conclusion to Griffis about the Japanese faith system. The reason Shintoism and Buddhism could combine with Confucianism, and form that “happy family of faith” lay in their difference. Lowell explained that Shintoism was extrinsic in its relation to the human soul whereas Buddhism was intrinsic, while Confucianism provided the “great moral law”.¹⁰⁰⁸

None of the Protestant-oriented experts appeared to be comfortable with the religious plurality in China and Japan. Coexisting creeds perhaps could have been palatable, if they were mutually exclusive, but mixing the three up together was not. Arthur Smith and William Martin both felt that such a complex and curious union of faiths violated an innate instinct for order. In the last analysis, Martin thought that this disorderly atmosphere could only be unhealthy for the souls of the Chinese.¹⁰⁰⁹ For Samuel Williams, this ‘pick and choose’, half-hearted religious attitude of the people implied that the Chinese were only slightly short of being irreligious. But not entirely, for the Chinese had one ‘religion’, which surpassed all others: ancestor worship. Williams and Smith both claimed that this was the “real religion” of the Chinese. It was not an organised system of belief like the creeds of *sanjiao*, Williams specified. Instead, it was a gratifying duty for all Chinese people.¹⁰¹⁰ William Martin, too, emphasised the obligatory nature of ancestor worship. It was the only religion upheld by the government and propagated with the Emperor’s authority. He described the rites of homage to ancestors as the most sacred, and vigorous form of faith in China. Moreover, he was sure that it had affected the whole of Chinese civilization more deeply than all the other religions combined.¹⁰¹¹ According to Lafcadio Hearn and William Griffis, Japan too was a country “ruled by the dead,” or “governed by graveyard”.¹⁰¹²

By the time the experts wrote their texts, ancestor worship had been incorporated into the three faiths of China and of Japan. William Martin recounted how both Buddhism and Confucianism had strengthened and consolidated the practice in China, meanwhile the three Japan experts associated ancestor worship primarily with Shinto. Lafcadio Hearn also distinguished a Buddhist “Religion of the Dead” coexisting with Shinto, but reminded his readers that the practice did not originally belong to the Buddhist tradition. Whatever the affiliation, Arthur Smith explained, the principle of ancestor worship was the same: “by the rite of ancestral worship it may be affirmed that in a sense all the

¹⁰⁰⁷ Griffis 1892, 75; Griffis 2006b, 6.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Lowell 2007b, 61–62.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Martin 1901a, 193; Smith 1890, 361.

¹⁰¹⁰ Smith 1890, 212; Williams 1913b, 194, 235–236, 267, 355.

¹⁰¹¹ Martin 1881, 109, 262, 265, 331, 334.

¹⁰¹² Griffis 1892, 44; Griffis 2006b, 159; Hearn 1896b, 62.

dead men of China are gods". That is, through ancestor worship virtually every Chinese and Japanese person was deified after death. The deceased were believed to continue their existence spiritually in the world of the living, and control the lives of their descendants.¹⁰¹³

Determining one's stance on the issue, however, proved problematic for the Christian authors. At first sight, there seemed to be nothing objectionable in the idea and practice of venerating ones ancestors. Samuel Williams and William Martin depicted how ancestor worship tied the Chinese family together and cemented affection, filial piety, and obedience in domestic relationships. Martin thought that it nurtured some of the highest sentiments of humanity, while Williams noted that it created order, and promoted commendable characteristics in the Chinese, such as industry and thrift.¹⁰¹⁴ Yet, the practice was clearly not one of mere commemoration or homage, the experts thought. It was literally worship, to the point at which Arthur Smith compared it to "polytheism", and Williams to "idolatry".¹⁰¹⁵ Idolatry had been a central bone of contention among Christians ever since the Reformation. As Carlos Eire has concluded in his study on the subject, the word itself was a cry to arms. By labelling something as idolatrous, the Catholics and Protestants alike defined what was true and what was false in religion.¹⁰¹⁶ Hence, by describing ancestor worship as idolatry, the missionary writers were actually defining it as something malicious, whatever positive features it may have had. "[E]vil with the guise of goodness", as Williams put it.¹⁰¹⁷

This presented a dilemma. Idolatry was a counter concept for 'true' religion in the eyes of our Protestant-oriented experts. It was a 'false' religion, a mockery¹⁰¹⁸ of religion, and therefore totally irreconcilable with Christianity.¹⁰¹⁹ Indeed, Protestant churches had decided to reject the idolatrous practice of ancestral veneration; while for the Chinese it was an essential part of their culture, which they refused to give up. The equation was therefore impossible, and so all three China experts agreed that the adherence to ancestor worship was "an obstacle" and "the most serious impediment" to the spread of Christianity in China. But at the same time, our experts were aware that an inflexible Protestant attitude was "a great bar" to converting the Chinese to Christianity.¹⁰²⁰ This led some Protestant missionaries to question whether there was room for negotiation after all.

The roots of this debate went all the way back to the Catholic missions of the 17th and 18th centuries in China. At that time, the Jesuits had assumed a more tolerant attitude to Chinese ancestor worship than the missionaries of other orders. This fundamental disagreement between the Catholic orders

¹⁰¹³ Griffis 1892, 75; Griffis 2006b, 44–45, 48; Hearn 1894b, 385, 392, 404, 414; Lowell 1895, 20–21, 379; Martin 1881, 258, 263–264; Smith 1890, 355.

¹⁰¹⁴ Martin 1894, 337; Williams 1913b, 238.

¹⁰¹⁵ Smith 1890, 213; Williams 1913b, 223, 239.

¹⁰¹⁶ Eire 1986, 3–5.

¹⁰¹⁷ Williams 1913b, 239.

¹⁰¹⁸ Josephson 2012, 14.

¹⁰¹⁹ Williams 1913b, 253, 267.

¹⁰²⁰ Martin 1894, 327; Smith 1901a, 35; Williams 1913b, 254.

about the best policy regarding Chinese traditions and rituals came to be called the Rites Controversy. Finally in 1715, the controversy was brought to an end by a statement from Papal Rome condemning the lenient Jesuit stance.¹⁰²¹

With the renewal of Christian missionary activities in the 19th century, the debate resurfaced, and this time it also involved the Protestants. William Martin was quite ready to follow in the footsteps of the Jesuits, as he searched for a satisfactory middle path between the extremes of total rejection and total acceptance of ancestral worship. He admitted that Chinese ancestor worship entailed a mixture of superstition and idolatry, and superstition and idolatry obviously clashed with the Christian Scriptures. But instead of abolishing the whole system, he advocated modifications that would make it compatible with Christianity. Martin strove to prove that the objectionable features of ancestor worship were later additions, not deriving any authority from Confucius. These additions concealed from view all the elements which were good and worthy of preservation, Martin argued. He thought that, in essence, practices such as visiting the family cemetery, and prostrating oneself before the tomb or memorial tablet, were just as innocent as practices used to commemorate the dead in Christian countries. However, some of the offerings made, and invocations and prayers uttered to the dead, did seem somewhat unsavoury. If the ancestors were treated as tutelary gods bestowing prosperity, protection, and blessings, then they received an honour belonging to God alone, Martin reasoned, and this was not to be tolerated.¹⁰²²

William Martin proposed that ancestor worship should be restored to its original pure form. He realized that even after a purge of idolatrous features, there would albeit still remain much that the Christians would find abominable in the Chinese rites. Keeping up any kind of communication with the dead, for example, would still be out of harmony with Protestant theology. But Martin claimed that the mission of the Christians was to convert the Chinese, not turn them into Europeans. He embraced a relativistic viewpoint in declaring that the "venerable usages of a civilized people should be judged by their own merits". He maintained that the Chinese church would have to be left to find its own course. To Martin's disappointment however, his suggestions were "received with strong expressions of disfavor" among his fellow missionaries.¹⁰²³ The majority of American Protestant missionaries were prone to reject the kinds of arguments Martin voiced,¹⁰²⁴ and Samuel Williams was among them. As far as he

¹⁰²¹ Fried 1987, 97–98.

¹⁰²² Martin 1881, 263, 268–269; Martin 1894, 337, 341–347.

¹⁰²³ Martin 1881, 268–270; Martin 1894, 348, 350, 355.

¹⁰²⁴ Martin's ideas did find some resonance among more liberal Protestants in the US. For example, at a missionary conference in 1895, a leading Congregational theologian, George A. Gordon, asserted that the missionaries should not export Christianity as a whole to China. Gordon believed that some Western traditions, policies and theology would only prove unsuitable and be rejected by the Chinese. But the majority of American and British Protestant missionaries wished to avoid a syncretic mishmash, fearing that no Chinese person who openly professed Confucianism could really be converted to Christianity (Coleman, Michael, "Presbyterian Missionary Attitudes Toward China and the Chinese, 1837-1900". *Journal of Presbyterian History*, Vol. 56, no. 3, 1978: p. 196; Hutchison 1983, 169).

could see, the Chinese worshipped their ancestors, and worship paid to any other object besides the one true God was simply idolatry, and thus a disfiguration of Christian doctrine.¹⁰²⁵

Arthur Smith, on the other hand, showed a little more sympathy to Martin's views. He took up the ambiguous term "worship", and noted that it could be interpreted as merely paying one's respects¹⁰²⁶. He indicated that historical analysis of the term might show that the ancient, real meaning of worship was not idolatrous, and thus would not be a violation of the Christian dogma. But, Smith continued, any argumentation based on historical method would be wasted on the Chinese people themselves. In Smith's opinion, most Chinese could only be treated as children, in that they could be told to not do something, but it would be useless to explain to them why. Hence, Smith thought it best to just ban ancestor worship, whatever its original character had been. Those foreigners who protested at this kind of intransigent missionary attitude, he felt, were in no position to judge, because such people had no knowledge of the Chinese language, and no first-hand experience of ancestor worship whatsoever.¹⁰²⁷

The China experts devoted a great amount of space and effort to the debate, which suggests that it was considered one of the most significant missionary questions of the day in China. Curiously, although fellow Protestant William Griffis acknowledged the persistence of ancestor worship in Japan, he did not share in either the alarmed concern of Williams and Smith, or the tolerant attitude of Martin.¹⁰²⁸ In fact, in his book about Japanese religions, Griffis treated the theme only in passing, and mainly in conjunction with Shinto. The "Rites Controversy" going on in China apparently did not touch him. The Protestant missionaries in Japan had no real historical equivalent to the polemical debate that had been raging in China. Instead, the main debate in Japan seemed to revolve around the question whether ancestor worship had Shinto or Chinese roots¹⁰²⁹.

¹⁰²⁵ Samuel Williams invoked all those Chinese Christians, who regarded ancestor worship as superstitious and sinful, to support his argument. Williams could understand that the Catholic Jesuits approved of the practice, because they performed similar services themselves before images of saints, or deified mortals. But for a Protestant, an approval of ancestor worship should be entirely out of the question. (Williams 1913b, 252–253, 292–293.)

¹⁰²⁶ The China experts tended to translate the Chinese terms *jingzu* and *baizu* as ancestor 'worship', although they could also have been translated as 'reverence' or 'veneration'.

¹⁰²⁷ Smith 1901a, 34–36. Eleven years earlier, before the Boxer disturbances, Arthur Smith had taken an even stricter line. Not allowing any room for speculation, he declared Christianity and ancestor worship to be diametrically opposed, and one of them would have to go. A death struggle was going on between the two, he claimed, quoting the popular Spencerian phrase that only the fittest would survive. (Smith 1890, 213.)

¹⁰²⁸ Griffis 1892, 44; Griffis 2006b, 52.

¹⁰²⁹ See e.g. Aston, W. G., "Ancestor-Worship in Japan". *Man*, Vol. 6, 1906; Cobbold, George A., *Religion in Japan: Shintōism-Buddhism-Christianity*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1894.

William Griffis had an overriding optimism that Christianity would eventually take over the world, and fulfil¹⁰³⁰ what was good in other religions. He was sure that Christianity would not destroy, but simply strengthen the Japanese reverence for ancestors, and reinforce it with nobler motives.¹⁰³¹ As for Percival Lowell, he showed little interest in the subject. As we have noted, the central theme in Lowell's discussions about East Asia was 'impersonality', and consequently, he treated also ancestor worship in relation to this theme. He pointed out that with ancestor worship, personal existence in East Asia could be said to only really start after death, making death possibly the most important act in the lives of the Japanese and Chinese.¹⁰³² Meanwhile, Lafcadio Hearn approached the question from a wholly different angle. He was not keen on missionary issues, instead, his main contribution was to the question of how ancestor worship, evolution, and science related to each other, but we will come back to this topic later on.

According to the six experts, another conspicuous feature in all the Chinese and Japanese forms of faith was 'superstition'. In China, popular superstitions were seen to take "myriad fantastic shapes", and attaching themselves to most of the Chinese schools of thought and belief, as William Martin claimed. Samuel Williams continued along this line, saying that in China all "classes are the prey of unfounded fears and superstitions, and dwell in a mist of ignorance and error[...]".¹⁰³³ Arthur Smith estimated that there was no other "civilized nation in existence", which was "under such bondage to superstition and credulity as the Chinese".¹⁰³⁴ It appeared very strange to him that such a practical people could "put the least faith in mummeries of this sort". Indeed, he assumed that very little faith was actually exercised in these practices, and in a way it was thus actually a logical consequence of the overall indifferent Chinese attitude to religion. This indifference perhaps came from the Chinese tendency to conform to tradition which, in Smith's eyes, was the foremost Chinese divini-

¹⁰³⁰ The 19th century liberal Protestant missionaries often tended to emphasise this idea that Christianity was out to fulfil other religions (Hokkanen 2007, 118.)

¹⁰³¹ Griffis 2006b, 52.

¹⁰³² Lowell 2007b, 15.

¹⁰³³ Martin 1881, 98, 118; Williams 1913b, 267.

¹⁰³⁴ Smith 1890, 362. Samuel Williams pointed out that Daoist priests knew the Chinese people to be superstitious, and financially exploited this. Arthur Smith, too, agreed that the credulity of the Chinese was the principal source of income for Daoist priests - so lucrative in fact, that the priests were like an organised army of parasites who could afford to live in comparative luxury. (Smith 1890, 44, 110; Williams 1913b, 215, 257, 259-260, 267.)

ty.¹⁰³⁵ The situation in Japan was deemed no different; all three Japan experts agreed that superstitions among the populace were vigorous and persistent.¹⁰³⁶

The superstitions the six authors claimed to witness in China and Japan included omens, personification and worship of nature, belief in supernatural beings, animal worship, phallicism, and fetishism. For example, William Griffis noted that searching for guidance from omens was widespread among the common people in China and Japan. In doing so, they were following the ways of their forefathers, his implication being that the Chinese and Japanese followed tradition instead of reason in their decision-making. However, Griffis reminded his readers that Westerners were by no means any freer from such superstitions themselves. And when it came to signs considered as lucky or unlucky, the Western and East Asian notions much resembled each other, he added.¹⁰³⁷ Far more disagreeable to Griffis' sensibilities than a belief in omens, was the evidence he found of phallicism and fetishism in all Chinese Asia. No class of men and no religious sect in Japan were free from such notions, and Griffis added that it was for the Westerners to "hint at the powerful influence such persistent ideas have upon Japanese morals and civilization".¹⁰³⁸ William Griffis did not specify the nature of this influence, but clearly it was not positive.

Arthur Smith, meanwhile, singled out the Chinese worship of nature as one of his topics:

That there is a tendency in man toward the worship of nature is a mere truism. The recognition of irresistible and unknown forces leads to their personification and to external acts of adoration, based upon the supposition that these forces are sentient.¹⁰³⁹

Smith therefore believed that worshipping nature was a natural human tendency. He noted that stars, the moon, the sun, trees, heaven, the Earth, sea, and natural phenomena like typhoons were all sacred to the Chinese.¹⁰⁴⁰ Worship of animals, both real and fabled, also seemed to follow suite. William Martin explained that this "worship of brute animals, or rather of their spiritual types, as with the North American Indians", was a conspicuous element in the "heterogeneous compound" of Chinese religion.¹⁰⁴¹

Lafcadio Hearn's attention was drawn to the worship of foxes in Japan, or "foxsuperstition" as he called it. The idea that foxes had supernatural powers

¹⁰³⁵ Smith 1899, 170, 209. In his treatise *The Chinese Characteristics*, Smith enumerated the characteristics he thought to be the constitutional traits of the Chinese, devoting a chapter to each trait. Chinese religious conformity Smith treated mainly under a chapter titled "Conservatism", although he returned to the topic in a chapter titled "Polytheism; Pantheism; Atheism". It seems that for Smith much of the popular religious beliefs, superstitions, practices, and attitudes he encountered in China could be ultimately reduced down to this one national Chinese characteristic: conservatism.

¹⁰³⁶ Griffis 2006b, 7; Hearn 1894b, 500; Lowell 1895, 17, 198; Lowell 2007b, 62. Indeed, probably the majority of the Japanese people at the time earnestly believed in supernatural beings and phenomena. (Josephson 2012, 165.)

¹⁰³⁷ Griffis 1892, 183-184.

¹⁰³⁸ Griffis 2006b, 12-13, 15.

¹⁰³⁹ Smith 1890, 355.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Smith 1890, 355-356, 368.

¹⁰⁴¹ Martin 1900, 289.

had originated in China, Hearn claimed, and from China it had travelled to Japan. There it had become “oddly blended with the worship of a Shinto deity, and again modified and expanded by the Buddhist concepts of thaumaturgy and magic”. The fox, previously a messenger for the Deity of Rice-Fields (Inari), had eventually supplanted the deity as the object of worship. Subsequently, foxes were understood to have a power over people and property. The result, Hearn maintained, was a “weird cult totally foreign to the spirit of pure Shinto”.¹⁰⁴²

According to William Griffis and Arthur Smith, superstitious practices in China and Japan were accompanied by pantheism – a belief that God was immanent in the universe, or that “God is everything and everything is God”. Animism, shamanism, fetishism, and phallicism were the “rudest forms” of pantheism, Griffis explained. In its higher forms, pantheism became “polytheism, idolatry and defective philosophy”.¹⁰⁴³ Griffis employed a medical metaphor to condemn the pantheism and polytheism prevalent in Japan, and likened pantheism to a form of malaria that, “unseen and unfelt, is ready to poison and corrupt Christianity”.¹⁰⁴⁴ Meanwhile, in Smith’s mind, there was no doubt that the Chinese “as a nation” were polytheistic and pantheistic. And among the “upper classes”, this pantheism and polytheism was matched by “what appears to be pure atheism”. His conclusion was that polytheism and atheism in China were “but opposite facets of the same die”, and were “more or less consciously held for true by multitudes of educated Chinese” with no sense of contradiction.¹⁰⁴⁵

Although the authors found traces of such superstitious practices in Confucianism, Buddhism, Shinto, and Daoism, they tended to associate them above all with the latter two. According to Percival Lowell, Shinto and Daoism were “corresponding indigenous bodies of superstition”,¹⁰⁴⁶ that is, they were the organised superstitions of Japan and China respectively. Daoism was the leading “idolatrous sect” of China, Samuel Williams explained. Relying on other foreign scholars and translations of Chinese classics and sources, he attempted to narrate the history of Daoism. Williams cited the French sinologist Antoine Bazin (1799-1863), who argued that the Chinese religions had progressed from magic to mythology, and then from mythology to philosophy. However, when Buddhism had arrived in China, the philosophers had taken up again their old ‘native’ mythology, and turned it into a religion to counter the newcomers. Hence Laozi, formerly regarded as a philosopher, had come to be seen as the founder of a religious system, Bazin claimed.¹⁰⁴⁷

According to Samuel Williams therefore, early Daoist philosophy had little to do with the Daoist religion of the 19th century. So what was this modern

¹⁰⁴² Hearn 1894a, 316, 318–319, 329–330.

¹⁰⁴³ Griffis 2006b, 17; “Pantheism, n.”, *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2014; “pantheism, n.”, *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Griffis 2006b, 17.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Smith 1890, 123, 355, 358.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Lowell 2007b, 62.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Williams 1913b, 213, 223, 267.

Daoism then? Williams answered that Daoism was a chaotic whole, made up of:

the pursuit of immortality, the conquest of the passions, a search after the philosopher's stone, the use of amulets, and the observance of fasts and sacrifices before gods, are mixed with the profound speculations of recluses upon abstruse questions of theology and philosophy.¹⁰⁴⁸

Williams noted that the Daoist organisation had an orderly hierarchy, and as the objects of Daoist worship, he listed idols, miscellaneous spirits, genii, and devils.¹⁰⁴⁹ William Martin noted that Daoism had gods for all “the leading wants and desires of mankind”, especially material interests.¹⁰⁵⁰ Both Williams and Martin noted that, regardless of their alleged atheism and scepticism, even the Confucians had a “confiding faith” in Daoist practices and beliefs. Williams claimed that, although scholarly Confucianists often laughed at Daoist “fables”, they were nevertheless “so much the prey of fears as to be often duped by them, and follow even when sure of being deceived”.¹⁰⁵¹

To gain a deeper understanding of the philosophy underlying Daoism, Samuel Williams turned to Laozi's classic, the *Daodejing* (Classic of the Way of Power, or in Williams' translation, *Canons of Reason and Virtue*). Williams referenced the discussions of *Daodejing* by the French scholar Jean-Pierre Guillaume Pauthier (1801–1873) and Samuel Johnson (1822–1882), the American Transcendentalist. Pauthier compared Laozi to Jean-Jacques Rousseau as a philosopher, while Johnson held the *Daodejing* in high esteem, describing its philosophy as lofty, vital, strong, and wonderful in spirit. Johnson went on to distinguish Laozi's thoughts from popular superstitions, and declared them to be earnest and from the heart. Williams, however, rejected both Pauthier's and Johnson's estimations. He claimed that these foreign writers had judged Chinese philosophy by their own higher standards, and as a consequence, had been unduly idealistic and generous in their judgements.¹⁰⁵²

William Martin explained that Daoist practices centred around an aspiration towards attaining mastery over matter, decay, and death. These objectives had made the sect materialistic to the point that they believed all matter possessed a soul. Martin argued that Daoists had thus concentrated on alchemy, and on procuring an elixir of life. They also consulted spirits, and resorted to magic in order to secure good luck or harm their enemies. Finally, he compared the Daoist system of belief to Spiritualism,¹⁰⁵³ which had caused quite a stir in the United States after its emergence in New York in the 1840s.¹⁰⁵⁴

¹⁰⁴⁸ Williams 1913b, 213.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Williams 1913b, 213, 215.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Martin 1881, 113.

¹⁰⁵¹ Martin 1894, 240; Williams 1913b, 215.

¹⁰⁵² Williams 1913b, 210–211.

¹⁰⁵³ Spiritualism mushroomed in the United States especially in the 1870s, which was a decade of great ferment in the American religious sphere. (Carroll 1997, 1, 3; Fox 1993, 641).

¹⁰⁵⁴ Martin 1881, 112, 120; Martin 1894, 236–237, 239. By the 1890s, there must have been more information about Daoism available, as Smith felt it unnecessary to deal with,

As to the Japanese Shinto, Lafcadio Hearn noted as late as in 1894 that it was still practically unknown in the Western world. Little had been written in English about Shinto that gave “the least idea” of what Shinto actually was, Hearn claimed. The little that *had* been written in English was by the two leading British Japanologists, Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850–1935) and Ernest Satow (1843–1929). But the Western reader, unless a specialist, was unlikely “to become familiar” with their works outside of Japan, Hearn explicated. To complicate the study of Shinto further, it had not only blended with Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism during its historical development, but also incorporated Chinese and Korean philosophy, as well as primeval polytheisms and traditions of uncertain origin.¹⁰⁵⁵ Consequently, Hearn argued that not even the best of scholars had yet agreed on the precise nature of Shinto. “To some it appears to be merely ancestor worship, to others ancestor-worship combined with nature-worship; to others, again, it seems to be no religion at all; to the missionary of the more ignorant class it is the worst form of heathenism”, Hearn enumerated. In fact, the Western scholars had distinguished at least six different forms of Shinto existing in Japan, he added.¹⁰⁵⁶

Having lived in Japan and adopted Japanese manners, Hearn claimed the “right to express his own conception of Shinto”. He regarded it as the most ancient faith of the Japanese, indigenous to the country, and characterised by the “spirit of simplicity”. Reverence for ancestors was the essence of Shinto, he believed, but it was also something much more. Shinto did not live in books, doctrines, or rites. It lived in the “national heart” of the Japanese. It was the “whole soul of a race with all its impulses and powers and intuitions”.¹⁰⁵⁷ Hearn’s description in his *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* was quite similar to Percival Lowell’s version of Shinto.¹⁰⁵⁸

Percival Lowell depicted Shinto as the oldest religious belief of the Japanese, existing long before it even had a name. In 1888, Lowell had regarded it as the common “mythological inheritance of the whole eastern seaboard of Asia”; but by 1894, he thought it was of Japanese origin, or at least thoroughly Japanese in character. It was “the faith of these people's birthright, not of their adoption. Its folklore is what they learned at the knee of the race-mother”, he wrote. In Lowell’s opinion, Shinto was a simple and beautiful compound of cosmology, nature worship, and veneration of ancestors. And it also had an esoteric side –

concluding instead that there could hardly be anything of “first rate importance” for a scholar to discover about Daoism (Smith 1890, 354).

¹⁰⁵⁵ Hearn 1894a, 209, 385–386.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Hearn 1894a, 209, 386.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Hearn 1894a, 19, 208–210; Hearn 1894b, 387, 399.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Perhaps this was more than a coincidence, for Hearn was no doubt familiar with Lowell’s *The Soul of the Far East*, and the two had also exchanged views on Japanese religions in their private correspondence. For example, Lowell wrote in a letter to Hearn that he had heard about his fascination with Buddhism, but he advised Hearn to rather keep his focus on Shinto, for “Shinto is plain but of exquisite taste”. (“Lowell to Hearn, July 7, 1893”. *Lowell: Collected Writings on Japan and Asia, including Letters to Amy Lowell and Hearn*. Vol. 1. Edited by David Strauss. Tokyo: Edition Synapse, 2006.)

the cult of god possessions.¹⁰⁵⁹ Lowell was especially captivated by the latter phenomenon,¹⁰⁶⁰ dedicating a whole book to the subject - *Occult Japan*. For Lowell, these trance-like states, where gods were invoked to take possession of the human body, were not shams; but just another proof of Japanese 'impersonality'.¹⁰⁶¹

William Griffis probably familiarised himself with Shinto to some extent when he lived in Japan, but in his accounts of it, he often cited other foreign scholars, long-time residents, and the Japanese themselves¹⁰⁶². He seemed to be undecided on the question whether Shinto was an indigenous or imported tradition, although finally in 1900, he argued that there was no evidence of Shinto being originally Japanese. Nonetheless, it was their "self-made religion" he claimed, for the characteristics of Shinto were indeed the characteristics of the Japanese - "[k]nowing Shintō, we to a large degree know the Japanese, their virtues and their failings", he added. According to Griffis, the faith had been founded on ancestor worship, and it also incorporated nature worship. He referred to Shinto being promoted as, what he understood to be, the state religion, and particularly in this connection, he quoted some rather grim Western assessments of Shinto. One such was Ernest Satow's, who saw it as a political tool: "Shintō, as expounded by Motoori, is nothing else than an engine for reducing the people to a condition of mental slavery".¹⁰⁶³

The gods of Shinto were also of interest to the three Japan experts. And if Shinto was rich in something, it was gods, Lowell remarked. There were too many gods, in his estimation, for anyone to worship them all. Hence, the Japanese were eclectic and venerated only the gods they found most suitable. He argued that the people considered themselves to be the direct descendants of their own gods, *kami*, and that this cemented the tight relation between the Japanese people and Shinto.¹⁰⁶⁴ A *kami* was something a man would become after death, Griffis wrote, but it could also be anything out of ordinary - a plant, an animal, or even a rock. The gods came in all shapes and forms, he added, "some of them being rude and ill-mannered, many of them beastly and filthy, while others are noble and benevolent". But they were certainly not morally pure, wise, or holy, of that he was sure. He deplored their obscenity, and the way they were represented as slaves to passions in the sacred text of Shinto, *Kojiki*

¹⁰⁵⁹ Lowell 1895, 13-16, 19-21, 25; Lowell 2007b, 61.

¹⁰⁶⁰ God-possession had a certain interest, and perhaps even charm, for Percival Lowell. Conceivably, this was not the least due to the fact that the subject was exotic and previously unexplored by other Western scholars (Strauss 2001, 135).

¹⁰⁶¹ Percival Lowell explained that Far-Orientals (as well as the French, and women in general) were very susceptible to the kind of autosuggestion these god-possession required, because they lacked personality (Lowell 1895, 26, 36, 99-100, 106, 118, 127, 248-250, 276, 292-293, 295-297).

¹⁰⁶² Among others, William Griffis cited Ernest Satow, Max von Brandt (1835-1920), Sir Harry S. Parkes, and the Japanese statesman Mori Arinori.

¹⁰⁶³ Griffis 2006a, 106-107; Griffis 2006b, 44-45, 48, 58; Griffis 1900, 94. Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801) was an eminent 18th century Japanese scholar of Japan's classical texts and Shinto.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Lowell 1895, 22-25, 100-101.

(Records of Ancient Matters).¹⁰⁶⁵ In contrast to Griffis, Hearn frowned upon this kind of misrepresentative criticism that Christian writers dealt out to the Shinto gods. He thought that it only showed the bigotry of the Christians.¹⁰⁶⁶

All three Japan experts noted that Shinto had halted in the middle of its development after Buddhism had been introduced to Japan in the 6th century. Buddhism had appropriated certain Shinto rites, made popular Shinto gods into the avatars of Buddha,¹⁰⁶⁷ and transformed Shinto shrines into Buddhist temples. In other words, Shinto was “absorbed in Buddhism”, as Griffis put it; or “interpenetrated and allied with Buddhism”, as Hearn preferred to say, his choice of words giving a slightly different impression of Shinto’s role and activity in the process.¹⁰⁶⁸ In any case, during the Heian (794–1185) and Kamakura (1192–1333) periods, Shinto and Buddhism more or less merged, with the result being a school of religious thought called *Ryōbu Shintō* (Dual Aspect Shinto).

The main factor that had enabled this syncretism was the flexible nature of Buddhism, William Griffis argued. The system of Buddhist philosophy was such that it could adapt to almost any kind of environment. Moreover, it had the ability to throw off seemingly contradictory elements, Griffis claimed.¹⁰⁶⁹ He understood that it had been necessary for Buddhism to adjust to the conditions prevailing in Japan, just as it had once been necessary for Christianity to adjust to pagan practices in Europe:

If, in the history of Christianity, the European missionaries found it necessary in order to make conquest of our pagan forefathers, to baptize and re-name without radically changing old notions and habits, so did it seem equally indispensable that in Japan there should be some system of reconciliation of the old and the new, some theological revolution, which should either fulfil, absorb, or destroy Shintō.¹⁰⁷⁰

It was not syncretism in itself that Griffis was disturbed about, for he doubted if any of the great religions of the world was destitute of it. He was primarily concerned about the question whether the process of reconciliation between Buddhism and Shinto had been natural and managed with honesty and pure motives. Apparently, Griffis thought this had not been so, for he described the Buddhist absorption of Shinto as “bold, crafty and unscrupulous”.¹⁰⁷¹ The unwritten implication was that this was quite unlike the Christian absorption of paganism had been in Europe.

Percival Lowell also felt that Buddhism’s absorption of Shinto had not done the latter any favours:

¹⁰⁶⁵ Griffis 2006b, 37–39.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Hearn 1894a, 101.

¹⁰⁶⁷ This localisation and incorporation of gods from one place and discourse to another happened time and again in the history of Japan. Many of the local gods that were later considered Shinto gods, had been imported from China and Korea, and were of Buddhist origin. With the coming of Buddhism to Japan, some of these gods ended up becoming once again Buddhist. (Josephson 2012, 100.)

¹⁰⁶⁸ Griffis 2006b, 48, 58; Hearn 1894a, 279; Lowell 1895, 16–17.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Griffis 2006b, 100–101, 109; Hearn 1894a, 101; Hearn 1894b, 388; Lowell 1895, 16–17.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Griffis 2006b, 100.

¹⁰⁷¹ Griffis 2006b, 100–101.

Under this generous adoption on the one hand, and relegation to an inferior place in the national pantheon on the other, very little, ostensibly, was left of Shintō,—just enough to swear by. Lost in the splendor of Buddhist show, Shintō lay obscured thus for a millenium; lingering chiefly as a twilight of popular superstition.¹⁰⁷²

But at the end of the 18th century, a new era had dawned for Shinto, Lowell explained. Japanese scholars had taken an avid interest in the study of the country's past, and underneath the *Ryōbu Shintō*, they had rediscovered the ancient Shinto faith. After the Meiji Restoration, Shinto “came back as part and parcel of the old”, Lowell recounted,¹⁰⁷³ and the whole movement culminated in the so called ‘Revival of Pure Shinto’.¹⁰⁷⁴ Lafcadio Hearn pointed out that this revival was in fact a government-led movement to restore Shinto to its earlier simplicity. The aim of the movement was to purge the ancient Japanese faith of imported influences. In William Griffis’ estimation, the idea was naïve, and a “splendid failure”. It would be virtually impossible to reinstate an ancient faith, Griffis thought. Too much time had passed, and Shinto had become too entangled with foreign notions. Lowell seemed to agree, as he emphasized that Shinto had nearly ceased to exist during the period of *Ryōbu Shintō*, and he doubted if any “pure Shintoists” had survived and kept such a faith alive. In contrast however, Hearn insisted that Shinto had never wholly yielded to Buddhism; quite the contrary, it had rather borrowed strength from the rival alien creed.¹⁰⁷⁵

In these discussions of Shinto, there seemed to be three interrelated propositions: Shinto was very old, it had a separate identity from Buddhism, and it was indigenous to Japan. Griffis, Hearn, and Lowell all agreed with the first proposition, but differed in their opinions on the second and third. It is interesting that, despite the expertise Percival Lowell and William Griffis claimed on the subject, their assertions that Shintoist notions had originated in China, or were common to all East Asia, and that Shinto was imagined anew after the period of *Ryōbu Shintō*, were largely ignored in later studies on Japanese religions. Instead, the proposition that Shinto was unique to Japan became an accepted truth in later studies, together with the propositions of Shinto's antiquity and separate identity. These propositions were also in line with the reformulations of Shinto made by 18th and 19th century Japanese scholars.

However, since the 1980s onwards, the findings of later revisionist scholars bear some affinity with Lowell and Griffis’ original opinions. Revisionist scholars have argued that many of the beliefs and practices that came to be called Shinto had been imported from China. They have also argued that dur-

¹⁰⁷² Lowell 1895, 17.

¹⁰⁷³ Lowell 1895, 17–18.

¹⁰⁷⁴ In the late 18th and early 19th century, a group of Japanese intellectuals and priests took an interest in rediscovering and reviving the mythic past and the “spirit of early Japan”. For that purpose, they studied ancient texts and local gods. These efforts came to be known as *Kokugaku* (National Study or Science). Some of the scholars were critical of the mix-up of Shinto and Buddhism and called for the purification of Japanese beliefs. Soon after the Meiji restoration, the government issued edicts to these ends: to separate the buddhas from the *kami*, and remove Buddhist symbols from Shinto. These edicts were also intended to eradicate “false” Shinto practices as much as the Buddhist ones. (Josephson 2012, 109–110, 115, 150–151, 186.)

¹⁰⁷⁵ Griffis 2006b, 49–51; Hearn 1894b, 386–388; Lowell 1895, 33.

ing most of their history, these beliefs and rituals were enmeshed with Buddhism to such extent that the people practising them hardly understood Shinto as an independent religious system. And finally, they have claimed that, in many ways, Shinto was not old, but actually a rather modern invention.¹⁰⁷⁶ All this invites speculation as to whether the conclusions of the Japan experts were influential only insofar as they were consistent with the views of contemporary Japanese scholars, and if so, this suggests that the real power to represent Japanese religions lay firmly in Japanese, not foreign, hands¹⁰⁷⁷.

The missionary authors roundly rejected superstitions regardless of whether they took the form of an organised system, such as Daoism or Shinto, or a disorganised bundle of ideas. For example, William Griffis, when describing these superstitions, did not hold anything back with dramatic descriptions of “growth as terrible as the drunkard’s phantasies”, clinging “parasitically to all religions”. For him, superstition was a “mental and spiritual disease”.¹⁰⁷⁸ William Martin too, saw them as debasing, degrading, and vulgar, while Samuel Williams argued that heathen superstitions “distorted” the mind and “depraved” the heart.¹⁰⁷⁹ Arthur Smith believed superstitions could even cost lives, when related to medicine, for instance, or when inciting a fanatical fury against a certain group of people.¹⁰⁸⁰

Arguably, the attitudes of Griffis, Martin, Smith, and Williams towards superstition in general, and superstitions of the Chinese and Japanese in particular, stemmed more from their devotional background than from any reality they encountered in China and Japan. This seems all the more probable when

¹⁰⁷⁶ Josephson 2012, 13, 98, 156. Jason Ānanda Josephson has skillfully summarized the conclusions of the Shinto scholars with a revisionist bent, and this summary is worth quoting in whole: “in the Kamakura period, an idea of ‘the unity of three teachings’ was imported into Japan. While in China this stood for Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, the lack of an independent Daoist institution meant that built into the logic of the three teachings was room for a third possibility, a space that quickly became identified with Shinto. Yet the nature of Shinto was far from clear. Before the fifteenth century the components that would make up modern Shinto—the name ‘Shinto,’ shrine rituals, gods, the textual canon, and the imperial cult—were largely disaggregated and embedded in different discourses. It was only in the nineteenth century that the relationships between these components was stabilized and cordoned off from Buddhism.” (Josephson 2012, 98).

¹⁰⁷⁷ For example, the Japanese attended the World’s Parliament of Religions of 1893, which was held in Chicago in association with the Columbian Exposition, and represented their own religions. The Exposition had been intended to mark the world’s progress in the 19th century, or more accurately, the progress of Western and American civilization. Similarly, the Parliament of Religions claimed to be an event uniting all religions against irreligiousness, yet it was more of a gathering for Christians. The meeting implicitly celebrated the material and spiritual power of the West. Nevertheless, the Japanese Buddhists spoke persuasively on behalf of their religion, raised American awareness of it, and even incited enthusiasm, which resulted in the establishment of Zen Buddhism in the US. Chinese representatives also attended the meeting. The secretary of the Chinese legation in Washington made a speech extolling Confucianism, and criticising the Daoist, Christian, and Buddhist religions. He proposed that religions in general were superstitious, and had only caused misfortune and miseries in China. (McRae 1991, 9–10, 13–14, 27–29.)

¹⁰⁷⁸ Griffis 2006b, 7–8.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Martin 1881, 101, 107–108, 123; Williams 1913b, 239.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Smith 1894, 164; Smith 1899, 273; Smith 1901a, 97, 197.

their estimations and attitudes are compared to those of Hearn and Lowell, who did not have a missionary agenda. Hearn, who eventually came to profess Buddhism, and Lowell, who kept publicly silent about his religious convictions, presented far more tolerant views of Japanese superstitions.

Percival Lowell argued that some of the old Japanese superstitions had turned into habits, and that in the process they had lost their original superstitious content. Nevertheless, he granted that “devils” still constituted a “far too respected a portion of the community in peasant parts of Japan”. As mentioned before, Lowell was particularly interested in certain aspects of Shinto, which he called “popular superstition”. The nature of his fascination was largely scholarly, but Lowell evidently found many of the features very interesting that the missionary writers had found disturbing, such as the seeming irreligiousness of Shinto. To Lowell, Shinto seemed simple and attractive, with “easy-going” gods, and a faith which had an “every-day family character”, since everyone was “a descendant of the gods, and therefore intrinsically no less holy than his neighbor”. Also, he found nothing reprehensible in the Shinto pilgrimages,¹⁰⁸¹ even though they were “probably the most unreligious in the world”, as they were more like picnics than events of pious worship.¹⁰⁸²

Lafcadio Hearn believed that only a few of the Japanese superstitions were sinister, and that in fact most of them were charming and kind. A large number of them he compared “for beauty of fancy even to those Greek myths in which our noblest poets of to-day still find inspiration”. These “lighter and kindlier superstitions of the people” added “to the charm of Japanese life”, and all this could be understood only by one who had lived a long time in Japan and was “impartial”, he felt.¹⁰⁸³ His implication was that negative assessments of Japanese superstitions resulted from lack of knowledge and empathy, together with prejudice caused by Christianity or a Western mind-set. Hearn did not regard superstitions as necessarily harmful or bad, and as for Shinto, he declared himself a “pagan still”, loving the simple old Shinto gods¹⁰⁸⁴. Hearn especially applauded the cheerful religious attitudes of the Japanese and the “joyousness of popular faith”, for blessed were they who did not “too much fear the gods which they have made”.¹⁰⁸⁵

¹⁰⁸¹ In contrast, Arthur Smith’s description of the irreligiousness of Daoist pilgrimages took on a rather contemptuous tone. He characterized these pilgrimages as mere “routine acts of devotion to whatever god or goddess”, accompanied by feasting, theatricals, and gambling. (Smith 1899, 143–144.)

¹⁰⁸² Lowell 1895, 26, 36, 99, 198; Lowell 2007a, 82. Daoism did not receive the same appreciation from Percival Lowell as Shinto, although he saw the two as being corresponding systems in the sense that both were superstitions. “Taouism, the third great religion of China, resembles Shintoism to this extent, that it is a body of superstition, and not a form of philosophy. It undertakes to provide nostrums for spiritual ills, but is dumb as to the constitution of the soul for which it professes to prescribe. Its pills are to be swallowed unquestioningly by the patient, and are warranted to cure; and owing to the two great human frailties, fear and credulity, its practice is very large”. (Lowell 2007b, 62.)

¹⁰⁸³ Hearn 1894a, viii–ix.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Hearn 1894a, 103.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Hearn 1894a, 35.

We have noted that this was a period of fervent classification efforts and overall scientification of a variety of subjects. In the midst the Europeans and Americans attempted to formulate the notions and concepts revolving around religion, including the concept of superstition. Meanwhile, for those Chinese and Japanese, who believed in foxes, monsters, and demons, the realm of supernatural was not a superstition, it was a reality. The supernatural realm became superstition only after the Europeans and Americans had categorised it as so, and imposed their definitions on the Chinese and Japanese. In Japan, the government thus took up the task of identifying and rooting out superstitions. Nevertheless, the supernatural continued to be very real for a number of Japanese people in spite of official intervention.¹⁰⁸⁶

Observers such as Samuel Williams and William Griffis held to the dictionary definition of superstition as a “false religion” and “paganism”.¹⁰⁸⁷ Accordingly, they repeatedly called the Chinese and Japanese “pagans”.¹⁰⁸⁸ Paganism was seen as the opposite of “true religion”, or Christianity.¹⁰⁸⁹ Clearly, Williams and Griffis made no secret of using the Christian framework as the starting point in their classificatory scheme. In fact, the whole scientific study of religion,¹⁰⁹⁰ as developed by the German scholar Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900), rested on assumptions deriving from Christian beliefs and theology, as did the concept of religion.

Jason Ananda Josephson has explained that, in the present day, the notion of religion has been largely stripped of its underlying Christian premises. Religions in plural are no longer generally considered as merely different manifestations of one and the same Christian revelation. Today the origins of the concept as a Christian Euro-American construct, with its intrinsic asymmetries of power, have often been largely forgotten. Instead, religion is used to denote to a universal aspect of humanity, to ideas regarding the sacred, present in all human cultures.¹⁰⁹¹ But in the 19th century writings of Samuel Williams and William Griffis, the concept was quite explicitly modelled on Christianity.

The understanding of Christianity as the epitome of religion had certain consequences. First of all, if superstition and paganism were the opposites of Christianity, and if Christianity was the prototype of all religion, then anything labelled as superstition and paganism could not actually be counted as religion. Josephson has argued that the European and American travellers and explorers took this absence of ‘religion’ among peoples as a sign of lesser humanity, and some of them also used it as a pretext to calls for colonisation.¹⁰⁹² But in spite of the perceived lack of religion in the Far East, neither China nor Japan were

¹⁰⁸⁶ Josephson 2012, 11, 21, 165.

¹⁰⁸⁷ “Superstition, n.”, *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828; “superstition, n.”, *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2012.

¹⁰⁸⁸ See e.g. Griffis 1903, 403, 437, 477, 567, 570; Griffis 2006b, 7; Williams 1913a, 382; Williams 1913b, 192, 359, 695.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Williams 1913b, 267.

¹⁰⁹⁰ The Science of religion, as termed by Max Müller, or the Science of comparative religion, as termed by William Griffis.

¹⁰⁹¹ Josephson 2012, 2–5, 9, 11; Lorenz 2008, 52.

¹⁰⁹² Josephson 2012, 4, 12, 65–66.

straightforwardly colonised, and nor did any of our authors call for colonisation on this pretext. As a matter of fact, there was no consensus among the experts on whether the Chinese and Japanese faiths were religions despite of their superstitious character, or not-religions because of their superstitious character.

According to Max Müller in 1870, there existed an “aristocracy of real book-religions”. These included the Hebrew, Christian and Muslim traditions, and the religions of the Brahmans, Buddha, Zarathustra, Confucius, and Laozi. And by virtue of being book-based, they qualified as worthy of study in his book *The Science of Religion* (1882).¹⁰⁹³ Interestingly, Shinto did not figure in Müller’s work. Nevertheless, William Griffis incorporated Shinto, alongside with Confucianism and Buddhism, into his study of comparative religion, *The Religions of Japan*. Griffis also mentioned in passing that he regarded religion as an acknowledgement of the existence of a power greater than man, and the acts that surrounded this. Meanwhile, William Martin set forth two “fundamental requisites” for a religion: a “belief in God; i.e., in some effective method of divine government” and a “belief in the immortality of the soul; i.e., in a future state of being whose condition is determined by our conduct in the present life”.¹⁰⁹⁴ All these definitions and discussions granted that China and Japan did in fact have religions. By William Martin’s own definition, both of the cardinal requisites for a religion could be found “accepted everywhere in China”.¹⁰⁹⁵

And yet, using Christianity as the point of departure, it was difficult, if not impossible, for the authors to fit the overlapping nature of China and Japan’s three teachings into the Euro-American framework for religion. First a shadow of doubt was cast over the religious nature of Confucianism. Percival Lowell remarked that Confucianism was “the great moral law” of the Chinese, Koreans, and, to a certain extent, the Japanese. He explained that it was never intended to be a religion, only a philosophy, and hence it should not be taken for a religion.¹⁰⁹⁶ Along the same lines, Samuel Williams remarked that it was as appropriate to call Confucianism a religion as it was to call the teachings of Socrates the faith of the Greeks.¹⁰⁹⁷ William Martin too agreed that Confucius had aimed to propagate a philosophy, not a religion, adding that Confucius had “ignored, if he did not deny, those cardinal doctrines of all religion, the immortality of the soul, and the personal existence of God”.¹⁰⁹⁸ Then again, in the same discussion Martin described Confucianism as “the leading religion of the Empire”, citing “the powers of nature, ancestors, and heroes” as its objects of worship.¹⁰⁹⁹ This was because, for Martin, the form of Confucianism that prevailed in 19th century China was in fact a religion, not a philosophy as it was originally.

¹⁰⁹³ Girardot 2002, 236–237.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Martin 1894, 285–286.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Martin 1894, 286.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Lowell 2007b, 62.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Williams 1913b, 199.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Martin 1881, 107–108.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Martin 1881, 108.

Similarly, Shinto seemed to be “no religion at all”¹¹⁰⁰ on closer inspection. Percival Lowell explained that:

The word ‘Shinto’ means literally ‘way of the gods’ and the letter of its name is a true exponent of the spirit of the belief. For its scriptures are rather an itinerary of the gods’ lives than a guide to that road by which man himself may attain to immortality.¹¹⁰¹

William Griffis noted that Shinto “could hardly be called a religion”, for it lacked sacred writings and priesthood. But he thought that the introduction of Buddhism to Japan had “quickened it, by the force of opposition, into something approaching a religious system”. However, soon after Shinto had turned into something more similar to a religion, it got inextricably caught up with Buddhism, and thus was no longer a religion in its own right.¹¹⁰² Even after Shinto was once more separated from Buddhism, Griffis was still of the opinion that it was “in no proper sense of the term a religion”, and added that it was “difficult to see how it could ever have been denominated a religion”. Instead, Griffis described Shinto in its “higher forms” as “a cultured and intellectual atheism”, and in its “lower forms” as “blind obedience to governmental and priestly dictates”.¹¹⁰³

It seems William Griffis was quite aware that his perspective in discussing Japanese belief systems was from the Euro-American understanding of religion. By Western standards, Shinto was not a religion. But as a matter of fact, Shinto was not a religion by Japanese standards either. The whole concept of religion, or anything even approximately corresponding to the English term, did not exist in Japan before the Europeans and Americans landed the country. The concept was imported and imposed on Japan. The term was used in diplomatic circles and legal documents,¹¹⁰⁴ and particularly so in the unequal treaties. This, in turn, necessitated that the Japanese had to translate and invent their own equivalent for the term, and negotiate its meanings. This process was complicated. In the 1870s, after some decades of deliberation, the Japanese intellectuals settled for the term *shūkyō* (teachings of a sect, or the principles of the teachings) as their translation of the English for ‘religion’.¹¹⁰⁵ At the same time, these intellectuals tried to apply the new term to their own circumstances, and make sense of the Japanese religious situation. In doing so, many of them accepted the suggestion that Christianity was the religion par excellence, and concluded that in

¹¹⁰⁰ Hearn 1894a, 209.

¹¹⁰¹ Lowell 2007b, 61. In essence, Lowell was making the same claim as Jason Ānanda Josephson over a hundred years later: originally Shinto was not a religion, it was “a description of the conduct of gods”, which only later had incorporated some rituals for deities and erected places for worship (Josephson 2012, 99).

¹¹⁰² Griffis 1892, 57; Griffis 2006a, 183.

¹¹⁰³ Griffis 2006a, 184. To confirm his position, Griffis quoted Max von Brandt, who had come to the conclusion that “[l]ittle was known of Shintō that might give it the character of a religion as understood by Western nations” (Griffis 2006a, 106–107).

¹¹⁰⁴ Religion featured in the “unequal treaties” in the clauses that called for “religious freedom”. For the Europeans and Americans, this primarily meant freedom for Christian missionary activities. (Josephson 2012, 4.)

¹¹⁰⁵ Josephson 2012, 1, 3, 7–8, 78, 89.

comparison to Christianity, many Japanese belief systems did not qualify for the category of religion.¹¹⁰⁶ This Japanese translation of the concept was then imported by the Chinese, as *zongjiao* (teachings of ancestors, or doctrinal lineages).¹¹⁰⁷

5.2 The dynamics of religion

The Chinese and Japanese belief systems caused confusion by not neatly conforming to the Euro-American category of religion. One way to explain this was to resort to the idea that religions evolved. "Religion is one, though religions are many", stated William Griffis. He continued by quoting his Morse lectureship predecessor, the Scottish theologian, Andrew Martin Fairbairn (1838–1912): "[b]etween fetichism and Christian faith there is a great distance, but a great affinity—the recognition of a supra-sensible life".¹¹⁰⁸ Griffis' citation could be interpreted to mean that all cultures were reaching out to one and same God—hence the correspondence between fetichism and Christianity, and the religious nature of them both. But the means of reaching out to God of the fetichists and Christians varied, and this distanced the two forms of religion. The statement could also be understood as confirming the idea of religious evolution. Just as the process of Civilization was one, though civilizations of different stages were many, the development of religion was one, though religions of different stages were many. Fetichism and Christianity were part of the same development, but at opposite ends of it.

The idea of various religions being merely different manifestations of God's revelation,¹¹⁰⁹ and the idea of religion evolving did not necessarily have to contradict or preclude each other, for religions could be seen as progressing towards an ever clearer and purer understanding of God's revelation. On the other hand, not all of our six experts were inclined to see the evolution of religion as God's work. The authors seemed to share a conviction that religion evolved, or religious thinking progressed. But the unanimity ended as soon as the writers entered into the particulars of this progress, partly because their no-

¹¹⁰⁶ For example, Fukuzawa Yukichi argued that there were no *shūkyō*, or religions, in Japan. Confucianism was an obsolete form of philosophy, and Buddhism and Shinto fell short of being full-blown religions. Also, the contemporary Japanese historian Kume Kunitake (1839–1931) thought that if Christianity was a religion, then the Japanese traditions obviously did not fit the same category. However, Kume granted that Buddhism did come quite close to meeting the two requirements for a religion. It was a system of ethics, and involved the worship of god. There were no doubt other Japanese voices that did not share this opinion, but the official line of the Meiji policymakers came to be that Shinto, in particular, was not a religion. From the 1870s onwards, Shinto was divided into secular and sect forms by legal edicts. The former was disassociated from the category of religion, and associated with traditional national rituals instead. (Josephson 2012, 93–94 159, 201–204.)

¹¹⁰⁷ Chow 2013, 7; Josephson 2012, 7.

¹¹⁰⁸ Griffis 2006b, preface, 6–7.

¹¹⁰⁹ Josephson 2012, 10–11.

tions were informed by different theories on the subject, partly because of personal convictions, and partly because of the temporal gap of over two decades separating some of the publications.

Authoritative 19th century thinkers explored the question of religion, and developed schemes which presented religious evolution as a counterpart to cultural or sociological evolution. Herbert Spencer discussed the origins and roots of religions in his *Principles of Sociology* (1874–1875), and E. B. Tylor dealt with the same theme in his study *Primitive Culture* in 1871. Tylor coined the concepts “animism” and “survivals”. Animism, he argued, was the primary form of religion, and survivals were the “processes, customs, opinions, and so forth, which have been carried on by force of habit into a new state of society different from that in which they had their original home [...]”. Thus, survivals were the remaining “proofs and examples of an older condition of culture out of which a newer has been evolved”.¹¹¹⁰

Survivals of primitive habits in the modern world could therefore perhaps reveal what the culture had been at the dawn of humankind, E. B. Tylor believed. Moreover, Tylor came up with the popular theory of religious development, which ran from primitive animism to begin with, through fetishism and polytheism, to ‘civilized’ monotheism. However, Tylor’s thesis that animism was the original religious form was soon challenged by the Scottish Orientalist, William Robertson Smith (1846–1894), in his influential treatise *The Religion of the Semites* (1889). W. R. Smith proposed that totemism, rather than animism, was the root of religion. Later on, the British anthropologist, J. B. Frazer, envisaged a yet another alternative course for evolution. In his well-known treatise *The Golden Bough* (1890), Frazer suggested that people had progressed from the “age of magic”, to the “age of religion”, and finally to the “age of science”.¹¹¹¹

Samuel Williams did not comment on the theories of Spencer or Tylor, and J. B. Frazer and W. R. Smith wrote their works after Williams’ death. Also Arthur Smith, though acquainted with Spencer, largely refrained from making comments on religious evolution from that perspective. Most of the debate, then, was delivered by the steadfast Spencerians Lafcadio Hearn and Percival Lowell; by William Griffis, who had adopted some features and vocabulary from Tylor’s theory; and by William Martin, who largely went against these tenets.¹¹¹²

William Griffis seemed to think that religion progressed from lower to higher forms. He suggested that when people tenaciously clung on to a lower

¹¹¹⁰ Tylor 1903, 16.

¹¹¹¹ Chidester 2005, 78–80; Girardot 2002, 244–246; Hamilton 2001, 27–29; James 1954, 93, 95; Lorenz 2008, 56; Molendijk 2004, 322–323, 326. The evolution of religion was also recognised outside the circles of social philosophy, sociology, and anthropology. For example, Max Müller, though somewhat ambivalent towards Tylorian notions, was careful to emphasise that he accepted the idea of religious evolution. (Girardot 2002, 245–246.)

¹¹¹² As noted before, Herbert Spencer’s theories figured prominently in Hearn and Lowell’s writings. Smith also mentioned Spencer in his texts, but not in the context of social/religious evolution. Griffis, on the other hand, utilised Tylorian notions of survivals and animism. (Griffis 2006b, 12; Rosenstone 1988, 173; Smith 1901a, 45; Strauss 2001, 121.)

form of faith after a higher form had stepped into the arena, the lower form then became a superstition for those who had adopted the higher.¹¹¹³ Griffis presented phallicism as one example of the process, stating that it had once been “a part of our own ancestors’ faith, and until very recently was the perfectly natural and innocent creed of many millions of Japanese [...]”.¹¹¹⁴ But the “change of view and centre of thought compelled by another religion”, that is, Christianity, had turned the phallic symbols and emblems into degenerate symbols of “sensualism or immorality”.¹¹¹⁵ Griffis and Lafcadio Hearn claimed to have witnessed such ‘superstitious’ continuations of lower forms of faith, such as ancestor worship in China, and Shinto in Japan. Hearn went on to note that, from a Tylorian perspective, these forms were survivals of a primitive stage in religious thought that would be worthy of the attention of a Western “anthropologist and the evolutionist”.¹¹¹⁶

Meanwhile, Percival Lowell argued that the fear of natural phenomena and fear of one’s father were the first stages in the development of religious thought, whereas Lafcadio Hearn was of the Spencerian opinion that devotion to the dead was the most ancient of all forms of worship – “the root of all religions”.¹¹¹⁷ According to William Griffis, both of these were forms of superstition, but he granted that superstitions had a certain rationale, and there was even a need for them. For the primitive or ignorant mind they were the only available means for explaining natural phenomena, and for coping with fears.¹¹¹⁸ Also Hearn considered those Japanese superstitions that survived to be “fragments of the unwritten literature of its hopes, its fears, its experience with right and wrong,—its primitive efforts to find solutions for the riddle of the Unseen”.¹¹¹⁹ Superstitions were therefore the way that primitive peoples were able to make sense of the inexplicable, awe-inspiring elements in their world.

But if it was assumed, as in the theories of Spencer or W. R. Smith, that the evolutionary stages of religion and society had any correlation,¹¹²⁰ then what were the implications of the fact that primitive superstitions were alive and well in Chinese and Japanese societies? Did a primitive religious notion necessarily imply a primitive society, or a savage or barbarous stage of Civilization? Griffis certainly seemed to think so. He explained that superstitions persisted in Japan,

¹¹¹³ Griffis 2006b, preface, 6–7.

¹¹¹⁴ William Griffis also remarked that these “phallic shrines and emblems” had been “abolished by the government in 1872 (Griffis 2006b, 15).

¹¹¹⁵ Griffis 2006b, 26.

¹¹¹⁶ Griffis 2006b, 12; Hearn 1894a, 208; Hearn 1894b, 399, 511.

¹¹¹⁷ Hearn 1894b, 392, 394–395; Lowell 1895, 20. Herbert Spencer’s contention was that primitive peoples were destitute of religious ideas and sentiments. When religious feelings began, they started with “ghost-propitiation” and ancestor worship. This, he believed, was proved by the fact that “races remote in time, space, and culture”, shared a supernatural fascination with the dead. The worship of ghosts, or ancestors, was then connected with fetishism, as well as animal and nature worship, Spencer thought. Finally, this polytheism could develop into monotheism. (Spencer 1897, 4, 7, 12, 14–15, 19, 21, 75, 77, 164.)

¹¹¹⁸ Griffis 1903, 477–478.

¹¹¹⁹ Hearn 1894a, viii.

¹¹²⁰ Hamilton 2001, 25; James 1954, 95.

because such notions were hard to eradicate once they had been conceived. It took centuries of higher culture to extinguish them, Griffis claimed – much longer than the brief period of Japanese contact with the West so far.¹¹²¹ William Griffis admitted that some superstitions seemed quite harmless, but an innocuous superstition was a superstition nonetheless, and as such, it was an obstacle to “spiritual progress” and Civilization, as he saw it.¹¹²² By spiritual progress, Griffis appeared to mean the religious evolution towards Christianity, and by Civilization, he denoted to all of its aspects: moral, mental, and material. Superstition had “darkened” the Japanese intellect and retarded “the march of mind”, he felt, and thus superstitions had blocked “the path of civilization.”¹¹²³ If Japan wished to reach the same level of progress as the West, superstitions would have to be uprooted once and for all.

Similarly, Arthur Smith regarded particular Chinese superstitions as inimical to China’s progress. He believed it would be impossible for China to take a single step forward, or adjust itself to the demands of the modern age, as long as the nation was treading under the “leaden conservatism” of ancestor worship.¹¹²⁴ Conservatism and superstition versus progressivism and Protestant Christianity – these were diametrically opposed pairs in both Griffis and Smith’s narratives. Smith declared that Christianity was “an integral part of modern civilization, from which it can no more be dissociated than the rays of light and of heat can be untwisted from the sunbeam”.¹¹²⁵

Modernity, science, and rationality were the watchwords of the day for liberal Protestants¹¹²⁶ and Spencerian Progressivists alike. And arguably, superstition flew in the face of all these three 19th century articles of faith. Unsurprisingly therefore, the majority of the six experts’ opinions were negative, or at least reticent, regarding the supernatural, spiritualism, and demons¹¹²⁷. Super-

¹¹²¹ Griffis 2006b, 7, 11.

¹¹²² Griffis 2006b, 8, 11–12. Eventually, the Meiji government accepted the proposition that Japanese demonic practices and beliefs were obstacles to civilization, like Westerners such as Griffis had suggested. From top-down, the government started to legally restructure the Japanese belief system, and purge it from practices that they considered as superstitious, backward, and harmful. Mainly such customs and rituals that could incite frenzy, uprisings, or disorderly and inappropriate behaviour were targeted, as well as popular movements that might become alternate centres of political power. The process was not easy and simple, and the reforms did not go unchallenged by the people. For example, fox-summoning was banned in 1873, but only three years later the Japanese newspapers noted a widespread epidemic of fox-possession instances. Legal edicts could not abolish people’s beliefs overnight. (Josephson 2012, 165–166, 172–174, 183–185.)

¹¹²³ Griffis 1903, 478.

¹¹²⁴ Smith 1890, 212.

¹¹²⁵ Smith 1901b, 737. In this way, Smith emphasised that Chinese superstitious practices did not concern merely Christian missions but had a significant bearing on the mission to civilize as well. Because superstition was irrevocably linked to conservatism, Martin, who advocated incorporating a purified form of ancestor worship into Chinese Christianity, had to convince his readers that ancestor worship was compatible with both Christianity and progress. He had to imply that Chinese conservatism was a result of other factors than ancestor worship (Martin 1881, 268).

¹¹²⁶ Wood 2005, 37.

¹¹²⁷ To be sure, there were also cases where the anti-supernatural attitude of a 19th century American was actually reversed by living in East Asia (See e.g. Wood 2005, 36).

stition was traditionally a cultural counter-concept attributed to all phenomena which did not fit the observer's definition of rationality.¹¹²⁸ And consequently, E. B. Tylor, for example, remarked that reasonable explanation was the "deadliest enemy" of superstition.¹¹²⁹ Similarly, contemporary English dictionaries and encyclopaedias connected superstition with irrationality, absurd beliefs, and practices that were not founded on judgment or knowledge. Superstition was the fear and awe of things unknown, things mysterious, or things imaginary; and it was the belief in supernatural forces, causes, and influences. Finally, superstition could be either philosophical or religious.¹¹³⁰

Thus, when the six experts attributed superstitions of the religious variety to nearly all Chinese and Japanese beliefs and practices, they effectively expunged them of rationality. William Martin, for example, objected to the Daoist inability to fight the superstitions prevailing in China. He declared that the Daoists, who called themselves "rationalists", were anything but.¹¹³¹ On a similar note, Samuel Williams denounced the teachings of the Daoists as being "despise of common sense and unproductive of good to their fellow-men".¹¹³² Arthur Smith, meanwhile, went a step further, and saw the whole system of Chinese *sanjiao* as based on irrationality. Smith held fast to the principle that religions could not be mutually compatible and inclusive, and consequently he believed that the seeming 'unity' of *sanjiao* dissolved on closer inspection. The three creeds were necessarily distinct and antagonistic, and consequently the whole scheme rested on an untenable basis, he claimed. To the Chinese the creeds appeared as one, only because they knew nothing of logical contradictions, Smith concluded. He thought the Chinese were patently unaware that they were committing a "logical suicide" by reconciling elements that were utterly irreconcilable.¹¹³³

Meanwhile, Percival Lowell assessed the philosophical side of Shinto, and concluded that it was weak. But that was to be expected, he explained, for the Japanese were artists, not scientists. This claim of Japan as an artistically tuned nation, in contrast with scientifically minded Western nations, became one of Lowell's main arguments in *The Soul of the Far East*. Lowell implied that scientific, or logical, thinking was not Shinto's strongest point. He particularly re-

¹¹²⁸ See João Feres Jr.'s list of cultural asymmetric opposites: Feres Jr. 2003, 15.

¹¹²⁹ Tylor 1903, 17.

¹¹³⁰ *Encyclopaedia Americana* 1840, 63; "superstition, n.", *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828; "superstition, n.", *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2012.

¹¹³¹ Martin 1881, 98, 109.

¹¹³² Williams 1913b, 213–214.

¹¹³³ Smith 1890, 360–361. Also William Martin attributed the integration of sects to inconsistencies in Chinese religious thought. The precept of Confucius had been to keep the gods at a distance; therefore the only consistent option for his disciples would have been atheism. And yet, Martin reminded, Confucianism was the mainspring for the deification of ancestors and national heroes. Daoism fared no better in Martin's opinion, because it filled the world with divine tutelary spirits, even though a Daoist was not supposed to believe in the distinction of spirit and matter. Martin did not spare Buddhism either, for it too was guilty of creating a host of gods, in spite of its purely atheist Indian origins. Thus, for both Arthur Smith and William Martin, the amalgam of *sanjiao* was a proof that the Chinese lacked logic and analytic skills. (Martin 1881, 114, 118–119; Martin 1894, 285.)

ferred to the Shintoist notion of gods living in heaven just like men on earth, which seemed to prove the Japanese inability to think in abstract terms.¹¹³⁴ Lowell, like Herbert Spencer, considered the ability for rational and abstract thinking as a step in the psychological development of mankind. Then, he added to this notion the idea of development of religious thought.

"Shintō is the Japanese conception of the cosmos. It is a combination of the worship of nature and of their own ancestors", Lowell explained. In his opinion, animism and ancestor worship were notions of children¹¹³⁵ and savages. He continued that as children and savages matured however, they tended to differentiate the fear of one's father and of natural phenomena, and as their powers of conception grew more abstract, such primitive religious ideas faded altogether. "The higher minds alone can rest content with abstract imaginings; the lower must have concrete realities on which to pin their faith", Lowell claimed. Most peoples had "grown out of conceit with their own conceptions" in spiritual matters, he continued, and they had relinquished the "foolish fondness for the sacred superstitions of their great-grandfathers". He reminded his readers that man would not be "the progressive animal he is if he long remained in love with his own productions". The suggestive thing here, Lowell pointed out, was that Shinto still thrived, and the Shintoists cheerfully blended nature worship with ancestor worship. This could not be a sign of anything else but a "a lack of psychic development."¹¹³⁶

Because Lowell insisted that Shinto was so essentially Japanese,¹¹³⁷ he could generalize his observations about Shintoists to cover all Japanese people. His suggestion was that the entire nation had stayed at a child's level of religious thought, just as they had remained at a child's level of psychological development. In his words, the "grades of elevation in individual beliefs" inevitably matched the "needs and cravings of each individual soul".¹¹³⁸

As for Lafcadio Hearn, he agreed that religions had a bearing on the development of civilizations, in the macro-level sense of the word. A nation's creed influenced its history, social institutions, and politics, and it moulded the character of the people.¹¹³⁹ But he went forcefully against the idea that the stage of religious thinking corresponded with the stage of psychological and intellec-

¹¹³⁴ Lowell 1895, 20, 22, 26–27.

¹¹³⁵ Also Samuel Williams and William Griffis resorted to the child-metaphor in their descriptions of Chinese and Japanese religious thought. For example, Williams thought that the "grotesque" Chinese religious myths illustrated "the childish imagination of their authors", and Griffis talked about the "childlike religious ideas" of the Japanese. (Griffis 2006b, 37; Williams 1913b, 140.) It is doubtful whether Griffis' and William's paternalistic tone in denoting to the Chinese and Japanese as children in religious thought equalled to participation in a colonialist discourse, or in a discourse in which the 'Other' was described as a child in order to justify subordination, and "adult" use of power over "children". (Feres Jr. 2002, 32; Feres Jr. 2006, 270.) But by cultivating attributes like childlike and primitive, Lowell, Griffis and Williams did assert that the Chinese and Japanese religions were temporally on a different plane than the more grown up Western religions.

¹¹³⁶ Lowell 1895, 20, 370–371; Lowell 2007b, 60, 66.

¹¹³⁷ Lowell 1895, 19.

¹¹³⁸ Lowell 2007b, 66.

¹¹³⁹ Hearn 1896b, 195.

tual development, or with the overall stage of Civilization for that matter. Hearn saw no problem in the coexistence of modern civilization with more primitive religious forms, or the religion of Japan's "childhood", as he put it, and so he argued against those who did.¹¹⁴⁰ First of all, Hearn reminded, ancestor worship was not just a phenomenon of East Asia. It persisted in some "highly civilized" countries of Europe too. Secondly, Hearn argued that the question of compatibility of religion with modernity could be asked of Christianity as well. Hearn undermined the suggestion of writers such as Griffis and Smith that only Christianity could accompany progress. He also tackled the presumed irrationality of Japanese religious beliefs, and the shadow it cast on their ability for logical and scientific thinking. "Critics of Japan" had failed to reconcile Japan's "scientific progress, and the success of her advanced educational system, with the continuance of her ancestor-worship", Hearn wrote. For these critics, it was inconceivable that Shinto could "coexist with the knowledge of modern science", but for Hearn it was not.¹¹⁴¹

Hearn found an analogy between the Japanese Shinto form of ancestral worship and the science of heredity. All dead people became gods, *kami*, Hearn recounted. However, the word *kami* did not signify god in a Western sense. It simply meant a being who was "above" or "superior", and who possessed supernatural powers. The living were subordinate to these *kami*, and the world of the living was directly governed by them. For the Japanese, dead ancestors were no less real or active in everyday life than the living, he wrote. Hearn then identified these ideas with the "scientific doctrine of psychological evolution".¹¹⁴² Ancestor worship was therefore not just consonant with science, but the basic tenets of the doctrine were actually confirmed by science:

Unless we deny psychological heredity, we cannot honestly deny that our impulses and feelings, and the higher capacities evolved through the feelings, have literally been shaped by the dead, and bequeathed to us by the dead [...].¹¹⁴³

In short, Hearn argued that the dead controlled the living through psychological evolution. Although this was not exactly what the Japanese believed about the dead,¹¹⁴⁴ Hearn's arguments were meant to assure his readers that ancestor worship was fit for the 19th century, and that Shinto was not an obstacle to either progress or Civilization. However, religion itself was a controversial topic at the time, and the connection between science and religion was no less so, as we will see in more detail in the next chapter.

Earlier we noted Percival Lowell's proposition that, as men progressed intellectually, they tended to outgrow their previous self-made religious notions. In essence, Lowell was arguing that religion was man-made. This idea was another source of disagreement among the experts. William Martin vehemently disputed the postulation, and contested the so-called "intellectualist" theories of

¹¹⁴⁰ Hearn 1894a, 103; Hearn 1896b, 266–267.

¹¹⁴¹ Hearn 1896b, 266–267.

¹¹⁴² Hearn 1896b, 267–271.

¹¹⁴³ Hearn 1896b, 271.

¹¹⁴⁴ Hearn 1896 271, 273–274, 300.

religion, which interpreted religion solely as a product of human reason. The foremost thinkers espousing this theory were the already mentioned Spencer, Frazer, and Tylor. Often these intellectualist theories were developed as atheist rebuttals against religions based on revelation.¹¹⁴⁵ Firstly, Martin refuted the idea that devotion to the dead was the tap-root of all religions. In fact, Martin turned the whole of religious development theory on its head, and argued that nature worship had preceded ancestor worship. He believed that man could only conceive of immortality when he had grasped a notion of lesser divinities under the hegemony of some supreme divinity.¹¹⁴⁶ In other words, in the beginning, man had a divine revelation.

The proposition that religion originated from human intellectual processes nonetheless had a semblance of truth, Martin admitted. The theory portrayed a process which began with polytheism arising out of human ignorance, and by gradual accretion of knowledge and philosophy, mankind then came to monotheism. Finally, man disposed of the notion of a Creator altogether, and the natural laws of science were left to govern people. This theory seemed ideal, but it did not accord with the facts, Martin argued. The religious development of the human mind was the exact opposite. First, there was a divine revelation, after which mankind actively tried to corrupt and obscure the original truth with his fallible logic. Martin was convinced that the history of China ultimately proved his theory correct. Monotheism was the primal form of Chinese religion, he stated. In ancient times, the Chinese had possessed divine revelation. They had venerated *Shangdi* (Martin transliterated the name as *Shangte*), who was identical with the Lord of Heaven, that is, the Christian God. Perhaps the Chinese did not recognise him as the Creator, Martin granted, but in any case they had acknowledged that there was a vague power in *Tian* (Martin's romanisation: *Tien*), or heaven, who looked after men.¹¹⁴⁷

The first corrupting step had been to replace one power with two: light and darkness, Martin claimed. Subsequently, superstition and vulgar idolatry had followed; all kinds of spirits had been introduced to share in the power of the Heavenly Father, and then polytheism became institutionalized with the rise of *sanjiao*. Martin maintained that only a pale notion of the primitive faith had remained in the form of the Temple of Heaven, where *Shangdi*, the Supreme Ruler, was presented and worshipped by the Emperor.¹¹⁴⁸ Martin's theory of original Chinese monotheism – or *Urmonotheismus* – was shared by William Griffis, who stated it in factual terms. Griffis even hinted at the possibility, but not probability, that Japanese Shinto¹¹⁴⁹ had been a rude sort of monotheism

¹¹⁴⁵ Hamilton 2001, 25; Parkin 1996, 21.

¹¹⁴⁶ Martin 1881, 259–260.

¹¹⁴⁷ Martin 1881, 98, 101, 119, 163–164.

¹¹⁴⁸ Martin 1881, 99–101, 165.

¹¹⁴⁹ Around the turn of the 19th century, some European scholars, such as the German Julius Klaproth (1783–1835) and the Dutchman Germain Meylan (1785–1831), had proposed the idea that Shinto was the original monotheism of Japan. And already in the 16th century, such Europeans as the French scholar Guillaume Postel (1510–1581), had claimed that the ancient Japanese had been in possession of the Christian revelation. (Josephson 2012, 13, 59–60, 63.)

in ancient times. Arthur Smith, however, pointed out that there was no decisive evidence either for or against the proposition that the ancient Chinese had known the true God. But “[i]f they ever did so, that knowledge has certainly been most effectually lost,” Smith concluded.¹¹⁵⁰

Set among the markedly evolutionist views of development, William Martin’s theory of religious degeneration seems anomalous. It was not that theories of degeneration as such were altogether uncommon, but in the prevailing intellectual climate they struggled to make their voices heard.¹¹⁵¹ Martin tried anyway, perhaps because his mission was also to remind the increasingly atheist American public of the divine revelation.

However, one did not need to employ the evolutionary framework in order to represent religions as having grades of development. William Martin observed a certain advancing tendency in the Chinese religious ideas. He believed that all the developments in the religions of China had been beneficial and had “served a useful purpose in the long education of the Chinese people.” One religion or idea had risen after another, thus “representing a distinct stage in the progress of religious thought.” Each one had supplied the deficiencies of the preceding one, and enlarged the peoples’ ideas and conceptions, Martin explicated.¹¹⁵² Arthur Smith and William Griffis had similar thoughts. Smith proposed that Buddhism had been introduced to China in order to “provide for those inherent wants in the nature of man, which Confucianism did little or nothing to satisfy”.¹¹⁵³ And by the same token, Griffis believed that Buddhism had supplied the Chinese with that which “simple Confucianism” could not.¹¹⁵⁴ In a sense therefore, Buddhism was presented by these experts as a third step in the religious development of China, after Daoism and Confucianism.

Martin summarised the chief tenet of Buddhist philosophy as being “all things are unreal, and human life itself a shifting phantasmagoria of empty shadows”. In his eyes, the universe was empty for the Buddhist, and this emptiness was “the highest object of contemplation” in their ascetic exercises. Life for a Buddhist was a cycle of “interminable misery”, as he saw it. The only escape from the cycle was the annihilation of one’s consciousness, or removing the soul and mind from anything that could be affected by evil or harm. By an endless repetition of prayers, the votaries of Buddhism aimed to “convert a living being into a spiritual mummy”, Martin reasoned. They aimed to enter Nirvana, “a negative state of exemption from pain”, or a state of being neither alive

¹¹⁵⁰ Griffis 2006b, 6, 41, 44, 77; Smith 1890, 213, 354–355, 357.

¹¹⁵¹ Molendijk 2004, 326–327. Another advocate of the theory of degenerated Chinese religious ideas was Joseph Edkins (1823–1905), British Protestant missionary, Sinologist, and linguist. He argued that monotheism was the root of polytheism, and ancestral worship a later introduction to the religious life of the Chinese. (Edkins, Joseph, *The Early Spread of Religious Ideas Especially in the Far East*. London: The Religious Tract Society, 1893: p. 30.)

¹¹⁵² Martin 1881, 121–122; Martin 1901a, 195.

¹¹⁵³ Smith 1890, 359.

¹¹⁵⁴ Griffis 2006b, 57.

nor dead. This state was attainable only after passing through successive stages of being.¹¹⁵⁵

However, Martin noted that in China, Buddhist ideals had adapted themselves to suit the local religious environment, or “comprehension of the masses”, as he put it. It had “personified its abstract conceptions and converted them into divinities”, thus giving the people “a more attractive object of worship” than Nirvana. Not only had it incorporated the Chinese gods and heroes into its pantheon, but it had even embraced ancestor worship.¹¹⁵⁶ Whereas in its earlier form, Buddhism advocated an escape from the transmigration of souls, in this more optimistic form, it now provided the Chinese with an assurance of future life, immortality and salvation.¹¹⁵⁷

So Martin believed that, from its origins, as an atheist philosophy of India, Buddhism had developed into a religious cult in China. This notion led him to make the same conclusion as we saw William Griffis make earlier in this chapter, that Buddhism was “plastic” and “chameleon-like” to excess. The overt flexibility of Buddhism had enabled its adherents to spread doctrines that were “contradictory and self-destructive”, at different times and places; and for Martin this had made the Chinese Buddhists a “strange paradox—religious atheists!”¹¹⁵⁸ Samuel Williams made much the same remarks as Martin on Buddhism, in both the 1848 and 1883 editions of *The Middle Kingdom*.¹¹⁵⁹ Arthur Smith, for his part, did not have much to say about Buddhism. He admitted that he preferred Buddhism over the “pure agnosticism of Confucianism”, but he did not have much sympathy for the spiritual leaders of Chinese Buddhism, describing them as greedy and ignorant.¹¹⁶⁰

Among the Japan experts, Lafcadio Hearn took a generally positive view of Buddhism – perhaps not surprisingly, considering that he subscribed to many Buddhist ideas himself. He found the inscriptions on Buddhist tombs beautiful, poetic, subtle, and comparable to *The Veil of Isis* in terms of mysticism.

¹¹⁵⁵ Martin 1881, 114–117; Martin 1894, 273.

¹¹⁵⁶ Martin 1881, 115–116, 264.

¹¹⁵⁷ Martin 1881, 124; Martin 1894, 272–273.

¹¹⁵⁸ Martin 1881, 114; Martin 1894, 284.

¹¹⁵⁹ Samuel Williams told his readers that the tenets of Buddhism required “a renunciation of the world and the observance of austerities to overcome evil passions and fit its disciples for future happiness”. Like William Martin, Williams thought that the original teachings of Buddhism had been shrouded in the later additions made to it, and in the “diversities of worship and doctrine” which baffled “all explanation”. Williams also attributed this to the flexibility of Buddhist doctrine, which had allowed it to absorb the popular local divinities of China as well as its superstitions and demonology. And Williams also believed, like Martin, that the popularity of Buddhism in China resulted from the consolation it offered by promising a life after death, and by introducing gods for the people to worship. (Williams 1848b, 250–251, 253; Williams 1913b, 220–221, 224, 226, 228, 236.)

¹¹⁶⁰ Smith 1890, 44, 110, 121–122, 214. William Martin hurled similar epithets at Buddhist monks: “[t]heoretically contemplative, pious, and virtuous, as a matter of fact most of these bonzes, or monks, are lazy, ignorant, and immoral”. Samuel Williams largely agreed with Martin about the ignorance of the Buddhist monks, as well as the reasons for this ignorance, yet he did point out that some of them were also “respectable, intelligent, and sober-minded persons”. (Martin 1900, 227–228; Williams 1913b, 222, 224–225, 229.)

He was fascinated by Buddhist notions, such as the unity of mind and matter, and the impermanence and unreality of everything but the “Absolute, the Supreme Buddha”.¹¹⁶¹ Hearn anticipated that an ignorant public would accuse him of making Buddhism and its texts “more beautiful than they are”. Apparently, he had heard such accusations plenty of times before due to his stylistic choices in writing. But he assured that he was only portraying Buddhism as it deserved to be portrayed, or how anyone who acknowledged the proposition that, in “any great religion something of eternal truth must exist”, would portray it.¹¹⁶²

The most comprehensive account of Buddhism, however, was written by William Griffis. He traced the history of Buddhism in his *The Religions of Japan* (1895) all the way from its Indian origins as “the bald skepticism or benevolent agnosticism of Gautama”.¹¹⁶³ In accordance with his idea that religions were simply different manifestations of the same truth, Griffis believed that Gautama had been groping toward the “personal self-existent God”, but his honest attempts had never quite succeeded in reaching the truth. He then went on to describe Mahayana Buddhism, or “Northern Buddhism”, and its diffusion through China and Korea to Japan. Mahayana Buddhism was for those, who were dissatisfied with the “absorption into a passionless state through self-sacrifice and moral discipline”. It had “gods, idols and an apparatus of conversion utterly unknown to the primitive faith”. Thus, in East Asia, Buddhism had become a religion “with some kind of theism, – which Gautama had expressly renounced”.¹¹⁶⁴ It had absorbed the local Chinese, Korean, and Japanese superstitions, and degenerated from “lofty metaphysics and ethics” into pantheism and polytheism, Griffis concluded.¹¹⁶⁵

Buddhism had continued to change and evolve in Japan. The Japanese had invented “systems of Buddhism which neither Gautama nor his first disciples could recognize”, Griffis thought. These systems had gone well beyond the teachings of Buddha, and produced “a luxuriant growth of new and strange species of colossal weeds that overtower and seem to have choked out whatever furze of original Buddhism there was in Japan”.¹¹⁶⁶ Griffis then went on to introduce a variety of these new species, or Japanese Buddhist sects to his readers. He outlined their main tenets, their history, and compared them with each other, as well as to the Christian denominations.¹¹⁶⁷

¹¹⁶¹ Hearn 1914, 98–99, 101 112–113, 115–118, 120.

¹¹⁶² Hearn 1914, 151–152.

¹¹⁶³ Griffis 2006b, 92. At first, Griffis described Gautama as “a protestant and a reformer, not an agnostic or skeptic”. Then, a page he described Gautama’s teachings as “atheism, or rather, atheistic humanism” and “skepticism” rather than “faith”. All in all, like William Martin, William Griffis called the Buddhists “religious atheists”. (Griffis 2006b, 85–86; Martin 1881, 114.)

¹¹⁶⁴ Griffis 2006b, 83, 86–90, 92.

¹¹⁶⁵ Griffis 2006b, 93, 156.

¹¹⁶⁶ Griffis 2006b, 74, 86, 88.

¹¹⁶⁷ Griffis described the old Tendai sect, which had originated in China, as pantheistic, ascetic and contemplative, with practitioners who were philosophers and intellectuals. For Griffis, their teachings resembled the philosophies of Hegel and Spinoza, and he likened the sect to the Jesuits. Griffis then introduced the Nichiren sect (*Nichiren-*

William Griffis' opinions of the diverse Japanese Buddhist sects ranged from downright aversion to commendation, but of one thing he was certain – the introduction of Buddhism had been a blessing for the civilization of Japan. Shinto had known very little of civilization, Griffis reckoned. Before Buddhism, there had been “with barbaric simplicity, a measure of culture somewhat indeed above the level of savagery, but probably very little that could be appraised beyond that of the Iroquois Indians in the days of their Confederacy,” Griffis estimated. But the coming of irresistibly “gorgeous, dazzling and disciplined” Buddhism had changed everything. Buddhism had been “the fertile mother of civilization” in Japan, and its priests had acted as “real civilizers.” Buddhism had been “the teacher under whose instruction the Japanese nation grew up,” Griffis concluded by quoting Basil Hall Chamberlain.¹¹⁶⁸

In none of the accounts of the six experts, however, was the religious nature of Buddhism questioned in the same way the other teachings of the *sanjiao* and *sankyō* were. Buddhism was a world religion like Christianity, in fact, the two were the “most powerful religions of the world”,¹¹⁶⁹ according to Percival Lowell. Hence, Buddhism could be treated analogously to Christianity, and the Buddhist sects could be compared to Christian sects, as in William Griffis' texts. Moreover, Lowell noted that Buddhism actually resembled Christianity in many respects:

At first sight Buddhism is much more like Christianity than those of us who stay at home and speculate upon it commonly appreciate. As a system of philosophy it sounds exceedingly foreign, but it looks unexpectedly familiar as a faith. Indeed, the one religion might well pass for the counterfeit presentment of the other.¹¹⁷⁰

Griffis, too, noticed the similarity between Buddhism and Christianity, Catholic Christianity in particular, and elaborated on the notion:

shū, or “School of Nichiren”), that was founded by the “ultra-patriotic and ultra-democratic” Buddhist prophet Nichiren (1222–1282). Griffis thought that the sect “brought religion down to the lowest,” being the most idolatrous of Buddhist sects; incorporating a belief in demonical possessions; making profligate use of amulets, spells, and charms; and being little short of bigoted. Zen Buddhism (developed in China from the 5th to early 8th century), Griffis characterised as a movement in the direction of simplicity, contemplation, and introspection. Thus, he called the Zen Buddhists the “Quakers of Japanese Buddhism”. Another influential Buddhist sect, *Jōdo* (“Way to the Pure Land”), founded by the Buddhist priest Hōnen (1133–1212), Griffis held as a very influential and thoroughly Japanized form of Buddhism. In the Pure Land doctrine, the arduous path to Nirvana was substituted by faith in the all-saving power of the Buddha Amida, and a belief that all believers would be reborn in the Pure Land after death. The “pathway to Paradise” Griffis thought to be “exceedingly plain” and “extremely easy, perhaps even ridiculously so”. He also criticised the sect for their “fictitious and sensational miracle-mongering”. Lastly, Griffis introduced *Jōdo Shinshū*, (“True Pure Land sect”), founded by the disciple of Hōnen and philosopher: Shinran (1173–1263). Shinran emphasised faith as the sole saving act, which in Griffis' eyes made him the Japanese Luther. Griffis especially lauded the sect for using vernacular religious texts, and for encouraging the practitioners to enter into modern education. In all these ways, Griffis observed, this sect resembled European Protestantism. (Griffis 2006b, 126–128, 130, 134, 136–145.)

¹¹⁶⁸ Griffis 1892, 59, 70–71; Griffis 1900, 94–95; Griffis 2006b, 21, 93, 102, 151, 162.

¹¹⁶⁹ Lowell 2007b, 60.

¹¹⁷⁰ Lowell 2007b, 63.

Buddhism is, in outward form, as rich and bright, and attractive to the senses, as Roman or Greek Catholic churches. Besides images, pictures, lights, altars, rich vestments, masses, beads, wayside shrines, monasteries, monks, nuns, shorn priests, bishops, archbishops, pope or lama, saintly intercession, indulgences, miracle-working relics, exclusive burial-ground, and splendid sacred edifices for worship. Buddhism has scriptures, rules of discipline, doctrines, a calendar of saints, and nearly everything visible that is found in the Roman system.¹¹⁷¹

Samuel Williams noted that purgatory and the holding of services “in a dead language” were common features of both Catholicism and Buddhism.¹¹⁷² And William Martin added to the list of Buddhist ideas that presented “a parallel, I shall not say a travesty, of Christianity,” that the Buddhist goddess of mercy, *Avalokiteshvara*,¹¹⁷³ remarkably resembled the Virgin Mary, and that the “Western Paradise” of the Mahayana Buddhists resembled the Christian heaven.¹¹⁷⁴

Both Williams and Lowell recalled that already the early Roman Catholic missionaries in China and Japan had noticed the similarity between Buddhism and their religion.¹¹⁷⁵ These missionaries had interpreted Buddhism to be a demonic imitation of the holy Roman church.¹¹⁷⁶ Williams, Griffis, and Martin, however, thought that a more plausible explanation was that, at some point in history, there had been contacts and borrowings between Buddhists and Christians.¹¹⁷⁷

Percival Lowell and William Griffis were convinced that Buddhism and Christianity had more than superficial similarity. They thought that further scrutiny revealed the structural and theological likeness of the two religions. “In their highest thinking, the sincere Christian and Buddhist approach each other in their search after truth”, Griffis concluded.¹¹⁷⁸ Also William Martin thought that the resemblances went beyond “the external habiliment of poetical tradition, or the superficial analogies of religious orders and religious ritual”. He argued that, in their general and doctrinal developments, both religions had followed a “course exactly the reverse of that mapped out in a celebrated dictum of Auguste Comte”. Origins of Christianity and Buddhism had been “not

¹¹⁷¹ Griffis 1892, 57–58.

¹¹⁷² Williams 1913b, 231.

¹¹⁷³ In Chinese: *Guanyin*; in Japanese: *Kannon*.

¹¹⁷⁴ Martin 1894, 273–274; Martin 1901a, 187.

¹¹⁷⁵ Lowell 2007b, 63–64; Williams 1913b, 232.

¹¹⁷⁶ Lowell went on to describe the missionaries’ reactions. “The resemblance so struck the early Catholic missionaries that they felt obliged to explain the remarkable similarity between the two [by] introducing, to account for things, a *deus ex machina* in the shape of the devil. They were so pleased with this solution of the difficulty that they imparted it at once with much pride to the natives. You have indeed got, they graciously if somewhat gratuitously informed them, the outward semblance of the true faith, but you are in fact the miserable victims of an impious fraud. Satan has stolen the insignia of divinity, and is now masquerading before you as the deity; your god is really our devil” (Lowell 2007b, 63–64). Josephson has also pointed out that before the 19th century, missionaries lacked the vocabulary for talking about Buddhism, or Chinese and Japanese religions in general, and that the only vocabulary available for them was that of Christianity. Hence, they were prone to interpret and present Buddhism as a heretic and demonic imitation of Christianity (Josephson 2012, 59).

¹¹⁷⁷ Griffis 2006b, 134, 156; Martin 1894, 273–274, 283; Martin 1901a, 187; Williams 1913b, 232.

¹¹⁷⁸ Lowell 2007b, 64, 66.

far removed from positivism," Martin claimed, and only later the two had evolved "a spiritual universe."¹¹⁷⁹ Here, again, Martin tried to repudiate the popular schemes of religious evolution. This time his arguments were explicitly directed against Auguste Comte's "Law of Human Progress," or the "Law of Three States".

Comte had mapped out this law in his *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, which was later translated into English as the three volume treatise *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte* (1853). In it, Comte proposed that knowledge passed through three "different theoretical conditions: the Theological, or fictitious ; the Metaphysical, or abstract ; and the Scientific, or positive".¹¹⁸⁰ Comte suggested that humans started out with religious conceptions and ended up with science and philosophy. William Martin refuted this idea, and presented the development of Buddhism and Christianity from the positivist stage to the theological stage as his proof.

However, all six experts seemed to agree that, in the last analysis, Buddhism and Christianity were not that similar. William Griffis pointed out that in terms of dogma, "a whole world of thought separates Buddhism from every form of Christianity". The Buddhist dogma, he explained, was based on "Ingwa, which means law or fate, the chain of cause and effect in which man is found". *Ingwa* was essentially "atheistic 'evolution applied to ethics'", which controlled the whole the Buddhist universe. Because of this idea of fate, the advocates of Buddhism evaded the questions of "world's evil and possible improvement", Griffis argued. Instead of conquering the problems of the world and life, the Buddhists prayed to be delivered from existence and from the miseries of life. Moreover, Griffis added, in such a universe, there could be no love, pity, or heart. There was a Creation, but no Creator. "All is god, but God is left out of consideration," Griffis concluded.¹¹⁸¹ To him, these were the great flaws in Buddhism when compared to Christianity, which was based on love and grace, had a Creator, and taught its disciples not to flinch in front of the world's problems.¹¹⁸²

¹¹⁷⁹ Martin 1894, 283.

¹¹⁸⁰ Comte 1896, 1-2. Auguste Comte elaborated his theory in the following manner: "In the theological state, the human mind, seeking the essential nature of beings, the first and final causes (the origin and purpose) of all effects, —in short, Absolute knowledge,—supposes all phenomena to be produced by the immediate action of supernatural beings. In the metaphysical state, which is only a modification of the first, the mind supposes, instead of supernatural beings, abstract forces, veritable entities (that is, personified abstractions) inherent in all beings, and capable of producing all phenomena. What is called the explanation of phenomena is, in this stage, a mere reference of each to its proper entity. In the final, the positive state, the mind has given over the vain search after Absolute notions, the origin and destination of the universe, and the causes of phenomena, and applies itself to the study of their laws,—that is, their invariable relations of succession and resemblance. Reasoning and observation, duly combined, are the means of this knowledge. What is now understood when we speak of an explanation of facts is simply the establishment of a connection between single phenomena and some general facts, the number of which continually diminishes with the progress of science". (Comte 1896, 2.)

¹¹⁸¹ Griffis 2006b, 97-98, 155-156.

¹¹⁸² Griffis 2006b, 98, 156.

In essence, William Griffis was putting forth reasons why he thought that Christianity was a superior faith in comparison to Buddhism, and why the Chinese and Japanese should adopt it. In a sense, Percival Lowell made the same argument, but from a different point of view. Lowell believed that the two religions had trodden the same path of development, but only up to a certain point. After that, the paths had diverged and the Buddhism had become “the weird, life-counterfeiting shadow” of Christianity. The point of divergence to which Lowell was referring to, the “great gulf” dividing Buddhists from Christians, was their attitudes to individuality and personality. “In relation to one’s neighbor the two beliefs are kin, but as regards one’s self, as far apart as the West is from the East,” Lowell maintained.¹¹⁸³ Christianity was a personal religion,¹¹⁸⁴ while Buddhism was an impersonal religion. While Christianity spread the gospel of optimism, Buddhism preached pessimism. Christianity took for granted the “desirability of personal existence”, and promised “personal immortality”, while the Buddhists claimed that the sense of self was an illusion, and that one should extinguish this mirage “for evermore”.¹¹⁸⁵

Individuality and personality were “at the bottom of the most pressing questions of the day”, Percival Lowell emphasised. First of all, if the feeling of individuality was but “the transient illusion the Buddhists would have us believe”, all faiths based on individuality would vanish, Christianity included. Secondly, if mind was but a “passing shadow” of the material body, all hopes for a life after the death would be shattered. Finally, and this was the most crucial problem for Lowell, if individuality was a mere illusion, then “what motive potent enough to excite endeavor in the breast of an ordinary mortal remains?” Lowell was certain that once the stimulus of individuality was snatched away from people, all action would be instantly paralysed. He saw three ominous consequences that would come of this: thinking minds would turn to agnosticism; the community would become the basis of existence, and socialism, communism, and nihilism would follow; and progress would come to a halt.¹¹⁸⁶

Lowell was implying that, because individuality was inculcated by the Christian faith, the West was active and progressive; and because Buddhism discouraged individuality and action,¹¹⁸⁷ the East was passive and stagnating. In this way, Lowell was arguing that religion was a critical component in the process of Civilization. A religion promoting individuality, which he saw as the motor of progress, was promoting Civilization. That the Japanese had been actively striving to become more and more impersonal, and that they had adopted the Buddhist faith with its aim towards “blessed impersonal immortality” and a “long dreamless sleep”, could not bode well for the nation. They were

¹¹⁸³ Lowell 2007b, 67.

¹¹⁸⁴ Protestant denominations in the US tended to emphasise individualism quite heavily. Religious sentiments, man’s relation to God and the Bible, questions of sins and salvation – all these were considered as personal, belonging to the believer’s own private sphere of contemplation, judgment, and conscience. (Lerner 1987, 704–705.)

¹¹⁸⁵ Lowell 2007b, 67–68.

¹¹⁸⁶ Lowell 2007b, 9.

¹¹⁸⁷ Lowell 2007b, 63, 68–69.

working energetically not only towards “self-extinction,” but towards the extinction of their whole civilization, Lowell inferred. Clinging on to their impersonality, Lowell asserted, the “Far Orientals” would not be the ones to survive.¹¹⁸⁸

Considering the harsh judgments of Buddhism, and his prognosis of doom for East Asians practising that faith, it is conceivable that Percival Lowell was somewhat worried about the fact that some Westerners were flirting with Buddhism at the time. Lafcadio Hearn noted that the Buddhist philosophy had proved to be very attractive for the Westerners,¹¹⁸⁹ and William Griffis believed that Theosophy,¹¹⁹⁰ then fashionable in the West, was a “logical product of the Northern Buddhisms, and may be called one of them”. William Martin believed that Buddhism had come to rival Christianity on its home turf in the West.¹¹⁹¹ In general, the missionaries naturally found it unsettling that the faith they were trying to defeat abroad, was making inroads at home.¹¹⁹² But Lowell was not concerned about missions and conversions; he was concerned about the future of Western civilization. He was adamant that the road of Buddhism should not be the one for the Western world to follow.

Then again, Lowell seemed sure that Buddhism would not be emotionally satisfying for the majority of Westerners, because it was not in their nature to be passive. “Scientifically, pessimism is foolishness and impersonality a stage in development from which we are emerging, not one into which we shall ever relapse”, he asserted.¹¹⁹³ Lafcadio Hearn, on the other hand, disagreed. Although he expressed admiration for Lowell’s *The Soul of the Far East*, he admitted that the conclusions drawn therein were “the extreme reverse” of his own. Hearn did not think that the Japanese lacked individuality; it was just that their personality was not so easily discernible for the Western observers. Hearn also thought that the Western world had misunderstood the Buddhist doctrines. The Buddhist goal was not ‘absolute passivity’ or ‘universal immobility’, but a “condition of Absolute Self-sufficiency, the state of all-knowing, all-perceiving”. The goal was therefore not a state of total inaction; instead, it was a state of “freedom from all restraint”.¹¹⁹⁴

¹¹⁸⁸ Lowell 2007b, 69–70, 81.

¹¹⁸⁹ Some of the well-known Americans associated with Japan, such as the physician and art collector, William Sturgis Bigelow (1850–1926), and the art historian, Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908), were converts to Buddhism.

¹¹⁹⁰ The Theosophical Society was founded in New York in 1875 by, among others, Henry Steel Olcott and Helena Blavatsky.

¹¹⁹¹ Griffis 2006b, 91; Hearn 1896b, 247–248; Martin 1894, 279–280.

¹¹⁹² After the publication of best-selling book *The Light of Asia* (1879), written by the British journalist and poet Edwin Arnold (1832–1904), the American interest in Buddhism increased considerably. (Henning 2000, 75.) For example, Merwin-Marie Snell, who was an American scholar of comparative religion and a Congregationalist turned to Catholicism, watched the “encroachments of paganism in our own midst” with anxiety. He regarded Spiritualism, Theosophy, and the like, as simply demon-worship and revival of animism of the lowest savages of the world. (Snell, Merwin-Marie, “The Practical Value of the Science of Comparative Religion”. *The Biblical World*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1899: pp. 91–92).

¹¹⁹³ Lowell 1895, 269; Lowell 2007b, 81.

¹¹⁹⁴ Hearn 1894b, 682; Hearn 1895, 319.

Lafcadio Hearn's sympathy for Buddhism was a minority view, though. Measured in terms of the 'level' of Civilization, other experts deemed that Buddhism came second to Christianity. As measured to the paragon of Euro-American concept of religion - Christianity - Buddhism also came short of being a religion, as is evident from William Griffis' and William Martin's definitions of Buddhism as "religious atheism." Meanwhile, other Chinese and Japanese faiths either did not qualify as religions at all, or were seen to be simply primitive stages of religious development.¹¹⁹⁵

Moreover, Samuel Williams, William Martin, Arthur Smith, and William Griffis thought that, in general, the religious condition among the Chinese was effete, and that the Chinese religions had reached a point of decay, and degenerated into materialism and atheism. Buddhism had reached "its final stage, foreshadowing its decay from rottenness and corruption" in China, Griffis opined, and it was moribund in Japan as well, since it was entirely out of tune with the times and needs of the people.¹¹⁹⁶ Given these circumstances, and the fact that the propagation of Christianity was once again allowed in China and Japan, after being outlawed for centuries following the "Rites Controversy",¹¹⁹⁷ William Martin was positive that the time was ripe for introducing Christianity, as a "fourth stage in the progression" of religions to East Asia.¹¹⁹⁸

¹¹⁹⁵ See, e.g. Lowell 1895, 26; Martin 1894, 254, 302-303; Smith 1890, 123, 213.

¹¹⁹⁶ Griffis 1900, 113; Griffis 2006b, 112-213, 146; Martin 1881, 102; Martin 1894, 242-243; Smith 1890, 358-359, 378; Williams 1913b, 215, 266. Although Griffis was certain that Japanese forms of faith were receding and dying, he noted that Shinto was still a living force, and that Buddhism was still the religion of the masses, and had lately been galvanised into new life. Nevertheless, Griffis insisted that the two would eventually disappear. (Griffis 1900, 113; Griffis 2006b, 6, 51, 72.)

¹¹⁹⁷ In China, the controversies between the different Catholic orders, especially the so called Rites Controversy, finally led to the proscription of Christianity as a heterodox religion, persecutions of Christians, and the waning of Christian missionary activities from the late 17th century and early 18th century onwards. However, it has been estimated that the number of Chinese converts to Christianity actually grew in some parts of China at this point, and that small Christian communities survived into the 19th century when Christianity and its propagation in the interior of the country were again legalised by the Treaty of Tientsin (Tianjin) in 1858. In Japan, Christianity had been proscribed even earlier. Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616) had issued a ban on Christianity already in 1614, and after 1639 the policy of national isolation was enforced, which effectively cut the Japanese contacts with Christian missionaries. (Beckmann 1965, 62-63, 101; Tiedemann 2008, 207-208, 213.) Behind the Shogunate's policy in Japan had been fears that the missionaries would ally with the domain lords, and thus threaten the Shogunate's power. Missionary activities had also been suspected of being merely a military strategy to conquer Japan, and that hot on the heels of merchants and missionaries, European soldiers would follow. And finally, the Japanese considered Christianity as a heresy, as a deviant form of Buddhism, which could be subversive to the society and dangerous to the government. (Beckmann 1965, 101; Josephson 2012, 23, 25, 28-29, 31, 35, 41, 54-55.) Like in China, the ban on Christianity in Japan was lifted through diplomatic negotiations and decrees of the unequal treaties. The American Protestant missionaries, who had arrived in Japan as soon as the treaties had opened the country, were actively involved in this process. In the name of "freedom of religion", they attempted to exert pressure on their own government as well as to the Japanese government. The Meiji government consented on tolerating Christianity from 1873 onwards, and in 1889 it granted freedom of religion. (Henning 2000, 40, 44, 47, 61; Josephson 2012, 73, 80, 92-93; Sachs 1989, 490.)

¹¹⁹⁸ Martin 1901a, 195.

Martin believed that the three teachings of *sanjiao* had prepared the way for Christianity. Each member of the triad had “enlarged and widened the speculative thought and religious conceptions of the people”, Martin argued, but none of them as much as Buddhism. Buddhism had equipped the Chinese people with a vast religious vocabulary. It had expanded the Chinese intellectual and spiritual mind-set, and it had familiarised the people with concepts of heaven and hell, life after death, as well as sin and its righteous retribution. The popularity of Buddhism demonstrated that the Chinese were willing to adopt a religion resembling Christianity, and a religion which also had a foreign origin. Because of all this, Martin believed that China was now “ready for the higher cultivation of our Christian epoch”.¹¹⁹⁹

Christianity could quite comfortably build itself on Buddhist foundations in China, Martin thought. Sprinkling paganism with holy water, and consecrating it for a new use, had been the strategy of Christianity before, and it could be the strategy in 19th century China as well.¹²⁰⁰ His idea echoed the view we saw Griffis express earlier, that a relatively flexible attitude was perfectly acceptable for Christian missions, if it made the doctrine more palatable for the public. Often William Martin’s fellow Protestants failed to agree with him on the end justifying the means, as we saw in the ‘renewed rites controversy’ case. But Martin insisted that all possible means of conversion should be put to use, since the Chinese were ready for it. Christianity, he asserted, “has already begun to arouse their attention; and when the spirit of inquiry is once thoroughly awakened, the San Kiao, or Three Creeds, will not long sustain the ordeal”.¹²⁰¹

Martin concluded that in the West, Christianity had come “forth like the flames of Pentecost to create a new era and to supply a new source of light and power”, and now that energy and “renovating power” had arrived in the East. In due time, it would also “put new life into the dry bones of the old systems of China”.¹²⁰² Particularly in the 1870s and 1880s, similar optimism prevailed in the missionary circles of Japan as well, and the American missionaries there were confident that the whole country would soon convert to Christianity.¹²⁰³

In fact, those of our experts from missionary backgrounds saw that there was no other choice for the Chinese and Japanese than to convert to Christianity, if they wished to raise their level of Civilization. Mere material civilization was not enough. “Commerce, diplomacy, extension of political relations, and the growing contact with Occidental civilization have, all combined, proved totally inadequate to accomplish any such reformation as China needs”, Arthur Smith declared. In fact, the material fruits of this “funded civilization”, as he called it, had “more than anything else” brought about the “Convulsion in China”, by which he meant the events leading up to the Boxer uprising.¹²⁰⁴ Smith was actually attacking the long-cherished and unquestioned notion that commerce,

¹¹⁹⁹ Martin 1881, 117; Martin 1894, 275–276, 285, 292, 299–302; Martin 1901a, 195.

¹²⁰⁰ Martin 1894, 300.

¹²⁰¹ Martin 1881, 123–124.

¹²⁰² Martin 1900, 290.

¹²⁰³ Henning 2000, 47; Taylor 1979, 73.

¹²⁰⁴ Smith 1899, 5; Smith 1901b, 735.

diplomacy, and technology¹²⁰⁵ were the agents of Civilization, which could destroy despotic governments and institutions, instil new scientific and religious ideas, and change value systems. Instead, he was promoting Christianity as the one and only effective agent of Civilization.¹²⁰⁶

For the Christians among our six experts, Christianity was the root of Western civilization, of modern civilization, and of the Civilization process.¹²⁰⁷ In 1876, William Griffis wondered whether a nation could “appropriate the fruits of Christian civilization without its root?”, and his answer to the question was negative.¹²⁰⁸ Arthur Smith, too, held the same opinion. Certainly, Christianization would not instantly modernise China, because no goal could be reached “without passing through all the intermediate stages”, but it was Christianity that would guide the Chinese on the path of progress.¹²⁰⁹

Not all, but most East Asians understandably refused to see this link between Christianity¹²¹⁰ and Civilization, which Griffis and Smith thought so self-evident. In view of this perhaps, Percival Lowell remarked that the Japanese accepted the Western material civilization, but rejected Western creeds¹²¹¹. And the Chinese seemed to be no different. Arguing for the Christian roots of the process of overall Civilization, Griffis and Smith were possibly hoping to persuade those East Asians who were educated in the English language and happened to stumble upon their treatises. But clearly the two were primarily addressing American and European audiences, so why the need to ‘preach to the converted’? Firstly, they wanted to justify the need to have Christian missionaries abroad, who would lay down the groundwork for the rest of the civilizing mission. Secondly, in order to garner financial and popular support for the evangelising mission. Thirdly, and perhaps more importantly, because an increasing number of Americans had begun to express doubt about, and refute, the link between religion and Civilization. Influential philosophers at home, such as Herbert Spencer, as well as secular members of the civilizing mission in Japan, were openly challenging the inseparability of Christianity from Civilization and progress.¹²¹²

¹²⁰⁵ Neumann 1963, 24; Varg 1979, xi.

¹²⁰⁶ Smith 1901b, 737.

¹²⁰⁷ Samuel Williams, for example, claimed that nations could progress only to a certain point without the Gospel (Williams 1913a, 48). This was a common view among the 19th century English and American Protestant missionaries. They believed that the superiority of Western civilization was attributable to Christianity, and that the inferiority of other civilizations was attributable to false religions. (Bonk 1989, 239, 245, 252; Henning 2000, 3.)

¹²⁰⁸ Griffis 1903, 578.

¹²⁰⁹ Smith 1901b, 738.

¹²¹⁰ Moreover, many 19th century Americans had adopted the idea of Hegel that progress went along with particularly the Protestant form of Christianity, not Catholic (Noble 2002, 1).

¹²¹¹ Lowell 2007b, 69. However, some Japanese Meiji-era intellectuals were attracted and influenced by Christianity. Some were educated at home and abroad in Christian schools and environments, and some converted to the faith. (Irokawa 1985, 211.)

¹²¹² Bonk 1989, 246; Henning 2000, 63–64, 86–87.

But Japan modernised by plucking “only the showy leaves” and neglecting Christianity, “the root” of Civilization.¹²¹³ Lafcadio Hearn went on to call this Japanese feat of combining Eastern ethical and spiritual civilization with Western material and intellectual civilization as “national jiu-jitsu”. “Twenty-five years ago, – and even more recently”, Hearn wrote in 1895, the “foreigners might have predicted, with every appearance of reason, that Japan would adopt not only the dress, but the manners of the Occident,” and even the “metaphysics and dogmas”. Hearn noted that, at first, the Japanese intellectuals had indeed been tempted by the faith, which seemed to underlie the great material and physical power of the Western nations. If there was “some occult relation” between superior power and a higher religion, was it not the duty of every patriot to convert to that faith, and save the nation from passing under alien rule, Hearn retraced the thoughts of those intellectuals. In the end, however, the Japanese had “selected and adopted the best of everything” from Western civilization, and harmonized it all with the needs and institutions of the country. Their objective had been to strengthen the country, not to imitate, and hence they had no need to adopt Western religion.¹²¹⁴

The Japanese may have felt obliged to “master foreign science” and to “adopt much from the material civilization of her enemies; but the same necessities could not compel her to cast bodily away her ideas of right and wrong, of duty and of honor”, Hearn explained.¹²¹⁵ And so Japan had remained “just as Oriental to-day as she was a thousand years ago”, and she had yielded to the West, only insofar as to survive and challenge the Westerners in their own game. They had resorted to “jiu-jitsu,” rejected Christianity, and succeeded.¹²¹⁶

On the other hand, it could be that the Chinese and Japanese were not unwilling, but incapable of receiving Christianity, or both, as Percival Lowell suggested. He thought that precisely because Christianity was such a “personal” faith, it would make no impression on the “impersonal” East Asians. The missionaries could perhaps turn some Japanese into agnostics, but in the end, Lowell thought, they would hold on tight to Buddhism.¹²¹⁷ As for Hearn, he believed that not only were the conditions for converting the Japanese to Christianity unfavourable, but that the psychological obstacles were insurmountable. The missionaries would not succeed in substituting “Western religious emotions for Oriental”, because, and here Hearn leaned on Spencerianism, a people could only receive a form of religion that suited their developmental stage.¹²¹⁸

¹²¹³ Griffis 1903, 548.

¹²¹⁴ Hearn 1895, 189–192; Hearn 1896b, 187–189.

¹²¹⁵ Hearn 1896b, 205–206.

¹²¹⁶ Hearn 1895, 193.

¹²¹⁷ Lowell 2007b, 69

¹²¹⁸ Hearn 1896b, 191–192; Hearn 1895, 206. According to Hearn, Spencer had claimed that the missionaries, who held their “creed to be absolutely true” and the other creeds “to be absolutely false in so far as they differ”, could not appreciate that religious creeds were relative in value. They thought that their own creed was “good for all places and all times”, and could not admit that each religious system was actually “a natural part of the society in which it is found”. Because each society could only adopt a creed that matched their level of development, Spencer claimed, all attempts

Curiously, Hearn was using the same argument he had earlier rejected – that the stage of Civilization dictated the stage of religion, and vice versa.

Somewhat surprisingly, also William Griffis showed some scepticism about the chances of Christianity succeeding in China and Japan. He suspected that the Chinese “moulds of thought”¹²¹⁹ were not entirely ready to accept Christianity just yet. And he doubted whether the psychology of the Japanese was ready either:

Do they possess that quality of emotion in which a tormenting sense of sin, and a burning desire for self-surrender to holiness, are ever manifest? Frankly and modestly, we give our opinion. We think not. The average Japanese man has not come to that self-consciousness, that searching of heart, that self-seeing of sin in the light of a Holy God's countenance which the gospel compels.¹²²⁰

Nevertheless, Griffis implied that eventually the Japanese would develop, and Christianity be chosen instead of the defective Buddhism.¹²²¹ Griffis, Smith and Martin believed this was inevitable, since the forthcoming homogenisation of civilizations would necessarily bring about the homogenisation of religions. All nations would in the end profess Christianity, because it was the “tide of human development,” the last stage in the “slow but irresistible progress of a law of man's spiritual nature,” as Arthur Smith stated.¹²²² Whereas for Hearn and Lowell, Christianity was only an intermediate stage, and the last stage belonged to science.

5.3 Eastern and Western ethics

An organised system of ethics required an advanced state of society, William Martin asserted, and thus a high level of ethics would also indicate a high level of Civilization.¹²²³ The six experts noted that the Chinese and Japanese ethical systems had arisen within the frameworks of Buddhism, Shinto, and especially Confucianism. Confucianism was, in fact, a very detailed code of morals, which affected all classes of people in China, and served as the “bond of social order”,¹²²⁴ Martin explained. Whatever other beliefs Chinese people held, they were always Confucianists first and foremost, Arthur Smith believed.¹²²⁵ And

at converting a lower form of society to a higher form of creed would be futile and even disastrous. (Hearn 1895, 206–207.)

¹²¹⁹ Griffis 2006b, 63.

¹²²⁰ Griffis 2006b, 147.

¹²²¹ Daniel Metraux has suggested that Griffis' optimism about converting Japan to Christianity stemmed from his conviction that the Japanese were already a latently Christian people, and so a conversion to Christianity would surely follow sooner or later (Metraux 2002, 18).

¹²²² Griffis 1900, 30; Martin 1881, 285; Smith 1901b, 737–738. William Martin, however, believed that while Christianity would in the end prevail in China, it would never entirely supersede and eradicate Confucianism (Martin 1900, 326).

¹²²³ Martin 1881, 145.

¹²²⁴ Martin 1900, 287–288.

¹²²⁵ Smith 1890, 370.

the same went for the Japanese Samurai class, William Griffis added. One thing that all Samurai shared, was Confucianism.¹²²⁶ But was Confucianism merely a system of ethics, as many 19th century observers thought, or was it a religion?

The advice of Confucius to his disciples had been to “reverence the gods, but to keep at a distance from them”, which to many Westerners meant that the Chinese were “comparatively free from the bias of religion”.¹²²⁷ But taking that advice as a sign of agnosticism, had been a misunderstanding, William Martin believed. Confucius had been a teacher of morals above all, but his aim had not been to “destroy faith in supersensible existence”, since Confucius had himself revered “the Supreme Power of the universe”, that is, Heaven.¹²²⁸ Also William Griffis affirmed that when Confucianism had entered Japan, it had been a “full-blown system of pantheistic rationalism”. It had arrived in Japan as a morality not merely touched, but infused with emotion, he claimed.¹²²⁹ In other words, Confucianism had arrived as a religion; although as a religion which, “like a giant with a child's head,” was “exaggerated on its moral and ceremonial side as compared with its spiritual development.”¹²³⁰

The Confucian scheme of ethics, William Martin explained, revolved around the five cardinal virtues of benevolence, justice, wisdom, good faith, and politeness. Benevolence, together with the virtues related to it, was the first and foremost.¹²³¹ “The Chinese are often benevolent,” Arthur Smith contemplated, although they seldom appeared to be so, when judged by their own, or the Occidental, ethical standards. He noted that organized forms of benevolence and charitable institutions were very rare in China, and that, in practice, the Confucian benevolence in China seemed to be only “half-stuff.” Benevolence was practiced “without heart,” Smith opined. Benevolent acts were performed by following a stereotypical pattern involving “a minimum of trouble and thought on the part of the doer,” and with selfish, rather than unselfish, motives

¹²²⁶ Griffis 2006b, 72.

¹²²⁷ Smith 1890, 365, 370.

¹²²⁸ Martin 1900, 288.

¹²²⁹ “Morality touched by emotion” was a well-known definition of religion, put forward by the English poet and literary critic, Matthew Arnold (1822–1888) in the preface of his 1883 edition of *Literature and Dogma*. For William Martin, this definition had been “neither logical nor complete”. In other words, it could be interpreted in a manner which was too secular. The “love of God” was religion; the “love of man” was morality, Martin thought, and apparently, only if the love of God was the emotion touching morality – the emotion that gave morality a soul – was Arnold’s definition then complete and logical. (Martin 1894, 323.) This argument again suggested that only Christianity qualified as a religion.

¹²³⁰ Griffis 2006b, 57, 72. The discussion over whether Confucianism can be understood as a religion, since it lacks the concept of a deity or deities, although containing many religious features, continues to this very day (Chow 2013, 7).

¹²³¹ Martin 1881, 140–142. The English translations of the cardinal, or “constant”, virtues tend to vary from one discussion to another, in nature as well as number. For example, at another point in the same book, William Martin named the virtues as “benevolence, justice, order, prudence, and fidelity”, while William Griffis termed them “uprightness of mind, obedience, justice, fidelity and benevolence”. In more recent academic discussions, the virtues have been translated as, for example, humanity; righteousness; propriety; wisdom; and truthfulness. (Griffis 2006b, 10; Huang 1999, 28; Martin 1881, 104.)

in mind. In fact, coming full circle, Smith thought that deep down the Chinese were destitute of the feeling of sympathy. The Chinese “indifference to the suffering of others,” he declared, was conspicuous and unlikely to be matched in “any other civilized country.”¹²³²

The virtues of benevolence and charity were also encouraged by Buddhism. “That Christianity is a religion of love needs no mention; that Buddhism is equally such is perhaps not so generally appreciated”, Percival Lowell wrote. Half of the Buddhist teachings revolved around charity.¹²³³ William Martin compared the Buddhist doctrines to Christian ethics, and commended Buddhism for the emphasis it placed on compassion and love to fellow beings. By having its own graces corresponding to the three graces named by the Apostle Paul – faith, hope, and charity – Buddhism differed from “all other pagan religions” he believed.¹²³⁴ Unlike the virtue of benevolence taught by the Confucianists, the Buddhist teachings had not fallen on deaf ears, the experts thought. The teachings had visibly affected the morals and character of the Chinese and Japanese, according to both Smith and Griffis. Lowell, too, concluded that the Buddhists actually practiced what they preached.¹²³⁵ But Griffis and Martin saw one definitive flaw in the benevolence of the Buddhists – an excess of it. Because of Buddhists’ belief in rebirth and reincarnation, they lavished undue benevolence on animals, at the expense of their fellow human, the two maintained.¹²³⁶

Second to last in Martin’s list of Confucian virtues was “good faith”, or truthfulness in words, deeds, and intentions.¹²³⁷ Yet, for Arthur Smith, sincerity was “about the last Virtue which in the Celestial Empire is likely to be met”. Instead, he believed that falsehood, duplicity, and insincerity were prominent Chinese national characteristics, taught to children at a young age, and regularly exhibited in official and commercial life.¹²³⁸ Consequently, Smith claimed

¹²³² Smith 1890, 68–70, 72–73, 214, 220, 286, 315, 319. Samuel Williams largely agreed with Smith on the condition of benevolence in China, and concluded that charity was “a virtue which thrives poorly in the selfish soil of heathenism” (Williams 1913b, 266).

¹²³³ Lowell 2007b, 67.

¹²³⁴ Martin 1894, 296, 298.

¹²³⁵ Griffis 2006b, 165; Lowell 2007b, 67; Smith 1890, 68.

¹²³⁶ Griffis 1903, 390; Griffis 2006b, 163. William Martin explained his view on the issue as follows: “Compassion for brute animals is an amiable feature of Buddhism, as well as of Brahmanism, from which it is derived. With us, a mystic like St. Francis of Assisi may fraternize with beasts and birds, or a poet like Coleridge apostrophize a young ass. A Buddhist is not sure that the ass may not be his father! The Buddhistic doctrine of metempsychosis indisputably tends to lower the sense of human dignity, and if it conduces in any way (which may be doubted) to the better treatment of lower animals, it does so at the expense of humanity to man”. (Martin 1900, 38–39).

¹²³⁷ Martin 1881, 130.

¹²³⁸ All three China experts believed that the Chinese were dishonest in trade and politics. The “most rigid economy of the truth”, as Arthur Smith put it, manifested itself especially in Chinese diplomacy. The Chinese tended to wilfully misunderstand what was said to them, and said whatever the foreigners wanted to hear, and they recurrently took advantage of the uprightness of foreigners. Meanwhile, William Martin felt that lying was held to be a duty in Chinese statecraft, and he contrasted this with the “transparent candour and immaculate integrity” of 19th century European diplomacy, which, according to him, rested on the doctrine that “honesty is the best policy”. Smith believed that the mutual understanding between the Chinese and foreign-

that sincerity in China was “as extinct as the dodo, and with no greater prospect of resuscitation”.¹²³⁹ It was not that the Chinese were incapable of telling the truth, or merely lying for the sake of lying, but because they resorted to dishonesty when it assured certain advantages for them, Smith explained, or when they wished to save face or avoid offending others.¹²⁴⁰ Martin too, came to conclude that the Confucian goal of “good faith” was not the promotion of truth as such, but the promotion of expediency.¹²⁴¹ Meanwhile, in Japan, William Griffis regarded lying as the moral cancer of the Japanese national character, inherited from the Tokugawa era.¹²⁴² In fact, by the 1880s, this apparent insincerity of the Japanese had become so proverbial, that while travelling through Japan, Percival Lowell expected to encounter it at every turn.¹²⁴³

Another stereotypical characteristic of the Chinese and Japanese, and one of the five Confucian virtues, was politeness, which featured in all our experts’ accounts.¹²⁴⁴ Politeness was civilization in the sense of refinement. Accordingly, in this respect the Chinese and Japanese were considered more civilized than the Americans, as Arthur Smith narrated:

When [...] we come to the Orient, and find the vast populations of the immense Asiatic continent so greatly our superiors in the art of lubricating the friction which is sure to arise in the intercourse of man with man, we are filled with that admiration which is the tribute of those who cannot do a thing, to those who can do it easily and well. The most bigoted critic of the Chinese is forced to admit that they have brought the practice of politeness to a pitch of perfection, which is not only unknown in Western lands, but previous to experience, is unthought of, and almost unimaginable.¹²⁴⁵

Samuel Williams drew attention to the “conduct of a host of foreigners”, whose rudeness and coarseness did not well “comport with their superior civilization”.¹²⁴⁶ But, although he believed that the level of politeness should reflect the level of Civilization, the refinement he was expecting from the representatives of a higher civilization was not the same as refinement of the East. The ceremonious Eastern refinement had little appeal to the Americans, who prided themselves on their “democratic manners” and lack of rigid etiquette.¹²⁴⁷

Eastern politeness appeared insincere to many American observers. As Jean Starobinski has noted, politeness can often be understood to be a kind of

ers had suffered because of their duplicity, and Williams too, felt that Chinese insincerity had chilled “the warmest wishes for their welfare”, and thwarted “many a plan to benefit them”. (Martin 1894, 167–168; Martin 1900, 358; Smith 1890, 59, 61, 86–88, 96–97, 269–271, 352; Williams 1913a, 518, 834–835; Williams 1913b, 389, 663.)

¹²³⁹ Smith 1890, 265, 272, 279, 284, 372.

¹²⁴⁰ Smith 1890, 93, 268, 391.

¹²⁴¹ Martin 1881, 107.

¹²⁴² Griffis 2006a, 345, 403.

¹²⁴³ Lowell 2007a, 34. Interestingly, also the Chinese had a tradition of attributing dishonesty, deceptiveness, and baseness of character to the Japanese (Howland 1996, 38).

¹²⁴⁴ See e.g. Griffis 1892, 79; Hearn 1894a, 130; Lowell 1895, 330; Martin 1900, 331; Smith 1890, 64; Williams 1913a, 805.

¹²⁴⁵ Smith 1890, 63.

¹²⁴⁶ Williams 1913a, 783.

¹²⁴⁷ Henning 2000, 72; Lerner 1987, 639–640.

mask,¹²⁴⁸ and in the case of Smith, Griffis, and Williams, the Chinese and Japanese politeness seemed like a superficial façade. Arthur Smith stated that:

We must dissociate Chinese politeness from those ideas of sincerity and cordiality which to us constitute the charm of social intercourse, for however sincere and cordial the Chinese may sometimes be, these are not inherent qualities to their politeness.¹²⁴⁹

According to Smith, the Chinese politeness was formal and hollow. It was merely an air-cushion, which was empty in itself, but eased the “jolts wonderfully”.¹²⁵⁰ But that was expected among a people whose “conceit and ignorance, selfishness and hauteur, were nearly equal”, Samuel Williams believed.¹²⁵¹ Similarly, William Griffis felt that the Japanese code of politeness was “vitiated by insincerity”.¹²⁵²

Arthur Smith and Samuel Williams seemed determined to demonstrate that East Asian politeness did not flow from honesty, benevolence, real kindness, or goodwill.¹²⁵³ And, speaking of the Japanese, though this no doubt extended to the Chinese, Percival Lowell found two more fatal flaws. First, politeness was a sign of impersonality. When the sense of self was suffocated, one tended to direct his attention to the wellbeing of others.¹²⁵⁴ And secondly, such a “decorous demeanor of the whole nation”, Lowell felt, betrayed a “lack of mental activity beneath”, because no “energetic mind” could have submitted to such an “exquisitely exacting” etiquette. He found the general refinement of the Japanese charming, but noted that it had come at the price of a lower level of intelligence.¹²⁵⁵ In effect, then, these experts were arguing that East Asian politeness, like benevolence, was actually no virtue at all.

Arthur Smith nevertheless commended the overall nature of Chinese ethics on several occasions. He assumed that the best parts of it derived from the fact that, whereas other nations depended upon physical force, the Chinese used moral force. Smith found the Chinese ethical system on a par with the West’s in many respects, and that social morality in China was, at its best, “fully equal to that of any Western land”.¹²⁵⁶ Nevertheless, he did not want to exaggerate their moral qualities, or give them “credit for higher practical morality than they can justly claim”,¹²⁵⁷ and as we have seen, Smith judged Chinese politeness, sincerity, and benevolence to be deficient. In these respects, therefore, he found Christian ethics superior.

¹²⁴⁸ Starobinski 2009, 159.

¹²⁴⁹ Smith 1890, 273.

¹²⁵⁰ Smith 1890, 65, 127, 155, 273, 277.

¹²⁵¹ Williams 1913a, 783.

¹²⁵² Griffis 2006b, 183. It has been argued that the 19th century American missionaries deliberately exaggerated the ‘low moral condition’ of the Chinese and other ‘heathen’ peoples in order to amass support for the missions (Malcolm 1973, 168).

¹²⁵³ Smith 1890, 64; Williams 1913a, 836.

¹²⁵⁴ Lowell 2007b, 34.

¹²⁵⁵ Lowell 1895, 331–332; Lowell 2007b, 6.

¹²⁵⁶ Smith 1890, 370, 380–381, 387; Smith 1899, 322.

¹²⁵⁷ Smith 1890, 3.

Smith insisted that Christianity fostered a devotion to doing good for others. The compassion of Christians was “the fairest plant that ever bloomed up on the earth”, he added, and reminded that the whole of Christendom was covered with benevolent institutions.¹²⁵⁸ Moreover, it was clear to him that Westerners were honest and straightforward, in other words, their instincts in this sense were the exact opposites of the instincts of “any Asiatic race”.¹²⁵⁹ Smith then proceeded to list other failings of the Confucian moral code, citing the German missionary and Sinologist Ernst Faber (1839–1899), who had devoted a section of his book, *Systematical Digest of the Doctrines of Confucius* (1875), to this very topic. These failings were the following: Confucianism had become caught up in superstitions; mere conformity was all that was required from the people; there were no rewards or retributions to be expected in the afterlife; there was no doctrine or therefore real concept of sin, and no mention of any sins being punished; Confucianists had no insight into the essence and nature of evil; and finally, there was an incongruence between the high ethical standards Confucianism set in theory, and the low standard of ethics in practice.¹²⁶⁰ In the end, the Chinese had done all that man could do, and developed the loftiest moral code “which the human mind unaided by divine revelation has ever produced”, Smith wrote.¹²⁶¹ His conclusion was clear – to make amends for the defects of their moral code, the Chinese needed to discard the ethics of Confucianism and embrace the ethics of Christianity.

This was the conclusion reached by all four of our missionary-minded authors. William Martin, for example, thought that in theory, the Confucian precepts harmonised with the teachings of Christianity, but noted that only a few practiced them in reality. This was because Confucius was “not a Christ, but a Moses”, Martin explained. For the majority of people, he felt, the theory of virtue as its own reward was too refined; this incentive was not as appealing to the masses as the incentive of receiving one’s just rewards in a future life. Martin believed that men were inclined to lean on religion, not philosophy, and so ethics and religion had to be better connected, if one wished the morals to be effective in practice. But not just any religion would do. Martin claimed that ancestor worship and Buddhism had already proved to be inadequate for this purpose, having not really encouraged and motivated virtuous behaviour, meanwhile Christianity could motivate the masses with the realization that one was “acting under the eye of ever-present Deity”. Thus, Martin concluded that “[t]he love of God is religion; the love of man, morality. The two must be combined, in order to give the highest effect”.¹²⁶²

¹²⁵⁸ Smith 1890, 73, 230, 396

¹²⁵⁹ Smith 1890, 91, 269

¹²⁶⁰ Smith 1890, 283, 362, 370–372, 374–377; Smith 1899, 55. Originally in Faber 1875, 124–127.

¹²⁶¹ Smith 1890, 397; Smith 1901a, 6.

¹²⁶² Martin 1881, 144–145, 267; Martin 1900, 288; Martin 1894, 311–312, 322–323; Martin 1901a, 151. Also Samuel Williams compared Confucian ethics to the “perfect standard given us from above”, and found some features to be commendable, but the general scheme flawed, and at times, it would seem from the following quote, downright repulsive: “With a general regard for outward decency, they are vile and polluted in

William Griffis' take on Japanese ethics was hardly any different. He attributed some positive features to the moral character of the Japanese, but when he compared their ethics with Christian ethics, the Japanese fell short. Griffis claimed that those Westerners who knew the least about the condition of Japanese morals, tended to be the "most glib, fluent and voluminous in showing to their own satisfaction, that there is little difference between the ethics of Chinese Asia and those of Christendom". Griffis was evidently convinced of quite the opposite, believing there was "scarcely a form of sin known to Sodom, Greece, Rome, or India, but has been, or is, practiced in Japan". And of course, the only way that this matter could be remedied, Griffis wrote, was by converting to Christianity, because whereas Confucianism and Buddhism could only provide a moral law, Christianity provided both law and a law-giver.¹²⁶³

Confucianism, and in a sense also Buddhism, entertained the possibility that ethics could exist without religion, or rather that a high standard of morals could exist without God's revelation. This notion had already aroused enthusiasm in many Western intellectuals,¹²⁶⁴ and all four missionary-minded authors - Smith, Martin, Williams, and Griffis - felt that it was their utmost duty to reject the idea and persuade others to do so too. Lowell and Hearn, on the other hand, were among those espousing secular ethics, or an ethics based on human reason, logic, or intuition, rather than religion.

Percival Lowell stated that, in practice, "morality has no more intimate connection with religion than it has with art or politics". He based this proposition on the fact, as he saw it, that the most religious people were not necessarily the most moral. Lowell took the virtue of honesty as his example. Religious spirit in Asia and in Europe was on par, Lowell estimated, and yet "throughout the Orient truth is a thing unknown, lies of courtesy being de rigueur and lies of convenience de raison; while with us, fortunately, mendacity is generally discredited." According to Lowell, the faculty of honesty had significance beyond the discussion of morals, for it was one of the main characteristics that had put Westerners "in the van of the world's advance to-day". But Lowell argued that the honesty of Westerners was not a product of religion, or Christianity; rather, it stemmed instead from the development of physical science and the extension

a shocking degree ; their conversation is full of filthy expressions and their lives of impure acts". In contrast to Smith and Martin, who thought that Chinese ethics were man-made, Williams believed that the Chinese had come this far without having fallen into total depravity only because they had unwittingly already been guided by God. He granted that Chinese law and education had accounted for much in maintaining some standard of morals, but what the nation needed in order to elevate its moral sense was "the Gospel". (Williams 1913a, 833-834, 836.)

¹²⁶³ William Griffis believed that the Japanese themselves wanted a higher morality than Buddhism or Confucianism could provide. The Japanese were no longer ignorant hermits, he pointed out. They were now inquiring and critical students, who were in the process of tearing down the old ethical system, calling for "a new way between heaven and earth, and a new kind of Heaven in which shall be a Creator, a Father and a Saviour". Confucianism had waxed old, and was now being swept away before the "flood of truth" from Christendom. Then, Griffis maintained that Christianity would fulfil, not destroy, Japanese ethics. (Griffis 1903, 568-569; Griffis 2006b, 72, 77-78, 80, 165.)

¹²⁶⁴ Clarke 2003, 82.

of trade. Lowell explained that the sole object of science was to discover truth, and hence the existence of science depended on veracity. From scientific circles, truth-telling had slowly “filtered down through every stratum of education”, making honesty the property of an average Westerner.¹²⁶⁵

The other incentive for veracity was trade, which had made the telling of truth a financial necessity. The whole Western mercantile system relied on it, Lowell maintained, and by extension, so did Western legal safeguards. To Lowell, it was clear that Western civilization had to be truthful, or perish.¹²⁶⁶ Honesty, in connection with the development of science and trade, had been a significant motor in driving progress in the West, Lowell believed. But he thought that honesty was also a quality that indicated intelligence. The more intelligent a person was, the more honest he tended to be. But on the other hand, the more intelligent the person, the better he was at lying. The Japanese, Lowell maintained, were neither honest nor intelligent, and hence their frequent lies were easily exposed by their “want of reasoning”. Using the vocabulary of racial anthropology of his day, Lowell claimed that an intelligent “long-headed man”, that is a Westerner, thought his stories through in advance, whereas the “brachycephalic people” never did that, and therefore they rarely succeeded in deceiving anyone.¹²⁶⁷ Thus, Lowell effectively made the Japanese “mendacity” one of the reasons for the superiority of both Western material and intellectual civilization over Japan.

In Percival Lowell’s scheme, morality was based on reason, which had evolved into a hereditary instinct. As for Hearn, he conceived of morality as flowing from reason together with philosophy, and instinct. Thus, Hearn judged that the benevolence of the Japanese was authentic and sincere, for it was partly innate and partly based on reason. The Japanese, he claimed, had understood that the secret of happy living depended upon the happiness of others, and hence they cultivated unselfishness and patience. Hearn connected Japanese benevolence to their politeness, which was “absolutely unconscious goodness”, coming straight from the heart.¹²⁶⁸ In other words, he believed it was instinctive. As to the indirectness of Japanese speech, Hearn associated it with Confucian philosophy and its system of ethics, just as, for example, Arthur Smith and William Martin did. But unlike them, Hearn did not think that the indirectness was an expression of insincerity; rather, it expressed a consideration for others, in other words, benevolence. Hearn granted that the Confucian system had fixed the ideas of the Japanese at the cost of their individuality, imagination, and originality. But this intellectual loss, Hearn assured, was “really more than compensated by the social charm”.¹²⁶⁹

¹²⁶⁵ Lowell 2007b, 64–65.

¹²⁶⁶ Lowell 2007b, 65.

¹²⁶⁷ Lowell 1895, 325–326; Lowell 2007b, 65.

¹²⁶⁸ Hearn 1894a, 130; Hearn 1894b, 673.

¹²⁶⁹ Although Hearn believed that the Confucian ethical system had stiffened the Japanese intellect, he denied that it was fundamentally inconsistent with intellectual progress, as long as it could accommodate a “scientific understanding of the freedom essential to intellectual evolution”. If this was possible, then Hearn guaranteed that “the highest and happiest results” would be obtained (Hearn 1894b, 672–674).

But more than Confucianism, Japanese morality had been shaped by Shinto, Hearn felt. Technically, Shinto was a religion, he thought, but it was a “religion transformed into hereditary moral impulse,—religion transmuted into ethical instinct”. The Shintoists held that all men were originally good, and that they intuitively acted in a virtuous manner. Shinto had no established moral code, Hearn noted, for the Shintoists believed that human conscience was the only guide that was required, and that no teacher of morals could be as “infallible as one's own heart”.¹²⁷⁰ According to Shinto, both good and evil *kami* were to be respected. Moreover, the evil *kami* were not considered altogether wicked, and in fact, the whole notion of “absolute, unmixed evil” was foreign to the peoples of the Far East, Hearn observed. In his estimation, this attitude to good and bad made Shinto in many respects the “most rational” of all religions. It also made Shinto the religion of optimists, and of those who had “a generous faith in humanity”, he believed.¹²⁷¹

All these propositions went directly against the beliefs of the four authors espousing Christianity and Christian ethics. William Griffis, for example, seized on the Shintoist ideas that only immoral people, such as the Chinese, needed moral codes; that Shintoists were originally pure and holy; that heart was the only moral guide necessary; and that the classification of good and bad was based on things pure and things impure. All these ideas Griffis denounced as naïve and even preposterous. If the “abominably obscene”, and “foul and revolting”, Shinto gods served as models for Shinto morals, the standard of that morality could not be high, Griffis baldly stated. And indeed, Griffis believed that the standard of Japanese morality had only risen after the fixed moral codes of Buddhism and Confucianism had been introduced to the country.¹²⁷²

Another Shintoist claim that seemed offensive to the Protestant writers was the natural goodness of man. The idea of men being born good, and instinctively acting that way, was in direct conflict with the Christian idea of the fall of man and original sin. In the West, similar ideas had been put forward by Rousseau, and in the East, especially by the Confucian philosophers. Samuel Williams noted that the first lines in the Confucian text-book read by all young Chinese students, *The Trimetrical Classic* (or the Three Character Classic, *San Zi Jing*), contained this disputed doctrine: “Men at their birth, are by nature radically good; Though alike in this, in practice they widely diverge.” This line was understood as inculcating moral education as the key for maintaining the good character man was born with.¹²⁷³

William Martin elaborated on this subject further. He explained that the topic had been a bone of contention in Chinese ethical discussions for centuries,

¹²⁷⁰ Hearn 1894b, 389, 392–393; Hearn 1896b, 300.

¹²⁷¹ Hearn believed that Shintō could only be practised by those who accepted that human impulses were controlled by the law of an ethical survival of the fittest, in which good impulses were more frequently inherited than bad impulses, thus resulting in a total of good impulses exceeding the total of bad influences in the universe (Hearn 1896b, 275–277, 299).

¹²⁷² Griffis 2006a, 106; Griffis 2006b, 38–39, 41–42.

¹²⁷³ Williams 1913a, 527. Smith quoted this Williams’ observation in his *Village Life in China* (Smith 1899, 82–83).

and that “every position admitted by the subject was successively occupied by some leading mind”. Some philosophers had proposed that human nature was naturally good; some believed that humans had no innate moral qualities and that character could be moulded as either good or bad; whereas some thought that human nature was essentially evil, and could only be amended by education teaching obedience to ethical precepts. Some thinkers had devised various combinations of these views, holding that men were both good and bad, but Martin criticised them for failing to provide a clear “distinction as to the extent to which our nature is infected with evil”.¹²⁷⁴ In the end, the view of Mencius, that man commenced life with a virtuous nature, and that human nature was therefore inclined to good, had won the day and become the accepted truth on the subject, Martin noted.¹²⁷⁵

Lafcadio Hearn put the instinctive nature of Shinto ethics, and the ‘original goodness of man’ concept, down to the fact that there was very little privacy in the lives of the Japanese people. “Neither vices nor virtues” could be hidden, he reasoned, and hence life could be “happily lived in Japan only upon the condition that all matters relating to it are open to the inspection of the community”. This had led to exceptional moral conditions he believed, which had no equivalent in the West.¹²⁷⁶ Hearn claimed that the “old Japanese civilization of benevolence and duty”, was incomparably better than the Western civilization in its “extraordinary goodness, its miraculous patience, its never-failing courtesy,¹²⁷⁷ its simplicity of heart, its intuitive charity”. But Japanese life had its darker side too, Hearn admitted, although even that was “brightness compared with the darker side of Western existence”.¹²⁷⁸ The West did not have any kind of ethical superiority, in his opinion. Instead, the Western superiority lay in “forces of intellect developed through suffering incalculable, and used for the destruction of the weak by the strong”. Civilization in the West had been “one great wolfish struggle”, or a “tremendous and perfectly calculated mechanism” of utilitarianism, conventionality, greed, cruelty, hypocrisy, and wealth. Materially, the West was powerful, morally, it was “monstrous”, Hearn concluded.¹²⁷⁹

¹²⁷⁴ Martin 1881, 135–137.

¹²⁷⁵ Nevertheless, William Martin claimed that “a genuine Confucian” still placed “the root of evil in the human heart”, and presumed that moral character was shaped by prevailing influences. For the missionaries, the Confucian ‘original goodness of man’ doctrine was understandably a cause for concern, since it presented an obstacle to converting the Chinese to a faith which was based on quite the opposite premises of ‘original sin’, and the corruptibility of human nature. However, Martin was sure that the obstacle was not insurmountable, as there was nonetheless some correlation between Christian and Chinese theories on the subject. As he saw it, the Chinese only needed to exchange their fragmented picture for the complete view presented in the Bible, and exchange their motive for good, faith in themselves, for the stronger motive of faith in God. (Martin 1881, 135–139).

¹²⁷⁶ Hearn 1894b, 618–619.

¹²⁷⁷ Percival Lowell stated, somewhat regretfully, that this “decorous” Old Japan with its “instinctive old-fashioned politeness” was being destroyed by contact with the “rough and ready foreigner”. He argued that just “as politeness stood personified — one may almost say petrified — in a Japanese gentleman of the old school, so rudeness incarnate jostles you in his son”. (Lowell 1895, 71, 284).

¹²⁷⁸ Hearn 1894a, vii; Hearn 1896b, 204.

¹²⁷⁹ Hearn 1896b, 189, 203–205.

To support his claim that Western superiority had no ethical basis, Lafcadio Hearn cited the British anthropologist and biologist, Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913):

Although we have progressed vastly beyond the savage state in intellectual achievements, we have not advanced equally in morals. [...] It is not too much to say that the mass of our populations have not at all advanced beyond the savage code of morals, and have in many cases sunk below it. A deficient morality is the great blot of modern civilization. [...] Our whole social and moral civilization remains in a state of barbarism.¹²⁸⁰

Through Wallace, Hearn was portraying Western civilization as having gone through a period of “merciless competition”, which had been “out of all harmony with Christian idealism”. Nowhere had “misery and vice and crime” flourished to such extent as in Christendom, Hearn claimed. He then concluded that, nominally the lands were Christian, but in practice, the Western world had no faith, and its civilization had no ethics.¹²⁸¹

In effect, Lafcadio Hearn made four outspoken and interrelated propositions concerning religion, ethics, and civilization, which were highly contentious in the latter part of the 19th century. Firstly, Hearn proposed that Eastern ethical standards were actually higher than Western ones¹²⁸². This was the exact antithesis of William Griffis’ narrative published a decade earlier. Griffis maintained that, if anything, the moral state of Old Japan indicated that Western Christian ethics were definitely superior.¹²⁸³ Hearn’s second proposition was that a high standard of morality did not necessarily have to come from some

¹²⁸⁰ Quoted in Hearn 1896b, 201. Originally in Wallace, Alfred, *The Malay Archipelago*. London: Macmillan, 1869.

¹²⁸¹ Hearn 1896b, 189, 200, 299. In this connection, Lafcadio Hearn also empathically denounced Western imperialism, carried out in the name of Christianity. He called it a delusion of “unthinking millions” in the West, who thought that there was “some divine connection between military power and Christian belief”, which justified “political robberies” and the extermination of “races holding other beliefs”. (Hearn 1896b, 189–190.)

¹²⁸² To be sure, Hearn was not alone in insisting that the ethics of Japan, or of the East in general, were loftier than the West’s. Edwin Arnold, for instance, had voiced similar opinions. (Metraux 2002, 8.)

¹²⁸³ Rather unexpectedly, William Griffis attributed much of the vast moral failings of Old Japan not to the lack of Christian influence and Christian ethics, but to the social and political conditions of the country. Griffis described the Japanese of the feudal era as warmongering; the land as a “paradise of thieves”; and the “common herd” as having grown up “in ignorance and misery”. He went on to say that the government, being “a colossal fraud”, had fostered the “public and private habits of lying, and deceit in all its forms”, to the point that “the love of a lie apparently for its own sake became a national habit”. Griffis also held the “dual system of exclusion and of inclusion” as responsible for the Japanese deceitfulness, and for the “code of politeness vitiated by insincerity”. All in all, Griffis believed, public morals had been “frightfully corrupted”, and religion debased. The days of Old Japan had been the “Golden Age of crime and anarchy”, Griffis contended, and the “moral rotteness as well as the physical decay of the Japanese people” had reached an acme just before the arrival of the Perry expedition in 1853. Thenceforward, the moral condition of the Japanese had been slowly improving, and due to increasing contact with Christian foreigners, Japan was becoming “more and more the country of reality and truth”, Griffis concluded. (Griffis 2006a, 220–221, 344–345, 420; Griffis 2006b, 183, 188.)

supernatural revelation or guidance. As the instinctive, rather than religious, ethics of Shinto demonstrated, higher ethical code could in fact be secular. This argument would appeal to the growing number of Americans, who were attempting to replace the moral codes embedded in Christianity with a more secular morality¹²⁸⁴. But the four avowedly Protestant authors clearly thought that secular sanctions would not be enough to maintain morality. Morals needed to be “touched by emotion”, as Martin phrased it, and not by just any emotion, but by the love of Christian God.¹²⁸⁵

Thirdly, Lafcadio Hearn proposed that Christian ethics had nothing to do with the progress of Western material civilization. Hence, in order to progress, the Japanese did not need Christianity as a moral backbone. He expressed it as his own personal conviction that “Japan has nothing whatever to gain by conversion to Christianity, either morally or otherwise, but very much to lose”.¹²⁸⁶ This was of course vehemently opposed by the missionary-minded authors, who claimed that Christianity, and its ethics, were the root of Western civilization, and the root of its superiority. And finally, Hearn suggested that, if the process of Civilization was tending to go the same way as Western civilization, then the progress of ethics did not go hand in hand with the progress of Civilization. Such a conclusion was unacceptable for all the other experts we have been dealing with in this thesis. Even Percival Lowell, who dissolved the bond between religion and ethics, advocated the idea that there was a correspondence between morals and the grade of Civilization.

¹²⁸⁴ The idea was to divest the moral codes of their religious sanctions, and instead gather support for them from the public opinion and legal sanctions (Lerner 1987, 667–668).

¹²⁸⁵ Even though many liberal Protestants had started to emphasise morality as the essence of religion and de-emphasise the supernaturalism of Christianity, (Brown 2004, 15–16) it was still Christian morals they were accentuating, and religious sanctions they were calling for. It has been estimated that works propagating the possibility of morals without Christianity only appealed to those who already embraced the same notion. (Henning 2000, 78.) And presumably, such works only hardened the opposition of those who rejected that notion.

¹²⁸⁶ Hearn 1894a, x. This was a conclusion reached by many Japanese Meiji era intellectuals, too. Thinkers such as Kume Kunitake and Fukuzawa Yukichi held that Japan did not need Christianity or any other religion to support public morality, instead, what they needed was secular ethics. (Josephson 2012, 204–205.)

6 EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

As the 19th century wore on, science emerged as a concept distinct from philosophy, and as one of the most eminent gauges of civilization for Western observers. Americans had the utmost regard for science as a way to explain the world, as a factor in material and intellectual progress, and as a contributor to national eminence and wealth. However, such assessments only applied to 'modern' sciences, which were formulated or developed in Europe and the United States. However, the six experts did note that some of these sciences were also practised among the Chinese and Japanese, in a different form perhaps, and that some sciences were wholly indigenous to East Asia. But measured against the sciences of the Europeans and Americans, the experts found Chinese and Japanese scientific practices to be erroneous, illogical, and even ridiculous. East Asian sciences appeared as 'false' in comparison, as not really sciences. And accordingly, the experts characterized the East Asians as essentially unscientific and irrational.

By the same token, also the Chinese and Japanese educational systems, as distributors of knowledge and sciences, came under critical evaluation. As compared to the American system of universal public education, the experts deemed the Chinese and Japanese systems as inadequate, and their modes and contents of learning as defective. The six American experts all agreed that China and Japan needed to modernise and reform their educational systems, and to adopt Western sciences. But their views differed on the actual role of sciences and scientific education in the process of Civilization. The question was whether or not science was the root of the progressive Western civilization, and thus the root of the process of Civilization itself. If it was, then Western sciences and education might be enough to lift the Chinese and Japanese to a higher level of Civilization. If not, then the solution perhaps lay in religion, morals, or psychological evolution.

6.1 Unscientific East Asia

By the latter half of the 19th century, when the China experts Samuel Williams, William Martin, and Arthur Smith were writing and rewriting their treatises, it had become a commonplace Western assumption that modernity, and consequently modern science, were uniquely European phenomena.¹²⁸⁷ The logical corollary to this claim was that only Europeans and their kinsmen on the American continent were modern and scientific, while the non-European peoples of the world were backward and unscientific. The Chinese were thus assigned to the latter category, and the three experts tended to confirm this general contention in their texts. In the words of Smith, the “paths of science” were “closed to the unscientific Chinese”,¹²⁸⁸ and in his book, *The Chinese Characteristics*, he marshalled evidence to prove this claim.

Arthur Smith enumerated attributes which, he believed, proved the unscientific nature of the Chinese, and devoted a whole chapter to each: “credulity”; “disregard of time”; “disregard of accuracy”; “disregard of foundations”; “intellectual turbidity”; and “inability to conserve tangible memorials of the past”.¹²⁸⁹ Smith defined credulity as “the readiness to believe without sufficient evidence”. And the Chinese, “as a rule”, were remarkably credulous, “singularly insensible to the relative value of evidence, and to be very little aware of the need of it”, he asserted. The opposite of both credulity and incredulity was to “listen to and yield to the best evidence, and to believe and disbelieve, on good grounds,” Smith pointed out, implying that this was the Western, scientific method of thinking. He believed the Chinese were incapable of doing this because they had “no instinct of weighing evidence, and no adequate criteria for determining what are, and what are not good grounds”. Smith indicated that the Chinese were susceptible to all kinds of superstitions, and also that the results of Western science were utterly confusing and incomprehensible to them.¹²⁹⁰

This credulity, Smith felt, made the Chinese ignore one of the main tenets of Western sciences – the uniformity of nature. The British geologist, Charles Lyell (1797–1875), popularised the principle of the uniformity of nature in his *Principles of Geology* (1830–1833). Lyell argued that same causes and same fixed natural laws operated the world over, as they had done in the past and would continue to do so in the foreseeable future, both in the moral as well as in the physical sphere.¹²⁹¹ Arthur Smith believed that all Westerners ultimately agreed

¹²⁸⁷ Goody 2010, 128–129.

¹²⁸⁸ Smith 1890, 34.

¹²⁸⁹ Chapters bearing these titles appeared in the first edition of *The Chinese Characteristics*, printed in Shanghai in 1890. However, only half of these chapters, namely: “Intellectual Turbidity”; “The Disregard of Time”; and “The Disregard of Accuracy”, figured in the revised edition of the book, which was printed four years later in the US.

¹²⁹⁰ Smith 1890, 42; Smith 1899, 314.

¹²⁹¹ Charles Lyell was first and foremost arguing for uniformity in geology and in the physical world: “the laws now governing the material world; and the discovery of this unlooked-for conformity has at length induced some philosophers to infer, that,

on this, whereas the Chinese lacked the notion altogether, because their “elaborate philosophies” had not led them to this realisation. Consequently, the Chinese had no real idea as to what caused rainfall, Smith claimed, and they were quite ready to accept propositions such as that “in Western lands the years are a thousand days in length, with four moons all the time,” or that in Western lands plants grew upside down, with their roots in the air.¹²⁹² This deficient understanding of cause and effect had resulted in total disregard of “any dividing line between the real and the fictitious”, or between the religious and scientific, Smith concluded.¹²⁹³

Another deficiency which contributed to the unscientific disposition of the Chinese, in Smith’s opinion, was accuracy. The Chinese, “like other Orientals”, cared “absolutely nothing for statistics”, he claimed. Chinese measures were unstandardized, as he saw it, and their use of numbers in general, was variable and inexact. With time and patience they would learn the art of being precise, Smith assured his readers. But for the time being, Chinese negligence would probably have fatal consequences, if they adopted modern sciences such as chemistry, without first remedying this deficiency. “The first generation of Chinese chemists will probably lose many of its number”, Smith imagined, “as a result of the process of mixing a ‘few tens of grains’ of something, with ‘several tens of grains’ of something else, the consequence being an unanticipated earthquake”.¹²⁹⁴

Smith also regarded the Chinese attitude to time as equally indiscriminate. The Chinese were evidently unaccustomed to watches, and their whole framework was still “antediluvian”, in his opinion, and they were perfectly unaware that the “days of Methusaleh have gone by.”¹²⁹⁵ Smith contrasted this Chinese imprecision with the “unerring exactness” of Westerners.¹²⁹⁶ This was a recurrent juxtaposition among the 19th century Western writers, as they eulogised their commitment to experiments, empiricism, tests, observations, measurements, statistics, and records – in a word, accuracy.¹²⁹⁷ Finally, Smith also presented the Europeans and Americans as clear-headed and rational, and the Chinese as suffering from “intellectual torpor”.¹²⁹⁸

during the ages contemplated in geology, there has never been any interruption to the agency of the same uniform laws of change. The same assemblage of general causes, they conceive, may have been sufficient to produce, by their various combinations, the endless diversity of effects, of which the shell of the earth has preserved the memorials; and, consistently with these principles, the recurrence of analogous changes is expected by them in time to come”. But Lyell also extended the theory to cover moral phenomena, which he thought were similarly governed by “fixed and invariable laws”. (Lyell, Charles, *Principles of Geology; or the Modern Changes of the Earth and Its inhabitants considered as Illustrative of Geology*. New York: D. Appleton, 1854: pp. 62, 149).

¹²⁹² Smith 1890, 43, 169, 260, 363; Smith 1899, 314.

¹²⁹³ Smith 1890, 260, 363; Smith 1899, 17, 68.

¹²⁹⁴ Smith 1890, 78, 80–83, 84.

¹²⁹⁵ Smith 1890, 75–77.

¹²⁹⁶ Smith 1890, 83.

¹²⁹⁷ Adas 1989, 263.

¹²⁹⁸ Smith 1890, 133.

Samuel Williams had painted a very similar portrait of the Chinese and Western scientific abilities and approaches already in his first edition of *The Middle Kingdom* in 1848. First of all, Williams thought that the Chinese set no value on the scientific ideal of cultivating knowledge for its own sake. The sciences of the Chinese William called a “parade of nonsense,” and their scientific works he described as lacking in facts, experiments, proper understanding, and classifications. All in all, Williams concluded that the Chinese were “unscientific” in all departments of learning, although he did admit that the “rapid advances” made by Europeans in so many areas of knowledge over the last two hundred years had perhaps made the Westerners “somewhat impatient” and quick to condemn the scientific propensities of the Chinese.¹²⁹⁹

William Martin, on the other hand, introduced another perspective by remarking that China had fostered thinkers who had hit upon the “Baconian method before Bacon”, and whose speculations were worthy of comparison with René Descartes, the “Father of Modern Philosophy”. Moreover, he added, the “unscientific speculations” of the Chinese philosophers had actually “anticipated the teachings of modern science”.¹³⁰⁰ Martin thought it possible that the Chinese had knowledge of decimal arithmetic and “Ether” before the advent of modern mathematics and physics in the West. He also reminded his readers that the Chinese had invented “gunpowder, printing and the mariner's compass” which then had been improved and developed further by the Europeans.¹³⁰¹

But if the Chinese intellectuals had conceived the idea of inductive method, and perhaps also of the experimental study of nature, why had they failed to put them into general use? Why had the Chinese failed to “profit by their discoveries?” Why had the sciences “remained stunted and deformed” in the Chinese soil in which they had been first planted, yet flourished and yielded “a rich fruitage” in European soil? And why had the same happened to Chinese inventions?¹³⁰² The answer William Martin proposed was Confucianism. First, Confucius was to blame for setting an erroneous precedent for scientific inquiry, or as Martin put it, “the vicious example of indulging in speculations which are susceptible of no proof”. Secondly, Confucianism had fostered conservatism, which had ensured that future generations, bound by the “yoke of authority,

¹²⁹⁹ Williams 1848b, 145, 192; Williams 1913b, 65, 134.

¹³⁰⁰ Martin 1894, 234; Martin 1901a, 31, 33–34, 38.

¹³⁰¹ Martin 1901a, 29–31.

¹³⁰² Martin 1901a, 29, 32, 35–36. The last proposition, that the Chinese were inherently incapable of developing their inventions further, had already been put forward a century earlier by the French scholar and scientist d’Ortous de Mairan (1678–1771), and it was accepted as a truism in the 19th century. The 19th century observers also frequently put forth the idea that Chinese sciences had been as advanced as their Western counterparts up to the 16th century. But since then, all development had foundered to a halt, and even retrograded, as the Chinese had failed to experience a scientific revolution akin to the one that had taken place in Europe. According to these narratives, the improvement of the Chinese discoveries had been left for the scientific-minded Westerners – an argument which effectively connected scientific knowledge with technology and innovation. (Adas 1989, 84, 191; Clifford 2001, 26–27.)

and led by a habit of the Oriental mind", had been reluctant to change, tenaciously clinging to the a priori method and shunning experimentation.¹³⁰³

Consequently, the scientific abilities of the generations after Confucius did not receive very positive marks from William Martin. He criticised the later Chinese scholars and intellectuals for want of "any investigation of the processes of reasoning corresponding with our logic," and for concentrating solely on politics, ethics, poetry, and rhetoric, thus leaving "all the regions of physical and abstract science almost as trackless as the arctic snows." As far as he was concerned, the "noble motto of the French Institute, *Invenit et perfecit*," was wholly alien to the academics in China.¹³⁰⁴

Japanese scientific thinking came under heavy criticism too. William Griffis thought that the Japanese had difficulties in discerning the line between the natural and supernatural, and that they struggled at making generalisations.¹³⁰⁵ But a more extensive onslaught on the scientific qualities of the whole "Tartar" race, came from Percival Lowell. "The scientific is not the Far Oriental point of view", he declared, adding that science was a stranger to the whole of the Far East:

To wish to know the reasons of things, that irrepressible yearning of the Western spirit, is no characteristic of the Chinaman's mind, nor is it a Tartar trait. Metaphysics, a species of speculation that has usually proved peculiarly attractive to mankind, probably from its not requiring any scientific capital whatever, would seem the most likely place to seek it. But upon such matters he has expended no imagination of his own, having quietly taken on trust from India what he now professes. As for science proper, it has reached at his hands only the quasimorphologic stage[...]. For pseudo-scientific collections of facts which never rise to be classifications of phenomena forms to his idea the acme of erudition.¹³⁰⁶

Lowell's opinion was clear. The Chinese and Japanese were no scientists, and to search from the Far Eastern civilization for "explanations of even the most simple of nature's laws," would be in vain.¹³⁰⁷

Lowell granted that the Chinese had produced a remarkable catalogue of inventions, but he emphasised that these inventions had been more due to coincidences than results of scientific inquiry. The Chinese did not owe them to any knowledge about the physics, mechanics, or chemistry. They had been invented as arts, not sciences, Lowell concluded. And by the same token, he claimed that the Chinese and Japanese were artists, not scientists. Art permeated the whole

¹³⁰³ Martin 1894, 223–224; Martin 1901a, 29, 32. Samuel Williams posed the same question as William Martin: why the Chinese had not developed the germs of arts and discoveries anciently in their possession? He thought that one possible answer to the question was that the "wonderful discoveries now made in the arts by Europeans" had been part of "God's great plan for the redemption of the race." As plausible as this explanation seemed to Williams, he proposed that other reasons could be the "debasement effects of heathenism upon the intellect," which explained the "apathy shown toward improvement;" the lack of incentives; suspicion and despotism; and finally, the "mode and materials of education." (Williams 1913b, 63–64).

¹³⁰⁴ Martin 1881, 28–29, 147–148. Same remarks also in Martin 1901a, 228, 359.

¹³⁰⁵ Griffis 1892, 62; Griffis 2006a, 51; Griffis 2006b, 37.

¹³⁰⁶ Lowell 2007b, 42–43.

¹³⁰⁷ Lowell 2007b, 43.

being of Chinese and Japanese peoples. It was their birth-right, since the aesthetic perception and artistic skills were inherited and perfected from generation to generation.¹³⁰⁸

According to Percival Lowell, such “prevalence of artistic feeling” was a yet another proof of the impersonality and unoriginality of the Far Eastern nations. The “utter ignorance of science” signalled a lack of imagination, and so did the pervasiveness of art. The proposition sounded paradoxical, Lowell admitted, but as we have noted, he believed that (constructive) imagination was the requirement of science rather than art. As the Chinese and Japanese art demonstrated, art of the highest quality could be produced by a people having taste and delicacy, but neither of these had anything to do with imagination, Lowell claimed.¹³⁰⁹ Neither had art anything to do with personality. Science was “unpersonal”, emotionally appealing to nobody, Lowell explained, but art was “impersonal”, speaking in a universal language to the whole of humanity.¹³¹⁰ And if art itself was impersonal, then Far Eastern art¹³¹¹ was distinctly so. This was evident from its main subjects: nature, religion, and humour, he argued. The first demonstrated the concrete impersonality of the Chinese and Japanese – a keen sensitivity to natural beauty being a particular trait of the latter nation; the second showed their abstract impersonality; and the third ridiculed personality in general.¹³¹²

¹³⁰⁸ Lowell 2007b, 42–43, 46, 56. Also Griffis and Hearn were eager to affirm the Japanese propensity for art. Griffis lauded the “latent artistic impulses”, with which the Heavenly Father had “endowed his Japanese child,” and Lafcadio Hearn described the “soul of the race” as “essentially artistic.” In comparison with the Japanese artistic qualities, the Occidentals were savages, Hearn opined. (Griffis 2006b, 153, 162; Hearn 1894a, 168; Hearn 1894b, 436). Anna Jackson has argued that American observers had a tendency to praise Japanese art, and thus attack the European claims to cultural supremacy. (Jackson 1992, 246.) But perhaps their main target was industrialisation. Hearn, for example, deplored how Japanese art was suffering under the influence of the “utilitarian ugliness,” sameness, uninterestingness, detestableness, and commonplaceness of Western taste and cheap industrial production. (Hearn 1894a, 9, 129; Hearn 1894b, 350.) On the other hand, Samuel Williams emphatically denied the artistry of the Chinese, finding them deficient in music, sculpture, and particularly painting. The Chinese works of art he described as rude, odd, and mediocre. (Williams 1913b, 105–107.) Apparently, Samuel Williams’ view on Chinese artistic abilities was the majority view, for the earlier appreciative attitude of the Westerners towards Chinese art had been steadily deteriorating throughout the 19th century. And neither did the Japanese art receive such unqualified praise as could be inferred from the statements of the Japan experts. Some Western critics thought that Japanese art was not ‘high art’, and that it was much lower in the scale of artistic development than European art. (Goody 2010, 127; Jackson 1992, 247–248.)

¹³⁰⁹ Lowell 2007b, 46, 75–76, 78.

¹³¹⁰ Lowell 2007b, 46.

¹³¹¹ Lafcadio Hearn agreed that Japanese art was impersonal, since it was the Buddhist way to look at things without their individuality. Also, the Japanese artistic instinct and the emotion of beauty were impersonal and collective, rather than individualistic, for they were an inheritance from past generations. (Hearn 1894a, 10; Hearn 1894b, 535; Hearn 1896b, 57–60.)

¹³¹² Lowell 2007b, 46, 78. Griffis and Hearn also emphasised the relationship between the Japanese people, their art, and nature. Hearn argued that while in the West the aesthetic love for nature had been a modern sentiment, developed through civilization, in the Far East it had been so since ancient times. (Griffis 2006b, 37, 153; Hearn 1914, 214–215.) Anna Jackson has pointed out that the Victorian era Western observers typ-

In assessing the defects in the scientific thinking of the artistic Chinese and Japanese, Percival Lowell came to the conclusion that East Asians were incapable of forming and grasping abstract ideas, and that they also had a very “limited reasoning power”. Together these two defects had resulted into a situation where the “would-be far-eastern science” was nothing but funny and comical.¹³¹³ The majority of our experts, in fact, seemed to agree with Lowell that Chinese and Japanese science was not really science, or to be taken seriously. This was often accompanied with the claim that real sciences, such as had been developed in Europe, were unknown or unimaginable for the Chinese and Japanese. For example, both Percival Lowell and Samuel Williams presented chemistry to be a science that had never entered the “Far Oriental,” or “Tartar,” mind.¹³¹⁴

William Martin, on the other hand, thought that sciences were gradually evolving, and so he argued that modern European chemistry and ancient Chinese alchemy were actually two “different stages in the progress of the same science”. Alchemy stood for the science in its infancy, being an “occult science,” which had been “nursed on the bosom of superstition,” that is, of Daoism.¹³¹⁵ Alchemy and alchemists had existed in the West as well, and indeed might still do in places, he believed, but they had originated in China. Martin granted that the leading objects of alchemy were such as to suggest themselves to any human mind anywhere, but the extravagant style and language of the alchemists were “so unlike the sobriety of thought characteristic of the Western mind,” that the origin of that science could not be in the West. It must have originated “in the fervid fancy of an Oriental people,” Martin asserted, and more probably in China than in India.¹³¹⁶ Europeans had then succeeded in emancipating alchemy from “puerile fancies,” and gestating it into its mature form of chemistry. Chemistry was a real science, claiming “the realm of nature for its domain, and the laws of matter as its proper study,” Martin defined.¹³¹⁷

ically regarded such intuitive aesthetic relationship with nature as a sign of primitiveness, or childlikeness. Thus, by representing the Japanese as having such relationship with nature, the Westerners simultaneously represented them as childlike, undeveloped, and intuitive – that is, the exact opposite of the rational, introspective, and mature Westerners. (Jackson 1992, 249).

¹³¹³ Lowell 1895, 328–329.

¹³¹⁴ Lowell 2007b, 42–43; Williams 1913b, 118.

¹³¹⁵ Martin 1881, 167, 174, 177–178. Martin traced the roots of alchemy first and foremost to Daoism. According to Martin, man’s desire to prolong his life and amass wealth had led the Chinese to study matter and nature, and in the end, these studies had resulted into alchemy, as well as into “botany, mineralogy, and geography”. (Martin 1881, 174–177; Martin 1894, 264.)

¹³¹⁶ Martin 1881, 190–191; Martin 1901a, 48–49.

¹³¹⁷ Martin 1881, 167, 186–187. When William Martin claimed that modern Western sciences had originated in China, he was probably implying that the Chinese should have no objection in adopting them, as they were rooted in the Chinese traditions and their assimilation would constitute only ‘a revival of lost art’. Some Chinese reformers made the same argument with the same intention in mind; while some Chinese, who resisted the adoption of Western forms of knowledge, made the same argument in order to show that the Chinese had consciously refused to follow this path before, and therefore they should reject that path also in the future. (Howland 1996, 202–203.)

A similar division between Chinese superstitious understanding and European scientific learning was made by our experts regarding astrology and astronomy. Samuel Williams described the astronomy of the Chinese as astrological rather than scientific, and in fact, as “anything but an exact science”. The 16th and 17th century Jesuit missionaries had done much to further the Chinese knowledge of astronomy,¹³¹⁸ he thought, but when left to themselves, the Chinese had been incapable of acquiring any “real knowledge”, and of developing their learning into a science. The astronomical ideas of an everyday Chinese person were “vague and inaccurate”, in Williams’ opinion. The people had not been taught even the imperfect knowledge contained in the Chinese scientific works, and hence they still believed “the earth to be a plain surface.” Meanwhile, the professional astronomers clung onto a “fanciful system” of superstitions and “abracadabra” against all evidence and reason, Williams opined. They studied the movements of heavenly bodies not for scientific purposes, but for purposes of the state, calendar making, denoting time, divination, horoscopes, and for selecting opportune days for significant acts in life. The government had monopolised “the management of the superstitions of the people,” and kept on speculating upon the calamities and misfortunes the changes in the sky forebode, thus intentionally perpetuating the “folly and ignorance among the people” in order to maintain the reverence people felt towards them, Williams concluded.¹³¹⁹

If Chinese astronomical notions seemed vague, Williams claimed, then their geographical knowledge was “ridiculous”. The Chinese maps were fairly well-informed, having been drawn up by the Jesuits, he explained, but geography was not part of the school curriculum. The everyday Chinese were thus ignorant of their empire, let alone the rest of the world; and their ideas about the various peoples which inhabited it were “equally whimsical”. And as for the art of maritime navigation, it had rather “retrograded” in China, not advanced.¹³²⁰ Geography as such was of little interest to the Chinese, all three China experts observed, but the relationship the Chinese believed to exist between geography and good or bad fortune was a whole another story. This geomantic relationship the Chinese referred to as *fengshui*,¹³²¹ or wind and water. It took its name after “the elements that most frequently form the vehicle for

¹³¹⁸ Martin also noted that in “astronomy and mathematics, all honor is due to the labors of the Catholic missionaries”. He noted, however, that the medieval astronomical tenets these pioneers of Western science had introduced were essentially defective, and so 19th century Chinese textbooks still placed the Earth at the centre of the universe. (Martin 1881, 279–280.)

¹³¹⁹ Williams 1913a, 436; Williams 1913b, 72–74, 76, 79–80.

¹³²⁰ Williams 1913b, 80–81.

¹³²¹ *Feng shui* was essentially a belief that the lives, wealth, and health of people are affected by the landscapes in which they live. In planning significant acts, such as burials, or building houses, people usually sought the advice of a geomancer to ascertain the most congenial place to perform that act. Foreigners settling outside the Chinese treaty ports built railways, homes, schools, churches, and a host of other buildings, whilst rarely paying heed to the geomantic beliefs of the Chinese, and this tended to cause friction and inflame conflicts throughout the latter half of the 19th century. (Fried 1987, 95.)

good or evil luck,” William Martin explicated. He characterized geomancy as “a false science, with libraries to expound it and professors to teach it,” bearing to geology “a relation similar to that which astrology bears to astronomy.” Similarly, Samuel Williams emphasised that, although the Chinese regarded geomancy as the most significant of all sciences, it was a travesty of science rather than truly a science.¹³²²

William Martin described *feng shui* as a “debasement offshoot of a degenerate Taoism”, which was as “complex as the cabala and as pernicious as witchcraft”. Meanwhile, Samuel Williams pointed out that it influenced all learning, religions, customs, and superstitions in China, with any peculiar event being explained by its principles. Williams went on to note that *feng shui* had come to involve quite a number of other Chinese sciences too – cosmogony, natural philosophy, and biology, at least so far as the Chinese had these sciences, he added. William Martin pointed out that geomancy was used in politics, and Arthur Smith noted its prevalence among “the leading literary men of the empire”. Because of the power it wielded over all aspects of Chinese life – past, present, and future – geomancy was definitely not a harmless pastime, Williams maintained. Rather, it was a “source of terror” to all men.¹³²³

According to Samuel Williams, mathematics was another branch of learning in which the Chinese had notably benefited from knowledge imparted by Jesuit missionaries. The Chinese had text-books on geometry, trigonometry, logarithms, and algebra modelled after European works, but again, the Chinese had progressed only slowly once they had been left to their own devices. Williams therefore believed that 19th century Chinese intellectuals generally knew very little about mathematics, and the other two China experts were of the same opinion. Arthur Smith claimed that: “the greater their learning, the less fitted do the Chinese seem to be, in a mathematical way”; while William Martin suspected that the scholarly elite scorned the subject, due to its use in business and trade. Among the common people in China, knowledge of mathematics was next to non-existent, Smith and Williams believed. All in all, Williams thought that the Chinese could make more headway in the subject only with the help of the foreigners and application of Western sciences.¹³²⁴

The Japanese mathematical training did not fare any better, at least in Percival Lowell’s estimation. Lowell described the Japanese mathematics as being based on Jesuit teachings, and consisting of merely “a set of empiric rules,” which the teacher did not know how to explain, and the pupil therefore had no hope of understanding.¹³²⁵ As for physics, Lowell assumed that the science was unknown to either the Japanese or Chinese; while Martin thought that Chinese

¹³²² Martin 1881, 264; Martin 1900, 41; Williams 1913b, 245–246. William Griffis contrasted Japanese superstitions with *feng shui* and argued that: “The Japanese fancy does not seem to have reached that depth of disease, to have suffered with that delirium tremens of superstition, such as inthralls and paralyzes the Chinese, and prevents all modern progress. Feng Shuey is not a national curse in Japan, as it is in China; [...]”. (Griffis 1903, 473.)

¹³²³ Martin 1881, 264; Martin 1900, 41; Smith 1899, 314; Williams 1913b, 246.

¹³²⁴ Martin 1881, 27; Smith 1890, 119; Smith 1899, 104–105; Williams 1913b, 66–68.

¹³²⁵ Lowell 2007b, 43.

ideas concerning physics were methodologically flawed, based as they were on the “dual forces that generated the universe”, and a “preposterous classification of elements”. Chinese scholars seemed to accept these notions without understanding or questioning them, Martin claimed. He explained that the Chinese text-books stated, for example, that “the nature of water is to run downward,” but it had never occurred to the philosophers to “inquire why water flows downward.”¹³²⁶

In the field of Chinese natural sciences, Samuel Williams was particularly struck by the classification of animals into five categories: “the naked, hairy, feathered, shelly, and scaly tribes”; and the division of plants into “herbs, grains, vegetables, fruits, and trees”. Moreover, mythical creatures, such as the dragon, were serious topics of Chinese zoology, which all made it patently clear to Williams that the natural sciences in China were rude and unscientific. “Natural history, in its various branches of geology, botany, zoology” may have received some attention from Chinese writers, Williams concluded, but as sciences, however, none of them had an existence.¹³²⁷

Passing from the animal kingdom to humans, Williams noted the great number of medical treatises in China, many of them wholly worthy of examination, and full of “good sense and sound advice”.¹³²⁸ William Martin, too, pointed out that millennia of experience and practice in the treatment of diseases had resulted in “a number of useful remedies”, although they had been happened upon by chance, “not by research or science”.¹³²⁹ The overall scheme of Chinese medicine, however, both Samuel Williams and William Martin found utterly defective. They listed several reasons for this: Chinese inexperience in dissecting bodies, and their consequent ignorance of human body parts; dangerous medical doctrines, such as the principle that poison cures poison; and the use of magic alongside medicine.¹³³⁰

Williams emphasised that Chinese medicine was more of a superstition, than a science. He claimed that the Chinese had “not enough knowledge of medicine to appreciate the difference between science and charlatanism”, and that they were “almost as superstitious as the Hindus or North American Indi-

¹³²⁶ Lowell 2007b, 43; Martin 1881, 27–28; Martin 1894, 224–225.

¹³²⁷ Williams substantiated his claims by quoting Charles de Rémusat (1797–1875), who had written a paper on the Oriental natural sciences in 1828. In it, Rémusat had claimed that instead of examining and recording facts, Chinese scholars often resorted to speculation, which would then lead them to strange misjudgements and fallacies. Rémusat ultimately characterised the Chinese natural sciences as the “learned absurdities” of philosophers, added to “puerile prejudices” of the vulgar, and Williams appeared to agree with every word. (Williams 1913a, 342, 372, 374, 377–378; 1913b, 134.)

¹³²⁸ Williams 1913a, 297; Williams 1913b, 119, 123.

¹³²⁹ Martin 1900, 321.

¹³³⁰ Martin 1900, 321–322; Williams 1913b, 119. William Martin pronounced the Chinese even less proficient in the study of minds than in the study of bodies. He observed that they had no system of psychology, and thought that one of the top priorities of the Westerners was to introduce the subject to China, along with philosophy and other branches of learning studying the human mind. These sciences, he believed, would teach the Chinese to “investigate their own mental processes, to weigh arguments and try evidence”. (Martin 1881, 146–147, 283.)

ans" in matters relating to medicine. The Chinese may have refrained from using incantations and charms as cures, unlike the Hindus and Native Americans, Williams admitted, but they resorted to "many strange practices," nevertheless.¹³³¹ Not just the practices, but the theories of Chinese medicine were built on superstition. According to Samuel Williams and William Martin, the Chinese theories were often based on the unscientific system of five elements and the philosophy of yin and yang, and connected with Daoist and alchemist pursuits. However, Samuel Williams granted that generally the practice of Chinese medicine was "far in advance of their theory."¹³³² Martin was confident that of all the Western sciences imported to China, medicine was "destined to effect the speediest conquest". Already, Western medical science, often practised by medical missionaries, was assiduously dispelling the superstition and "quackery" of Chinese medicine, Martin argued.¹³³³

In Japan, Western medicine had already made considerable headway by the late 19th century. Along with astronomy, Western medicine had been one of the foreign sciences the Japanese had studied under the Dutch long before the arrival of Commodore Perry's squadron.¹³³⁴ At the time the Japan experts were writing their treatises, the Japanese medicine, or the medicine they had adopted from China, was gradually disappearing. Consequently, the experts had little to say about Japanese medicine, and the few comments they did make, echoed the other experts' views on Chinese medicine. Percival Lowell, for example, claimed that practitioners of the old medicine had lacked scientific zeal and knowledge. William Griffis, on the other hand, commended the Japanese for having made considerable improvements on the science they had borrowed from the Chinese.¹³³⁵

Finally, there was one field of learning, which was increasingly feeling the pressures of scientification in Europe and the US during the 19th century, but which some of the experts did not count as being a science as such - history.

¹³³¹ Williams 1913b, 118, 339.

¹³³² Martin 1900, 322; Williams 1913b, 121, 123, 133.

¹³³³ Martin 1900, 321-322. Here Martin touched on the controversial topic of associating Christian missions with the sciences. Because Martin was a firm advocate of using science and education to help convert the Chinese, he wrote approvingly about the medical missions. However, Smith had some misgivings about the "almost universal use of Western medicine as the handmaid of Christianity". He granted that medical missions had done much to remove Chinese prejudices towards the West, but reminded his readers that those prejudices nevertheless died hard. Despite countless successful treatments and operations, the Chinese continued to be suspicious of foreign medicine and hospitals. Smith's main fear lay in the fact that, since the missionaries represented both Western medicine and Christianity, any suspicion the Chinese felt towards one could easily be extended to the other. (Smith 1890, 262; Smith 1901a, 41-42.)

¹³³⁴ Beasley 1995, 23-24, 26. During the late Tokugawa period however, Western medicine was not entirely trusted upon, or officially sanctioned. But as Jason Ananda Josephson has noted, the Meiji government welcomed Western medicine as a tool for policing the health of its subjects and promulgating its ideologies, and consequently, from 1870 onwards, the state began to actively promote and enforce the study and practice of foreign medicine. (Josephson 2012, 145.)

¹³³⁵ Griffis 2006a, 235; Lowell 2007b, 54.

Samuel Williams noted the vast number and minutiae of Chinese histories,¹³³⁶ and wondered why the subject did not get the attention it deserved from Western scholars. He first asked this question in the original 1848 edition of *The Middle Kingdom*, but deemed it still valid in the revised 1883 edition. Williams claimed that, in general, Westerners considered Chinese history “extravagant and ridiculous”, and thus not worth studying. More crucially, he believed that the Chinese histories lacked credibility in the Western eyes because they were incompatible with the Mosaic chronology¹³³⁷. The Chinese historians claimed that the world had existed “myriads of years”, they traced the succession of their dynasties “far beyond the creation”, and they ascribed to their ancient monarchs a “longevity that carries its own confutation on its face”. Interestingly, according to Williams, the Chinese historical learning was not so much discredited for conflicting with scientific methods, but for conflicting with biblical notation of time.¹³³⁸

Williams also listed what foreign readers might find repellent about Chinese history writing: the profusion of “insignificant details”; the blend of “sense and nonsense”; and the tendency to begin with the foundations for a “just argument”, only to end it with a “tremendous *non-sequitur*”. Nevertheless, Williams called for “a Gibbon or a Niebuhr”¹³³⁹ to step forward and, through studying these texts, write a comprehensive history of China. Such a history would not only aid foreigners in understanding China and the Chinese, but would shed light on the whole history of mankind, Williams believed. In addition, it

¹³³⁶ Also William Martin noted that there were countless historical texts in China. This mass of accurate and minute chronologies was “an inexhaustible mine of curious and useful information” that was respected by the people, and unparalleled by any other nation, he stated. Martin saw history writing as an “expression of national life”, and claimed that Chinese historical literature was a clear indication as to the greatness of the nation. (Martin 1881, 20, 194.)

¹³³⁷ The notion of a “Mosaic chronology”, to which Samuel Williams referred, dated from the Reformation. For example, in Martin Luther’s chronology, the Creation – starting point of the chronology – was dated to 4000 B.C. Such reckoning of time went largely unchallenged through the 16th and 17th centuries, until in the Enlightenment era, some philosophers shifted away from the Biblical chronology, and instead, attempted to determine earth’s age by scientific inquiry and experiments. Studies on geological time and paleontology soon challenged the Mosaic chronology by presenting findings about the earth’s age, which conflicted with the date Luther had set for Creation. However, a conservative religious reaction ensured that the Mosaic history did not lose its grip altogether. But as the 19th century progressed, it became increasingly difficult to defend the proposition that earth was only few thousand years old. (Burchfield, Joe, *Lord Kelvin and the Age of the Earth*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990: pp. 4–9.)

¹³³⁸ Williams 1848b, 193; Williams 1913b, 135–136. Williams, himself, evidently adhered to biblical time, as in his history of China he frequently compared Chinese chronology to biblical events and characters, such as the Creation, Deluge, Noah, and the Tower of Babel. (Williams 1913b, 137, 143–144.)

¹³³⁹ In the 1848 edition of *The Middle Kingdom*, the models Samuel Williams proposed for the project were two German historians: A. H. L. Heeren (1760–1842) and Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776–1831). In the 1882 edition Williams replaced Heeren with the English historian Edward Gibbon, the author of the popular historical treatise: *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, which was published between 1776 and 1788. (Williams 1848b, 193.)

would lead to fairer comparisons of East and West, and a better understanding of the merits of both.¹³⁴⁰

Writing in 1890, Arthur Smith did not detect any Western reluctance towards studying Chinese historical texts. In fact, he acknowledged that the opposite was the case. Many Western writers seemed to “feel the greatest admiration” for them, he felt, placing “unrestricted confidence in their statements”. This truthfulness and accuracy of the Chinese histories the Westerners contrasted with the “generally sanctioned license in lying and dissimulation,” which they believed to prevail in China. Arthur Smith himself, however, appeared to be sceptical that a nation of liars such as the Chinese could “furnish successive generations of historiographers who are reverent of the truth.” To him, the proposition appeared singular and unprecedented, and he suggested that it was more likely that “the same passions which have distorted the history of other lands” also operated in China.¹³⁴¹

Considering the unscientific characteristics Smith had attributed to the Chinese, such as their “disregard of accuracy,” it was perhaps to be expected that he would not find their historical accounts accurate and honest. But ultimately, what Smith meant was that these accounts were inaccurate insofar as they failed to explain historical events, and analyse the character and motives of historical actors.¹³⁴² In other words, Smith implied that even if the Chinese could carefully jot down events and make chronologies, they could not write ‘proper’, analytical and interpretive, history. William Martin expressed similar criticism of Chinese historical accounts, but unlike Smith, he explicitly denied that history was a science. Although the discipline of history was a search for truth, the materials of history were too indefinite for one to make any scientific deductions from them, he claimed. And hence he preferred to follow Francis Bacon’s (1561–1626) definition that history was “philosophy teaching by example”.¹³⁴³

Judged by Western standards of philosophical criticism, rather than by the standards of scientific inquiry, William Martin then declared that the Chinese had chronicles, but not histories. For him, Chinese history writing contained nothing that could be called philosophy of history, and the Chinese historians compared poorly with their European counterparts:

¹³⁴⁰ Williams 1848a, 98; Williams 1848b, 193–195; Williams 1913a, 120; Williams 1913b, 135–137. Like the other two China experts, Arthur Smith too observed that no nation had “a greater regard for antiquity than the Chinese”, and noted that the ancient Chinese had an “instinct of preserving records of the past.” Although it was clear to him that these records were “comprehensive”, the way they had been written was “antediluvian”. By antediluvian he meant that they went all the way back “to the ragged edge of zero for a point of departure”; were “interminable” in length; and indiscriminately covered all matters and events imaginable. Smith also found it “singularly inadequate” by Western standards that, in spite of their length, Chinese historical accounts did not cover more recent history. The reigning dynasty, for example, was not deemed a suitable object of study. (Smith 1890, 76–77, 147, 267; Smith 1899, 99.)

¹³⁴¹ Smith 1890, 267–268.

¹³⁴² Smith 1890, 268.

¹³⁴³ Martin 1894, 11.

They have no Hegel, who, after reconstructing the universe, applies his principles to explain the laws of human progress; no Gibbon or Montesquieu to trace the decay of an old civilisation; and no Guizot to sketch the rise of a new one. They have not even a Thucydides or a Tacitus, who can follow effects up to causes, and paint the panorama of an epoch.¹³⁴⁴

Martin believed that, unlike Western historians, the Chinese historians were “utterly incapable” of making “broad synthetic combinations” and of perceiving “the trend of colossal movements that sweep over whole nations and long centuries”. And as a consequence, they had failed to perceive the grand narratives in China’s history, and to draw analogies with the history of Europe.¹³⁴⁵ He believed the reason for this deficiency lay with Confucius, who had set a bad example for history, just as he had for science. The so-called “Father of History” had misled his followers to believe that keeping diaries amounted to writing history,¹³⁴⁶ and as a result, Chinese history writing had become a yet another example of a “noble art” that the Chinese had invented, but which had “remained ever after in a state of arrested development”.¹³⁴⁷

The Chinese style of writing history had also washed up on the shores of Japan¹³⁴⁸, so a lot of the criticism Japanese history faced was the same.¹³⁴⁹ In *The Mikado’s Empire*, William Griffis stated that the Japanese were “intensely proud”, and took “great care in making and preserving records”.¹³⁵⁰ But the Japanese attitude towards their own history was not the attitude of the “cold-blooded foreigner,” Griffis cautioned. A foreign scholar took a critical and analytical stance to the Japanese records, looked for truth, and submitted his findings in prose; while to the Japanese their country was “the Land of Gods”, its primitive past holy and inhabited by divinities, and its history “all poetry, lovelier than a fairy tale,” and until recently, a religion.¹³⁵¹ History was the “surest ground for

¹³⁴⁴ Martin 1894, 11–12.

¹³⁴⁵ According to William Martin, the grand narratives of Chinese history had been: the conquest of China by first the Chinese; then the Tartars; and the struggle between the centripetal and centrifugal forces of the empire. The first narrative described how the superior civilization of the Chinese conquered the country that then became theirs, by either assimilating or banishing the weaker races, much like Rome in the West. The second narrative was the Manchu invasion, which to Martin, resembled the “successive sackings of Rome by Gaul and Vandal” and the “conquest of Italy by Barbarians from the North”. Finally, the conflict between centripetal and centrifugal forces was a narrative waiting for some future Henry Hallam to show that “Feudalism, which formed such a conspicuous stage in the development of modern Europe”, also played an “equally prominent part in the History of China”. (Martin 1894, 14–17, 19.)

¹³⁴⁶ Martin 1894, 11–14. In general, the objective of Chinese histories, written within a Confucian frame, was to explain the cyclical patterns of rising and declining dynasties, and to assess the extent to which any particular dynasty had enjoyed the so-called Mandate of Heaven, or the divine right to rule (Marcus 1961, 133).

¹³⁴⁷ Martin 1894, 13.

¹³⁴⁸ Beasley 1995, 14.

¹³⁴⁹ For example, Percival Lowell claimed that Japanese historical works were merely “elaborate lists of facts”, that may have been typographically imposing, but were “not even formally important”, while the reasoning in them was “as exquisite a bit of scientific satire as could well be imagined”. (Lowell 2007b, 43).

¹³⁵⁰ Griffis 2006a, 29.

¹³⁵¹ Griffis 1892, 25, 42–43; Griffis 2006a, 100.

prophecy" regarding future, and hence an important subject for study, William Griffis maintained. But he warned his readers not to take as real the accounts of the Japanese historians, and advised them to interpret the Japanese historical materials for themselves.¹³⁵²

Unlike William Martin, Griffis did not think it was Confucianism that was holding Japanese historians back, but rather political restraints. He explained that during the Tokugawa Era, the Japanese freedom of inquiry had been substantially curbed by the government: a rigid censorship had been exercised; study of ancient history, which could have exposed the origin of the Shogunate, had been "forbidden to the vulgar, and discouraged among the higher"; and a ban had been placed on publications treating contemporary history. Such constraints had effectively "dried the life-blood of many a master spirit," and produced a vast amount of "false and garbled histories which extolled the reigning dynasty, or glorified the dual system of government," Griffis opined.¹³⁵³ In 1868 the Meiji government had superseded the Tokugawa government, but the restrictions had not been lifted, Griffis noted. They had only been shifted from the study of Shogunate to the study of the emperor. "It is still dangerous in Japan to write in criticism of the origin of the Mikado's house," Griffis wrote in 1899, and hence "[f]ull-grown natives who profess to be educated" refrained from all critical research, and continued to produce histories propagating official truths, even when they knew those truths to be forged.¹³⁵⁴

Here Griffis approached the point he regarded as perhaps the main problem with Japanese history writing: the careless blending of truth, fable, and mythology. He remarked that the ancient Japanese historical records, *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* (or *Nihon shoki*, *Chronicles of Japan*), contained much that was "fabulous, mythical, or exaggerated", or the "stuff of which fairy tales are made". Griffis was aware that a staunch patriot or Shintoist may well have accepted such records as genuine history, but "in the cold, clear eye of an alien" they were merely "inventions of men shaped to exalt the imperial family".¹³⁵⁵ Lowell, too, described these records as collections of "facts and fictions about the national past". They were histories "of a far-oriental kind", starting with gods and

¹³⁵² Griffis 1892, 42.

¹³⁵³ Griffis 2006a, 28, 344.

¹³⁵⁴ Griffis 1892, 43, Griffis 1900, 93–94. Griffis explained that when "the government says that Jimmu Tenno, the first Mikado, 'ascended the throne' B. C. 660, or 2,552 years ago, every Japanese is expected to believe it". The only way for the Japanese to conduct research "with critical care", as the Europeans did, and to escape punishment for doing so, was to present their findings in English, German, or French (Griffis 1892, 43). By mentioning the political constraints, Griffis seemed to acknowledge that Japanese scholars were well aware of the requirements for critical scholarship, but prevented from engaging in it. Western historical methods had been introduced to Japan; for example, Ludwig Riess (1861–1982) was invited to help the Japanese modernise their Chinese studies. Riess, a protégé of the father of modern historiography, Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), taught Western historical methods at the University of Tokyo from 1887 onwards, and within a few years Japanese students started to radically revise the study of Chinese history (Wright 1960, 248).

¹³⁵⁵ Griffis 1892, 42; Griffis 2006a, 26–27, 49, 418.

ending with men, although the gods had never really left the scene of Japanese history, Lowell added.¹³⁵⁶

The same problem bore down on the Chinese history writing, Arthur Smith argued. Due to the characteristic “disregard for foundations”, the Chinese scholars rarely knew “fact from fiction,” Smith opined. Neither did they discern history and mythology, for they had “shingled backward into the fogs of antiquity, for some thousands of years”, and had “never detected the point where the roof of history, and the fog of myth unite,” Smith concluded.¹³⁵⁷ Not knowing myth from history was a serious reproach¹³⁵⁸ on the Chinese and Japanese histories. The distinction between myth and truth was one of the main principles of Western historiography. During the 19th century, this principle was coupled with the insistence on critical methods,¹³⁵⁹ which was again something the experts found lacking in the Chinese and Japanese practice of history.

In the end, majority of the experts appeared to be very much of the same opinion: Chinese and Japanese history writing was not truly history. All this amounted to a theft of history of sorts. Arguably, it was different from the theft of history we discussed earlier. The statement the experts made, that the Chinese and Japanese had only chronologies and no history, was not necessarily meant to deprive China and Japan of change and progress – that is, of history – in the sense Hegel had done when he represented China as ahistorical.¹³⁶⁰ Probably the statement was also not meant to deprive the Chinese and Japanese history of their worth, as Herder had done in claiming that only the dynamic European history was worthy of study and consideration. Or as Leopold von Ranke had done in conceiving the history of the world as synonymous with the history of the peoples of Western and Central Europe, and characterising the history of the Chinese, “the people of eternal standstill,” as only “natural history,” not the history of men, and thus irrelevant for historical studies.¹³⁶¹ Quite the contrary, the experts appeared to hold the undertaking as valuable and conducive for the understanding of world history.

But what the statement did imply was that the Chinese and Japanese lacked the scientific and philosophical abilities necessary for writing history, and hence they could only write chronologies. The task of composing a ‘true’ history of these nations was waiting for a foreign historian, who alone possessed the necessary qualifications for the enterprise, as William Griffis ar-

¹³⁵⁶ Lowell 1895, 251–252.

¹³⁵⁷ Smith 1890, 120–121; Smith 1899, 100.

¹³⁵⁸ In the light of contemporary theories of intellectual development, it could be interpreted as an even heavier reproach on the Chinese and Japanese intellectual development. For example, E. B. Tylor had weaved his theory of cultural evolution around the notion of development of knowledge and reason. In Tylor’s scheme, myths belonged to a primitive stage of knowledge, or a stage in which people based their thinking on false logical premises. (Schrempf 1983, 92–94.)

¹³⁵⁹ Iggers 1997, 1–2, 14, 25, 27.

¹³⁶⁰ Wright 1960, 245. For example, Michael Adas has argued that the usual 19th century account of history of civilised peoples was a narrative of progress and advancement, while the history of less civilised or barbarous peoples was regarded as “a dreary chronology of endless cycles of decline and recovery”. (Adas 1989, 196–197.)

¹³⁶¹ Clifford 2001, 26; Iggers 1997, 30; Wright 1960, 241.

gued.¹³⁶² In other words, as far as history writing was concerned, the experts wielded from China and Japan their right to represent themselves, and asserted the Western power of representation over the Chinese and Japanese. In doing so, the experts also engaged in a 'theft of history' in the sense Jack Goody has introduced the term: they took European history – its categorisations, periodisation, and concepts – as the norm¹³⁶³ by which they then examined Chinese and Japanese histories.

On one hand, this could lead to seeing non-European history as an exception¹³⁶⁴ from the universal trend of history, that is, from European history. For example, Samuel Williams tended to regard Chinese history as a separate stream of history, isolated from the world history.¹³⁶⁵ On the other hand, it could lead to the thought that non-European was parallel to European history, and that the concepts of European history were just as appropriate for the histories of China and Japan. For example, Williams recounted the history of China according to Mosaic chronology; William Griffis and Lafcadio Hearn found certain Japanese periods, events, and ideas analogous to Greek and Roman Antiquity, to Middle Ages, and Feudalism; and Griffis treated these categories as if they were necessary steps in the progress of history.¹³⁶⁶ The appropriation of the power to represent China and Japan, and the tendency of the experts to narrate Chinese and Japanese history using the European historical framework, both conform to Edward Said's notions of Orientalism. As Nicholas Clifford has explained Said's views, the attempt to incorporate Oriental history to the world history effectively gave the command of Oriental history to the Europeans, and made Orient an "appendage" of Europe.¹³⁶⁷

6.2 Eastern and Western traditions in education

In the last chapter we noted that our six experts considered Chinese and Japanese religions, or beliefs, to be superstition, and as we have just seen, they had this opinion of their science too. Consequently, William Griffis noted that the uneducated classes of Japan, in particular, lived in a world shrouded with mystery. "With no religion but that of paganism and fetichism, armed without by no weapons of science, strengthened within by no knowledge of the Creator-father", they had few means to explain their surroundings, he felt.¹³⁶⁸ William

¹³⁶² Griffis 2006a, 26, 418.

¹³⁶³ Goody 2010, 1, 6–7.

¹³⁶⁴ Jack Goody has mentioned the idea of "Oriental despotism" as an example of such narrative of non-European exceptionalism, and according to Nicholas Clifford, Westerners were quick to note that the familiar signposts of European history, such as Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment, were conspicuously absent from the Chinese history. (Clifford 2001, 26; Goody 2010, 2–4.)

¹³⁶⁵ Williams 1913b, 143.

¹³⁶⁶ See e.g. Griffis 1892, 62, 104; Griffis 2006a, 245; Griffis 2006b, 71–72, 84; Hearn 1894a, ix, viii, 157, 210; Hearn 1894b, 390, 394; Hearn 1895, 291, 297; Hearn 1896b, 176, 193.

¹³⁶⁷ Clifford 2001, 27.

¹³⁶⁸ Griffis 1903, 477–478.

Martin and Arthur Smith described the situation in China in a similar fashion. Superstitious misconceptions of the causes of natural phenomena reigned in the minds of the Chinese and thwarted any material progress.¹³⁶⁹ Martin suggested that the only influence capable of abolishing the superstitions and magic arts among the Chinese was “the diffusion of just ideas as to the laws of nature,” that is, the diffusion of science. Science was to be diffused through scientific literature, and more significantly, through public education, for public education was the “omnipotent enemy of superstition,” Martin, Hearn, and Griffis trusted.¹³⁷⁰

The ‘education’ that the experts had in mind was not of the Chinese or Japanese variety, since the existing educational system was riddled with ‘superstitious practices’ as they saw it. The Chinese system of education attracted almost as much critical attention from the China experts as the Chinese systems of faith. Samuel Williams’ account of Chinese education in the 1883 edition of *The Middle Kingdom* was only a slightly modified version of the account he had presented in the original 1848 edition. He credited the Chinese for having understood the importance of education at a historically early stage, before many other nations. But in spite of the thoroughness of the Chinese system with all its various merits, Williams felt it was not to be compared with the education of the “modern Christian countries”, for there was “really no common measure between the two”.¹³⁷¹

Chinese education consisted of reading and learning classical works, histories, and the precepts for social duties. The lot of a teacher was to “teach the same series of books in the same fashion in which he learned them himself”, Williams explained, while the lot of the student was to commit everything to memory. The great end of this education was “not so much to fill the head with knowledge, as to discipline the heart and purify the affections” he claimed. In other words, the goal was to make students reverent towards Confucius and obedient towards the government.¹³⁷² To that end, Williams thought, the contents and mode of study were well-fitted, but otherwise the system was seriously defective in its “extent, means, purposes, and results”. Chinese education gave the students little in the way of mental nourishment, Williams lamented.¹³⁷³ Rather, it weakened, unbalanced, and circumscribed their intellect, moulded it “like the trees which their gardeners so toilsomely dwarf into pots and jars—plants, whose unnaturalness is congruous to the insipidity of their fruit”. In other words, the system confined students’ knowledge to the classics, taught them to reason in circles, and left no room for original or independent thinking. His conclusion was that this encouraged the Chinese to be imitative and slavishly adhere to “venerated usage and dictation”.¹³⁷⁴

¹³⁶⁹ Martin 1881, 280–281; Smith 1899, 171.

¹³⁷⁰ Griffis 1892, 182, 190–191; Hearn 1894a, 341; Martin 1881, 280–281; Martin 1894, 92.

¹³⁷¹ Williams 1848a, 421, 434; Williams 1913a, 519–520, 546.

¹³⁷² Williams 1848a, 424, 427–429; Williams 1913a, 523, 526, 528, 556.

¹³⁷³ Williams 1848a, 434; Williams 1913a, 529, 546; Williams 1913b, 370.

¹³⁷⁴ Williams 1848a, 422, 426, 431; Williams 1913a, 520, 524, 541–542, 554, 556; Williams 1913b, 370.

Williams lay the blame for this state of affairs at the feet of Confucius and Mencius. As remarkable as those teachings were, they were quite inappropriate as the basis for a sound education, he thought. Confucius and Mencius had done all that was possible “to make their countrymen thinking, useful, and intelligent men”, he admitted, but they had left the system wanting for “more truth” and “better science”.¹³⁷⁵ And as the Chinese empire had remained isolated from the outside world, Chinese intellectuals had no means of learning “the best thoughts of foreign minds”, and consequently they had remained ignorant of “other races, ages, and lands” as well as other “conceptions of morals, science, and politics.” Lack of knowledge was the “evil” and “misfortune” resulting from the Chinese isolation, Williams concluded.¹³⁷⁶

In the early 1880s, William Martin addressed the subject of Chinese education in *The Chinese: Their Education, Philosophy, and Letters*. Martin explained that the Chinese educational curriculum consisted of the Five Classics and Four Books,¹³⁷⁷ besides which not much else was taught. The classics were thought to contain all the knowledge that was needed, and so, Martin argued, the Chinese did “nothing to extend the boundaries of human knowledge”. All in all, the idea of progressive knowledge was foreign to them, he asserted. He believed the educational objectives of the system to be largely the same as Williams had thought, namely to mould the character, to inculcate practical morality, to foster unquestioning submission to superiors, and finally, to instruct the students in the composition of the perfectly polished and decidedly unoriginal ‘eight-legged essay’. The last goal, Martin believed, effectively rendered the Chinese education superficial, as not much but “empty glitter.”¹³⁷⁸

The ancient sages had contributed more to letters than science, Martin felt, and hence the students following in their footsteps had also occupied themselves more with words and literary pursuits. As a result, the Chinese seemed to put little value on the sciences and, as far as he could see, “no science whatever” was really on offer in their academies and educational institutions. It was not that the teaching of sciences was actually prohibited in schools; it was just that the teachers were not up to the task, in his opinion. Such a system may have produced great historians, philosophers, novelists, and poets, but it had failed to produce scholars well-versed in the scientific methods. Accordingly, Martin judged the whole “standard of intellectual merit” in China to be false.¹³⁷⁹

¹³⁷⁵ Williams 1913a, 546, 556.

¹³⁷⁶ Williams argued that Chinese academic ignorance of anything beyond the classics was one of the main reasons for China’s “conceit, ignorance, and arrogance as to its power, resources, and comparative influence”. (Williams 1913a, 568).

¹³⁷⁷ Martin 1900, 59–60. Martin’s “Five Classics” were: the *Book of History* (Book of Documents); the *Book of Changes* (I Ching), “an absurd system of divination”, which he thought had caused more “obstructive superstition” in China than any other book; the *Book of Odes* (Classic of Poetry); the *Annals of Lu* (Spring and Autumn Annals); and the *Book of Rites*, which was a “collection of court etiquette, social usages, and religious ritual”. As for the “Four Books”, these were: the *Analects or Sayings of Confucius* (Analects); the *Great Study* (Great Learning); the *Just Mean* (Doctrine of the Mean); and the *Discourses of Mencius* (Mencius).

¹³⁷⁸ Martin 1881, 18, 63, 65, 70, 206.

¹³⁷⁹ Martin 1881, 18, 51, 61, 94.

Like Williams, Martin believed the system was geared against original and independent thinking, discouraged inventiveness, and smothered the spirit of inquiry. In this “land of uniformity”, teachers who, in his opinion, had “never had a dozen thoughts” in all their lives taught the students a fixed course of study, with methods lacking all “tact and originality”. All that was required from the students was “sheer memory!” Martin exclaimed. They merely memorised books “in a dead language”, with little understanding of the actual meaning of what they read.¹³⁸⁰ Martin concluded that this was nothing like the education as practised in “our modern schools”, and that Chinese degree qualifications thus bore only a faint resemblance to Western degrees.¹³⁸¹

Around a decade later, Arthur Smith more or less reiterated the views of Williams and Martin on Chinese education. He noted the reliance on Classics as the sole text-books for the nation; the Chinese curriculum that made the students intellectually “obtuse” and their minds “ill-balanced”; and the irrational ends and methods of study. On the whole, such system was a gigantic “intellectual infanticide,” Smith alleged, and he also blamed the schools for giving rise to conservatism.¹³⁸² They were surrounded by multitudes of uneducated,¹³⁸³ “very poor and very ignorant” Chinamen, whose horizon was so narrow that the lot of “intellectual turbidity” fell on them inescapably. Arthur Smith explicated:

Their existence is merely that of a frog in a well, to which even the heavens appear only as a strip of darkness. [...] In many of them even the instinctive curiosity common to all the races, seems dormant or blighted. [...] They know how to struggle for an existence, and they know nothing else.¹³⁸⁴

The ignorance of the uneducated was accompanied by a blind, humble, and almost idolatrous respect for learning, Smith remarked. An uneducated Chinese youth knew that he knew nothing, and that he would never know anything; and the bits of knowledge he did have, were the same as those of his ancestors. Thus, the “long, broad, black and hopeless shadow of practical Confucianism” fell over both the uneducated and the educated, condemning the former into a “lifetime of intellectual stagnation,” and the latter into narrow-mindedness and bigotry, Smith concluded.¹³⁸⁵

That the mass of the Chinese were uneducated was due to lack of universal public schooling, such as existed in the United States,¹³⁸⁶ William Martin

¹³⁸⁰ Martin 1881, 51, 63–65.

¹³⁸¹ Martin 1881, 51, 78–79.

¹³⁸² Smith 1890, 129, 135, 152–153, 323, 385–386; Smith 1894, 163–165; Smith 1899, 78, 81, 91–93, 95–96, , 105–106.

¹³⁸³ William Martin noted that the Western peoples tended to have a false impression on this issue, believing that education was universal in China, and that “even coolies are taught to read and write”. This impression he tried to correct by explaining that the Chinese and Westerners had very different definitions of literacy. (Martin 1881, 74).

¹³⁸⁴ Smith 1890, 136.

¹³⁸⁵ Smith 1899, 133–134, 257, 313, 315–316.

¹³⁸⁶ After the Declaration of Independence, discussions on the philosophy, contents, methods, and aims of education had proliferated in the United States. The advocates of a uniform, standardized system of schools emphasised, for example, the influence

explained. The government did not value education for its own sake, but regarded it as the means to prepare and secure qualified and able officers for the state. By the same token, those students only valued learning as a means for employment in the civil service.¹³⁸⁷ The government encouraged learning, funded and supervised a few schools, and kept the Hanlin Academy, the highest educational institution of China,¹³⁸⁸ as a sort of government organ, and its elite scholars as a “body of civil functionaries.” But otherwise, education was “systematically left to private enterprise and public charity”, Martin said. As all education depended on private interest, there was no education for women, and only a little for the “more favored sex”, Martin argued.¹³⁸⁹ He was evidently an ardent advocate of the public school system, believing that education should be rooted to the national revenue, and extended to all classes of people.¹³⁹⁰

Overall, Smith, Williams, and Martin were of the same mind as to the inadequacy and defectiveness of the Chinese system of education. But there was one feature they disagreed on – the Chinese literary examinations. These examinations were the means by which the Chinese government singled out the best talent among the students, William Martin explained. They had “an air of Oriental display and exaggeration,” Martin admitted, and they suggested rather the “dust and sweat of the great national games of antiquity than the mental toil and intellectual triumphs of the modern world.” Nonetheless, Martin thought that these examinations were “the most admirable institution of the Chinese Empire,” and that they had been eminently successful in their objective. The

of education on social mobility. The advocates won the day and common schools were established during the period from 1830s to 1870s. These schools provided elementary education, and were open to all children in a given community. From approximately 1870s forward, students could proceed from the public elementary education to public secondary education, and then to colleges and universities. In general, the Americans had a high regard for their educational system. (Gutek 2013, 1, 4–6, 14, 25, 39–40, 45–47, 75, 77, 84, 90–91, 171–172; Lerner 1987, 733.)

¹³⁸⁷ Martin 1881, 10, 30, 75. Smith added that another Chinese motive for seeking education was the “desire for fame and for power”, and as these were in the hands of the literati and rich, and as learning was easier to acquire than wealth, aspiring youths would opt for education (Smith 1899, 132).

¹³⁸⁸ The Hanlin Academy was an elite scholarly institution established during the Tang dynasty in the 8th century, but by the 19th century, it had “degenerated into a mere appendage of the civil-service competitive examinations”, William Martin argued. As a result, its effect on the standard of national education had become “corrupting and debasing instead of advancing”. In characteristically colourful terms, Martin described it as a “relic”, its halls as “tombs”, and its staff as “living mummies”. (Martin 1881, 85, 90.)

¹³⁸⁹ Martin 1881, 16, 49, 71–72, 74; Martin 1900, 42.

¹³⁹⁰ Martin 1881, 73. To emphasise his point about the effectiveness of public schooling, Martin compared the literacy rates of China and the US. On average, those Chinese who could read, and understand what they were reading, did not “exceed one in twenty for the male sex and one in ten thousand for the female”, he estimated. In the US however, the educational statistics of 1870 showed that nationally, “the ratio of illiteracy among persons over ten years of age is 1 in 6; taking the Northern States alone, the ratio is [...] about 1 in 18”. (Martin 1881, 74–75.)

men selected as civil servants were “without exception the choicest specimens of the educated classes”, in his opinion.¹³⁹¹

William Martin remarked that the mandarins were so identified with “all that constitutes the intellectual life of the Chinese people,” that the foreigners had “come to regard them as a favored caste, like the Brahmins of India, or as a distinct order enjoying a monopoly of learning, like the priesthood in Egypt.” However, Martin hastened to add, they were “not possessors of hereditary rank” nor were they the subject of favouritism. They were the product instead of a meritocratic system, earning their position through the examinations. What could be “more truly democratic”, Martin pointed out, than to offer to everyone “the inspiration of a fair opportunity”?¹³⁹² Moreover, the examinations were a kind of safety-valve for the state, as they provided a career for those ambitious individuals, who otherwise might perhaps use their energy to incite revolutions and disturbances. They also served as a “counterpoise to the power of an absolute monarch”, and introduced “a popular element into the government”. All in all, the examinations upheld the government, tied the educated gentry to the service of the state, influenced education, and assisted the nation in maintaining “a respectable standard of civilization”, Martin concluded.¹³⁹³

The system was somewhat corrupt though, Martin pointed out, as the literary degrees were also sold. “A price was placed on them, and like the papal indulgences, they were vended throughout the Empire”, he stated. Hence, the principle of degrees being conferred on the basis of merit alone proved to be more an ideal than practice¹³⁹⁴. In addition, he acknowledged that the exams only measured students’ literary grasp of the Chinese Classics, not their scientific ability, or knowledge of anything outside China; and that the imitation of ancient models also encouraged conservatism to the detriment of other skills. All the same, Martin thought that the general tendency of foreigners to dismiss these exams offhandedly, and to hold them accountable for all Chinese intellectual defects¹³⁹⁵, was hasty and erroneous. He maintained that with the introduction of few improvements, such as Western science, the examination system was worth keeping.¹³⁹⁶

In fact, Martin claimed that the system was not just worth keeping, but should even be transplanted to the United States. He thought the organisation

¹³⁹¹ Martin 1881, 40–41, 49.

¹³⁹² Martin 1881, 41–42, 53–54.

¹³⁹³ Martin 1881, 43, 49, 53–54.

¹³⁹⁴ John K. Fairbank has argued that passing the examinations required many years of laborious and diligent study, which no ordinary peasant, no matter how intelligent, could afford. He has also pointed out that personal contacts in bureaucracy played a large role in entering the class of civil servants. (Fairbank 1961, 42).

¹³⁹⁵ Samuel Williams listed similar “important and beneficial results” of the Chinese examination system, but the drawbacks he detected were more numerous: the system bound all education to the service of the state; it diverted students from scientific research; and it was responsible for conservative attitudes. Williams also pointed out that, in reality, it was far from democratic or meritocratic. Also Arthur Smith noted the same “defects and malversations”, as he floridly put it, and he believed the system to be a barrier “to the national progress of China”. (Smith 1890, 37, 387; Smith 1899, 122–123, 134; Williams 1913a, 378–379, 546, 565–566, 568–569).

¹³⁹⁶ Martin 1881, 77, 81, 90; Martin 1900, 42–43.

of the American civil service system needed reform, or an “antidote for the corruptions of the spoils system”,¹³⁹⁷ so he suggested that something similar to the Chinese examinations should be engrafted on the American republican institutions. “The bare suggestion may perhaps provoke a smile;” and be considered derogatory for Western civilization, Martin continued, “but does any one smile at the idea that we might improve our polity by studying the institutions of Egypt, Rome, or Greece?” This would not be the first, nor the last, lesson the Americans could learn from China, Martin reminded. He believed that the system would, in fact, be “congenial to the spirit of our free government,” and would “yield better fruits” in the United States than in China. England, France, and Prussia had each introduced the competitive examinations to some branches of their civil service, while the Americans remained “tardy in its adoption,” Martin lamented.¹³⁹⁸

Overall, the amount of attention and detail William Martin devoted to the subject of Chinese education in his texts was natural, considering that he was well acquainted with the subject, and personally involved in the system. The subject itself was undoubtedly interesting to him, but it also seems that Martin was aware of how important education was in the national scheme of things. First of all, he was convinced that, in order to transform the Chinese system of education, one had to win over the literati. He recognised that the educated class had the ear of both the emperor and the people, and no new policy could be implemented without their approval.¹³⁹⁹ Arguably, Martin also understood that education was the key to altering society as a whole. He seemed to realise that education, along with the religious system, was the bedrock of Chinese society, and that if one wished to reform society, one had to start there. And that was precisely what Martin ultimately wished to do: to reform, or civilise, the Chinese nation. Hence, he was keen to pinpoint both the weaknesses and merits of the Chinese system of education, to propose improvements, and to work for those improvements to be put into practice.

The Chinese, on the other hand, were often just as eager to resist any reforms. Traditionally, the Confucian scholars had indeed held the education system as crucial to political stability and social harmony, and believed that changes in education could have radical, far-reaching, and unforeseen effects in society and the people at large. Hence, the changes that men like Martin proposed and even introduced were often regarded as potential threats.¹⁴⁰⁰ However, al-

¹³⁹⁷ The “spoils system” describes the political favouritism or even nepotism that prevailed in US consular appointments until the Rogers Act (1924) decreed that these appointments should be based on merit (Tyrrell 2007, 116).

¹³⁹⁸ Martin 1881, 39–40, 55; Martin 1900, 42–43. Arthur Smith and Samuel Williams, however, were decidedly against the idea of transplanting the system to the US. It was fitted “for the genius of the Chinese”, not for Westerners, Williams argued. Altogether, he thought that the system was utterly unnecessary in “an enlightened Christian country, where the people, pursuing study for its own sake, are able and willing to become as learned as their rulers desire without any such inducement.” (Smith 1890, 385; Williams 1913a, 562, 564–565.)

¹³⁹⁹ Martin 1881, 37–38, 41.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Beckmann 1965, 147, 150; Josephson 2012, 54–55; Spence 2002, 129, 136; Thompson 1999, 70.

ready in 1881, Martin noticed some indications that Chinese resistance to change was starting to crumble. He observed that “the door, if not fully open, is at least sufficiently ajar to admit the introduction of our Western sciences”, and this would “lift the Chinese out of the mists of their medieval scholasticism”, and “bring them into the full light of modern knowledge”. What he meant was that schools for studying Western languages and sciences had now been established at some of the treaty ports, and the literati were having Western works on science, technology, and machinery translated for them into Chinese.¹⁴⁰¹

Yet William Martin felt these efforts were “hardly sufficient to justify the conclusion that the central government is adopting an enlightened and liberal policy”.¹⁴⁰² One undeniable proof of changing attitudes and a “great intellectual movement”, however, was the establishment in Beijing of *Tongwenguan*, the school for Western sciences and languages. Originally established for training interpreters in 1862, this was the school at which Martin himself taught, and which he later presided over. Soon after its establishment, Martin recounted, Prince Gong had asked the throne if astronomy and mathematics could be added to the school’s curriculum, in the spirit of the self-strengthening movement. Prince Gong had argued that these subjects were indispensable for understanding machinery and the manufacture of fire-arms, and he went on to try and convince the rest of the literati that only when the Chinese were “able to master the mysteries of mathematical calculation, physical investigation, astronomical observation, the construction of engines, [and] the engineering of watercourses”, could they assure “the steady growth of the power of the empire”.¹⁴⁰³

Prince Gong’s proposition was met by a storm of protests from the more conservative mandarins, according to Martin. Some felt the matter was insignificant and not worth wasting time on. Others regarded abandoning Chinese methods for Western as nothing short of treasonous, while yet others held the idea of Westerners teaching Chinese as an absolute disgrace. But Prince Gong set out to prove all these objections wrong in another memorandum. The first objection he suspected to stem from ignorance about the subject and ignorance about the needs of times. The second objection he held to be fictitious, for evidently, the roots of Western methods had been in ancient China. Thus, the Western methods were in fact Chinese methods. And the third objection, Prince Gong declared as absurd, for there could be no deeper disgrace than that of “being content to lag in the rear of others.” The Westerners learned from each other, and even the Japanese had started to learn from the West, Prince Gong re-

¹⁴⁰¹ Martin 1881, 52, 239. The advocates of the self-strengthening movement in the 1860s had already highlighted the need for Western learning, and technical training. As a result, the School for Navy Administration (or *Chuan Zheng*) was established for the Fuzhou Arsenal in 1866. The object of the effort was to educate Chinese naval architects, engineers and skilled workmen. Another example of new institutions for Western learning was The Shanghai Polytechnic Institution, which opened in 1876, and started under the direction of English educator John Fryer (1839–1928). The aim of the institution was to promote Western sciences, arts, and products through exhibitions, lectures, classes, and scientific literature. (Elman 2004, 298–300, 306–309.)

¹⁴⁰² Martin 1881, 239–240.

¹⁴⁰³ Martin 1881, 240–241; Martin 1900, 302.

marked. It would be shameful, therefore, if China alone continued to “tread indolently in the beaten track, without a single effort in the way of improvement”.¹⁴⁰⁴

William Martin thought that this document demonstrated the “humiliation felt by the Chinese mind to find itself, on awakening, in the rear of the age”.¹⁴⁰⁵ In this case, the supporters of educational reform won the day, and before the close of the 1860s, the school of interpreters was supplemented by a Department of Mathematics and Astronomy, and henceforth became a college.¹⁴⁰⁶ Martin reminisced on how the attitude of the literati towards the new college had been quite reserved and disrespectful at first, but with time the school had started to gain respect, and draw able and competent students. These students did particularly well in scientific studies and showed a marked ability chemistry, he remarked, but in language studies they struggled. Martin had high expectations for the *Tongwenguan*, and the wonders it might achieve both for Chinese education and the nation as a whole.¹⁴⁰⁷

In addition to new schools, the China experts also believed that translations of Western works, and the education the Chinese received abroad, were effective levers for change.¹⁴⁰⁸ But the results of all the measures, reforms, and ideas that were introduced in the decades following the 1860s were still meagre, William Martin thought. In 1881, he pointed out that, although “enlightened views” were gaining ground, the more conservative Confucian scholars still shunned Western learning and education, as it was not the surest way to attain power or office.¹⁴⁰⁹

In Japan, before the Meiji Restoration, the system of education had drawn its inspiration largely from China. Percival Lowell argued that in Chinese schools, the students saw no merit in studying anything but the Confucian Classics, and consequently, the students ended up becoming even “more Con-

¹⁴⁰⁴ Martin 1881, 241–243; Martin 1900, 302.

¹⁴⁰⁵ Martin 1881, 245.

¹⁴⁰⁶ Martin 1900, 301.

¹⁴⁰⁷ Martin 1900, 311–312, 314. Also Samuel Williams saw the development of the *Tongwenguan* as a sign that the Chinese were ready to make “rational advance” in scientific learning, and William Griffis anticipated that it would “change the key of national education and intellect.” Griffis also lauded the work William Martin had done in steering the college, instructing the future statesmen, and enlightening the populace with his translations. Martin was the “Verbeck” of China, Griffis contended, implying that his role had been crucial in the education of the Chinese. (Griffis 1900, 74–75; Williams 1913b, 741.)

¹⁴⁰⁸ Martin elaborated that the works translated from English and other European languages comprised subjects such as “international law, political economy, chemistry, natural philosophy, physical geography, history, French and English codes of law, anatomy, physiology, *materia medica*, diplomatic and consular guides” (Martin 1900, 320).

¹⁴⁰⁹ Martin 1881, 38, 246. Although to Martin it seemed that not much had happened in the way of educational reform in China, Benjamin Elman has described the second half of the 19th century in China as a significant seeding time for modernisation. Scientific works were translated, “modern science” carried into the classrooms, and sciences were popularized through journals. Also, a new category of scholars was emerging next to the orthodox Confucian literati: the scientists (*gewu zhe*, one who investigated things). (Elman 2004, 304–305, 310–311; Wright 2000, 152–154, 158.)

fucian than Confucius". And so it was in Japan, the difference between the two being one of "quantity rather than quality", according to Lowell.¹⁴¹⁰ Meanwhile William Griffis pointed out that China had made and Japan had borrowed, and he believed this to be the most remarkable contrast between "the intellects" of the two neighbouring nations. The Chinese mind had possessed the mental force to create the Confucian system of philosophy and education, which the Japanese had then passively received. The Japanese had not attempted to modify the system, instead, they had been content to copy, repeat, and recite. The Japanese had been merely "talking aloud in their intellectual sleep but not reflecting", while China had been "awake and thinking hard", Griffis concluded.¹⁴¹¹

Since Japanese education had so closely followed the Chinese model, and since William Griffis largely shared the same ideas of education as the three China experts, he attributed the same defects to the Japanese system as Samuel Williams, William Martin, and Arthur Smith had to the Chinese. Griffis thought that the Tokugawa government had deliberately used education to hinder the intellectual growth of its subjects. The government had limited the supply of "mental food", and chosen philosophy as "a chief tool among the engines of oppression, and as the main influence in stunting the intellect", he believed. All thinking had thus been funnelled into the orthodox channels of Confucianism; knowledge of the outside world consisted only of legends and fairy tales; and anything approaching originality had been weeded out. The object of education had been to maintain the established order. And hence, the "tree of education, instead of being a lofty or wide-spreading cryptomeria," had been reduced into a bonsai tree. Consequently, also the intelligence of the Japanese had been dwarfed to the same "proportions of puniness, so admired by lovers of artificiality and unconscious caricature," Griffis asserted, using the same analogy of stunted intelligence and bonsai trees as Samuel Williams.¹⁴¹²

Griffis concluded that, as a result of the politics of the Tokugawa government and almost three centuries of seclusion, the Japanese educational system had thus produced "generations of male adults who, compared to men trained in the life of modern civilization, were children".¹⁴¹³ Nevertheless, Griffis reminded that the Chinese learning did have a contender during the Tokugawa era: the *Rangaku* studies. The foreigners staying at the Dutch outpost in Dejima had taught the Japanese Dutch language and disseminated knowledge of European sciences of astronomy, mathematics, medicine, and gunnery. They had also distributed Dutch scientific works - which were of world-class quality at the time, Griffis pointed out - for the Japanese to translate. The Japanese who had decided to "feed their minds at the Occidental fountains" were few, and had to brave disgrace and "even death, at the hands of the bakufu," Griffis recounted. But once the foreigners had broken free from the confinement of the

¹⁴¹⁰ Lowell 2007b, 19-21.

¹⁴¹¹ Griffis 1892, 81; Griffis 2006b, 72, 74.

¹⁴¹² Griffis 1900, 204; Griffis 2006b, 182.

¹⁴¹³ Griffis 1903, 371.

island of Dejima, the Shogunate had been forced to acknowledge the necessity of having men versed in foreign languages and sciences. The “Thornrose had rubbed her eyes” and turned to English language and learning, Griffis wrote, but the Dutch language and learning had been “her first love.”¹⁴¹⁴

After the Meiji Restoration, Japan started to break what Griffis termed “the chains of her intellectual bondage to China and India”.¹⁴¹⁵ The educational policies of the new Meiji government, to which he was referring, were inaugurated with the Imperial Charter Oath of 1868 urging the people to seek knowledge the world over. To fulfil the oath, the Meiji government hired foreign specialists to teach at Japanese educational institutions, and sent educational missions and individual students to the United States and Western Europe.¹⁴¹⁶ William Griffis and Lafcadio Hearn were themselves proof of these changing educational policies, being both employed as teachers by the Japanese government – Griffis in the early 1870s, and Hearn from 1890 onwards.¹⁴¹⁷

Hearn and Griffis pointed out that for centuries preceding the Meiji Era, advanced education and official rank had been strictly hereditary privileges only. Hearn noted that, as in China, there had been no system of public schools, while Griffis explained how court nobles, priests, and particularly the samurai class had been the only people entitled to a higher education.¹⁴¹⁸ Four years after the Charter Oath, the Meiji government issued an edict stating that “all classes of the people should cultivate their minds, and that elementary schools for the instruction of the whole nation's young folk should be organized in every part of the empire”, Griffis reported.¹⁴¹⁹ Effectively, this decree, called the Fundamental Code of Education, was a proclamation of a universal education system. The government stipulated that all children of the country were to complete four years of elementary education. The government eventually extended the system to cover middle schools and universities in the 1880s.¹⁴²⁰

¹⁴¹⁴ Griffis 1892, 197, 199–202; Griffis 2006a, 374.

¹⁴¹⁵ Griffis 2006b, preface, 4.

¹⁴¹⁶ Beauchamp 1975, 423.

¹⁴¹⁷ Griffis' first teaching post was at *Meishinkan*, the domain school of Fukui, after which he was appointed to the *Kaisei Gakkō* (Kaisei school) in Tokyo. *Kaisei Gakkō* received its name in 1873, but it was originally set up in the late Tokugawa period as a school for studying Western languages. Under the Meiji government, the school went through many transformations and name changes, and Guido Verbeck was appointed as its director. After 1875, the curriculum was divided into law, science, and engineering, and the language of instruction was changed to English. Eventually, *Kaisei Gakkō* formed the basis for Tokyo University. (Duke, Benjamin C., *The History of Modern Japanese Education: Constructing the National School System, 1872-1890*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2009: pp. 153–156).

¹⁴¹⁸ Hearn added that from the 17th century onwards, all the Japanese could send their children to private elementary schools called *terakoya* (temple school), but in these schools instruction was restricted to reading, writing, calculation, and a smattering of moral education (Griffis 2006a, 347; Hearn 1895, 41–42).

¹⁴¹⁹ Griffis 1903, 676.

¹⁴²⁰ Middle schools were added to the nation's education system in 1881, boys' high schools in 1886, and girls' high schools in 1889. A wide variety of private institutions were also established during the last decades of 19th century. (Beasley 1995, 219; Benson et al. 2001, 131–132; Irokawa 1985, 56.)

Along with the school system, the curriculum underwent a drastic transformation. In most respects, the subjects taught at the new public schools in Japan differed little from the subjects taught at American or European schools.¹⁴²¹ According to Lafcadio Hearn, Japanese students received daily lessons in such subjects as natural history, chemistry, botany, geology, and biology. The subjects were taught according to modern scientific theories, such as those presented by Thomas Henry Huxley. And the theories were complemented with practical observations and studies, conducted with “the latest and best methods” and sophisticated equipment, Hearn explained.¹⁴²²

William Griffis gave a lot of credit to Fukuzawa Yukichi for making Western learning palatable to the Japanese,¹⁴²³ but first and foremost, he lauded the American teachers who had brought modern education to Japan, and markedly changed this Oriental people.¹⁴²⁴ The American employees, *oyatoi*, had made a huge imprint on the education of the Japanese,¹⁴²⁵ Griffis asserted, and another great influence had been the Japanese translations of Western books. In fact, he attested that the translations had done “more to transform the Japanese mind, and to develop an impulse in the direction of modern civilization, than any other cause or series of causes”. These translations included many American treatises, ranging from dictionaries to scientific works, Griffis noted, and they provided better models and higher literature for the Japanese to study.¹⁴²⁶

In contrast, Lafcadio Hearn saw foreign employees, foreign sciences, and foreign education as a form of “alien domination”. The Japanese government believed that the future of the nation depended on “the study and mastery of the languages and the science of the foreigners”, Hearn explained. But in the meantime, before the results of the study would materialise, Japan would prac-

¹⁴²¹ Beasley 1995, 219; Benson et al. 2001, 132.

¹⁴²² Hearn 1894b, 443.

¹⁴²³ According to Griffis, Fukuzawa had “pointed out the weaknesses, defects, and errors of his countrymen, and showed how Japan, by isolation and the false pride that scorned all knowledge derived from foreigners, had failed to advance like Europe or America” (Griffis 2006a, 374).

¹⁴²⁴ Griffis had in mind people like David Murray (1830–1905), appointed the Superintendent of Educational Affairs by the Ministry of Education in 1873, who had done “much to improve and perfect education in Japan”. The Dutch-American Guido Verbeck, he named as the “[g]reatest of the aliens who wrought to build the New Japan”. Verbeck had been instrumental in planning the new national system of education, Griffis explained. Griffis also mentioned a host of other American specialists, governmental advisors, and teachers who had been associated with the “general development, or with scientific work and progress in Japan”, such as Horace Capron, William Phipps Blake, Benjamin Smith Lyman, Ernest Fenollosa, Edward Morse, Edward Warren Clark, and Martin Nevius Wyckoff. (Griffis 1900, 107–108, 115, 167–168; Griffis 1903, 563.)

¹⁴²⁵ It has been argued that after Murray’s appointment as the Superintendent of Educational Affairs, the Japanese school system acquired a markedly American character. The administration and organization of schools owed much to France, the sciences and medicine to Germany, and engineering to Britain; but in terms of curricula, methods of instruction, and teaching equipment, the Japanese followed American models. However, when Murray left the post in 1879, the American influence on Japanese education started to wane, and by the end of the century Japanese schools were reorganised along German lines. (Beasley 1995, 205; Dulles 1965, 160–162.)

¹⁴²⁶ Griffis 1900, 116–118; Griffis 2006a, 375.

tically be subjected to foreign domination.¹⁴²⁷ Moreover, Hearn added that, unlike the Chinese education, the Western education had not been sought wilfully, but it had been forced on Japan, “thrust upon her by violence.”¹⁴²⁸

From its inception in the 1870s to the end of that century, the Japanese educational system rapidly went through many changes. Hearn recalled that during his time in Japan, there had been five different ministers of education and more than five different educational policies. “That any educational system could have produced any great results under these conditions seems nothing short of miraculous”, Hearn marvelled.¹⁴²⁹ Assessing the situation in 1902, William Griffis thought that the “ideal and actualization” of the educational reforms were still far apart. The number of elementary schools, middle schools, and universities existing in reality did not match the number that had been planned on paper, and the attendance of the boys and girls to school did not reach a hundred percent. Nevertheless Griffis thought the reforms were some cause for celebration, and he reminded readers that many of the technical schools successfully operating in the country had not even been part of the original plan.¹⁴³⁰

In addition, Lafcadio Hearn and William Griffis affirmed that the public education system had done wonders in dispelling Japanese superstitions.¹⁴³¹ William Griffis noted that:

Now that the Japanese are being civilized after the Western fashion, a great many of the old beliefs of the people are passing away. Men of science, the doctors, and the boys and girls taught in the public schools laugh at the ideas of their grandmothers. In the cities and towns the old folk-lore and fireside stories are being forgotten, and the household customs and superstitions are fading away. In the country they linger longer, [...].¹⁴³²

Similarly, Hearn stated that the scientific education was “rapidly destroying credulity in old superstitions”, and he found it encouraging that among his stu-

¹⁴²⁷ Hearn 1896b, 178. In practice, some foreign employees might have had some influence on policies, but most of them had a say only in matters relating to their everyday work, and the government had the last word in every decision. In essence, the Meiji government considered the hired foreigners as temporary and disposable. (See e.g. Beauchamp 1975, 434, 450.)

¹⁴²⁸ Hearn 1896b, 154.

¹⁴²⁹ Hearn 1896b, 35–36.

¹⁴³⁰ The figures Griffis gave were the following: “[o]f the 256 middle schools set down on paper, the actual number was 222. Instead of the total of 53,760 elementary schools contemplated, only 27,076 were in existence. The attendance of children of the school-going age at elementary schools in 1902 was 93.75 per cent, in the case of boys, and 81.84 in the case of girls, being an average of 88.07” (Griffis 1903, 676). In the 1880s, it was estimated that only 50 percent of school-aged children attended primary school, and that even in 1900 not all children attended voluntarily. The facilities for students were poor, there was a shortage of school buildings, and the teachers were not always up to standard. Only a few students from elementary school could then afford middle school, let alone university. Yet, the government came close to attaining the literacy objective of its Fundamental Code from 1872, as by the end of the century the national literacy rates were estimated to be 94% among men and 82% for women. (Benson et al. 2001, 137, 141–142; Irokawa 1985, 56.)

¹⁴³¹ Griffis 1892, 190–191; Hearn 1894a, 323, 329.

¹⁴³² Griffis 1892, 183.

dents there was now “a healthy tone of scepticism in regard to certain forms of popular belief”.¹⁴³³

Griffis claimed that the Japanese adoption of Western education had also begun to have a positive influence on the Chinese. “Repaying the debt of former ages”, the Japanese were “surely leading their brethren in China ‘into the younger day’”, he testified in the tenth edition of Book III of *The Mikado's Empire* (1903).¹⁴³⁴ William Martin, also writing at about the same time, felt that before the Sino-Japanese war, the Chinese efforts at educational reforms had been feeble, but the lesson of defeat had forced the Chinese to look into the causes for their humiliation and Japan's victory. The explanation they found, Martin asserted, was Japan's new system of education, and this convinced them to renew their own educational system.¹⁴³⁵

After the Sino-Japanese war, both the pace and scale of educational reforms in China grew. Arthur Smith observed that the reform-minded Chinese had come to think of the state of their scholarship as low, deplorable, and teeming with frauds, and the examination system as degenerated and unfavourable to progress. The reformers had concluded that, in order to attain “solid and practical education”, they needed to cast “away all empty and obsolete customs.”¹⁴³⁶ William Martin went on to recount that, once the reformers and their ideas had reached the emperor, he had then taken it upon himself to lead the people on the “path of reform”. Martin and Smith described how the emperor had commenced the Hundred Days Reform in 1898 by issuing a series of edicts decreeing that new schools, colleges, and an Imperial University were to be established; that in these schools, modern science and Western learning were to complement Chinese learning; that a new bureau was to be set up for translating text-books; and that the ‘eight-legged essay’ was to be abolished from the civil service examinations, and substituted with practical arts and sciences. These innovative edicts “took away the breath of the whole Empire”, Arthur Smith depicted, and he added that “[t]o the really progressive there seemed to be coming a new heaven and a new earth for old and worn out China”.¹⁴³⁷

Arthur Smith argued that the edicts could have revolutionised the intellectual life of China if the Empress Dowager Cixi had not returned to power, and suppressed nearly all the educational and political reforms. However, he believed that it was only a question of time before the pendulum would swing back again, and the reformers would once more gain control. But this was written in 1899, and two years later, William Martin reported that even the new Imperial University, which until then had survived the reversal of educational policies, was brought to a standstill by the Boxer Uprising.¹⁴³⁸

¹⁴³³ Hearn 1894b, 467.

¹⁴³⁴ Griffis 1903, 676.

¹⁴³⁵ Martin 1901a, 19; Martin 1905, 1–2.

¹⁴³⁶ Smith 1901a, 135, 139.

¹⁴³⁷ Martin 1901a, 20; Martin 1905, 2; Smith 1899, 134; Smith 1901a, 135, 139, 141–142.

¹⁴³⁸ Martin 1901a, 20; Smith 1899, 135.

Political, ideological, and popular opposition¹⁴³⁹ were not the only obstacles however, that stood in the way of Western education and science entering the Far East. Most of the experts argued that the Chinese and Japanese languages themselves were a major hindrance. Samuel Williams described the Chinese language as “an unwieldy vehicle for imparting new truths”, and “the most tedious and meagre of all tongues”. Because Chinese required different characters for the treatment of different subjects, he explained, a scholar well-versed in Confucian Classics could not read and understand even the simplest work on mathematics or medicine because of all the new words. As learning any new character was a burdensome task, modern sciences had made only a little advance in the country. Hence, the Chinese language was effectively in the way of progress, Williams concluded.¹⁴⁴⁰

Arthur Smith argued that the nature of the Chinese language was such that it was “difficult or impossible” to render “wide ranges of human thought” intelligible by using it. This was because the Chinese nouns appeared to be indeclinable and free from gender; the adjectives had no degrees of comparison; the verbs implied no mood, voice, tense, person, or number; and finally, there was no “recognizable distinction between nouns, adjectives, and verbs.” Smith insisted that this lack of grammar was one of the main causes of the Chinese “intellectual turbidity”, while William Martin regarded it as a sign that the Chinese language was truly a “primitive form of human speech”.¹⁴⁴¹ And because Martin thought that language was the most significant of all influences affecting the mind, he concluded that the Chinese language had necessarily imparted a negative effect on the Chinese mind, and obstructed all abstract thinking.¹⁴⁴²

William Griffis and Percival Lowell saw similar defects with the Japanese language and its system of writing. Lowell described the Japanese language as being near to the “beginnings of human conversation.” He defined the Japanese noun as a “crystallized concept, handed down unchanged from the childhood of the Japanese race.” It was a vague, general, and indefinite idea similar to the utterances “of the infant;” a “primitive conception” belonging to an “early state of semi-consciousness,” which the Japanese had never outgrown. A lack of link words made the language resemble “baby-talk” in his opinion, and was another

¹⁴³⁹ However, the Chinese intransigence was more of an image than a reality. Historians have noted that during the history of contacts with Western countries and peoples, the Chinese adopted and assimilated much of the theories, sciences, and techniques the Westerners brought with them. In other words, the Chinese were very receptive to certain aspects of Western civilization. But they did tend to reject Western ideologies, because from the Chinese point of view, that would have been a sign of submission to the West. (Spence 2002, 289–290.)

¹⁴⁴⁰ Williams 1913a, 568; Williams 1913b, 65, 370, 545. Smith and Martin, too, noted that learning to write the Chinese language, “the most difficult of the languages of man”, was an overtaxing task, and the end result often unsatisfactory, since the pupils left school with little knowledge of how to read or write most of the characters. Smith also blamed the Chinese scholars for their unwillingness to devise new vocabularies for the modern sciences, and to incorporate them into the Chinese language in the first place. (Martin 1881, 45; Smith 1899, 87–88, 97.)

¹⁴⁴¹ Martin 1881, 67–68; Smith 1890, 131.

¹⁴⁴² Martin 1881, 148.

sign of its primitive character¹⁴⁴³. The language also lacked personal pronouns, since “invidious distinctions of identity” had never entered “the simple early Tartar minds”. None of this had rendered the language wholly unintelligible, or the exchange of ideas impossible, but it did go some ways towards explaining the ‘impersonality’ of the people, he argued.¹⁴⁴⁴

Percival Lowell also detected this impersonality in the “Tartar mode of grammatical construction”, which he saw as “very nearly the inverse of our own”, lacking as it did plural forms, and subjects in the sentences. And in nowhere was this impersonality as evident as in the Japanese verbs, Lowell asserted. He claimed that, unlike in the West, in Japan action was “looked upon more as happening than as being performed,” or as “impersonally rather than personally produced.” Lowell thought this was because the Japanese had “the most superficial of childish conceptions” that mankind was less important than nature, and because the Japanese mind was incapable of abstract thought, or “concrete to a primitive degree”. For example, words such as ‘none’ and ‘nothing’ did not exist in Japanese, because they were ‘human-born’ and based on metaphysical abstractions. “Such, then, is the mould into which, as children, these people learn to cast their thought,” Lowell concluded.¹⁴⁴⁵ Lowell was clearly aiming to prove that the Japanese people were impersonal, and this served his argument admirably well. However, the list of adjectives he used to describe the Japanese language – primitive, vague, childish, and concrete – imply that in Lowell’s opinion, such language was an undeveloped and inadequate vehicle for transmitting ideas that sprung from modern, accurate, and abstract sciences.

William Griffis, on the other hand, turned his attention to the Chinese ideographic writing system, which he believed to have impeded Japanese “efforts in intellectual advancement”. The Chinese characters took years to learn, Griffis explained, and in addition, students were required the knowledge of English or some other modern European language. The result of the burden was a “vast sacrifice of health and life” among the students, as well as their “early intellectual decay”. Griffis was in favour of using romaji instead, the Latin script applied to Japanese language, which was quick to learn. He believed that the universal adoption of the romaji system would benefit the mind and body of the Japanese as a whole, and add “youth and years to a nation's life”. Griffis also noted approvingly, that English was vast becoming the language of the educated, and that eventually it could become the medium of knowledge for all Japanese.¹⁴⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴³ Percival Lowell’s description followed largely Herbert Spencer’s ideas on the evolution of language, and the characteristics of ‘primitive’, or ‘lowest kinds of’, human speech (Spencer 1893, 321).

¹⁴⁴⁴ Lowell 2007b, 31–32, 35–36, 38.

¹⁴⁴⁵ Lowell 2007b, 37, 39–41. Like Lowell, Griffis judged the Japanese language as impersonal and being “in psychological development [...] scarcely above the grade of childhood” (Griffis 2006b, 186).

¹⁴⁴⁶ Griffis 1892, 86; Griffis 2006a, 411–414.

In contrast, Lafcadio Hearn resisted the idea of replacing aesthetic Japanese written characters for an ugly and purely utilitarian Latin script, even if it was a trying task for students to learn them. The Japanese language had proved to possess the same assimilative genius as the race itself, Hearn believed. The influence of English had made the Japanese language “richer, more flexible, and more capable of expressing the new forms of thought created by the discoveries of modern science”. Hence, Hearn was confident that the language would meet the requirements of modern day education and learning.¹⁴⁴⁷

In fact, Hearn thought that the greatest problem for educators in Japan was not language, but nation-wide underfeeding. This problem the Japanese had to solve if they wished to be able to assimilate the civilization the Westerners had “thrust upon her”.¹⁴⁴⁸ The Japanese students were trying to seize hold of modern knowledge, which had been “discovered, developed, and synthesised by minds strengthened upon a costly diet of flesh”, not on a diet of boiled rice and bean-curd, Hearn pointed out. The Japanese students studied their own language, literature, history, and morals, as well as foreign history, geography, arithmetic, astronomy, physics, geometry, natural history, agriculture, chemistry, drawing, mathematics, and foreign languages “upon a diet no English boy could live on”. The burden was too great, he felt, and the mind of a growing youth needed a more nutritious diet to “repair the physical waste involved by brain-exertion”.¹⁴⁴⁹

Finally, there was one question which the experts needed to address when discussing the introduction of Western education and science to the Far East in the late 19th century. This question was the inherent ability of the Chinese and Japanese to receive and fully absorb Western learning. And this question divided the opinions of theorists, intellectuals, policymakers, and the six experts alike. Some foremost intellectuals and theorists of the day held that mental capacity was determined by race. Charles Darwin had hinted at it. And Alfred Russel Wallace had suggested intellectual capacity as the driving force behind human evolution, claiming that there were noticeable differences in that capacity between the races – those with superior intelligence being the ones who were dominant, progressive, and capable of adopting advanced science and technology.¹⁴⁵⁰ In 1889, following this line of thought, Gustave Le Bon considered the influence of European education on the indigenous population of colonies, and came to the conclusion that foreign ‘civilisers’ were effectively incapable of ex-

¹⁴⁴⁷ Hearn 1894a, 4; Hearn 1894b, 453; Hearn 1896b, 153–154.

¹⁴⁴⁸ It has been estimated that around the mid-1870s, a typical Japanese person consumed 1500 calories per day. However, the situation was slowly improving, as the price of food started to decrease, at the same time as the variety of food available started to increase (Benson et al. 2001, 117–118).

¹⁴⁴⁹ Hearn also reminded his readers of the Spencerian notion that the “degree of human energy, physical or intellectual”, depended on the nutritiousness of food, and that history had shown that the most well-fed races had always been also the most energetic and dominant (Hearn 1894b, 452–454; Hearn 1895, 28–29).

¹⁴⁵⁰ Adas 1989, 272, 308–311

ercising a “civilizing action over Orientals, and even less so over totally inferior peoples”.¹⁴⁵¹

Le Bon did not argue that the “races classified as inferior” could not be “educated like Europeans.” Quite the contrary, he thought that a “child belonging to a semi-civilized or half-savage people” would succeed at school quite as well as a European child. But Le Bon thought that ultimately the education of inferior races was an illusion, shared particularly by the missionaries. He claimed that education was based on memory; it placed material in the minds of people for the intelligence to utilize later. But the intellectual aptitude to make use of the materials and knowledge provided by education was conditioned by race, Le Bon asserted. Mental constitution, sentiments, intelligence, and modes of thinking and feeling were all results of centuries of inheritance. They were peculiar to each race, and they constituted the fundamental differences “separating the Orient from the West,” and were the foundation of racial inequalities. Le Bon maintained that the intellectual abilities of all races were bound by these “laws of heredity”. The Europeans had acquired a higher level of intelligence, whereas the “inferior” man could perhaps attain “bits of European ideas”, but only along the lines of “reasoning and sentiments of savages and semi-civilised men”.¹⁴⁵²

Gustave Le Bon’s conclusion was that no system of education could erase the inherited difference between the intellectual aptitude of races, and the national sentiments and qualities of a people.¹⁴⁵³ Le Bon was well aware that missionaries tended to disagree with his position, and the missionary-oriented China and Japan experts William Griffis, Arthur Smith, and William Martin were no exception. They made it clear that the Chinese and Japanese *did* have the intellectual capacity to receive a Western system of education. Griffis, for example, wrote that he found the young Japanese students to be the equal of Americans in “good-breeding, courtesy and mental acumen”.¹⁴⁵⁴

Arthur Smith may have conceded that there was an “intellectual contrast between the East and the West”, but he attributed much of these differences to Confucianism, and a system of education that had trained the Chinese mind “for one line of work” only. And, in spite of these differences, it was evident to Smith that the Chinese were a “nation of keen intellectual ability”. He recounted how he and other Western observers were “constantly surprised and delighted by the rapidity, accuracy and apparent ease with which some Chinese seem to assimilate knowledge, even when cast in foreign moulds”. And Smith did not think this ability was restricted to only the educated classes, as he was able to find able men among the lower classes too. In conclusion, Smith was certain that the Chinese could master Western education, for they possessed a “genius” which had an “infinite capacity for labour”, and such “staying qualities” they were able to “win every race.”¹⁴⁵⁵

¹⁴⁵¹ Le Bon 1889, 24.

¹⁴⁵² Le Bon 1889, 21–22, 24.

¹⁴⁵³ Le Bon 1889, 21–22.

¹⁴⁵⁴ Griffis 2006a, xii.

¹⁴⁵⁵ Smith 1890, 131, 384; Smith 1899, 102–103.

The outlines of William Martin's account were similar. He admitted that, considering the Chinese inability to develop further the sciences they had originated, there had to be a "strange defect" in the Chinese mind. But this defect was rather in the development of Chinese mind than in its constitution, Martin argued. It was largely the outcome of the Chinese language, "servile reverence for antiquity," and most of all, defective education. The Chinese education had stifled independent judgment and inventiveness, and it had curtailed the amount of knowledge students could amass. Hence, the Chinese were children in knowledge, according to Western standards, Martin stated. But this observation was not to be taken as a gauge of mental power, he reminded. He rebutted any charges of "mental inferiority" levelled at the Chinese, in the light of the "immense social and political organization which has held together so many millions of people for so many thousands of years, and especially of arts, now dropping their golden fruits into the lap of our own civilization, whose roots can be traced to the soil of that ancient empire". In intellectual force, therefore, Martin was sure that the Chinese were giants.¹⁴⁵⁶

The opinions of Martin and Smith represented the majority view on the subject. For example, most foreign observers of China were confident that the Chinese were not incapable of adopting Western sciences and ideas – they were merely unwilling to do so. The same group of observers also thought that this unwillingness, and the accompanying passivity and conservativeness, was neither a racial trait nor inherited intellectual defect, but derived instead from external conditions.¹⁴⁵⁷ Behind these views was an unfaltering belief in the psychological unity of mankind; in the capability of all peoples for intellectual progress, and ultimately, for progress in Civilization.

Percival Lowell took notice of the intellectual defects of the Japanese, such as a weak power for reasoning and intellectual homogeneity. Especially the latter phenomenon appeared truly remarkable for a Westerner accustomed to the "immense intellectual differences between man and man," Lowell remarked. In Japan, the distances "between the extremes of mind-development" were nearly non-existent in all lines of intellectual activity. However, Lowell took no part in the debate whether Western education could redeem those defects or cause the "peaks of intellect" to rise higher, at least in the publications under study here. But his theory, which insisted that individuality was both an inherited racial

¹⁴⁵⁶ Martin 1881, 29, 67, 148; Martin 1900, 300. Like Arthur Smith and William Martin, also Samuel Williams cited the intelligence of the Chinese repeatedly, but perhaps with a touch less insistence. Williams deemed the powers of Chinese mind as being no match to the powers of European or American minds in originality, genius, and rationality. But as noted before, he held that the stunted intelligence of the Chinese was due to the mode and contents of their education, and he declared that the diffusion of new mode of education was already "awaking the people from their lethargy" and an immense intellectual development was already taking place in China. However, at one point in *The Middle Kingdom*, Williams was hinting that different peoples differed in their ability to achieve civilization. In listing and describing the ethnic and regional variations of China, he noted that there were distinctions, and that the Manchus, for example, were intelligent and the "most improvable race". (Williams 1913a, ix, xiv, 44, 100, 102, 519, 524, 541, 546; Williams 1913b, 74.)

¹⁴⁵⁷ Adas 1989, 284–285, 330.

trait and the result of brain evolution, had rather gloomy implications for the mental development of the Japanese, as he repeatedly stressed that they lacked the instinct for personality. And he also claimed that the “intellectual machine” of the Far Oriental peoples had run down in the middle of their career of development, and that their evolution had ceased due to “purely intrinsic inability to go on.”¹⁴⁵⁸

Lafcadio Hearn was more positive, in that he thought Japan’s new educational policy *would* bring great intellectual progress, although not “a progress so rapid as those who think that Japan has really transformed herself in thirty years would have us believe.” Scientific education could not “immediately raise the average of practical intelligence to the Western level” though, and it was this average, or the general capacity of many, on which the nation’s future rested.¹⁴⁵⁹ Thus, Lafcadio Hearn believed that Western education had an effect on the intellect of the Japanese, but the results were necessarily slow to manifest themselves.

However, Hearn was convinced that the course of study forced upon the Japanese students was above “the average capacity of Western students”, and just as certainly above the capacity of Japanese students. Hearn explained that “in obedience to sudden necessity”, the Japanese had undertaken “nothing less than the tremendous task of forcing mental expansion up to the highest existing standard [...]”. One reason for this, he believed, was because of the qualities inherent in their “race character”, that is, the “wonderful national spirit of duty”, combined with patience and self-sacrifice, which made the “modern Japanese student the most indefatigable, the most docile [and] the most ambitious in the world”. These same qualities could also have the negative effect of pushing the Japanese student to “efforts in excess of his natural powers”; efforts which would overburden and finally exhaust his moral and mental powers, Hearn lamented. The nation had entered upon a period of “intellectual overstretch.” It desired an intellectual change, which was to be accomplished within few generations, and which necessarily involved a physiological change that was “never to be effected without terrible cost,” Hearn warned.¹⁴⁶⁰

“Just so certainly as Japan has attempted that which is above the normal limit of her powers, so certainly must she fall back to that limit, – or, rather, below it”, Lafcadio Hearn concluded.¹⁴⁶¹ In other words, as surely as the Japanese had progressed intellectually, just as surely they were soon to regress. Arguably, Hearn did not think that this was because the racial constitution of the

¹⁴⁵⁸ Lowell 1895, 328; Lowell 2007b, 6, 56, 72, 79–80.

¹⁴⁵⁹ Hearn 1896b, 150–151.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Hearn 1894b, 665–666; Hearn 1896b, 151–152.

¹⁴⁶¹ Hearn 1896b, 151–152. Also Gustave Le Bon considered what would happen if the Japanese adopted European education, and although he did not predict intellectual collapse, he nevertheless felt the results would be negative. European education had created complicated needs for the Japanese, yet provided them with no means to satisfy these. It had rendered the Japanese miserable, when they had been so happy previously. It had overburdened them with taxes and work, yet offered nothing in compensation. Le Bon thought it a good thing, therefore, that no other nation in the Far East had adopted European education like the Japanese. (Le Bon 1889, 20–21.)

Japanese had rendered them intellectually incapable of digesting the Western learning; rather, it was because the effort was too much of a leap in the intellectual evolution of any nation. Hearn claimed that after a necessary collapse, the Japanese would eventually return to the path of intellectual progress once the evolution of their nerves and brains matched the requirements. In other words, Hearn was arguing that as long as the Japanese remained on a lower level of intellectual evolution, they could not truly digest Western education and sciences. Race would not prevent the Japanese from attaining the required level of intellect, but it would condition the pace of progress. The Japanese race possessed certain qualities, such as the aforementioned sense of duty, and they lacked certain qualities, such as the abilities and skills necessary for the “most difficult branches of scientific study”. Following the notions of Lamarckian evolution, Hearn believed that the Japanese would acquire these skills slowly through practice and inheritance.¹⁴⁶²

6.3 Mental, moral, and material civilization

Lafcadio Hearn was convinced that modern science, transmitted through universal education, was the only force capable of eradicating Japanese superstitions. Neither Christianity, nor the efforts of missionaries, most of whom professed “an earnest belief in devils” themselves, could affect superstitions, Hearn insisted. He claimed that the Japanese people would have to be taught the wisdom of thinkers such as John Tyndall, Charles Darwin, Thomas Henry Huxley, and Herbert Spencer. The selection of intellectuals such as Huxley to represent “Occidental wisdom” – an avowed agnostic and advocate for dissociating science from religion – was hardly a coincidence, given Hearn’s own views that the teaching of science should be “unclogged by sectarianism or prejudice”.¹⁴⁶³

However, some China and Japan experts were decidedly against the view Lafcadio Hearn espoused. Arthur Smith, in particular, held that scientific facts could not battle credulity and superstition. Smith explained that:

Beliefs of this type are not the product of reasoning, and they are not to be dispelled by ratiocination. An attack by reasoning on such a foe is as inert as the discharge of a park of artillery into a Scotch mist. The projectiles are irresistible, and make their way through the yielding mass, with infinite ease. But the mist is in the same place, and of the same density as before.¹⁴⁶⁴

Only the “breezes of a Christian civilization” would scatter such a mist, he maintained.¹⁴⁶⁵ Then again, William Griffis, although also a fervent Christian, demonstrated a staunch faith in the power of public education and science to battle the “spell of superstitious ideas”. But he noted that even in Europe and

¹⁴⁶² Hearn 1894b, 682–683; Hearn 1896b, 151–152.

¹⁴⁶³ Gay 2007, 20; Hearn 1894a, 341.

¹⁴⁶⁴ Smith 1890, 44.

¹⁴⁶⁵ Smith 1890, 45.

America, in spite of their education, there were many individuals who still clung onto omens, signs, and other superstitions.¹⁴⁶⁶ Hence, he also concluded that science and education were not enough without a “faith in one God”.¹⁴⁶⁷

William Martin’s take on the issue seemed somewhat inconsistent. In 1896, he claimed that science and education were the powers that could shake the pillars of Chinese false sciences, and “bring down the whole edifice of superstition.” Martin continued that it was “not a blind Samson”, but “science with her eyes open”, that could accomplish the feat. In other words, Martin declared that solely science, not Christianity, could exterminate Chinese superstitions.¹⁴⁶⁸ In 1881, Martin had also noted that it was science, not religion, that had broken down delusionary beliefs in witchcraft among Europeans and Americans. Yet, in the same treatise, he claimed that “holy faith” was “a powerful agency, cooperating with the diffusion of science” towards emancipating the Chinese from the “bondage of superstition”.¹⁴⁶⁹ And as for the obstacles standing in the way of Chinese intellectual development – language, overt conservatism, submissiveness, and indifference to acquiring new knowledge – Martin thought that Christianity alone could strike off those fetters. In the 1881 treatise, he expounded that Christianity would emancipate the Chinese mind by stimulating inquiry along the precept “[p]rove all things, hold fast that which is good;” by subverting “the blind principle of deference;” and by superseding the language and providing “a medium better adapted to the purposes of a Christian civilization.”¹⁴⁷⁰

The big questions in these debates were the relationship between Christianity and education on the one hand, and religion and science on the other. William Griffis and William Martin shared the opinions of many American Protestants regarding the first relationship: Christianity and Western scientific education were inextricably intertwined. Missionaries, in particular, often understood Western learning as part of the Gospel, and education the handmaid of Christianity – and therefore an indispensable aid in converting the Chinese and Japanese.¹⁴⁷¹

William Martin had studied sciences at Indiana University, but in the end he had complied with his parents’ wishes and become a missionary. Nevertheless his missionary work in China proved disappointing: those Chinese who converted to Christianity often seemed to do so for other motives than religious. Hence, he concluded that modern sciences and Western education would first have to render the Chinese ready to accept Christianity.¹⁴⁷² Martin argued that scientific works were an indispensable preparation for the propagation of the Gospel, because sciences were “essential to the understanding of religious truth.” Without knowledge of history and geography, the narratives of the Bible would

¹⁴⁶⁶ Griffis 1892, 183–184.

¹⁴⁶⁷ Griffis 2006a, 17.

¹⁴⁶⁸ Martin 1900, 236.

¹⁴⁶⁹ Martin 1881, 248, 281.

¹⁴⁷⁰ Martin 1881, 148–149.

¹⁴⁷¹ Bonk 1989, 168, 190; Howes 1972, 353; Metraux 2002, 6.

¹⁴⁷² Spence 2002, 130–135.

remain vague and unintelligible for the Chinese.¹⁴⁷³ And consequently, Martin devoted much of his energy to educational work.

Also William Griffis reasoned that education prepared the way for Christianity, and had to precede it. He thought that in Japan, the Dutch studies had familiarized the Japanese with “the treasures of modern thought” and literature, and thus made them “plastic for the reception of the ideas of Christianity.”¹⁴⁷⁴ He also commented on the three-way relationship between higher civilization, Christianity, and scientific education. He thought that they were sequential and mutually reinforcing. Scientific education led to a higher rung on the ladder of Civilization; and this then “smoothened the path [of] success” for Christianity.¹⁴⁷⁵

The American missionaries often regarded schools as places where they could get into contact with the non-Christian East Asians, and impart the Christian message together with the uplifting influence of Western learning.¹⁴⁷⁶ Even if one could not preach Christianity at schools in the years immediately following the first unequal treaties, William Griffis advised that American missionaries be flexible and simply teach rather than preach until prejudices wore off.¹⁴⁷⁷ This reveals Griffis’ stand on the debate, already touched upon earlier, whether missionaries should engage in education or not.¹⁴⁷⁸ But also another current question was involved here: whether schools should be committed to some or other form of religion, and educate citizens in religious matters.

Education and religion had been tightly bound together in Europe for centuries, and the tradition had been imported to Britain’s American colonies too. Consequently, most of the early American schools were established to the end of educating the children in the Christian faith of the denomination their parents professed. However, after the Declaration of Independence, the intellectuals envisioning America’s new national education system had to take into account the First Amendment of the Constitution, which stated that the government should not establish a religion, or interfere in its exercise. Hence, public education had to be free from all religious beliefs and doctrines. Nevertheless, religion still shaped the worldview of many Americans and these thinkers called for a harmonious union of nationalism, Enlightenment ideas, science, and Christianity within schools. Meanwhile, many of the Protestants saw schools as the perfect medium for instilling Protestant work values and ethics in all American citizens.¹⁴⁷⁹

¹⁴⁷³ Martin 1881, 278; Martin 1894, 324–325.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Griffis 2006b, 186.

¹⁴⁷⁵ Griffis 1903, 598; Griffis 2006a, 438–439.

¹⁴⁷⁶ Bonk 1989, 158, 161.

¹⁴⁷⁷ Griffis 1900, 76–77, 106; Griffis 2006a, 438.

¹⁴⁷⁸ The question surfaced again in 1899, when the Japanese government prohibited all forms of religious teaching at schools, even at private institutions. Consequently, many Methodists and Presbyterians renounced education and returned their teaching licenses. But Episcopal missionaries continued to teach, for they thought that the next best thing to religious instruction was the propagation of Western culture, morals, and values. By imparting a cultural influence, the missionaries hoped eventually to have a religious impact as well. (Sachs 1989, 491, 497.)

¹⁴⁷⁹ Gutek 2013, 40, 49, 83.

Arthur Smith considered this issue from the perspective of China. He affirmed that Western-style education was a “valuable and an indispensable agency”, which had already been employed in China to some extent, and which needed to be “used upon a scale ten thousand fold greater before the darkness of the masses of China can be expelled and replaced by light”. But Western education was intellectual only, dealing with physical and mental facts. It left the “highest parts of man's nature unsatisfied and untouched,” Smith argued. That education had nothing to offer in way of morals, and simultaneously, it was undermining the faith of the Chinese in their own traditional moral philosophies. Smith forecasted that the Western education would eventually leave the moral structure of the Chinese in ruins and Chinese ideals “pitilessly and irrevocably shattered”. Thus, the education Westerners were offering to the Chinese was “a two-edged sword certain to cut in both directions”. In other words, Smith feared that teaching the Chinese such subjects as physics and chemistry, showing them how to produce arms and other implements of destruction, and leaving them void of moral education, could make the unmilitary people military. It could make China a “menace to mankind”, or in other words, a ‘yellow peril.’¹⁴⁸⁰

The problem both Smith and Griffis envisioned in the modernising process of China and Japan was the selectivity of the Chinese and Japanese. They were only picking up the “outward features of the civilization of Christendom”, as Griffis put it, and hence their adoption of Western civilization changed the outer man, but left the inner man largely untouched.¹⁴⁸¹ The Chinese and Japanese accepted the Western material civilization, but ignored the moral and intellectual patterns underneath, as Arthur Smith explained:

With few exceptions the Chinese do not wish (though they may be forced to take) foreign models for anything whatever. [...] They would like some, but by no means all, of the results of Western progress, without submitting to Western methods, but rather than submit to Western methods, they will cheerfully forego the results. Whatever has a direct unmistakable tendency to make China formidable as a ‘Power,’ that they want and will have, but the rest must wait.¹⁴⁸²

It was evidently difficult for these Americans to conceive how the Chinese and Japanese could successfully change the material side of their civilization without changing the way they thought and behaved.¹⁴⁸³

¹⁴⁸⁰ Smith 1901b, 736–737.

¹⁴⁸¹ Griffis 1892, vii, 223.

¹⁴⁸² Smith 1890, 129.

¹⁴⁸³ Iriye 1967, 20. Fukuzawa Yukichi, for example, divided civilization into its visible external part and internal part; or into material, mental, and moral. For him, the internal civilization did not denote to Christianity, as it did for Arthur Smith and William Griffis, but to the “spirit of the people”, or the “spirit of civilization”. Fukuzawa argued that the difficult, internal side of civilization should be pursued first, and only then introduce the external side of civilization, such as clothes or laws. He believed that, if the “spirit of civilization” was not internalized, the introduction of externals of civilization would only prove useless, or even harmful. (Fukuzawa 2009, 21–24, 48, 105.)

Arthur Smith therefore called for new moral ideas, deriving from Christianity, to replace the old. Western learning and sciences could revolutionize the Chinese system of education, Smith thought, but without Christian education, that revolution was almost certainly going to turn China into a threat¹⁴⁸⁴. The introduction of “new intellectual life with no corresponding moral restraints, might prove far more a curse than a blessing, as it has been in the other Oriental lands”, he warned. Christian education would not only remove the impending peril, but it would awaken the hibernating imagination of students, widen their horizons, develop and cultivate their judgment, teach them the history of mankind, arouse their conscience, and “create an intellectual atmosphere” at home and school alike.¹⁴⁸⁵ Smith’s argument was that if scientific education did not have a basis in Christianity and ethics, the consequences would be detrimental to the intellect and morals of the Chinese themselves, and ultimately, to world peace.¹⁴⁸⁶

Lafcadio Hearn agreed with Smith that Western education was fast corrupting traditional morals and manners in the East. He saw the old morality in Japan being replaced instead by force of law, but “real social progress” could not be made through legislation, he claimed. He was convinced that the absorption and assimilation by Japan of Western civilization would not lead to moral progress. The old Japanese moral codes had been lofty and noble, and people had lived up to them. But along with the modern civilization, population pressure and a “struggle for existence”¹⁴⁸⁷ had intensified, and crime rates had gone

¹⁴⁸⁴ William Martin presented a variant of the threat scenario by recounting the history of atheistic and materialistic philosophies, and the impact they had had on societies: “In the ancient world, the triumph of Epicurus was fatal to the liberties of Rome. In modern France, the guillotine reaped the harvest sown by the hands of an atheistic philosophy. After the restoration of the Stuarts, the materialism of Hobbes strengthened the tyranny and encouraged the excesses of a dissolute court; [...]”. He then noted the “speculative atheism” of Sung philosophers, with the implication that its influence on the Chinese society was negative. Martin was not so much arguing that atheistic China would be a threat to the world, but that atheism would be a threat to the Chinese nation itself. Consequently, he called for scientific treatment of philosophy, metaphysics, and other mental and social sciences in China. He believed that inquiry into those subjects would show that Christianity and Christian philosophy were on the side of, or at least consonant with, reason and logic, and also the keys to a better society. (Martin 1881, 281–283.)

¹⁴⁸⁵ Smith 1899, 342–343

¹⁴⁸⁶ Smith was echoing a prevailing missionary stance that the adoption of Western civilization without Christian ethics would lead to moral disaster and a threat to Occidental nations. Similar views were also presented outside the missionary and church circles. For example, the American Navy Admiral and historian Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840–1914) believed that technologically and scientifically westernised China would certainly pose a threat to its own existence and even to the whole mankind, if the Chinese were not bound by the restrictions of Western moral principles. Thus, many Americans from all walks of life advocated the Christianisation of China, which was believed to guarantee world peace and the survival of Western civilization. (Bonk 1989, 247, 258; Iriye 1967, 61; Varg 1954, 79–80.)

¹⁴⁸⁷ “Struggle for existence” was a Malthusian concept, which Darwin had also adopted, with perhaps unforeseen consequences. Malthus had argued that there was a tendency among all organic beings to produce more members of their species than could possibly survive, and this overpopulation then led to the struggle for existence. Darwin complemented the idea by claiming that those individual members, who had developed traits which helped them survive, then transmitted them to their progeny,

up. Unlike many of his colleagues, Hearn believed that Western ethics was no match for this problem, being actually inferior to the old Japanese ethics of altruism. Hearn posited that one day the Japanese would look back with regret to the old days of simple pleasures, morality, and pure joy of life, in the same way that Westerners now looked back on the ancient Greek civilization.¹⁴⁸⁸

Like Arthur Smith, Lafcadio Hearn separated the scientific school education from other kinds of self-cultivation. According to Hearn, the latter signified the exceptional development of noble qualities. It was the kind of self-cultivation which recognized “moral beauty as greater than intellectual beauty”, and in which the Japanese had traditionally excelled. As for scientific education, it was something else entirely, Hearn opined. The aim of that education was to forge a sword of knowledge, with which the humans fought each other. The Western world was characterised by a struggle for the survival of the fittest, according to the laws of evolution, and the fittest were simply those who were the most intelligent, as Hearn saw it. By adopting a Western mode of education, the Japanese had therefore entered the competitive fray, Hearn lamented. For him, the human heart, or morals, was “worth infinitely more than the human intellect”.¹⁴⁸⁹

In Western countries, greater knowledge generally led to higher emotional sensibilities, Hearn claimed. But in Japan, this rule did not apply. The same influence had the “extraordinary effect of suppressing them”, Hearn argued. The character of a Japanese intellectual, cultivated using Western methods, was thus one of “singular hardness”. The most elevated class of modern Japanese thinkers acquired a countenance of “cold and faultless politeness” through education, rather than emotional sensitivity and empathy like the modern Western thinker. To Hearn, this phenomenon indicated a profound difference between the Japanese and Western races. Instead of creating a “community of feeling” and “intellectual sympathy”, higher education was actually intensifying and developing “race differences” and widening the “distance between the Occidental and the Oriental”.¹⁴⁹⁰

Hearn believed that race character could not be transformed through education. Education could only bring out and accentuate existing inclinations – in this instance, hardness and coldness. But why it had brought out those qualities in the first place? The answer, Hearn lay in the aforementioned “intellectual overstretch” that the Japanese were subjecting themselves to. It had roughened the finer tendencies of Japanese character, and left no room or energy for moral self-cultivation.¹⁴⁹¹ Japan needed morals, and it needed “higher forms of faith than her mediaeval ones”, Hearn argued. As the Japanese already possessed a

thus ensuring the survival of their children. In other words, the progeny of those individuals who fared well in the competition, and were best adapted to the prevailing conditions, had better chances of survival, and thus were “naturally selected” (Darwin, Charles, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. New York: D. Appleton, 1871 [1859]: pp. 19–20).

¹⁴⁸⁸ Hearn 1894b, 681, 683; Hearn 1895, 229, 231–233; Hearn 1896b, 147–148, 150.

¹⁴⁸⁹ Hearn 1896b, 37–38.

¹⁴⁹⁰ Hearn 1894b, 663–664; Hearn 1895, 86–87.

¹⁴⁹¹ Hearn 1894b, 664–665; Hearn 1896b, 152–153.

refined moral code, they only needed to find a way to reconnect with it. As to religious beliefs, they would have to evolve from previous indigenous forms – they certainly could not be transplanted to Japan from abroad. Hearn’s conclusion was that Buddhism, “strongly fortified by Western science”, would “meet the future needs of the race”.¹⁴⁹²

The era during which Lafcadio Hearn and the other five experts wrote their treatises has been called the “Age of Doubt” in the West. It was an era when traditional European and American religious beliefs were under close scrutiny. The beliefs of Christianity, in particular, were under attack because of the doubts raised by proponents of Higher Criticism, geology, biology, and other sciences.¹⁴⁹³ Some thinkers of the period argued that science would eventually overcome religion and form the last stage in the mental and Civilizational development of human beings. As noted before, the theory of J. B. Frazer proposed that evolution of human mind was progressing from the stage of magic, through the stage of religion, and towards the final stage of science. Well before Frazer, Voltaire had claimed that religion was only a phase that would be followed by a phase of reason, and Auguste Comte had presented his Law of Three States, which proposed that humans passed theological and metaphysical states before ending in the scientific state.¹⁴⁹⁴

Some European and American intellectuals of the Victorian era argued that scientific theories and discoveries were fundamentally incompatible with Christian beliefs. One of the most famous debates concerned the incompatibility of creationist and evolutionary theories of history.¹⁴⁹⁵ Those adherents of Christianity, who thought that the Bible was to be read and accepted literally, not symbolically or metaphorically, often regarded evolutionary theories as direct attacks against Christian tenets. Indeed, some thinkers deliberately used evolutionary theory to attack Christianity. Soon the debate was being waged in Japan, too, and not just Europe and the United States, as from the 1870s onwards, Western scientists and teachers began to teach sciences and evolutionary theory to the Japanese. This got some of the American missionaries and their supporters worried both at home and abroad. They feared that Japanese students and intellectuals would become sceptical towards Christianity, and that, as a consequence, the evangelization work of the missionaries was in serious jeopardy. Consequently, some of the missionaries became determined to arrest and resist the spread of evolutionary theories to Japan.¹⁴⁹⁶

Battling against both Western scientific scepticism and Japanese paganism, the American missionaries did their utmost to censure the theories and works they regarded as atheist or agnostic. The list of such scholars included Henry Thomas Buckle and John William Draper, who prioritized science, reason, and

¹⁴⁹² Hearn 1896b, 193.

¹⁴⁹³ Clarke 2003, 80–81.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Lorenz 2008, 54–56.

¹⁴⁹⁵ Sweet 2007, 1.

¹⁴⁹⁶ Henning 2000, 63–64, 79, 89; Howes 1972, 353.

non-religious factors as forces of progress and civilization.¹⁴⁹⁷ But at the top of the censure list was, of course, Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer. These two thinkers were considered atheists, and their theories posed the biggest threat to the Christian mission in Japan.¹⁴⁹⁸

The most ardent and active proponent of Darwin's theories in Japan was the American Edward S. Morse (1838–1925), who served as the Professor of Zoology at the Tokyo Imperial University in the late 1870s, and visited Japan also after he had returned to work in the United States. He travelled throughout the US and Japan, and held many public lectures about natural sciences and evolutionary theory. In Japan, he lectured not just at universities, but at many other venues across the country. He introduced Darwinian evolutionary theory,¹⁴⁹⁹ and the theory of natural selection to Japanese audiences of students, officials, and even members of the imperial family. His lectures sparked a wide interest in evolution among listeners, as well as indignation among some of the American missionaries, for Morse was rather outspoken about his conviction that people should pursue scientific truths rather than following religious tenets. The missionaries were quick to react by countering Morse's views in their own lectures delivered in Japan, and by condemning those views in American newspapers. But by this point, evolutionary theory had left an indelible mark in the minds of many Japanese.¹⁵⁰⁰

Spencer's theories also spread among Japanese students and intellectuals like wildfire during the last decades of the 19th century. They were translated into Japanese, and used as textbooks in colleges and universities.¹⁵⁰¹ American missionaries in Japan censured him because they thought his theories left no room for God.¹⁵⁰² However, Spencer himself argued that religion and science were entirely different entities, and so there was no point arguing whether they were compatible or not, as they had no common ground to tread on. The material world was for the scientists, whereas the spiritual realm belonged to theologians, and his argument was 'never the twain shall meet'.¹⁵⁰³

The missionaries also accused Darwin of atheism, even though it appears he was never one at any point in his career.¹⁵⁰⁴ Meanwhile, Spencer was not ex-

¹⁴⁹⁷ The missionaries did have cause for concern. Buckle's *History of Civilization in England* (two volumes published in 1857 and 1861) was translated into Japanese in 1874, and before long it replaced the Bible and other religious works as a source of inspiration for many Japanese students. And as for Draper, the title of his book alone was provocation enough for the missionaries - *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*. (Henning 2000, 80–81.)

¹⁴⁹⁸ Henning 2000, 79–81, 87

¹⁴⁹⁹ Darwin's *The Descent of Man* was translated into Japanese and published in 1874, but *On the Origin of Species'* translation had to wait until 1896. In the meantime, Morse's lectures, and their Japanese translations, served as one of the most influential sources of information on Darwinian theory in Japan (Henning 2000, 82).

¹⁵⁰⁰ Henning 2000, 81–84.

¹⁵⁰¹ Henning 2000, 80.

¹⁵⁰² Henning 2000, 85.

¹⁵⁰³ Henning 2000, 85; Sweet 2007, 2–3.

¹⁵⁰⁴ Denis Lamoureux has claimed that, at the early stages of his career, Charles Darwin did not question the literal truth of the Bible, the existence of a Creator, or intelligent

actively ruling out God, when he proposed that, just as there had to be some cause effecting evolution, there had to be a "First Cause" which started the whole process in the first place. This First Cause was an "Infinite and Eternal Energy", from which all things proceeded. It was an "Inscrutable Existence" manifest everywhere; something infinite, independent, "in every sense perfect, complete, total", and absolute.¹⁵⁰⁵ Spencer noted that all religions spanning from primitive ghost-theory to polytheism, monotheism, pantheism, and even non-religious atheism, had sought to explain this first cause, all in their own ways. But the conclusions to which the religious groups and atheists alike had arrived about the nature of the First Cause were all logically indefensible, Spencer claimed.¹⁵⁰⁶ Yet, he granted that, in a sense, all religions pursuing to understand the First Cause contained a seed of truth, although under the disguise of error. Spencer believed that intellectual development and science would purify the truth from erroneous beliefs and myths, but ultimately, the First Cause would remain unintelligible to religions and sciences alike.¹⁵⁰⁷

As noted before, Hearn was a steadfast Spencerian, and rather expectedly, he ascribed to the notion of the "Universal Riddle", which humans could never entirely solve, but nevertheless attempted to. This compelling need to resolve the riddle was actually a driving force behind the natural evolution of human knowledge and abilities, Hearn asserted.¹⁵⁰⁸ He also believed that of all world religions, the one that had come closest to properly putting the riddle in the right perspective had been Buddhism. Hearn claimed that some Buddhist theories and ideas perfectly complemented the "facts of modern science", and even Spencerian psychology and evolution.¹⁵⁰⁹ Both Buddhism and science recognised the same phenomena but under different names, he argued. In particular, the Buddhist notion of karma, or pre-existence, was perfectly analogous to the scientific notions of inherited instinct, memory, and nervous systems – that is, psychological evolution.¹⁵¹⁰

Hearn claimed that science and Buddhism had come to occupy the same ground of reason, fact, and reality. He asserted that, by the 19th century scien-

design, but later in life, he declared himself an agnostic (Lamoureux 2007, 40–42, 45, 47).

¹⁵⁰⁵ Spencer 1893, 37, 42; Spencer 1897, 175.

¹⁵⁰⁶ Spencer 1893, 43–44.

¹⁵⁰⁷ Spencer 1893, 45–46; Spencer 1897, 165–166, 169, 171.

¹⁵⁰⁸ Hearn 1895, 75.

¹⁵⁰⁹ Hearn 1896b, 226.

¹⁵¹⁰ Hearn 1896b, 230, 240; Hearn 1914, preface. "Man's evolution is a progress into perfection and beatitude. The goal of evolution is Equilibration. Evils will vanish, one by one, till only that which is good survive. Then shall knowledge obtain its uttermost expansion; then shall mind put forth its most wondrous blossoms; then shall cease all struggle and all bitterness of soul, and all the wrongs and all the follies of life. Men shall become as gods, in all save immortality; and each existence shall be prolonged through centuries; and all the joys of life shall be made common in many a paradise terrestrial, fairer than poet's dream. And there shall be neither rulers nor ruled, neither governments nor laws; for the order of all things shall be resolved by love. [...] hereafter by reason of the persistence of Force and other cosmic laws, dissolution must come: all integration must yield to disintegration. This is the testimony of science". In other words, the scientific idea of evolution very closely resembled the Buddhist idea of transmigration and pre-existence to him (Hearn 1895, 165–167).

tific standards, Buddhist tenets were altogether rational. Buddhism had arrived at the idea of pre-existence naturally, via intuition, but the idea itself was grounded in “the world of reality”. And as science had furnished “irrefutable evidence” to prove the idea of psychological evolution, the Buddhist doctrine had passed “out of the realm of theory into the realm of fact”.¹⁵¹¹ Deep down, however, science came first for Hearn, and he embraced Buddhism only insofar as it was consistent with Spencerian theories.¹⁵¹²

But the compatibility of Buddhist religion and science did not mean that Lafcadio Hearn considered science and religion in general, or Christian religion in particular, as compatible. On the contrary, Hearn thought that Christian doctrines, such as the idea of specially created souls, were far removed from the tenets of hereditary evolution. In fact, Hearn claimed that it was not until Christian theology had started to lose its grip on the West that the idea of psychological inheritance could be commonly accepted. But once the doctrine of physical and intellectual evolution had arrived, “old forms of thought” began to crumble, with new ideas rising “to take the place of worn-out dogmas”. In this respect, the “general intellectual movement” in the West was taking a direction “strangely parallel with Oriental philosophy”, Hearn claimed.¹⁵¹³

Lafcadio Hearn was not the only one at the time who argued that Buddhism was on the side of reason and science, while Christianity was on the side of irrationality and superstition. Many Europeans and Americans who wished to reject atheism and thoroughgoing secularisation found Buddhism a viable alternative to Christianity, and one that remained consonant with science. And they were quite vocal in expressing their opinions.¹⁵¹⁴ Needless to say, such claims were not favourably received by Christian missionaries and thinkers.¹⁵¹⁵ William Griffis, for example, countered any such ideas by maintaining that Buddhist speculations, doctrines, and disciplines were hardly conducive for intellectual development or rationality. In fact, he described Buddhism as “one of the most potent engines ever devised for crushing and keeping crushed the intellect of the Asiatic masses”, and defined the quest for Nirvana as a form of “mind-murder”.¹⁵¹⁶

Lafcadio Hearn, however, was confident that Christianity was receding in the West. It was turning into more of a social convention than ethical necessity, and life was gradually being placed on scientific basis.¹⁵¹⁷ In other words, Hearn was envisioning that the Western world as now finally entering a phase

¹⁵¹¹ Hearn 1895, 170; Hearn 1896b, 225, 234, 238–239.

¹⁵¹² Tweed 2000, 106–107.

¹⁵¹³ Hearn 1896b, 234, 236–237.

¹⁵¹⁴ Clarke 2003, 20–21, 81–82. One group of Westerners arguing for the rationality and scientific nature of Buddhism were the Theosophists, and many others outside the West also adopted the argument (McRae 1991, 23; Tweed 2000, 108, 110).

¹⁵¹⁵ Clarke 2003, 80.

¹⁵¹⁶ Griffis 2006a, 343; Griffis 2006b, 132; Martin 1881, 115; Martin 1900, 38. Still, Griffis noted approvingly the Japanese movement he called “New Buddhism”, which was “democratic, optimistic, empirical or practical” and welcomed “science and every form of truth”. This would delay the demise of Buddhism for a while, he claimed, but not forever, as it was “unquestionably moribund”. (Griffis 2006b, 146.)

¹⁵¹⁷ Hearn 1896b, 192.

of reason and agnosticism. Meanwhile Japan was following suit, he noted, as during the last few decades the educated classes in Japan had become decidedly agnostic. He explained that the students and intellectuals of Japan now viewed their own old religious practices, as well as any notions of the supernatural, either with little respect, or even with “undue contempt”. Buddhism they regarded as an intolerable superstition. This was a natural reaction, Hearn observed, and he reminded his readers of the time when, most “of us who now call ourselves agnostics”, had emancipated “from a faith far more irrational than Buddhism”, and of the feelings with which they had then looked back on “the gloomy theology of our fathers”. The educated elites of Japan were now entering the same intellectual plane as the “cultivated Parisian or Bostonian.”¹⁵¹⁸ Still, it appears that, in Hearn’s opinion, religious sentiments and thoughts were not necessarily excluded from this phase of reason, neither in Japan nor in the West.

Hearn firmly believed that Buddhist ideas were rational enough to survive the ‘scientific phase’. The outward and popular forms of Buddhism would definitely have to go, he felt, but “the deeper religious sense”, as long as it harmonised with “the best and broadest teachings of modern science”, would endure in Japan.¹⁵¹⁹ Due to “the expansion of the popular mind through education” and “the influences of modern science”, Hearn thought that also Shinto would undergo modifications, and its folk beliefs and popular gods would disappear before “the irrefutable philosophy of evolution”.¹⁵²⁰ And yet, this pared-down and healthier version of Shinto would not only persevere, but probably thrive in the future. It would provide resistance against Western religions¹⁵²¹ whilst allowing for the adoption of Western sciences.¹⁵²² However, Hearn did not consider Shinto to be a religion as such. Rather, he understood it as something the Japanese inherited and it provided an innate sense of duty, ethics, and loyalty.¹⁵²³

¹⁵¹⁸ Hearn 1894a, v–vii.

¹⁵¹⁹ Hearn 1894a, vi.; Hearn 1894b, 467, 682–683. Surprisingly, in the first volume of *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, Hearn suggested that Buddhism seemed “doomed to pass away at last from this Japan to which it came only as an alien faith” (Hearn 1894a, 208–209). But perhaps this was meant to imply that the outward forms of Buddhist religion were destined to disappear, not the doctrines which science had confirmed.

¹⁵²⁰ Hearn 1894a, 103; Hearn 1894b, 388, 467.

¹⁵²¹ Hearn 1894a, 209; Hearn 1894b, 388. Also Percival Lowell noted at the close of the 19th century, that although some of the educated Japanese had entered a phase of science, Shinto had not lost its grip on the nation. He argued that the “Japanese upper classes had found a new faith; and Herbert Spencer was its prophet”, and yet “in the nation’s heart the Shinto sentiment throbbed on as strong as ever”. (Lowell 1895, 18.)

¹⁵²² Modern Shinto, from the late 17th century onwards, and the *Kokugaku* (National Revival) attached to it, were generally in favour of siding with sciences rather than renouncing them. Jason Ananda Josephson has argued that European sciences were understood to result from the will of Japanese deities, and they were thus incorporated into the Shinto canon, as a figure of speech. As the Japanese nation committed itself to modernisation and secularisation, *Kokugaku* and Shinto remained as background influences in ideologies, education, and scientific journals and discussions. (Josephson 2012, 95–96, 110, 112–115, 147–148.)

¹⁵²³ Hearn 1894b, 468.

To conclude, Hearn's take on the issue of religion and science was mainly Spencerian. He claimed that religious feeling was "something infinitely more profound than dogma". It would survive "all gods and all forms of creed", and only widen, deepen, and grow "with intellectual expansion". Science would merely modify, not destroy it:

That as mere doctrine religion will ultimately pass away is a conclusion to which the study of evolution leads; but that religion as feeling, or even as faith in the unknown power shaping equally a brain or a constellation, can ever utterly die, is not at present conceivable. Science wars only upon erroneous interpretations of phenomena; it only magnifies the cosmic mystery, and proves that everything, however minute, is infinitely wonderful and incomprehensible.¹⁵²⁴

Hearn admitted that sentiments surrounding Christianity in the West were nevertheless strong and would not easily change. But he trusted that, with a little bit of soul-seeking, Westerners would find that the mutual consistency of Buddhist and scientific ideas, together with their own intellectual evolution had already prepared them for accepting the idea that future form of all religion would be along the lines of Spencer's 'Synthetic Philosophy'. And this form would differ from Buddhism "only in the greater exactness of its conceptions; holding the soul as a composite; and teaching a new spiritual law resembling the doctrine of karma", Hearn added.¹⁵²⁵

William Martin and William Griffis also espoused the fundamental compatibility of science and religion, although their conceptions of the matter were nothing like the one Lafcadio Hearn presented. The two had opted to teach sciences, but they nevertheless held fast to their faith, being part of the late 19th century liberal strain of American Protestantism, which was accommodating towards scientific doctrines. In general, the liberal Protestants envisioned the secular as well as spiritual as their fields of operation, and they supported the development of universities and scientific disciplines.¹⁵²⁶ The liberal Protestants emphatically contested the claims of conservative Christians, atheists, and agnostics about the incompatibility of religion, rationality, and science.¹⁵²⁷ William Martin, for example, claimed that reason had already been tried against Christianity, but to no avail, for science and rationality were not in contradiction with Christianity, and hence could not harm the Western faith. Thus, for Martin, (scientific) rationality and logic were on the side of Christianity.¹⁵²⁸ And as noted earlier, for William Griffis, science was the handmaid of Christianity.¹⁵²⁹

¹⁵²⁴ Hearn 1896b, 243.

¹⁵²⁵ Hearn 1896b, 243–244.

¹⁵²⁶ Fox 1993, 639–641.

¹⁵²⁷ Henning 2000, 79. For example, Josephus Flavius Cook (1838–1901) was one of the most vocal advocates of the compatibility of science and religion in the US. He frequently discussed the issue in his popular lectures in Boston. In 1882, he travelled to Japan and lectured there too, trying to persuade his audience, both Japanese and foreigners, to adopt his stance and repudiate agnosticism and atheism. However, when Christians like Cook took their liberal interpretations of science and religion to Japan, the conservative missionaries stationed there felt that they had encountered yet another threat to their work and ideas. (Henning 2000, 79; Howes 1972, 353.)

¹⁵²⁸ Here Martin was specifically arguing that Christianity could survive the attacks of (scientific) logic, unlike Confucianism. (Martin 1881, 283.) Deeming science, logic,

But for William Martin, Christianity was not merely compatible with science; it was the root of science and the scientific revolution in the Western countries. He regarded all scientific literature of “the most favored nations of Christendom” as being religious deep down, or “leavened” with the “noble sentiments and values” of Christianity. He admitted that Western secular literature often proved to be far removed from the Christian “ideal of purity and spiritual elevation”, but “compared with the literature of heathen peoples”, it glowed “with the warm light of a higher world”.¹⁵³⁰ Martin believed that Christianity was at the base of all Western scientific works, and that Christianity was generally conducive to science,¹⁵³¹ as it fostered the abilities needed for scientific thinking: “Jesus Christ appealed to evidence and challenged inquiry, and this characteristic of our religion has shown itself in the mental development of Christian nations.”¹⁵³² Also William Griffis attributed the “freedom of inquiry” to the influence of Christianity, since Jesus had bade his disciples to search, inquire, discern, and compare.¹⁵³³

Griffis then went on to suggest that Christianity fostered a faith not only in empirical methods, but also “the unity of law”, which was the “foundation of all science”. This unity referred to the principle of the uniformity of nature, which Griffis believed an “average Asiatic” was not able to comprehend, having “no unifying thought of the Creator-Father”, whereas for those who believed “in one Spirit pervading, ordering, governing all things”, and to whom “the boundary line between the Creator and his world” was perfectly clear, there was “unity amid all phenomena” and the universe was “all order and beauty”.¹⁵³⁴ Griffis was not saying that the sciences were the exclusive property of Christians, however. He noted that sciences such as geography and astronomy had probably been “born among lands and nations outside of and even before Christendom”, and that in Japan, the Buddhist scholars had cultivated and developed “exact sciences” and humanities.¹⁵³⁵ In fact, he argued that the only distinctly Christian science, “the direct offspring of the religion of Jesus,” was the theological science of comparative religion. As a product of “Christian civilization” and the Christian spirit of inquiry, it was essentially “Christianity's

and rationality as tools for undermining heathen beliefs was rather typical among the liberal Protestants at the time (Adas 1989, 206).

¹⁵²⁹ Griffis 1903, 488; Griffis 2006a, 412.

¹⁵³⁰ Martin 1881, 272–273, 275. It should be noted, however, that here Martin was not so much contributing to the debate about religion and science, but arguing that missionaries could and should participate in the creation of new secular literature for China, since introducing scientific works was one of the most crucial elements in the Christianisation of China. (Martin 1881, 272, 275, 277–278.)

¹⁵³¹ This too was an opinion shared by many liberal Protestants and scientists during the latter half of the 19th century. The argument ran that since numerous Christians throughout the centuries had contributed to scientific research, Christian ideas and ideals had hence shaped scientific methods, and thus Christianity had been pivotal to the development of sciences. (Adas 1989, 205–206; Sweet 2007, 2–3.)

¹⁵³² Martin 1881, 107–108.

¹⁵³³ Griffis 2006b, 3.

¹⁵³⁴ Griffis 2006b, 7–8.

¹⁵³⁵ Griffis 2006a, 230; Griffis 2006b, 2.

own child."¹⁵³⁶ Still, this did not preclude Griffis from contending that most sciences came from Christian nations, and thus flowed from Christianity.¹⁵³⁷

As for the other two overtly Christian experts, Samuel Williams and Arthur Smith, they also seemed quite sure that religion and science were compatible. In fact, we already saw that Smith considered Christian religion to be a necessary accompaniment to Western sciences in China, if one wished to avoid the 'yellow peril'¹⁵³⁸. Meanwhile, Williams refrained from taking an active part in the debate, but he did imply that religious liberty and freedom of discussion had been what caused science to flourish in the West. Hence, Williams argued that before the Chinese could make progress in science, the "ennobling and expanding principles of an enlarged civilization" – that is, Christianity and individual liberties – would have to be adopted by the Chinese.¹⁵³⁹

The interconnectedness of science and religion was further emphasised by the use of similar counter-concepts and oppositional metaphors in discussing them. We have already noted that the Christian experts tended to contrast science and Christianity with superstition, and to claim the first two as being European and American in nature, whereas practically all the Chinese and Japanese had in the way of religion and knowledge appeared to be superstitions. The oppositional categories of truth and falsehood were used to the same effect. For William Martin and William Griffis, Western sciences and Christianity were generally the products of a "true civilization", Christianity was the "true faith", and Christian revelation the "truth", while the Chinese and Japanese philosophies and faiths were either full of errors, or they were "superstitious errors" in themselves.¹⁵⁴⁰ And this applied equally to Chinese and Japanese knowledge, which was erroneous, and their sciences, such as geomancy, were "false".¹⁵⁴¹

Martin and Griffis also used the counter-conceptual pair of 'sober', or rational, and 'irrational' to distinguish Western religion and sciences from Chinese and Japanese systems of belief and knowledge. "Intelligent sobriety" was a characteristic of the Western mind and beliefs, while the philosophical and religious superstitions of Oriental peoples were products of irrationality and "fer-

¹⁵³⁶ Griffis 1900, 116; Griffis 2006b, 2-3.

¹⁵³⁷ Griffis 1903, 370.

¹⁵³⁸ Smith granted that the Chinese were in great need of science: "[t]hey need every modern science for the development of the still latent resources of their mighty Empire. This they are themselves, beginning clearly to perceive, and will perceive still more clearly in the immediate future". However, Smith questioned the power of science to exert beneficial moral influence over China. He believed that the introduction to China of such sciences as chemistry, which had proved to be most essential for "modern advancement", would not lead to moral regeneration, but rather to "new and unthought of possibilities of fraud and violence, throughout every department of life". He concluded by asking his readers whether it would be "quite safe, Chinese character being what it is, to diffuse through the Empire together with an unlimited supply of chemicals, an exact formula for the preparation of every variety of modern explosives?" (Smith 1890, 401-402.)

¹⁵³⁹ Williams 1913b, 64.

¹⁵⁴⁰ See e.g. Griffis 1900, 85; Griffis 2006b, 7, 63, 186; Martin 1881, 254, 281, 283; Martin 1894, 285, 292, 324; Martin 1900, 236.

¹⁵⁴¹ Griffis 2006a, 344, 374; Martin 1881, 264, 281; Martin 1900, 41, 236.

vid fancy," and "as terrible as the drunkard's phantasies."¹⁵⁴² Using this form of rhetoric, Martin could then conclude that the Chinese, and no doubt the Japanese as well, needed "a truer logic" and rationality, which could only come from Christianity and Western sciences.¹⁵⁴³

In their accounts of sciences and religions, Martin and Griffis resorted to temporal counter concepts such as 'adult' and 'mature' against 'child', 'childish', and 'childlike', or 'modern' against 'primitive' and 'ancient'. Martin described the Chinese as a "child" in knowledge and science, and he compared the Chinese philosophical writings to the "nonsensical ditties of children."¹⁵⁴⁴ Griffis contrasted the Japanese with "men trained in the life of modern civilization", and concluded that in comparison they were not only "untrained as children", but that their ideas, religions, and language were "primitive" and "child-like".¹⁵⁴⁵ Both Martin and Griffis repeatedly characterised Western sciences as "modern sciences". Meanwhile, as was indicated earlier, Martin spoke of "ancient" Chinese alchemy as a form of chemistry in its "infancy". In other words, Martin argued that alchemy was an earlier developmental stage of the "mature" and "modern" discipline of chemistry, just as Griffis argued that Japanese Shinto was an earlier developmental stage of religion. In their eyes, the sciences and religious ideas of Christendom were representatives of modernity and the 'state of the art' in progress.¹⁵⁴⁶

Besides counter concepts, Martin and Griffis frequently used the conventional oppositional metaphors of light and darkness to make clearer the contrasts between the West and Far East. Light, of course, denoted to knowledge and truth, whereas darkness denoted to superstitions and ignorance. Darkness was the lot of Chinese and Japanese, as was evident from Martin's assertion that Chinese "heathenism" was "darkness," and from Griffis' comment on the "darkened intellect" of the Japanese.¹⁵⁴⁷ However, Martin consoled that the diffusion of "the light of science as well as religion" in China would "dispel that darkness." And Griffis pointed out that even during the period of seclusion, the Japanese had yearned and sought after "light" and "truth." Finally in the 1850s, Japan had been irrevocably opened to "light, science, and the gospel," and the "gray light" of earlier centuries had turned into a "full day."¹⁵⁴⁸

¹⁵⁴² Griffis 2006b, 8; Martin 1881, 109, 190, 282.

¹⁵⁴³ Martin 1901a, 43.

¹⁵⁴⁴ Martin 1881, 29; Martin 1894, 197; Martin 1900, 300.

¹⁵⁴⁵ Griffis 1903, 371; Griffis 2006b, 14, 37, 44, 186, 190.

¹⁵⁴⁶ Griffis 1903, 477-478; Griffis 2006a, 101, 155; Griffis 2006b, 6; Martin 1881, 52, 167, 211, 257; Martin 1894, 21; Martin 1900, 318, 457; Martin 1901a, 38, 52; Martin 1905, 2.

¹⁵⁴⁷ Griffis 1903, 478; Griffis 2006b, 176-177; Martin 1894, 173; Martin 1901b, 30.

¹⁵⁴⁸ Griffis 1892, 201; Griffis 1903, 552; Griffis 2006a, 463; Griffis 2006b, 184-185; Martin 1901b, 30. William Griffis' and William Martin's use of language followed the traditional 19th century missionary discourse. Valentin Mudimbe has argued that this missionary discourse reflected the idea of the superiority of Christianity, and identified Christianity with reason, history, and power. It was a language of derision and ethnocentrism, of systematic reduction into metaphoric oppositions, and of religious and biblical categories for describing culture and civilization. This language was geared towards proving that no human enterprise could succeed without knowledge of true Christian God. Mudimbe has claimed that: "All missionaries, whatever their denomination, operate according to the same canon of conversion. Their language

Martin and Griffis admitted that Japan and China had their own sources of light. Buddhism was “the Light of Asia”; Confucian philosophy and morals had light-shedding wisdom to offer; and Chinese morality also sparkled “with the light of truth”. Then again, Martin and Griffis remarked that Buddhism was “light without heat”, or that its light had not been “pure”, or the “products of its illumination” had not been “wholesome”. “Full light”, “higher light”, and “warm light” were qualities that only modern science, modern knowledge, and Christianity could bring.¹⁵⁴⁹ And particularly Christianity, for even the lights of science and philosophy needed the “Light of the World” to complement them, Martin argued.¹⁵⁵⁰

If Griffis and Martin’s use of counter-concepts and metaphors in discussing science and religion are to be understood as an expression of their liberal Protestant attitude, then logically the use of those concepts should be different in texts by someone expressing different views, such as Lafcadio Hearn. Hearn, however, was no different when he referred to Western science as “modern”, and Shinto as a “primitive” form of faith or religion. But unlike Martin and Griffis, he presented superstition as the opposite of only science, not of Christianity. Ultimately, Lafcadio Hearn forecast that “modern knowledge” and modern science would raise humans to “mental manhood”, and after that, man would have “no light” in religion and no consolation in prayers. As Buddha said, man would have to become the “light for himself”, and contend to the fact that the only “truth” was the “Unknowable”. At this point of mental development, Hearn explained, “Western Faith” would be revealed to consist of “falseness” and “fairy tales” only, and it would be doomed to pass away forever. This losing of faith in the “All-Father” and “Saviour” would be a shocking moment, Hearn forewarned, but it would not be the “darkest prospect possible for man”, for science could hold in store even “darker” discoveries for the future.¹⁵⁵¹ Hearn therefore was using the traditional metaphors of light, dark,

depends on three major types of data always considered a given and taken for granted: premises, mediators, and objectives”. The premises in this language included such categories as primitive, pagan, child, and darkness. These premises could be mediated by the missionary work of conversion, Christianity, and education, and thus steered towards the goals of civilization, Christianity, and light. (Mudimbe 1988, 51–52, 53.)

¹⁵⁴⁹ Griffis 1903, 478; Griffis 2006b, 91; Martin 1881, 5, 52, 133, 141–142, 272; Martin 1900, 229; Martin 1901a, 149.

¹⁵⁵⁰ Martin 1881, 163, 166; Martin 1894, 256, 325. Another interesting and frequent group of metaphors William Griffis and William Martin used in their discussions about science and religion related to medicine and health. For example, Martin argued that the Chinese three religions created “not a healthy atmosphere”. Griffis characterised the Japanese superstitions as “mental and spiritual disease”, and products of “diseased brains” or “diseased imagination”, and thus drew a stark contrast between “Chinese Asia” and “Aryan world”. Meanwhile, scientific and rational scepticism towards superstitions was “healthy”, Griffis noted, and Martin concluded that the most effective “antidote” and “cure” against superstition was Christianity. (Griffis 1892, 190–191; Griffis 2006a, 84; Griffis 2006b, 7, 9; Martin 1881, 251, 270; Martin 1900, 313; Martin 1901a, 193.) According to Valentin Mudimbe, these metaphors of illness/health and order/disorder were also traditional categories in missionary language (Mudimbe 1988, 52).

¹⁵⁵¹ Hearn 1894a, 199, 341; Hearn 1894b, 399; Hearn 1895, 180–181; Hearn 1896b, 233.

child, adult, truth, and false in quite different ways to the Protestant experts. He effectively turned the category of rational and irrational upside down by claiming that Buddhism and science were on the side of reason, while Christianity was not, but he also portended that science, although being a 'light', could have a 'darker' side from the point of view of the humankind.

By the 1870s, the American liberal Protestants had begun to cast a critical eye on the Bible and doubted a literal reading of the Word of God.¹⁵⁵² From this position it was only a small step to accepting the claims of science about evolution. The religious ramifications of the theory of evolution were immense. Yet, these Christians noted that the causes of evolution were still little known and understood, and so this did not eliminate the possibility that God had originated life and steered evolution according to his plans. Thus, evolution and Christianity could be reconciled.¹⁵⁵³ Such an interpretation of evolution made the idea generally quite palatable for many American Christians. For example, William Martin seemed to have no scruples about espousing Darwin's theory of biological evolution. In fact, he argued that the idea of evolution had been anticipated in China well before it had dawned on European minds:

Even such general ideas as that of Biological Evolution, and that of the conservation of energy, they appear to have apprehended with great clearness, but they never took the trouble to fortify them by the laborious process of systematic induction. Says Mencius, "The study of nature has for its object to get at the causes of things. In causes the ground principle is advantage." In this remarkable speech uttered 400 B.C. he shows that he knew how to set about the study of nature. It might perhaps be going too far to affirm, that in speaking of "advantage" as a fundamental principle in natural causes, he anticipated the author of *The Origin of Species*; yet this obscure hint, if followed up, might have led to Darwin's doctrine.¹⁵⁵⁴

Martin then added that the idea of evolution had been entertained by the alchemists of Ancient China:

The eminent chemist Dr. J. W. Draper, of New York, in a recent lecture on evolution, gives ancient alchemists the credit of being the first to seize the grand idea of evolution in its widest extent, as "a progress from the imperfect to the more perfect, including lifeless as well as living nature, in an unceasing progression in which all things take part towards a higher and nobler state". [...] These views are prominent in the writings of all the leading alchemists of China.¹⁵⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵² Martin's texts provide one example of reinterpreting the Bible in a metaphorical, not literal, manner. He noted that Satan had appeared as "a kind of rival deity, a personification of the power of evil" in the New Testament, and consequently a majority of Christians thus saw Satan as an omniscient living being. Martin thought this interpretation mistook the "language of poetry for that of philosophy", and placed the soul against a person - Satan - rather than sin itself. According to Martin, the correct interpretation of New Testament was that Satan was only a symbol for evil. (Martin 1881, 165.)

¹⁵⁵³ Fox 1993, 645; Henning 2000, 86; Hokkanen 2007, 114-115; Lamoureux 2007, 39, 41. For example, to show their commitment to reconciling Christianity with evolutionary theory, the organisers of the 1893 Parliament of Religions in Chicago arranged their event together with the Congress on Evolution, in which the reconciliation of Christian and evolutionary doctrines were discussed (McRae 1991, 13).

¹⁵⁵⁴ Martin 1901a, 31-32.

¹⁵⁵⁵ Martin 1881, 167-168.

For Martin, it was hardly surprising that evolutionary theory had its roots in China, considering that the original unity and evolution of matter was so important in the cosmological speculations of Chinese Taoists and alchemists.¹⁵⁵⁶

Martin made no indication that evolutionary theory was in contradiction to Christianity, and William Griffis disregarded the topic altogether, though he did show that he largely accepted the Darwinian account.¹⁵⁵⁷ Arthur Smith, meanwhile, referred to “human evolution”, and the evolution of mind and morals. He especially mentioned “Christian heredity”, by which he meant that to some extent at least, the moral power of Christianity was inherited and evolved from generation to generation.¹⁵⁵⁸ Smith therefore seemed to accept the theory of evolution in principle, but like other bits of Western learning, it had to be infused with Christianity. Therefore, he argued that China needed Christian “righteousness”, and “a deep conviction that there is a ‘Power that makes for righteousness’”. Having these would give the Chinese “a meaning to History, other than that of a blind evolution of unknown and unpreventable causes”.¹⁵⁵⁹

Just as some Christian believers did not reject science and evolutionary theory, or think of them as conflicting with religion, some scientists and evolutionists did not reject Christianity.¹⁵⁶⁰ Percival Lowell was as devoted to evolutionary theory and Spencer’s ideas as Lafcadio Hearn, but unlike Hearn, he argued that evolution *could* be reconciled with Christianity.

Lowell started with Darwin’s theory of evolution, and noted that for years it had been held “by most religious folk to be impious”, adding that it was “still so held by a few of them”. He explained that Darwin’s doctrines were thought to “deny a special creator”, although what Lowell thought they actually denied was the idea of humans as “special creatures:”

So far as God was concerned, all it did directly was to remove him to a proper height above his handicraft; it was man whom it treated with scant respect by linking him with the brutes. Darwin committed the unpardonable sin of recognizing his own poor relations.¹⁵⁶¹

However, after its initial rejection, Lowell believed that Darwinian theory had been “nearly universally” accepted in the West. And yet there was one part of

¹⁵⁵⁶ Martin 1901a, 41.

¹⁵⁵⁷ William Griffis remembered seeing monkey meat being sold in a Japanese village on his journey from Fukui to Tokyo, and wondered how this “Darwinian steak would taste”. He ultimately declined the offer of eating one of his “ancestors” though, and remarked that the Japanese needed science to teach them what cannibals they were. (Griffis 1903, 542). Griffis was notably silent about Spencerian evolutionary theory, but in private he had characterised it as the “bastard philosophy of Christendom” (Henning 2000, 86).

¹⁵⁵⁸ Smith 1899, 43, 349. Arthur Smith discussed the idea of Christian heredity in conjunction with the question how long it would take for Christianity to take root in China and regenerate the whole empire. Smith characterized heredity as a mighty “force for evil,” but if Christianity could establish itself in China and capture that force, he believed that the Chinese progress in Civilization would be greatly accelerated. (Smith 1899, 351.)

¹⁵⁵⁹ Smith 1890, 403–404.

¹⁵⁶⁰ Gay 2007, 19–20; Sweet 2007, 1–2.

¹⁵⁶¹ Lowell 1895, 309.

evolutionary theory which Christians still found offensive – the removal of the dividing line between spirit and matter. Percival Lowell argued that, in the end, mind and matter both came down to the same material world. He claimed that “the two are one; and that the life-principle of the whole is some mode of motion.” Consequently, the humans were no more elevated than any old senseless and soulless thing in the universe. Thinking otherwise would be “thoroughly irreligious,” Lowell concluded, for “what warrant” had man “to prescribe laws to an omnipotent creator and to turn up his human nose at one mode of creative action as unworthy to be used in his construction”.¹⁵⁶² In other words, Lowell was saying that the Christian dualist notion of the soul and a material body did not hold against the proofs of science, whereas if dualism was dropped, Christians would have no difficulties accommodating scientific theories with their religion.

In a way, the whole debate of science and religion came to a head in late 19th century Japan. The Japanese empire became a test case of whether Christianity, modern science, and higher civilization were inseparable, as the Christian missionaries claimed, or whether progress could be achieved according to a wholly secular and scientific recipe, as a growing number of American scholars insisted.¹⁵⁶³

At first, the Japanese who studied and travelled in the West were confounded by this debate. They were surprised to find the values and ideas in a state of flux and subject to intense criticism. In Europe and the United States, the Japanese came across the theories of intellectuals such as J.S Mill, Samuel Smile, Spencer, T.H Huxley, and Darwin, and the evangelist spirit of many Christian believers. As a consequence, some Japanese left the West advocating Christianity, while some advocated science strengthened with some other form of faith, and yet others advocated science together with thorough secularisation.¹⁵⁶⁴ In the end, it was the last two groups who garnered the most support among Japanese intellectuals.¹⁵⁶⁵ Indeed, such was the case, that by the turn of the 20th century, American observers were acknowledging that the Japanese

¹⁵⁶² Lowell 1895, 309–311.

¹⁵⁶³ Henning 2000, 63, 66, 87.

¹⁵⁶⁴ Beasley 1995, 208; Josephson 2012, 197; Henning 2000, 79. For example, Nakamura Masanao (1832–1891) converted to Christianity and endorsed Christian civilization, while another philosopher, Nishi Amane (1829–1897) argued that all religious beliefs were based on false knowledge or lack of knowledge. Fukuzawa Yukichi argued that the Japanese belief systems and their metaphysical speculations were incompatible with the scientific doctrines of the West, and he linked modernity primarily with secularisation, physical sciences, and technology. (Josephson 2012, 141–142, 197, 211.)

¹⁵⁶⁵ The Japanese imported European and American political and scientific ideas in an essentially de-Christianised form. Thus, Jason Ananda Josephson has argued that the coming of the so called secular age, traditionally attributed to European Protestantism, first took place outside Europe – in Japan. On the other hand, at the same time *Kokugaku* and Shinto gained a remarkable foothold in the political ideologies of the Meiji regime, as well as in the new educational system. However, it should be remembered that for the Japanese, Shinto did not signify religion, but science and statecraft, and hence it could be argued that the Japanese society indeed secularised during the latter half of the 19th century. (Josephson 2012, 129–130, 149, 155, 162–163).

had adopted Civilization without Christianity, and without discarding Buddhism.¹⁵⁶⁶

The image of Japan as a success story, as climbing higher up the ladder of Civilization was not the least due to its receptiveness to Western sciences, technology and education, and to the satisfaction the Americans felt at successfully executing their 'mission to civilize' in this respect. William Martin, for example, thought Japan had done better than China because they had reconstructed their national education system along Western lines while the majority of Chinese continued to obstinately reject Western styles of education.¹⁵⁶⁷ But the Japanese success posed problems for the missionary experts. Secular Western writers were starting to write that Japan was bad news for anyone who persisted in claiming that modern Western civilization was founded on Christian principles, and that the two were inseparable. Moreover, the development of the Japanese nation seemed to complicate the simplistic counter-concepts of heathen versus Christian, and barbarian versus civilized.¹⁵⁶⁸ In other words, it was increasingly hard for the missionaries and their supporters to insist that heathens were necessarily primitive or barbarian.

Here was probably one clue why people like Arthur Smith insisted on the importance of Christian morals. In their line of thought, a nation without a high standard of morals could not be a truly civilized nation. And as no other philosophy or religion than Christianity could provide such an elevated moral code, only a Christian nation could be counted as genuinely civilized. Percival Lowell, too, hesitated to put the new Japan on the same level as the civilizations of Europe and the United States. But this was not because they lacked any morality – the Japanese seemed to have plenty of that; rather it was due to a lack of scientific spirit. Lowell had a high regard for science, or the search after truth, as an essential element in the Civilization process in general, and in the advancement, power, and superiority of the Western civilization in particular. Thus, by characterising the Westerners as imaginative scientists and the Japanese as unimaginative artists, Lowell effectively denied the possibility of Japanese civilization eventually rising to the same level as Western civilization.¹⁵⁶⁹ The Japanese could compete with the West in the arts, economically, and perhaps even militarily, but they could never challenge the West at science and imagination.

In the end, the increasing emphasis on the roles of science and technology in the progress of civilizations did not affect the image of Japan in the eyes of American observers as much as it affected their image of China. The failure to develop science and technology, to accumulate systematic knowledge and create general theories, and their flawed logic and lack of accuracy were all stand-

¹⁵⁶⁶ Henning 2000, 64, 88.

¹⁵⁶⁷ Martin 1881, 82; Martin 1900, 327.

¹⁵⁶⁸ Henning 2000, 87–89.

¹⁵⁶⁹ Percival Lowell's biographer, David Strauss, has argued that Lowell held the Japanese artistic abilities in great respect, and that in this way he expressed his ambivalence towards modernisation. According to Strauss, Lowell also intentionally stressed the supremacy of science over art, and the inability of the Japanese to think scientifically, in order to dissipate any notions of Japan posing a challenge to Western hegemony. (Strauss 2001, 123–124, 129.)

ard criticisms hurled at the Chinese in the 19th century. Michael Adas has noted that criticism of Chinese scientific achievements had steadily grown from the Enlightenment onwards, and this had had devastating repercussions on the Western attitudes towards the Chinese civilization as a whole. Considering the diverse and advanced scientific learning the Chinese possessed, it was curious that it was China out of all the nations that came under the most severe attacks, and which lost much of its earlier prestige. Adas has suggested that this was because Westerners were more informed about Chinese scientific knowledge than, say, African. And because of the earlier Jesuit and Sinophile admiration of China's scholarly achievements, the Chinese also had much more to lose in terms of reputation.¹⁵⁷⁰

¹⁵⁷⁰ Adas 1989, 54, 81-83, 94-95, 124-125, 177, 265.

7 SOCIETY, GOVERNMENT, AND THE INDIVIDUAL

The semantic field drawn from the texts of the six experts shows that the concept of civilization was associated with social and family relations, social organization, politics and institutions, constitution and legal safeguards, individuality and liberty, and with the position of women. All these were factors in the constitution and characteristics of macro-level civilizations, but their relation to the process of Civilization was more complicated. The precise connection was often left undefined, and in some cases the connection seemed to be quite slight, or even non-existent. The form of government, for example, appeared to have no obvious connection to the level of Civilization, although some forms, such as despotism and patriarchy, were generally denoted to as more 'primitive'. Other features, such as a constitution or legislation, were promoted as gauges of Civilization in the context of the unequal treaties, and the idea of 'comity of nations'. But all the missionary-minded experts agreed that the position of women had a significant effect on the nation's level of Civilization, and thus it could be used as perhaps the foremost measure of it.

The world-view of a late 19th century American often included such values and principles as freedom of the individual; equality; social mobility; democracy; competitiveness; and nationalism. Majority of our authors showed commitment to some, or most, of these values. They used them to compare Chinese and Japanese societies and forms of government to the United States, and to accentuate the differences they found. They identified the American values as typically Western, while such antithetical values as hierarchy, inequality, collectivism, lack of freedom, and corruption they distinguished as typically 'Asiatic'. This rhetorical feat enabled them to advocate reforms in China and Japan, and to either explicitly or implicitly both criticise and praise their *own* society and political culture.

7.1 Social relations

The first feature of Chinese society that caught the eye of our experts was its hierarchical nature. Both Arthur Smith and Samuel Williams noted that the Chinese occupied unequal positions in the society depending on merit, wealth, vocation, and the division of people into four classes - scholars, farmers, workers, and lastly, merchants¹⁵⁷¹. Samuel Williams added that there also existed partly hereditary and partly merit-based nobility in China, but he considered this privileged class to be rather insignificant, because it was small and had no real political power. Smith and Williams explained that, in theory at least, the lot of each member of the society was hereditary, since inherited occupations were a principle stipulated by the law.¹⁵⁷² Williams also drew attention to some broader lines of social division, which had legal consequences, affected one's eligibility for literary examinations, or involved prejudice. One such line was drawn between 'natives' and foreigners, while another was between the conquerors and conquered, that is, the Manchus and the Chinese, and there was also one between free people and slaves. Slaves as an official category however, did not exist in China owing to the "liberal principles of the Four Books", Williams pointed out, but there were plenty of unofficial slaves. One final division was made between the honourable and 'the mean', the latter category including a ragbag assortment of people including vagrants, criminals, actors, and executioners.¹⁵⁷³

Nevertheless Williams was quick to point out that the Chinese did not have a caste system, and in this respect he compared China favourably to India.¹⁵⁷⁴ Regardless of the hierarchy and social inequalities, China also differed from other Asian nations by having noticeable "democratic" elements. One such element was the tendency of the Chinese to unite and form clans, guilds, and societies in order to assert their rights and influence public opinion. But the main democratic feature was "the republican method" of literary examinations. Every honourable man with talent could strive to become a member of the literati and even become an official. Although only a handful of the candidates ever got employed by the government, Williams reported, all members of the literati enjoyed the privileges, respect, and influence associated with that class, and

¹⁵⁷¹ Arthur Smith was surprised to find merchants at the bottom of the hierarchy, considering that the Chinese had a "singular penchant for trade". He did not pause to elaborate on the Confucian roots of the low rank of the traders in the society, only explained that the Chinese did not "place a high value upon trade as such". (Smith 1899, 49; Smith 1901a, 9.) In the Confucian economic theory, merchants were regarded as an unproductive class, contributing nothing of any real value to society. Also, they were considered to be a potential source of political disorder. Hence, merchants were given a low social rank to reduce their possible influence. Nevertheless, some of the merchants grew very wealthy, entered into the socially acceptable classes, and cooperated with the government officials. (Beckmann 1965, 24-25; Fairbank 1961, 44).

¹⁵⁷² Smith 1899, 246; Williams 1913a, 387-388, 405-406.

¹⁵⁷³ Williams 1913a, 411-413, 564.

¹⁵⁷⁴ Williams 1913a, 411.

they formed an influential middle class.¹⁵⁷⁵ In the end, it seems that though Williams depicted the Chinese people as having unequal opportunities, rights, and resources, at every turn he found irregularities that eased the inequality.¹⁵⁷⁶

Like Samuel Williams, William Martin maintained that there were no hereditary privileged classes to speak of, and no “unalterable stratification” in the Chinese society, because of the literary examinations. He cited the Chinese saying that ministers and generals were not born in office, and observed that, theoretically, this principle offered an “inspiration of equal opportunity” to everyone. This was the “democratic feature in the Chinese constitution”. But as noted in the previous chapter, practice was often different from theory. The majority of those who made it to the scholar class, sprung up from wealthy gentry families,¹⁵⁷⁷ not from poor peasant families. The democratic element was also undermined by the sale of literary degrees.¹⁵⁷⁸

Nor was there anything democratic in Chinese officialdom, Martin thought, as officials were appointed by the Emperor, not chosen by votes. “They spring from the people, but they do not, as with us, revert to the people”, he noted. And as to the career of these officials, in a country where there was “no free press and no ballot-box”, the mandarins were free to conduct their affairs in pretty much any way they pleased. Provincial mandarins, in particular, enjoyed “an almost autocratic immunity from interference”, and Martin was aware that the Chinese themselves believed that among those mandarins corruption was the rule “and integrity the exception”.¹⁵⁷⁹ Thus, Martin appeared to be quite sceptical about how the democratic elements in Chinese society actually functioned.

Arthur Smith, meanwhile, thought that the main division in Chinese society ran between the rich and the poor. Both groups were subject to severe oppression, he observed. The position of the rich, especially affluent officials, was anything but enviable. They were, in his opinion, “the most hard-worked class of the Chinese race”, as they had to perform more tasks than was actually possible, and because each were personally responsible for any shortcomings.¹⁵⁸⁰ Smith went on to say that the rich were subject to the “devastating levies” of all their numerous relatives and friends.¹⁵⁸¹ Meanwhile he described the life of the poor as literally a “struggle for existence”.¹⁵⁸² The Chinese lived in a country that frequently suffered devastating natural calamities, and people ceaselessly married and brought more and more children into the world, though they had no means of supporting them. These two factors, Smith claimed, constantly

¹⁵⁷⁵ Williams 1913a, 412, 562–564.

¹⁵⁷⁶ Williams 1913a, 563.

¹⁵⁷⁷ Fairbank 1961, 36, 40.

¹⁵⁷⁸ Martin 1900, 328–329.

¹⁵⁷⁹ Martin 1900, 329, 333.

¹⁵⁸⁰ Smith pointed out that the normal workday of a Chinese official could begin at two a.m., and end at seven or eight in the evening. He contrasted this with the demands of the American labour unions for an eight-hour workday, and implied that, compared to the Chinese officials, workers in the US could hardly claim to be over-worked. (Smith 1894, 31–32; Smith 1899, 49.)

¹⁵⁸¹ Smith 1890, 314.

¹⁵⁸² Smith 1890, 177.

pushed the hopelessly deprived poor over the edge and into ruin.¹⁵⁸³ As a result, poverty was widespread in China and, in Smith's opinion the result of this was twofold: it brought life in China "down to a hard materialistic basis", with an emphasis on food and money; and it made it very difficult for the people to feel or express altruism.¹⁵⁸⁴

Smith did not show much sympathy for the plight of the poor in China. Instead, he admitted that it was hard not to feel "righteous indignation" towards a society in which Confucianism¹⁵⁸⁵ encouraged overpopulation, and brought into the world "tens of thousands of human beings who ought never to have been born, and whose existence can never be other than a burden to themselves". With a rather unforgiving and Spencerian choice of words, Smith argued that such a society violated the "beneficent laws of nature which would mercifully put an end to many branches of families when such branches are unfitted to survive". As a result, "vice, disease and crime" proliferated in Chinese society, and wherever one went, it was the "same weary tale" of "poverty, poverty, always and evermore poverty".¹⁵⁸⁶

The worst thing about this situation, Smith reasoned, was that the poor were unable to do anything about it. They had no means to educate or better themselves, nor any way of moving into less overcrowded areas to exploit the vast undeveloped resources of the country, because Confucianism dictated that they could not leave the place of their birth and abandon their ancestral graves.¹⁵⁸⁷ For Smith, it was clear that most Chinese lived and died in the same place, and that there was little social mobility. They lacked the restlessness and yearning for "a good time coming", which characterised most other nations at the close of the 19th century.¹⁵⁸⁸ The Chinese stoically adapted to, and contended with, any situation life threw at them. Thus, they entertained no hope of a better tomorrow, and they made no effort to change their lot, or the social system. So eventually, this endurance had the negative effect of becoming the "antithesis of progress", Smith claimed.¹⁵⁸⁹ He then contrasted this passivity with the "impetuous energy" of the "Anglo-Saxon race", whose "constitutional tendencies" had prepared them for the productive, high speed of modern life in the "developed civilization of our day".¹⁵⁹⁰

Overall, Smith's assessment of Chinese society was not exactly a positive one: "Chinese society resembles some of the scenery in China. Seen at a little

¹⁵⁸³ Smith 1890, 116, 286-287.

¹⁵⁸⁴ Smith 1890, 288.

¹⁵⁸⁵ The Confucian tenet to which Arthur Smith was referring to was ancestor worship, which encouraged people to have offspring to perform the necessary ancestral rituals at the family temples after one had passed away.

¹⁵⁸⁶ Smith 1899, 310-311.

¹⁵⁸⁷ Smith 1890, 313; Smith 1899, 310-311.

¹⁵⁸⁸ Smith 1894, 162. The 19th century Americans generally considered themselves as restless, and the peoples of Europe and Asia as immobile, despite of the fact that these peoples could be considered to be nations of movers inasmuch as the Americans. Part of this image was also the idea about the unprecedented social mobility of the Americans. (Tyrrell 2007, 56-57).

¹⁵⁸⁹ Smith 1894, 162-163, 165.

¹⁵⁹⁰ Smith 1890, 74.

distance it appears fair and attractive. Upon a nearer approach, however, there is invariably much that is shabby and repulsive, and the air is full of odours which are not fragrant."¹⁵⁹¹ Such a society was perhaps too complicated and too foreign for an Anglo-Saxon person to fully understand and appreciate, Smith admitted. He thought his own society was governed by straightforward ideas, such as "individual rights" and "personal and social liberty", whereas Chinese society was controlled by the bewildering concept of "face". This concept had too many meanings to describe, let alone comprehend, and the rules regulating it were "often wholly beyond the intellectual apprehension of the Occidental", Smith explained. "Face" was something one either had or did not have in relation to others. It was evidently somewhat theatrical, Smith thought, due to the likelihood that all Chinese people were under the watchful eyes of their neighbours. It was simultaneously connected with honour, fame, and reputation, and yet at other times it had nothing to do with any of these. Ultimately, he felt, the whole principle was worth scrapping and needed to be "replaced by common sense".¹⁵⁹²

Meanwhile, the society the American experts encountered in Japan was in a state of flux. William Griffis outlined the characteristics of Japanese society over centuries of political and cultural upheaval in his treatises. He described how the 19th century Japanese had inherited a feudal society with a hereditary class system from the Tokugawa era. In "Old Japan", there had been "no masses" but "many classes", he pointed out.¹⁵⁹³ By the end of the 8th century, these various classes could be grouped into two main kinds: the first was military, composed of peasants with wealth and skills; and the other was agricultural, composed of the remaining populace. The emergence of the military classes had been the single most significant event in the history of the Japanese society, Griffis argued. It had raised part of the population to the plane of "travel, adventure, the profession and the pursuit of arms, letters, and the cultivation of honor and chivalry". Eventually, it had enabled "that brightest type of the Japanese man" to emerge – the samurai.¹⁵⁹⁴

Griffis believed that the emergence of the samurai class made Japan different from other East Asian nations. In China, the civilians and scholars were in a separate class from the soldiers,¹⁵⁹⁵ whereas in Japan, the samurai had monopolized both the arms and intellect of the country, and occupied the top position in the social hierarchy. Everyone else in Japan was in one of the three remaining Confucian classes: farming, artisanal, or mercantile. All four classes were each then further subdivided in two, Griffis listed: (i) the *kuge* (court nobility in Kyoto), and (ii) the *daimyo*; (iii) the samurai; (iv) the untitled landowners

¹⁵⁹¹ Smith 1890, 392.

¹⁵⁹² Smith 1890, 15–17, 60, 116; Smith 1899, 337.

¹⁵⁹³ Griffis 2006b, 62.

¹⁵⁹⁴ Griffis 1892, 79; Griffis 2006a, 64, 114–115.

¹⁵⁹⁵ Griffis 2006a, 115; Griffis 2006b, 59. Griffis contrasted the Japanese society with its dominant samurai class also to Western Asian and European societies, in which the two most powerful groups had often been the military and priestly classes (Griffis 1892, 73).

and farmers; (v) craft artisans and other workmen; (vi) merchants or traders; (vii) actors, vagrants and prostitutes; and (viii) outcasts.¹⁵⁹⁶ Particularly the last group of people, the “minus quantities” existing below the status of man, or below “the level of humanity,” attracted Griffis’ attention.¹⁵⁹⁷

The people Griffis was referring to were the *hinin* (non-humans) and the *eta* (literally the “abundance of filth”), who in the 19th century came to be known collectively as the *burakumin* (hamlet people). The *hinin*, Griffis explained, were the “lowest class of beggars, the squatters on waste lands”, who were generally “filthy and disgusting, in their rags and dirt”. The “pariah” class of *eta*, on the other hand, consisted of “skinners, tanners, leather-dressers, grave-diggers, or those who in any way handled raw-hide or buried animals”. And although some “individual cases” of the *eta* were a bit better off, they were nevertheless treated like “the filth, and off-scouring of the earth”, he added. In the Confucian scheme of society, the Japanese government cared mainly for the well-being of the samurai class, and Griffis was quick to point out that the merchants had little rights. But the people who fell completely outside the four-class system had no recognised rights whatsoever. For this, Griffis blamed Buddhism, as the Buddhist tenets prohibited the eating of animals as food, and its sutras encouraged the idea of pariahs.¹⁵⁹⁸

William Griffis dedicated the Book II of *The Mikado’s Empire* for recollections of his personal experiences and observations of the country and its people during the first half of the 1870s. In these reminiscences, he continued the subject of Japanese dehumanization of certain groups of people in their society. For example, he brought up the Japanese beggars, who lived scantily clothed in “straw kennels by the roadside,” and of whom the Japanese law did not recognize as human.¹⁵⁹⁹ Then again, Griffis himself implied that the Japanese beggars, as well as coolies, and the common people in general, were not fully human, or at least they were an inferior type of human when compared to the Americans. Griffis wrote that:

Two arms, two legs, a head, and trunk, when added together in an Asiatic country, do not produce the same sum that such factors would yield in America. With us a man is a man. In Asiatic countries he is a wheelbarrow, a beast of burden, a political cipher, a being who exists for the sake of his masters or the government.¹⁶⁰⁰

In other words, a man was not a man unless he was a man unto himself. He had to exist for something more than duties.

In old Japan, however, every man knew his place and the duties that went with it, and the governing principle throughout all classes was loyalty, Griffis explained. He believed that the “eight classes of the people were kept contented

¹⁵⁹⁶ Griffis 1892, 74; Griffis 2006a, 325–326.

¹⁵⁹⁷ Griffis 2006a, 326; Griffis 2006b, 62.

¹⁵⁹⁸ Griffis 1892, 164–165; Griffis 2006a, 325–326; Griffis 2006b, 163. Lafcadio Hearn also treated the subject of Japanese outcasts in detail in his book *Kokoro* (See Hearn 1896b, 328–329).

¹⁵⁹⁹ Griffis 1903, 358, 361.

¹⁶⁰⁰ Griffis 1903, 360–361.

and happy”, and that there were a number of reasons for this. Firstly, all the Japanese believed the course of their life to have been preordained; famines did not happen quite so often as in China; there was no uncontrolled contact with foreigners or their ideas; education was reserved for the samurai only; there was no vast amount of wealth and power for merchants to accumulate; and political factions were held in check. Griffis argued that, due to these factors, there were few reasons and even fewer opportunities for the people to rise up against the government.¹⁶⁰¹ However, by the last decades of Tokugawa rule, Japanese “moral rotteness” had reached its apex,¹⁶⁰² in Griffis’ opinion, and this was reflected in the state of society:

With such repression of the natural powers of humanity, it was but in accordance with the nature of things that licentiousness should run riot, that on the fringes of society there should be the outcast and the pariah, and that the social waste of humanity by prostitution, by murder, by criminal execution under a code that prescribed the death penalty for hundreds of offences, should be enormous. It is natural also that in such a state of society population should be kept down within necessary limits, not only by famine, by the restraints of feudalism, by legalized murder in the form of vendetta, by a system of prostitution that made and still makes Japan infamous, by child murder, by lack of encouragement given to feeble or malformed children to live, and by various devices known to those who were ingenious in keeping up so artificial a state of society.¹⁶⁰³

But with the Meiji Restoration, a new society started to take shape.

Griffis recounted how the samurai overthrew the Shogunate and the feudal system, abolished the *han*, and worked towards centralizing the country. They “sent their sons abroad to study the civilization of the West”, and envisaged sweeping reforms that would rejuvenate society. With their refinement, learning, and political skill, the samurai came to represent the “typical progressive Japanese,” Griffis felt.¹⁶⁰⁴ The samurai rose to power due to a combination of intellect, education, ability, and skills, and challenged the nobility of the old order, Griffis claimed. Gradually, an “irreconcilable” difference grew up between these “self-made men, whose minds have been expanded by contact with the outer world, and the high nobles nursed in the atmosphere of immemorial antiquity, and claiming descent from the gods”. A “chasm between the forms and spirit of the past and the present” was widening, Griffis wrote. The “modern claims” jostled “the ancient traditions,” and “vigorous parvenuism” challenged the “effete antiquity”.¹⁶⁰⁵

A solution was sought from the levelling of social hierarchy. William Griffis perceived that the tendency of Japanese politics after the Meiji Restoration had been to obliterate the old order of nobility and the hereditary class of the samurai. In 1869, a new hierarchy had been introduced to replace the old order. The *kuge* and *daimyo* classes merged to form the *kazoku* (nobles); the samurai became known as the *shizoku*; and commoners the *heimin*. In 1876, the

¹⁶⁰¹ Griffis 2006a, 326, 345; Griffis 2006b, 62, 77.

¹⁶⁰² Griffis 2006b, 188.

¹⁶⁰³ Griffis 2006b, 183.

¹⁶⁰⁴ Griffis 1892, 75; Griffis 2006a, 115, 383.

¹⁶⁰⁵ Griffis 2006a, 117.

samurai were finally obliged to give up their stipends and the right to carry two swords. In effect, this measure compelled the “privileged classes to begin to earn their bread”, and it was warmly welcomed by the common people, Griffis wrote. Then, in 1884 the system of nobility was also rearranged,¹⁶⁰⁶ so that in “response to public opinion”, many distinguished Japanese received a title on the basis of their achievements, not through birth.¹⁶⁰⁷ Under this new plan, Griffis pointed out, Japanese society had now just three classes: the nobles, gentlemen, and the common people, who made up the vast majority.¹⁶⁰⁸

Besides the “great social transformation” which had begun to narrow the gap between the privileged classes and the people, Griffis observed other indicators of social change in Japan. He noticed that people were leaving the countryside in their droves and moving to urban areas; a national army had been created; family structures and values were starting to crumble; and the Japanese now had a “love of and pursuit after money” which occasionally amounted to sheer “madness”.¹⁶⁰⁹ Griffis also noted the emergence of new industries and handicrafts, the introduction of new machinery, and the concentration of capital. With a nod to primitivism, he described the newly industrialised cities as having “tall chimneys and clouds of coal smoke where these before were unknown”, and lamented the disfigurement of “beautiful landscapes, making eyesore and desolation where once was beauty”. All in all, he concluded, Japan had begun transforming into a “manufacturing and commercial nation”, and would soon be the industrial leader in Asia.¹⁶¹⁰ However, some of these changes had met with resentment and opposition in some quarters, Griffis remarked. The government was nevertheless able to silence much of the criticism, suppress peasant uprisings, and even quell the alarming Satsuma Rebellion¹⁶¹¹ in 1877.¹⁶¹²

In 1871, Griffis was pleased to report that the *burakumin* were granted full legal equality, and in 1889 this status was affirmed when all Japanese were de-

¹⁶⁰⁶ The new nobility consisted of five ranks, which roughly corresponded with the English titles of: prince or duke; marquis; count; viscount; and baron (Lebra, Takie, *Above the Clouds: Status Culture of the Modern Japanese Nobility*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. P. 51).

¹⁶⁰⁷ Griffis 2006a, 381, 383, 407–408.

¹⁶⁰⁸ Griffis 1892, 9, 75.

¹⁶⁰⁹ Griffis 1903, 540, 649–650.

¹⁶¹⁰ Griffis 2006a, 410; Griffis 1903, 649–650.

¹⁶¹¹ In the 1860s, the samurai from Satsuma (now Kagoshima Prefecture) and Chōshū (now Yamaguchi Prefecture) had been instrumental in overthrowing the Shogunate and establishing the new Meiji government. However, some of the samurais from these regions resented some of the decisions the government then made, such as the formation of a new conscript army, abolishment of the title of samurai, and to *not* declare war on Korea. Eventually these samurai gathered together other adversaries of westernisation and revolted, led by former Meiji bureaucrat Saigō Takamori (1828–1877). In the end, the central government emerged victorious, but the revolt had been a serious challenge to its authority and policies. (Beckmann 1965, 253; Benson et al. 2001, 19–20).

¹⁶¹² Griffis 2006a, 383–384.

clared subjects of the Emperor with “equal rights before the law”.¹⁶¹³ The formerly denigrated merchant class not only gained status, but political power too, while the lot of the working classes improved tremendously thanks to more widespread education.¹⁶¹⁴ However, Griffis argued that throughout this period, one group of people remained stolidly conservative and unaffected by these changes – the farmers. Griffis summarized the attitude of the agricultural class to the changes around him in the following manner: “he knows not, nor cares to hear, of it, and hates it because of the heavier taxes it imposes upon him”.¹⁶¹⁵

But none of these groups, or their social standing, was considered to have a more determining relation to the level of Civilization as the women. William Griffis argued that it was “probable that all civilizations, and systems of philosophy, ethics and religion, can be well tested by this criterion—the position of woman”.¹⁶¹⁶ This was perhaps the majority view among the 19th century American intellectuals. In his essay, “American Civilization”, Ralph Waldo Emerson cited the position of women in society as an indicator of a nation’s level of Civilization.¹⁶¹⁷ Before Emerson, Thomas Jefferson had put forward similar arguments, and both James Mill and John Stuart Mill had also asserted that women played a significant role in the civilizational process. In addition, a number of missionaries had adopted the same view, and indeed, in the original 1848 edition of *The Middle Kingdom*, Samuel Williams noted that “the two best general criteria of civilization among any people are superior skill in destroying their fellow men, and the degree of respect they pay to women”.¹⁶¹⁸ Before long, some of the leading Japanese intellectuals, such as Fukuzawa Yukichi and Mori Arinori, were also espousing the idea of using women’s status as a gauge of Civilization.¹⁶¹⁹

In 1890, Arthur Smith thought that women’s position in China was a topic already too well-known in the United States to be recounted. A countless number of illustrative examples of the Chinese “theory and practice in regard to woman” could be cited, Smith wrote, but he settled for citing the following three: “[u]niversal ignorance on the part of women”, “universal subordination”, and “the existence of polygamy and concubinage.”¹⁶²⁰ The principles that had led to the subordination of women in Chinese society were inherited from times past, he explained. The venerated Confucian Classics had people believe that women were “as inferior to [men] as the earth is inferior to heaven”, and that the two could never be equal. On the other hand, the Chinese dualist philosophy ascribed the origin of “death and evil” to the female principle of *yin*, while “life and prosperity” ensued from its subjection to the male principle of *yang*.

¹⁶¹³ Nevertheless, both Griffis and Hearn conceded that those who had been formerly outcast still suffered from both public prejudice and social ostracism (Griffis 1892, 9–10; Griffis 2006b, 163; Hearn 1896b, 329–330).

¹⁶¹⁴ Griffis 1903, 650; Griffis 2006a, 410.

¹⁶¹⁵ Griffis 2006a, 115.

¹⁶¹⁶ Griffis 2006b, 79.

¹⁶¹⁷ Emerson 1862, 503.

¹⁶¹⁸ Beard 1948, 192; Henning 2000, 60; Mazlish 2009, 375; Williams 1848b, 161.

¹⁶¹⁹ Henning 2000, 56.

¹⁶²⁰ Smith 1890, 246.

Hence, it followed that keeping the women “completely under the power of man, and to allow her no will of her own” amounted to a natural law in China, Smith argued.¹⁶²¹

The end result of Chinese philosophies was that women were not allowed to develop and cultivate themselves, or to have any happiness of their own. Instead, they belonged to their husbands and were expected to live and work for men, Smith concluded.¹⁶²² Moreover, Chinese women had no opportunities to go anywhere, or cultivate friendships. In Smith’s opinion, their lives were “literally the existence of a frog in a well”.¹⁶²³ This, he believed, was wholly different from the “relatively lofty conception of woman, held by the Teutonic races” in the West, where Christianity had elevated the women to a much higher position.¹⁶²⁴

William Martin, for his part, took particular note of the Chinese practice of binding women’s feet. In the West, this had become symbolic of the suppression of women in China. It was a practice, which many Westerners condemned widely and loudly, and which, for them, epitomised the ‘otherness’ of China.¹⁶²⁵ Martin too, joined in the condemnation of this “whimsical fashion”. The whole custom seemed not only eccentric, but completely irrational to him. It could not be explained by either Confucianism, which implored the Chinese to keep the bodies they had received from their parents unharmed and intact, or any other Chinese religion. Foot-binding went against nature; was a crime against femininity; and was an “example of the tyranny of a perverted taste”. Martin compared the practice to the “waspish waist” of Western women, but found that whereas the latter was only sporadic or “tribal”, foot-binding was carried out on a national level. The only plausible explanation Martin came up with was that this was one way of “keeping women at home”.¹⁶²⁶

Samuel Williams also took up the theme of women’s seclusion. Male and female members of the household were kept apart and not allowed to freely socialize with each other. Like Smith, Williams mentioned that Chinese girls were not even given a chance to form friendships or meet up. Segregation and “the custom of crippling the feet” confined Chinese women to the home, and although they undoubtedly enjoyed many of their duties as wives, mothers, and daughters, Williams seemed convinced that they were generally unhappy. As a consequence, he felt that Chinese women did not hold their “proper place” in the society.¹⁶²⁷ Williams denounced the whole system which separated the sexes, and kept the women ignorant of the obligations and privileges a membership in the society entailed. He particularly emphasised that the results were injurious for the whole society. Women were the ones who could impart “grace-

¹⁶²¹ Smith 1899, 305.

¹⁶²² Smith 1899, 305–306.

¹⁶²³ Smith 1899, 262, 326.

¹⁶²⁴ Smith 1899, 306.

¹⁶²⁵ Clifford 2001, 49–50. Smith also took note of the “almost universal” practice of binding women’s feet in China - a custom which he described as irrational and “utterly opposed to the natural instincts of mankind” (Smith 1899, 261).

¹⁶²⁶ Clifford 2001, 49–50; Martin 1900, 23, 25–26.

¹⁶²⁷ Williams 1913a, 784, 786.

fulness and purity" to society, but if they were "uneducated, unpolished, and immodest" the result in a mixed society would be "general corruption."¹⁶²⁸ Society needed women to purify it, but before women could do that, they had to be educated.

William Martin was an advocate for educating Chinese women too, and for similar reasons. First of all, he felt that Chinese literature was "filthy", and this was because women were illiterate and so were never expected to read it. Literature therefore needed "women to purify it".¹⁶²⁹ Martin saw Chinese women as "modest, graceful, and attractive" and the country's moral "better half", and yet they were made to feel so inferior, that they prayed to Buddha they would be born as men in the next life. Chinese women were ignorant, Martin claimed, as they were "left to grow up in a kind of twilight, without the benefit of schools".¹⁶³⁰ This was because the target of education was an official post, and the government had no intention of hiring women. And nor was public opinion in favour of girls' education, Martin explained, as reading, writing, and knowledge were seen to be "dangerous arts in female hands". If they seemed ignorant therefore, it was not due to any inherent deficiencies; rather it was because the men held them back.¹⁶³¹

What the Chinese had failed to understand, Martin argued, was that the level of education women received had a direct effect on the family, and especially the children. With Americans, the family was the first school for children, he explained. Educated parents stimulated the minds of their young, and cultivated their language skills, reason, memory, and taste. But in China, there was "no such accommodating medium, no such blushing aurora". According to Martin, this lack of domestic maternal training for children accounted for the "early awaking of the mental powers of European children as compared with those of China". This was not caused by any intrinsic "difference of race", but by the lack of educated mothers.¹⁶³²

Samuel Williams' take on the question of women, education, and family was that he thought it to be a "singular anomaly" among the Chinese that, even while their ancient philosophers had emphasised the beneficial influence of cultivated mothers on the minds and morals of infants, they still neglected the education of their girls. Williams believed the main reason why the Chinese had failed to establish girls' schools was "a general contempt for the capacity of the female mind"; and like Martin, he noted that the government had little incentive for providing female education.¹⁶³³

Meanwhile, Arthur Smith thought that women's education was a question concerning the future of the whole empire. It was the precondition of national reforms, for no nation or race could "rise above the status of its mothers and its

¹⁶²⁸ Williams 1913a, 784.

¹⁶²⁹ Martin 1900, 83.

¹⁶³⁰ Martin 1900, 82–83.

¹⁶³¹ Martin 1881, 73, 214.

¹⁶³² Martin 1881, 59–61, 74.

¹⁶³³ Williams 1913a, 521, 572–573.

wives".¹⁶³⁴ Thus far, however, no education had been given to women, leaving them in a "dense darkness", and an unimproved "state of nature", as he put it. And in spite of having "well-balanced and practical minds", Smith noted that Chinese women were often led to believe that they had no mind or opinions of their own at all.¹⁶³⁵ The situation was somewhat surprising for Smith, since he thought that viewed "from a purely Chinese point of view," there could be no "inherent objection to the education of Chinese women."¹⁶³⁶

Another recurring observation about Chinese women in the treatises of Samuel Williams and Arthur Smith was the propensity of women to do hard, physical labour in the fields and as burden-bearers, or enervating work at home. In other words, the propensity of women to do men's work, side by side with men, and as industriously as men.¹⁶³⁷ Arguably, many Americans considered the differentiation of sexes as one measure of the level of Civilization a people had attained. They believed that the men and women of their own superior Anglo-Saxon civilization were pronouncedly different and their social spheres distinct. Supposedly, the civilized men were resolute and disciplined, and the civilized women frail and pious angels of the household. In contrast, the women of less civilized societies were often depicted as masculine, aggressive, and performing manual labour, whereas the men were represented as emotional and lacking self-control.¹⁶³⁸ Considering the comments Samuel Williams and Arthur Smith made on education of women on one hand, and the contents of their work on the other, it would seem that the two experts called for an equal and similar position for the men and women of the Chinese empire, but not *too* equal.

All three China experts mentioned in passing that there was, or had been, some variation in the status of the women of the empire. For example, unlike the Chinese, the Manchu did not practice foot-binding, William Martin observed. He also found evidence that occasionally the Chinese did in fact hold certain women in high esteem, and extolled the virtues, benevolence, and benign influence of wives and mothers, for instance.¹⁶³⁹ Samuel Williams observed that, in some families at least, the education of their daughters in poetry, music, composition, and classical lore seemed to befit their status, and bestowed "credit on the family".¹⁶⁴⁰ But even in these cases, he pointed out, the Confucian Classics and history were rarely thought to be proper subjects for women to study. Indeed, in Chinese educational works, such as *Lessons for Women*,¹⁶⁴¹ womanly virtues were seen to consist of modesty and chastity rather than intelligence and scholarly ability.¹⁶⁴²

¹⁶³⁴ Smith 1899, 344.

¹⁶³⁵ Smith 1890, 384-385; Smith 1899, 307.

¹⁶³⁶ Smith 1899, 307.

¹⁶³⁷ See e.g. Smith 1899, 275; Williams 1913a, 93, 137-138, 174, 212, 247-248.

¹⁶³⁸ Bederman 1995, 25; Smithers 2009, 250.

¹⁶³⁹ Martin 1881, 61; Martin 1894, 54; Martin 1900, 25, 83, 163-164.

¹⁶⁴⁰ Williams 1913a, 573.

¹⁶⁴¹ *Lessons for Women* had been composed during the Han Dynasty by Ban Zhao, a female historian, poet, scholar, and instructor of the regent Empress.

¹⁶⁴² Williams 1913a, 574.

In spite of all this, William Martin discovered many female poets, historians, and rulers from the annals of the empire. And if a woman happened to emerge from the “shaded hemisphere to which social prejudices have consigned her”, the Chinese were sure to give her “even more than her proper share of public admiration”, he added.¹⁶⁴³ As for Arthur Smith and Samuel Williams, they both noted the numerous and influential literary works written by famous female authors, and Williams argued that literary attainments were considered more “creditable to a woman” in China than was the “case in India or Siam.” However, Smith calculated that considering the myriad of Chinese ladies who had ever lived, the few exceptional women were but “isolated twinkles in vast interstellar spaces of dense darkness.”¹⁶⁴⁴

Overall, the experts held on to their assessment that women’s position in China was ignorant and poor, and they de-emphasized the national and historical diversity of opinions, values, and conditions.¹⁶⁴⁵ The only concession made to the fair treatment of women in China was to compare the situation favourably with countries where it was even worse in their opinion. For example, Arthur Smith thought that Chinese women had “incomparably more liberty than their sisters in Turkey or in India”; and Samuel Williams noted that at least they did not “make slaves of their females”, unlike some modern “unevangelized countries”, ancient kingdoms, and “Moslem races”.¹⁶⁴⁶ But with the Western countries, China compared unfavourably. Smith, for example, saw respect for womanhood as a distinctly Western quality. It was “one of the fairest characteristics of Western civilization,” he argued, and noted also that the Western civilization had allocated a large “place for the energy and the diversified talent of the fair sex”.¹⁶⁴⁷

The observations of William Griffis on the position of women in Japanese society were quite similar in tone and content as the observations of the China experts. This was perhaps not very surprising, considering that Griffis shared with the China experts the same background assumption that Western women enjoyed a notably higher status in society than women in Oriental societies. Hence, Griffis described the reaction of an “American who leaves his own country, in which the high honor paid to woman is one of the chief glories of the race to which he belongs”, as being “shocked and deeply grieved” to discover women being treated so poorly “in pagan lands”. In Asia, he went on, women showed “abject obedience as daughter, wife, and widowed mother”, as this was the wisdom of the ancients, “fixed by the custom of ages”. In Asia, the forces of religion, government, and society combined with physical force to make wom-

¹⁶⁴³ Martin 1881, 73–74; Martin 1900, 83.

¹⁶⁴⁴ Smith 1899, 307; Williams 1913a, 573–574.

¹⁶⁴⁵ For example, the three China experts tended to pass over the social reforms affecting women’s position, initiated by the rebel regime during the Taiping Rebellion in the 1850s and 1860s. The rebels pronounced women as equal to men, and encouraged them to take up civil and military positions. Foot-binding and prostitution were banned, and monogamy and love were raised as new ideals in marriage. (Beckmann 1965, 136.)

¹⁶⁴⁶ Smith 1890, 246; Williams 1913a, 576.

¹⁶⁴⁷ Smith 1890, 246; Smith 1901b, 486; Smith 1901b, 490, 515.

en “as near to the level of the unreplying brute as possible”, Griffis concluded.¹⁶⁴⁸

For Griffis the fact that Japan was an “Asiatic” country seemed reason enough for the position and character of Japanese women.¹⁶⁴⁹ Although, he maintained, the status of women in Japan compared favourably with the status of their sisters in India and China. The Japanese women were the freest, most respected, and perhaps the best treated females in Asia, Griffis asserted. They had more dignity, self-confidence, and learning than the daughters of other Asiatic nations. In respect to women, Japan was “leader of them all.”¹⁶⁵⁰ But still, the Japanese were Asiatic. And in addition to being Asiatic, they were also “idolatrous” and “despotic”, and in Griffis’ opinion, this accounted for the servility of Japanese women.¹⁶⁵¹ The reference to idolatry shows that Griffis partook in the popular 19th century missionary belief that all heathen women lived under a curse of unspeakable repression.¹⁶⁵² In this case, the ‘idolatry’ to which Griffis was referring to was Buddhism – the “only religion in Japan worthy of a name”. He believed that Buddhism was to blame, first and foremost, for the low status of Japanese woman. From the viewpoint of “Buddhist dogma, ecclesiastical law, and monkish asceticism”, a woman was merely seen as “a temptation, a snare, an unclean thing, a scape-goat, an obstacle to peace and holiness”. Accordingly, the women were offered no chance of salvation or immortality until they had been born again as men, Griffis explained.¹⁶⁵³

The position accorded to women in the Buddhist scheme was “immeasurably beneath” the position given by Christianity. Moreover, it was also beneath the position of women under Shinto, William Griffis argued. Shinto accorded woman to a relatively high place, Griffis noted, and hence the Japanese history recorded women in significant positions as Shinto goddesses and priestesses, as well as heroines and empresses.¹⁶⁵⁴ He recounted that during the early centuries of Japan, when Shinto had still prevailed, the women had possessed “more intellectual and physical vigor, filling the offices of state, religion, and household honors, and approaching more nearly the ideal cherished in those countries in which the relation of the sexes is that of professed or real equality”. In ancient Japan, women had reached “a high plane of social dignity and public honor”, whereas “in later ages the virtuous woman dwelt in seclusion; exemplars of ability were rare; and the courtesan became the most splendid type of womanhood.”¹⁶⁵⁵ But in spite of their later seclusion, Griffis marvelled that Japanese women were one of the “anomalies” with which Japan had “surprised or delighted the world”, as they had preserved and cultivated the Japanese language,

¹⁶⁴⁸ Griffis 1903, 551.

¹⁶⁴⁹ Griffis 1903, 554.

¹⁶⁵⁰ Griffis 1900, 111; Griffis 1903, 551, 554; Griffis 2006a, 238 Griffis 2006b, 164.

¹⁶⁵¹ Griffis 1903, 554.

¹⁶⁵² Henning 2000, 55.

¹⁶⁵³ Griffis 1903, 555.

¹⁶⁵⁴ Griffis 1903, 555; Griffis 2006b, 164.

¹⁶⁵⁵ Griffis 2006a, 77–78.

and written a “very large proportion of the best writings of the best age of Japanese literature”.¹⁶⁵⁶

It seemed to Griffis that the Japanese held their women in a much lower social position than they had in previous centuries, which surprised him, considering the relatively high position 19th century Japan had overall on the scale of Civilization. But then again, Griffis noted, the “ancient barbarians” had surpassed “civilized Romans in the respect paid to their women”, while in Greece women had held a higher place in the “former and ruder” periods. In some cases, he added, women seemed to even lose something of their standing and talents with the progress of “luxury and civilization”.¹⁶⁵⁷ To be sure, these arguments contradicted his conviction that status of women could serve as a measure of Civilization, but he either did not notice it, or he disregarded it.

Either way, Griffis considered the lot of the Japanese women to have been better in the past and under Shinto. But Shinto could “never sway the heart and mind of modern Japanese people”,¹⁶⁵⁸ he insisted, and so if the Japanese really wished to improve the lot of their women, they would have to turn to Christianity. In this respect, the China experts all agreed with Griffis. It was thanks to Christianity alone, that women received “respect, support, freedom from servile labor, and education” in the West, Samuel Williams maintained. And thus, where the principles of Gospel exerted no force, the rights of the women were “more or less disregarded,” Williams maintained.¹⁶⁵⁹ Arthur Smith and William Martin shared much the same opinion – the spiritual, social, and intellectual elevation of women in China depended on the adoption of Christian principles.¹⁶⁶⁰ Martin, however, hinted at the possibility that the process could also go the other way around. “Woman ignorant has made China Buddhist,” he asserted and asked: “will not woman educated make her Christian?”¹⁶⁶¹

Female education was a topic which aroused the interest of William Griffis as well. He stated that, traditionally the Japanese women had been tied to their tasks at farm or house, and been debarred from “intellectual culture.” However, the daughters of samurai families and respectable classes had often received a “rudimentary literary training” at home, Griffis admitted. Besides some elementary instruction, they had been drilled in manuals for women, such as the *Onna Daigaku*,¹⁶⁶² which consisted of Confucian precepts guiding the behaviour, morality, duties, and virtues of wives, daughters, and mothers. These women were also learned in manuals for the art of housekeeping and etiquette, in poetry, and occasionally in Chinese characters and Japanese history.¹⁶⁶³

¹⁶⁵⁶ Griffis 1892, 104; Griffis 2006a, 242–243. Here Griffis was citing the British scholar of Japanese, W. G. Aston (1841–1911).

¹⁶⁵⁷ Griffis 1903, 551; Griffis 2006a, 77–78.

¹⁶⁵⁸ Griffis 1903, 555.

¹⁶⁵⁹ Williams 1913a, 784.

¹⁶⁶⁰ Martin 1900, 26; Smith 1899, 343.

¹⁶⁶¹ Martin 1900, 83.

¹⁶⁶² *Onna Daigaku*, or “Greater Learning for Women,” was an early 18th century treatise popularly attributed to the Japanese Confucian philosopher Kaibara Ekken (1630–1714).

¹⁶⁶³ Griffis 1900, 111; Griffis 1903, 558.

But this education was limited to only a few, and it was not until the Protestant missionaries arrived in the country and shook the “faultless and lifeless symmetry of old Japanese ideals” that Griffis felt things had really started to change. By preaching the “Christian doctrine of the worth of woman”, by educating girls, and by creating new channels for the energies of Japanese women,¹⁶⁶⁴ the missionaries got the Japanese to grasp the value of educating women, Griffis claimed. Consequently, the Meiji government brought in public education for girls. But then, the initial enthusiasm had receded, and the position of women in Japan had remained relatively low compared to their sisters in Christian countries, Griffis estimated.¹⁶⁶⁵

Like the China experts, William Griffis believed that women’s education was the key to Japan’s progress and welfare. The importance for Griffis was based on his belief that family was the foundation of every society, and that for the reforms of New Japan to fully take root, they would first have to be consolidated and cultivated in the home. If the wives and mothers of the country were not educated in the new ideas, he warned his readers, the adoption of a “new civilization” would surely fail in Japan. So, the education of women was significant “even from the vulgar concrete standing-point—that woman is merely the supplement of man, and that the end and aim and Almighty purpose of a woman's creation is that she shall become some man's wife”.¹⁶⁶⁶

In contrast, Lafcadio Hearn emphatically refuted the conclusions of “hasty critics” such as William Griffis, who thought Buddhism was somehow opposed to the “natural rights of women”. Hearn granted that the teachings of Buddha put men socially and spiritually above women, but so did the teachings of early Christianity. Besides, Hearn added, some Japanese Buddhists had later revised the dogma which barred women from spiritual salvation – a point which Griffis also conceded¹⁶⁶⁷. Moving on to Shinto, Hearn emphasized that the faith had been “at least as gentle to woman as the ancient faith of the Hebrews”. As proof, Hearn cited the numerous female divinities in Shinto, as well as the practice of ancestor worship, in which wives and mothers were cherished as much as the men. By thus eliminating Buddhism and Shinto from the list of possible culprits for explaining the low position of women in Japan, Hearn ended up with just Confucianism. But Confucianism, he insisted, was a reflection rather than an explanation for the life and character of the peoples of the Far East. This left just

¹⁶⁶⁴ Griffis 1900, 111. The missionaries, female missionaries in particular, directed their attention to the Japanese women, and had a significant role in their education. The missionaries established and ran schools, taught the women the message of the Bible, and to cook, sow, and weave. The Japanese converts to Christianity played a central part as well. For example, Tsuda Umeko (1864–1929), who had been one of the five girls sent with the Iwakura mission to study in the US in 1871, and was baptized into Christianity, became a pioneer in women’s higher education and founded a women’s college in Tokyo in 1900. (Benson et al. 2001, 153, 188; Henning 2000, 54, 58.)

¹⁶⁶⁵ Griffis 1903, 552, 554; Griffis 2006b, 165.

¹⁶⁶⁶ Griffis 1903, 551, 560–561.

¹⁶⁶⁷ Griffis wrote that the Jōdo Shinshū sect of Buddhism, or “True Pure Land sect,” taught that women had equal opportunities for salvation with men, and he estimated that Shin Buddhism led all the other sects in the honour and social position they accorded to women. (Griffis 2006b, 164.)

the people themselves as the cause. It was not “altogether irrational” for one to seek causes and explanations in Confucianism, Hearn contemplated, but the beliefs, philosophies, and religious practices of a people had their roots in that people.¹⁶⁶⁸

Hearn was insisting that the difference between Eastern and Western attitudes to women went deeper. It went down to a more fundamental distinction between the Japanese and Westerners. In the West, the ancient ideal of the “Eternal Feminine”, or women as divine, mysterious, and unattainable was ingrained to the race character, Hearn claimed. It had become an abstraction reflected in the arts, aesthetics, literature, and industries; manners, customs and taste; philosophy, ethics, and religion. The idea had influenced nearly “every phase of public and private life”. This idea did not exist in the Far East, he argued, and nor could it be transplanted there in the foreseeable future. Thus it remained “one of the greatest obstacles to intellectual sympathy between the West and the Far East”, Hearn thought.¹⁶⁶⁹

Percival Lowell hit upon a similar observation to Hearn. In the West, he declared, women were considered to be, if “not superficially godlike”, at least “sure to be godly”, unlike in the East.¹⁶⁷⁰ In his travel book *Noto*, Percival Lowell noted one example of the diverging Japanese and American attitudes to women: the severity of the labor women performed in Japan.¹⁶⁷¹ To him this seemed like an instance of intrinsic Japanese indifference towards the female gender and their godliness.

On the other hand, the Japanese evinced an utter indifference not only to female gender, but to gender in general, Percival Lowell opined. He used the Japanese language as an example to prove his point, explaining that in the Japanese speech all notions and signs of sex were usually avoided. The point he was trying to make was that, the neglect of women and the neglect of gender in the language were not tokens of misogyny, but of impersonality and overall indifference to mankind.¹⁶⁷² This indifference had also affected the level of Japanese civilization, Lowell maintained. To elucidate his claim, he quoted *An Essay on Man* (1734), a poem by Alexander Pope (1688–1744). Pope had written that “the proper study of mankind is man.” If the European and American material advances served as any “criterion of the fitness of a particular mental pursuit”, then the saying was “assuredly justified”, Lowell estimated. The Westerners had concentrated on the study of man, and progressed. In the Levant, the

¹⁶⁶⁸ Hearn 1895, 107–109.

¹⁶⁶⁹ Hearn 1895, 104–107, 110–113.

¹⁶⁷⁰ Lowell 1895, 207.

¹⁶⁷¹ In his travels through Japan, Percival Lowell encountered women bearing burdens and pulling heavy carts to the market. A place in which “the local Adam had thus contrived to shift upon the local Eve so large a fraction of the primal curse”, was certainly “no Eden,” Lowell remarked. Although, it was not “as bad as the north of Germany”, he added. Women tended to have “a weakness for a touch of the slave-master in a man”, Lowell believed, but he refused to avail himself with female luggage bearers or rickshaw pullers, because the phenomenon was something more than his “Anglo-Saxon attitude towards the sex could stand”. (Lowell 2007a, 33, 49–50).

¹⁶⁷² Lowell 2007b, 35–36.

scholars had taken on the “improper study of mankind”, or the study of women, and inevitably degenerated. As for the Japanese, they had failed to concentrate on either, and subsequently they had stagnated, Lowell concluded.¹⁶⁷³

We noted before the statement of Ralph Waldo Emerson about how the “right position of woman” was the measure of Civilization, and the disapproval of Samuel Williams over the Chinese women not being allowed to take their “proper place” in the society. But what exactly was this right or proper position of women? For Emerson, it denoted to mutual respect between the sexes, and to a “severe morality” giving that “essential charm to woman which educates all that is delicate, poetic, and self-sacrificing, breeds courtesy and learning, conversation and wit, in her rough mate”.¹⁶⁷⁴ In other words, the right position of and women was one in which the sex could exert good influence on men and on civilization as a whole. Emerson seemed to suggest that woman’s duty and place in civilization was the cultivation of refinement and manners in her capacity as a wife.

Were our experts’ opinions any different, then? Samuel Williams, Arthur Smith, William Martin, and William Griffis all put a premium on the social and national importance of the position of women. They disapproved of the ignorance among the women they saw, and the smattering of Confucian education offered to them. They recommended Christianisation and education for women as the solution, and heartily approved of the Japanese move to extend public schooling to all girls as well as boys. The fact that a child’s gender nevertheless dictated the contents and extent of that public education appeared to be of no consequence for these authors, however. They tended to ignore the Meiji government’s educational policy of rearing the girls into *ryōsai kenbo*, or good wives and wise mothers, and of separating girls’ studies, such as moral education, child-rearing, and wifely duties, from boys’ studies.¹⁶⁷⁵ And they passed over the fact that the question of a gendered education was still actually unresolved and being hotly debated at that time in the United States.¹⁶⁷⁶

The impression Griffis, Martin, Smith and Williams gave in their texts was that the primary sphere for women was home, where they educated and refined their husbands and children, and secondarily the society, which they beautified and purified. This impression coincided with the conviction of Emerson, and

¹⁶⁷³ Lowell 2007b, 47.

¹⁶⁷⁴ Emerson 1862, 502–503.

¹⁶⁷⁵ Benson et al. 2001, 186–188, 209–210. On the other hand, urbanisation, industrialisation, and the Sino-Japanese war undermined the Meiji government’s efforts to maintain traditional gender roles. Working-class women enjoyed comparative freedom and autonomy, and some Japanese women adopted Western clothing in an attempt to gain recognition for their part played in forging the New Japan. (Benson et al. 2001, 189–190, 193; Henning 2000, 97.)

¹⁶⁷⁶ The traditional patriarchal American view was that women were biologically, emotionally, and intellectually inferior to men, and hence incapable of mastering liberal arts and modern sciences. This ‘scientific’ assumption was vocally challenged by both male and female educators and thinkers, who called for equality in education irrespective of gender or economic background. Nevertheless, the ‘Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education’ in 1918, still thought subjects such as “household arts” important for girls. (Adas 2004, 35; Bederman 1995, 34–35; Gutek 2013, 54, 137–138, 171–172).

the ideal of womanhood presented by Protestant Christianity,¹⁶⁷⁷ that the contribution of women to civilization was mainly moral, aesthetic, and ornamental. Their role was to support and nurture men as wives and mothers, so that the males could make their scientific, technological, economic, political, and philosophical contributions to civilization. The American 'cult of domesticity,' and exaltation of womanhood may have been stereotypes, as Nicholas Clifford has reminded,¹⁶⁷⁸ but those ideas were perceptibly present in William Griffis' appraisal for the work of American female missionaries. By precepts and by their own example, these women had taught the Japanese girls the meaning of woman's right position in the society.¹⁶⁷⁹

Arguably, the only deviation from the cult of domesticity in Griffis' representation was the American missionary woman: far away from home, often single and independent, respected by her male colleagues, and pursuing a career in education, evangelisation, medicine, or charity.¹⁶⁸⁰ But perhaps the American female missionary was not the anomaly she might at first appear to be. First of all, her autonomy was more ostensible than real, due to the rigid patriarchal hierarchy of Protestant churches; and, although she did not necessarily raise her own family at home, she was raising Japanese families and nation exporting the Protestant American ideal of femininity to Japan, and by turning the Japanese women into "mothers of civilization".¹⁶⁸¹

¹⁶⁷⁷ Bederman 1995, 34; Jalagin 2007, 15.

¹⁶⁷⁸ Clifford 2001, 28. Historians have argued that Victorian era American ideal of women being placed on a pedestal, worshipped, and confined to home was more often a myth than reality. First of all, the ideal was supposed to involve only the white middle- and upper class women, while the working-class women, women of different ethnicity, and poor women were required to work in the fields and factories. Secondly, even many of those white middle-class women deviated from the ideal and worked alongside their husbands in farming, commerce, and such. As the 19th century wore on, however, industrialisation separated the home and the workplace, and the women were increasingly relegated into the private sphere, and men to the public sphere. Nevertheless, not all American women settled for the domestic circle. They educated themselves, formed and joined organizations, campaigned for more extensive rights and duties, and declared the whole society, not just home, as their domain of activity. (Beard 1948, 197-198; Chafe, William H., "Women and American Society." *Making America: The Society and Culture of the United States*. Ed. Luedtke, Luther S. Washington: U.S. Information Agency, 1987. P. 259.)

¹⁶⁷⁹ Griffis 1903, 561.

¹⁶⁸⁰ Garrett 1983, 223; Henning 2000, 48, 53; Taylor 1979, 68, 72.

¹⁶⁸¹ Garrett 1983, 224-226; Henning 2000, 50-52. Both Sandra Taylor and Seija Jalagin have reminded that American Protestant Christianity was a male-oriented religion, and missionary work was a male-dominated field. The Protestant denominations generally refused to grant women equal positions in the hierarchy, equal voting rights in the government of the church, or equal pay for missionary work. The situation was accepted by the majority of both male and female church-goers and missionaries. But still, it is noteworthy that, as the American female missionaries were exporting the conventional 19th century middle class cultural values to Japan, these "diplomats of domesticity," as Joseph Henning has titled them, were often radically deviating from the same values they were inculcating to the Japanese. (Garrett 1983, 225; Henning 2000, 39, 57-59; Jalagin 2007, 11; Taylor 1979, 72, 74, 77-79.)

7.2 The rulers and the ruled

One reason for the pertinence of questions about social divisions, unequal opportunities in education, and social participation, was the value the experts put on national unity and national feeling. As is well known, national identity and patriotism were on the rise in 19th century Europe and the United States, and they were propagated and inculcated through education, the press, military service, and certain symbols. Not only were these principles held as prerequisites for becoming a strong, prestigious, and powerful country – a country qualifying for the comity of civilized nations – some philosophers even considered them to form a stage in the development of societies. In the previous chapter we came across the idea, voiced by many 18th and 19th century intellectuals, that reason would one day supersede irrational emotions, and the religions based on them. While some thinkers proposed that science was going to take their place, Rousseau devised the idea of a “civil religion”, while Herder envisioned a world where national cultures would gradually replace the older units based on religions.¹⁶⁸²

In describing and assessing the Chinese state the China experts thus focused their attention on two matters: (i) whether the Chinese people formed a single entity, that is, a nation; and (ii) whether they showed a national public spirit, that is, patriotism. William Martin claimed that after centuries of assimilation and absorption the heterogeneous elements of China had been “moulded into one people, the most numerous on the face of the earth”.¹⁶⁸³ Arthur Smith, on the other hand, seemed undecided on the matter, concluding that “the sense of China as an essential unity” was equally as strong as “the sense of her disunity”.¹⁶⁸⁴

The experts were inconclusive about the second question too. Martin asserted that a person’s allegiances in China were primarily to their own clans and villages, and only the official class expressed loyalty to the government. The fact that the word patriotism, or an equivalent, was not used by either group seemed significant too. “All they know of it, in its broader sense, is to boast of China and vilify foreigners”, Martin claimed, although at the same time he did note some rare instances when individual Chinese showed “a fine spirit of patriotism”.¹⁶⁸⁵ Samuel Williams, meanwhile, believed that many Chinese “had the good of the country at heart”,¹⁶⁸⁶ and Smith had “irrefragable proofs” that there had been “single-hearted and resolute men” throughout the history of China, who had been “true patriots”.¹⁶⁸⁷ On the other hand, he found most Chinese to be profoundly indifferent to their country and reluctant to serve their land. As an example, Smith pointed out that during the Second Anglo-

¹⁶⁸² Lorenz 2008, 55–56.

¹⁶⁸³ Martin 1900, 253.

¹⁶⁸⁴ Smith 1890, 7–8, 186.

¹⁶⁸⁵ Martin 1900, 92, 165–166.

¹⁶⁸⁶ Williams 1913b, 479.

¹⁶⁸⁷ Smith 1894, 114.

Chinese War, a considerable number of Chinese had offered to help the British and French troops in exchange for either money, or being left undisturbed. From this, Smith deduced that if there was such a thing as 'patriotism' in China, this word certainly had a different meaning from Anglo-Saxon usage.¹⁶⁸⁸

In contrast, the Japanese seemed a conspicuously homogenous people to the experts, in spite of the Ainu, Okinawan, Korean, and *burakumin* minorities.¹⁶⁸⁹ William Griffis, for example, described the Japanese as a "very mixed race," but a homogenous people.¹⁶⁹⁰ Similarly, Percival Lowell declared that all the Japanese were alike, but *not* because of the apparent "racial similarity" which, he noted, often characterised initial encounters with a new people. In other words, Lowell was saying that there was a genuine similarity, not simply due to the perspective of the observer being a foreigner.¹⁶⁹¹

However, homogeneity did not automatically translate into a national feeling of unity, and Griffis pointed out that when the foreigners first arrived to the country in the 1850s, the Japanese were not a united people. Japan was a feudal country, divided into "petty fragments" of families, domains, and rulers.¹⁶⁹² Neither national spirit nor national progress could coexist with such a feudal government and society:

national development and peace could never be secured while the feudal system existed. The clan spirit which it fostered was fatal to national unity. So long as a Japanese meant by "my country" merely his own clan, loyalty might exist, but patriotism could not.¹⁶⁹³

For Japan to emerge as a powerful, civilized nation, the people needed to direct their allegiances from the local to a national level. Naturally then, there had to be a national focal point for this loyalty, and thus a sufficiently strong centralized government.

Japanese politics appeared to be of no particular interest for Percival Lowell or Lafcadio Hearn, but William Griffis studied the topic extensively. First, Griffis told the political history of Japan, which he divided into roughly three periods: (i) the "rude feudalism" of the Yamato Period, which was a system of

¹⁶⁸⁸ Smith 1890, 142-143. Smith also believed that, to differentiate it from "blind impulses of the bias of national feeling", real patriotism required Christianity. These went hand in hand, he felt, and if China wished to have patriotic subjects, it first had to have Christian subjects. (Smith 1899, 348-349.)

¹⁶⁸⁹ Benson et al. 2001, 210-211. In a sense, it could be argued that extraordinary homogeneity and uniqueness have been building blocks of the image of Japanese exceptionalism, just as altruism, equality, and liberty have been the corner stones of the representations of American exceptionalism. John Benson and Takao Matsumura have described the homogeneity of the Japanese nation as an often reiterated and consciously maintained myth. This myth has blurred from the sight the individualism, divisions, different attitudes, and various tensions that have existed in the Japanese society. And as to the uniqueness of Japanese culture and historical trajectory, Benson and Matsumura have pointed out that Japan has been inasmuch unique as any country in the world. (Benson et al. 2001, 4, 9, 179.)

¹⁶⁹⁰ Griffis 1878, 79; Griffis 2006a, 16; Griffis 2006b, 5.

¹⁶⁹¹ Lowell 2007b, 80.

¹⁶⁹² Griffis 2006a, 319.

¹⁶⁹³ Griffis 2006a, 376.

the “most rudimentary kind”; (ii) the centralized form of government imported from China in the 7th century,¹⁶⁹⁴ which came with Confucian ethics; and (iii) the period when Buddhism took over from Confucianism, and a “more elaborate feudalism” was established with the rise of the military classes.¹⁶⁹⁵ The shogun had assumed power in the 12th century, Griffis stated, and while the nations of Europe were “engaged in throwing off the feudal yoke and inaugurating modern government”, the Shogunate meanwhile perfected the feudal system to an extent that existed nowhere else in Asia at that time. However, even though the shogun held the reins of power, the emperor had not been ousted from office, Griffis reminded his readers, and so in effect, the system of government was a duarchy.¹⁶⁹⁶

From these two centres of authority, power gradually passed to the Dai-myō (provincial feudal lords). At this point there was no unity and, according to Griffis, Japan became “a mass of warring factions”.¹⁶⁹⁷ To complicate matters more, both emperor and shogun were often effete figure-heads;¹⁶⁹⁸ or mere puppets with their every movement controlled by others. “It was a game of Punch and Judy in politics”, Griffis claimed,¹⁶⁹⁹ noting that this “political puzzle” had confused Western observers both before and after the self-imposed seclusion of the Japanese empire. Because of this confusion, European and American encyclopaedias and school books had been filled with “misleading nonsense about ‘two emperors,’ one ‘spiritual’ and the other ‘secular’”. Griffis emphasised that there had always been only one emperor in Japan, one source of power and honour, and one lawful sovereign. From the first shogun, the military rulers had been nothing but usurpers, Griffis maintained. They were merely vassals of the emperor, and if they proclaimed otherwise, it was nothing but “a diplomatic fraud”.¹⁷⁰⁰

By the beginning of the 17th century, the Tokugawa shoguns came to power and inaugurated a period of two and a half centuries of unbroken peace. The Tokugawa shogunate governed with an iron hand, Griffis described, but the stability of the system resulted mainly from the non-existence of the kind of factors that had rocked European feudalism: the church, free cities, and industrialism.¹⁷⁰¹ Griffis believed that the reason the duarchy had come about, in the first place, was due to the absence of foreign or indigenous enemies. While

¹⁶⁹⁴ The unification and centralization of power in Japan were proclaimed by Emperor Kōtoku in the ‘Taika reforms’ of 645 (See e.g. Beasley 1995, 10–12; Beckmann 1965, 75–76).

¹⁶⁹⁵ Griffis 1900, 95; Griffis 2006a, 98; Griffis 2006b, 6, 53, 58–59.

¹⁶⁹⁶ Griffis 1900, 95; Griffis 2006a, 165, 245, 342, 345, 418–419.

¹⁶⁹⁷ Griffis 2006a, 419.

¹⁶⁹⁸ Josephson has argued that calling the feudal era Mikado (*Tennō*) an ‘Emperor’ might be misleading. The position was mainly ceremonial, and the main duties consisted of Buddhist and Daoist inspired rituals. As many early Western observers described him, he was more like a Pope than Emperor. Meanwhile, the shogun acted as the functional sovereign, and his title was etymologically closer to the English meaning of Emperor. (Josephson 2012, 101.)

¹⁶⁹⁹ Griffis 1892, 131; Griffis 2006a, 113, 168, 219.

¹⁷⁰⁰ Griffis 1892, 162; Griffis 2006a, 157, 160, 165, 320, 342–343, 345; Griffis 2006b, 61.

¹⁷⁰¹ Griffis 1892, 165, 206; Griffis 2006a, 308, 320, 345, 419; Griffis 2006b, 59, 61, 75.

there were enemies at the borders, the people and their rulers were united in their common enemy; but as soon as there was peace, and the Mikado was no longer “a man of physical and mental vigor”, the duarchy came about. Then, as the “black ships” bearing Americans began to arrive on the shores of Japan, the “calm of despotism” was “rudely broken”.¹⁷⁰²

The foreigners had sought the real source of power, thus exposing the shogun, and poured into Japan “the ferment of Christian civilization”. Their coming had made a collision between the two governments as immediate and inevitable, and doomed the Shogunate and feudal system to fall, Griffis claimed.¹⁷⁰³ The seeds of this revolution had been planted in the soil of Japan centuries before the arrival of foreigners, William Griffis argued. The Tokugawa era had given “earnest patriots” a peaceful time in which to think. Some began to rethink the first and foremost of the Confucian “five relations” – the relation between sovereign and subjects. They wondered that, if this relation required absolute submission and deference from vassals, why did the shogun not yield to the authority of the Emperor.¹⁷⁰⁴ Another intellectual current raising awareness of the emperor’s position, and contributing to the growing respect for him, had been the 18th century studies on Shinto, Griffis thought. Shinto represented Japan as the Land of Gods, and the Emperor as either the gods’ vicegerent, or a minor god himself, and this obliged all Japanese to obey the Emperor. Thus, both Shinto and Confucianism could be used to justify the emperor’s return to power. In due time, Griffis believed, these two forces alone would have destroyed the Shogunate and the feudal system.¹⁷⁰⁵

Public opinion was therefore increasingly in favour of restoring the emperor, Griffis claimed, while the shogunate and feudalism were struggling on their own account. Griffis thought that the leaders of feudal Japan were not men of “brain and action”, but “amiable nobodies, great only in stomach or silk robes” and many were “sensualists, drunkards, or titled fools”. Griffis believed this corruption was the major cause of the shogunate’s downfall. Its leading figures had been steeped in “luxury, carousal, and the stupor of licentious carnival”, and the period had witnessed examples of “tyranny and misgovernment such as would disgrace the worst Asiatic bureaucracy”, he claimed.¹⁷⁰⁶ Such a government could hardly inspire awe in its subjects, and nor could it have been particularly effective, Griffis argued.¹⁷⁰⁷

In the events that followed, the forces of Satsuma, Chōshū, and some other domains armed themselves for war, took possession of the imperial court, purged it, and forced the shogun to abdicate. They then proclaimed the young Emperor Meiji as head of state in 1868, and abolished the office of Shogun.¹⁷⁰⁸ A civil war then ensued between supporters of the emperor and shogun in the

¹⁷⁰² Griffis 2006a, 165–166, 420; Griffis 2006b, 64.

¹⁷⁰³ Griffis 2006a, 166, 350, 420.

¹⁷⁰⁴ Griffis 1892, 206; Griffis 2006a, 342, 346–349, 352.

¹⁷⁰⁵ Griffis 2006a, 343, 349–352, 420.

¹⁷⁰⁶ Griffis 1892, 165, 206; Griffis 2006a, 172, 245–246, 330, 350, 377.

¹⁷⁰⁷ Griffis 2006a, 360, 377.

¹⁷⁰⁸ Griffis 2006a, 352, 366, 377.

same year.¹⁷⁰⁹ In 1869, the imperial faction emerged victorious from the so-called Boshin War, and the Meiji Restoration was enacted. The “supreme magistracy” was restored to the emperor,” William Griffis recounted, and emphasised that the power was vastly enlarged from what it had been even in the ancient times. Duarchy, Griffis proclaimed, had become a thing of the past, and “Japan once more presented to the world, unity”.¹⁷¹⁰

The blueprint for future politics was presented in the Charter Oath of 1868, which stipulated that Japan would establish “a national assembly, to decide measures by public opinion, and to abolish uncivilized customs”.¹⁷¹¹ But the Charter Oath was only a beginning, Griffis reminded. The new Meiji government had to “heal the disease of ages”: to eradicate sectionalism, feudalism, and the old social system. It had to regenerate, create a new nationality for the empire, and “make a hermit nation, half blinded by a sudden influx of light, competitor with the wealthy, powerful, and aggressive nations of Christendom.”¹⁷¹² Then, in 1871, the government put an end to the feudal system and its domains with an imperial edict.¹⁷¹³

With this edict and the Charter Oath, the Meiji government had unmistakably entered “the path of modern civilization”, William Griffis declared. He emphasised that the chief motors behind the process that had led to this point had been intellectual,¹⁷¹⁴ and that the presence of foreigners had only been the occasion, not the cause for the unfolding of events.¹⁷¹⁵ Also Lafcadio Hearn saw the fall of duarchy and feudalism in Japan as an unavoidable eventuality. But Hearn did not cite Shinto studies or the corruption of Tokugawa Shogunate as causes for the political revolution; instead, he cited a prediction Herbert Spencer had presented in his *First Principles* (1862). Herbert Spencer had argued that the Japanese society had “evolved to the limit of its type, and reached a state of moving equilibrium”. As soon as Japan had received “an impact from Europe-

¹⁷⁰⁹ The foreign powers followed the Boshin war with a keen eye. The Americans considered the imperial faction to be reactionary, and public opinion in the US, at least initially, favoured the forces of the shogunate. (Iriye 1967, 25.)

¹⁷¹⁰ Griffis 1892, 97–98; Griffis 2006a, 109, 371; Griffis 2006b, 59.

¹⁷¹¹ Griffis 1892, 220; Griffis 2006a, 372. The Charter Oath of Emperor Meiji consisted of five articles. The first stated that deliberative assemblies were to be established and the country’s affairs be henceforth decided by public opinion. The second stated that all classes of people were to carry out the administration of the state. The third stated that common people were to be allowed to pursue whatever calling in life they chose. The fourth declared that the “evil practices of the past” would be abandoned and actions would be henceforth based on international practices. And the last article declared that knowledge would be sought from all over the world, to consolidate and strengthen the basis of imperial rule. (Nimmo 2001, 6.)

¹⁷¹² Griffis 2006a, 379.

¹⁷¹³ Initially, the leaders of the imperial faction had planned simply to overthrow the shogunate, not feudalism itself. However, the new government soon realised that administration of the country needed to be unified and centralized, and consequently, the *han* (domains) were abolished. (Beckmann 1965, 264–265; Fält 1990, 49–50.)

¹⁷¹⁴ Griffis’ insistence on explaining the Meiji Restoration and the following abolition of feudal domains with intellectual, ideological, cultural, and historical factors has been in later historiography largely replaced with political, social, and economic explanations (See e.g. Beasley 1995, 34–35; Beckmann 1965, 102, 104–107, 110–111, 246; Benson et al. 2001, 13–14; Josephson 2012, 130–131; Nimmo 2001, 4.)

¹⁷¹⁵ Griffis 2006a, 339, 341, 352, 373.

an civilization", the equilibrium had been lost, and political dissolution had taken place. Spencer had thought it possible that after the disintegration, a political reorganization could follow, and from the vantage point of the 1890s, Lafcadio Hearn could confirm that it had followed rapidly.¹⁷¹⁶

The Meiji restoration also gave Japan a central governmental organ, the *Dajōkan* (Council of the State), which administered the whole country in the name of the Emperor. In 1875, it then created the governmental organs of the *Genrōin* (the Senate, or the Chamber of Elders) and *Daishinin*, (the Supreme Court, or the Great Court of Cassation). In so doing, Japan was now finally moving towards the "modern division of government into the executive, legislative, and judicial branches", Griffis concluded.¹⁷¹⁷ But what other prerequisites were there for a government to qualify as civilized? To determine these was not an easy task for Griffis, or the Japanese reformers for that matter,¹⁷¹⁸ since the governments considered as 'civilized' took a wide range of different forms.

One thing Griffis was sure of, however, was that a great nation must rule by the people's consent. People were the source of authority; they created the public opinion, according to which the government had to rule. First, however, there had to be a people, and this, Griffis argued, Japan did not have before the Meiji Restoration. "Public opinion, as the basis of national action, must be the real, though regulated, feeling of all, from emperor to eta," Griffis announced. He continued that, in the "attainable ideal system," the highest and the lowest of the humanity were included into the people, and no member of the body politic was raised above the other. In Japan, such people began to take form only after the feudal class distinctions had been erased in the 1870s, Griffis opined.¹⁷¹⁹ Then, the people also had to be prepared, enlightened, and educated¹⁷²⁰ for their role as responsible citizens and subjects of the Emperor, Griffis

¹⁷¹⁶ Hearn 1895, 217–218; Spencer 1893, 520–521.

¹⁷¹⁷ Griffis 2006a, 424.

¹⁷¹⁸ Studying the sources of national strength, the Japanese intellectuals and statesmen soon came upon this problem. One perceivable explanation for the strength of the Western treaty powers was their political systems. Those systems, however, were widely varied, ranging from republics to monarchies, from federations to unitary nations, from absolutist states to parliamentary states. Moreover, those systems seemed to be constantly changing. (Beasley 1995, 176, 203.) Thus, the Japanese reformers had no ready-made solution to the question of the form of government, and they had to decide which, if any, of the variety of models their country should emulate. Fukuzawa Yukichi, for example, emphasised that Civilization was the "only purpose and goal of mankind", but that there were many roads to it. And hence, from all the roads available in terms of government, each nation should select a form best suited to its level of Civilization. (Fukuzawa 2009, 50, 57.)

¹⁷¹⁹ Griffis 1900, 118–119; Griffis 2006a, 419, 421.

¹⁷²⁰ To educate and make the people politically aware was a prime objective of the Meiji government from the start, for it was thought that only an enlightened people could participate in the economic, military, and political reconstruction of the country (Benson et al. 2001, 133; Iriye 1967, 46).

stipulated. These tasks were up to the schools, books, and the “civilizing force”¹⁷²¹ of the free press.¹⁷²²

Despite the campaigns for popular representation and local assemblies, power in Japan was concentrated in the hands of few extraordinary individuals, William Griffis stated, while the actual administration was carried out by skilful men ranking rather low in the hierarchy of the former samurai class. The true leaders and policy-makers of Japan after the Restoration were court nobles and “simple samurai”¹⁷²³. These men had been brought up in the feudal era, but then pursued the path of progress, Griffis pointed out. They had once been anti-foreign perhaps, but then later endorsed the “principles of western civilization”; just as they had once been loyal to their clans, and then adopted the notion of national unity.¹⁷²⁴ But these men would soon pass away, Griffis reminded his readers, era of personal government would recede, and a new era of representative government would begin.¹⁷²⁵

In 1881, the government yielded to popular pressure, and the Emperor issued an edict which “expanded and confirmed his oath of 1868”, Griffis noted, proclaiming that Japan was to have a Parliament and a constitution.¹⁷²⁶ In 1889, the Constitution was passed into law, and Griffis enthused that this was the “greatest event in modern Japan” – one which dwarfed all others.¹⁷²⁷ Arguably, Griffis’ excitement over the new Meiji Constitution was a characteristic feature of the age. The American and French revolutions had ushered in the ‘modern’ idea of a constitution. And this idea, together with nationalism, had led the American and European legal scholars to define constitution as a document which not only eliminated despotism and absolutism, but also declared the sovereignty of a nation. Many of the Japanese statesmen and scholars had adopted this definition, and for them, constitution became an instrument with which to assert the independence, parity, and civilization of Japan in the face of the international law.¹⁷²⁸

But if Japan’s equal status was to be recognised in the negotiations to revise the unequal treaties, then the international community would have to ap-

¹⁷²¹ Also R. W. Emerson, for one, believed that the free distribution of knowledge through affordable newspapers and magazines kept society more egalitarian and was one of the gauges of civilization (Beard 1948, 192).

¹⁷²² Griffis 1892, 225; Griffis 1903, 568, 570; Griffis 2006a, 373, 385. The Tokugawa government tightly restricted all media and printing, and the Meiji government in fact continued the same policy, after only a short-lived trial that allowed the press full freedom. Newspapers and magazines were obliged to promote morality, stability, dutifulness, national goals, and government. However, not all journalists acquiesced quietly. They continued to criticise the government’s domestic and foreign policies even in the face of legal consequences. (Benson et al. 2001, 159–162.)

¹⁷²³ Griffis was referring to a group of highly influential nobles, samurai, and statesmen instrumental in installing the new Meiji government: Ōkubo Toshimichi (1830–1878); Kido Takayoshi (1833–1877); Iwakura Tomomi; Sanjō Sanetomi (1837–1891); Gotō Shōjirō (1838–1897); Katsu Kaishū (1823–1899); Soejima Taneomi (1828–1905); Okuma Shigenobu (1838–1922); and Ōki Takatō (1832–1899).

¹⁷²⁴ Griffis 2006a, 377–378, 385–386, 406–407, 417, 420, 444.

¹⁷²⁵ Griffis 2006a, 392–393, 406, 444.

¹⁷²⁶ Griffis 2006a, 391, 394

¹⁷²⁷ Griffis 1892, 224–225.

¹⁷²⁸ Beasley 1995, 204; Takii 2007, xiii, xvii–xviii, 5.

prove the new constitution. At this point in his account, Griffis admitted that the idea of an Asian country “becoming constitutional and representative in government” was something that many Westerners found hard to believe.¹⁷²⁹ Foreign observers were mostly sceptical of the Meiji Constitution, especially after the Ottoman Empire’s attempts at a Western-style constitution in 1876 had been dropped only a year later.¹⁷³⁰ The Japanese had to convince the international community that their constitution was otherwise. According to Griffis, the crucial question the community should be looking at was whether the Constitution was “a manufacture or a growth?” Or in other words, whether it was rooted in the history of the Japanese and adapted to their needs. Tracing the history of Japanese governments, Griffis himself assessed that the new constitutional government was “organized on the basis of immemorial tradition,” that is, it was entrenched in the history of the country, with some added modern features modelled on the German constitution.¹⁷³¹

The Meiji Constitution defined the rights and duties of the rulers and the ruled. It confirmed that the Emperor was to share his sovereign authority with the people, Griffis related, and that his power no longer derived from any “mythological claims” based on divine right, but from the consent of his subjects.¹⁷³² At this point, the people of Japan was finally born, Griffis opined, although he thought that the day was still ahead when the people of the empire had fully grown to consciousness of themselves “in the modern, not to say the American, sense.”¹⁷³³ The Japanese were now granted “most of the privileges of people in Europe”: equality before the law, the rights of conscience and domicile, freedom of speech and assembly, and protection from arbitrary governmental or legal actions. Even women now had rights before the law, Griffis exclaimed, adding that it was also beginning to dawn on some Japanese that children have rights too.¹⁷³⁴

Interestingly, neither Griffis nor any of the other experts referred to the question of whether Japanese or Chinese women should be granted political rights, even though women’s suffrage had been hotly debated for decades in the United States.¹⁷³⁵ This was all the more curious, as the experts could not

¹⁷²⁹ Griffis 2006a, 417.

¹⁷³⁰ Takii 2007, 134.

¹⁷³¹ Griffis 2006a, 417, 427. In this William Griffis agreed with Herbert Spencer, who emphasized that the new constitution of Japan may have appeared foreign, but deep down it was not a departure from, but a continuation of the history of the empire. In addition to Spencerian social evolutionists, also the legal scholars of the German historical school deemed the question about the historical roots of any country’s constitution to be of prime importance. (Takii 2007, xi, xv, xvii, 109, 134–135.)

¹⁷³² Griffis 2006a, 417–418, 426; Griffis 2006b, 78–79.

¹⁷³³ Griffis 2006a, 419.

¹⁷³⁴ Griffis 1892, 226; Griffis 2006a, 426–427; Griffis 2006b, 78.

¹⁷³⁵ Since the Seneca Falls Woman’s Rights Convention in 1848, the call for women’s suffrage, together with many other legal rights, had been added to the agenda of the Women’s movement in the US. These demands were countered by the conservative Protestants, who thought that women should be rather educated into Christian, Republic motherhood, than into participation in politics as fully endowed citizens. (Beard 1948, 198–200; Countryman 1997, 232; Gutek 2013, 76; Tyrrell 2007, 1340.) American women were first enfranchised in the state of Wyoming in 1869, and by the

help noticing that both China and Japan had an impressive record of female rulers. Indeed, during much of the time Arthur Smith and William Martin were in China, it was a woman who was, for all intents and purposes, in control of the country. Smith and Martin did describe and assess the reign of the Empress Dowager,¹⁷³⁶ but they did not base their assessments explicitly on the fact that she was a woman, or derive any conclusions from it concerning the political competence of women.

Meanwhile, Percival Lowell remarked that, in ancient Japan, there had been practically no restrictions on women having political power. Together with William Griffis, he singled out the famous Empress Jingū from Japanese history. According to the records, Empress Jingū had reigned as a regent some-time around 200 CE, conquered Korea, and given birth to a son who was later canonised as the God of War. The Empress was noted for her political power and tact, and her martial valour. For Lowell these features were apparently so eminently unfeminine, that he characterised Jingū as “a good deal of a man”, and “a great deal more of a man than her husband”. Griffis, on the other hand, somewhat played down these features, and emphasised that the Empress had been renowned for her beauty and piety, and that her greatest role had been as the mother of *Hachiman*.¹⁷³⁷ Again, there was nothing expressly written about the political rights and capabilities of women in these writings, only Lowell’s implicit suggestion that politics and masculinity somehow went together.

At the same time as drafting a constitution, the Japanese also revised their legal codes. William Griffis claimed that these codes had previously been unwritten, unknown to the people, and based on customs which varied from place to place. They were mainly borrowed from China, and were characterised by what he called a “home-spun sort of Confucianism”. This meant that they included rules regarding morals, etiquette, and social hierarchy, but no features of modern legislation. The punishments had been severe, cruel, and bloody, and the old law upheld the principles of private vengeance and trial by ordeal.

end of the century, they had gained the right to vote in Idaho and Utah too. However, nationwide suffrage had to wait until 1920. In China, women won suffrage for the first time in the 1947 Constitution of the Republic of China. In Japan, women over twenty were granted the right to vote in 1945.

¹⁷³⁶ It seems that the gender of the ruler was less of a factor in their descriptions than the time they were written. William Martin, for example, suggested that the Empress Dowager had reigned harmoniously and justly with her co-regent Ci’an, also a former consort of the Xianfeng Emperor. After the death of Ci’an, she gained more power, and in the war against Japan, she showed that “her patriotism was equal to her humanity”. However, after the Boxer Rebellion, Martin’s account changed for the worse. Arthur Smith, too, had nothing good to say about how the Empress Dowager had joined the Boxer rebels in expelling all foreigners from the country. According to Smith, the policies of the Empress Dowager around the turn of the century proved that the regent lacked any real “statesmanship”. But she did have a “superabundance of what may well be conceded to be state-craft”, he added. After the Boxer Uprising had been settled, both Martin and Smith expressed their amazement at the fact that, “after directly authorizing the commission of perhaps the greatest crime against the intercourse of nations in the whole history of the human race”, the foreigners allowed her to return to power. (Martin 1900, 262–263; Martin 1905, 4; Smith 1901a, 125–126, 149–150; Smith 1901b, 408, 554, 594).

¹⁷³⁷ Griffis 2006a, 78, 83; Lowell 1895, 187, 257.

Thus, the people were frightened into behaving the right way, Griffis concluded.¹⁷³⁸ The foreigners negotiating treaties with Japan in the 1850s refused to submit themselves to such laws, and hence they demanded extraterritorial rights, and advised Japan to reform its legislation. As long as “Japan maintained the institutions of barbarism”, the foreigners would not “recognize her as peer in the comity of nations”, Griffis explained. Consequently, after the Restoration, Japan began the work of revision.¹⁷³⁹

Like the Japanese Constitution and legislation, also the new system of government had many modern features borrowed from the West, Griffis argued, but essentially it was based on “immemorial tradition”.¹⁷⁴⁰ The new Imperial Diet (*Kokkai*) was divided into an Upper and Lower House, and it convened for the first time in 1890. The Lower House (*Shūgiin*) consisted of approximately 300 elected members serving four years at a time. The members had to be at least 30 years-old, while the electors’ minimum age was 25. Both the electors and elected also had to pay a certain amount of taxes, Griffis added.¹⁷⁴¹ The suffrage in elections for local and national assemblies was restricted to males only, but this probably appeared too self-evident for Griffis to believe it warranted a mention at all. Griffis initially portrayed the new system of government in a positive light. Like many of his compatriots, he hailed the Diet, Meiji Constitution, and legal revisions as clear indicators that Japan had emerged as a modern, politically Westernized, and civilized nation, and that it deserved a revision of the unequal treaties¹⁷⁴². Nevertheless, when the Diet was dissolved in 1894 and political tumult followed, Griffis expressed some reservations about the “capacity of an Asiatic race for constitutional government or for participation in the comity of nations”.¹⁷⁴³

It seemed to Griffis that, in spite of the nominally representative government and constitution, nothing in the politics of Japan had really changed. In 1894, the country was still ruled by men from the former Satsuma and Chōshū *han*, and when new men filled the top positions, it was the “mats and not the floor” that were rearranged. Griffis concluded that the “Japanese political edifice” that held up the Meiji government was “an oligarchy cemented by clan

¹⁷³⁸ Griffis 1903, 361–362, 569; Griffis 2006a, 96, 468–469; Griffis 2006b, 182–183.

¹⁷³⁹ Griffis 1903, 568–569, 572, 656; Griffis 2006a, 427, 430.

¹⁷⁴⁰ Griffis 1892, 227; Griffis 1903, 577; Griffis 2006a, 427.

¹⁷⁴¹ Activities in the Lower House followed the “European fashion”, Griffis claimed, and its primary duties were to give a voice to public opinion and to influence governmental policy. In the first elections of 1890, 85% of eligible voters cast their votes, and Griffis estimated that the elected members thus represented the people rather well, as they stood for a variety of different political opinions, classes, and occupations. (Griffis 1892, 226; Griffis 2006a, 428–429). In practice, only the biggest landowners and other affluent men were eligible to vote. In 1891, men with suffrage made up only 1 per cent of the population. (Benson et al. 2001, 23; Takii 2007, 105.)

¹⁷⁴² Henning 2000, 130–131, 135–136.

¹⁷⁴³ William Griffis remarked that the Diet was plagued by political animosities, and that its dissolution became a frequent occurrence in the last decade of the century. And he also pointed out the failures of Japanese party governments, and suggested that the government was plagued by nepotism and corruption. (Griffis 1903, 666–669; Griffis 2006a, 446).

spirit", while the general populace had scarcely any power.¹⁷⁴⁴ During the latter half of the 19th century, Japan had tried "every form of oligarchy," Griffis noted. All the attempts had been failures as such, but still, the members of the oligarchy had embodied a curious combination of opportunism, foresight, statecraft, natural skills, and education, which had enabled them to steer their country far beyond the initial goals of the Restoration. The oligarchy had made Japan "vastly less the land of lies and sham than in the old days of seclusion", and "more and more the country of reality and truth," Griffis opined. In all these events he saw the "finger of God",¹⁷⁴⁵ and the "next stage of political evolution" would necessarily be a party government, and a cabinet obedient to parliamentary mandate.¹⁷⁴⁶

One final aspect of the Japanese government that William Griffis brought up was the role of the emperor in the system, and the consequent question about religion and politics. Griffis referred to the first chapter of the Constitution, which granted the emperor vast prerogatives, and declared him "sacred and inviolable."¹⁷⁴⁷ The Constitution confirmed that an unbroken line of Japanese Emperors had descended from the gods, and ruled the country since the dawn of history. This claim had been formulated in the past by the Yamato clan, Griffis noted. They had pictured the Mikado as the "Son of Heaven", presiding over the land his ancestors, the gods, had created. He was a servant and vicegerent of the gods, and a god himself, and a centre of superstitious awe, loyalty, and personal reverence. The Yamato men had employed this religious doctrine as a political tool for subduing and controlling other tribes in the Japanese islands, but Griffis opined that they had carried their dogma too far. "Stopping

¹⁷⁴⁴ Griffis 1903, 671; Griffis 2006a, 377, 420, 443. It has been argued that the primary goal of the Meiji Constitution was in fact to strengthen the ultimate sovereignty of the Emperor, and keep executive power in the possession of the *Sūmitsuin* (Privy Council) and the *genrō* (principal elders). The *Sūmitsuin* was established in 1888 to advise the throne, and because its duties were not specified, its members could actually wield a considerable amount of power in state affairs. Meanwhile, the *genrō* was an oligarchy of counsellors to the emperor who hailed mainly from the Chōshū and Satsuma *han*. Other centres of power were the senior members of the bureaucracy and armed forces, the latter of which was entirely outside governmental control and accountable only to the emperor. (Benson et al. 2001, 21–24; Pessen 1988, 275).

¹⁷⁴⁵ William Griffis portrayed the events in all of Japanese political history as if they had been preordained. He spoke about political evolution, but the ultimate cause of that evolution was God. Also the China expert William Martin brought up the question of Providence in the rise and fall of empires, quoting George Bancroft (1800–1891), who claimed "that God rules in the affairs of men is as certain as any truth of physical science". (Griffis 1903, 540; Griffis 2006a, 387; Martin 1881, 274).

¹⁷⁴⁶ Griffis 1903, 668, 671; Griffis 2006a, 420, 428. Although he thought that party politics was the next natural step in the development of Japanese government, he implied that parties could be a risk to national unity. Indeed, Griffis was implicitly criticising his own country for letting party politics override patriotism and dictate the country's foreign policy. (Griffis 1900, 232–233.)

¹⁷⁴⁷ Griffis 2006a, 426, 427. William Griffis' comments referred to articles 1, 3–8, and 10–11 of the constitution. These proclaimed, for example, that the "Empire of Japan shall be reigned over and governed by a line of Emperors unbroken for ages eternal", that the emperor possessed and exercised large legislative and administrative power, and that he appointed and dismissed all civil and military officers. (*The Constitution of the Empire of Japan*.)

short of no absurdity, they declared their chief greater even than the heavenly gods;" they had centred their religion and worship around the Mikado rather than his allegedly "heavenly ancestors, or 'heaven,'" Griffis explained.¹⁷⁴⁸

Thereafter, the temporal power of the emperor had fluctuated, but it had always retained prestige and dignity, Griffis believed. The emperor was the ultimate source of authority, and a mighty political, religious and moral force in the national history of Japan. Hence, it had been only logical that the anti-Tokugawa forces wanted to control the Mikado, Griffis reasoned, as they strove to topple the shogunate in the early 19th century.¹⁷⁴⁹ Once the Emperor had been restored to power in 1868, the Meiji leaders also decided to revive and purge Shinto in order to strengthen and unify the nation, to foster a national spirit, and convince the people that their duty lay in unquestioningly obeying the Emperor. Shinto became a political tool again.¹⁷⁵⁰ Thus, the government and religion became one; the emperor was placed at the epicentre of state and church alike, and for the people, being a Shintoist was the same as being a patriot, Griffis concluded.¹⁷⁵¹ Both Percival Lowell and Lafcadio Hearn agreed with Griffis that the Meiji government had appropriated Shinto in order to strengthen the state's policies.¹⁷⁵²

And yet it seems that William Griffis did not consider Shinto to be a state religion as such. In fact, as we noted earlier, he did not think that Shinto was even a religion, at least not anymore. Instead, he saw Shinto as more of "a system of government regulations".¹⁷⁵³ And hence the public ceremonies of the government which, on first appearances, seemed religious in nature, were not necessarily so.¹⁷⁵⁴ But he did concede that there were unmistakably religious features to Japanese politics. Firstly there was the popular belief that the emperor was divine. Secondly, the government and the empire claimed to rest on the religious myths of *Kojiki*. And thirdly, there was the notion that, as a safeguard, the validity of the Meiji Constitution and Japanese institutions depended "upon the oath which the Mikado swore at the shrine of his heavenly ancestors". Griffis felt this need for a spiritual authority strangely incongruous, con-

¹⁷⁴⁸ Griffis 1892, 20–22; Griffis 2006a, 43, 99, 211; Griffis 2006b, 22.

¹⁷⁴⁹ Griffis 2006a, 207–208, 211.

¹⁷⁵⁰ Griffis 1892, 204; Griffis 2006a, 102, 107, 183–184; Griffis 2006b, 6, 50, 75.

¹⁷⁵¹ Griffis 2006b, 30, 50. Aizawa Seishisai (1782–1863) argued that if Japan was to be unified and strengthened after centuries of feudal division, some form of national consciousness or essence had to be forged in the people. To describe this essence, Aizawa popularised the age-old concept of *kokutai* (nation body). He believed that Christianity was the key to a national spirit in the West, and so the same could be achieved in Japan with Shinto. Public Shinto ceremonies should be incorporated via the *kokutai* into education and the government. Eventually, the Meiji government adopted many of these proposals, in order to foster unity and nationalism, and to gain support for the government and its policies. (Benson et al. 2001, 146–148, 157–158; Dulles 1965, 162; Irokawa 1985, 247, 249–250; Josephson 2012, 101, 120–124, 149, 153.)

¹⁷⁵² Hearn 1894b, 387; Lowell 2007b, 61.

¹⁷⁵³ Griffis 2006a, 184. Griffis wrote that the laws of Shinto, as published by the Department of Religion in 1872, called for the people to honour the gods and love their country; to understand the principles of heaven and the duty of man; and to venerate and obey the sovereign Mikado and his court (Griffis 2006a, 102).

¹⁷⁵⁴ See e.g. Griffis 2006b, 52.

sidering the fact that otherwise the Japanese lived in an “enlightened age when all authority is challenged”.¹⁷⁵⁵

Griffis granted that, by amalgamating Shinto and politics, the Meiji government had achieved many of its goals before the century had drawn to a close. The Japanese people had become thoroughly imbued with national sentiment and veneration for their country.¹⁷⁵⁶ He also praised the emperor for having now “taken his place among men of thought and action, a student, a thinker, an earnest and enlightened ruler”. As a man, the emperor was a “splendid success”, Griffis posited, but as a god, he was an utter failure.¹⁷⁵⁷ His final conclusion was the following:

The doctrine of the divine descent of the mikado has been very useful in times past ; but its work is done. Its light is paling ; it is time for its wane ; it can not long remain above the horizon. There are so many Sons of Heaven, so many Centres of the Universe, Infallibilities, etc., in Asia, where the fashion still lingers of making gods of men for the purposes of political machinery, that the very mention of such an idea is an evidence of weakness, even of imbecility. Japan will win the respect of civilization by dropping the fiction.¹⁷⁵⁸

Essentially, Griffis was arguing that a modern, civilized nation did not mix religion and politics. The United States, for instance, was a thoroughly Christian Republic, which nevertheless did not require a state church,¹⁷⁵⁹ Griffis pointed out. Apparently, Japan had not yet quite reached the stage in which the affairs of the state, and the affairs of the individual, such as religion, were consecrated to their own spheres. It was as if Japan was modern and ancient at the same time.

In contrast, China seemed only ancient and unchanging, “existing, for aught that appears, in much the same way as in hoary antiquity,” as Arthur Smith claimed. The Chinese had not progressed, but not yielded to the “universal law of the decay and death of nations” either, Smith wondered.¹⁷⁶⁰ How was this possible? The question puzzled both Smith and Samuel Williams alike. Williams sought reasons for the perpetuity of Chinese institutions and government first from the geopolitical position of China, which had ensured relative isolation and security for the country. Secondly, the religious beliefs, philosophies, language, and literature had unified the people and upheld the institutions, Williams noted. Confucius had also taught the virtue of conservatism and the benefits of having a centralised government. Thirdly, the government had pre-

¹⁷⁵⁵ Griffis 2006a, 25, 49, 106; Griffis 2006b, 52.

¹⁷⁵⁶ Griffis 1892, 13–14. Hearn, too, claimed that the Japanese possessed national spirit to a degree that had no “modern parallel” (Hearn 1895, 224).

¹⁷⁵⁷ Griffis 1903, 562.

¹⁷⁵⁸ Griffis 1903, 566.

¹⁷⁵⁹ Griffis 2006b, 189–190. A Christian country, but no state church - this William Griffis’ description was a rather common way for the Americans to interpret the First Amendment of their Constitution, which stated that the government and civil society were neutral in questions of religion. They prided themselves for the freedom to exercise one’s religion, and thought that the government should not interfere with this freedom. Yet, they still liked to think that the Americans were a nation under the Christian God. (Hoxie 2001, 67; Marty 1988, 302.)

¹⁷⁶⁰ Smith 1890, 380.

vented the domination of feudal, hereditary, priestly, and aristocratic landowning classes. Williams also argued that the government had been well adapted to the needs of the people, while the people had been remarkably peaceful, absorbed in their industries, content, and thus easy to administrate.¹⁷⁶¹

Meanwhile, William Martin insisted that the Chinese society was far from 'immutable', and that the people had not been "wedded to a uniform system of despotic government", or treaded in a "vicious circle". Instead, the Chinese had passed through many changes, lived under as many different forms of government as modern France, and made a "general, if not a regular, advance in all that constitutes the greatness of a people."¹⁷⁶² However, Martin noted that certain aspects of society had withstood the tests of time: a monarch that ruled with the mandate of heaven and formed the centre of government; a hierarchical and patriarchal family and society; learning as the passport to office; and ancestor worship.¹⁷⁶³ Martin agreed that Confucianism had been a crucial factor in the stability of Chinese society and its government. But the tenets of Confucius, he believed, were not as much the cause for Chinese conservatism as many foreigners and Chinese tended to think. Martin explained that Confucius had undoubtedly been a conservative, but instead of advocating an "unreasoning submission to antiquity," he had urged the rulers to renovate themselves and the people.¹⁷⁶⁴

Also Arthur Smith acknowledged that the Chinese government was "by no means incapable of being blown over", but he claimed that it was like a cube: "when it capsizes, it simply falls upon some other face, and to external appearance, as well as to interior substance, is the same that it has always been".¹⁷⁶⁵ Smith came up with rather similar explanations for the unchanging nature of Chinese society as Williams. He claimed that self-preservation was the "first law of nations," and that the Chinese Classics had brought about a system of government which was unmatched in its adaptation to that end. Because of Confucian tenets, China had outranked all other nations in duration. The feat was all the more remarkable, Smith argued, since the Chinese government was actually quite weak. He claimed that the government was incapable of putting forth sudden and effective efforts if the people were to conspire or rise against it. "If the millions of China were not satisfied with the existing rule, nothing would be easier than for them to unite and overthrow it," Smith noted. But the people had no wish, or even ability, to do so, and this explained the longevity of Chinese nation.¹⁷⁶⁶

¹⁷⁶¹ Williams 1913a, 380-381, 520; Williams 1913b, 188, 190-191, 193.

¹⁷⁶² Martin 1881, 230; Martin 1894, 23-24. These forms of government included first an elective monarchy and then a feudal system. Martin claimed that during the feudal era, China had witnessed the "wealth of Persia and the culture of Greece" combined with anarchy. Then feudalism was overthrown, and the empire centralized and unified by the first Chinese Emperor, Qin Shi Huangdi (260-210 BCE). This framework had then remained the basis of the Chinese empire ever since. (Martin 1881, 231; Martin 1894, 19, 27).

¹⁷⁶³ Martin 1894, 24.

¹⁷⁶⁴ Martin 1894, 185-186; Martin 1900, 60.

¹⁷⁶⁵ Smith 1890, 152.

¹⁷⁶⁶ Smith 1890, 152; Smith 1899, 220-221; Smith 1901a, 174.

It was not that the Chinese people were necessarily content, Smith argued, it was just that they had an inherent “superlative peaceableness”. In this, he was echoing the conclusions of Williams, who claimed that moral forces had replaced physical force, so that the people had an inherent respect for law. “Whether this element in their character is the effect, of their institutions, or the cause of them, we do not know,” Smith continued, but “what we do know is, that the Chinese are by nature and by education a law-abiding people”.¹⁷⁶⁷ He emphatically contrasted the Chinese adherence to law with the relative lawlessness of “the English-speaking race”. Although Americans were educated, refined, and Christian, and though they lived in a society where republican institutions flourished the most, they often ignored or openly defied municipal, state, and national laws alike. The American statute books were filled with laws no one respected or enforced, Smith claimed, to the point at which they were fast becoming an object of derision. Crime had thus been on the increase for the last three decades, and human life was now cheap in the United States. He believed that someone in Beijing, or indeed, a foreigner in any part of China, was safer than anyone in New York, or a Chinese person in the US for that matter.¹⁷⁶⁸

Smith argued that the peacefulness of the Chinese made them “the most easily governed” of “all Asiatic peoples”.¹⁷⁶⁹ Samuel Williams somewhat disagreed; according to him, the Chinese thought it quite acceptable to “evade taxes, defy the police when they can safely do so, and oppose rather than aid in the maintenance of law and order”. Altogether, Williams found that there was a wide variety of “vices” and “repulsive features” to Chinese society, such as clan feuds, banditry, dishonesty, and selfishness, which made it hard for the government to prevent outbreaks of violence, and disorganisation.¹⁷⁷⁰ Yet in spite of this, Williams did find some “redeeming traits”, which prevented complete chaos from breaking out. Firstly, the Chinese were bred to be obedient from birth, although it was motivated by expediency, rather than any kind of morality. Secondly, there existed the idea of mutual responsibility, Williams claimed, which however tended to subject the innocent to suffer on behalf of those who were guilty.¹⁷⁷¹

Samuel Williams was convinced that the people of China constantly violated the letter and intent of the law. He also thought that the rulers of the country violated the order of the society they were supposed to maintain, and in-

¹⁷⁶⁷ Smith 1890, 46–48, 50, 240.

¹⁷⁶⁸ Smith 1890, 240–241.

¹⁷⁶⁹ Smith 1890, 48.

¹⁷⁷⁰ Williams 1913a, xi, 441, 500; Williams 1913b, 580–581.

¹⁷⁷¹ Williams 1913a, 472, 518; Williams 1913b, 581. Smith also remarked on the principle of mutual responsibility, which dictated that every person in China was directly responsible for the acts, debts, and character of another, whether a member of the family, a subordinate, or one’s neighbour. The idea rested upon a theory that both good and bad thoughts and ideas were contagious. The certainty that someone else was going to be punished for one’s bad deeds did not “make a bad man good,” but it could prevent him “from becoming ten-fold worse,” Smith maintained. But he agreed with Williams that, all things considered, the doctrine was nevertheless repellant by “Western standards of thought”. (Smith 1890, 233, 238–240.)

fringed the very laws they were supposed to protect and administrate, just as frequently as their subjects.¹⁷⁷² The rulers were “bad almost beyond belief to one conversant only with the courtesy, justice, purity, and sincerity of Christian governments and society”, Williams claimed. He estimated that the laws of the country themselves were rather equitable and admirable, and if they had not been so poorly executed, China would have been “incomparably the best governed country out of Christendom”.¹⁷⁷³ These laws were very detailed, and there were many, Williams explained, because this was the only way to efficiently control the people without considerable military power. The problem was that many of the statutes were obscure and outdated, and none of them defined the rights of the Chinese subjects.¹⁷⁷⁴

Samuel Williams described the Chinese criminal laws as having many praiseworthy features, and being a solid proof that crimes did not go unpunished for “want of proper laws or insufficient threatenings”. However, the criminal laws were also the most “cruel and irregular” of all Chinese laws, he thought, as they permitted torture and imprisonment in order to elicit a confession, and thus opened “the door for much inhumanity”.¹⁷⁷⁵ In his opinion, the use of torture showed a distinct lack of honesty and honour in the people.¹⁷⁷⁶ Nevertheless, in spite of cruel punishments, torture, the occasional brutal treatment of suspects and prisoners, and the “painful” contrast “between good laws and wicked rulers”, Williams thought Chinese legislation was “far superior to [that of] other Asiatic countries”. But in order to rise to the level of Western legislation and social order, the Chinese would have to adopt “higher moral principles than heathenism can teach”.¹⁷⁷⁷

The Manchu Dynasty, then reigning China, received approving remarks from the experts. William Martin appraised the dynasty for being the wisest, ablest, and altogether “the best link in the long succession”, and Samuel Williams thought that it had more vigour and less corruption than the preceding governments, and that it provided more security and development.¹⁷⁷⁸ But overall for the experts, the shortcomings of the Manchu government far outweighed its merits. Arthur Smith, for one, thought that the governing class as a whole was morally inferior to other classes in China.¹⁷⁷⁹ Likewise, Williams felt that the rulers of China were no better than the people when it came to morals, patriotic sentiment, or truthfulness. But, by his reasoning, the emperor and his officials were only as good “as the people”, and the kind of government they had produced was ultimately rotten and weak. He accused the Chinese officials of bribery, extortion, oppression, and embezzlement, though he granted that perhaps the majority of them genuinely wished to serve their country and gov-

¹⁷⁷² Williams 1913a, xi, 384, 499–500; Williams 1913b, 508.

¹⁷⁷³ Williams 1913a, 427, 500.

¹⁷⁷⁴ Williams 1913a, 385, 392.

¹⁷⁷⁵ Williams 1913a, 389–390, 506.

¹⁷⁷⁶ Williams 1913a, 507.

¹⁷⁷⁷ Williams 1913a, 391–392, 427.

¹⁷⁷⁸ Martin 1900, 127; Martin 1901a, 408; Williams 1913b, 185.

¹⁷⁷⁹ Smith 1890, 284, 337.

ern justly.¹⁷⁸⁰ Smith agreed that doubtless there were “pure-minded and upright officials in China”, but due to the constraints of the environment, they were “utterly helpless to accomplish the good which they may have at heart”.¹⁷⁸¹

Williams and Smith believed that the machinations and secrecy of government officials had led to a situation where the people distrusted officials and vice versa. Meanwhile inside the government, Manchu and Chinese officials also profoundly distrusted each other.¹⁷⁸² Smith maintained that this state of affairs had been a serious impediment to reforms and progress. The Chinese had resources, talent, and learning, but their lack of mutual confidence and sincerity prevented them being properly used.¹⁷⁸³

All three experts noted that the Chinese state was based on patriarchal theory. The idea had been inculcated particularly by Confucian ethics, William Martin remarked, and Samuel Williams estimated that the extent, systematization, and longevity of the patriarchal principle in China were unprecedented. But the curious thing according to Arthur Smith was that the government “although patriarchal”, was “more occupied in looking after the patriarch, than in caring for the patriarch's family”.¹⁷⁸⁴ Also Williams was of the opinion that the officials were more worried about their own prosperity and standing than the well-being of their subjects. Also this state of things, Williams thought, was a direct consequence of the prevailing distrust and corruption, but it was also a characteristic of “pagan governments” more generally.¹⁷⁸⁵

Samuel Williams defined the Chinese government as “weak despotism” tempered by some democratic elements and principles.¹⁷⁸⁶ A few years later, Arthur Smith echoed Williams’ conclusions in his book *Chinese Characteristics*:

The Chinese may be regarded as the only pagan nation which has maintained democratic habits under a purely despotic theory of government. This government has respected the rights of its subjects by placing them under the protection of law, with its sanctions and tribunals, and making the sovereign amenable in the popular

¹⁷⁸⁰ Williams 1913a, Williams 1913a, 294, 419, 441, 461; Williams 1913b, 580–581.

¹⁷⁸¹ Smith 1890, 283.

¹⁷⁸² Smith 1890, 257. The Manchu shared their government with the Chinese, but they were careful to preserve their own identity and customs, and maintain military supremacy over the Chinese (Beckmann 1965, 55–54).

¹⁷⁸³ Smith 1890, 285.

¹⁷⁸⁴ Martin 1881, 134–135; Martin 1900, 334–335; Smith 1890, 138, 338; Williams 1913a, 380–381.

¹⁷⁸⁵ Williams 1913a, 450–451; Williams 1913b, 497, 505.

¹⁷⁸⁶ Williams 1913a, 449, 565. In the 18th century, Voltaire had extolled the government and civilization of China as an example for European countries to follow, as had the Jesuit writers before him. At the same time, in his famous *The Spirit of Laws* (1748), Montesquieu divided governments into monarchies, despotisms, and republics; guided by the principles of honour, fear, and virtue, respectively. Montesquieu argued that the Chinese empire was despotic, since the people were motivated by neither virtue nor honour, but by beatings. Besides Montesquieu, an increasing number of Enlightenment and early 19th century thinkers were highlighting the despotic nature of the Chinese government, and the negative effects the corruption, the lack of popular rights, and other attendants of despotism had on commerce and on the society as a whole. (Adas 1989, 80–81, 89, 92, 123–124; Spencer 1999, 91–92.)

mind for the continuance of his sway to the approval of a higher Power able to punish him.¹⁷⁸⁷

In 1899 and again in 1901, Smith drew attention to the democratic features of Chinese society and politics. He noted, for example, that in spite of being despotic, the government did not prevent the Chinese from assembling and debating freely.¹⁷⁸⁸ Samuel Williams also observed that not only were they allowed to discuss political matters without restriction, but they could form guilds and societies to protect their rights, and appeal to the courts if they felt they had been dealt an injustice.¹⁷⁸⁹

But overall, Samuel Williams thought that liberty was unknown among the Chinese people, and that there was “not even a word for it in the language”. The people had privileges, but they were either too poor, afraid, ignorant, or too insignificant to claim them. He believed that the “mental independence” of the Chinese people had been destroyed and their enterprise checked. Neither the rulers nor the ruled had come to the understanding of their rights and duties yet, Williams judged.¹⁷⁹⁰ William Martin largely agreed with Williams, and remarked that the Confucian principles of society and government had tons to say about the duties and obligations of the subjects, but not a word about their rights. In addition, the masses were totally oblivious of their situation. The average Chinese had no politics, Martin claimed. The Chinaman was “happy, reign whoever may, and eats and sleeps his misery away”, Martin concluded.¹⁷⁹¹

Samuel Williams and Arthur Smith saw the Chinese democratic features being counteracted by the fact that public opinion, local government, and the government of the empire as a whole, were all in the hands of few powerful members of the literati. For instance, Smith noted that the self-government of local Chinese communities could be easily mistaken for “a pure democracy”, but in reality, the power and responsibility rested on a handful of individuals, not on the people at large.¹⁷⁹² Meanwhile, Williams pointed out that the government of the empire centred on an emperor with absolute powers, towards whom the people expressed “unbounded reverence”. The emperor was not only the head of the Chinese government and constitution, but the sole source of authority, rank, and honour, and the holder of supreme executive and legislative powers. In addition, he owned the lands and wealth of the empire, and ultimately, claimed to rule the whole mankind.¹⁷⁹³

¹⁷⁸⁷ Smith 1890, 142.

¹⁷⁸⁸ Smith 1899, 228; Smith 1901a, 152.

¹⁷⁸⁹ Williams 1913a, 415, 488.

¹⁷⁹⁰ Williams 1913a, 411, 415, 499.

¹⁷⁹¹ Martin 1881, 146; Martin 1900, 166.

¹⁷⁹² Smith 1899, 226; Williams 1913a, 438, 440–441, 520. Smith estimated that very often the administration of Chinese villages and local communities was done by only one man. He likened the situation to the municipal government of New York under William M. “Boss” Tweed (1823–1878), a politician representing the Democratic Party, who together with his men controlled the politics, justice and legislation, and the finances of the area. (Smith 1890, 309.)

¹⁷⁹³ Williams 1913a, 393, 395, 411, 565.

Thus, the emperor was omnipotent, but in theory only, Samuel Williams explained. There was no “deliberative or advisory body in the Chinese government, and nothing really analogous to a congress, parliament, or *tiers état*” to restrain the emperor’s power. Nevertheless, the ruler was expected to consult and discuss with the heads of the two most influential councils: the “Cabinet, or Imperial Chancery” (also known as the ‘Grand Secretariat’) and “the Council of State” (or ‘Grand Council’); and to take into consideration the deliberations of the “Six Boards” (‘Ministries’). None of these organs were elective however, Williams clarified, as that would have been “almost as incongruous to a Chinese as the election of a father by his family”.¹⁷⁹⁴

William Martin added that the emperor “never rejected” the advice from these departments, because he was held accountable to history and his people for the decisions he made.¹⁷⁹⁵ The Chinese emperor represented heaven, in much the same way as the Japanese emperor represented the gods. The difference was that the Chinese emperor was, as Samuel Williams put it, a “vicegerent of heaven”, while the Japanese emperor’s source of authority came from the fact that he was, himself, of divine descent. Williams compared the Chinese emperor to the Christian Pope. Both represented divine power, interpreted it for their subjects, and served as heads of a religion.¹⁷⁹⁶ The emperor of China exacted the same reverence as was paid to the gods, Williams argued, and ceremonies held in his honour thus took a religious character. “Nothing is omitted which can add to the dignity and sacredness of the Emperor's person”, he noted, and thus ceremonies, rites, symbols, and taboos were used to increase and maintain the awe of the subjects.¹⁷⁹⁷

This combination of customs, religion, and rituals was the secret of stable and durable government in China, William Martin pointed out. From an early point on, they had employed religious rites and “the worship of the gods as an instrument of government.”¹⁷⁹⁸ During the Zhou Dynasty (1046–256 BCE), Martin elaborated, the national religion had crystallised into three elements: “1. The worship of Shangti, the Supreme Ruler; 2. The worship of powers supposed to preside over the principal departments of material nature; and 3. The worship of deceased ancestors”.¹⁷⁹⁹

The worship of *Shangdi*, the greatest of ancestors, was gradually replaced with the worship of the more abstract *Tian*, but the veneration of both was reserved for the emperor. Martin made it clear that ceremony nevertheless pervaded the whole of society as a governmental tool. In fact, the Board of Rites

¹⁷⁹⁴ Williams 1913a, 415–416.

¹⁷⁹⁵ Martin 1900, 337.

¹⁷⁹⁶ Williams 1913a, 393, 395, 411.

¹⁷⁹⁷ Williams 1913a, 402, 801.

¹⁷⁹⁸ Martin 1881, 257–258.

¹⁷⁹⁹ Martin 1881, 258. The scheme for government, devised during the Zhou Dynasty, consisted of the ideas that the ruler of the country had been nominated by Heaven, that he was the highest authority on earth, and that his duties included the sacrifices to Heaven and other religious rites. The ruler was also thought to be accountable for Heaven for the well-being of his subjects. He could keep the mandate for governing only as long as he was seen to rule according to the will of Heaven, and as long as the people remained content. (Beckmann 1965, 6–7).

was dedicated to managing state ceremonies, worship, and etiquette, as well as education. Martin could see no equivalent to this in Western government,¹⁸⁰⁰ but felt it was only natural in the context of Chinese government. In contrast, Samuel Williams found it entirely objectionable, just as William Griffis had found similar aspects of the Japanese system objectionable. The “lofty assumption” that the emperor was the “Son of Heaven” was surely prone to fail “before the advance of western civilization”, Williams concluded.¹⁸⁰¹

For Samuel Williams, the Chinese had perfected “human government to as high a degree as it is possible for man to go without the knowledge of divine revelation”; so the next step was to adopt Christianity, as this would give them the “power of conscience and amenableness to law” which would provide the foundations for a just government and society. Thus he proposed that thoroughgoing social, political, and religious reforms be undertaken without delay.¹⁸⁰² In fact, by accentuating the defects of Chinese society and government; by either emphasising China’s stagnation, as Williams and Smith, or its capability for change, as Martin; and by labelling the Chinese as ‘pagan’, all three experts were in effect arguing that China needed social and political rejuvenation, and Christianity. In 1881, William Martin explicitly declared that: “the Chinese people must, and will, be renovated”.¹⁸⁰³

A decade later, William Martin and Arthur Smith were around to see the changes being debated and taking shape in China. Martin and Smith described how the Chinese reformers began to talk about the necessity of imitating Japan’s example, introduction of a representative, parliamentary organ in the government, and a revision of laws and the form of administration.¹⁸⁰⁴

¹⁸⁰⁰ Martin 1881, 257–258; Martin 1900, 323.

¹⁸⁰¹ Williams 1913b, 571.

¹⁸⁰² Williams 1913a, 517–518, 572; Williams 1913b, 581.

¹⁸⁰³ Martin 1901a, 370. Charles Wordell has noted about another American observer of Japan, Richard Hildreth, that when he repeatedly pointed out Japanese features which failed to meet American standards, he was in fact arguing that the Americans should have a definite role in the civilizing mission in East Asia (Wordell 1998, 40).

¹⁸⁰⁴ As in Japan, the extraterritoriality clause in the unequal treaties was motivation enough for the Chinese to want legal reforms, as it was humiliating that foreigners did not have to obey China’s laws. Reformers proposed that features be adopted from European and American law, adapted for use in China, and put into operation in the treaty ports at first. Some reformers, such as Kang Youwei, were also keen on establishing China as a constitutional monarchy, in the manner of Russia under Peter the Great, or Japan under the Emperor Meiji. Meanwhile, many reformers openly admired the parliamentary institutions of Europe and United States. As the objective of the reforms was to gain political, commercial, and military equality with the West, the perception of whether a certain political or social aspect was the source of Western power became perhaps the most significant incentive for endorsing or rejecting a suggested reform. However, as noted before, the proposed political, social, educational, and economic reforms stirred reactionary sentiment, and were suppressed by the opposition after 1898. (Beckmann 1965, 183; Eastman 1968, 698, 700–705; Levenson 1950, 465.)

7.3 Family – the basic unit of Chinese and Japanese societies

One feature of Chinese and Japanese society, which particularly attracted the experts' attention, was the social collectivism and focus on the family. Arthur Smith, William Griffis, and Percival Lowell all noted that the basic social unit, as well as "the unit of civilization," in China and Japan was the family.¹⁸⁰⁵ This phenomenon, Lowell explained, was due to the "patricentric pivot" that Far Eastern societies revolved around:

Upon the conception of the family as the social and political unit depends the whole constitution of China. The same theory somewhat modified constitutes the life-principle of Korea, of Japan, and of their less advanced cousins who fill the vast centre of the Asiatic continent. From the Emperor on his throne to the common coolie in his hovel it is the idea of kinship that knits the entire body politic together. The Empire is one great family; the family is a little empire. The one developed out of the other.¹⁸⁰⁶

Patriarchy was thus the basis for the family as well as the empire, and both mirrored each other.¹⁸⁰⁷ Lowell pointed out that patriarchy was the oldest and most primitive of political systems. It was a system which practically all nations had undergone at some point in their history, but which they had then left behind. "Now the interesting fact about the yellow branch of the human race is, not that they had so juvenile a constitution, but that they have it; that it has persisted practically unchanged from prehistoric ages", despite of lapse of years, altered conditions, and "immense advance in civilization", Lowell remarked. It had not dissolved like other "antiquated views"; instead it had become crystallized into an institution, sanctioned by philosophy and religion alike.¹⁸⁰⁸

William Griffis compared the Japanese family to the "paterfamilias at Rome", at least when it came to the power and responsibility that the head of the family wielded over its members and property.¹⁸⁰⁹ Meanwhile, William Martin described the organisation of Chinese families as despotic. He likened the "grand-sire" of the family to a monarch,¹⁸¹⁰ who reigned with absolute power and thrashed and maltreated his subjects at will for as long as he lived. In rural districts, the elders of the families often took law into their own hands,

¹⁸⁰⁵ Griffis 2006a, 469, 471; Griffis 2006b, 68; Lowell 2007b, 16; Smith 1890, 231.

¹⁸⁰⁶ Lowell 2007b, 16.

¹⁸⁰⁷ In Japan around the 20th century, the Meiji authorities explicitly tried to instil the Confucian emphasis on family, and the idea of Japan as a family state, into the minds of the people. Through education and media, the government promoted the conception that all the Japanese were heirs to the gods and goddesses, related to the Emperor, and that filial piety in the context of the family equalled patriotism in the context of the state, and the other way around. (Beckmann 1965, 76; Benson et al. 2001, 143, 151.)

¹⁸⁰⁸ Lowell 2007b, 16–17.

¹⁸⁰⁹ Griffis 2006a, 469–470.

¹⁸¹⁰ Similarly, Percival Lowell argued that an Occidental father and Oriental father were by no means correlating terms, since the latter resembled rather a king than a head of a family in his duties and functions. This had been the case also in the West in the "early bucolic days", when the family had denoted to a whole clan, and the head of the family had been like a head of a small state. (Lowell 2007b, 29–30.)

and cared very little for the actual government, he added, concluding that there was no country like China, when it came to “home rule of this description”.¹⁸¹¹

The three China experts all agreed that a Chinese family was nothing like a Western family. William Martin emphasised that the Chinese family was a complex unit, and similarly, Arthur Smith told his readers that family in China did not consist of a man, wife, and their children, as in the United States, but of a host of people sharing the same surname and ancestors.¹⁸¹² Samuel Williams added that many generations lived under the same roof in China, and generally, the families had a conspicuously large number of children. This state of things was the direct result of the ethical precept of Mencius, stating that of three unfilial things a man could do, not having posterity was the greatest, Arthur Smith explained. It was the duty of the Chinese to have male posterity to continue the family line, take care of the parents in their old age, and to perform the rites of ancestor worship.¹⁸¹³ If the couple did not have male progeny of their own, they could adopt a son from the relatives of the husband, or even a complete stranger, Smith added.¹⁸¹⁴

This doctrine of filial piety, which necessitated a male heir, also had a decisively negative impact on the position of girls in the family, Smith noted, which was nevertheless “eminently rational to the Chinese mind”. He explained to his readers that the birth of a son was greeted with extravagant joy, and the wishes of the first son, in particular, were indulged to the point at which the mother was literally his “slave”. A daughter, however, was a wholly different matter as, according to the doctrine, she was not able to offer sacrifices to her parents once they were dead. In cases of a girl being born, the mother was often treated harshly, and occasionally she was even beaten up for, as Smith put it “her lack of discretion in not producing a son”. The daughters themselves were considered as burdens, made to feel unwelcome, and were sometimes even killed in infancy. The Chinese were “almost the only people boasting an ancient and developed civilization” treating their daughters this badly, Smith opined. From his Occidental point of view, the unequal treatment of girls and boys seemed like a “singular perversion of human nature” and a “gross outrage”.¹⁸¹⁵

¹⁸¹¹ Martin 1900, 209, 335.

¹⁸¹² Martin 1900, 335; Smith 1890, 105, 231.

¹⁸¹³ Smith 1890, 187, 207; Smith 1899, 251; Williams 1913a, 277–278.

¹⁸¹⁴ Smith 1899, 251–252. Later scholars have debated whether large extended families actually were the ideal for all classes of people in China. Some have suggested that the perceptions of the 19th century European and American observers may have been biased by their primary contacts with the South-eastern gentry and literati families, in which the idea of a nuclear family probably figured more rarely than in poorer families elsewhere. (Fried 1987, 100.)

¹⁸¹⁵ Smith 1890, 207, 210, 291; 1899, 237–238, 258–259, 272. Both Arthur Smith and William Martin supposed that a certain ballad from the Chinese classic, the *Book of Odes*, was to blame for the position and treatment of girls. William Martin presented the following translation of the ballad in question: “When a son is born—in a lordly bed/ Wrap him in raiment of purple and red/ Jewels and gold for playthings bring/ For the noble boy who shall serve the king./ When a girl is born—in coarse cloth wound,/ With a tile for a toy, let her lie on the ground./ In her bread and her beer be her praise or her blame/ And let her not sully her parents' good name”. Martin be-

Another feature of Chinese families that Arthur Smith noted was the power and responsibility the older members had over the younger members. In theory at least, the father accounted for his son for as long as he lived, the older brother for the younger brother, and the eldest in the family for the whole clan. In return, the older members demanded respect, subordination, and obedience from the younger. This organisation, Smith claimed, had some serious defects. It cramped the minds of those who were subjected to its "iron pressure", prevented "development and healthful change", and went entirely against any concept of personal liberty.¹⁸¹⁶ The youngest members were also expected to be useful – to work and participate in business, industry, and agriculture at an age when Western children would only be expected to play. And thus the Chinese custom of calling their daughters "slave-girls" was not so off the mark, Smith added.¹⁸¹⁷

When children's help was not needed, they were more or less neglected and ignored by the family, Smith thought. They received little education, and their illnesses went untreated. This showed the Chinese lacked an ability to empathise with childhood – an ability, which Smith felt was such a "distinguishing a part of our modern civilization".¹⁸¹⁸ But the practice "most revolting" to Smith's Western sensibilities was the selling of female infants and children "as openly as that of mules and donkeys, the only essential difference being that the former were not driven to market". Along with children, also the wives could be put on the market in times of calamities and distress. Although Smith admitted that it was perhaps unfair to judge a people by their conduct in extreme circumstances, he nevertheless estimated that such instances brought to light the underlying social principles of a nation.¹⁸¹⁹ At this point, he did not specify the social principles he was referring to, but with hindsight it would seem he was referring to an "absence of altruism" in Chinese society.

The need to have male children affected Chinese marriages as well, Smith pointed out. Boys and girls were ushered into marriage as soon as it was feasible. For Smith, this custom appeared to have no advantages whatsoever. It was "a piece of absolute barbarity", and "one of the many points in regard to which it is almost impossible for the Chinese and the Anglo-Saxon to come to terms".¹⁸²⁰ Engagement was arranged by the parents through a go-between, and the consent of the betrothed themselves was not sought in the matter. Thus, the habit of American men and women to propose and arrange their own marriag-

lieved that if only Confucius had attached "a little note of disapproval" to this ballad in his compilation, an immense amount of cruelty could have been averted. (Martin 1901a, 78–79; Smith 1899, 237.)

¹⁸¹⁶ Smith 1890, 211, 232.

¹⁸¹⁷ Smith 1890, 272–273; Smith 1899, 245–246, 262.

¹⁸¹⁸ Smith 1890, 218, 299, 317; Smith 1899, 241–242.

¹⁸¹⁹ Smith 1890, 291; Smith 1899, 259. Martin depicted the Chinese practice of selling wives and daughters as a "mild kind of slavery". However, he thought there were a couple of redeeming features in this "peculiar institution". Firstly, the rights of the girls and women were defined by law, and secondly, Chinese moral teachings tended to humanize the custom. (Martin 1900, 307.)

¹⁸²⁰ Smith 1890, 207, 292; Smith 1899, 265, 267.

es struck the Chinese as absurd and even morally questionable.¹⁸²¹ According to Smith, Chinese parents did not care so much about the future happiness of their daughters, and often rarely bothered to investigate the character of the husband-to-be. Again, Smith contrasted Chinese customs and patterns of thoughts with Western ones to conclude that the indifference of China parents violated the “most ordinary rules of prudence and common sense”.¹⁸²²

For Smith, the lot of a Chinese girl did not improve after her marriage had been brokered. In Chinese families, the wife was always a “side issue” he asserted, referring to George Dennison Prentice’s comment that in the Creation woman had been merely a side issue.¹⁸²³ The wife was *yin*, “dull, female, inferior”, while the husband was *yang*, “male, ruling, and chief element in the universe”. The wife was not a companion to her husband. In fact, Smith claimed that the whole idea of partnership was absent from China. It would have been unthought-of for the husband to even converse with his wife.¹⁸²⁴ A wife joined the family of her husband, was held there under “chronic repression”, abused and beaten as “a matter of course”, with a role best defined as a servant. The main source of her suffering and anxiety was the mother-in-law. On this subject one could write a long chapter, Smith remarked, but he settled for few paragraphs. The wife had to live under the tyrannical domination of the mother-in-law, whose methods of maltreatment ranged from uninterrupted scolding to flagrant cruelty. However, the mother-in-law was a necessary element in the family, Smith insisted, since the young brides had yet to learn how to control themselves.¹⁸²⁵

The Chinese bride therefore had no “rational prospect of happiness”, Smith firmly asserted. She had no other means than vile language and a bad temper for asserting herself. She could try to defend herself by keeping quiet, but to the majority of Chinese women, Smith alleged, such a feat was “as difficult as aerial navigation”. The girl’s parents could not interfere in the marriage, nor did they want to, for once married off, they did not consider her to be a member of their family anymore.¹⁸²⁶ As a result, a huge number of young wives committed suicide every year. This “insecurity of the life and happiness of woman” was one of “the weakest parts of the Chinese social fabric”, Smith concluded.¹⁸²⁷

For the most part, Samuel Williams’ description of the domestic life of wives in China did not differ substantially from Smith’s account. But what was markedly different in Williams’ description, was his emphasis on subjectivity of

¹⁸²¹ Smith 1890, 196–197.

¹⁸²² Smith 1899, 267–268.

¹⁸²³ Smith 1890, 290. George Dennison Prentice (1802–1870) was the editor of the *Hartford New England Review* and the *Louisville Daily Journal*. With this comment, Prentice had declined to discuss the question of women’s suffrage, and it was much-quoted at the time in many American, Australian and New Zealand newspapers. (See e.g. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 18.8.1876.)

¹⁸²⁴ Smith 1899, 302–303.

¹⁸²⁵ Smith 1890, 222, 292, 296–297; Smith 1899, 276–277, 303.

¹⁸²⁶ Smith 1890, 53, 222, 292–293; Smith 1899, 303–305, 327.

¹⁸²⁷ Smith 1890, 222; Smith 1899, 287.

the experience of happiness. He cited the French diplomat Chrétien-Louis-Joseph de Guignes (1759–1845), who had written that happiness did not necessarily “consist in absolute enjoyment, but in the idea which we have formed of it”. Inspired by de Guignes’ statement, Williams insisted that Chinese women were generally happy, content, and oblivious of the injustice done to them, because they were ignorant of anything better. They had no knowledge of the freedom European and American women enjoyed, or the sympathy and love women in Christian lands received, he argued.¹⁸²⁸

Meanwhile Arthur Smith pointed out that the dictum of Mencius on filial piety had also led to a variety of marriage arrangements in China. First, there were concubinage and polygamy, with all their “attendant miseries”. In order to fulfil ones filial duty and secure a male heir, sometimes a Chinese man had to procure a second wife, Smith explained. The concomitant evils were the incessant squabbles and bitterness between the wives, and hence Chinese often referred to concubinage with the saying “sipping vinegar,” the implication being that it was something to be avoided.¹⁸²⁹ For this reason, and for the great expenses involved, the families with more than one wife were “happily relatively few in number”, Smith noted.¹⁸³⁰ Another expedient marriage arrangement was the “rearing-marriage”. In this case a young girl was handed over to a family, in which she was brought up, and then married to. Like concubinage, the rearing-marriage had “manifest and grave” moral wrongs, Smith argued, but he thought that it was still somewhat better custom than the child marriages in India. The most redeeming feature of this arrangement was that it allowed the prospective couple to get to know each other before marriage, he thought. But whether this feature ensured happiness in the future marriage was a question “no Chinese would be likely to ask”, for that was not what marriage was for.¹⁸³¹

The dictate of Mencius also had its effect on the dissolution of marriage in China. Both Arthur Smith and Samuel Williams mentioned that a failure to give birth to a male heir was the most common legal grounds for divorcing a wife in China. The other six grounds stated in the law were wife’s lasciviousness or wanton conduct, jealousy, talkativeness, thievery, disobedience or neglect of the

¹⁸²⁸ On the whole, however, Samuel Williams estimated that the Chinese women held quite a high status in the family and society, and that their rights and security were tolerably well protected by the legal and moral codes of the country (Williams 1913a, 792, 794–796.)

¹⁸²⁹ Smith 1890, 207, 220–221, 294–295; Smith 1899, 299.

¹⁸³⁰ Smith 1890, 220–221; Smith 1899, 300. Samuel Williams claimed it was not rare for a richer man to purchase a concubine in a situation where the wife had not borne him a son, and he claimed that the greatest supporters of the institution were the wives themselves, because introducing more women into the household could sometimes improve the position of a wife in the family. He also added that the laws of the country were always on the side of the wife, not the concubine. Finally, Williams pondered that, as far as the “general purity of the society” went, it was dubitable whether “such abominable conduct” as was legalised among Mormons in Utah was “any improvement on the hardships of woman among the Chinese”. Thus, Williams reminded his readers that, in the instance of polygamy at least, the American society was not necessarily morally superior to the Chinese society. (Williams 1913a, 791–792, 797.)

¹⁸³¹ Smith 1899, 260.

husband's parents, and leprosy or some other deadly disease. Of all the seven causes for divorce, Arthur Smith believed adultery to be the most common in practice. Another usual cause Smith mentioned was "incompatibility", by which he meant incessant domestic brawls and bickering.¹⁸³² Perhaps Chinese marriage law appeared too lax to Smith, as he felt that divorces in China were "by no means so common as might be expected". Smith and Williams suggested that this was also because a husband could not make such a decision without considering the wife's family. Most often, the wife's relatives were unable or unwilling to take her back and support her, Smith explained, and if there was no perfectly valid cause, or an opportunity for the wife to remarry, divorce was not likely to be granted.¹⁸³³

American Protestants, such as Williams, Martin, and Smith, tended to view marriage and divorce as intimately related to public morality,¹⁸³⁴ which also involved questions about sexual morality in general. For example, William Martin mentioned in passing that prostitution was a lawful calling in China, and stressed that such a legal sanction for vice invariably indicated a low standard and state of morals.¹⁸³⁵ Williams also recognised prostitution as one of the three social evils from which China suffered, along with polygamy and slavery. However, he believed that the operation of these three evils had been effectively circumscribed by early marriage, the separation of sexes in society, and poverty. On the whole, Williams thought, sexual morals in China were actually quite well regulated, and thus the Chinese had managed to restrict debauchery, and prevent youths from indulging in sin.¹⁸³⁶

William Martin, on the other hand, observed that all the Chinese legal and moral regulations on chastity focused only on the female members of the society. Also Arthur Smith noted that only women were considered inherently immoral. Such characteristics as deceitfulness, fraudulence, jealousy, and selfishness were exclusively associated with women, Smith maintained, as were also the vices of seduction, intrigue, and adultery.¹⁸³⁷ It was not that Martin and Smith considered the Chinese wifely ideal of chastity as objectionable – together with obedience and dutifulness, chastity was considered to be one of the characteristics of a good wife in the United States too.¹⁸³⁸ But they did think that conjugal fidelity should be binding for both sexes. Both Martin and Smith also referred to the cultural relativity of sexual morals. They noted that from the

¹⁸³² Smith 1890, 207; Smith 1899, 268, 288–290; Williams 1913a, 794.

¹⁸³³ Smith 1899, 288–290; Williams 1913a, 794.

¹⁸³⁴ In the US, divorces were regulated by public and religious opinion, and legislation. The laws varied from state to state, according to the regional characteristics, customs, and the church's power over jurisdiction. In general, Americans considered divorce to be the last resort, a shameful act, and associated with crime. Divorce was not thought of as a private right, and it could not be granted on the grounds that someone simply wished for it. Adultery, for example, was a sufficient cause, but even then, the guilt and innocence of the two parties had to be indisputably proven in court. (Hartog 2002, 11–12, 19, 29, 63–64, 66, 70, 72, 79.)

¹⁸³⁵ Martin 1894, 366–367; Martin 1900, 24.

¹⁸³⁶ Williams 1913a, 285, 793.

¹⁸³⁷ Martin 1881, 133; Smith 1890, 246–247; Smithers 2009, 249.

¹⁸³⁸ Hartog 2002, 27.

point of view of traditional Chinese morals, the freedom of intercourse between Western men and women, which was “the accompaniment of Occidental civilization”, was a flagrant violation against propriety and decency.¹⁸³⁹

Arthur Smith’s final assessment of the most important social unit in China, the family, was that it was an entangled “association of individuals who are indissolubly tied together, having many of their interests the same, and many of them very different”. The members of a Chinese family were not likely to sympathise with each other, or share a “unity of feeling,” which according to Smith was essential to “real home-life”. Hence, Chinese homes were not likely to be happy homes, but instead, full of alienation, bitterness, and devastating quarrels. In fact, the Chinese, or other Asians, did not have homes, Smith concluded.¹⁸⁴⁰ The observations Arthur Smith made of the Chinese families, homes, marriages, and sexual mores, as well as the manifest criticism he directed towards them, corresponded in many respects with the descriptions and opinions Percival Lowell and William Griffis presented on the equivalent Japanese institutions.

The traditional Japanese family was nothing what a Western person understood by the word family, and it was radically different from the “family of Christendom”, William Griffis claimed. It was artificial, meaning that it was composed of people who in Western countries would have been excluded from the family circle. Japanese family was made up of “elements that would not be recognized where monogamy prevails and children are born in the home and not in the herd”, Griffis described. “Instead of father, mother and children, there are father, wife, concubines, and various sorts of children who are born of the wife or of the concubine, or have been adopted into the family”. It comprised the dead as well as the living, and the grown up children as well as the under-aged.¹⁸⁴¹ Percival Lowell pointed out that a widening family circle had been a universal tendency in the evolution of societies, until the enlarged family had finally reached a point at which cohesion was no longer possible, and the family had begun to slowly dissolve. In the United States, this had happened quickly, and consequently, in the 19th century American brothers and sisters found themselves “scattered to the four winds”. In contrast, the people had stuck together in a single, homogenous mass in the Far East, he remarked.¹⁸⁴²

Also Lafcadio Hearn argued that the Japanese family was entirely different from an Occidental family in its structure, ethics, and practices. In comparison to the extended Japanese family, the Western family appeared to Hearn as narrow, fragmented, and lacking cohesion. Hearn claimed that the tendency of the Japanese family was to cultivate fellow-feeling and sympathy towards not only the most immediate family members, but in time of crisis, towards the whole nation.¹⁸⁴³ And to no one did the Japanese extend their sympathy as fully as to children. Love of children was a part of the soul of all Japanese, Hearn

¹⁸³⁹ Martin 1900, 366; Smith 1890, 125–126.

¹⁸⁴⁰ Smith 1890, 197, 218–219; 231, 392; Smith 1899, 327, 329–331.

¹⁸⁴¹ Griffis 2006a, 470; Griffis 2006b, 65, 68.

¹⁸⁴² Lowell 2007b, 30.

¹⁸⁴³ Hearn 1895, 90–91; Hearn 1896b, 290–291.

opined. In fact, the neglect of children that was mentioned in the writings of the China experts did not feature at all in the works on Japan. On the contrary, Hearn characterized the Japanese childhood as happy, and William Griffis noted reverentially that the Japanese were affectionate, kind, and compassionate parents.¹⁸⁴⁴

Regarding Japanese families, there was one thing in particular that Lafcadio Hearn wished to emphasise. He maintained that while the families of the poorer classes may have had no secrets, the home life of the upper classes was utterly out of reach to foreigners:

But the innermost intimate life of that family will never be revealed to you. All that you see to suggest it will be refined, courteous, exquisite, but of the relation of those souls to each other you will know nothing. Behind the beautiful screens which mask the further interior, all is silent, gentle mystery.¹⁸⁴⁵

Japanese family life was veiled and sacred. Hearn's assertion was definitely seasoned with a touch of exoticism, but it served as a reminder that all the accounts by foreigners were necessarily compromised by a lack of sufficient knowledge on the subject.¹⁸⁴⁶

One custom that intrigued the Japan experts, just as it had intrigued the China experts, was adoption. Percival Lowell described adoption in the United States as a "kind of domestic luxury, akin to the keeping of any other pets, such as lap-dogs and canaries". It was not done out of necessity, and neither was a son or a daughter adopted out of pure affection, for no-one cared "so heartily to own a dog which has been the property of another; a fortiori of a child". In the United States, adoption was done out of self-gratification, Lowell opined. Meanwhile, in the Far East, adoption was a genealogical requisite; it was done out of the desire for posterity. Whereas the China experts explained the desire for posterity with ancestor worship, and William Griffis with the wish to keep the family line unbroken,¹⁸⁴⁷ Lowell emphasised that the Japanese sought posthumous fame. Illustrious descendants reflected honour on their parents and

¹⁸⁴⁴ Griffis 1903, 465; Hearn 1895, 46; Hearn 1896b, 6.

¹⁸⁴⁵ Hearn 1895, 97.

¹⁸⁴⁶ Hearn 1895, 95, 97. As was the case in representations of the Chinese family, the images of the Japanese family tended to be based on contacts with only a small fraction of the population. The observations made in these situations were then generalized to cover all Japanese families. Historically, there had been significant and notable differences between the traditional family system of the samurai class, and the families of peasants and urban labourers. And as Lafcadio Hearn hinted, some of these differences were still alive in the late 19th century. For example, the head of the household in a samurai family usually had absolute power, whereas among the poorer people, the patriarchal ideal was less dominant, since all members of the family needed to contribute equally economically or otherwise to their household. Also, individuals and women had potentially more freedom and more say in their own matters than in upper class families, although they too were expected to revere the decisions of their elders and superiors. All in all, the Japanese 19th century family was not a uniform unit; instead, it took many forms and came in many sizes. (Beckmann 1965, 98; Benson et al. 2001, 184–185.)

¹⁸⁴⁷ Griffis 2006b, 67.

grandparents, he argued, and hence the Japanese were content to use “artificial means” if necessary to secure a male descendant.¹⁸⁴⁸

Marriage and the role of women¹⁸⁴⁹ in Japanese families was another topic of interest for the experts. William Griffis traced the history of marriage in Japan to the early days, when it was like that of the “modern Ainos or North American Indians”, and featured polygamy and unions between half-brothers and sisters. In later times, he continued, marriage had taken on similar characteristics to its counterpart in China. It was arranged by parents using a go-between, without “any love-making or courtship by those most interested”. The bride was handed over to the husband and his household, for which she was expected to show obedience and reverence, “but not love”, Griffis claimed. Ultimately, she was expected to demonstrate the “utter absorption of her personality into that of her husband”.¹⁸⁵⁰ Percival Lowell thought that in “Far Oriental” marriages, the persons most interested in the matter played “only the part of a marionette”, having no say in the decision. Marriage was solely a mercantile transaction; an investment contracted by the parents through a marriage broker, and handled “with the same care one would exercise in the choice of any staple business commodity”. The end result was a kind of a compromise, “unobjectionable mediocrity” at its best, Lowell estimated. But whatever the outcome, it hardly fulfilled “one’s ideal of a wife”, he concluded.¹⁸⁵¹

Like William Griffis, Lowell maintained that Japanese marriage was not about love. Any hint of romance would have struck the Japanese as improper. In fact, love as the Westerners understood the word, was “a thing unknown to the Far East”, he claimed. A Japanese youth never got the chance to experience such feelings as first love, as an American youth could. He never got to experience the world surrounding two lovers vanish and life taking on a “rose-tint”. He never got to feel true acceptance and comprehension, and that moment when two souls and minds stood revealed to each other as they really were,

¹⁸⁴⁸ Lowell 2007b, 27–29.

¹⁸⁴⁹ The Japan experts described the Japanese women on numerous occasions. All three characterised the women as pretty, charming, exotic, gentle, and graceful. All three noted the sweet voice of the Japanese women, “a voice softly toned as a wind-bell”, as Lafcadio Hearn related. And finally, all three likened the Japanese women to the landscape, as if they were picturesque human adornments of the environment. Moreover, Percival Lowell hinted at the childlikeness of the women, while Hearn emphasized their submissiveness. Hearn explained that the old-fashioned Japanese upbringing of girls “cultivated simplicity of heart, natural grace of manner, obedience, and love of duty as they were never cultivated but in Japan,” and he claimed that this education had produced “one of the sweetest types of woman the world has ever seen”. Japanese woman was something “too gentle and beautiful” for any other society. She was required to be nearly superhuman, Hearn noted, but under her humble, inexpressive mask she felt just as her Western sisters, and in some cases, she could harbour an inconceivable hardness. (Griffis 1903, 359, 544, 559; Griffis 2006a, 237–238; Hearn 1894a, 25, 113; Hearn 1894b, 513; Hearn 1895, 2, 98, 147; Hearn 1896b, 47–48, 109–110, 113; Lowell 1895, 208; Lowell 2007a, 22, 73; Lowell 2007b, 49.)

¹⁸⁵⁰ Griffis 1903, 559–560; Griffis 2006a, 97, 470; Griffis 2006b, 67. What William Griffis’ generalisation did not take into account was that marriages among the poorer urban classes could differ markedly from marriages among the higher social classes in Japan (Fuess 2004, 58–59).

¹⁸⁵¹ Lowell 2007b, 15, 23–24.

without any inhibitions or conventionalities. That “blissful infatuation” was not the lot of the Japanese, Lowell believed, and the consequent loss in happiness was immeasurable.¹⁸⁵² This account was understandable against the 19th century middle class infatuation with the ideal of passionate, romantic love in the United States.¹⁸⁵³ At the same time, by insisting that the Japanese were devoid of romantic love, Lowell in fact performed “theft of love”,¹⁸⁵⁴ in other words, he claimed that romantic love was the exclusive property of the Western peoples.

William Griffis and Lafcadio Hearn did not wholly agree with Lowell on this, however. Griffis believed that passions such as love and jealousy thrilled and tormented men and women in Japan just as much as in the West. As proof, he cited Japanese poetry and literature, both of which commonly featured *eros* as a theme. Reverence from the wife, and benevolence from the husband, were the sentiments that often prevailed over love in Japanese marriages, Griffis admitted, but this did not mean that the emotion was a stranger to the East Asia.¹⁸⁵⁵ Hearn also made it very clear that the feeling itself was universal, and even though the Japanese were expected to love their parents more than anyone else, this did not necessarily prevent them from loving their spouses.¹⁸⁵⁶ He too noted that love poems formed a large proportion of Japanese literature,¹⁸⁵⁷ although he realised that these poems were mainly about physical love, and amounted to nothing like the obsession the Westerners had with love in their literature. Overall though, Hearn admitted that falling in love at first sight was not as commonplace in Japan as in the West. Moreover, in most of these cases love led to improper relationships from the Japanese perspective, and result was often unhappy, sometimes even leading to a double suicide, Hearn concluded.¹⁸⁵⁸

Nevertheless, it was Percival Lowell’s firm contention that love did not belong to Japanese marriages, and neither did companionship nor equality. Even if a couple was inclined to consider each other as companions, the customs of the country forbade showing it. Hence, Lowell described the mutual relations of a typical Japanese couple as those of “substance to shadow”:

She followed him inevitably, and he trod on her feelings regardless of them. She had been pretty when he took her to wife, and though worn and withered she was happy

¹⁸⁵² Lowell 2007b, 21–23, 29.

¹⁸⁵³ Lerner 1987, 583.

¹⁸⁵⁴ According to Jack Goody, Europeans and Americans have held certain institutions and values as uniquely and originally Western. In addition, they have appropriated certain emotions, too – romantic love included – and associated them solely with Europe and the United States. (Goody 2006, 267–269).

¹⁸⁵⁵ Griffis 1903, 474; Griffis 2006b, 63.

¹⁸⁵⁶ Hearn 1895, 88–91, 94–95, 100; Hearn 1896b, 113; Hearn 1914, 165.

¹⁸⁵⁷ Hearn and Griffis noted the ancient love poems in Japanese literature, but also Chinese literature was filled with love poems. For example, such themes as courting and marriage were quite prominent in one of the Five Classics: the *Classic of Poetry*. Whether these poems were read as moralistic political narratives on how to behave like a proper Confucian, as general ethical precepts calling for virtue, aesthetically, as satires, or as they were, it did not change the fact that the poems often treated the theme of romantic love. (Chin 2006, 53.)

¹⁸⁵⁸ Hearn 1895, 243–244.

still. As for him, he was quite satisfied with her, as he would have been quite satisfied without her.¹⁸⁵⁹

According to Lowell, a Japanese couple maintained separate spheres both in public and private. Japanese marriage was a “semi-attached relationship,” and as such, it was hardly conducive for fostering mutual understanding, Lowell opined.¹⁸⁶⁰ These thoughts Lowell presented in his books *The Soul of the Far East* in 1888, and *Noto* in 1891. However, a couple years later, in *Occult Japan*, Lowell described marriage *in general* as a merging of the wife in the husband. The wife adopted the husband’s interests, dislikes and likes, and opinions. The intellectual property of the husband became the property of the wife, and in exchange she surrendered her material property to him.¹⁸⁶¹ Now, in this later account, marriage appeared not as an equal companionship of two individuals, but as an arrangement in which the wife lost herself, and became an extension of her husband.

Lafcadio Hearn largely agreed with Percival Lowell’s portrayal of the differences between Japanese and American marriages. However, Hearn did not use this comparison to praise the American, or to criticise the Japanese, ideas and practices. Instead, he sought explanations for the dissimilarities from both the American and Japanese social principles and cultures. In the American society, it was customary that children left their parents to establish small families of their own. Even the Bible urged man to leave his father and mother, and to “cleave unto his wife”, Hearn remarked. Neither was it anything out of the ordinary for a man to love his wife and children more than his parents. Moreover, in the American society, marriages were not left to the discretion of the parents, but were arranged by the couples themselves, Hearn noted. All the above mentioned would have been highly insolent,¹⁸⁶² and serious breaches of etiquette in Japan, he maintained. In Japan, women were not placed on a pedestal, or “on display”; they were not courted or even complimented; they seldom appeared in public; and they never walked side by side with their husbands. A Japanese man rarely mentioned his wife or children in conversation, and he did not exhibit affection towards them, other than acts of courtesy and kindness. Then again, a Japanese man would speak about his parents “with a reverence approaching religious feeling, yet in a manner quite different from that which would be natural to an Occidental”, Hearn noted.¹⁸⁶³

William Griffis, meanwhile, turned his attention to the question of divorce. Like many foreign observers from the 16th century onwards, he came to the conclusion that marriage ties in Japan were scandalously loose. He implied that

¹⁸⁵⁹ Lowell 2007a, 20.

¹⁸⁶⁰ Lowell 2007a, 20; Lowell 2007b, 26.

¹⁸⁶¹ Lowell 1895, 281–282.

¹⁸⁶² Immoral, distasteful, indecent, an outrage in decorum – these had been the assessments of the members of the Japanese embassies in the United States in the 1860s and 1870s, when they witnessed the courteous treatment of the American women, and the free mingling of wives and daughters among dignitaries in formal occasions (Beasley 1995, 65, 70; Miyoshi 1979, 72, 74, 78).

¹⁸⁶³ Hearn 1894b, 461; Hearn 1895, 89–90, 93–95, 99–101.

Japan was a kind of haven for divorce, referring to the statistics compiled since the Meiji Restoration, which showed that the divorce/marriage ratio was almost one to three. All that was required was a document of separation, called “three lines and a half”, Griffis explained, written by the husband. The seven legitimate grounds for divorce were the same as in China, and the clause to which the Japanese most frequently appealed was ‘excessive talkativeness’. These grounds applied solely to the wife, the decision lay in the hands of the husband, and the wife had “little redress” in the matter, Griffis described. And even if the wife did manage to obtain a divorce, it was nominal rather than actual, if the house and relatives of the husband so dictated. Nonetheless, regardless of the power men had over marriage and divorce, Japanese women with their “tact, tongue, graces, and charms”, and their invisible “finer strength,” were generally the rulers of their husbands, Griffis opined.¹⁸⁶⁴

Besides a wife, the experts assigned four other roles to a Japanese woman: a mother, concubine, geisha, and a prostitute. Percival Lowell believed certain characteristics of motherhood to be universal. A mother, no matter what her nationality, was self-abnegating. She immersed her personality in the child, and lived solely for her offspring. Both as a wife and a mother, the “two most important relations of her life”, a woman sacrificed herself for the sake of someone else, Lowell believed. Man extolled her for this, but that was “tantamount to praising her for being a woman”.¹⁸⁶⁵ William Griffis was less prone to extend the idea of self-sacrificing motherhood to involve all women in the world, but he granted that in the education of their children, as well as in “affection, tenderness, anxiety, patience, and long-suffering”, the Japanese mothers were equal to the “mothers of any civilization”. However, Japanese women necessarily operated “within the limits of their light and knowledge”, he added. Griffis also expressed dissatisfaction with the lot of Japanese mothers by observing that a mother in Japan seemed more of an instrument than a person, implying that in the West, a mother did not lose her personality to the same degree as Lowell suggested.¹⁸⁶⁶

A Japanese man could have only one legal wife, William Griffis explained, but if he was wealthy, he could choose to have one or more concubines. A concubine was usually procured with the wife’s assent, and with the objective of securing the continuance of the ancestral line. Tokyo or the sea-ports were not the proper places to start, if one wished to estimate the prevalence of the cus-

¹⁸⁶⁴ Griffis 1903, 557; Griffis 2006b, 66–67. It has been estimated that among families belonging to the peerage, the ratio of divorces was approximately 0.6 divorces per 1000 people between 1886 and 1898, while the average figure for the whole country was 2.74. In the figures, there was notable variation between different social classes. The high-ranking members of the peerage were less likely to get a divorce than the lower-ranking, and peasants were more likely to divorce than members of the urban samurai class and the townspeople. In rural areas in general, divorces were more common than in urban areas. As Griffis suggested, getting a divorce was indeed a relatively easy procedure. There was no involvement of the courts, and no social stigma was attached to those who had gone through divorce. Both men and women could remarry afterwards. (Fuess 2004, 1–5, 57–59.)

¹⁸⁶⁵ Lowell 1895, 282.

¹⁸⁶⁶ Griffis 1903, 559; Griffis 2006b, 67.

tom in Japan, Griffis remarked, for Tokyo was the capital, “as full of political and social corruption” as Washington, and sea-ports were unusually opulent. “After careful examination of the facts”, Griffis pronounced his assessment that the proportion of men who had concubines did not exceed five percent of the whole population. To Griffis, concubinage appeared as an ancient, barbaric institution, which stopped Japanese domestic life from getting anywhere near its Christian counterpart “in purity and dignity”. Griffis was particularly reproachful of Buddhism for having allowed the practice in the first place, although he thought it hardly surprising, considering that Buddhism was “founded by one who deserted his wife and babe”.¹⁸⁶⁷

Lafcadio Hearn had little to say about Japanese concubines,¹⁸⁶⁸ but he had plenty on the subject of geisha, or dancing girls. The geisha, Hearn explained, were hired entertainers. They were graceful, beautiful, dexterous, and sociable. A geisha began her career as a slave, bought from her wretched parents, and contracted to serve the buyers for around twenty years. She was clothed, fed, and educated in the arts of dancing, music, etiquette, entertainment, and discussion. By the age of eighteen, if skilful and pretty enough, she would have made her name famous, and had countless lovers. More than anything, she hoped that someone would buy her out of her occupation and marry her. Luckily, she was eminently talented in using her charms to her advantage, and in entangling weak men in “webs of sensual delusion”. Hearn noted that the Japanese had a saying that God of Poverty treaded in the shadows of a geisha. They thought of her as the “most consummate of pretty hypocrites, the most dangerous of schemers, the most insatiable of mercenaries, the most pitiless of mistresses.” Not only did geishas ruin fortunes, but also youth and families. She was by profession “a creature of prey”, Hearn described, like a lovable kitten.¹⁸⁶⁹

Although Hearn characterised the story of a geisha to be an “unpleasant” one, he did not moralise, or criticise the institution. Neither did he want to romanticise or eulogise the practice. He merely concluded that a geisha was “what she has been made in answer to foolish human desire for the illusion of love mixed with youth and grace, but without regrets or responsibilities [...]”.¹⁸⁷⁰ Curiously, in discussing the subject of concubinage, the treatment of women, or the lot of geisha in these texts, Hearn made no reference to the idea that the status and treatment of women was in any way a measure of Civilization. And neither did he refer to the theories of Herbert Spencer as so often before.

Herbert Spencer was on the opinion that polygyny necessarily implied a low status of women, while monogamy was a prerequisite for a high status of women. According to Spencer, low status of women, together with its manifestations, were phenomena of military societies, while monogamy belonged to

¹⁸⁶⁷ Griffis 1903, 556–557; Griffis 2006a, 117; Griffis 2006b, 164.

¹⁸⁶⁸ See e.g. Hearn 1894b, 426; Hearn 1896b, 149.

¹⁸⁶⁹ Hearn 1894b, 525–526, 530–533; Hearn 1896b, 114–115.

¹⁸⁷⁰ Hearn 1894b, 530.

industrialized societies. Hence, Spencer thought that the status of women improved as industrial activities replaced the military activities. This had obviously not yet happened in China or Japan, as in both countries the “absolutism in the State” was accompanied with “absolutism in the family”, and concubinage persisted. The other extreme, Spencer opined, was the United States, where militarism had been in a rather insignificant role, industrialism dominated the society, and consequently the women had reached a higher position than anywhere else.¹⁸⁷¹

These Spencer’s ideas, the subject of Japanese concubinage, and the “natural tendency” of monogamy, Lafcadio Hearn treated briefly ten years later in his publication *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*. But even at this point he did not associate the position of Japanese women, which he described as “reverse of happy”, or the form of marriage, with the process and level of Civilization. Hearn claimed that the absolutism under which women had traditionally lived in Japan had persisted well after the society had “otherwise advanced in civilization”, partly because it had received its justification from religious doctrines. He also claimed that while the harsh treatment of women had undoubtedly existed in law books and philosophy, the cruel theories had not been put to practice in reality.¹⁸⁷²

Finally, William Griffis turned to the fourth ‘role’ of women in Japan – “the trade in which beauty ever finds ready customers”. Prostitution in Japan was licensed by the government, and in Tokyo it had been restricted to an area called the Yoshiwara district.¹⁸⁷³ In Griffis’ opinion, this was the most beautiful part of the capital, a place where the myth of “Oriental splendour” became a reality. With his account on prostitution in Japan, Griffis wished to counter two kinds of images the foreigners usually represented, and to find a median way between two opposing opinions. The first image “shed a poetical halo around

¹⁸⁷¹ Spencer argued that in most primitive societies, there were no established rules for marriage, or any social laws for that matter. Societies then tended to move onto polygamy, with multiple wives being a sign of wealth and greatness. Polygamy then took the more specific form of concubinage, and finally concubinage gave way to monogamy. Spencer maintained that monogamy coexisted with polygamy through all these stages, but only became the predominant arrangement later on. (Spencer, Herbert, *A System of Synthetic Philosophy*. (6.): *the Principles of Sociology*, vol. I. New York: Appleton, 1912 [Enlarged third edition, 1885. Originally 1874–1875]: pp. 628, 667–669, 676–677, 679, 682–685, 725–728, 734, 741–743).

¹⁸⁷² See Hearn, *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907: pp. 77–79, 81–84.

¹⁸⁷³ Yoshiwara was a government licensed and controlled quarter in Edo (Tokyo), which had been established in 1617. It had been proposed as a measure to protect public morals, but it soon became a space where a comparable freedom from social and moral conventions and hierarchies was allowed for the visitors. Yoshiwara was a “city within a city,” a place where much of the Edo period culture emanated, and inhabited by a few thousand prostitutes, entertainers, servants, tea-house girls, and managers. Many of the resident women were indebted to the brothel-keepers, or their families were. In 1872 the government proclaimed the prostitutes as legally free, but this did not practically change their position, as they were still indebted to the brothel keepers. Yoshiwara itself lasted until prostitution was proscribed by law in 1957. (Richie, Donald, “Foreword to the Facsimile Edition.” In *The Nightless City or the History of the Yoshiwara Yūkwanu*, by J. E. de Becker. New York: ICG Muse, 2000 [original 1899, fifth edition 1905]: pp. xi–xvii, xxiv.)

the Yoshiwara system of Japan", Griffis noted, while the second was put forward by "well-meaning people", who propagated the view that the Japanese did not consider prostitution as immoral, that gentlemen frequently married prostitutes, and that licensed districts existed in practically every city.¹⁸⁷⁴

Both these views, Griffis granted, had some truth in them, but they needed some clarification. The system of licensed prostitution certainly did do some good in placing this "social evil" out of sight of common folk, and thus one could live in Japan for a considerable time without ever encountering such "moral leprosy" as one might encounter at night in New York, London, or Paris, Griffis argued. Also, the system was not treated with such "sensitiveness" in Japan as among English speaking people. For example, making an intelligent wife out a "bright, witty, educated" girl from Yoshiwara was not unacceptable among the lower classes. However, Griffis maintained, these districts did not exist everywhere in Japan, only in the biggest cities and sea-ports.¹⁸⁷⁵

William Griffis' own assessment was relatively negative. Considering that the Japanese were heathen and that their moral status was low - as "every friend of Japan" well knew - their attempts to solve such mighty social problems deserved to be examined with sympathy, Griffis opined. Studying from a sympathetic point of view, Griffis found the Japanese solution of a "fenced plague spot", or "a moral quarantine", as perhaps more successful than in many other nations. But in the final event, Griffis judged Yoshiwara to be only "another name for misery, degradation, and vice, in which suicide, disease, premature old age, abandonment, or blight wastes the lives of thousands of victims".¹⁸⁷⁶

Interestingly, Griffis made it quite clear that part of the blame for prostitution in Japan fell on the foreigners themselves:

Where heathen women are cheap, and wives from home are costly, chastity is not a characteristic trait of the single men; but the same evil and the same resultant curse rests on all such places where "Christians" live side by side with "pagans." Given a superior race with superior resources, and poor natives who love money more than virtue, and the same state of things results.¹⁸⁷⁷

Griffis noted that before opening the treaty ports for the foreigners, the Japanese officials had made sure that each of them was endowed with a custom house and a brothel. And besides prostitutes, the Japanese authorities tended to

¹⁸⁷⁴ Griffis 1903, 555-556.

¹⁸⁷⁵ Griffis 1903, 362, 556; Griffis 2006a, 155.

¹⁸⁷⁶ Griffis 1903, 556. Hearn also viewed prostitution in Japan with mixed feelings. He saw nothing praiseworthy in the practice of girls being sold "to a life of shame for the sake of their families", but then he insisted that Japanese prostitutes never reached the same "depth of degradation to which their Western sisters descend", except in the treaty ports where they were demoralised by "European vice and brutality". If anything, Hearn thought that many of the Japanese prostitutes retained an amazing "refinement of manner, a delicacy of sentiment, and a natural modesty". (Hearn 1894a, 289.)

¹⁸⁷⁷ Griffis 1903, 344.

provide the foreigners with “Japanese wives”.¹⁸⁷⁸ Naturally, there cannot have been a supply if there had been no demand in the first place. Indeed, “Japanese wives” were found in many of the houses where foreign men lived. One American in Tokyo, for example, enjoyed a “harem of ten native beauties”, according to Griffis. He thus concluded that the “chief patrons of human flesh let out on hire in Japan” were actually from Christendom.¹⁸⁷⁹

William Griffis was adamant that just because concubinage, the geisha, and licensed prostitution existed in Japan, it did not mean that virtue and chastity were unknown among Japanese women, as many “ignorant bigots and seared libertines” would have one think.¹⁸⁸⁰ A Japanese girl might have seemed somewhat unchaste by Western standards, Griffis admitted, since public nudity was commonplace in the early days of foreign contact.¹⁸⁸¹ But he assured that most Japanese girls were “bright, intelligent, interesting, modest, ladylike, self-reliant; neither a slave nor a wanton”.¹⁸⁸² In fact, Griffis noted that the Japanese terms *teisō* and *misao*, both translated in English as chastity, were only associated with women. Chastity and purity were essentially womanly virtues and duties, and correspondingly, only a woman could be found guilty of committing a crime such as adultery. Thus, Confucianism admitted a double-standard of morals, one for women and one for men, Griffis argued. The women were expected to be morally spotless, and they often were, while the men could get away with almost anything.¹⁸⁸³

Also Lafcadio Hearn attempted to refute the allegation that the Japanese did not possess a word for chastity, or the abstract moral concept behind the word, or the concrete moral feeling. Such accusations and misleading statements were uttered by the missionaries, Hearn argued, and he countered them by asserting that the Japanese not only had purely indigenous adjectives to denote to chastity, but also Chinese moral terms adopted centuries ago. And unlike the foreigners often claimed, the word most commonly used applied to both sexes, Hearn added. He granted that the old Japanese moral standard of chastity was “that of a less developed society than our own”, but insisted that

¹⁸⁷⁸ Griffis related that he was himself offered such a ‘native wife’, but he had declined the offer (Griffis 1903, 424–425).

¹⁸⁷⁹ Griffis 1903, 363–364, 371, 555. Seija Jalagin has argued that Western writers rarely treated Japanese prostitution in any depth, as it could perhaps arouse the suspicion that they had first-hand experience of the matter. Nor was there mention of any ‘Japanese wives’, for the same reason. (Jalagin 2002, 17). However, William Griffis was evidently willing to bring these topics to light, and his texts suggest that they were also debated in the 19th century Europe and United States to some extent. Also, an English sociology student Joseph Ernest de Becker (1863–1929) devoted a whole book to the study of the Yoshiwara system: *The Nightless City or the History of the Yoshiwara Yūkwaku* (1899).

¹⁸⁸⁰ Griffis 1903, 554, 556.

¹⁸⁸¹ Mixed bathing in public bathhouses, half-nude men and women in the streets in hot weather - these were some of the things that disturbed the moral sensibilities of foreigners. William Griffis insisted that, although an “Eve before the fall” proved shocking to a foreigner, for the Japanese there was nothing out of the ordinary in nudity, and no hint of indecency in it. (Griffis 1903, 446, 529, 560.)

¹⁸⁸² Griffis 1903, 560.

¹⁸⁸³ Griffis 2006b, 67, 79, 165.

the moral conditions were hardly worse than in the Occidental countries. In one respect, Hearn pointed out, they had been certainly better, for the virtue of the Japanese wives had in all ages been “above suspicion”. And as to the morals of Japanese males, Hearn doubted “whether a much better state of things prevails in the Occident”. The Japanese people were better than their laws asked them to be, Hearn maintained, and particularly in sexual morals, they were beyond reproach, unlike many Westerners.¹⁸⁸⁴

Lastly, Lafcadio Hearn reminded that the Japanese social conditions were “so different from those which Western religion assumes to be the best possible”, that any “ecclesiastical” judgment made by the Western missionaries was inevitably partial and biased, and hence incorrect.¹⁸⁸⁵ Arguably, William Griffis made precisely such an ‘ecclesiastical judgment’, when he claimed that the idea of spiritual purity, or the idea that a mere thought of defilement or lust was a sin, was totally absent from the Japanese moral universe, and used this absence as evidence that even the loftiest of Buddhist and Shinto teachings had absolutely failed to elevate the Japanese from their phase of “low moral status”.¹⁸⁸⁶

But all in all, William Griffis estimated that the Japanese home was more conducive to morality than many foreigners in the treaty ports were willing to concede. And Griffis believed that the situation was progressively improving. Indeed, progress was the watchword in all corners of Japan, he claimed, and the young were being “educated in Western ideas”, which was bound to result in the development of “the mental powers at the expense of the animal instincts”. Already the Japanese government had banned the sale of orphan girls to brothels, the trade in obscene pictures, nudity, and public bathing.¹⁸⁸⁷ The standards of Christendom were being adopted, and many things that were “absolutely innocent” before had become “at once relatively sinful”. Griffis continued his list of Japanese social improvements by noting that men were beginning to free themselves from old notions of strict family morals and etiquette: they were marrying for higher motives than mere social necessity; pursuing a happy home life; and searching for a suitable companion for themselves. And those Japanese men who aspired to “rise out of the old plane of existence and dwell permanently on the higher levels of intellectual life” were seeking to marry educated wives, he added. Some, “braving public scandal”, even treated their wives respectfully in public. Evidently, the Japanese were earnestly attempting to raise the social condition of their nation, Griffis rejoiced.¹⁸⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸⁴ Hearn 1896b, 148–150.

¹⁸⁸⁵ Hearn 1896b, 149.

¹⁸⁸⁶ Griffis 1903, 554–555

¹⁸⁸⁷ As the foreigners condemned prostitution, erotic prints, and nudity in the bathhouses not merely as immodest, but also uncivilized, the Japanese government took steps to prohibit and suppress these customs. Also, the government issued regulations concerning marriage, extramarital affairs, and concubinage, in order to mould and protect the sexual and family morals of their subjects. (Benson et al. 2001, 186; Shively 1976b, 81–82.)

¹⁸⁸⁸ Griffis 1903, 552, 557–558, 560–561, 572–573. Such Japanese intellectuals as Fukuzawa Yukichi and Mori Arinori criticised heavily the relations between sexes in the country. They condemned the marriage laws which fostered inequality, treated the wives as property, allowed such immoralities as concubinage, obstructed enlightenment

7.4 Asiatic versus Western society

On many occasions the experts tended to underscore any differences that existed between the Chinese and Japanese, but when it came to their societies and governments, differences were largely overlooked and they were lumped together as inherently “Asiatic”. Predictably, the experts employed “Western” and its synonyms as the counterpoint of ‘Asiatic’, and maintained that the two were based on radically different social theories.¹⁸⁸⁹ Williams’ excerpt below provides one such example of this:

But this civilization is Asiatic and not European, pagan and not Christian. The institutions of China are despotic and defective, and founded on wrong principles. They may have the element of stability, but not of improvement. The patriarchal theory does not make men honorable, truthful, or kind; it does not place woman in her right position, nor teach all classes their obligations to their Maker; the wonder is, to those who know the strength of evil passions in the human breast, that this huge mass of mankind is no worse.¹⁸⁹⁰

Thus, first of all, the Asiatic civilization was characterised as “pagan”, or to be more precise, as Confucian. The experts thought that the precepts and tenets of Confucianism pervaded the whole social, political, and moral fabric of the Asiatic China and Japan.

Especially the mission-oriented experts were keen to examine how Confucianism affected the family and society, and the rulers and the ruled,¹⁸⁹¹ and contrast these findings with the effects of Christianity in the West. According to Confucian philosophy, a society was built upon five relations: the governmental, parental, conjugal, fraternal, and that of friendship, William Martin enumerated. These five relations were accompanied with four related duties: filial piety, fraternal love, conjugal fidelity, and choice of associates. The last duty, Martin explained, denoted to the principles regulating general intercourse.¹⁸⁹²

William Griffis elaborated that the first relation, the governmental, prescribed the duties of the sovereign and his ministers, of lords and their retainers, and of masters and servants. In these relationships, the duty of the ruled was to show loyalty and reverence towards their superiors, and the duty of the rulers was to treat their subordinates with benevolence. At this point, Griffis begged his readers to notice the difference between the “teachings of Christ” which urged both the masters and servants to love each other, and those of “the Chi-

and progress, and also gave the nation a reputation of being immoral. Also the Chinese official, Li Gui, for example, promoted the idea of equality between sexes in the society. (Beasley 1995, 210; Desnoyers 1997, 151–152; Henning 2000, 56–57.)

¹⁸⁸⁹ Smith 1890, 13.

¹⁸⁹⁰ Williams 1913a, 382.

¹⁸⁹¹ William Griffis was somewhat of an exception, as he repeatedly emphasised the role of Buddhism in the inequalities he witnessed in Japan. This perhaps derived from his conviction that Buddhism, the only ‘real’ religion in Japan, was the foremost adversary of Christianity, and hence he wished to highlight its defects.

¹⁸⁹² Martin 1881, 133.

nese sage" which condemned the love of the servant towards his master as inappropriate.¹⁸⁹³

The second relation was that of a father and a son. The father was an absolute ruler, and the only parent in the family, since the role of the mother was practically ignored, Griffis pointed out. The third Confucian relation was that of a wife and a husband, which Griffis felt should have taken precedence over all the others.¹⁸⁹⁴ According to the Confucian theory, marriage was a master-servant relationship inasmuch as the governmental and parental relations. The fourth relation was between an elder brother and a younger brother. Like the others, this was not an equal relationship of mutual love, rights, and duties as in most of the Christian countries, Griffis maintained, but a relationship of rank and hierarchy. The fifth and final relation denoted to friends. Confucius had taught that strangers were to be treated as friends. His teaching had been that "what you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others". Griffis claimed that the Chinese and Japanese had not applied this principle of Confucius universally to all strangers, particularly to the foreigners. And as compared to the Golden Rule of the Christians, the precept of Confucius appeared to Griffis as a Silver, or Gilded, Rule only, as it was in the negative, not in the positive and affirmative.¹⁸⁹⁵

The most significant component in all of these relations was the duty of filial piety. In fact, Lafcadio Hearn opined that all the fundamental differences between American and Japanese societies flowed from the fact that the latter was ruled by the principles of filial piety and duty, while the former was not.¹⁸⁹⁶ William Martin emphasised that this was not just a domestic virtue, but the basis for the whole social, legal, and moral order in China; and as it was linked to ancestor worship, it amounted to almost a religion.¹⁸⁹⁷ Arthur Smith pointed out that the concept translated into English with difficulty, but that it was based on the gratitude felt towards one's parents, and that unfilial sentiments were thought to be at the root of all unvirtuous conduct.¹⁸⁹⁸ Samuel Williams, Percival Lowell, and William Griffis all claimed that, in both China and Japan, filial piety was the greatest of virtues and obligations, to which all other considerations were subordinated. However, Griffis noted that there was one significant

¹⁸⁹³ Griffis 2006b, 62–63.

¹⁸⁹⁴ In his *Chinese Characteristics*, Arthur Smith quoted the Canadian missionary Charles Samuel Eby (1845–1925) on the subject. Eby insisted that the relationship of a man and wife was prior to that of parent and child. He claimed that the priority of this relationship was "the grand principle of all true sociology, given in the very beginning of the Bible, and fundamental in all progressive civilization [...]". (Smith 1890, 211. Originally in: Charles Samuel Eby, *Christianity and humanity: a course of lectures delivered in Meiji Kuaido, Tokio, Japan*. Yokohama: R. Meiklejohn, 1883).

¹⁸⁹⁵ Griffis 2006b, 65, 67–68.

¹⁸⁹⁶ Hearn 1895, 89.

¹⁸⁹⁷ Martin 1881, 105, 133–134; Martin 1894, 184–185, 199–200.

¹⁸⁹⁸ Smith 1890, 201, 203. Smith noted that foreign scholars had for some time debated whether the Chinese were really as 'filial' in practice as their theory maintained. For example, in 1877 an American Baptist missionary, Matthew Tyson Yates (1819–1888), claimed after thirty years in China, that the Chinese had the most disobedient and unfilial sons. This view was denied by the equally experienced Scottish Sinologist James Legge. (Smith 1890, 202, 209, 288–289.)

difference between Japanese and Chinese Confucianism concerning this point. In Japan, filial piety had been partly replaced by loyalty, so that a retainer was expected to obey his lord before his parents, while in China filial piety had persisted as the highest duty and strongest tie – as the surest “proof of the fulfilment of that promise which was made on Sinai and wrapped up in the fourth commandment”.¹⁸⁹⁹

Drawing from the list of errors of Confucianism by the Sinologist Ernst Faber, Arthur Smith argued that Confucianism and filial piety were the primary sources of many social evils.¹⁹⁰⁰ They explained the lack of female education; marriages at too early an age; the inferior position of wives in marriage; the sale of wives and daughters; the infanticide of new-born girls; concubinage and polygamy; the suicide of distraught daughters and wives; why younger family members were ignored; and the near deification of the parents.¹⁹⁰¹ Smith attributed the Chinese social wrongs to the prevailing moral system of the country, even though it was a bit like blaming all the moral evils in the West on Christianity. However, Smith insisted that there was a significant difference between the two cases. The vices thriving in Christian countries did so in spite of Christianity, “against its unceasing efforts and incessant protest”, while the vices in China were either tolerated by Confucianism, or downright rooted in it.¹⁹⁰²

As mentioned earlier, the experts were rather keen to underline that Chinese and Japanese women were chaste in spite of the prevalence of prostitution and concubinage. An Asiatic woman was not under any circumstances to be blamed for her condition; it was the despotic, patriarchal Asiatic society that was at fault. Because of Confucianism, people at all levels of Asiatic society were subject to tyranny, Arthur Smith argued, again citing Faber on the subject.¹⁹⁰³ Consequently, both William Griffis and Smith called for higher social principles to replace Confucianism in Asiatic societies. Again resorting to the medical metaphor, Arthur Smith declared that the only “prophylactic”, the only “efficient sanitary commission” capable of “removing everything that can breed pestilence”, was Christianity.¹⁹⁰⁴ And Griffis agreed:

I yet utter my conviction that nothing can ever renovate the individual heart, nothing purify society, and give pure blood-growth to the body politic in Japan, but the

¹⁸⁹⁹ Griffis 2006a, 140; Griffis 2006b, 59–60; Lowell 2007b, 20; Williams 1913a, 538.

¹⁹⁰⁰ Smith saw the positive side of filial piety too. “To the Occidental, fresh from the somewhat too loose bonds of family life, which not infrequently prevail in lands nominally Christian, the theory of Chinese filial conduct presents some very attractive features. The respect for age which it involves is most beneficial, and might profitably be cultivated by Anglo-Saxons generally”, he argued. While William Griffis noted that, in reverence paid to parents, the Japanese children generally excelled children born “even in a Christian home”. (Griffis 1903, 555; Griffis 2006b, 65; Smith 1890, 210).

¹⁹⁰¹ Smith 1890, 210–212, 298, 373; Smith 1899, 307–309. The list William Griffis presented on the defects of Confucianism and filial piety was largely similar (Griffis 1903, 555, 570; Griffis 2006b, 65).

¹⁹⁰² Smith 1899, 306.

¹⁹⁰³ Smith 1890, 375. Originally in: Faber 1875, 126.

¹⁹⁰⁴ Griffis 2006b, 66; Smith 1899, 341.

religion of Jesus Christ. Only the spiritual morality, and, above all, the chastity, taught by Him can ever give the Japanese a home-life equal to ours. With all our faults and sins, and with all the impurities and failures of our society, I believe our family and social life to be immeasurably higher and purer than that of Japan.¹⁹⁰⁵

Both Griffis and Smith suggested that the five Confucian relationships should be revised according to Christian precepts, and a sixth relationship added: that between God and people. Thus filial piety would become “something more real”, Griffis argued, tyranny would come to an end, marriage and the status of women would be completely redefined,¹⁹⁰⁶ and sexual mores improved.¹⁹⁰⁷

Revision of the fifth relation would hasten “the reign of universal brotherhood”, free the slaves, elevate the outcasts, and educate all the members of the nation. Finally, it would also promote Japan as a full member of the “fraternity of nations”, and make the Japanese “one with the peoples of Christendom”, William Griffis contended.¹⁹⁰⁸ Published one year after the renegotiation of the unequal treaties of Japan, this last statement from Griffis implied that, even if the sovereignty of the Japanese was accepted in diplomatic terms, their complete equality with Christian nations still lay some way ahead. However, the New Japan was departing from Asiatic civilization, Griffis noted approvingly, and this was primarily due to the work of the missionaries, particularly the American female ones.¹⁹⁰⁹

Another outcome of Confucianism in the Asiatic societies the experts believed to be the social hierarchies. The emphasis the six experts laid on the Chinese and Japanese class structures, inequalities, and hierarchies was noticeable at every turn. Lafcadio Hearn, for example, described the Japanese “feudal distinctions of caste” as sharply drawn, dividing Meiji era society into upper, middle and poorer classes along economic, educational, and social lines.¹⁹¹⁰ Arthur Smith’s list of classes in China differed very little from the lists drawn up by the Japan experts about Japan,¹⁹¹¹ meanwhile William Martin evidently concentrat-

¹⁹⁰⁵ Griffis 1903, 561.

¹⁹⁰⁶ There was no hint in either Griffis’ or Smith’s accounts of the contemporary statements made by women’s rights activists back home, who compared marriage to slavery and bondage, and claimed that American wives were considered as part of their husband’s property (Hartog 2002, 24, 42).

¹⁹⁰⁷ Griffis 2006b, 63, 79; Smith 1899, 342.

¹⁹⁰⁸ Griffis 2006b, 79–80.

¹⁹⁰⁹ Griffis 2006b, 66, 80. William Griffis extolled the American Christian women in Japan for their labours to save the Japanese mothers, to purify the Japanese homes, and to educate the Japanese girls. In this work, the American ladies led the way, Griffis opined, and added that they also held up a remarkable example of ideal womanhood for the Japanese women to imitate. (Griffis 1900, 112; Griffis 1903, 561).

¹⁹¹⁰ Hearn 1894a, 162; Hearn 1894b, 421, 499, 663; Hearn 1895, 95. William Griffis divided the Japanese into lower, middle, and upper classes, and many sub-classes based on Confucian, occupational, and social distinctions (Griffis 1892, 9, 74–75, 78; Griffis 1900, 97; Griffis 1903, 370, 467, 512, 554, 650; Griffis 2006a, 96, 197, 239, 347, 349, 383, 410, 420; Griffis 2006b, 163). Percival Lowell made similar class distinctions, emphasising in particular the divisions between common folk and the people of bluer blood, and the poor and rich (Lowell 1895, 18; Lowell 2007b, 20–21, 49–50).

¹⁹¹¹ In other words, Arthur Smith distinguished classes according to people’s economic status, occupation and education (Smith 1890, 23, 39, 101, 358; Smith 1894, 163; Smith 1899, 251; Smith 1901a, 9, 33, 130, 137, 223; Smith 1901b, 366, 518).

ed on the upper stratum of Chinese society,¹⁹¹² and Samuel Williams took particular note of the absence of dominating feudal, hereditary, and priestly classes and, as noted earlier, the “absence of any class of slaves or serfs”.¹⁹¹³

In contrast, references to class distinctions in American society were rare. In Western society, these only seemed to exist in Europe. Arthur Smith referred to European social classes in passing; William Griffis brought up “English caste traditions, rank, and class worship”; while Lowell compared Japanese society to the ways of the French upper class.¹⁹¹⁴ By ignoring the existence of any of such class distinctions in their own society,¹⁹¹⁵ the experts tended to perpetuate the idea of the United States being uniquely egalitarian and free, or in other words, exceptional and beyond the reach of universal laws and forms of history.¹⁹¹⁶

The rhetoric of American egalitarianism could be traced all the way back to the early European settlers of the country. Their philosophy of religious freedom and equality had been consolidated in the Declaration of Independence, which declared that all men were created equal, and were “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”.¹⁹¹⁷ The image of American equality was often conjoined with other relating values, such as social mobility and meritocracy, and reiterated and developed in later speech and texts, perhaps most famously by the French author Alexis de Tocqueville.¹⁹¹⁸ Majority of the experts seemed unanimous on the proposition that in the Asiatic society, the members only had duties and obligations, while in the Western societies, the members had rights. Percival Lowell, for example, argued that China furnished the “most conspicu-

¹⁹¹² William Martin mentioned, for example, the Chinese educated, literary, learned, student, ruling, and official classes (Martin 1881, 6, 119, 283, 246; Martin 1894, 325; Martin 1900, 166, 447).

¹⁹¹³ Williams 1913a, 520, 562, 564–565, 792, 806; Williams 1913b, 188, 191, 201, 576, 601.

¹⁹¹⁴ Griffis 1903, 337; Lowell 2007b, 24; Smith 1899, 216.

¹⁹¹⁵ Classes and inequalities were to be met in the United States just as well as in East Asia or Europe. In the post-Civil War United States, classes were formed around occupations, wealth, ethnicity, and education, and exhibited through life-styles, attitudes, behaviour, dresses, and dwellings. Perhaps the most visible class was the swelling middle class. But as the economic problems at the end of the 19th century aggravated the clash of interests between different social groups, also the agrarian and industrial worker classes became more prominent in promoting and defending their causes. As John Eperjesi has described the era, at “all levels of the social formation, America appeared to be coming apart at the seams”. (Eperjesi, “The American Asiatic Association and the Imperialist Imaginary of the American Pacific.” *Boundary 2*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 2001: pp. 208–209; Lerner 1987, 488; Pessen 1988, 277; Tyrrell 1991, 1049.)

¹⁹¹⁶ Pessen 1988, 270, 272; Tyrrell 1991, 1031; Tyrrell 2007, 58. Perhaps also the experts’ representations of families and women were somewhat blinded by this perceived egalitarianism of the American society. The experts seemed to equal the middle- and upper-class American families and women to the whole of American families and women, and then sometimes contrasted this generalisation with the families and women of the poorest classes of China and Japan.

¹⁹¹⁷ *The Declaration of Independence* 1917, 3.

¹⁹¹⁸ Lerner 1987, 467, 624; Mennell 2009, 424; Tyrrell 2007, 40.

ous instance of the want of individual rights", while in the United States, the people had the ultimate right of being the sovereigns¹⁹¹⁹ of the nation.¹⁹²⁰

But perhaps the starkest contrast, however, the experts drew between Asiatic collectivism and Western individualism. In Asiatic societies the family was the social unit, and the whole nation was a family; whereas in the Western "Ptolemaic" society, the social unit was the individual, around whom everything revolved, and the nation was a "large collection of individuals", as Arthur Smith and Percival Lowell put it.¹⁹²¹ However, individualism was a word that the experts rarely, if ever, used. In fact, the whole English term was a rather recent one. According to *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word was used in 1827 in the sense of independent action and self-reliance, and in 1840 as a synonym for *laissez-faire*, and an antonym to collectivism and socialism. Instead, the experts used the word individuality, often in the sense of a synonym to personality, but also interchangeably with the social, economic, and political individualism.¹⁹²²

William Griffis argued that Confucianism was to blame for suppressing individuality and personality. He believed these values to be inherently Christian. Similarly, Arthur Smith opined that the Chinese social circumstances, which were "at the greatest possible remove from the condition of things in most Western lands", thwarted the "Nature's design in giving each human being a separate personality". Smith continued that in China, man was not a free agent, but an interdependent part of a "gigantic social machine, a mere cog in one of many wheels".¹⁹²³ Meanwhile, Lowell accused patriarchy for curtailing individual expression, and for obstructing economic and social independence.¹⁹²⁴

¹⁹¹⁹ According to the Declaration of Independence, the American government was "instituted among Men" and derived its "just powers from the consent of the governed". In other words, the American people were the sovereigns, since the government was accountable for its decisions to the people. Also, if the government became corrupt and unjust, it was the duty of the people to overthrow it. (*The Declaration of Independence* 1917, 3).

¹⁹²⁰ Lowell 1895, 74; Lowell 2007b, 17. The American people were the sovereigns, but not every American was considered to belong to that 'people' in the 19th century. The Declaration of Independence had announced that all men were created equal. However, when it came to political rights, apparently some men were created more equal than others. First of all, "all men" did not include slaves or Native Americans, nor did it include women. In the first half of the century, the universal manhood suffrage was for white males only. And after the Civil War, when the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution forbade "the states to infringe male citizens' right to vote on the ground of their 'race, color, or previous condition of servitude,'" in practice the amendment was often interpreted narrowly, and in some states, the political rights of the African Americans were curbed with, for example, literacy tests. Naturally, there were also differences in the political power of the white males, according to their wealth, education, and prestige. In fact, Percival Lowell's biographer has noted that Lowell was adamantly against women's suffrage, as well as against giving any political power to other than the educated and wealthy elite of the country. (Countryman 1997, 150, 219-220; Mennell 2009, 424; Strauss 2001, 261; Tyrrell 2007, 16, 40, 91-92, 120-121.)

¹⁹²¹ Lowell 2007b, 16; Smith 1890, 9, 231.

¹⁹²² "individualism, n.," *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2014; "individuality, n.," *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2014.

¹⁹²³ Griffis 2006b, 80; Smith 1890, 9-10, 57; Smith 1899, 256.

¹⁹²⁴ Lowell 2007b, 17.

Returning to Percival Lowell's text celebrating American and Western love, it seems that he did not write it principally in order to extol the sentiment of love itself, or to contest its existence in the East Asia. Instead, his argument behind the account was that, because love was individualistic,¹⁹²⁵ the Japanese who lacked love also lacked individualism. In other words, it was a "theft" of individualism¹⁹²⁶ that Percival Lowell performed with his texts, not of love. He pinpointed the Asiatic collectivism as the culprit for loveless Asiatic marriages, for love necessarily conflicted with collectivistic values.¹⁹²⁷ Lafcadio Hearn agreed to some extent, as from the perspective of filial piety, love was indeed a selfish feeling.¹⁹²⁸ But Hearn did not agree with Lowell's proposition that love was inherently individual. Hearn invoked modern science as his proof, or Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Psychology*. Spencer had assured that first love, seemingly the most personal of all feelings, was actually bequeathed by the dead generations, and did not depend on the choices of the lovers themselves. And hence, love was not individual at all.¹⁹²⁹

Percival Lowell also emphasised the connection between individuality and marriage. In the West, individuality was the essence of marriage, Lowell argued, while the Asiatic marriage was impersonal. This was detrimental to the personal development of the Chinese and Japanese men, Lowell claimed, for a man who was married to a "cipher" was deprived of circumstances conducive to psychological growth.¹⁹³⁰ The same absence of individuality characterized the whole family life in the Asiatic societies, Lowell thought. The customs of collective birthdays, adoption, and abdication were unsettling to one's identity, and tended to merge individual identities to the identity of the group. Also inherited occupations had the same effect, both Lowell and Arthur Smith remarked. Unlike in China and Japan, in the United States no profession, trade, or pursuit was hereditary. A man of the Anglo-Saxon race was self-made, responsible for his own success, and an individual, Smith claimed.¹⁹³¹

This individualism, however, did not prevent the Americans from working for common good, although Arthur Smith remarked that now that the doctrines of personal liberty and rights had been established and secured, it would have been advisable to put more emphasis on the significance of "subordinating the individual will to the public good". By the same token, collectivism did not prevent the Chinese from acting selfishly. In Smith's contention, then, individuality did not equal selfishness.¹⁹³²

¹⁹²⁵ This was not only Lowell's contention. In the US at the time, romantic love was strongly associated with individualism, freedom of choice, and modernity (Goody 2006, 267; Lerner 1987, 583).

¹⁹²⁶ Jack Goody has listed individualism as one such value that Westerners have generally appropriated for themselves (Goody 2006, 9, 126, 240).

¹⁹²⁷ Lowell 2007b, 22.

¹⁹²⁸ Hearn 1895, 94–95.

¹⁹²⁹ Hearn 1896b, 155.

¹⁹³⁰ Lowell 2007b, 23–24.

¹⁹³¹ Lowell 2007b, 14–15, 20–21, 27–28; Smith 1890, 9, 106.

¹⁹³² Smith 1890, 242–243, 334–335; Smith 1899, 331.

Lafcadio Hearn differed on this point though. Individuation itself was the natural tendency of evolution, according to Herbert Spencer. The problem Hearn saw with the individuation of the Westerners was that much of what they called “personality”, or “force of character”, represented “only the survival and recognition of primitive aggressive tendencies, more or less disguised by culture”. In other words, the individuality of the Westerners often manifested itself through aggression. Earlier we noted Hearn’s contention that Western civilization was a “wolfish struggle” between the forces of greed, materialism, and intellect. In other words, it was a perpetual, selfish struggle “between the simple and the cunning, the feeble and the strong; force and craft combining to thrust weakness into a yawning and visible hell”.¹⁹³³

Hearn went on to quote the “Viscount Tōrio”,¹⁹³⁴ whose words had been translated into English and published in the *Japan Daily Mail* in 1890:

Selfishness is born in every man; to indulge it freely is to become a beast. Therefore it is that sages preach the principles of duty and propriety, justice and morality, providing restraints for private aims and encouragements for public spirit.¹⁹³⁵

According to Torio, Western civilization was superficially attractive, but in reality, it was “based upon the free play of human selfishness”. The result of basing civilization on the theory that man’s desires constituted “natural laws” was an abundance of extreme luxury and extravagance, social disturbances, confusion, and suffering. Such civilization suited to people who were controlled by selfish and individualistic ambitions, Torio concluded, but it promised no benefit for the masses or for the common good.¹⁹³⁶

Both Lafcadio Hearn’s and Viscount Torio’s views on Western civilization echoed the idea that an individualist “jungle law” of Darwinism was in operation in the industrialising Western societies. Particularly in the last decades of the 19th century, the American society with its labour disturbances, strikes, clashes, farmer protests, economic panics, and urban poverty came to be commonly described with the phrase “wolfish struggle for existence”. This labelling of the Social Darwinist vision of society as a jungle and a struggle was used as an argument both for and against individualism in the society and laissez faire in the economy.¹⁹³⁷

¹⁹³³ Hearn 1894b, 682; Hearn 1896b, 202.

¹⁹³⁴ It seems that Hearn was referring to General Torio Koyata (1847?-1905), the founder of the Moderate Conservative Party (*Hoshutō-Chūseiha*).

¹⁹³⁵ Hearn 1894b, 677.

¹⁹³⁶ Hearn 1894b, 677-680.

¹⁹³⁷ In other words, it could be used as an argument for government intervention, reforms, policies, and transcending the nature with human made ethics, as for example Thomas Huxley did. Or it could be used as an argument against all government interference in the matters of individuals and the workings of the natural laws, as Herbert Spencer did. However, the Social Darwinists themselves were not entirely clear on whether the struggle for existence and natural selection, which operated in the plant and animal kingdom, was operating also in the human societies. Charles Darwin, for example, had set apart the savage and civilized peoples in this respect, and maintained that while the struggle for existence operated on the savage stage as a motor for progress, on the civilized stage it had been replaced by education and “a

With his quotes from Torio's account, Lafcadio Hearn appeared to be arguing against individualism. His text seemed to be a reaction against the established, prevailing view among the American masses and academia alike, that individualism was a virtue, something good in itself, and that the aggressive competition of the Westerners was a scientifically proven and justified natural law.¹⁹³⁸ On the other hand, while he firmly believed that a Western style of society was, in many respects, "the most horrible that has ever existed in the world's history", Hearn pointed out that the same society also cultivated the energy, talent, and abilities of many of its members by forcing the strong, clever, and self-controlled to continually better themselves.¹⁹³⁹

In any case, Lafcadio Hearn argued that this "jungle law", with its brutal individualism, was something very foreign to the traditional Japanese society. Hearn wrote that never "in Japan had there been even the sick dream of such conditions" as the struggle in the Occidental civilization. Also Viscount Torio claimed that the Japanese society and government had been based on benevolence and always aimed to secure the welfare and happiness of the people.¹⁹⁴⁰ And as Western civilization was being transplanted into Japan, Hearn could not but agree with Torio, that the future of Japan under such a system filled one with anxiety.¹⁹⁴¹ Already the new educated generations believed that, in order for Japan to successfully compete with the West, the Japanese had to abandon their old moral codes which repressed individualism, and adopt the ways of the West, including the cultivation of the individual by unrestricted competition. And with individualism came selfishness, and moral decline, Hearn concluded.¹⁹⁴²

The problem for Lafcadio Hearn appeared to be the same as Thomas Huxley had presented, that the society could not progress without individuality, but if individuality extended beyond a certain limit, it would wreck the society.¹⁹⁴³ The Japanese may have had no personal individuality, Hearn asserted, but they more than made up for this lack with their strong sense of national identity. Meanwhile, the Western civilization had over-cultivated "the qualities of the individual", perhaps already to "the destruction of national feeling" and, indeed, the whole nation.¹⁹⁴⁴ According to Hearn, the only hope for the Western

high standard of excellence". (Bannister 1979, 10-11, 30-31, 33, 50-51, 54, 136-137; Beard 1948, 384; Hannaford 1996, 325-326.)

¹⁹³⁸ Beard 1948, 384-385.

¹⁹³⁹ Hearn 1896a, 458.

¹⁹⁴⁰ Hearn 1894b, 666, 673, 678, 681-682; Hearn 1896b, 202.

¹⁹⁴¹ Hearn 1894b, 679.

¹⁹⁴² Hearn 1894b, 666, 681; Hearn 1895, 232; Hearn 1896b, 150.

¹⁹⁴³ Bannister 1979, 31.

¹⁹⁴⁴ Hearn 1895, 224. While the European nationalism tended to centre around the creation of central states and intellectuals proclaiming mythical national pasts; the American state in the early 19th century was relatively weak on the federal level. The country was fragmented, ethnically heterogeneous, and there were little or no awareness of the idea that all the Americans together constituted a single people. Popular nationalism increased as time passed, but still allegiances were often sworn to the state, or local, level. After the Civil War, the American national unity increased, and identity started to take form, but the central government stayed weak for years to come. (Tyrrell 2007, 87, 92, 118-120.)

civilization was the application of Herbert Spencer's evolutionary doctrine, which stated that "the highest individuation must be joined with the greatest mutual dependence".¹⁹⁴⁵ That is, by cultivating altruism and increasing mutual dependence, the West could escape the dissolution that was threatening to engulf it. Moreover, Hearn entertained the thought that with the annihilation of selfishness and prejudice, the West could ultimately cooperate on an international level as well, and unite with all "races" in "universal brotherhood".¹⁹⁴⁶

Finally, the majority of the experts characterised the Asiatic society - its values, principles, structure, and the system of government - as feudal, ancient, and being on a primitive stage of development. They considered the doctrines on which it was based as obstructions to the process of Civilization. For example, William Griffis argued that the tenet of filial piety had kept China stagnant for centuries, and that now it blocked the advance of Civilization. He also argued that Confucianism had "cut the tap-root of all true progress". Meanwhile, Arthur Smith opined that it had been the Asiatic collectivism and solidarity that had brought about inertia. William Griffis also maintained that neither China nor Japan could rise higher in the scale of Civilization before the women were educated and allowed to participate in the building of the nation.¹⁹⁴⁷ In comparison, majority of the experts represented the Western societies, governments, families, and individuals as blueprints for modern civilization, although they did not necessarily agree on the details of the drawings. And the Western values, such as individualism, they presented as the motors of progress.

¹⁹⁴⁵ Hearn 1894b, 682-683. Herbert Spencer's theory of social evolution stated that individuation proceeded together with integration, co-operation, and the development of altruism (Bannister 1979, 40; Spencer 1893, 315, 360, 540).

¹⁹⁴⁶ Hearn 1896a, 464; Hearn 1918, 162.

¹⁹⁴⁷ Griffis 1903, 552, 555; Griffis 2006b, 56-57; Smith 1890, 11.

8 CONCLUSION

That civilization was a key concept in the late 19th century United States has been both the hypothesis and the justification for this study, and the semantic field drawn from the texts of the six American China and Japan experts confirm the hypothesis. The frequency with which the experts used the word in their publications shows that the concept had become democratized, that it had diffused from theoretical works written by intellectuals into general knowledge, and into more popular works written by educated middle-class amateur scholars. The words and themes the six experts attached to the concept, show that civilization had become an inescapable part of American discussions about societies, cultures, time, history and politics. The meanings the experts gave to civilization also reveal that the concept was flexible, complex, and inherently contested.

The experts thought that the concept operated on three distinct, but overlapping, levels. Firstly, civilization denoted to a macro-level unit, a large geographical and cultural entity. Secondly, it referred to a micro-level, at the level of the individual, in the sense of refinement, manners, and courteousness. However, Percival Lowell believed that this level was rather insignificant in the grander scheme of civilization, or Civilization with a capital letter. This third sense of the concept portrayed Civilization as a dynamic process, inseparably entangled with progress, and the contemporary doctrine of progressivism. Accordingly, history was identified with the linear progress of Civilization, operating under certain identifiable laws, and continuously moving towards improvement and betterment. This process could be also likened to evolution, which in many of the scientific theories of the day was presented as a progressive process, regulated by natural laws, and governing the biological, social, and cultural spheres alike.

The experts thought that this compound of progress, evolution, and civilization proceeded in stages, as Lewis Henry Morgan, among others, had suggested. Since the process was stadial, Civilization was also something measurable. The experts ranked macro-level civilizations in the scale of Civilization, and denoted them to lower and inferior, as well as higher, better, and more ad-

vanced stages of progress. Operating on the macro- and micro-level, Civilization produced a variety of manifestations, allowed the use of a plural form, and accommodated the idea of an organic life cycle of civilizations. On these levels, a people, a nation, or an individual could be the actor in the process. Humans could give birth to, build, develop, and even ruin civilization, and they could receive, impart, and transmit civilization through contacts and interaction. But Civilization with a capital letter was an unstoppable force, beyond the control of men. It appeared in singular form only. It was a universal, uniform, and uninterrupted onward march on a preordained path. It was generally thought that the end result of Civilization would be one homogenous world civilization, which would eventually displace the heterogeneous patchwork of civilizations that then existed. Although, on this, as well as on all the propositions summarized here, some of the experts had diverging opinions.

In their publications, the experts presented a comprehensive list of prerequisites, adjuncts, outcomes, and measures of civilization. These features were thought to be applicable to some, or all, of the three levels on which the concept was used. They included climate, wealth, and commerce; literacy, letters, language, and education; intellect and mind; institutions, laws, constitution, suffrage, and government; settled life, social organization, complex social relations, and division of labour; national army and warfare; religion and morals; family, position of women, and equality of sexes. Analogous to overall process of Civilization, also government, society, morals, religions, mind and intellect, were seen to be progressing. The list of the experts also included elements relating to the so called arts of civilization: aesthetics, taste, sculpture, architecture, painting, decoration, literature, drama, and music; as well as to the sciences of civilization: philosophy, history, medicine, sociology, systems of knowledge, and freedom of inquiry. And finally, it included the material civilization: "modern inventions", "western machines", railways, telegraphs and telephones, submarine cables, navigation, lighthouses, postal system, and national banks.

The descriptions of the six experts of the contents, mechanisms, and nature of civilization were largely conventional, suggested by earlier and contemporary philosophical and scientific theories, and congruent with dictionary definitions of the word. The whole idea appeared to the experts to be so firmly established, that they rarely felt the need to define or explain the concept. Thus, their discussions of civilization were conditioned by the earlier knowledge and preconceptions they had on the subject, but they were also prompted and moulded by contemporary debates in European and American context, or in the contexts of China and Japan. Much of their writings, particularly on the elements of civilization, become intelligible when considered as arguments and contributions to some contemporary discussion, ranging from philosophical and theoretical debates to debates on practices and significance of evangelising and civilizing missions. In other words, they become intelligible when considering the intention of the author, as Quentin Skinner has advised.

The primary objective the experts had in writing their treatises was to inform American audience about China and Japan; to produce knowledge for the

sake of knowledge, according to the scientific ideal. Some of them pioneered in the American studies of East Asia, and the rest of them accumulated, revised, and moulded the existing knowledge. Arguably, the information they supplied had a great impact on the American images of Japan and China during the 19th century. Nevertheless, some of them explicitly admitted having also other motives for writing besides informing their audience. The authors with a missionary background wished to further both the evangelising and civilizing missions with their work, and Samuel Williams and William Griffis attempted to influence American policies in the East Asia and Pacific region.

Still, the experts claimed that they were striving for objectivity in their accounts. Just how objective these accounts were, however, is an irrelevant question for the purposes of this thesis. But it should be noted that, as always, there was a host of variables affecting the process and the outcome of the experts' observations and representations of China and Japan. First variable was time. Samuel Williams moved to China in 1833, William Martin in 1850, and Arthur Smith in 1872. William Griffis arrived in Japan in the 1870s, Percival Lowell in the 1880s, and Lafcadio Hearn in the 1890s. William Griffis' *The Mikado's Empire* was first published in 1876, and the other texts under the focus of this thesis were published in the following twenty-five years.

The political, intellectual, and personal contexts changed a lot during the timespan from Samuel Williams' arrival in China to the settlement of the Boxer Uprising. William Griffis, Percival Lowell, Lafcadio Hearn, and Arthur Smith were born, and Samuel Williams passed away. China and Japan were "opened" to the West, and tied to the international community by the unequal treaties. The Americans increasingly embraced modernisation and industrialisation, as did the Chinese and Japanese to a varying extent a bit later on. Eurocentric great power system was established and consolidated. The United States adopted a more active and aggressive role in the Pacific region, and sought recognition as a great power. In the meantime, Japan sought recognition as a civilized country, adopted imperialistic policies, and began to strive to the position of a Pacific power. All three countries involved experienced a host of domestic and international conflicts and disturbances. Foreign powers encroached on the Chinese territory, and China had to endure one humiliation after another. Chinese and Japanese labourers emigrated to Hawaii and the United States, and American images of China and Japan fluctuated. Intellectual currents changed. New ideas and theories on development, societies, and humans were devised. Various sciences – including Sinology – professionalized and institutionalized.

Other variables were the place and contacts. The representations of the experts were affected by the places they visited, and people they met. In China, geographical, cultural, and ethnic differences were huge. In Japan and China alike, the treaty ports were far different from the inland, and educated, wealthy elites from uneducated peasants. Arguably, Arthur Smith's experiences with poor peasants and corrupt local administrators in the Chinese villages were not conducive to similar observations, images, and conclusions as William Martin's experiences in the capital with students of the *Tongwenguan* and mandarins of

the *Tsungli Yamen*, whom were accustomed, and receptive, to Westerners and their ideas.

Yet another variables were the so called 'filters', such as the filter of previous knowledge, which affected the experts' observations and representations of China and Japan inasmuch as it affected their understandings and treatment of the concept of civilization. On the other hand, in this, too, the variables of place and interaction were at play, as previous knowledge could be confirmed, reformulated, or rejected according to the encountered realities.

In addition, there was the 'filter' of personal background, which included beliefs, values, world-views, attitudes, ideologies, and experiences; and the 'filter' of cultural background, which made it possible and probable that those personal beliefs and values were largely common to individuals who shared the same educational, intellectual, and ideological influences. The relation any of these variables or 'filters' had to the observations and representations of experts was not a simple and straight-forward one, and using them as contexts for explaining is therefore somewhat precarious. The proposition of a cultural 'filter', in particular, is problematic, as the texts of the six experts show. The experts represented certain reference groups – liberal Protestants, Spencerians, middle-class Americans, elite Bostonians, white Anglo-Saxon males – and yet there was hardly an issue on which the authors belonging to the same reference group fully agreed on. Thus, even the opinions and attitudes of smaller reference groups were collections of individual stances, and the experts represented, first and foremost, themselves.

The authors' way of representing what they saw, cannot be categorically reduced to their political, historical, cultural, intellectual, or personal backgrounds. And yet, following the principle of 'best possible explanation', these same contexts can potentially help in the process of interpretation. Moreover, their texts can be explained by the context of language. The language available for the experts simultaneously enabled them to communicate their ideas, and restricted the ways in which they formed their thoughts, and in which these thoughts could be expressed. The concept of civilization itself was a linguistic unit, which assisted, moulded, and restrained their representations. During the latter half of the 19th century, civilization was an eminently useful concept for American authors in discussions relating to societies and cultures, and hence for the experts representing Chinese and Japanese cultures. It was a unit for analysis, and it was a useful tool in both 'othering,' and in translating, explaining, and making familiar this 'otherness.' It was also a tool for constructing essentialised binary dichotomies between oneself and the 'Other,' for making comparisons, and for defining and demarcating identity.

The concept of civilization enabled the experts to construct the categories of Asiatic and Western civilizations as a starting point of their analysis. These were umbrella categories, accommodating smaller, distinct offshoots based on nationality, such as the Chinese, Japanese, English, and American civilizations. They also accommodated specific cultural units, such as Christian and Confu-

cian civilization, and racial units, such as Turanian, Indo-Germanic, and Anglo-Saxon civilizations.

For centuries, Europeans had imagined the Orient as the diametric opposite of the Occident, and as the prime example of the 'Other,' and this construction of opposites was perpetuated in the texts of the six experts as well. First of all, Asiatic civilization was Confucian. Asiatic society was built upon the five Confucian relations: the governmental, parental, conjugal, fraternal, and that of friendship, and upon the Confucian duty of filial piety. These were the principles that pervaded the whole social, political, and moral landscapes of China and Japan, and controlled all relations down from the rulers and the ruled to the members of a family. Western civilization and societies, on the other hand, were based upon the teachings of Christianity.

Then, the Asiatic civilization was impersonal and collectivist, with family serving as the basic social unit. The Asiatic family was artificially extended, oppressive, unequal, and represented a lower stage in social development. Meanwhile, Western civilization was personal, and the individual stood for its basic unit. Asiatic civilization had social hierarchies and divisions, unequal opportunities for education and participation in the government of the country, and it more or less prescribed an inherited lot for each of its members. In contrast, particularly the American offshoot of Western civilization was imagined as uniquely egalitarian, free, and conducive to social and physical mobility. In Asiatic civilization, government, society, and family alike were characterized by tyranny, despotism and patriarchy. Chinese government was "weak despotism" tempered by some democratic elements and principles, and both China and Japan had an absolute, theocratic ruler. The people in Asiatic civilization had duties and obligations, whereas the people in the American civilization had rights, democratic government, and sovereignty.

In creating this dichotomy of Asiatic and Western civilization, the experts made prolific use of counter concepts. The experts displayed the Asiatic 'Other' with such cultural oppositions as idolatrous, irreligious, superstitious, atheistic, agnostic, pagan, heathen, and conforming to customs. These characteristics were betrayed by the Chinese and Japanese sciences and systems of belief. Chinese and Japanese had 'false' sciences and religions, as opposed to the 'true' Christian religion and modern Western sciences. The Chinese and Japanese were characterised as dishonest, and majority of the experts even dubbed the Asiatic micro-level civilization - politeness and benevolence - as "half-stuff" and insincere. The Chinese and Japanese were also irrational, credulous, unoriginal, uninventive, and lacked the capability for independent thinking and the spirit of inquiry. In contrast, the Western peoples were rational, logical, original, inventive, and clear-headed. However, at this point Lafcadio Hearn took the same counter concepts and turned the tables. He argued that the Chinese and Japanese Buddhism was on the side of reason and science, whereas Christianity was on the side of irrationality and superstition.

The experts also used temporal counter-concepts to portray Asiatic civilization as backward and ahistorical. The government, principles, values, and

structures of Asiatic societies were ancient, feudal, stagnated, primitive, child-like, and they obstructed development. In comparison, Western civilization was modern, progressive, and mature. Now, for the 19th century American authors, it was almost self-evident that Western civilization represented the highest stage of Civilization yet. And it was just as evident that the Asiatic civilization, which was temporally lagging behind the Western progress, occupied a lower step in the scale of Civilization. Thus, the opposite of Western civilization was neither the conventional opposite of barbarism nor savagery, but another macro-level civilization, trapped somewhere lower down on the progressive ladder of Civilization.

The utilisation of the third group of counter concepts – the racial – in constructing the opposition between Asiatic and Western civilizations was more problematic for the experts than the use of cultural and temporal counter concepts. At the time, the experts could hardly have escaped from being affected by racially loaded ideologies and theories, which basically divided the human kind into whites and non-whites. The experts themselves often used the word race in their texts, although it should be noted that this race was inasmuch a cultural and linguistic category as it was biological. The experts evidently adhered to notions of racial hierarchies. They proposed that the world was inhabited by inferior, weaker, and superior races. The inferior races were generally considered as incapable for civilization on their own, and unfit to govern themselves, and hence it was the duty of the superior races to take the inferior races under tutelage. Alternatively, the weaker races could vanish before the advancing stronger races, such as the Anglo-Saxons.

Besides counter concepts, particularly the Protestant writes utilised medical analogies, and conventional metaphors, such as light and darkness. And they often distinguished the Asiatic civilization from the Western with such words as lack, want, absence of, and defect. Thus, they represented Western civilization as the reference point for all other civilizations, and Asiatic civilization as deficient when measured against it. In all these discussions, the Western civilization seemed to denote, first and foremost, to American civilization. For the majority of the experts, the American civilization represented the highest stage in the universal process of Civilization; it was the most free, equal, and democratic, and perhaps also the most purely Christian form of Western civilization.

By placing it as the categorical opposite of Western civilization, Asiatic civilization was a congenial construct for extolling the virtues of civilization in the United States, but also for criticising its vices and moral lapses. The experts noted that Confucianism generated respect for parents, that Asian peoples were law-abiding, and that the Japanese evinced a remarkable amount of national unity, consideration for others, and unselfishness. The experts seemed to suggest that these were lessons that the land of irreverent children, lawlessness, disunity, brutal individualism, and selfishness could very well learn from Asia. In these respects, East Asia appeared to challenge the supremacy of American civilization.

But the 19th century Westerners held tight onto their supremacy and power. The Western nations defined the meaning of civilization, and determined the goal and contents of progress. They shaped the world-order, and dictated the rules of international relations by using the concept of civilization. They pushed other nations to accept their definitions, threatened or coerced them to sign and maintain treaties, and pressured them to adopt the Western civilization. Those who refused, the Westerners condemned under colonization or into semi-sovereignty.

The six experts were either willing or unwilling participants in these power relations. Some of them took part in the evangelising and civilizing missions, which were entangled with political, economic, and cultural interests. They also appropriated the power of representation over China and Japan. In their publications, the experts participated in the theft of history, emotions, values, and institutions. They narrated Chinese and Japanese histories, and depicted their civilizations, societies, and cultures by using Eurocentric frameworks and categories, which they claimed to be universal. They often evaluated China and Japan according to American standards and values. On occasions, they undeniably participated in Orientalist discourses. They also made frequent use of temporal counter concepts, which justified intervention in the form of civilizing mission, armed 'lessons,' or even colonisation. They thought that the more civilized peoples could cure nations suffering from a historical handicap, and push them back into the course of progress. The experts argued that it was the American duty to remove the obstacles of Chinese and Japanese progress, and civilize East Asia. In these arguments, perhaps more than in any others, it becomes evident that some of the experts considered civilization as the distinctly 'American spirit.'

However, the Westerners did not have a monopoly on the representations of China and Japan. The Chinese and Japanese did not lose the power to speak and act for themselves. In adopting the concept of civilization, the Japanese interpreted and defined it according to their own understandings and circumstances. When the foreigners imposed the notions of religion and superstition on the Japanese, they took it upon themselves to determine the beliefs and practices that were included and excluded from these categories. Moreover, the experts seemed to accept many of the definitions and arguments of the Japanese scholars regarding religions and history. The Japanese had plenty of chances to project their self-images to the American public directly through magazines, exhibitions, congresses, and personal contacts. And during the Sino-Japanese War, they put up an impressive propaganda campaign in the American newspapers. And the Chinese did not stay silent on their own points of view either.

To escape the threat of colonisation, and to regain the full sovereignty which had been lost in the unequal treaties, the Japanese embarked on a series of military, political, governmental, institutional, technological, and educational reforms during the late Tokugawa and Meiji Era. William Griffis rejoiced that Japan had rejected the Asiatic, and accepted the Western ideals of civilization. The Sino-Japanese War in 1894–1895 stood as the final confirmation and culmi-

nation point for the narrative of Japan successfully modernising itself and 'leaving Asia'. In the United States, the Japanese receptivity to Western civilization translated into a generally positive image of Japan. On the other hand, China had also made efforts at modernization, but the outcome of the war was interpreted as a failure of those efforts. Consequently, the American opinions and attitudes against China hardened. The China experts expressed hopes that the war had served as an object-lesson for the Chinese, and awakened them to whole-hearted embracement of Western civilization. Moreover, as the former tributary state of Japan triumphed over Middle Kingdom, the war added one more humiliation to the 'China's century of humiliation.'

Michael Adas has argued that the primary gauges of civilization for 19th century Westerners were machines, technology, and science. In the case of Japan, for example, this was largely true. Adopting Western material civilization, sciences, and laws was enough for Japan to get recognition as a civilized, equal, and sovereign nation in the form of revision of the unequal treaties. However, it could be argued that this recognition was only diplomatic and political, and perhaps not even those, judging from the Triple Intervention. Not many American observers were ready to concede that Japanese civilization might one day be able to topple the position of Western civilizations at the top of the scale. On the contrary, the idea gained ground that Japan was somehow incompletely civilized, that it only imitated higher civilization. William Griffis, for example, estimated that Japan had plucked the showy leaves of Western civilization, but neglected its roots. The experts tended to consider commerce, industry, technology - or the "funded civilization," as Arthur Smith called them - as merely footnotes to Civilization. They were the concrete and visible branches of Civilization, and as such, they were inadequate indicators of the progress of a nation in "real civilization". Adopting only these outward manifestations, would not ensure a spot on the highest ladder of Civilization.

The experts argued that material civilization was only a symptom of mental and moral processes underneath. Behind technology and machines, there were sciences, and behind sciences, there were the spiritual, moral, and intellectual roots of Civilization. In these discussions, the experts tended to equal the linear progress of Civilization with the historical trajectory and developments of American civilization. Hence, William Griffis insisted that the root and motor of higher Civilization was Christianity, or spiritual progress, which also involved progress of the mind. Arthur Smith opined that the root was Christianity together with its ethics. Lafcadio Hearn, on the other hand, emphatically rejected the idea that Western spiritual and moral processes were behind the progress of Civilization. In fact, he posited that ethical improvement and higher Civilization did not go hand in hand. Instead, Hearn proposed that the higher Western civilization emanated from intellectual and psychological evolution, which tended towards reason and individuality. These Hearn coupled with the "wolfish struggle" between the weak and strong, and the consequent survival of the fittest. As for Percival Lowell, he emphasized psychological, or "soul-

evolution", driven by imagination and tending towards ever-increasing individualization.

These accounts reveal that there were two primary 'filters' through which the experts observed China, Japan, and civilization in general: Christianity and (Spencerian) evolutionism. Lafcadio Hearn and Percival Lowell advocated the idea that evolution knew no bounds, and that it touched all aspects of the world and universe around them. Accordingly, for Hearn and Lowell evolution appeared to be the main explanatory framework for all past, present, and future developments. Although the liberal Protestants of the age largely considered evolutionary framework as compatible with Christianity, the missionary-oriented experts preferred to use biblical interpretations, such as the biblical notion of time, or the notion of all human races originating from the first couple. They particularly resorted to the idea of Providence. For the Protestant experts, Providence accounted for evolution, history, and the progress of Civilization towards some divinely contemplated end.

Although the experts expressed their convictions of mental, moral, and spiritual roots of Civilization throughout their texts during the latter half of the 19th century, it was particularly after the Sino-Japanese War, and also after the Boxer Uprising, that their views became more accentuated. This was perhaps prompted by the idea, popularised by Charles H. Pearson, that materially Westernised Asia could pose a military, political, industrial, and economic threat to Western civilization in the future. Japan was already seen to be encroaching on the American backyard in Hawaii, and subsequently, the Japanese success narrative turned into a narrative of 'yellow peril' in the United States. Arthur Smith, for instance, also warned that China educated in Western sciences and material civilization, but not in Western ethics, could prove to be a menace to mankind.

In the context of the 'yellow peril,' some of the experts put an increasing emphasis on the spiritual, ethical, and intellectual roots of Civilization, as if to affirm that materially civilized China and Japan could not ultimately threaten the Western supremacy, which was based on these mental or moral causes. In the end, anyone could borrow and imitate technology, but could anyone master the Western sciences or religion? Percival Lowell thought that the impersonal East Asians could be as incapable as they were unwilling to adopt such a personal faith as Christianity. He also appeared to suggest that the unscientific, artistic, and concrete mind of the Chinese and Japanese was, in fact, an immutable racial trait. Following Herbert Spencer, Lowell argued that each race had its own share of evolving force and abilities, and he hinted that the "yellow branch" of the human race had already used up its share. Consequently, it could be that the Chinese and Japanese were the 'weaker races,' inherently incapable for 'real' progress, and thus destined to cede to the stronger Anglo-Saxons.

In contrast, those experts, who were in China and Japan on a mission to either civilize or evangelise, tended to advocate the fundamental psychical unity of mankind. They thought that all peoples had the inherent abilities to partake

in progress, and that the “intellectual torpor” and limited reasoning power of the Chinese and Japanese was only a passing phase, curable through stimulus and training. Similarly, although the Chinese and Japanese minds may have not yet reached a level required to receive Christianity, once the sciences had enlarged the Asian minds, and the foreigners weeded out the superstitions and other obstacles for progress, their conversion would be inevitable.

Arguably, at the turn of the 20th century, Civilization was still the ultimate counter concept for the Americans. But whether it was a distinctly ‘American Spirit’, as Charles and Mary Beard have suggested, is more debatable, considering that the idea derived largely from British and French 18th and 19th century discussions, and it was increasingly shared with other peoples of the world.

In addition, the idea of progressing Civilization had lost some of its sheen in the American eyes, as it was becoming more and more evident that it had significant downsides, such as unemployment, social disintegration, and industrialisation, which ruined landscapes and gave birth to a new class of urban barbarians. Also, the idea was losing some of its main characteristics, such as the claim for universality. It was increasingly held either as unique to the West, or to the Anglo-Saxon race only. And it was doubted whether it was tending towards complete homogenisation of civilization after all. Lafcadio Hearn, for example, envisaged that China and Japan would probably become materially and intellectually westernised, but they could not be forced to westernise in spiritual and ethical matters. Hearn thought that, in the future, the Asiatic and Western civilizations would not be two steps on the same ladder of progress, but rather distinct units struggling to ‘overlive,’ and ‘underlive’ each other.

And finally, as the idea was appropriated by other peoples, it was increasingly difficult for the Americans, or the British and French, to monopolise the power of defining what it meant. Also, in the world scale, it was challenged by alternative conceptions of Civilization, such as the Chinese *wenming*, or German *Kultur*. Thus, in a larger scheme of 19th century ideas of civilization, this study of heterogeneous American conceptions is only one side of the story.

SUMMARY

Materiaalinen, mentaalinen ja moraalinen edistys: *civilization*-käsite ja -käsitteet amerikkalaisten Kiinan ja Japanin asiantuntijoiden julkaisuissa 1800-luvun lopulla.

Tutkimustehtävä, lähteet ja metodit

Väitöskirjan keskiössä ovat kuusi amerikkalaista, jotka matkasivat ja asettuivat Itä-Aasiaan 1800-luvulla. Kiinan ja Japanin kulttuurit ja yhteiskunnat vaikuttivat heistä hyvin vierailta ja arvoituksellisilta. He pyrkivät ymmärtämään tätä kohtaamaansa vierautta ja tulkitsemaan sitä myös kotimaansa yleisölle. Näissä pyrkimyksissään he usein turvautuivat *civilization*-käsitteeseen tai -ajatukseen. Tässä väitöskirjassa selvitetään kuinka nämä kuusi amerikkalaista ymmärsivät kyseisen käsitteen, millaisia merkityksiä he antoivat sille, sekä kuinka *civilization*-käsite ja siihen kytkeytyvät ajatuskokonaisuudet muodostivat osan heidän maailmankuvaansa ja tapaansa selittää maailmaa.

Työn aikarajaus alkaa niin kutsutuista ”epätasa-arvoisista sopimuksista” (unequal treaties), joista ensimmäiset Kiina ja Japani solmivat Yhdysvaltain ja Euroopan valtioiden, kuten Britannian ja Ranskan, kanssa 1840- ja 1850-luvuilla painostuksen alla. Aikarajaus päättyy vuonna 1901 solmittuun rauhansopimukseen, boksaripöytäkirjaan, jonka Kiina solmi kahdeksan valtion liittokunnan kanssa Boksarikapinan jälkeen. Epätasa-arvoiset sopimukset antoivat amerikkalaisille eksterritoriaaliset oikeudet Kiinassa ja Japanissa, sekä oikeuden määrittellä tullitariffit yhdessä eurooppalaisten sopimusosapuolten kanssa. Sopimukseen sisältynyt suosituimmusehto takasi, että yhden valtion saavuttamat etuudet koskivat kaikkia sopimusosapuolina olleita Euroopan valtioita sekä Yhdysvaltoja, mutta ei taannut samankaltaisia etuja ja oikeuksia Kiinalle ja Japanille. Nämä sopimukset kytkivät Kiinan ja Japanin kansainväliseen yhteisöön. Samalla ne kuitenkin rajasivat kiinalaiset ja japanilaiset suvereenien, kansainvälistä lakia keskinäisissä suhteissaan noudattavien, ”sivistysvaltioiden” (civilized nations) ulkopuolelle. Täten epätasa-arvoisista sopimuksista tuli symboli sivistykselle, tai Kiinan ja Japanin tapauksessa sivistyksen puutteelle.

Päästääkseen eroon sopimuksista sekä niiden mukanaan tuomasta barbaarin tai ”puoli-sivistyneen” leimasta, monet kiinalaiset ja japanilaiset pyrkivät toteuttamaan sotilaallisia, teknologisia, yhteiskunnallisia, lainsäädännöllisiä ja koulutuksellisia uudistuksia. 1800-luvun loppuun mennessä japanilaisten uudistukset vakuuttivat britit kansakunnan saavuttamasta ”sivistyksestä”, sopimukset uudistettiin, ja Japanin autonomiaa loukkaavista eksterritoriaali- ja tariffioikeuksista luovuttiin asteittain. Kiinan sopimukset sen sijaan jäivät edelleen voimaan. Oopiumsotien ja epätasa-arvoisten sopimusten vuoksi vuosisataa on kutsuttu ”Kiinan nöyryytyksen vuosisadaksi” (century of humiliation) sekä Kiinan ”epäonnistumistarinaksi” (failure narrative), joka kulminoitui kiinalaisten tappioon Japania vastaan vuosina 1894–95 käydyssä sodassa. Vuosisadan vaihteen jälkeen Japani liittoutui Yhdysvaltojen ja Euroopan maiden kanssa

tukahduttamaan Boksarikapinaa, sekä osallistui vaikutuspiirien jakoon ja epätasa-arvoisiin sopimuksiin Kiinassa.

Modernissa muodossaan ja merkityksessään käsite *civilization* esiintyi ensimmäisen kerran 1700-luvun puolivälin Ranskassa ja pian myös Britanniassa. Aikakauden merkittävien ranskalaisten ja brittiläisten filosofien teoksista käsite omaksuttiin 1800-luvulla myös amerikkalaisten ajattelijoiden ja sittemmin suuren yleisön puheeseen ja kirjoituksiin. Kun yhä isompi joukko ihmisiä käytti käsitettä yhä useampiin tarkoituksiin ja eri yhteyksissä, *civilization* sai lukuisia muuttuvia ja jopa keskenään kiistanalaisia merkityksiä ja tulkintoja. Siitä tuli erottamaton osa amerikkalaista sanastoa puhuttaessa politiikasta, yhteiskunnasta, kulttuurista ja historiasta. Toisin sanoen, käsitteestä tuli Reinhart Koselleckin määritelmän mukainen ”avainkäsite” (key concept). Toisaalta on muistettava, että käsitteellä oli myös erilaisiin maailmakatsomuksiin ja -järjestyksiin perustuneita haastajia, kuten kiinalainen *wenming* ja saksalainen *Kultur*.

Tässä väitöskirjassa *civilization*-käsitettä ja -ajatusta tutkitaan käyttäen lähteinä kuuden amerikkalaisen Kiinan ja Japanin asiantuntijan julkaistuja teoksia, vaikka ilmeisempi valinta lähteiksi ehkä olisikin amerikkalaisten intellektuellien, kuten esimerkiksi Lewis Henry Morganin, vaikutusvaltaiset teoriat ja klassikot. Keskittyminen klassikoihin ei kuitenkaan paljastaisi sitä kuinka laajasti käsite oli amerikkalaisessa yhteiskunnassa demokratisoitunut ja kuinka laajasti se todella oli avainkäsite. Toisaalta taas ”tavallisen kadunmiehen ja -naisen” arkipäiväiseen puheeseen kodeissa, työpaikoilla ja kouluissa on hyvin vaikea päästä käsiin. Siksi tässä työssä keskitytään niihin kirjoihin, joita ”tavallinen kansa” mahdollisesti luki, ja jotka saivat innoitusta vallitsevista teorioista ja älymystön esittämistä ajatuksista.

Näiden kirjojen aiheena ei ollut *civilization*-käsite tai siihen kytkeytyvät teoriat, vaan niissä pyrittiin analysoimaan ja kuvaamaan kiinalaista ja japanilaista kulttuuria ja yhteiskuntaa. Koska valitut kuusi asiantuntijaa kuitenkin usein hyödynsivät käsitettä kirjoissaan ja esittivät sille erilaisia määritelmiä, ovat heidän tekstinsä hedelmällinen lähtökohta käsitteen merkitysten, käytön ja demokratisoitumisen tutkimiseen. Koska asiantuntijat tapasivat myös verrata Kiinan ja Japanin sivistystä ja sivilisaatioita omaansa yrittäessään ymmärtää ja selittää näitä vieraita sivilisaatioita, heidän kuvauksensa kertoivat usein yhtä paljon ”Lännestä” kuin ”Idästä”.

Vielä 1800-luvun alussa amerikkalaisilla oli hyvin vähän tietämystä Japanista ja Kiinasta. Ajan myötä tietämys kasvoi, kun amerikkalaiset Japanin ja Kiinan kuvaukset lisääntyivät kirjoissa, aikakausjulkaisuissa, keltaisessa lehdistössä, maantieteen ja historian oppikirjoissa, ensyklopedioissa, matkakertomuksissa ja fiktiossa. Kaikkien näiden mahdollisten genreen kirjoittajista, tässä väitöskirjassa lähteiksi on valittu asiantuntija-aseman saavuttaneiden henkilöiden tekstit, koska heillä oli aikaa, mahdollisuuksia ja halua perehtyä Kiinan ja Japanin kulttuureihin sekä pohtia idän ja lännen sivilisaatioiden yhteneväisyyksiä ja eroja.

Lähteiksi on valittu seuraavat Kiinan asiantuntijat: Samuel Wells Williams (1812–1884), William Alexander Parsons Martin (1827–1916), ja Arthur Hender-

son Smith (1845–1932) sekä seuraavat Japanin asiantuntijat: William Elliot Griffis (1843–1928), Percival Lawrence Lowell (1855–1916), ja Patrick Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904).

Williams saapui Kiinaan vuonna 1833. Hän oli amerikkalaisen Kiinan tutkimuksen vaikutusvaltainen pioneeri sekä Yhdysvaltain ensimmäinen Sinologian professori. Vastaavasti Griffis saapui Japaniin vuonna 1871 työskenneläkseen opettajana ja hänestä taas tuli amerikkalaisen Japanin tutkimuksen pioneeri. Muut asiantuntijat saapuivat Kiinaan ja Japaniin heidän jälkeensä. Tutkimuksillaan ja julkaisuillaan he sekä täydensivät että muokkasivat Williamsin ja Griffisin luomia kuvia Itä-Aasian maista. Williams ja Martin olivat alkujaan protestanttisia lähetystyöntekijöitä, jotka myöhemmin siirtyivät diplomaatti- ja opetusuralle. Smith loi pitkän uran lähetystyöntekijänä ja myös Griffis oli vakaumuksellinen protestantti. Lowell sen sijaan vaikutti luottavan ennen kaikkea tieteeseen ja (Herbert Spencerin) evolutionistisiin teorioihin samoin kuin Hearn. Näiden asiantuntijoiden tekstejä ovat ylistäneet niin aikalaiset kuin myöhemmätkin kriitikot, mutta osaa teoksista on myös kritisoitu siitä, että ne ovat olleet kirjoittajiensa henkilökohtaisten vakaumusten ja mielipiteiden sävyttämiä.

Kyseisten asiantuntijoiden tekstien valinta lähteiksi tuo työhön tiettyä yksipuolisuutta. Jokainen asiantuntijoista oli melko oppinut, keski- tai yläluokkainen valkoinen mies, kaikki Kiinan asiantuntijat olivat taustaltaan lähetystyöntekijöitä ja valitut tekstit edustavat ainoastaan kirjoittajiensa julkisia mielipiteitä. Oikeastaan voidaan kysyä, kuinka kattavasti valittu joukko edustaa amerikkalaisuutta ja ”amerikkalaisia käsityksiä”. Vaikka koulutus, kirjat ja sanomalehdet, uskonto sekä kulttuuri- ja aatevirtaukset yhdistivätkin monia amerikkalaisia, on silti hyvin epätodennäköistä, että voitaisiin erottaa tietty monoliittinen, uniikki ”amerikkalainen” näkemys maailmasta tai *civilization*-käsitteestä. Tämä pitää paikkansa etenkin 1800-luvulla, jolloin paikalliset identiteetit olivat usein huomattavasti kansallista identiteettiä vahvempia Yhdysvalloissa. Valittujen asiantuntijoiden tekstit vahvistavat, että näkemyksiä ja mielipiteitä oli lukuisia ja että kukin kirjoittaja edusti ensisijaisesti omaa maailmankatsomustaan, ei amerikkalaista katsantotapaa. Koska henkilökohtaisten näkemysten joukko oli valtavan suuri, on luultavaa, että vaikka tutkimuksen otos olisi kuinka laaja, koko amerikkalaisten *civilization*-käsitysten kirjoja olisi käytännössä mahdotonta kattaa.

Metodologisesti työ ammentaa toisaalta kulttuurihistoriasta, erityisesti kuvien, representaatioiden ja kohtaamisten tutkimuksesta (Peter Burke, Colin Mackerras, Nicholas Clifford, Edward Said), ja toisaalta aate- ja käsitehistoriasta (Quentin Skinner, Reinhart Koselleck, João Feres Júnior, Dominick LaCapra, Robert Lamb, Mark Bevir). Metodien ja teoreettisten lähtökohtien valinnassa on pyritty joustavuuteen. Lähdemateriaalin kontekstoinnissa on otettu huomioon (i) kirjoittajien henkilökohtaiset taustat, (ii) kirjoittajien kulttuuriset, ja yhteiskunnalliset taustat sekä kansallinen tausta, (iii) kirjoittajien motiivit, (iv) poliittinen, aatteellinen ja yhteiskunnallinen tilanne Yhdysvalloissa, Kiinassa ja Japanissa, (v) kirjoittajien intentiot, (vi) kieli ja kielelliset konventiot sekä metaforat,

käsitteet ja vastakäsitteet, (vii) aiempi kirjallisuus ja tietämys, (viii) yleisö sekä (ix) kansainväliset suhteet ja suhteelliset valta-asemat.

Työ pyrkii täydentämään jo olemassa olevaa tutkimusta *civilization*-käsitteen ja -ajatuksen historiasta (Pim Den Boer, Brett Bowden, Michael Adas), *civilizing mission*-ideologiasta ja käytännöstä 1800-luvulla (Joseph Henning, Jonathan Spence) sekä länsimaisista Kiinan ja Japanin representaatioista (Robert Rosenstone, Ian Littlewood, Colin Mackerras, Nicholas Clifford, Harold Isaacs, Daniel Metraux).

Semanttinen kenttä

Valitut kuusi asiantuntijaa pitivät *civilization*-käsitettä ongelmattomana, itseltään selvänä ja vakiintuneena, joten se ei vaatinut määrittelyä tai problematisointia. Semanttisen kentän avulla voimme kuitenkin tavoittaa asiantuntijoiden käsitteelle antamat merkitykset, käsitteen käyttötavat, käsitysten sisällöt, ja osittain jopa kirjoittajien asenteet ajatusta kohtaan. Systemaattisten ja mekaanisten hakujen avulla näemme kuinka usein kirjoittajat käyttivät käsitettä tai sen johdannaisia, mitä sanoja ja käsitteitä he liittivät ajatukseen, ja mitä käsitteitä he pitivät *civilization*-käsitteen vastakohtina.

Kuuden amerikkalaisen asiantuntijan teksteistä hahmoteltu semanttinen kenttä vahvistaa, että 1800-luvun loppuun mennessä *civilization*-käsitteestä oli tullut demokratisoitunut ja monimerkityksellinen avainkäsite Yhdysvalloissa. Kahta poikkeusta lukuun ottamatta, termit *civilization*, *civilize* ja *civilized* esiintyvät kirjoissa usein. Näihin termeihin kirjoissa liitetyistä sanoista voidaan päätellä, että asiantuntijat käyttivät sanaa *civilization* kolmella eri tasolla. Ensimmäinen taso viittasi makrotason yksiköihin, suuriin maantieteellisiin ja kulttuurillisiin kokonaisuuksiin, jotka suomen kielessä kääntyvät sanaksi *sivilisaatio*. Tällä tasolla asiantuntijat puhuivat sellaisista epämääräisesti rajatuista sivilisaatioista kuin läntinen, oksidentaalin, eurooppalainen, tai itäinen. Termiä käytettiin myös tarkemmin rajattujen kansallisten sivilisaatioiden yhteydessä, kuten englantilainen, amerikkalainen, kiinalainen ja japanilainen. Nämä sivilisaatiot olivat alakategorioita laajemmille kokonaisuuksille, jotka muotoutuivat esimerkiksi kulttuurin ja uskonnon ympärille (konfutselainen ja kristillinen sivilisaatio) ja toisaalta "rodun" ympärille. Rotu (*race*) olikin 1800-luvun *civilization*-käsitteeseen lähes erottamattomasti kytketty aikalais- ja avainkäsite.

Toiseksi, *civilization* viittasi mikro- tai yksilötasolla älylliseen, moraaliseen ja kulttuuriseen hienostuneisuuteen – kaikkeen siihen, mitä suomeksi kutsutaan sanalla *sivistys*. Ja kolmanneksi, termiä käytettiin kuvaamaan laajaa, universaalista prosessia. Tämä prosessi oli *Civilization* isolla alkukirjaimella. Se kytkeytyi erottamattomasti kahteen keskeiseen 1800-luvun käsitteeseen, edistykseen ja evoluutioon, sillä se käsitettiin periytyväksi, luonnonlakien alaiseksi, vääjäämättömäksi, kumuloituvaksi, alati eteenpäin liikkuvaksi prosessiksi kohti parempaa. Tämä prosessi vaikutti myös mikro- ja makrotasolla, mutta toisin kuin sivistys ja sivilisaatio, sitä ei voitu ajatella monikossa. Oli vain yksi *Civilization*-prosessi, jonka myötä tulevaisuudessa erilaiset sivilisaatioiden ja sivistyksen

muodot yhdenmukaistuisivat joko osin tai kokonaan. Aiempiin teorioihin nojautuen asiantuntijat esittivät *Civilization*-prosessin asteittaiseksi ja siten myös mitattavaksi. Makrotason sivilisaatioita voitiin mitata *Civilization*-prosessia vasten ja asettaa ne asteikolle edistyneisyyden mukaan. Lähes poikkeuksetta asiantuntijat varasivat korkeimman sijan tällä asteikolla joko läntiselle sivilisaatiolle, kristikunnan sivilisaatiolle tai amerikkalaiselle sivilisaatiolle.

Semanttisella kentällä *civilization*-käsitteen yhteydessä esiintyneet verbit paljastavat, että *Civilization*-prosessi – isolla alkukirjaimella – oli pysäyttämätön voima, ihmisten kontrollin ulottumattomissa. Sen sijaan sivilisaatioiden ja sivistyksen tasolla toimijana saattoivat olla ihmisjoukot, kansakunnat ja yksilöt. Asiantuntijoiden käyttämien verbien mukaan ihmiset synnyttivät, kehittivät ja jopa tuhosivat sivilisaatioita. He myös vastaanottivat, perivät ja välittivät sivistystä kontaktien ja vuorovaikutuksen kautta. Erityisesti William Griffis, William Martin ja Samuel Williams uskoivat, että koska Yhdysvallat sijoittuivat *Civilization*-asteikon kärkipäähän ja koska ihmisillä oli valta vaikuttaa kehityskulkuun, amerikkalaisilla oli oikeus ja velvollisuus opettaa kiinalaisille ja japanilaisille, kuinka he voisivat saavuttaa amerikkalaisen kehityksen asteen. Tämä opettaminen saattoi tapahtua rauhanomaisesti, esimerkiksi koulujen ja kristillisen lähetytyksen kautta, tai aseellisesti pakottaen. Tässä näkemyksessä vuorovaikutuksesta Kiina ja Japani olivat vastaanottajia ja oppilaita, kun taas eurooppalaiset ja amerikkalaiset olivat maahantuoja ja opettajia.

Lafcadio Hearnia lukuun ottamatta asiantuntijat edellyttivät kiinalaisten ja japanilaisten hylkäävän kokonaisvaltaisesti omat sivistyksen ja sivilisaation muotonsa ja omaksuvan länsimaiset mallit. Sisäisen ja ulkoisen paineen alla Kiina ja Japani aloittivatkin useita uudistushankkeita. Kun Kiinan ja Japanin välinen sota puhkesi vuonna 1894, sitä pidettiin yleisesti näiden hankkeiden onnistumisasteen mittarina. Japani selvisi sodasta voittajana ja William Griffis ylisti japanilaisten edistyneisyyttä ja vastaanottavaisuutta länsimaisen, korkeamman sivistyksen suhteen. Samaan aikaan Yhdysvalloissa heräsi kuitenkin huoli, että Japani saattaisi haastaa länsimaisten opettajiensa hegemonia-aseman maailmassa ja lyödä lännen tämän omassa pelissä. Tätä taustaa vasten japanilaisten vastaanottavuus ja lännen ”matkiminen” (*imitation*) eivät olleetkaan enää välttämättä kehuja vaan moitteita, todisteita japanilaisten omaperäisyyden ja kekseliäisyyden puutteesta, kuten Percival Lowell väitti. Imitointi oli kenties jopa osoitus japanilaisten sisäsyntyisestä rodullisesta kykenemättömyydestä edistykseen.

Näiden kuuden asiantuntijan kuvaukset *civilization*-käsitteestä ja -ajatuksesta, sen mekanismeista, sisällöstä ja luonteesta, olivat melko tavanomaisia. Ne mukailivat aiheesta esitettyjä filosofisia ja tieteellisiä teorioita sekä sanakirjamääritelmiä. Täten asiantuntijoiden käsitykset ja esitykset aiheesta olivat laajalti aiemman tiedon ja kirjallisuuden sekä heidän omien ennakkoletustensa muokkaamia. Toisaalta nämä esitykset nousivat myös vallitsevista (ajankohtaisista) keskusteluista ja diskursseista Kiinassa, Japanissa ja Yhdysvalloissa, olivatpa nämä keskustelut sitten suuria teoreettisia debatteja tai pie-

nemmän piirin kysymyksiä lähetys- ja sivistysmissioihin (civilizing mission) liittyen.

Sivistyksen mittarit

Civilization-käsite oli asiantuntijoille hyvin käyttökelpoinen työkalu Japanin ja Kiinan kulttuurien ja yhteiskuntien ymmärtämisessä ja kuvailemisessa yleisölle. Käsite oli hyödyllinen paitsi määrittelyissä ja kuvauksissa myös kansakuntien ja kulttuurien vertailussa. Usein vertailuun kytkeytyi ajatus sivistyksen ja sivilisaatioiden tasoista ja vertailukohtina käytettiin sellaisia mittareita kuin yhteiskunnan ja valtion muoto, lainsäädäntö, koulutusjärjestelmä ja tieteet, uskonto, moraalit, perhearvot sekä naisen asema perheessä ja yhteiskunnassa. Aivan kuten evoluution ja kehityksen ajateltiin operoivan biologian ja koko *Civilization*-prosessin tasoilla myös esimerkiksi yhteiskunnan, uskonnon, mielen ja älykkyyden uskottiin kehittyvän asteittain omien lainalaisuuksiensa mukaan. Amerikkalaiset asiantuntijat olivat jokseenkin erimielisiä näiden mittareiden kehityksen kulusta ja määrittelmästä, mutta vielä erimielisempiä he olivat mittareiden kehitystason ja *Civilization*-prosessin kehitystason suhteesta.

Michael Adas on esittänyt kirjassaan *Machines as the Measure of Men* (1989), että 1800-luvun loppupuolen amerikkalaisille – ja aikakauden ”länsimaisille” ihmisille yleensä – tärkein mittari oli materiaallinen sivistys: teknologia, koneet, innovaatiot ja niiden taustalla vaikuttanut tiede. Periaatteessa, esimerkiksi Japanin tapauksessa, tämä on melko osuva arvio. Epätasa-arvoiset sopimukset purettiin ja Japani hyväksyttiin osaksi sivistyneiden, suvereenien ja tasa-arvoisten kansakuntien yhteisöä sen jälkeen, kun maa omaksui läntisen materiaallisen sivistyksen, tieteet ja lait. Toisaalta tämä hyväksyntä oli kuitenkin lähinnä diplomaattinen ja poliittinen tunnustus. Se ei edes välttämättä ollut poliittinen tunnustus, kuten Venäjän, Saksan ja Ranskan vuonna 1895 toteuttama kolmoisinterventio eli Japanin asioihin sekaantuminen ja painostus, osoittivat.

Vaikka kaikki kuusi asiantuntijaa pitivät materiaalista sivistystä tärkeänä, he kukin olivat varmoja, että pelkästään läntisen, korkeamman sivistyksen materiaaliset hedelmät eivät taanneet Japanille, Kiinalle, tai millekään muulle kansakunnalle paikkaa *Civilization*-asteikon ylimmällä tasolla. Heille materiaallinen sivistys oli ainoastaan *Civilization*-prosessin konkreettinen ja näkyvä sivutuote, joka varsinaisesti juontui koko prosessin pohjalla olevasta hengellisestä, intellektuaalisesta ja moraalisesta kehityksestä. Teknologian takana oli tiede ja tieteen takana mentaalinen ja moraalinen kehitys eli *Civilization*-prosessin juuret.

Kiinan ja Japanin asiantuntijat painottivat, että *Civilization*-prosessi oli universaali ilmiö. Silti he usein esittivät tämän prosessin kehityskulun yhteneväisenä Euroopan ja Yhdysvaltain historiallisen kehityskaaren kanssa. Myös prosessin juurten uskottiin löytyvän eurooppalaisten ja amerikkalaisten yhteisestä perinnöstä. Esimerkiksi William Griffis katsoi korkeamman *Civilization*-tason periytyvän viime kädessä kristinuskosta eli henkisestä edistyksestä ja Arthur Smith lisäsi henkiseen edistykseen moraalisen edistyksen, kristillisen etiikan. Lafcadio Hearn kiisti tällaiset väitteet ja totesi, että henkisellä ja moraa-

lisella edistyksellä ei ollut mitään tekemistä korkeamman *Civilization*-asteen kanssa. Päinvastoin, länsi oli saavuttanut tuon korkeamman tason älyllisen ja psykologisen evoluution, eli järjen ja individualismin kehityksen, seurauksena. Hearnin mukaan tämä kehitys oli tulosta raa'asta kamppailusta, josta vain vahvimmat selvisivät. Myös Percival Lowell piti psykologisen evoluution roolia keskeisenä, mielikuvitusta tämän evoluution moottorina ja kasvavia yksilöiden välisiä eroja sen lopputuloksena.

Henkisen, psykologisen ja moraalisen edistyksen korostaminen korkeamman kehityksen lähteenä sai lisää pontta erityisesti Kiinan ja Japanin välisen sodan sekä Boksarikapinan jälkeen. Charles H. Pearson oli vastikään popularisoinut ajatuksen, että materiaalisesti länsimaistunut Aasia saattaisi tulevaisuudessa olla vakava sotilaallinen, poliittinen tai taloudellinen uhka läntiselle sivilisaatiolle. Samankaltaista "keltaisen vaaran" ajatusta toisti esimerkiksi Arthur Smith, joka uskoi että Kiina, joka omaksuu pelkästään lännen tieteet ja materiaalsen kehityksen, mutta ei lännen etiikkaa, saattaisi olla uhka koko ihmiskunnalle. Toisaalta, Percival Lowell käytti samaa argumenttia todistaakseen, että Kiina ja Japani eivät kykenisi horjuttamaan läntisen sivilisaation hegemoniasemaa. Kuka tahansa pystyy matkimaan lännen koneita ja teknologioita, mutta kuka tahansa ei ehkä pysty omaksumaan lännen uskontoa, tieteitä tai muita mentaalisen ja moraalisen edistyksen saavutuksia. Lowell vihjasi, että japanilaiset ja kiinalaiset olivat kuluttaneet omat evolutiiviset voimavaransa loppuun ja että he saattaisivat lopulta joutua väistymään maapallolta vahvemman anglosaksisen rodun tieltä.

Aasialainen sivilisaatio / läntinen sivilisaatio

Civilization oli 1800-luvun amerikkalaisten käytössä kuin kaikenkattava ja perustavanlaatuinen vastakäsite. Se piti sisällään kaikki kolme João Feres Júniorin määrittelemää vastakkaisuutta: kulttuurillisen, ajallisen ja rodullisen. Käsitteen avulla oli mahdollista tehdä kulttuurillisia ja tilallisia erotteluja sivilisaatioiden välillä, ajallisia erotteluja "modernien" (modern) ja "muinaisten" (ancient) sivilisaatioiden välillä sekä rodullisia erotteluja eri kansojen kehittymiskykyjen mukaan. Toisin sanoen, käsite soveltui erinomaisesti "toiseuttamiseen", samoin kuin sen käsitteelliset vastakohtat raakalaisuus (savagery) ja barbaarius (barbarian).

Suurimman jakolinjan asiantuntijat vetivät aasialaisen ja länsimaisen sivilisaation välille. He kuvasivat aasialaisen sivilisaation läpikotaisin konfutselaiseksi ja läntisen sivilisaation kristilliseksi. He pitivät aasialaista sivilisaatiota kollektivistisena ja esittivät aasialaisen perheen, yhteiskunnan pääyksikön, epätasa-arvoisena, sortavana ja kehityksessä jälkeenjääneenä instituutiona. Läntinen sivilisaatio oli sitä vastoin persoonallinen ja sen perusyksikkö oli yksilö. Aasialainen yhteiskunta oli heidän mukaansa hierarkkinen ja jäykkä, ja tarjosi jäsenilleen epätasa-arvoiset mahdollisuudet osallistua koulutukseen ja päätöksentekoon. Lisäksi heidän mielestään länsimainen, erityisesti amerikkalainen,

yhteiskunta oli aasialaisen täysi vastakohta: egalitaarinen, vapaa ja sosiaalisen sekä fyysisen liikkuvuuden takaava. Aasialaisessa sivilisaatiossa niin perhettä, yhteiskuntaa kuin hallintoakin leimasi tyrannia, despotismi ja patriarkalaisuus, ja kullakin jäsenellä oli pelkästään velvoitteita ja vastuita, ei lainkaan oikeuksia, demokratiaa tai itsemääräämisoikeutta.

Tehdessään näitä erotteluja aasialaisen ja läntisen sivilisaation välille, asiantuntijat hyödynsivät kulttuurisia vastakäsitteitä, ”ateistinen” ja ”pakanallinen”. Näillä sanoilla he kuvasivat Kiinan ja Japanin uskontoja ja tieteitä, jotka asiantuntijoiden mukaan olivat ”vääriä” (false), tai eivät oikeita uskontoja ja tieteitä lainkaan. Tämä johtui siitä, että japanilaiset ja kiinalaiset olivat asiantuntijoiden mukaan epärationaalisia, herkkäuskoisia ja kyvyttömiä itsenäiseen ajatteluun tai tutkimukseen. Länsimaalaisia he taas pitivät rationaalisina, loogisina, kekseliäinä sekä järkevinä ja länsimaisia tieteitä ja uskontoa ”todellisina” (true). Toisaalta, Lafcadio Hearn uskoi, että kristinusko itse asiassa vertautui irrationaalisuuteen ja taikauskoon, kun taas japanilainen ja kiinalainen buddhalaisuus oli yhdenmukainen järjen ja tieteen oppien kanssa.

Valtaosa asiantuntijoista esitti kiinalaiset ja japanilaiset kansakuntana villipilliseksi, ja he kutsuivat aasialaista mikrotason sivistystä, kuten kohteliaisuutta ja hyväntahtoisuutta, epärehelliseksi. He myös käyttivät ajallisia vastakäsitteitä, kuten feodaalinen, pysähtynyt, primitiivinen ja lapsenomainen, osoittaakseen että aasialainen sivilisaatio oli kehittymätön ja vailla historiaa. Rodullisten vastakäsitteiden käytössä asiantuntijat olivat kuitenkin varovaisempia siitä huolimatta, että rotuopilliset ideologiat ja teoriat olivat aikakaudella vallitsevia. Asiantuntijoille rotu oli paitsi biologinen, myös kulttuurinen ja kielellinen kategoria, jonka avulla he jaottelivat maailman ”alempiin” (inferior), ”heikompiin” (weaker) ja ”ylempiin” (superior) kansoihin. Mutta erityisesti ne neljä asiantuntijaa (Williams, Martin, Smith ja Griffis), jotka olivat henkilökohtaisesti mukana sivistysmissiossa, uskoivat että kaikki ihmisrodut olivat perimmiltään kykeneviä liittymään marssiin kohti korkeampia tasoja *Civilization*-prosessissa.

Vastakäsitteiden lisäksi erityisesti protestanttiset kirjoittajat hyödynsivät lääketieteellisiä ja agraarisia analogioita sekä lähetykskirjallisuudelle ominaisia metaforia kuten valo ja pimeys. Asettamalla aasialaisen sivilisaation länsimaisen sivilisaation – ja ennen kaikkea sen amerikkalaisen sivuhaaran – vastakohdaksi, asiantuntijat loivat retorisen rakennelman, jonka avulla oli helppo esittää sekä kritiikkiä että ylistystä omaa sivilisaatiota kohtaan. Viime kädessä tämä idän ja lännen sivilisaatioiden vastakohtaisuus oli paljon enemmän kuin pelkkä retorinen konstruktio, ja sen vaikutukset ulottuivat niin Kiinan, Japanin kuin Yhdysvaltojenkin sisä- ja ulkopoliittikkaan sekä kansainvälisiin suhteisiin.

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APPENDIX

TABLE 1. Frequency of the concept of civilization, and its co-occurrences

Author, title, year	Civiliz -ation -e -ed (frequency of occurrences ¹)	Attached words (examples of co-occurrences)	Attached verbs (examples of co- occurrences)
W. E. Griffis <i>The Mikado's Empire: Book I.</i> 2006a [1895 edition, original 1876]	55	continental, Chinese, Japanese, Roman, Asiatic, Western, European, Turanian, foreign, of Christendom, West, Europe, America, civilizations (plural) ancient, new, modern, course, path of, high, higher, step in the scale of, progress of, irresistible momentum of, "civilized world", hunter, farmer, husbandry division of labor, arts, factors, elements of, comfort, luxury, wealth, division of labor, letters, education, laws, politics, social organization, ethics, science, philosophy, religion, Buddhism, innovations, medicine, art Vs. barbarism, half-savage, savage, rude state, aborigine, uncivilized	bring, induce by contact, receive, accumulate, be influenced by, teach, study, borrow, assimilate, must adopt, pressure to, adopt, impelled to, adopt, select, improve upon, reject

¹ Figures are approximate.

<p>W. E. Griffis</p> <p><i>The Mikado's Empire: Book II & III.</i> 1903 [Book II, original 1876]</p>	<p>77</p>	<p>Asiatic, foreign, Christian, Japanese, Western, of Japan, of Christendom, of the sages, civilizations (plural), race, new, modern, path of, onward march of, advance of, evolution, superior, superiority of, higher/highest form of, elevated, low level of, semi-, scale of, unique, incompatible, "civilized countries", "highly civilized countries", "civilized world", great civilizing powers, motors, root, fruits, forces, elements of: the press, the Bible, religion of Christ, telegraph, railroad, wealth, clothes, national army, might, outward appliances of, glittering veneer of material, march of mind, condition of woman</p> <p>Vs. boor, barbarian, aborigine, primitive</p>	<p>encounter, assimilate, adopt, change, must/ ought to accept, impress, penetrate, elevate, rise, prepare, give a lesson, study, receive, flout, insult</p>
<p>W. E. Griffis</p> <p><i>Japan in History, Folk Lore and Art.</i> 1892</p>	<p>34</p>	<p>European, Chinese, Japanese, Western, Eastern, of Christendom, civilizations (plural), new, old, modern, superiority, wonder-world, rudiments of, arts, sciences, letters, writing, history, diplomacy, commerce, abolishing feudalism, constitutional government, modern principles of law, dress, food, ideas, habits, customs,</p>	<p>receive influences, give an object-lesson, introduce, opened to, import, study, develop, adopt, reconcile</p>

		lighthouses, schools, colleges, postal and money systems, outward features Vs. savage, barbarism, uncivilized	
<p>W. E. Griffis <i>The Religions of Japan.</i> 2006b [1895]</p>	60	<p>Christian, Chinese, Asiatic, western, Hindu, Aryan, Eastern, Western, Japanese, of India, of continental Asia, of Europe, of the United States, civilizations (plural), stage of, less, improvement, advance, modern, paralysis, cultured, [China] the mother of, exterior forces, engine of, resources of, details and elements of, crucial test of, agriculture, culture, enlightenment, art, aesthetic, literature, letters, knowledge, education, erudition, science, medicine, freedom of inquiry, exploration, philosophy, government, law, stability, sociology, spiritual progress, stage of religion, Buddhism, morals, spiritual emancipation, freedom from idol worship, Shinto, ethical, nobler humanity, peace, position of / attitude toward woman, foundation, necessity: fire, agriculture, industry, iron, wealth, easy and settled life, appliances, inventions, benefits, commerce, material, material improvement</p> <p>Vs. uncivilized, primitive, ignorant, rude, idolatry, savage, savagery, aborigines</p>	<p>introduce, import, bring, receive, improve, infuse, filter in, extend, radiate, open, test, meet, crystallize into shape, study, die</p>

<p>W. E. Griffis</p> <p><i>America in the East.</i> 1900 [1899]</p>	46	<p>Occidental, Chinese, Christian, American, Egypt, Assyria, India, Hindu, Indo-Germanic races, Anglo-Saxon, China the mother of, civilizations (plural), many, one, single type, new, modern, old, ancient, primeval, planes of, grades of, standard of, greater, highly "civilized countries", "civilized world", enlightened, culture, nature [= climate], elements, resources, interests of: Buddhism, religion, luxury, commerce, literature, science, art, law, writing, chronology, good government, institutions, railways, lighthouses, telegraphs, submarine cables, spirit in, bane of</p> <p>Vs. barbarians, barbarism</p>	<p>emerge, introduce, open to, propagate, extend, give an object-lesson in, teach, lay foundations of, uplift, govern, fit</p>
<p>L. Hearn</p> <p><i>Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan.</i> Vol. I. 1894a</p>	2	<p>Western, new</p>	<p>invade</p>
<p>L. Hearn</p> <p><i>Glimpses of</i></p>	19	<p>Greek, Occidental, Western, civilizations (plural), old,</p>	<p>share, assimilate, change of,</p>

<p><i>Unfamiliar Japan.</i> Vol. II. 1894b</p>		<p>“civilized world”, [Western civilization:] far-reaching, selfish desires, moral weakness, artificial, high-pressure, no benefit to the masses, constant change, religions, benefits, social disintegration</p> <p>Vs. savages</p>	<p>force upon, thrust upon, struggle, escape</p>
<p>L. Hearn <i>Out of the East.</i> 1895</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>Greek, European, Western, “civilized world,” “civilized nations” standard, highly, monstrous, pain, inhumanity, aggression, suffering, selfishness, individuality, imitation, pleasure, refinement, luxury, arts of industrial competition, scientific powers of aggression and destruction, systems of knowledge, sculpture, painting, decoration, architecture, literature, drama, music, taste, manners, customs, conduct, ethics, philosophy, religion</p>	<p>force, bid, receive an impact by armed aggression, by commercial impulse, by the influence of ideas, study, admire, adopt, imitate, girdle, judge,</p>
<p>L. Hearn <i>Kokoro.</i> 1896</p>	<p>39</p>	<p>Western, English, Japanese, so-called Christian, of races professing Christianity, of Greeks, civilizations (plural), totally reverse “civilized world,” “civilized countries”, superior, modern, highly, new, state of transmitted, irresistible, inevitable</p>	<p>change, adopt, study, produce permanent psychological results</p>

		<p>force of, character of, religion, conventions, mental, moral, social, ethical, material, [Western civilization:] deficient morality, blot of, weakness, perpetual wicked struggle, misery, vice, crime, luxury, wastefulness, inhumanity, reckless consumption, cruel, force, craft</p> <p>vs. state of barbarism, primitive, savagery</p>	
<p>L. Hearn <i>Exotics and Retrospectives.</i> 1914 [1898]</p>	10	<p>Western, highly civilized races, adult, refined, cultivated, humane, aesthetic love of nature, security, habit, training of mind, social discipline, regret, nobler mental and moral qualities</p> <p>Vs. nature, savage, primitive, emotional, child</p>	train
<p>P. Lowell <i>The Soul of the Far East.</i> 2007b [1888]</p>	32	<p>Far Eastern, Japanese, Chinese, Western, of Japan old</p> <p>state of development, standard, equal, half, semi-, measure, advance in, more advanced, ever-increasing, progression, evolution, slow progress, partially arrested development, stationary, status quo, vis inertiae, conservative, laggard position, less advanced, height of, annihilating,</p>	<p>possess, imitate, borrow, copy, import, accept, reject, surpass, attain, stature, move, perfect, help, hinder,</p>

		<p>passive, completed race-life, mental development, vital force, force at work, imagination, oddities, anomalies, soul of, centre of, ingredients, impersonality, sense of self, individuality, individualization, superficial amenities, refinement, refined, legal safeguards, truth, veracity, trade, clothes, haste, arts, material, modern inventions, science, complex social relations, state of society, mind-machinery, creeds</p> <p>Vs. aboriginal, rudimentary, primitive, simplicity, savagery, barbaric</p>	<p>compare, perish, survive, bear fruit</p>
<p>P. Lowell</p> <p><i>Occult Japan or the Way of the Gods.</i> 1895 [1894]</p>	2	<p>condition of</p> <p>Vs. state of nature, savage</p>	
<p>W. A. P. Martin</p> <p><i>The Chinese: Their Education, Philosophy, and Letters.</i> 1881 [Hanlin Papers: First Series. 1880]</p>	34	<p>Christian, Chinese, Western, of Christendom, phases of, path of, high grade, scale of progress of, highly, lower type, slow rate of movement, temporary weakness, failure, "tendency towards homogenization of civilization", civilized commerce, civilized, warfare, "civilized nations",</p>	<p>admit, adapt to, attain, acquire, absorb, borrow, copy, cultivate, improve, engraft on, instruct,</p>

		<p>contact, collision, different, antipodes, seeds/germs of, roots of, sources of arts, letters, knowledge, history, religion, commerce, intellectual activity, mental emancipation, innovations, revolutions, social and political organization, architecture, energy, assimilative power, changes</p> <p>Vs. barbarism</p>	<p>crystallize, judge, comprehend, supersede, be affected by contact</p>
<p>W. A. P. Martin</p> <p><i>Hanlin Papers: Second Series. Essays on the History, Philosophy, and Religion of the Chinese. 1894</i></p>	31	<p>Chinese, Western, of China, of Europe, civilizations (plural), state, people, empire, race, separated, antiquity, old, new, stages, rise, higher, more, advanced, elaborate, cultivated, nomad, agriculture, ruder type, decay, “civilized world”, “most civilized nations”, public law, interchange of embassies elements of, letters, culture, laws, external form, rich, populous</p> <p>Vs. barbarian, savage</p>	<p>found, yield to the influence, derive, influence, shape, select, fix the form, exchange barbarism for, obtain, inherit, judge, Europeanize, make Christian</p>
<p>W. A. P. Martin</p> <p><i>A Cycle of Cathay 1900 [1896]</i></p>	23	<p>Christian, Western, Chinese, of the West, China, Europe, civilizations (plural), the scale of, (respectable) standard of, a high place in, better, higher, more, progress, ancient, “tendency toward homogeneity of civilization”,</p>	<p>bring, introduce, sow, spread, trample over, repudiate, earn, absorb, adopt, learn,</p>

		<p>“laws of civilized warfare”, root, comfort, elements of, arts, sciences, architecture, accompaniments, appliances of: steamer, telegraph, railway, national renovation</p> <p>Vs. uncivilized, barbarism</p>	maintain
<p>W. A. P. Martin <i>Lore of Cathay.</i> 1901</p>	47	<p>Christian, Chinese, Western, of China, of the Far East, of Christendom, of Europe, ancient, old, new, progress, higher, high grade, scale of, stages of, acme, rising, elaborate, advanced, cultivated, different, antipode, separated, “civilized world,” “family of civilized States”, “civilized warfare” bed-rock of, factors of, sources of, pioneers of, leading powers of, limit of, human, common, material, laws, letters, printing, morality, architecture, religion, language, mental emancipation, inquiry, energy, failure</p> <p>Vs. barbarian</p>	<p>engraft on, attain, acquire, inherit, crystallize, be affected by contact and collision, collide, judge, measure, comprehend, derive, influence, copy, absorb, yield, cultivate, improve, promote, exchange barbarism for, decay, rise, secure</p>
<p>A. H. Smith <i>Chinese Characteristics.</i></p>	49	<p>Chinese, Occidental, Christian, of China, of the West, modern, of our day, of the nineteenth century, ancient, developed, superior, more, most, high</p>	<p>win its way, obtrude upon, remove, barriers, produce</p>

<p>First edition 1890.</p> <hr/> <p>(<i>Chinese Characteristics</i>. Revised 5th edition, 1894)</p>	<hr/> <p>36</p>	<p>degree of, semi-, foreign, difference, rivalry, “civilized nation/lands/country/peoples” mankind, object-lessons, effete, imperfect, boasted, inconveniences of, comfort, forms of, fruit of, characteristics of, moral, physical forces, moulding force of, Christianity, womanhood, freedom of intercourse, Western culture, “funded civilization,” material, postal system, roads, currency, telephone, telegraph, bank, railway, steam, electricity, mines, navigation, institutions, ballot-box, Western science, nervous excitement, auxiliary of, commerce, charity</p> <p>Vs. uncivilized, savage, primeval, barbarous, barbarism</p>	<p>effects, accumulate</p>
<p>A. H. Smith <i>Village Life in China.</i></p>	<p>9</p>	<p>Chinese, Occidental, of the west, of China, civilizations (plural), ancient, antiquity, modern,</p>	<p>accomplish reformation, operate, produce</p>

1899		gauge, wide interval between, highly civilized race, developed, advancing, conservative, form of, complex character of, commerce, diplomacy, extension of political relations, sympathy for childhood	effects
A. H. Smith <i>China in Convulsion.</i> Vol. I. 1901a	13	Western, European, Chinese, civilizations (plural), modern, advanced, cultivated/ civilized race, march of, obstacles, "civilized country/ world", sufferers, adjuncts of, railway, science	spread, steady advance of, make war upon, entertain a respect, harmonize, reduce to order
A. H. Smith <i>China in Convulsion.</i> Vol. II. 1901b	12	Western, Occidental, of China, of the West modern, ancient, "civilized States/world", compact, worst phase, highest qualities of, Pandora Box of evil and of good, integral part of, Christianity, "funded civilization", commerce, steamships, railways, telegraphs, mines, military force, large place for the fair sex, ladies Vs. savages	end relations with, be in operation, alter conditions, bring about, regenerate by contact, renovate, adapt
S. W. Williams <i>The Middle Kingdom.</i> Vol. I.	39	Chinese, Siamese, Burmese, Christian, Asiatic, European, Siberian, of the Chinese, of Christian lands, of the tribes, civilizations (plural),	compare, judge, adopt, attain, develop,

<p>1913a [1882 Revised edition]</p>		<p>modern, advances, higher, half-, superior, improvement, development of, comparison, tests of, criteria, inferior, equal to, darkest/brightest day of, “most civilized nation”, “great family of civilized nations”, foreign, general, different, polished, ridicule, pagan, conceit, peculiar, advantages, excellences and defects, knowledge, manners, language, letters, literature, arts, learning, government, institutions, religious, political and domestic life, railroads, telegraphs, manufactures, mechanical arts, legal provisions, luxury, wealth, elegance, priestcraft, external, woman - position, degree of skill, national character, habits, notions, Christianity, Bible, climate</p> <p>Vs. uncivilized, uncivilization, ignorance, barbarity</p>	<p>introduce, enlighten, reign</p>
<p>————— <i>(The Middle Kingdom. Vol. I. 1848, original version)</i></p>	<p>————— 38</p>		

<p>S. W. Williams</p> <p><i>The Middle Kingdom.</i> Vol. II. 1913b [1882 Revised edition]</p>	<p>33</p>	<p>British, Christian, western, Chinese, European, of European nations, of Formosa, civilizations (plural), path of, different degrees, criteria of, tests of, state of, higher plane of, most, advance of, unparalleled, more perfect, desirable condition, real, enlarged, enlightened, difference, ancient, effete, backward, much-despised, less, "civilized nation", blessings of, society, good government, institutions, morals, arts, science, laws, education, religious liberty, liberty, women - degree of respect, war, arms, comfort, commerce, light of the gospel, wealth, western machines, methods, adjuncts of modern European life, regeneration, reformation, bankruptcy, conflict between capital and labor, polite,</p> <p>Vs. barbarian, barbarous state</p>	<p>modify, measure, introduce, extend the influence of, exercise a beneficent rule, adopt (vs. extravagant and premature adoption), adjust, apply to, expand, ennoble, improve, advance, rise, push forward, raise, force into, trample under foot, increase, respect, harmonize</p>
<p>(<i>The Middle Kingdom.</i> Vol. II. 1848, original version)</p>	<p>19</p>		

TABLE 2. Related concepts and the opposites of civilization

Author, title, year	Related concepts (frequency of occurrences ¹)	Antonyms (frequency of occurrences ²)
<p style="text-align: center;">W. E. Griffis</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Mikado's Empire:</i> <i>Book I.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">2006a [1895 edition, original 1876]</p>	<p>Progress³ -ive: 7</p> <p>Evolution⁴ -al: 0</p> <p>Race⁵: 19</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 36</p> <p>Savage -ry: 21</p> <p>Uncivili -zation, - zed: 2</p>

¹ Figures are approximate.

² Figures are approximate.

³ Included in the count are instances when the word was used in any of the following 19th century definitions: Noun. "Advancement to a further or higher stage, or to further or higher stages successively; growth; development, usually to a better state or condition; improvement; an instance of this;" "A moving forward in growth; increase; as the progress of a plant or animal;" "Advance in business of any kind; --- the progress of arts;" "Advance in knowledge; intellectual or moral improvement; proficiency." Verb. "To proceed to a further or higher stage, or to further or higher stages continuously; to develop, increase; (esp.) to advance to a better state or condition; to improve." Excluded are e.g. the following definitions: Noun. "The action of stepping or marching forward or onward; onward march; journeying, travelling, travel; (also) an instance of this; a journey, an expedition;" "--in progress: in the process of happening or being carried out;" "Removal; passage from place to place." Verb. "To make a progress --or journey; to journey, travel; spec. to make a state journey, to travel ceremoniously, as a royal, noble, or official personage. ("progress, n." American Dictionary of the English Language, 1828; "progress, n." Oxford English Dictionary, 2013; "progress, v." Oxford English Dictionary, 2013) Excluded are also cases in which the word appeared in a title (e.g. of a book) or in a name of an organization (e.g. the Japanese political party Rikken Kaishintō, Constitutional Progressive Party, which was called the "Progressist" party.

⁴ All occurrences, except for book/article titles, are counted.

⁵ Figure includes the occurrences of the word in a sense of "A group of people, animals, or plants, connected by common descent or origin. a) A group of people belonging to the same family and descended from a common ancestor; a house, family, kindred. b) A tribe, nation, or people, regarded as of common stock. In early use freq. with modifying adjective, as British race, Roman race, etc. c) A group of several tribes or peoples, regarded as forming a distinct ethnic set. d) According to various more or less formal systems of classification: any of the major groupings of mankind, having in common distinct physical features or having a similar ethnic background." Excluded are the senses "A running; a rapid course or motion, either on the feet, on horseback or in a carriage, &c.; particularly, a contest in running; a running in competition for a prize;" "A strong or rapid current of water, or the channel or passage for such a current; as a mill-race." ("Race, n." American Dictionary of the English Language, 1828; "race, n.6" Oxford English Dictionary, 2013.)

<p style="text-align: center;">W. E. Griffis <i>The Mikado's Empire: Book II & III.</i> 1903 [Book II, original 1876]</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 33 Evolution -al: 6 Race : 14</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 15 Savage -ry: 8 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 0</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">W. E. Griffis <i>Japan in History, Folk Lore and Art.</i> 1892</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 3 Evolution -al: 1 Race : 3</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 7 Savage -ry: 12 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 2</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">W. E. Griffis <i>The Religions of Japan.</i> 2006b [1895]</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 10 Evolution -al: 12 Race : 5</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 12 Savage -ry: 14 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 2</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">W. E. Griffis <i>America in the East.</i> 1900 [1899]</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 16 Evolution -al: 5 Race : 24</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 13 Savage -ry: 6 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 0</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">L. Hearn <i>Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan.</i> Vol. I. 1894a</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 2 Evolution -al: 5 Race : 11</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 3 Savage -ry: 3 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 0</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">L. Hearn <i>Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan.</i> Vol. II. 1894b</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 3 Evolution -al: 6 Race : 31</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 0 Savage -ry: 8 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 0</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">L. Hearn <i>Out of the East.</i> 1895</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 6 Evolution -al: 11 Race : 43</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 1 Savage -ry: 3 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 0</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">L. Hearn <i>Kokoro.</i> 1896</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 14 Evolution -al: 35 Race : 54</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 7 Savage -ry: 5 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 0</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">L. Hearn <i>Exotics and Retrospectives.</i></p>	<p>Progress -ive: 0 Evolution -al: 28</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 2</p>

<p>1914 [1898]</p>	<p>Race : 20</p>	<p>Savage -ry: 7 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 0</p>
<p>P. Lowell <i>The Soul of the Far East.</i> 2007a [1888]</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 13 Evolution -al: 11 Race : 32</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 2 Savage -ry: 3 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 0</p>
<p>P. Lowell <i>Occult Japan or the Way of the Gods.</i> 1895 [1894]</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 2 Evolution -al: 8 Race : 24</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 1 Savage -ry: 3 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 0</p>
<p>W. A. P. Martin <i>The Chinese: Their Education, Philosophy, and Letters.</i> 1881 [Hanlin Papers: First Series. 1880]</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 31 Evolution -al: 3 Race : 22</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 9 Savage -ry: 2 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 0</p>
<p>W. A. P. Martin <i>Hanlin Papers: Second Series. Essays on the History, Philosophy, and Religion of the Chinese.</i> 1894</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 4 Evolution -al: 3 Race : 14</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 32 Savage -ry: 10 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 0</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">W. A. P. Martin</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A Cycle of Cathay</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1900 [1896]</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 28</p> <p>Evolution -al: 1</p> <p>Race : 10</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 14</p> <p>Savage -ry: 10</p> <p>Uncivili -zation, -zed: 1</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">W. A. P. Martin</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Lore of Cathay.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1901</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 23</p> <p>Evolution -al: 6</p> <p>Race : 25</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 33</p> <p>Savage -ry: 7</p> <p>Uncivili -zation, -zed: 0</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">A. H. Smith</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Chinese Characteristics.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">First edition 1890.</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 20px auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Chinese Characteristics.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Revised 5th edition, 1894)</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 5</p> <p>Evolution -al: 5</p> <p>Race : 78</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 20px auto;"/> <p>Progress-: 4</p> <p>Evolution-: 0</p> <p>Race: 54</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 20</p> <p>Savage -ry: 4</p> <p>Uncivili -zation, -zed: 1</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 20px auto;"/> <p>Barbar-: 11</p> <p>Savage-: 1</p> <p>Uncivili-: 1</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">A. H. Smith <i>Village Life in China.</i> 1899</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 5 Evolution -al: 3 Race : 28</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 3 Savage -ry: 3 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 0</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">A. H. Smith <i>China in Convulsion.</i> Vol. I. 1901a</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 12 Evolution -al: 2 Race : 14</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 18 Savage -ry: 3 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 0</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">A. H. Smith <i>China in Convulsion.</i> Vol. II. 1901b</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 2 Evolution -al: 1 Race : 9</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 11 Savage -ry: 9 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 0</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">S. W. Williams <i>The Middle Kingdom.</i> Vol. I. 1913a [1882 Revised edition]</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(The Middle Kingdom.</i> Vol. I. 1848, original version)</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 8 Evolution -al: 3 Race : 67</p> <hr/> <p>Progress -: 7 Evolution -: 0 Race: 58</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 16 Savage -ry: 7 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 3</p> <hr/> <p>Barbar -: 15 Savage -: 3 Uncivil -: 2</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">S. W. Williams <i>The Middle Kingdom.</i> Vol. II. 1913b [1882 Revised edition]</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">(<i>The Middle Kingdom.</i> Vol. II. 1848, original version)</p>	<p>Progress -ive: 28 Evolution -al: 5 Race : 29</p> <hr/> <p>Progress -: 16 Evolution -: 0 Race: 29)</p>	<p>Barbar -ism, -ian, -ic, -ous -ity: 58 Savage -ry: 8 Uncivili -zation, -zed: 0</p> <hr/> <p>Barbar -: 46 Savage -: 2 Uncivil -: 0)</p>
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