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Out of the East:
Emily Dickinson and Lafcadio Hearn

by
Kenneth J. Bassett, B.A.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
Department of English

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and Research acceptance of this thesis

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Emily Dickinson and Lafcadio Hearn

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts

Thesis Supervisor

Chair, Department of English
Language and Literature

Carleton University
May 1998

Dedicated to
Frances Smith, Ian Cameron, and Tom Henighan

and in memory of Michael Thompson:

" . . . but for myself I know
I stirred certain vibrations in Spoon River
Which are my true epitaph, more lasting than stone."

Edgar Lee Masters

Abstract

This paper will discuss the influence of the East on two nineteenth-century writers, Emily Dickinson and Lafcadio Hearn. Emily Dickinson constructed a mock-Eden from the materials furnished by her immediate environment. Lafcadio Hearn lived the last fourteen years of his life in Japan, and through self-immersion became a part of an unfamiliar world. Both writers turn to the East as a source of creative power, Dickinson to a familiar landscape charged with new meaning, Hearn to an alien culture made a paradise through his imagination.

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Introduction

The process by which Europe became aware of the East was, as Edward Said has noted, largely a textual one. Information about the Orient was disseminated throughout the West through accounts of ancient authors, travel literature, and the efforts of scholars, as well as those descriptions of the East contained in the Bible. Up until what was known as the Mongol Peace of the fourteenth century--a period of relative tranquility in which merchants and pilgrims swarmed into the East, biblical sources and classical authors were still the best authorities on the East. Some attempts had been made prior to this period to "explain" Islam and account for its peoples. The Venerable Bede traced the origin of the Saracens to Hagar, the wife of Abraham, and her son, Ishmael, the wild man of the desert against whom every hand was raised. Paul Alverus, in A.D. 852, found evidence in the Book of Daniel to equate the rise of Islam with the last days. In 1143 the Cluniac monks translated the Koran from Arabic into Latin. But Orientalism as a field of study, Said notes, "is considered to have commenced its formal existence with the decision of the Church Council of Vienna in 1312 to establish a series of chairs in "Arabic, Greek, Hebrew and Syriac at Paris, Oxford, Bologna, Avignon, and Salamanca" (1979, 49-50).

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, writers continued the habit of studying the East with reference to the Bible. "Many of them," wrote Marshall and Williams in The Great Map of Mankind, "were more concerned with traces of antiquity than with any civilizations they actually saw" (1982, 10). More attempts were made to translate Eastern scripture. In 1673 a Dutch clergyman, Abraham Roger, published an actual Hindu text, known as the Sentences of

Bhartrihari, translated into English by John Ogilby. A Jesuit, Philip Couplet, published a translation of three of the Chinese Four Books in 1687. A fellow Jesuit, Father Francois Noel, provided the fourth, as well as a Latin translation of the Classic of Filial Piety by a disciple of Confucius, Tzeng-Tsu. La Loubere's A New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam (English translation, 1693), provided "one of the fullest of the early European descriptions of Buddhism" (Marshall and Williams 1982, 20).

In the eighteenth century, publications on the East reached "flood-tide proportions" (Marshall and Williams 1982, 45). Simon Ockley's influential History of the Saracens, was translated into English in 1708 and George Sale's English version of the Koran was published in 1734. With the aid of William Jones, Wilkins translated the Sanskrit code of laws, known as the Institutes of Manu, in 1775. A servant of the East India Company, Charles Wilkins made an English translation of the Bhagavad Gita in 1785. In Paris in 1786 Abraham Duperron translated the Upanishads.

Another feature of eighteenth-century Orientalism was the attempt to systematize the East. "Dictionaries" of the East, such as d'Herbolot's Bibliothèque Oriental (1697), represented early attempts to consolidate knowledge of the Orient. Societies and periodicals devoted to the Orient came into being. The eighteenth century saw the birth of "institutionalized collections" (Marshall and Williams 1982, 58) of Eastern art and artifacts, exemplified by the establishment (by an Act of Parliament) of the British Museum in 1753. By the mid eighteenth century a process began whereby the Orient, in Edward Said's words, was canonized. The new breed of Orientalist scholars were not biblical specialists but individuals like Silvestre de Sacy, Ernest Renan, and Edward William Lane, who attempted "to place Orientalism on a scientific and

rational basis" (1979, 122). Orientalism took on the appurtenances of a scholarly discipline, a specialized vocabulary, a system of cross-referencing, a way of speaking for and about the East that gained power with the growth of empire in the nineteenth century.

Said's Orientalism is concerned with the process whereby discussion and interpretation of the East, which reached its peak in the age of imperialism, became the special province of the academic specialist. It may seem negligent, therefore, to leave off a discussion of Orientalism just as it reaches its height. But what I am concerned with is the effect of Orientalism on two writers who were non-academics, Emily Dickinson and Lafcadio Hearn. Lafcadio Hearn went to the East, but Emily Dickinson acquired what Said has called a kind of second-order knowledge of the East--knowledge gleaned from popular travel books, images in Orientalist painting, and the spillage from academic inquiry. As Henri Baudet suggests, one of the most pervasive images to be derived from this popular vision of the East was the myth of the earthly paradise, located somewhere in the Orient (1965, 4-5).

The myth of the "golden age," as Baudet writes in Paradise on Earth, is as old as Western civilization (1965. 7). It was first located in time, in a distant, uncomplicated past. With the advent of the Crusades, broadening Western awareness of other cultures gave rise to the suggestion that paradise was more a question of geography than history. The seat of paradise was first identified as the land nearest to Eden, Ethiopia. The search for Ethiopia and its priest-king, Prester John, was not without political implications. It was undertaken in the hope of forming an alliance with a (supposed) Christian nation in the midst of Islam. But Ethiopia was also a country with strong ties to Eden. The river Gi-hon, one of the four heads of the river of Eden, flowed into it (Genesis 2:13). Ethiopia's proximity to the biblical Eden made it a link to

paradise. For medieval Europe, Ethiopia "could not be far removed from a true state of bliss" (Baudet 1965, 16). It was, perhaps, the first country made to service European fantasies (Sir John Mandeville asserted that the Ethiopians ate from cups and dishes made of precious stones), and others would follow. Ethiopia existed in the European mind as a political reality, an imaginative construct, a potential ally, and a potential Eden.

In the wake of European expansionism, the seat of paradise shifted with each fresh discovery. In the Atlantic era, the native American became the figure of European fantasies concerning that mythical occupant of paradise, the noble savage. China, in the eighteenth century, emerged as "an immense, remarkable land of perfect peace" (Baudet 1965, 44). The vogue for China was particularly strong. It provided, as Walter Davis notes, "the only living prototype of Deistic ethics known to eighteenth century thinkers" (Ching and Oxtoby 1992, 24). The English Sinophile Sir William Temple declares: "It were endless to enumerate all the excellent orders of this state" (Marshall and Williams 1982, 23), and William Chambers, the author of the Dissertation on Oriental Gardening of 1772 (Marshall and Williams 1982, 24), built a pagoda and other Chinese-influenced buildings at Kew Gardens. The Chinese were strutted across the European stage, as had been the peoples of America before them in Dryden's The Indian Queene. Voltaire called his L'Orphelin de la Chine, "the morals of Confucius in 5 acts" (Ching and Oxtoby 1992, 22).

But to speak of plays is perhaps fitting, for to many the Orient was theatre. Some played at dress-up. Julia Margaret Cameron photographed Holman Hunt in Eastern garb. Some who went to the East went as actors. Richard Burton and William Gifford Palgrave disguised themselves to enter territory forbidden to Europeans. It is partly in this sense that Said speaks of

the East as "staged" by the West. In this scenario the West, as author/director, stands omnipotent before the East. The West speaks for, or represents, the East, which can do little more than act out its appointed part. But in such a situation there is little room for the exchange of ideas. A number of artists, however, were affected by their encounter with the East, whether in their own drawing rooms or in the actual Orient.

In her discussion of nineteenth century Orientalist painting, the art historian MaryAnne Stevens noted that artists attempted to apply the conventions of the Picturesque, as exemplified by Claude and Poussin, to Eastern subjects (1984, 17-18). Poussin approached compositional space with the precision of a mathematician and Claude's nostalgia-filled canvases hark back to a golden age of harmony with nature. But artists encountering the Orient found they had to adapt Picturesque conventions of light, space, and subject matter to accommodate the landscape. Faced with the challenge of depicting the desert, a number of artists were forced "to invent their own visual vocabularies" (Stevens 1984, 19). In Stevens's book, the reproduction of Belly's Pilgrims Going to Mecca (1861) and Gustave Guillaumont's The Desert (1867) struggle with the problem of depicting a landscape with a seemingly endless horizon--a horizon unbroken by vegetation and infused with blinding light. The dead camel in the foreground of The Desert, and the weariness of Belly's pilgrims, signal a departure from the idyllic subject matter of the Picturesque.

Faced with the problem of depicting unfamiliar landscapes, a number of artists modified their technique (Belly's desert does not conform to compositional regularity but threatens to spill out of the canvas). Their response to the Orient, writes Stevens, "may be closer to a 'dialogue' between cultures than a 'discourse'" (Stevens 1984, 19). Others were challenged in even more

subtle ways. In 1886 Charles Doughty embarked on a twenty-month journey through northern Arabia. In a world where many Europeans sought to disguise their origins by adopting Eastern dress or, in some cases, by attempting to "pass" as Muslims, Doughty never concealed his nationality or his faith. His encounters with the Bedouin were sometimes perilous, yet he came to realize that Bedouin life was moulded from the harsh conditions of the desert. "Their spirits," he observed in Travels in Arabia Deserta, "are made weary with incessant apprehension of their enemies, and their flesh from continual thirst and hunger" (Tidrick 1981, 150).

Of the sheiks Doughty noted that they were not despots but "noblemen of the desert, men of ripe moderation, peacemakers of a certain erudite and subtle judgement" (Tidrick 1981, 151). Doughty was also capable of seeing beyond a stereotypical view of the Bedouin. In the East existed a long tradition of conferring nobility onto the Bedouin, the "free" people of the desert, and of praising their legendary hospitality. Doughty also notes that "[e]very Beduin [sic] tent is sanctuary in the land of Ishmael" (Tidrick 1981, 151), yet he attributes this to more than good manners. In Bedouin society a certain equality and interdependence sprang from the need to survive. Bedouin charity was the result of a profound awareness that each person, European or Arab, was a guest in the desert, dependent on God's grace for survival. Consequently, Doughty concluded, Bedouin society contained the elements of a "natural religion" (Tidrick 1981, 151).

But it is existential terror, not God's wonder-working providence, that Doughty confronts in one critical passage. Pausing before the "iron desolation" of the lava field of the Harra Desert he writes:

"There is a startling conscience within a man of his mesquin being . . . in the presence of the divine stature of the elemental world!—this lion-like sleep of

cosmographic forces in which is swallowed up the gnat of the soul within him--that short motion and parasitical usurpation which is the weak accident of life in matter." (Tidrick 1981, 152)

In the immensity of the desert Doughty referred to his soul as an insect. The desert is a lion that, even in slumber, has the power to crush him. Though Doughty is careful to impute "divine stature" to the elemental world, the sentiment is decidedly un-Christian. The desert, not Doughty, would prevail.

A similar feeling of, if you will, gestalt, was described by another Victorian traveller in the East. Sir Richard Burton's Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah recounts his success at being the first European to view the Ka'abah in Mecca. After a long and arduous journey, Burton confronted the stone, which, he notes, was the "bourn of my long and weary pilgrimage":

I may truly say that, of all the worshippers who clung weeping to the curtain, none felt for the moment a deeper emotion than did the Haji from the the far north. . . . But, to confess humbling truth, theirs was the high feeling of religious enthusiasm, mine was the ecstasy of gratified pride. (Burton 1986, vol. II, 161)

As attitudes towards the Arabic people turned slowly from unqualified hatred, and as European society became more complex, the Arabs became figures of envy. The crisis of faith experienced by Europe in the nineteenth century provoked religious leaders to look elsewhere for examples of piety. They found it in Arabia. The devisiveness of European society was set against the (apparent) unity of the Arab world, their devotion to Islam against a society whose new God was science. The Arabs, said David Wilkie, "look as if they have never changed since

the time of Abraham" (Stevens 1984, 33). The nineteenth-century contribution to the myth of the Arab was to emphasize this timelessness, from which emerged a picture (replicated many times over by artists such as Wilkie), of a homogeneous society marked by religious devotion. Burton, on viewing the Ka'abah, contrasts his own fleeting sense of victory with the "high feeling" of his fellow pilgrims. Insofar as Burton identifies the intense religiosity of the Arabs, he may be said to be reflecting contemporary notions of the strength of their faith. But this cannot account for his sense of shame. Having accomplished his most elaborate ruse, Burton is cowed by the true meaning of the spectacle he is witnessing. The man who, as the Earl of Dunraven noted, "prided himself on looking like Satan" (Burne 1985, 1) was humbled by a stone.

In Orientalism Edward Said made the important point that the East "helped to define Europe" (1979, 12). The definition of the Orient evolved along with European history, absorbing the West's fears, day-dreams, and repressions. But so, too, did the Orient affect individuals, perhaps merely hardening the prejudices of some, but changing others in subtle ways. Much of nineteenth-century Orientalist writing involves the interplay of received notions about the East with personal discovery.

A world away from that of Doughty and Burton another writer/traveller conceived the perfect metaphor, eerily evocative of Foucault, for the control of the East. The bamboo curtain, Lafcadio Hearn writes from his home in Japan, "prevents anyone outside from seeing into the house, while those inside the house can see through it very plainly everything which happens outside" (Bisland 1911, 165). Many artists went to the East as unofficial spies; they were observers, the East the observed. But the vision was one way. What allowed observers to see

out prevented them from seeing in. Lafcadio Hearn lifted the protective cover of the bamboo curtain to gain insight into the house of Japan. Of the many writers and artists who journeyed to the East in the nineteenth century--travellers as diverse as Gustave Flaubert and Mark Twain--few left a legacy as rich as Lafcadio Hearn. His writing extends from translation of Japanese folk-tales to a discussion of the silkworm trade--from analysis of Japan's major religions to the various fashions worn by the Japanese people. Hearn was convinced that the East had insights to offer the West. It was only a question of seeing.

Like the tropical flowers she "forced" to grow in her New England garden, Dickinson transposed the East to Amherst. Yet she was, in a sense, as much of a traveller as Lafcadio Hearn. As Dickinson suggests in a number of poems, the mind can dissolve distance. It becomes an "area" beyond measure:

The Brain--is wider than the Sky--

For--put them side by side--

The one the other will contain

With ease--and You--beside

The Brain is deeper than the sea--

For--hold them--Blue to Blue--

The one the other will absorb--

As Sponges--Buckets--do-- (Poem 632)

In width, depth, and, as the speaker notes humorously, in absorbency, the brain is superior to external reality. Through the agency of the imagination, Dickinson was able to construct reality at will, to draw from different worlds, to inhabit various locales. Dickinson turned her

home into "[t]he House of Supposition--" (Poem 696), one that would make her world into a universe, her garden into paradise.

Chapter 1 Emily Dickinson

In looking at the life of Emily Dickinson, "almost nothing," Richard Sewall observes, is simple and clear-cut" (1974, 3). Her letters and poetry provide some biographical material but, as she writes in a poem from the late 1860s, her artistic method was to "[t]ell all the Truth but tell it slant-" (Poem 1129). There are, however, some relevant dates and incidents in her life that bear repeating. She was born to Edward and Emily Dickinson on December 10, 1830, in Amherst Massachusetts, and for the first few years of her life was called by her middle name, Elizabeth. In her correspondence she describes her father as emotionally distant, a New England lawyer, "too busy with his Briefs--to notice what we do--" (Letter 261), and her mother as unimaginative: "Mother does not care for thought" (Letter 261). Nevertheless, correspondence between the parents reveals concern for the Dickinson siblings (Austin, born in 1829, Emily, and Lavinia, or Vinnie, born in 1833) and an interest in their education (Sewall 1974, 335-36). Dickinson entered Amherst Academy in 1840 and attended for seven years. In September 1847 she was enrolled in the Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in nearby South Hadley. In her first significant encounter with the world, Emily Dickinson resisted convention. As one by one her friends made formal declarations of Christianity, she declared her preference for the world's "siren voice" (Letter 11). At Mount Holyoke, where its founder, Mary Lyon, divided the student body into "no-hopers," "hoppers," and "Christians" (Sewall 1974, 361), Dickinson resisted all efforts at conversion.

Her formal schooling ended in 1848, after 10 months at Mount Holyoke. The decade of the 1850s was marked by the marriage of her brother Austin to Susan Gilbert in January, 1856,

and a trip to Washington and Philadelphia in 1855 (to visit her father who had been elected to Congress in 1852). Except for an extended stay in Boston in 1864 to treat her eyes, for what may have been an early manifestation of Bright's disease, Dickinson was never to leave Amherst again. Increasingly, the house and grounds of the Homestead became her world.

Recent critics, such as Susan Howe, Paula Bennett, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, have suggested that Dickinson's withdrawal was a conscious choice. Bennett notes that there are "no hard data proving that Dickinson's life was unhappy, unfulfilled, or (aside from some eye trouble) limited in any substantive way" (1990, 21). She needed a "space" in which to create, and "the self-imposed restrictions of her life worked paradoxically to ensure that freedom" (1990, 21). For Susan Howe, Dickinson's strategy allowed the power to escape the rigid hierarchies of nineteenth-century America. "This self-imposed exile," she writes, "emancipated her from all representations of calculated human order" (1985, 13). Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar note that Dickinson gives her life a "fictional shape" (1970, 584), in order to create:

the verse-drama into which she transformed her life enabled her to transcend . . .
the "double bind" of the woman poet: on the one hand, the impossibility of self-assertion for a woman, on the other hand, the necessity of self-assertion for a poet.
(1979, 584)

But withdrawal and the need for self-liberation are also, to some extent, features of Oriental thought. Emily Dickinson did not live, in the strictest sense, a contemplative life, but she read voraciously, she cultivated the mind. There is no evidence that she read the Vedas or any book of Eastern philosophy, but she could have arrived at some conception of Eastern thought through the writing of the Transcendentalists. Sewall notes that the Dickinson family

and perhaps Emily herself, owned Emerson's The Conduct of Life and Thoreau's Walden (1974, 678). Barton Levi St. Armand writes that Dickinson, like Thoreau, "believed that the spectrum of nature and the spectrum of spirit were identical" (1894, 271). Viewed in this way, a number of associations make themselves felt. A poem such as "I heard a Fly buzz-when I died-" (Poem 465) is one of a number where Dickinson's speaker enacts her own death. But it may also be an awareness of Emerson's "double consciousness," of the individual's capacity to "experience to the absolute and the relative, heaven and earth, eternity and time" (1983, 35), referring to the necessity of living in the here and now. That Dickinson chose not to meet Emerson (when he stayed next door at the "Evergreens," the home of Austin and Susan) is suggestive of the Buddhist idea that not even the Buddha himself can show the way to enlightenment. The last stanza of "I felt a Funeral in my Brain" (Poem 280) may refer to existential angst, or the necessity of "Emptiness," or even to the dissolution of the ego:

And the a Plank in reason, broke,
 And I dropped down, and down--
 And hit a World, at every plunge,
 And Finished knowing--then-- (Poem 280)

"The whole of nature," Emerson writes, "is a metaphor of the human mind" (1957, 35). In a number of poems Dickinson enacts an attitude of mindfulness. The mind becomes her vehicle of escape into an exotic world, and the source of creative power. "Renunciation" is a "piercing Virtue" (Poem 745) because, like the sword of Vishnu, it cleaves through reality and illusion.

In a late poem Emily Dickinson's speaker notes playfully, "I shall vote for Lands with Locks / Granted I can pick 'em--" (Poem 1195). Throughout her life the poet was, to some

extent, land-locked, but her habit of mental travelling gave her the freedom to pick her choice of residence. In a burst of nationalist sentiment early in the 1860's, Dickinson's speaker declares she sees the world "New Englandly" (Poem 285), but the poet also writes, "it takes but a moment of the imagination to place us anywhere" (Prose Fragment 66). Imaginative travel precludes the necessity of movement and makes location superfluous. "The Will it is that situates--" (Poem 863), she notes in a poem from 1864, and one could go to the ends of the globe and beyond. "Vermont or Asia," she writes in a letter to Elizabeth Holland, "[m]any of us go farther" (Letter 685).

Despite Dickinson's implicit rejection of geography, however, foreign place names and geographical terminology can be found in a number of poems. Distant lands alluded to in her poetry include Ethiopia, Libya, and the Levant, as well as (in her own hemisphere) Brazil, Peru, and the Bahamas. Her cities include Santo Domingo and Jerusalem, Vera Cruz and Carrara. As a mental cartographer, Dickinson lifts many terms from the atlas, such as zone, latitude, equator, and axis.

As Rebecca Patterson notes, much of the poet's exotic imagery makes reference to "geographic stereotypes" (1970, 141). Peru, India, and the biblical Ophir are associated with fabulous wealth, Ethiopia with heat, and Egypt with mystery and sensuality. But the Orient, and its exotic equivalent, South America, are evoked in her poetry as more than a series of clichés. Taken as part of a larger theme they refer to the mind's ability to encompass both distance and difference. In Dickinson's mental travelling the mind can harness the world's farthest geographical points. "My business," she notes in an early letter to T.W. Higginson, "is Circumference" (Letter 268), to embrace and contain the earth in a circle of her own making.

In order to do this, Emily Dickinson becomes a kind of map-maker. But she takes as her symbolic cartographer not the more exotic animals from her bestiary--the antelope, the elephant, or the tiger--but the indigenous insect, the spider. In "The Spider Holds a Silver Ball," she writes:

He plies from Nought to Nought--
 In unsubstantial Trade--
 Supplants our Tapestries with His--
 In half the period--
 An Hour to rear supreme
 His Continents of Light--
 Then dangle from the Housewife's Broom--
 His Boundaries--forgot-- (Poem 605)

In Poem 605 Dickinson is both "[h]ousewife" and arachnid. As does the spider she weaves "[c]ontinents of light," making a world in the corner of a room or windowsill. And as the word "[l]ight" suggests, the dominant characteristic of her continents is insubstantiality. Her territory stretches from "[n]ought to Nought," rejecting "boundaries." But perhaps, most importantly, the spider creates worlds from within, weaving his "[y]arn of Pearl" from his own bowels. And like Dickinson's [h]ousewife, the poet brushes aside worlds with a gesture. The mind is a broom that sweeps away restrictions.

The superiority of mind to "location" is the theme of another early poem:

My Eye is fuller than my vase--
Her Cargo--is of Dew--

And still--my Heat--my Eye outweighs

East India--for you! (Poem 202)

In Poem 202 East India is associated not so much with wealth as with size. The mind, however, is heavier; the speaker's "I" outweighing Asia. "Vastness," Dickinson writes elsewhere "is but the shadow of the brain that cast it" (Letter 735), and in Poem 855 the imagination is, in another self-referential pun a "reducelless Mine" (Poem 855).

In his essay The Transcendentalist Emerson notes that "[m]ind is the only reality" (1960, 194), and in Nature he refers specifically to the Mind's powers of containment:

Give me health and a day and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous. The dawn is my Assyria; the sunset and moonrise my Paphos, and the unimaginable realms of faerie; broad noon shall be my England of the senses and understanding; the night shall be my Germany of mystic philosophy and dreams. (1960, 27)

But it was Thoreau who urged the reader to cultivate the vast tracts of the self in terms of mental voyaging. Referring to the naval expedition of Charles Wilkes to the South Pacific, he declares:

. . . it is easier to sail many thousand miles through cold and storm and cannibals, in a government ship . . . than to explore the private sea, the Atlantic and Pacific ocean of one's being alone (1966, 214)

Far better, Thoreau notes in Walden, to be the "Mungo Park, the Lewis and Clark and Frobisher, of your own streams and oceans" (1966, 214). Moreover, cultivation of self leads to tremendous power; through mental effort the individual becomes the inheritor of realms "beside which the empire of the Czar is but a petty state" (1966, 214). For Thoreau, the mind is represented as an immeasurable tract of land (or sea) compared to which real nations are diminutive.

Dickinson, in a number of poems and letters, reaffirms the theme of the mind as infinite space. In "I send Two Sunsets" the speaker competes with the day in the number of sunsets either can create. The sunset made by [d]ay," the speaker confesses:

was ampler--but as I
Was saying to a friend--
Mine--is the more convenient
To Carry in the Hand-- (Poem 308)

Because the speaker's suns are products of the imagination, they are more portable, and in Dickinson's lexicon the earth shrinks until it can be contained in a handbag. "My Basket holds-- just--Firmaments--" the speaker notes in Poem 352: she carries "[d]omains in my Pocket" in Poem 1771. In "Exhilaration--is within--" the speaker asks where is the liquor that will intoxicate the individual "[w]ho hath the Ample Rhine / Within his Closet" (Poem 383).

If the individual could contract the globe to fit what Dickinson called "the Capsule of the Mind" (Poem 998), it could also expand, or give new meaning to, the smallest object. In Poem 448 the speaker suggests that it is the function of the Artist to distil:

amazing sense
From ordinary Meanings--
And Attar so immense
From the familiar species
That perished by the Door

From the meanest flower on her doorstep, amazing sense (with a pun on the word "scents") can be drawn. Through the agency of the imagination the size of the speaker's immediate

surroundings can be expanded at will. And in the hands of the artist the domestic world could be invested with heightened meaning. The bird that sings in a nearby tree "[m]ay be a common thing- / Or only a divine" (Poem 526), and a pair of robins lighting on her lawn become "[t]wo Gabriels" (Poem 1570). Home, too, can contain infinite space. In a late poem "[t]he very nearest Room" is all the distance to "Elysium" (Poem 1760). Home, in other words, could be paradise.

In Natural Space in Literature, Tom Henighan identifies three ways in which the "paradisal moment" can be invoked (1982, 74). The first involves escape into a "fictive world"; the second is an actual or imaginative escape into an "exotic space," such as the Orient; but the third occurs when "the familiar environment, perceived with a new intensity, may become the enclosing centre of a pleasure that sustains the individual against the bite of time and change" (1982, 73-74). To situate herself in an imaginary paradise, Emily Dickinson, to some extent, used all three. Through books she escaped into a world of fiction. In Poem 1263 a book is a "frigate" on which the mental traveller sails, "[t]o take us Lands away." In "Unto my Books-so good to turn-" the act of reading displaces external reality, making day for night:

It may be Wilderness--without--
Far feet of failing men--
But Holiday--excludes the night--
And it is Bells--within-- (Poem 604)

The fictive world, the world of "possibility," as Dickinson writes, is "[a] fairer House than Prose" (Poem 657). The poet transforms her prosaic home in Amherst into the house of possibility by turning it into that most exotic of landscapes, Eden. The house and grounds of the Homestead become a place in which time stops, where the Fall has not occurred, and where

"frost," Dickinson's word for death, never enters. In an 1883 letter Dickinson writes that her sister Vinnie "carried a 'drawn Sword' in behalf of Eden" (Letter 861). But she reverses the biblical reference to the angels who barred the way to Eden (Genesis 3, 24). Vinnie stood before the door to outsiders; to the occupants of the house paradise was within. "I never believed [paradise] to be a superhuman sight" (Letter 392), Dickinson writes to a friend, punning on "sight/site." To dwell in Eden is simply a matter of choice; it is "always eligible" (Letter 391), requiring only an act of the imagination. Echoing transcendental notions of the mind's infinitude, Dickinson writes: "Paradise is no journey because it is . . . within" (Prose Fragment 99), inside the mind, and inside her home grounds.

That nature could refresh the spirit, serving and stimulating the imagination, is a theme Dickinson shares with earlier American writers. Critical of the inroads made by civilization on the wilderness, the painter Thomas Cole writes:

In this age, when a meager utilitarianism seems ready to absorb every feeling and sentiment, and what is sometimes called improvement in its march makes us fear that the bright and tender flowers of the imagination shall all be crushed beneath its iron tramp, it would be well to cultivate the oasis that yet remains to us.

(1983, 90)

Cole suggests that the cultivation of nature is a metaphor for cultivation of the mind. Thoreau, working in his bean field, notes:

. . . sometimes I watched a pair of hen-hawks circling high in the sky, alternately soaring and descending, approaching and leaving one another, as if they were the embodiment of my own thoughts. (1966, 107)

In Walden the flight of the bird is analogous to the flights of the imagination. Labour in the garden can also unearth another world. As he tills the field, Thoreau writes, "from under a rotten stump my hoe turned up a sluggish portentous and outlandish spotted salamander, a trace of Egypt and the Nile" (1966, 107).

The hoer who labours diligently in the earth sows more than beans. In a poem from the 1860s Dickinson's speaker outlines the advantages of such digging:

Soil of Flint, if steady tilled
Will refund the Hand--
Seed of Palm, by Libyan Sun
Fructified in Sand-- (Poem 681)

With proper care, the flinty New England soil could be made to yield the exotic Palm. The imaginative tiller would make the earth pay dividends. Massachusetts could be transformed into a kind of Libya, a world of endless fecundity and heat. Outside the Homestead was a desert. "I open my window," Dickinson writes, "and it fills the chamber with white dirt" (Letter 504). But within was an oasis, a world of perennial heat and growth, in which Dickinson's home and grounds become a paradise where summer lasts all year. Flowers, in the presence of which "expulsion from Eden grows indistinct (Letter 610), become her allies; they are a "transport" (Poem 137). Dickinson's flowers, her "[s]haws," "[s]ultans," and hyacinths help situate the poet in a type of Eden, in "the ancient Homestead" (Poem 1545), the garden.

An early poem suggests that flowers are a catalyst for the imagination:

The lamp burns sure--within--
Tho' Serfs--supply the Oil--

It matters not the busy Wick--
 At her phosphoric toil!
 The Slave--forgets--to fill--
 The Lamp--burns golden--on--
 Unconscious that the oil is out--
 As that the Slave--is gone (Poem 233)

Flowers are the "[s]erfs" (that is, attached to the land) that provide the fuel for the imagination. Having fulfilled their task, they die at the end of the season. But the imagination is like phosphorus--once set alight it continues to burn.

Poem 233 suggests that flowers ignite the mind, but they are no longer necessary once the imaginative process has been set in motion. Other poems and letters, however, reveal that Dickinson actively cultivated nature throughout her life. As a skilled horticulturist, Dickinson was familiar with the art of "forcing" flowers." She transformed the Homestead into a kind of hot-house, into a world of perpetual creation and bloom. In a sketch she made of Amherst in mid winter, Dickinson spared the Homestead. "I omitted the snow on the roof," she notes to a friend. Within the house, seasonal change was also omitted. In "The Products of my Farm are these" the speaker is not limited to one growing season, for:

With us, 'tis Harvest all the Year
 For when the Frosts begin
 We just reverse the Zodiac
 And fetch the Acres in. (Poem 1025)

As the word "[z]odiac" suggests, heaven could be made to bloom indoors through an imaginative

reversal of seasons. And the cunning New England farmer has taken in, or fooled, the "[a]cres," another way of describing the process of "forcing."

But Dickinson did not sow her garden merely to display her gifts as a horticulturist. Flowers, especially those of an exotic derivation, represent escape. "The grounds are ample," she writes, referring to the Homestead, "almost travel (Letter 735). They could place her anywhere. In a letter to Elizabeth Holland the poet notes, "My flowers are near and foreign, and I have but to cross the floor to stand in the Spice Isles" (Letter 315). Flowers are "[a]n Indies in the Hand" (Letter 543). To receive a bouquet of flowers from a friend is to obtain a "little package of Ceylon" (Letter 889). Red lilies could evoke the colours of Iran, the "Persian Hues" (Letter 848) of an imaginary East.

But, most importantly, flowers are emblems of Eden. In Dickinson's imaginary atlas they come straight from paradise. "These little Beings," she wrote, "are only 'on a furlough' from Paradise" (Letter 846). They constitute the topography of Eden, and, as Poem 81 suggests, they could make it return:

We should not mind so small a flower--

Except it quiet bring

Our little garden that we lost

Back to the Lawn again (Poem 81)

To mind, or tend her garden is to bring back the topography of Genesis. But as the word "mind" suggests, only an act of the imagination could make it so. The mind, like, nature, has to be forced, in order to remain in Eden.

In a late poem Dickinson writes that labour in the garden can erase memory:

"Lethe" in my flower,
 Of which they who drink
 In the fadeless orchards
 Hear the bobolink! (Poem 1730)

In Dickinson's geography, the river of forgetfulness, the river of hell, runs through the fadeless orchards of Eden. Her garden has other growth that cannot be pruned away. Memory cannot be rooted from the garden, as Dickinson's speaker notes in Poem 1508:

When it shall once have grown--
 Its Iron Buds will sprout anew
 However overthrown--

But if the "[i]ron Buds" of pain cannot be eradicated from the garden, some pleasures are denied there too. To remain in paradise is to be unchallenged, static. Such a state is, as Dickinson suggests in Poem 1315, the opposite of "transport":

Not of detention is Fruition--
 Shudder to attain.
 Transport's decomposition follows--
 He is Prism born.

To be detained in one place, even if it is a paradise, is to negate freedom. Transport is as ephemeral as light through a prism. But transport is also prismatic, multi-faceted. In Poem 1082 the poet's doctrine of endless becoming is expressed as endless bloom:

Revolution is the Pod

Systems rattle from
 When the Winds of Will are stirred
 Excellent is Bloom
 But except its Russet Base
 Every Summer be
 The Entomber of itself,
 So of Liberty--
 Left inactive on the Stalk
 All its Purple fled
 Revolution shakes it for
 Test if it be dead.

Freedom left inactive or, perhaps, taken for granted, becomes colourless and dies. Revolution is necessary to shake the mind from stasis. Even that which sustains the body, Dickinson's speaker suggests in "There is an arid Pleasure," may become stale. "The finest Honey--curdled--" she notes, "[i]s worthless--to the Bee--" (Poem 782).

In the poetry of Emily Dickinson a self-willed expulsion from Eden is seen to be necessary. To remain in Eden means the death of "transport" and, as Poem 1627 suggests, mental voyaging is all that matters:

The pedigree of Honey
 Does not concern the Bee,
 Nor lineage of Ecstasy
 Delay the Butterfly

On spangled journeys to the peak
 Of some perceiveless thing--
 The right of way to Tripoli--
 A more essential thing.

The creatures of nature are not concerned with origins, only with flight. The poet who could not even "stop for Death" (Poem 712) is uncomfortable even in the midst of paradise:

Wild Nights--Wild Nights!
 Were I with thee
 Wild Nights should be
 Our Luxury!
 Futile--the Winds--
 To a Heart in port--
 Done with the Compass--
 Done with the Chart!
 Rowing in Eden--
 Ah, the Sea!
 Might I but moor--Tonight--
 In Thee!

In the speaker's system of values "[w]ild Nights" are a luxury item. They are not necessary. And for the speaker this is as it "should be," for the heart in port must throw away the compass and the chart, the tools of guidance to other lands. In the concluding stanza the speaker begs for one night only on the Edenic sea. To moor there longer would be to become static.

For the speaker, as Poem 239 suggests, heaven is not a place but a state of mind in which one is constantly challenged:

"Heaven"--is what I cannot reach!

The Apple on the Tree

Provided it do hopeless--hang--

That--"Heaven" is--to Me!

The Color, on the Cruising Cloud--

The interdicted Land--

Behind the Hill--the House behind--

There--Paradise--is found!

Heaven should be as ungraspable as the colour of a moving cloud, as high as the apple that is out of reach.

Ultimately, Dickinson goes beyond her sources of inspiration to become her own source:

Soto! Explore thyself!

Therein thyself shalt find

The "undiscovered Continent"--

No Settler had the Mind. (Poem 832)

Here the word "[s]ettler" refers to one who cannot put down roots but also to one who cannot be satisfied. Exploration of the self, as the speaker suggests in Poem 746, should remain limitless:

Never for Society

He shall seek in vain--

Who His own acquaintance

Cultivate--Of Men

Wiser Men may weary
But the Man within
Never knew Satiety--
Better entertain
Than could Border Ballad
Or Biscayan Hymn--
Neither introduction
Need you--unto Him--

To the speaker, "[s]atiety" is a pejorative term. Ultimately, the mind becomes a kind of Eden, without borders or parameters. For Dickinson, paradise is perpetual mental voyaging, perpetual transport.

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Chapter 2 Lafcadio Hearn

Lafcadio Hearn's first book on Japan describes a journey undertaken along the Izumo coast. Near the village of Kami-ichi, Hearn passes to view a sacred tree. He writes:

Entering the grove I find myself in a sort of miniature glen surrounded on three sides by very low cliffs, above which enormous pines are growing, incalculably old. Their vast coiling roots have forced their way through the face of the cliffs, splitting rocks. . . . One pushes out three huge roots of a very singular shape: and the ends of these have been wrapped about with long white papers bearing written prayers, and with offerings of seaweed. (1976, 510-11)

On his trip to the barren coast of Izumo, Hearn shapes, perhaps unconsciously, a metaphor for the power of the past over the present. The roots of the past are strong enough to split rock. They force their way into the open air, into visibility. And for Hearn the past in Japan is visible, in the persistence of ancient customs, in the festivals and dances, in the oral and written stories that are handed down for generations. The past, moreover, is venerated, propitiated with offerings, invoked to influence the present. In Japan the present shrinks under the weight of centuries of past experience. In the Land of the Gods, Lafcadio Hearn travels back in time, to "an elder world" (1976, 113), where gods are closer to men and women, and the ghostly influence of the dead defines the lives of its people.

To find Hearn, the reader, too, must travel back to the time of Hearn's childhood.

Lafcadio Hearn was born on the Greek island of Leucadia on July 24, 1849, to a Greek mother and an Irish father who was stationed in Greece as a surgeon with the British army. His unusual

Christian name comes from the island of his birth, pronounced "Lafcadio" in modern Greek. Charles Hearn was, by his son's description, an unamiable man who was absent for most of Lafcadio's infancy. In August 1852 Charles sent his family back to Dublin to the home of his mother, Elizabeth Holmes Hearn. The meeting and the subsequent years spent under her roof were not happy. Lafcadio's mother, Rosa, was Greek Orthodox, and the Hearn family was Protestant. They were bewildered by the exotic Mrs. Hearn and her young son who wore gold earrings. Charles came home in the fall of 1853, leaving again in March, 1854, to serve with his regiment in the Crimean War. Later that year, Rosa, now pregnant with a brother Lafcadio would never see (though they corresponded as adults), returned to Greece. Lafcadio never saw his mother again. Charles returned to Dublin in 1856, dissolved his marriage to Rosa, and married a Dublin woman in 1857. In August of that year, Charles, his new bride, and her children by a previous marriage left for a new post in India. Rosa Hearn remarried in Greece, and, after periodic bouts of mental illness, she died in Corfu in 1882 in the National Mental asylum. In 1861 Charles returned to Ireland on sick leave but did not see his son. On a return voyage to Dublin in 1866, Charles fell ill with malaria and died before reaching Ireland.

From the time of his mother's return to Greece, Lafcadio Hearn lived with his great-aunt Sarah Brenane. On the advice of a distant relative, Henry Hearn Molyneux, Hearn was sent to the Institution Ecclesiastique, a school in France where a number of English and Irish families sent their sons. (Guy de Maupassant, a writer whose works Hearn would later translate, attended the school and was expelled soon after Hearn's residence there.) The institution's chief contribution to Hearn's education was to provide him with a knowledge of French. Hearn was sent to another Roman Catholic school, this time in England in 1863, St. Cuthbert's. In the

callous atmosphere of an English boys' school he temporarily submerged his Greek heritage and was known as Paddy Hearn.

At sixteen Paddy Hearn suffered an ordeal that was to change his life. In a game similar to tug-of-war, another boy released the end of a knotted rope, which struck Hearn in the left eye. The eye was operated on, and, though it could not be saved, it was not removed, leaving scar tissue that discoloured the cornea. Constant use of the right eye did further damage; it became enlarged and began to protrude from the socket. The immediate effect of this accident was to turn the popular and gregarious Lafcadio inward. Throughout his life Hearn was plagued by constant fear of going blind. At work he used a magnifying glass for reading and a retractable telescope for looking into the distance. Hearn felt that his appearance placed a permanent barrier between himself and polite society. He never again allowed himself to be photographed from a frontal position or with the left side of his face showing.

But by 1867 Hearn had other problems. Sarah Brenane had entrusted her fortune to Henry Molyneux, and he, through a series of bad investments drained away a large portion of it. Now in her seventies, Mrs. Brenane had come to rely totally on Molyneux's advice, and in the spring of 1869, Hearn, Mrs. Brenane's original heir, was dispatched to America. Lafcadio Hearn was told to make his way to Cincinnati, to the home of Thomas Cullinan, Molyneux's brother-in-law. In 1871 Hearn received his last communication from Ireland, informing him of Sarah Brenane's death. From this point on, Hearn broke off communication with his family. He was barely out of his teens in a strange land, with no money, family, or friends.

A number of letters that Hearn wrote to his half-sister, Minnie Atkinson, have survived. Hearn describes nights spent in the street, working at odd jobs, including a stint as a servant in a

boarding-house, where the young Lafcadio "lighted fires, shovelled coals, etc., in exchange for food and the privilege of sleeping on the floor of the smoking-room" (1961, 30). A chance meeting with a Cincinnati printer was his salvation. Henry Watkin allowed Hearn to sleep behind his shop and taught him something of the business. His first real breakthrough came in 1872, when he found a job on the trade paper the Trade List. In October of that year he made his way to the offices of the Cincinnati Enquirer, whose editor, John A. Cockerill, was impressed enough by Hearn's work (a review of Tennyson's "Idylls of the King") to publish it in the next two issues. By 1874 Hearn was a full-time member of the staff. For the next thirteen years he worked as a reporter for various American papers, moving from the Enquirer to the Cincinnati Commercial before leaving the city in 1877. Hearn was hired by the New Orleans Item later that year, after a period of near-starvation on the streets of New Orleans. From 1881 to 1887 he worked for the amalgamated Times-Democrat.

Hearn spent the next two years in Martinique, sending back articles sporadically to the American papers and receiving payment in like manner. During his West Indian period, however, he produced three books: the record of his travel experienced, entitled Two Years in the French West Indies, and the novels Chita and Youma. Isolated for at least the third time in his career, Hearn submitted a proposal to Harper's, outlining a projected journey to Japan. In Elizabeth Stevenson's words, the proposal was "detailed, comprehensive, and remarkably prophetic" (1961, 197). "The studied aim," wrote Hearn,

would be to create, in the minds of the readers, a vivid impression of living Japan-
-not simply as an observer but as one taking part in the daily existence of the
common people, and thinking with their thoughts. (1961, 197)

In March 1890 Hearn sailed for Japan, fell out with his editors and with the Harper's photographer that had accompanied him, and found himself alone once more. With the help of Basil Hall Chamberlain, a professor at Tokyo Imperial University, Hearn secured a position as a teacher of English at Matsue in the ancient province of Izumo. From 1890 until his death in 1904 Hearn never left the Land of the Gods, and after the publication of Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan in 1893, wrote almost a book a year on Japanese life. The young man who had started life sleeping on a bed of paper shavings behind Henry Watkin's print shop was buried, with full Buddhist rites, in Zoshigaya Cemetery in Tokyo.

Writing from the island of Grande Anse in 1884 Hearn told of witnessing a peculiar island phenomenon. Schools of fish would dash themselves against the shore, precipitating an onslaught of birds and other predators. The horrified onlooker wrote:

Soon along the beach is spread so mighty a feast that the birds sicken themselves with luxuries:--they feed upon the eyes only, and only devour one eye of most victims, not seeking even to overturn the flat body in order to tear out the other.

(1961, 138)

Because of his own eye problem, Hearn, perhaps, would notice this particular grotesquery. But the passage also speaks of Hearn's Darwinian conception of life. The destruction on Grand Anse symbolized "the great contests of human life in which the fiercest and strongest and swiftest survive to exemplify Nature's mystic and merciless law" (1961, 138). By the time Hearn left for Japan it might appear, to the casual onlooker, that he had prevailed in the struggle. He had achieved a measure of fame in the United States. He was the friend of a number of writers, among them George Washington Cable and Joel Chandler Harris, the author of Uncle Remus.

Hearn corresponded with Whitman's friend and biographer, W.D. O'Connor; at a dinner party in New York at the prestigious Union League Club, William Dean Howells crossed the floor to meet him.

Hearn lived considerable periods of his life in poverty. In Cincinnati he contracted dengue, or break-bone, fever; in Martinique he almost died of typhus. Despite these setbacks and the time consumed by his duties as a reporter, Hearn's literary output was remarkable. In 1882 Hearn, bearing half the expense himself, published his first book, One of Cleopatra's Nights, a translation of some of Theophile Gautier's tales. He wrote Stray Leaves from Strange Literature in 1884 and Some Chinese Ghosts two years later. Both contained tales culled from his wide reading of Arabian, Indian, and Chinese folklore. For the World Exposition held in New Orleans in 1885-86, Hearn wrote a cookbook, La Cuisine Creole, and Gombo Zhebes: A Little Dictionary of Creole Provers. He also contributed some minor pieces to the Historical Sketch Book and Guide to New Orleans and Environs, which, like the other publications, was to be sold at the fair. For a brief period in 1874 he left the security of the Enquirer to start a weekly journal, Ye Giglampz, which folded after nine issues. The three aforementioned books from his West Indian travels were also published in the late 1880s.

Despite his success, Hearn continued to feel like an outsider in the society of the gilded age. He never got over his father's betrayal and the loss of his mother. He trusted too easily, gave his heart too freely to friends who could not reciprocate with the same intensity. His insecurity came to the fore at such times, and his typical response was to lash out and destroy what remained of the friendship. He was possessed by wanderlust. After he had established himself at the Enquirer, Hearn could have made a career by simply staying where he was.

Instead he remained essentially rootless until marriage to a Japanese woman in Izumo in 1891. Hearn was intensely insecure because of his eyes and his height (five feet, three inches). Ellwood Hendrick, a New York friend, noted, "His usual posture was with one hand over his blind eye, because someone once told him it was ugly and offended people" (1961, 192). As Jonathan Cott noted, the imminent arrival of Hearn's son in 1893 prompted him to exclaim: "Come into this world with good eyes!" (1991, 301).

In the world of his friends and colleagues Hearn was always on the defensive. But this was not the case in the other worlds existing in his immediate vicinity. Until his journey to Japan, Hearn's writing falls into three broad categories: translation, of which he did much more than Gautier; transliteration of folk tales, as in Some Chinese Ghosts; and the description of minority cultures existing in sometimes tenuous harmony with the broader culture. In addition, Hearn reported on crime. He had made his reputation on the Enquirer with his grisly coverage of the Tanyard murder case and on such items as the death of the Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest. But in translation, in the re-writing of ancient myths and legends, he lived his dreams.

In the preface to One of Cleopatra's Nights, Hearn wrote that Gautier's aim was to evoke "the loveliness of the antique world" (1882, xii). He dedicated his first book to

... the lovers of physical beauty and artistic truth, of the charm of youthful dreams and young passion in its blossoming, of poetic ambitions and the sweet pantheism that finds all Nature vitalized by the Spirit of the Beautiful. (1882, xii)

These were, perhaps, strange words to be written in a rooming-house, but Hearn's pursuit of the beautiful carried over to his descriptive pieces. In his stories of black life in Cincinnati, of

the Creoles of New Orleans, of the harsh life of the porters and washer-women of Martinique, Hearn sought the beautiful amidst the squalor, the loveliness of the antique world in the colourless present. Hearn's conversion to the cult of the beautiful began, as he was later to write, in the Brenane family library, where he discovered

. . . great folio books containing figures of gods and of demigods, athletes and heroes, nymphs and fauns and nereids, and all the charming monsters--half-man, half-animal--of Greek mythology. (1991, 24)

It was, the author writes, his "Renaissance," but here, as in the rest of his life, the discovery of beauty was inextricably mixed with pain:

Now after I had learned to know and love the elder Gods, the world again began to glow about me. . . . In the sunshine, in the green of the fields, in the blue of the sky, I found a gladness before unknown. Within myself new thoughts, new imaginings, dim longings for I know not what were quickening and thrilling. I looked for beauty and everywhere found it: in passing faces--in attitudes and motions--in the poise of plants and trees--in long white clouds--in faint-blue lines of far-off hills. At moments the simple pleasure of life would quicken to a joy so large, so deep, that it frightened me. But at other times there would come to me a new and strange sadness--a shadowy and inexplicable pain. (1991, 22-23)

Hearn links beauty with suffering in several of his early works. In Some Pictures of Poverty he sketches one of the poorest quarters of Cincinnati:

It was nothing short of startling to find that a certain iron railing which guards the opening of a cellar stairway in Bucktown, bore on its lower part that

unmistakable Greek border-design which is formed by a single line worked into a beautiful labyrinth of right angles. (1949, 258)

But even more startling is to find "an engraving of the head of one of Raphael's Madonnas" (1949, 258) in the room of an elderly woman about to die. With his reporter's keen sense of observation, Hearn notes the human touch. The frame of the picture was make-shift, having been "cut out of kindling wood with a penknife" (1949, 258). In the climax to Hearn's sketch the world of the dying woman is reduced to the picture:

The sufferer had her eyes fixed upon that little print, framed so clumsily in bits of kindling-wood; and it seemed to us that she was thinking less of the Great Morning about to dawn upon her, than of the rude, but perhaps kind hand of the dead steamboatman who carved the coarse frame, and whose resting place remains unmarked even by a ripple of the River's breast. (1949, 259)

For Hearn, human beauty, the unselfish act of a sailor long dead, transcends the beauty of the picture. Even the greatest art, Hearn seems to suggest, must have as its frame a knowledge and understanding of human suffering. And only art, fused with love, transcends death. In an 1882 letter to H.E. Krehbiel, Hearn writes:

What you say about the disinclination to work for years upon a theme for pure love's sake, without hope of reward touches me,--because I have felt that despair so long and so often. And yet I believe that all the world's art-work--all that which is eternal--was thus wrought. (1964, 4)

Two stories from Hearn's second book of tales refer to art's demand for sacrifice: "The Soul of the Great Bell" and "The Tale of the Porcelain-God," both from Some Chinese Ghosts.

In "The Soul of the Great Bell" the Ming Dynasty emperor Yong-Lo commands one of his officials, Kouan-Yu, to construct a great bell to be suspended "in the centre of the imperial capital" (1887, 17). In addition to its massive size the bell has to be "strengthened with brass, and deepened with gold, and sweetened with silver" (1887, 16). Despite the best efforts of Kouan-Yu, the metals will not fuse, the gold "scorned alliance with the brass, the silver would not mingle with the molten iron" (1887, 17). In the face of the emperor's growing anger, Kouan-Yu and his assistants attempt to cast the bell twice and fail. Yong-Lo delivers a final message to his subject: "If thou fail a third time in fulfilling our command, thy head will be severed from thy neck" (1887, 19). Kouan-Yu's daughter, Ko-Ngai, upon seeing the awful missive, hastens to an astrologer, who tells her the bell will resist casting unless her blood "be mixed with the metals in their fusion" (1887, 21). At the moment the bell is cast in the third attempt, Ko-Ngai leaps into the fire, the metals bond, and Kouan-Lo is saved.

In the companion piece, "The Tale of the Porcelain-God," Hearn's protagonist, Pu, is more intentional an artist than the hapless Kouan-Lo. "By his heaven-taught wisdom," writes Hearn, "was the art of porcelain created" (1887, 147), and he is placed, in the introduction to the tale, at the head of a long line of similar craftsmen. Having sent "a priceless gift" to the emperor, a vase "imitating the substance of ore-rock" (1887, 157-58), Pu is summoned to the court. Like Kouan-Lo, he is charged with an impossible task. "It is now our will," declares the emperor:

that thou make for us a vase having the tint and the aspect of living flesh, but,--
mark well my desire!--of flesh made to creep by the utterance of such words as
poets utter,--flesh moved by an idea, flesh horripilated by a Thought! (1887, 159)

Forty-nine times does Pu attempt to fire the vase, each time failing. In a final appeal to the Spirit of the Furnace he is told the price of success: "Thy life for the life of thy work!--thy soul for the soul of thy Vase!" (1887, 169). Having made his decision, on the fiftieth firing, Pu "yielded up his ghost in the embrace of the Spirit of the Furnace" (1887, 172) and the vase is removed from the kiln "seeming to be flesh moved by the utterance of a Word, creeping to the titillation of a Thought" (1887, 172).

In both the "Soul of the Great Bell" and "The Tale of the Porcelain-God" the death of the victim is compensated for by a transference of the soul to the object that has been made. In both cases the body does not survive. But a kind of immortality is conferred upon the victims, not through the body but through what they have wrought. "Even the bones of Pu had cease to be," Hearn writes in "The Tale of the Porcelain-God." Pu is made a god at the end of the story, but, more importantly, his creation serves as a constant reminder of his sacrifice. When tapped, the vase of the artist "uttered a voice and a name--the voice of its maker, the name of its creator: PU" (1887, 172). In "The Soul of the Great Bell" the body of Ko-Ngai "had been totally absorbed by the precious alloy, and blended with the well-blended brass and gold" (1887, 25). When sounded, the tones of the great bell:

were found to be deeper and mellower and mightier than the tones of any other bell,-- reaching one hundred li, like a pealing of summer thunder; and yet also like some vast voice uttering a woman's name,--the name of Ko-Ngai! (1887, 26)

Both characters make their works more beautiful by bequeathing their soul to the act of creation. They enter into their creation through a sacrifice of self. But it is necessary to distinguish between the type of sacrifice each makes. Ko-Ngai dies for love, to protect her

father, Pu for beauty, to create the perfect object. Pu dies for ambition, Ko-Ngai in an unselfish act. For the artist the pursuit of beauty is not enough; it must be allied with emotional depth.

Throughout his life Lafcadio Hearn, to some extent, played with the concept of identity. At St. Cuthbert's he was Paddy Hearn. In letters to Henry Watkin he styled himself as the "Raven" to symbolize his tattered circumstances and his penchant for the macabre (and in homage to a youthful idol, Edgar Allan Poe). When his fellow boarders at a Cincinnati rooming-house could not manage the name Lafcadio, he simply became "Pat." In articles sent back to the Enquirer in Hearn's early days in New Orleans he used the pseudonym Ozias Midwinter, after a character in a Wilkie Collins novel, Armadale. To his Japanese students he became Herun-san. But in 1895 Hearn took on the last of his identities. He became Yakumo Koizumi, citizen of Japan. Hearn had become a citizen to ensure that his family could inherit his estate, but the name meant much more. By taking his wife's surname, Koizumi, he had to be adopted by her family. From 1895 on he belonged, officially to a Japanese household. But with regard to his personal name Hearn was free to choose. "Yakumo," he told his friend Ellwood Hendrick, "is a poetical alternative for Izumo, my beloved province, 'the place of the Issuing of Clouds' (1961, 281).

During his two years in Matsue, a city of forty thousand people in the province of Izumo, the place became a kind of paradise for Lafcadio Hearn. It remained in memory as his beloved province and gained in stature when he encountered the more impersonal atmosphere of Japan's larger cities. In America, Hearn had been essentially rudderless; in Matsue, as a writer and teacher, he became a respected, if curious member of the community. In Cincinnati, Hearn had entered into a marriage with a young black woman, Mattie Foley, in violation of Ohio miscegenation laws, resulting in his dismissal from the Enquirer and the dissolution of the union.

In contrast, Hearn's marriage in Matsue to Setsu Koizuma, a young woman from an impoverished samurai family, was a happy one, and together they produced four children. Around him, too, were signs of a world that had all but vanished from urban Japan. Matsue still retained some of the flavour of pre-Meiji Japan. The feudal castle of the Matsudaira family still dominated the city. Hearn's second home, a samurai house known as Kitabori, bordered on the castle, suggesting a time when its earlier occupants had been at the beck and call of their lord. In nearby Kitzuki was the Shinto shrine Taisha, one of the oldest and most sacred placed in the land. The province of Izumo was justly called the Land of the Gods.

For Hearn it seemed that the gods and goddesses of the volume he had found in the Brenane family library had come to life. "It is," he wrote to Basil Hall Chamberlain, "the old Greek soul again" (1911, 10). In the essay "The Chief City of the Province of the Gods," Hearn writes that Japanese feet are "light as the feet of figures painted on Greek vases" (1976, 145). In "Kitzuki" he notes that the "Oriental soul" bears a "strange likeness to the soul of the old Greek race" (1976, 210). The priests and priestesses of the temples are like those of Greece and Rome. In "Notes on Kitzuki" the miko of Kitzuki temple is "like the priestesses of Delphi" in her powers of divination (1976, 247). In "Kitzuki" the Guji, chief priest of Kitzuki, stands "in hierophantic attitude" (1976, 191). Even the landscape seems Grecian, dotted as it is with temples and wayside shrines. Hearn's description of the temples of Kamakura, in "A Pilgrimage to Enoshima," call to mind an Athens in Izumo:

Only some of the unnumbered temples of the once magnificent city now remain . . . doubtless because built in high places, or because isolated from the maze of burning streets by vast courts and groves. Here still dwell the ancient

Gods in the great silence of their decaying temples. (1976, 63)

But it is Hearn's visit to the great temple at Kitzuki that forms the centre-piece of Glimpses. Here Hearn penetrates the heart of the Japanese past:

Even as Izumo is especially the province of the gods, and the place of the childhood of the race . . . so is Kitzuki of Izumo especially the city of the gods, and its immemorial temple the earliest home of the ancient faith, the great religion of Shinto. (1976, 172)

Through a letter of introduction, Hearn is granted an audience with the Guji of Kitzuki, "the descendant of the Goddess of the Sun" (1976, 191). He obtains admittance to view the Oho-Yashiro--the innermost shrine of the temple of Taisha, the "dwelling of the god" (1976, 192). As the first Westerner to gain access to the secrets of the temple, Hearn is momentarily ecstatic:

I cannot suppress some exultation at the thought that I have been allowed to see what no foreigner has been privileged to see--the interior of Japan's most ancient shrine, and those sacred utensils and quaint rites of primitive worship so well worthy the study of the anthropologist and the evolutionist. (1976, 208)

But exultation gives way to a kind of awe: "To see Kitzuki," Hearn writes, "is to see the living centre of Shinto, and to feel the life-pulse of the ancient faith" (1976, 208). "Buddhism," he notes, "has a voluminous theology, a profound philosophy, a literature vast as the sea" (1976, 209). But Shinto lives "in the national heart," and it is the heart of Japan that Hearn plumbs in his later stories (1976, 209). As Beongcheon Yu notes, Hearn wrote his stories in "the last five years of his career in Japan when he knew more about the country" (1964, 56). In a number of stories there is a conflict between duty and desire, between freedom and obligation that, to some

extent, represents Hearn's own life in Japan.

In Kokoro, Hearn refers to an incident that would have a profound effect on him:

A male servant long in my house seemed to me the happiest of mortals. He laughed invariably when spoken to, looked always delighted while at work, appeared to know nothing of the small troubles of life. But one day I peeped at him when he thought himself quite alone, and his relaxed face startled me. It was not the face I had known. Hard lines of pain and anger appeared in it, making it seem twenty years older. I coughed gently to announce my presence. At once the face smoothed, softened, lighted up as by a miracle of rejuvenation.

(1931, 38-39)

Here, Hearn seems to acknowledge, is the true face of Japan; the land of the gods is in fact a land of mortal men and women. But the "miracle" that Hearn witnesses is one of self-sacrifice—not instinctive, but voluntary. The tragedy of modern Japan, Hearn suggests, is to place individuals in conflict with a moral code that can no longer accommodate, or in some way perverts, the ancient code of self-sacrifice.

"The Red Bridal" is a story of contemporary Japan, and of the love between two young people. On his first day at school, Taro is ridiculed by his teacher and fellow students. Only O-Yoshi, "a little girl about a year older than he (1949, 374), comes to comfort him. As they grow up they remain friends. Both children suffer the loss of their mother, but O-Yoshi's father, Miyahara, re-marries a woman much younger than himself. The choice is seemingly fortunate, for the young peasant woman, O-Tama, helps to make him rich. But she is also cruel, "one of those excellently organized beings who succeed in life by the perfect ease with which they

exploit inferior natures (1949, 383). One day in his seventeenth year Taro goes to see O-Yoshi in the shop where she works. Taro looks at his childhood friend as if seeing her for the first time, and falls in love. But O-Yoshi is busy with someone else--the nakodo, the village marriage broker, who is acting on behalf of the elderly Okazaki. Okazaki "wished to treat himself to the luxury of a young and pretty wife" (1949, 378) but he, too, is cruel. It is rumoured that on the night of his first marriage he was made to feast Jizo, whereby an unpopular member of the village is compelled to give a banquet on his wedding night as a gesture of "public rebuke" (1949, 378).

But Okazaki is wealthy, and O-Tama embarks on a campaign to secure him for her daughter-in-law. After extracting from him a promise of a significant portion of his property, O-Tama informs O-Yoshi of her impending marriage. She is in love with Taro, but announces, to O-Tama's surprise, "her readiness to obey the will of her parents in all things" (1947, 384). On the eighteenth day of the ninth month Taro and O-Yoshi disappear. They die, locked in an embrace, under the wheels of the Tokyo Express.

In "The Red Bridal" the train is a symbol of change. It is built by "strange tall men with red hair and beards--foreigners from the West" (1947, 376). It comes in the couple's childhood, transforming the landscape and "shaking the Buddhas in the old cemetery off their lotus-flowers of stone" (1947, 376). Yet it is the irony of "The Red Bridal" that the symbol of modernity becomes the tool whereby the couple perform Joshi, ritual suicide. In "My First Day in the Orient," Hearn seems content to marvel at the juxtaposition of ancient and modern. "In these exotic streets," he writes, "the old and the new mingle so well that one seems to set off the other" (1976, 7). Here, the Tokyo Express becomes an agent of death. And in killing O-Yoshi it kills

the past, for her real mother was a samurai, and O-Yoshi "the only survivor" of the Miyahara children (1947, 375).

But the train is not the only representative of the present. The other is O-Tama. She stands for social change--change that, with the Meiji restoration, divests the samurai class of rank, power, and income. O-Tama's views her former superiors with contempt:

She had seen them reduced from wealth to misery. She had seen the pension bonds given them by the new government pass from their hands into the clutches of cunning speculators of the most vulgar class. She despised weakness; she despised incapacity; and she deemed the commonest vegetable seller a much superior being to the ex-Karo obliged in his old age to beg assistance from those who had formerly cast off their foot-gear and bowed their heads to the mud whenever he passed by. (1947, 383)

O-Tama's cunning, however, goes no further than "a deep instinctive knowledge of the uglier side of human nature" (1947, 380-81). O-Yoshi's moral code is utterly alien to her, and she takes O-Yoshi's assent to the marriage at face value. During the fateful transaction between the two women O-Yoshi smiles:

And as she smiled, her young will became steel, of the sort that severs iron without turning edge. She knew at once exactly what to do--her samurai blood told her that; and she plotted only to gain the time and the chance (1947, 385-86)

O-Yoshi kills herself, rejecting her suitor and a life of dishonour. But Taro and O-Yoshi do gain a kind of immortality. The people of the village "put bamboo cups full of flowers upon the

single gravestone of the united pair" (1947, 387). In the end, O-Yoshi is a symbol of the past that cannot be extinguished.

In a series of remarkable books, beginning with Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan, published in 1894, Hearn describes the sufferings, the joys, the traditions, and the beliefs of the Japanese. Hearn published Out of the East in 1895 and Kokoro the following year. There followed Gleanings in Buddha-fields, 1897; Exotics and Retrospectives, 1898; In Ghostly Japan, 1899; Shadowings, 1900; A Japanese Miscellany, 1901; and Kotto, 1903. In 1904, the last year of his life, Hearn wrote two books, Kwaidan and Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation, the latter based on a series of lectures he had prepared to deliver at Cornell University. Most of his other writings on Japan follow a similar pattern: travel pieces, folk-tales, and essays. Hearn comments on every aspect of life in Japan—from what he wore (European suits for the classroom, Japanese obi at home) to descriptions of "fire-fly catching" (1903, 149). He writes of nirvana and of the various types of incense, of life during a cholera epidemic, and of the inhabitants of the remote island of Oki. His travel literature is much more than a description of place. Into it he weaves stories of the gods and recalls tales of human passion.

In the essay "At Hinomisaki" he tells the ancient tale of the Daimyo of Izumo, who visits the temple of Hinomisaki and is "nobly entertained by the Kengyo" (1976, 283), the local lord and overseer of the temple. Echoing the story of King David and Bathsheba, Hearn recounts a similar Japanese tale. The Daimyo, upon seeing the Kengyo's young wife, falls in love with her and brings about the death of her husband. Upon receiving the news of the Kengyo's death, the Daimyo summons one of his ministers, the Karo, who is also the young wife's father, to bring her

to court. The Karo:

prostrated himself, retired and presently returning placed before his master a kubi-oke upon which lay the freshly-severed head of a beautiful woman--the head of the young wife of the dead Kengyo--with the simple utterance:--

"This is my daughter."

Dead by her own brave will,--but never dishonored (1976, 284)

This passages shows that in Japan, Hearn's writing style moved towards simplicity and economy of expression. In the United States, Hearn's newspaper articles were given to sensationalism, a quality, as Malcolm Cowley observes, his editors did little to discourage (1949, 4). Hearn's description of the corpse in his series on the Tanyard murder case (the man had been pushed, possibly while still alive, into a burning furnace by his killers) is nothing short of macabre:

So covered were the jaws and lower facial bones with coal, crusted blood and gummy flesh, that the coroner at first supposed the lower maxillary to have been burned away. On tearing away the frightful skull-mask of mingled flesh and coal and charred gristle, however, the grinning teeth shone ghastly white, and both jaws were found intact. (1991. 45)

In his early novels, and in his translations of Gautier and Flaubert, Hearn strove for an "ornamental" style he characterized as "poetical prose" (1964, 27). In works such as Some Chinese Ghosts, and in the novels Chita and Youma, the style is florid, verbose. Hearn sacrifices meaning for, in an expression he applied to Gautier, "word-chiselling" (1964, 27). Hearn seems to have been aware of the drawbacks of such a style. As early as 1881 he wrote, in the Preface to

One of Cleopatra's Nights, that Gautier's style exemplifies:

the art of painting carried to the highest perfection in literature. It is not wonderful that such a man should at times sacrifice style to description; and he has himself acknowledged an occasional abuse of violent coloring (1900, x)

Nevertheless, Hearn's own "addiction" to word-painting, as Beongcheon Yu describes it (1964, 30), lasted well into the 1880s.

In a story from Some Chinese Ghosts, "The Legend of Tchi-Niu," a poor man marries a goddess who weaves magnificent silks. From her loom

silk flowed . . . like a slow current of glossy gold, bearing upon its undulations strange forms of violet and crimson and jewel-green: shapes of ghostly horsemen riding upon horses, and of phantom chariots dragon-drawn, and of standards of trailing clouds. In every dragon's beard glimmered the mystic pearl, in every rider's helmet sparkled the gem of rank (1887, 87).

As Elizabeth Stevenson suggests, Hearn's colourful prose is an attempt to escape from the limited palette of his life (1961, 122). Beongcheon Yu notes that Hearn's stylistic conversion came as a result of reading writers who were more economical than his earlier idols. In a letter to Basil Hall Chamberlain, Hearn writes:

I used to adore Tennyson's "Idylls of the King." But to-day what artificial, strained, over delicate conservatory work they seem, after a fresh perusal of naif Sir Malory's "Morte d'Arthur," which is all pure human nature. After four years studying poetical prose, I am forced now to study simplicity. After attempting my

utmost at ornamentation, I am converted by my own mistakes. The great point is to touch with simple words. (1911, 62)

But it is the Japanese aesthetic, which everywhere Hearn sees as striving for maximum emotional force with minimum materials, that is also responsible for his stylistic Renaissance.

Japanese calligraphy, Hearn writes:

consists only of a certain number of brush-strokes; but in each stroke there is an undiscoverable secret art of grace, proportion, imperceptible curve, which actually makes it seem alive. (1976, 5)

With regard to floral arrangement he points out:

. . . they know how much the natural charm of the flower depends upon its setting and mounting, its relation to leaf and stem, and they select a single graceful branch or spray just as nature made it. (1976, 168)

Hearn's translations of haiku, of "vulgar" street songs, and of Japanese children's songs showed him the advantages of brevity. In the essay "Out of the Street" Hearn notes that the songs of the street are "characterized by the greatest possible simplicity, directness, and sincerity" (1949, 473). In Japan he learned how to touch with the minimum of ornamentation. Although Yu notes that Lafcadio Hearn retained a more refined poetical prose for some of his essays, most notably his "Fantastics," a number of his stories reveal that he has pruned back his infatuation with ornamental language.

"Oshidori," a tale of little more than two pages, tells the story of a hunter, Sonjo. Chancing upon a pair of mandarin-ducks (oshidori), he slays the male. That night he has a dream in which a beautiful woman enters his room and admonishes him for killing her husband. In the

morning Sonjo returns to the scene of the previous day and there:

... he saw the female oshidori swimming alone. In the same moment the bird perceived Sonjo, but, instead of trying to escape, she swam straight toward him, looking at him the while in a strange fixed way. Then with her beak, she suddenly tore open her own body, and died before the hunter's eyes. ... Sonjo shaved his head, and became a priest. (1949, 33)

In "Diplomacy" a man about to be executed vows vengeance on his executioners. Hearn writes, "If any person be killed while feeling strong resentment, the ghost of the person will be able to take vengeance upon the killer" (1949, 38). The officiating samurai asks the man for "some sign of your great resentment" (1949, 38) and proposes that "after your head has been cut off, try to bite the stepping-stone" (1949, 38). To the horror of the onlookers, the condemned man does succeed, after his head has been severed, to catch "the upper edge of the stone" between his teeth (1949, 39). In fear, the samurai's retainers petition him to "have a Segaki-service" (1949, 39) to quiet the restless spirit of the condemned. But the samurai assures them that this precaution is unnecessary:

"Only the last intention of that fellow could have been dangerous; and when I challenged him to give me the sign, I diverted his mind from the desire of revenge. He died with the set purpose of biting the stepping-stone; and that purpose he was able to accomplish, but nothing else. All the rest he must have forgotten. ... So you need not feel any further anxiety about the matter." And indeed the dead man gave no trouble. Nothing at all happened. (1949, 39)

The ending of "Diplomacy" and of "Oshidiro" reveals that Hearn had learned to harness

the power of words. But it also suggests that Hearn was familiar with some Buddhist concepts. Kenneth Rexroth notes that "what [Hearn] does incomparably is to give his reader a feeling of how Buddhism is lived in Japan" (1977, xiii). In his essays, stories, and copious footnotes Hearn shows how popular Buddhism permeates life. In the essay "Buddhist Allusions in Japanese Folksongs" he writes:

One may discern Buddhist thoughts in the cheap cotton prints from an Osaka mill not less than in the figured silks of Kyoto. The reliefs upon an iron kettle, or the elephant- heads of bronze making the handles of a shopkeeper's hibachi . . . the etchings upon a metal pipe, or the enameling upon a costly vase--may all relate, with equal eloquence, the traditions of faith. (1977, 31-32)

Hearn was charmed by the story of the Bodai-Daruma, the twenty-eighth patriarch of the Zen sect who "remained for nine years in uninterrupted meditation, during which time his legs fell off" (1977, 227). In "Otokichi's Daruma" he describes the way in which the story was transmuted into popular culture in the unlikely form of a toy, the "Okiagari-koboshi" (the Getting-up Little Priest)" (1977, 227). "However the little figure be thrown down," writes Hearn, "it will always bob up again into a squatting posture" (1977, 227). In "Songs of Japanese Children" Hearn observes that children's clothing never has the pattern of the lotus-flower, because "the lotus, being the symbolic flower of Buddhism, is sculptured upon tombstones, and is borne as an emblem in funeral processions" (1901, 271). The cuckoo, Hearn notes in "Buddhist Names of Plants and Animals," is known as the "mujo-dori (the bird of impermanency)," and the bird's song:

is popularly interpreted as "Honzon kaketaka?"-- meaning, "has the honzon yet

been suspended?" (The "honzon" is the sacred picture displayed in temples upon the eighth day of the fourth month--a little before the time at which the bird makes its annual appearance.) (1977, 210-11)

Hearn believed that maintaining respect for the past would be Japan's salvation in its struggle to modernize. But in the essay "Nirvana" he advances the idea that Buddhism could help rebuild the world. In that essay Hearn attempts to refute the "erroneous" belief that nirvana means "complete annihilation" (1977, 50). Nevertheless, he states:

. . . if we declare that Nirvana means the extinction of individual sensation, emotion, thought--the final disintegration of everything that can be included under the term "I"--then we rightly express one side of the Buddhist teaching (1977, 50).

In the "doctrine of the impermanency of the conscious Ego" (1977, 62) Hearn sees the salvation of the West. He observes:

How much of human unhappiness has been caused, directly and indirectly by opposite beliefs-- by the delusion of stability--by the delusion that distinctions of character, condition, class, creed, are settled by immutable law--and the delusion of a changeless, immortal, sentient soul, destined, by divine caprice, to eternities of bliss or eternities of fire! (1977, 62)

Only through cultural exchange will the illusion of self be exposed:

. . . it may be hoped that the contact of Western with Oriental thought will have for one happy result the acceleration of their decay. While even the feelings which they have developed linger with us, there can be no true spirit of tolerance,

no sense of human brotherhood, no wakening of universal love. (1977, 62-63)

Lafcadio Hearn, as he writes in a letter to H.E. Krebiel, desired "to be a literary Columbus," (1964, 100), an explorer who found a passage between East and West. He looked for, to use a word we perhaps do not like as much now, "universals" of human experience. He wrote stories of joy, suffering, grief at death, and happiness in love. But he saw in Japan a quality that could save the West, the spirit of self-sacrifice. In "Ubazakura," he tells the story of a milk-nurse, O-Sode, hired by a rich family to attend their daughter, O-Tsuyu. At fifteen, O-Tsuyu falls ill, and O-Sode "went to the temple Saihoji, and fervently prayed to Fudo-Sama on behalf of the girl (1971, 40). She recovers, but O-Sode herself becomes sick, and at her deathbed she reveals:

"I besought Fudo-Sama that I might be permitted to die in the place of O-Tsuyu; and this great favor has been granted me." (1971, 41)

O-Sode asks only one thing in return: "I would have a cherry tree planted in the garden of Saihoji, for a thank-offering and a commemoration" (1971, 41). The parents of O-Tsuyu honour her last with:

The tree grew and flourished; and on the sixteenth day of the second month of the following year,--the anniversary of O-Sode's death,--it blossomed in a wonderful way. So it continued to blossom for two hundred and fifty-four years;--and its flowers, pink and white, were like the nipples of a woman's breast, bedewed with milk. And the people called it Ubazakura, the Cherry-tree of the Milk-Nurse. (1971, 41)

Like O-Sode, who became part of the cherry-tree, Hearn became a part of Japan. His

favourite story was not from Japanese folklore but from Greek mythology. Yet his words apply to his life and work in the Land of the Gods: "The Beauty is in that psychic truth of the desire to melt into another being--the fable of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus" (1911, 308). Like Salmacis, Hearn embraced Japan with a love that make it possible for him to merge his being with of the "other."

Conclusion

Though on the surface Emily Dickinson and Lafcadio Hearn appear to be remarkably divergent as individuals, as writers they have one characteristic in common; the desire to escape-- Dickinson from the confines of Amherst, Hearn from the crassness of the Gilded Age. Dickinson turned to a fictive space, Hearn to the East. But both filtered their environments through the prism of the imagination. Within this space, each writer obtained the freedom to create. As her letter attest, Dickinson was not free from every-day duties. Many of her poems are set either at dawn or late at night, suggesting that these were the times in which she was able to write. Hearn, too, was restricted by his teaching schedule and by the responsibilities of a family. Yet both found a proper setting in which to write and to develop as artists. Both writers manipulated space. Dickinson mentally expanded her environment to a point "[b]eyond the Dip of Bell" (Poem 378). Hearn, in his role as "literary Columbus," attempted to yoke two worlds together, to shrink the gulf between East and West. Each writer played with the concept of identity. Dickinson used a number of pseudonyms in her letters, from the deliberately child-like "Emilie" (Letter 29) to the cryptic "Modoc" (Letter 394). Hearn, a British subject for most of his life (though he is commonly claimed by the United States), became Yakumo Koizumi in Japan.

Hearn's understanding of Japanese culture deepened with his years in Japan. He improved stylistically. His early work is marred by an excess of ornamentation, but, under the influence of Japanese aesthetics, he simplified his style. Hearn came to see the religion of Japan as both a bridge to the past and as a living reality. He eagerly attended festivals and learned the rituals and stories of the various gods. In his essays on religion, as Kenneth Rexroth observes,

Hearn " is as good as anyone at providing an elementary background in Buddhist doctrine (1977, xiii). Hearn was not so bewitched by the post that he was unable to envisage the future. He predicted (and saw the necessity of) Japan's coming modernization. He was among the first writers from the West to show an interest in haiku and other forms of Japanese literature. In this, Hearn precedes other writers, such as Ezra Pound and Gary Snyder (the latter also went to Japan), as well as Rexroth. In his explanation of Eastern thought to the West, Hearn resembles such writers as Huston Smith and Alan Watts, and his interest in mythology calls to mind Joseph Campbell.

Emily Dickinson did not share Hearn's ambitious plans for a meeting of East and West. She does not appear to have had an interest in any of the religions of the Orient or in travel literature pertaining to the East. But her poetry reveals an Eastern conception of mind, as filtered through the Transcendentalists. Many of her poems recall Emerson's "double consciousness," that of eternity in the moment. Such statements as "I find ecstasy in living--the mere sense of living is joy enough" (Letter 342) are not hyperbole, but a kind of second-hand conception of mindfulness as received through the Transcendentalists. Dickinson's garden became, like Walden, a mock-Eden. She did not go to the woods to live deliberately but brought the woods to her. Cultivation of nature becomes a metaphor for cultivation of the mind.

Emily Dickinson and Lafcadio Hearn were writers who inherited the legacy of Romanticism, the double legacy of the worldly (Byron) and the meditative (Wordsworth). In Dickinson the Wordsworthian spirit of the primacy of the imagination takes precedence over external reality. Common indicators of reality-- time, space, distance--are re-shaped by the poet and made to serve the imagination. The transformative power of the mind as applied to the

environment makes Dickinson's speaker able to expand, contract, or re-shape the material world. "Conversion of the Mind" (Poem 593) makes "[b]utterflies" of "[b]ees," and "[b]utterflies-as-Swans" (Poem 593). The shaping spirit of the imagination may "[c]lasp Hemispheres, and Homes," (Poem 710), or make an "Orient" in the "West" (Letter 870).

Lafcadio Hearn represents another Romantic tradition, that of flight into the exotic. He concentrates on the wonders of the immediate environment. External reality is glorified, shaped by the imagination into a kind of Eden. Japan becomes a living model of antiquity. "There is a weird sweetness in this place," he writes, "like a shadowing of Lares" (1976, 113). In Hearn's writing, Japan is a paradise of the past:

. . . to feel that its mythology, though senescent, is alive all around you,—is
almost to realize the dream of the Romantics, to have the sensation of returning
twenty centuries into the life of a happier world. (1976, 102)

With respect to the Eastern theme, Emily Dickinson and Lafcadio Hearn can be seen as transitional writers. Behind them stood the Transcendentalists and writers like Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Their contemporaries, Walt Whitman and Herman Melville, enriched their work with images drawn from Eastern sources. Walt Whitman's "Passage to India" is evocative of Hearn's dream of a unification of East and West:

The earth to be spann'd, connected by network
The races, neighbours, to marry and be given in
marriage,
The oceans to be cross'd, the distant brought near,
The lands to be welded together (lines 31-35)

Dickinson and Hearn responded with equal sensitivity to the challenge of textualizing the Orient. Much later, some of the same themes and perspectives would be developed by Ezra Pound and Gary Snyder, and American culture would be enriched on an even wider scale. To probe the poetry of Emily Dickinson and the writings of Lafcadio Hearn is to understand something of the vital roots of the twentieth-century American quest.

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