

Kipling in Nagasaki: “Put the Whole Empire in a Glass Case”

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India was not Rudyard Kipling's only "Orient." It was, as Jane Hotchkiss rightly notes, certainly his "colonial world," and he was most interested in exploring the "complexities of England's long relationship of imperial domination" in India (432). But the travel letters he sent to the *Pioneer* for his Anglo-Indian readership while on his 1889 tour through East Asia reveals that the Victorian's imperial gaze reached beyond the confines of Britain's immediate spheres of interest. Of the letters he sent from other parts of the "Orient," including Singapore, Canton, and Japan, thirteen were from Japan, a nation that had undergone a drastic transformation in the three decades between its formal "opening" and Kipling's arrival. In one of these letters, Kipling recounts the words of his traveling companion, Alec Hill, who muses that "It would pay us to establish an international suzerainty over Japan [...] to put the whole Empire in a glass case and mark it, *Hors Concours*, Exhibit A" (56).¹ This comment echoes Kipling's own wish to "tear up the railway and pull down the telegraph poles" in Japan, and it attests to the travelers' desire to arrest the modernity that was changing Japanese landscapes and modes of life (105). In agreement with Hill that the "*sahib-log* all the world over" should take action to "save Japan from herself," Kipling suggests that they "speak to the Emperor about it" (105, 56). They don't speak to the emperor, but Kipling's letters do try to turn Japan into an exhibition piece that can be appreciated under glass.

Most Kipling scholars have regarded his travel letters as a “minor footnote in a long literary biography” (Scholtz 199). Only a handful of articles on Kipling’s letters from Japan have shed light on what Steve Clark calls an “Asian version of the [...] Grand Tour” (76). Amelia Scholtz, for example, focuses on the metaphor of the curio cabinet and delineates how “the cabinet of curiosities [...] offer[s] useful analogies for analyzing Kipling’s relationship to the Japanese people” (200). David Scott examines Kipling’s ambivalence toward Japanese imperialism and modernism, and Shizen Ozawa reads letters from Kipling’s 1889 and 1892 Japanese travel to reveal that the later Kipling’s “concern with British imperial unity seriously impairs his cross-cultural vision” (293). Most recently, Clark has examined Kipling’s use of the Hindi word *bandobast* to explore “how Victorian representation of Japan inevitably interacts with those of other East Asian cultures” (77), and Chris Prentice has read the Japanese letters in contexts of Kipling’s developing theories on impressionism (22).

Building upon these previous studies but narrowing down its focus to Kipling’s letters from Nagasaki and Deshima, the following essay examines the rhetorical tactics Kipling employs to prevent the apparent signs of Japanese subjectivity from unraveling Victorian fantasies about elegiac Japan and, more importantly, from undermining his Eurocentric, imperialist worldview that demarcates the *sahib-log* from “natives” and designates the former as one with rights and responsibility to lead the latter on the path of progress. In so doing, I investigate how Kipling tried to grapple with the dissonance between “old” and “new” Japan. Ultimately, I hope to explore the ways in which Japan’s emergence as a modern entity and its claims to the right to enter the ranks of modern powers of the Euro-American type critically influenced late Victorian imperialist thinking. Japan’s claims to parity with Western powers were often disregarded, as this essay will show, but it nonetheless caused Victorians to entertain the possibility of “a lighter than yellow but not quite white” nation (Kowner 103) ascending and thus subverting the imperial hierarchy of nations and peoples. Kipling’s nostalgia for a time and place untouched by modernity,

along with his desire for exoticism, impeded his recognition of Meiji Japan's potential (and intent) to re-map imperial politics and de-center it from the West, and led him to equate "old" Japan with "real" Japan, and to disregard modern elements in Meiji Japan as defective copies of European originals that were unsuited to Japan.

Kipling was certainly not alone in regarding "old" Japan as the "real" one. The portrait of "old" Japan as a magical place that should be preserved was contrived by many, including not only the early Japanophiles like Philipp Franz von Siebold and Lafcadio Hearn, government officials who went on Japanese missions—like Captain Sherard Osborn, individual travel-writers like Cyprian Bridge, Charles Wentworth Dilke, Edwin Arnold, Isabella Bird, and artists like Mortimer Menpes, but also British editors of magazines who, recognizing the allure Japan had to their readership, sought to capitalize on it by shaping their publication accordingly. In his report on Lord Elgin's mission to Japan, which was published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, for instance, Osborn answers to his editor's request to offer insights into "old" Japan by recounting the pleasures he experienced in the traditional tea-houses where he could "resign himself to the ministrations of a bevy of fair damsels who glide rapidly and noiselessly about" (qtd Yokoyama 23). Bridge and Dilke likewise spoke about people living in old wooden houses that were "scarcely fifteen feet above the ground" and the joy they felt in treading the "elf-land" landscape that seemed so romantically different but still very "real" that they found to be representative of Japan (214). Even Bird, who appreciated Meiji Japan's modernizing efforts, revealed her desire to see the preservation of "old" Japan implicitly and explicitly by calling Tokyo often by its old name Edo and expressing her contempt as she witnessed Western-style buildings in Japanese cities which, she pointedly noted, looked like "inferior warehouses, or taverns in the out-skirts of San Francisco" (34). Mortimer Menpes also promoted "old" Japan as the real Japan, which he depicted as an art piece carefully curated by people with exceptional aesthetic talent. In his writing, this "old" Japan makes one feel as though one is "living in another world" (14) and becomes *the* Japan that

needs to be protected from the modernizing Japanese. Of course, such a trend of exotifying the “foreign” isn’t one that pertains only to Victorian visitors to Japan. As Jonathan Culler points out, tourists abroad tend to search for “signs of Frenchness, typical Italian behavior, exemplary oriental scenes [...] and so on” (qtd Urry 3). The Victorians, coming from a nation at the height of industrialization, took Japan’s “old” quarters to be signs of Japaneseness, the “essence” of Japan because cherry blossoms, kimono-clad people, and houses made of camphor wood were different from what they were familiar with at home. However, as I have noted above and as Kipling’s letters from Japan well exemplify, the impulse to exotify Japan stemmed not simply from the tourists’ need to “get away from home,” but from their need to negotiate with the changing reality where Japan was making conscious efforts *not* to be deemed as “an innocent sweet damsel to be petted and played with” or a nation of “dear giggling dolls, living in dear little miniature houses made of cardboard, and eating fairy food out of miniature dishes” (Kawakami ix, viii).²

The first of Kipling’s Japanese letters, the Nagasaki letter reveals the ways in which diminutive tropes from *Japonisme* can help a traveler find a way out of dealing with Japanese histories, realities, and subjects that he finds too contemporary or contentious. The dismissive language Kipling employs enables him to divert his attention from the fact that Japan is and has been a politico-economic agent with its own stakes and agenda to protect and pursue in its interactions with Western entities. To speak briefly, Nagasaki’s history and Deshima’s existence attest to efforts Japan took to partake in the global exchange of cultures and commodities without sacrificing domestic stability. Nagasaki, the modern port city that had seen Portuguese and Dutch influence from the sixteenth century, was a cultural and commercial intersection for the Japanese and their foreign guests. Deshima, an artificial island off Nagasaki’s coast that Tokugawa Japan used as its international trading post, had imprinted on it the historico-political implications of Euro-Japanese relations. Nagasaki and Deshima locals often revealed through their appearance, words, and gestures that the Japanese, whom Victorians had regarded as petite people

notable for "their incessant laughing chatter, and their funny gestures" (Dilke 443), had been adapting themselves to the new world order in which Japan came to assert itself as a politico-economic agent, a maker of modernity with aspirations of gaining entrance to the modern league of nations. Despite what he sees and hears, however, Kipling takes pains to return Japan to an ahistorical exotic past. This return is imperative, as his prime interest is not to know Meiji Japan but to "pack away a very fair collection of new experiences" there (35). He wants "new experiences," but this craving is not to be met by engaging modern subjects and objects of "New Japan" but by indulging in remnants of "Old Japan," as his disdain for railways reveals.

Responding to Edward Said's analysis of Cromer's work on Egypt, Douglas Kerr asserts that Cromer does not always claim to know the Orient and, rather, relies on the rhetoric of unknowing to connote that "his knowledge runs up to a point, and beyond that point the Oriental remains unknowable in his radical difference" (230). What Kerr calls "a prophylactic ignorance," the "aloof, even philistine refusal to know," is a shield that protects the observer from influences of the observed culture during close contact (230). Kipling practices this will to ignorance as soon as he sets foot in Nagasaki, although in his case, it is not the native's "radical difference" but rather, Japanese modernity and the (non)-verbal claims to "sameness" that he refuses to acknowledge. On Kipling's arrival, a Japanese man approaches him to ask whether he has "seen the Constitution of Japan" (36). Appalled at the thought of the Japanese talking of "local-government and proportionate minorities," holding political meetings, and "[printing] reports in newspapers," Kipling states that he would rather "go back to [his] own place" (36). The Japanese enquirer's comment that Kipling does "not seem to be interested in Japanese progress" hits the nail on the head (36). As Kipling himself notes in an earlier letter, he plans on joining the globetrotters who "deliver brawling judgments all day long; on all things unashamed" (*From Sea to Sea* II.5). There is a sense of self-irony here, as Kipling criticizes globetrotters in India for misrepresenting the country of which they know

little. The globetrotters' glib words remain unchallenged by locals because they are "too busy to reply upon their life and manners" (*From Sea to Sea* II.4). Kipling's commentary on the local-globetrotter relationship "admits the impossibility of understanding other cultures and societies" (Ozawa 295). However, it is also his self-given identity as a globetrotter that lets him preemptively justify his traveling persona's callousness. If Kipling looks only at the surface of "exotic" Japan, it is permissible, because it is, according to him, what globetrotters *do*. In other words, the genre of his writing, letters from a casual globe-trotting tourist, provides an efficient excuse for not knowing, and *willing* not to know, Japan.

Kipling is politic and political in using his touristic will not to know. Laughingly dismissing and disparaging the non-romantic aspects of Meiji Japan, the newly emerging modern force in the East, he reassures the conservative readership of the *Pioneer* that the progress being made by "natives" in Japan are laughable ones that "sahib-logs all over" need not worry too seriously about. Furthermore, the lighthearted dismissals and jokes about Japan's modern entities helps Kipling deal with Japanese counter-gazes and political visions that undercut the authority of the imperial gaze. This is evinced in the Nagasaki letter, which shows ample examples of how Kipling uses techniques of rhetorical reduction and alienation most rigorously in three instances: when Japanese locals obstruct the Victorian fantasy of Japan; when they exert Japan's subjecthood as a modern entity; and when they expose the arbitrariness of the global imperialist hierarchy. From the man who accosts Kipling with a copy of the Meiji constitution, to random members of the tourist industry, there are many locals who prompt Kipling to acknowledge Japan's vision of itself as a modern(izing) nation with socio-political actors. Yet, Kipling's comments on Japan's modernity and its subjectivity are usually supplemented with tropes from Victorian *Japonisme* and various cues to Kipling's desire to remain ignorant of the Japan as lived and represented by the Japanese.

Disclaimers of knowledge are employed because knowledge of the Other acquired at close quarters can "abolish the prestigious distance that

sustains [the Englishmen's] authority" (Kerr 235). Engaging political visions and counter-gazes of the Japanese could close the temporal distance between Japan and Britain. More specifically, to regard the Japanese state and people's experience in navigating international relations as evidence of their modern subjectivity would have been akin to accepting Japan as a coeval subject with potential to stand on equal grounds with foreign powers like Britain. Such acceptance Kipling cannot grant, for the acceptance of Japan's modernity—the hybridity of which Kipling derisively emphasizes throughout his letters as grounds for its parity with Western states—could lead to the forfeiture of the *sahib*'s authority over the meaning of modern progress. Japan's inclusion in the club of modern nations could result in the pluralization of modernity's center, a remapping of modern "civilization." Such a potential remapping was problematic, as Kipling—despite his belief in the importance of converting non-Western countries to modernity—believed (as his poem "White Man's Burden" indicates) that the "*sahib-logs*" and only they had the capacity for defining the meaning of progress and paving ways to it. Perceiving Japan as a modern subject was to undercut the premise on which the white man's burden and prerogatives were grounded. To retain the temporal gap between the nations, Kipling asserts his will to ignorance—or rather, his "right" to ignorance, as the offence he takes at being compelled to listen to the Japanese speak of history and politics indicate—and thus he belittles Japan.

Re-framing Nagasaki and Deshima with his exotic lens and with his insistence on not knowing Japan, Kipling obscures the shared time of the observer and the observed, as did imperial anthropologists who used the ethnographic present tense to locate the observed in a "Time other than the present of the producer of [...] discourse" (Fabian 31). I argue that the frequency with which Kipling employs such rhetorical tactics in dealing with Japanese subjects indicates that their effects were temporary and unbinding. Kipling persists in turning a blind eye toward signs of Japan's modernity and modern polity throughout his travels in order to keep Japan in the "timeless" spatio-temporality of his imagination, and thus he

succeeds in bringing closure to his repeated negotiations with non-exotic elements of Japan. He ridicules Japan's excitement over the Meiji constitution, dismisses Japanese polity, disregards Japan's modern reforms, sensationalizes Japan's history in foreign relations, and stares down Japanese counter-gazes. But signs of epistemological clashes remain imperfectly erased. The locals' unyielding comments and unwieldy visions that Kipling introduces in scenes of conflict and negotiations mark the disparity between the traveler's perceptions of Japan's past, present, and future relations to European powers, and the perceptions of the Japanese. These remaining markers of perspectival dissonance indicate that Japan was a dynamic meeting ground where *sahibs* were at times forced to realize the precariousness of the imperial world order.

Nagasaki on Japanese Screens

Kipling's Nagasaki visit is told through a series of smaller narratives in which he vacillates between being reassured by the extant romanticism of Japan and being disillusioned by the politics of Euro-Japanese contact. The pendulum swings back with more force toward the former, as evidence revealing Japan and the Japanese to be historico-political subjects is re-written into vignettes featuring tropified figurines. Even after a Japanese local takes part in a politically charged scene of cross-cultural interaction with Kipling, he is unable to exert himself as a political subject as he practices the globe-trotter's right to prophylactic ignorance as he collects familiar stereotypes and underwrites the historico-political contexts of their interaction.

A more important interlocutor for Kipling is another Westerner: Oscar Wilde, who published the "Decay of Lying" before Kipling landed in Japan and argued that "there was no such a place as Japan [and] that it had been created by fans and picture books" (35). For Wilde, the Japan Victorians had come to know was a Japanese *effect* bearing no resemblance to the realities of "actual people who live in Japan" (54). The gap between representation and reality was inevitable. Even paintings done by "Hokusai, or Hokkei, or any of the great native painters" reflect

the artists' aesthetic visions rather than cultural, political, and socio-economic circumstances of Japanese life (Wilde 54). Pointing to this gap, Wilde pulls back the screen. That Kipling was quite conscious of Wilde's chastising remarks is explicitly revealed in his initial reminder to readers to "never believe anything that Mister Oscar Wilde tells you" (35), as well as the illustrative descriptions of Nagasaki harbor that follow, descriptions that serve to draw the screen of *Japonisme* back over the reality of Nagasaki as a working international port.³ As Kipling depicts it, "two grey rocks studded and streaked with green" and "crowned by two stunted blue-black pines" surround the harbor he sees via his cabin window (35). On the dock, he sees an "indigo-blue boy with an old ivory face and a musical voice ... hauling on a rope" (35). The vivid environs of Nagasaki harbor and indigo-blue boy realizes for Kipling a scene from Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience* (1881), which also features a "Japanese young man/ A blue-and-white young man" (126). The man hauls on a rope, but as Kipling's focus on the colors of his clothes, person, and surroundings as well as his "musical voice" ushers him into a picturesque scenscape, disassociating him from the socio-economic grounds of the port city that had become the center of Japan's heavy industry in the late nineteenth-century. Kipling's illustrations of the man and the dock on which he toils reveal that Wilde was right to point out the discrepancies between Japanese effects and Japanese life. Ironically, however, the blue-and-ivory boy serves also as Kipling's supporting evidence against Wilde.

Even his first glances into Nagasaki evince, Kipling pointedly states, that Japan "was not a lie" as Wilde had claimed (35). The land "whence the camphor and the lacquer and the sharkskin swords come" exists in reality, and these things, according to Kipling, sit "among—what is it the books said?—a nation of artists" (35). The list of exotic artifacts associated with Japan and the reference to "books" that identify Japan as "a nation of artists" reveal Kipling's proclivities for *Japonisme* conventions.⁴ Promptly after setting foot in Nagasaki, however, Kipling is confronted not by artists but rather, "an execrable man" bearing a far different document: the Meiji constitution (36). A document that attests to Japan's capability to install

modern administrative and legal systems, the Meiji constitution was to be used to realize *bankoku taiji* (parity with the powers), and to rewrite the unequal terms of Euro-Japanese relations. More specifically, the Meiji constitution was to be used in removing the extraterritoriality clauses that undercut Japan's legal autonomy (Auslin 157).⁵ Removal attempts had been made prior to the promulgation of the Meiji constitution, only to be met by the powers' refusal to yield jurisdiction to Japanese local authorities before Japan modernized its socio-juridical systems to the full satisfaction of Western nations (Auslin 194). After a difficult process, Japan's first modern constitution was promulgated in 1889.⁶ The government also debuted the English translation and an "official interpretation" of the Meiji constitution to the West, sending both to constitutional scholars and experts in the West in the hopes of showing off Japan's "progress" (Takaii 131). However, the majority of the documents' recipients dismissed the Japanese constitution as a motley quilt of European counterparts (Takaii 131).⁷

Upon being confronted by a local who takes upon himself the mission to have a Westerner recognize the Meiji constitution as evidence and culmination of Japan's progress in juridical reforms, Kipling gives a short review and calls it "an excellent little scheme of representation, reforms, payment of members, budget estimates, and legislation" (36). He also declares it "a terrible thing to study" what is "so pitifully English" (36).⁸ The details of the "little schemes" included in the Meiji constitution demonstrate that its makers were thorough in constructing the institutional basis by which Japan would be run. Nonetheless, Kipling retracts even the little credit he gives as he reduces the Meiji constitution into an inferior copy of England's own. The question he poses, "is the public mind agitated over these [...] skittles?" (36), also betrays Kipling's disregard for Japan's modern polity. The words "agitated" and "skittles" mark the supposed irrational and microscopic Japanese approach to constitutional politics. Obsessing over minute details, the Japanese reveal themselves to be lacking in political acumen: one needs to see the forest as well as the trees, to understand that it is one thing to write a constitution and another to put

it into practice. Kipling's identification of the Meiji constitution as Japan's "new plaything" (173) further demonstrates that he perceives the promulgation of the constitution not as a watershed event in Japanese politics but the source of a passing fad that consumes the public. This "plaything" is old news for Kipling, who comes from a place where "constitutions [...] and all the other skittles [have been] played with for six hundred years" (173). The Japanese may be eager to discuss its contents, but he needs to hear no more. The contrast between the local's excitement and Kipling's jaded response to the constitution reconfirms the temporal distance between the two islands. In just a few words, Kipling reiterates that Japan cannot really catch up with the west—a gap of six centuries is quite unbridgeable.⁹

Leaving the man with the constitution behind, Kipling tries to escape from the political subjects and visions of Meiji Japan by re-aestheticizing Nagasaki, focusing his eyes on the yellow green hues of its hills, which appear to be "the green of a Japanese screen" (36). Kipling's re-framing of Nagasaki bears out Ali Behdad's claim about Anglo travelers in the Orient, with a twist. According to Behdad, Anglo-travelers' narratives of Oriental voyages center on their "reexperience of a phantasmatic text" (26). An Orientalist subject's vision is "mediated by the symbolic field of cultural 'baggage' that has given him the illusion of a phantasmagoric city," but the subject's "encounter with the 'real' can only be an experience of discontentment" (Behdad 26). The cultural "baggage" Kipling carries leads him to expect a phantasmic Japan, but the discrepancies between such an expectation and his run-ins with the all too "real" histories and politics of Japan distress him. However, the cultural baggage that the "real" threatens to rip apart still has tools with which he can push Japan back into a phantasmic text. The use-value of this "baggage" is aptly exemplified as Kipling veils over contemporary debates about the Meiji constitution with familiar descriptions of Nagasaki's colorful hills.

The repose of Nagasaki hills, however, is impermanent: the mediating force of Japanese screens wanes the moment Kipling's eyes lock onto the Japanese customs official strolling in a "badly-fitting German uniform" (36).

The man's occupation as a customs official signifies Japan's systematic engagement with international commerce, and his uniform reflects the political vision of the Meiji government, which sought to modernize all facets of society—including the everyday habits of the Japanese.¹⁰ The native official's modern existence—his being testifies to Meiji Japan's political aspirations to be and to be seen as a modern nation—and causes the traveler to face the impossibility of re-experiencing "Old Japan" as he witnesses such a man. Nonetheless, there still remain tropes for Kipling to use in negotiating with Japanese modernity without giving up the notion of exotic Japan altogether. After sighting the native official, Kipling disdainfully notes that the man is a "hybrid—partly French, partly German, and partly American—a tribute to civilization" (36).¹¹ That Kipling should read the man in an assortment of European uniforms as a synecdoche of a nation giving "tribute" to European civilization, and that he should note that the "Mikado" must have made the uniform "at the same time as the Constitution" (37), indicate that he recognizes the political motivation behind Japanese sartorial reforms. The Euro-imperial notion that Japan has become the West's tributary is quite condescending, but it nonetheless reveals that Japan understands the global implications of its reforms and is making conscious efforts to show its international audience Japan's willingness and preparedness to join the ranks of modern nations. However, if the Japanese in a Europeanized uniform—a reminder of Meiji politics, domestic and international—politicizes Japan too much and disabuses Kipling of his Japanese fantasies, his derisive description of the uniformed man's appearance as well as his dismissive interpretation of the uniform itself enable Kipling to restrain such effects to some degree. A tropical figure that evinces Japan's imitative nature, the man's apparent hybridity reassures Kipling that Japan is at best a bad mimic of modernized Western nations, and a child who has "unexpectedly passed a college examination" due to his imitative powers (Kowner 104). The trope of Japan as a child emulating "adult" nations and following in Europe's footsteps, relegates Japan to Europe's past, and thus re-relegates it to another temporality. Japan may not be as "old" as it used to be, as the Japanese official in a mismatched Western uniform tells him, but it still belongs to another time.

People who "Can't Stop Laughing" and "Beefsteaked" Christians

After Kipling passes condescending remarks on the Japanese official's modern attire, he visits a theater to see *The Mikado*, and comes out content. The plotline of Gilbert and Sullivan's popular comic opera remains unrecounted in his letter.¹² Nonetheless, he portrays the actress playing Pitti-Sing in detail: she wore a sash, a pair of "three-inch clogs," and "three giant hair-pins in her hair which was 'blue-black, lustrous, thick as horse hair'" (37). The familiar markers of *Japonisme* displayed on the actress delights Kipling. He finds himself "grin[ning] luxuriously" at her, and he takes her laughter, as he puts it, to be "my welcome to Japan" (37). Kipling had already had a closer encounter with a Japanese local—the man with the constitution—before being greeted by the Mikado cast. Why aren't the words of the man with the constitution counted as a welcome? The determiner "my" is perhaps a hint. The actress's laughter allows Kipling to retrieve a sense of mastery over his interaction with Japan, for unlike the native's request for a comment on the Meiji constitution, laughter emanating from a character embodying Victorian fantasies about Japanese maidens caters to rather than challenges his desire to consume Japan as an aesthetic object. Her laughter is unassertive, and her presence is colorful and decorative. The maiden's laughter is not any kind of welcome, but it is a welcome that a globetrotter can appreciate.

Even after Kipling steps out of the theater, the maiden's laughter serves as an anchor from which he can continue to see Japan through the intermediating lens of *Japonisme*. Strolling through Nagasaki's streets, Kipling muses, "Can the people help laughing? I think not," then he goes on to explain that such a phenomenon is due to the city being populated "entirely by children" (37). The trope of Japanese as children is fleshed out as he observes that "[a] four-foot child walks with a three-foot child who is holding the hand of a two-foot child, who carries on her back a one-foot child," and that the "scale [of children] runs down to six-inch little Japanese dolls such as they used to sell in the Burlington Arcade" (37). The scaling down of the laughing "children" and his reference to miniature dolls shrink Nagasaki into a showcase of nesting dolls. Writing of

inanimate toys such as dolls, Susan Stewart argues that such miniaturized inanimate objects repeat “the still life’s theme of arrested life” (57). Kipling’s dollification of Nagasaki pedestrians has the same arresting effect. Nagasaki becomes a Japanese still-life as Kipling reduces Japanese locals to dolls that “wriggle and laugh” (37) and the streets they occupy into a stage for an expanded production of *The Mikado*. Placed in this arrested time, the toy-like children reinforce Victorian-Japanese illusions that not only Kipling but also other travel writers like Bridge and Dilke perpetuated by marveling at “toy-like tininess” of Japanese wooden houses, “troop[s] of maidens coming home with cheerful chatter” (64), and the “smallness of the [Japanese], their incessant laughing chatter, and their funny gestures,” which makes the traveler feel like he is walking among elves (443). As such, Nagasaki is re-aestheticized; the giggling children please the traveler’s eyes and obscure the bustle of the evolving, modern port city. If the “desire not simply to know everything but also to experience everything simultaneously” (Stewart 57) leads one to feel also the desire to animate the toy, the opposite desire, to not know and to not experience “everything” about Meiji Japan motivates Kipling to de-animate the Japanese.

That prophylactic ignorance, which is the flipside of one’s will to immerse oneself in preconceived fantasies about the Other, becomes even more evident in the scenes of Kipling’s interaction with a local tour guide who takes him to Deshima—an historical site that testifies to the history of Euro-Japanese interactions that began in the sixteenth century. Whisking Kipling away from an impeccably organized grain-dealer’s shop, Y-Tokai, the tour guide, prompts Kipling to confront the conflicted history of Euro-Japanese interrelationships (39). However, this confrontation remains cursory, for Kipling negotiates the competing wills of himself and his guide—the will not to know Japan’s socio-political history, and the will to make them known—by overriding Y-Tokai’s political vision with his own exotic vision.

Putting Deshima in contexts of Dutch-Japanese relations, Y-Tokai renders the island into a spatial manifestation of Japan’s history of cross-

cultural exchange, and presents Japan as a subject that had been entangled in politico-commercial contests with Western nations prior to the nation's formal "opening." By so doing, Y-Tokai oversteps his mark as a tour guide, whose conventional role was to "[offer] the tourist a fully programmed approach to the Orient, mapping a suitable itinerary, designating the appropriate sights [...] defining the desire for the Orient" (Behdad 52). To tame the local who prompts him to go and look beyond the designated itinerary and appropriate sights usually done by globetrotters, Kipling reduces Y-Tokai into a rambling man whose incompetency leads to the reversal of roles; Kipling, not his guide, serves the other. He "feign[s] interest" in Y-Tokai's repeated statements about the conflicts between "the Dutch and the Japanese" while Y-Tokai remains oblivious to his client's lack of interest (39). The evident failure of Y-Tokai to understand the requirements of his profession undercuts the authority of his words and justifies Kipling's omission of them.

Kipling gives a truncated version of Y-Tokai's lecture, noting that "a complication not unattended with bloodshed had cropped up between the [Dutch and the Japanese]" in Deshima (39). Amplifying the violent nature of Japanese-Dutch relations, Kipling simplifies the "complications" he mentions. The sensationalistic tone employed here echoes that used in his observations on Portuguese-Japanese relations. As Kipling puts it, Japan had "[made] enterprising Jesuit missionaries into beefsteak," and is at present paying for its past offenses by letting "vile" Western dresses take over and adulterate "their artistic instincts" (39). Stated as thus, he depreciates sartorial reforms as a hefty price Japan is paying for its past aggressions. Furthermore, his commentary on the "beefsteaking" of Jesuits marks religious intolerance and xenophobia of the Japanese as defining features that caused the failure in Tokugawa Japanese foreign relations. Grounded on the image of Tokugawa Japan as a zealously guarded country in self-imposed isolation, the comment misleads one to overlook the fact that Japanese approaches to foreign religions, businesses, and nationals shifted according to the political turbulence Tokugawa Japan saw as it attempted to "crystaliz[e] the social and power structures in place" (de Groot 201).¹³

Early Japanese-Portuguese relations, which began with Francis Xavier's arrival in 1549, depended on the good will of Japanese *daimyos* and thus could not but be volatile. However, volatility did not always mean violence. The Jesuit missionaries were respected by the provincial lord, Omura Sumitada, who himself converted to Christianity. To "attract Portuguese commerce into one of the most obscure fishing villages of his domains," Sumitada offered excellent harbors to Jesuits (Loureiro 195). The result was salutary. The Macau-Nagasaki trading route established under Sumitada's auspices transformed Nagasaki into a flourishing port studded with churches and Portuguese-built constructions that gave it "all the look of a Lisbon suburb" (Burke-Gaffney 2). Trouble started brewing when increasing numbers of Japanese converts to Christianity alarmed leaders who were trying to revive the country that had just emerged from a civil war by imposing a "strong central authority under Hideyoshi" (Loureiro 198). Political fallout of the dissemination of Christianity was a grave cause for concern for the *bakufu*, who feared that people might "compromise their allegiance to the shogun and rebel under the international aegis of the Pope" (Mochizuki 76-77). The *bakufu*'s suspicion that missionary activities may be a precursor to "control or colonize [Japan]" caused missionaries to be banned in 1597 (Davies 10).

The ban followed the execution of twenty-six Jesuit missionaries—possibly the "beef-steaking" of Jesuits to which Kipling refers. But it was conflicts between Portuguese Jesuits and Spanish Franciscans—in other words, internal conflict amongst foreign residents in Japan—that caused the Japanese to use violence (Davies 10). This indicates that it was not Japanese xenophobia but rather clashing interests amidst multi-layered grounds of Euro-Japanese interactions that wreaked havoc in Nagasaki. In fact, the policy that caused the expulsion of foreign missionaries was reversed for a time because the Tokugawa leaders valued trade with Europe. Such leniency reveals politico-economic pragmatism rather than blind xenophobia. The *bakufu* did eventually renew the ban, but this decision was likewise a pragmatic one based on imperial data. In its

experience with the Dutch, who “showed no concern for proselytizing” (Davies 10), the *bakufu* came to recognize the possibility of maintaining foreign trade without having Christianity threaten the social order. This recognition led to the official ban on propagating Christianity in 1612. The austerity with which the *bakufu* persecuted Christians after the ban caused the Shimabara rebellion (1636-38). To diminish remaining Christian influence in Japan, the *bakufu* removed the Portuguese from the Nagasaki mainland to Deshima in the year of the Shimabara rebellion. The name of the island, “Exit Island,” is a symbolic reminder of the Tokugawa régime’s effort to secure its territory and national security while acclimatizing itself to global trade. The *bakufu* wanted the continuation of Euro-Japanese commerce, but also needed to contain foreigners so that they can be made to “exit” Japan without jeopardizing social equilibrium by dispersing an “alien set of moral and ethical rules and values” (Davies 199). Portuguese failure to stop proselytizing resulted in their expulsion from Deshima in 1639. After the Portuguese departed, the Dutch took to Deshima, and strict rules were imposed on the island. Trade in Deshima was to occur only in designated areas, inland ventures were prohibited, and the learning of the Japanese language was forbidden (de Groot 210). Despite severe regulations, however, the Dutch stayed and enjoyed a monopoly over Euro-Japanese trade until 1858. During this time, Dutch-Japanese relations became more than commercial as Japan hired Dutch advisors to kick-start modern reform projects.

I have delineated Nagasaki and Deshima’s histories as cultural intersections to expose the dehistoricizing effect of Kipling’s sensational and simplistic rendering. His stories of murdered Jesuits, quarantined Dutch, and bloodied grounds of Euro-Japanese contact zones put a horrific yet fantastical veil over the swaying political grounds on which both foreign and native players of cross-cultural interaction collaborated, came into conflict, made compromises, and struggled to assert their interests as they did so. Signs of Portuguese and Jesuit influence imprinted on Nagasaki buildings, Y-Tokai’s comments on Euro-Japanese contestations, and his own knowledge of Deshima as “a spot

where the wicked Dutch was segregated” (37) could have given Kipling enough context to realize the complexity of the situation. However, he again refuses to do more than “pack away [...] new experiences” (35), the “new experience” here meaning to be accosted by a rambling tour-guide who speaks of the “three hundred years of” Dutch-Japanese horrors “so many times” (37). The complications of this long history remains suppressed as Kipling mutes Y-Tokai’s voice and replaces his history lesson with visceral summaries (37). By so doing, Kipling negotiates a way out of regarding Japan as a political entity that worked with or against foreigners based on its assessments on the benefits and demerits of cross-cultural mingling. Furthermore, he reinserts himself in a re-exotified Japan where one hears of extraordinary things. The imagery of beefsteaked missionaries may not be as pleasing as that of “blooms on the people’s cheeks” (39), but it does turn Japan into a backdrop for wondrous tales.

Struggle in the Japanese “Cuckoo Cabinet”

Diverting his attention from Deshima’s contentious history, Kipling refocuses his eyes on the “cabinet-like” shops that line its streets and tries to reconstruct the place into a fairyland by referring to Mary Louise Molesworth’s *The Cuckoo Clock*, a children’s adventure story set in various fantastical spaces within the protagonist’s dreams, including the land of “Nodding Mandarins.” In Molesworth’s exotic *Bildungsroman*, Chinese figurines living inside an ornamental cabinet entertain a British girl who has entered their realm in her dream state in the guidance of her imaginary friend, the cuckoo of the eponymous clock. Likening the curio-shop he enters to the “cabinet that Griselda [Molesworth’s protagonist] entered with the cuckoo,” Kipling relocates it on an otherworldly sphere and de-links the Anglo-Japanese interaction—including his own with the shopkeeper—that occur within this space from historico-political contexts (40). Molesworth’s text is clearly not divorced from reality; quite the contrary, it reflects the very real desires of Victorians to teach its children the importance of learning “submission, patience, love, restraint of temper, obedience, industriousness,

mental self-discipline, and spiritual awareness" (Sicar 164). What I wish to emphasize here, is that Kipling's allusion to Moleworth's Chinese cabinet removes the curio-shop, if only temporarily, from the gritty world of Japanese politics in the larger space of Deshima as well as from the island's history that Y-Tokai so passionately lectured about, to the more familiar space of Victorian fiction, then once again, to a magical dream-sphere where oriental figurines come to life to indulge their visitor.

Twice removed from the present spatio-temporality of Meiji Japan, Kipling's Japanese cabinet almost becomes what Gaston Bachelard calls a "felicitous space." *Almost*, for the tiny shopkeeper of the Deshima curio-shop does not cooperate in the making of his shop into a globetrotter's felicitous space. Felicitous spaces are spaces within "drawers, chests, wardrobes" that people tend to imagine as protective enclaves "against adverse forces" outside (Bachelard xxxv-xxxvi). Upon entering the curio-shop, Kipling muses: "I was not Griselda, but my low-voiced friend [...] was the cuckoo, and the room was the cabinet" (40). Such references to a fairy-tale cabinet demonstrate that Kipling expects the curio-shop to be a felicitous space that grants him the reprieve he needs from the more "adverse" native elements that force him to at least acknowledge Japan's political history and concerns. But such an expectation goes unmet. Instead of being greeted by hosts eager to please, Kipling in the Japanese cabinet is confronted with a shopkeeper whose deft manners and seemingly judgmental gaze unnerve him.

In this little shop "among doll's houses" (40) Kipling is simultaneously enlarged and dwarfed. He is, as he notes in approaching the place, happy to have no one "tower over him" (40). But satisfaction turns into discomfort as soon as Kipling and his "cuckoo" in the cabinet begin interacting. Eyeing his dirty boots, the man places a mat in front of him, and causes Kipling to question his cultural superiority. Under his gaze, Kipling feels "like a 'barbarian, and no true *sahib*'" (40). In the short internal monologue that follows, Kipling states, "I hate you because I feel myself your inferior, and [...] because you know me for a savage" (40). The phrase "you know me for a savage" exposes Kipling's recognition of

his status as the Other's object of study as well as the precariousness of his assumed cultural superiority. The shopkeeper is not an ornamental addition to the Japanese cabinet, but a subject capable of returning Kipling's gaze and of shaming his apparent vulgarity. Intimidated by the apparently elegant storekeeper who keeps his shop immaculate and moves about the tiny space suavely, Kipling tries to "console [himself] with the thought that [he] could kick the places to pieces" and considers threatening to "pull your house of cedar-wood over your ears" (40). He does not act upon the thought, however, for it makes him "feel large and coarse and dirty" i.e., like a savage (40). This self-conscious response to his own imagined verbal attack illustrates that Kipling has internalized the native's gaze; the temptation to reassert his authority through violence is strong, but he must censor himself as he has no wishes to let the Other reconfirm his savagery or to aggravate his own sense of inferiority.

The internal struggle Kipling undergoes in the curio-shop reveals that the "corporeal estrangement" he experiences "translates into an estrangement from the white colonial body" (Scholtz 206). The native's gaze, Kipling's self-consciousness of his own awkwardness, and his violent impulse to bring the man to submission all alienate him from his proclaimed *sahib*-ness. His sense of being out-of-place persists as the storekeeper brings out delicate tea in the tiny space in which Kipling finds it difficult to maneuver gracefully. As the dissonance lingers, the Briton's perception of the world and his place within it remains awry. The native's gaze that refuses to succumb to the imperial subject's gaze suspends Kipling's prerogatives as the rightful judge of other cultures and peoples. Travel books may have given "European reading publics a sense of ownership, entitlement and familiarity with respect to the distant parts of the world that were being explored" (Mary Louise Pratt 3), and the Japanese "cabinet" may have been familiar for Kipling, but the Kipling-shopkeeper interaction demonstrates that travelers in these "distant parts" often experienced dis-entitlement. As he stands awkwardly under the native's gaze and ponders the possibility that the Japanese may just be "ordinary human beings" equal or even superior to himself, his sense of mastery is undercut (41).

Kipling, however, does not remain daunted for long. In fact, he reverses the subverted positions of the elegant native and the bungling *sahib*, and re-stabilizes the hierarchical order by writing his curio-shop experience as a cautionary tale featuring an unsuspecting tourist and an unconscientious native merchant keen on ripping him off. According to Kipling, the shopkeeper calls an exorbitant price for a *netsuke* and drops the price after seeing his hesitance to make the expenditure. The man's descent from the status of a master of manners to a deceptive fraud dissolves the estranging effect of Kipling's earlier interaction with him. The distress Kipling had felt as the recipient of the storekeeper's elaborate services and discerning gaze is replaced by a sense of relief—he is "relieved when the cuckoo-man proved to be a horrid extortioner, lowering his prices like a *kabari*" (40). *Kabari*, derivative of the Hindi word *kabad* (junk), refers to those who deal in scrap goods, and thus emphasizes the inferiority of the shop's inventory as well as the storekeeper's moral deficiency. And the parallel drawn between the Japanese shopkeeper and Indian junk dealers indicates that Kipling's relief comes from being able to reaffirm the native's inferiority, which enables him to revive the hierarchical divide between the native and himself—a divide on which Kipling's colonial identity depends.

Moreover, the storekeeper's bad conduct is denounced but appreciated by Kipling as that which reconfirms his notion of Japan as a "nation of artists" and his belief that such a country "should have no concern with business" (35, 39). He makes this dismissive comment before introducing the curio-shop episode, but the fact that he adds the phrase "as you shall hear" in a letter that features no other episode dealing with Japanese businesses demonstrates that Kipling had that very incident in mind (39). To be fair, there were local merchants in Japan who employed fraudulent methods to maximize their profits by taking advantage of the West's desire for exotic goods from Japan. While some simply capitalized by catering to the curio market fueled by the desires of "western housewives enchanted by the romance of Japan," turning profits from cheaply made export ware (Checkland 23), others turned to dealing in rare antiques or to producing and selling bogus antiques with added dust

and dirt, taking advantage of high-end shoppers looking to “buy ‘quality or age’” (Bincsik 226). Japanese traders in the business also formed collectives to share information on the social status and approximate budgets of their prospective customers to make the most profitable sales (Bincsik 226). Read in this context, Kipling’s warning against duplicitous “cuckoos” in Japanese curio-shops is justifiable.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that the conclusion Kipling draws from the curio-shop incident—that the Japanese are unfit for business and should not venture into it—not only belittles the body of commercial agents in Japan but also obscures the complex dynamics of domestic and international commerce in Japan. Although Kipling insinuates that commerce is a new undertaking for the Japanese, Tokugawa Japan had a merchant body that contributed much to the making of a proto-industrial economy that lay the grounds for Meiji Japan’s transformation (Edward Pratt 87). The maritime ban prohibited manufacturers from exporting surplus goods, but intra-Asian trade with China, Ryuku, and Korea, as well as international trade with a limited number of European entities endured in the so-called isolationist period.¹⁴ To speak of the curio industry, it was the curio merchants’ awareness of the history of Euro-Japanese trade, or more specifically, their concern that less experienced merchants would be duped into selling their stock at prices below their worth, that led them to establish networks and share information on how one can and should haggle with foreign buyers. While this collective action can be construed as deceptive, it was also preemptive and self-protective. The Japanese concern for being unfairly compensated was well grounded. In early days of Euro-Japanese art trade, Europeans profited much because the Japanese were ignorant of the international market value of their goods, so much so that Philippe Sichel, a Parisian art dealer, speculated that “the Japanese must [...] hold their art in low esteem” (qtd Put 44). Kipling would not have been able to say the same, as his “cuckoo” called a high price for a trinket. But the fluctuation of prices in Japan’s curios and antique market cannot be explained simply as the product of the local traders’ moral failings or Japan’s supposedly inherent ineptitude for business, for it was

the pull and push of all parties with vested interests in profiting from the Japanese arts and curio industry that caused price shifts.

Notwithstanding the push and pull he also experienced, Kipling takes the curio-shop incident to be a reassuring sign of Japan's lacking faculties in business, rendering abstruse the real politics of Euro-Japanese commerce in which both Japanese and European traders exploited each other as they navigated the global capitalist market. Kipling's denigration of the storekeeper as a villain intent on ripping off unsuspecting foreigners serves the rhetorical purpose of transforming the unsatisfactory cultural transaction and failed commercial exchange between Kipling and the Japanese merchant into an unpleasant but entertaining tale that features the known trope of the "corrupt" Japanese swindlers one could easily find in travelogues like Rutherford Alcock's *The Capital of the Tycoon* or Bird's *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*.¹⁵ Kipling's Japanese cabinet may have been a space that estranges traveler and readers, but the villain in the shop makes the story familiar enough that the disillusioning effect of Kipling's experience in the infelicitous space of the Japanese cabinet can be mitigated. As the storekeeper sinks back to his place below the *sahib*, another negotiation between Kipling and a Japanese subject comes to a close.

Conclusion

As is his pattern, Kipling escapes the infelicitous space of the curio-shop to find solace in a more innocuously exotic place that suits his fancies—a teahouse where he is served by soft-spoken, kimono-clad tea-maidens.¹⁶ There is little to be negotiated in the tea house, for although his "cheap striped brown [socks] with a darn at the heel" and his clumsiness that makes the waitresses "shriek of delight" evoke a feeling of great embarrassment, the tea-maidens' laughing shrieks and the admiration they heap upon Kipling "in an unknown tongue" do not fall short of placing the traveler and waitresses in the phantasmic text of Victorian Japan (42). O-Toyo, a Japanese teahouse server, is described as a beauty, "ebon-haired, rosy-cheeked, and made throughout of delicate porcelain" (44). This ebon-

and rose-colored maiden does not put Kipling up to acknowledging the political progress Japan has made or to learning the details of the conflicted history behind Euro-Japanese interactions. Nor does her gaze threaten to subvert the hierarchy between herself and the *sahib*. Content with the light-hearted atmosphere of the tea-house that allows for casual flirtations, Kipling declares that he “would be a Japanese—always with O-Toyo of course—in a cabinet-work house on a camphor scented hillside” (44).

The brief encounter with O-Toyo reconciles Kipling and Nagasaki, and it seems that negotiations are finally complete. Kipling departs the city without being further disillusioned. But peace is short-lived. In my introduction, I noted that Kipling’s will-to-ignorance and his use of Victorian tropes of Japan enables him to preserve temporarily the myths about Japan and, more importantly, the *sahib*’s ownership of the surveying, appraising, consuming gaze. I wish to reemphasize here the impermanence of closures he brings to his negotiations with the Japanese. The many negotiations we witness in the single letter Kipling writes from Nagasaki reveals the provisional nature of the rhetorical strategies Kipling uses to close battles of clashing gazes, and they reveal the fact that the business of taming the Other was an incomplete one. He can bring somewhat neat ends to the struggles he has in and with Nagasaki, but these ends do not preclude another scenscape from Tokyo or another comment or glance of a native of Osaka, for example, from revealing the non-existence of the Japan of Victorian imagination, challenging the presupposed non-coevality between the Western self and non-Western Others, and from unraveling the hierarchy of nations. Furthermore, the convoluted history of Euro-Japanese interaction and counter-gazes of Japanese subjects all cast long shadows and persistently haunt Kipling. He wills not to know the Japan that rests outside Japanese screens, but he cannot but engage in repeated negotiations with Meiji Japan, which consistently reveals itself as a historico-political subject that cannot be confined under a display case.

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Notes

¹ My quotations from Kipling's Japanese letters are from *Kipling's Japan*, unless otherwise noted. Editors of *Kipling's Japan* (Hugh Cortazzi and George Webb) introduce these letters in their initial versions.

² Karl Kiyoshi Kawakami's *Japan and the Japanese* was published in 1904, a few years after Kipling's Japanese visit. But it should be noted that the Japanese were averse to the Western practice of (dis)regarding Japan as a romantic country that can be adored (but not always respected) even before Kiyoshi's time. In 1887, for instance, Erwin Baelz advised Ito Hirobumi not to introduce Western clothing to Japan, but Hirobumi retorted that measures must be taken to prevent the Japanese from being "regarded as dolls or bric-a-bac" (Kokaze 124).

³ Editors of *The Pioneer* excised these remarks about Wilde perhaps because they were "aimed at London and not Anglo-Indian readers" (Prentice 23).

⁴ For details on Victorian *Japonisme*'s development and popularity, see Ayako Ono and Yoko Chiba. For a general overview of British representation of Japan, see Toshio Yokoyama.

⁵ Extraterritorial rights granted subjects of treaty powers immunity from Japanese law. See Turan Kayaoğlu's *Legal Imperialism* for a detailed analysis of extraterritoriality.

⁶ Disagreements among Meiji leaders over the details of the constitution slowed down its making. A major issue that had to be ironed out was how they should achieve a "happy co-existence and merging of Western and Japanese characters" in the constitution (Takaii 131).

⁷ Oliver Wendell Holmes was one of the few who approved of the Meiji constitution; he appreciated that the constitution was rooted in "Japan's ancient history, institutions, and customs, though the logic of Western jurisprudence has been applied to embellishing it" (Oliver Wendell Holmes qtd Takaii 135).

⁸ Meiji leaders did consult European constitutions and political thinkers, but they also worked to make the Meiji constitution suitable for

Japan, as articles regarding the Emperor implies. For example, article 1 of Chapter 1 stipulated that the “line of Emperors unbroken” holds “sacred and inviolable” authority. His powers, however, were to be checked by the Imperial Diet, whose consent the emperor had to acquire before exercising legislative power.

⁹ In Tokyo, Kipling is again embroiled in a discussion on the Meiji constitution. An editor of a Japanese newspaper offers “a torrent of words” to explain the political significance of the constitution and “the to-be-taken-seriouslyness [*sic*] of Japan” (171). When Kipling asks, “where did you pick up your Constitution?” the editor catches the condescension in Kipling’s rhetorical question and retorts that the constitution has not been put together in haste (by “picking up” bits from other constitutions), that it is the product of the government’s efforts to “[proceed] step-by” (171). The editor also dispels Kipling’s concern over Japan’s unpreparedness in actualizing constitutional politics by emphasizing that the constitution has “not come too soon,” that the Japanese have been operating under the watchword of “Not so quick” in all aspects of social reforms, and that it had promised Japan a modern constitution “twenty years ago” (171 original italics). The editor also claims the Meiji constitution’s superiority over European counterparts, stressing that “the Constitutions of the foreign nations, are all bloody” (171). The emphasized violence involved in the making of European constitutions and the contrastingly non-violent process through which Japan produced the Meiji constitution marks Japan as the more “civilized” nation and thus subverts Kipling’s Eurocentrism. The editor’s trenchant remarks are signs of transculturation. As Pratt points out, natives often challenged Eurocentric values undergirding imperial perspectives and discourses “using the European’s own tools” (7). Returning Kipling’s gaze, the editor destabilizes the hierarchy that divides Britain and Japan by employing the rhetoric of violence versus civilization that Japan’s treaty powers had used to justify their asymmetric relations with Japan.

¹⁰ Meiji leaders conceived of sartorial reform as a counter move against Western effeminization of Japan. See Sally Hastings for details on Japan’s sartorial reforms.

¹¹ On Japanese hybridity, Kipling has much to say. In his discussion with a Japanese newspaper editor, he complains about European houses "defil[ing] the streets of Tokyo" (171). Finding the hybrid city with both modern and traditional houses unattractive, he asks the editor why the Japanese "discard [their] own architecture" (171). The editor retorts: "you call it picturesque. I call it too. Wait till he light up—incidiate [*sic*]. A Japanese house then is only one fire-box. That is why we think good to build in European fashion [....] it is not because we are curious children, wanting new things, as some people have said. We have done with that season of picking up things and throwing them down again" (171). The editor's refutation presents Japan not as an imitative nation but a pragmatic one borne out of Japan's experience with transculturation. Japan has not simply absorbed foreign cultures out of fascination with "new" things, they have, he emphasizes, appropriated imported technologies to improve Japanese lives. His comment echoes Pratt's argument that natives play active roles in deciding how and how much of the dominant culture they will absorb into their own (7). Kipling disregards the editor's assertion for Japanese agency by discrediting his words; according to Kipling, the man suffers from the "double agony of twisting a foreign tongue to his service" (171). The editor's commentary on the transculturation involved in Japan's modern making (which he delivers, using the language of a nation Kipling believes Japan to be mimicking) "reverse[s] the effects of colonialist disavowal" (Bhabha 114) of so-called inferior subjects. Kipling's anxiety over such reverse effects is revealed in his emphasis on the editor's limited English skills as well as the man's supposed tendency to repeat government propaganda.

¹² *The Mikado; or, the Town of Titipu* (1885) was first performed at the Savoy theatre (14 March). It continued to run at the Savoy for over 600 times. Its popularity was due partly to its satire of British politics displaced onto Japan, but the more significant reason for its success was Sullivan and Gilbert's timely appropriation of Japanese backdrops and objects from

the height of the Victorian craze for *Japonisme*. Shortly before *The Mikado*'s opening, for example, the Knightsbridge Japanese Village was a huge hit among Victorians. The village exhibition organizer, Tannaker Buhicrosan, "imported over 100 persons, including 26 women and children, to build and inhabit the village and perform for its visitors" (McLaughlin par 11). See Josephine Lee's *Japan of Pure Invention* for a detailed analysis of *The Mikado* and its reception history.

¹³ Tokugawa Japan's "isolationist" policy is a contested issue. Tashiro Kazui argues that *sakoku* (isolationist policy) protected Japan's economy, and similarly, Kato Hidetoshi notes that the *sakoku* period should be viewed as an intense period where "energies that until then had been allowed to dissipate toward the outside were redirected internally where they now had to be coped with" (qtd Jonathan Wang 70). Others, like John Lee, posit that the term *sakoku* should be done away with, as the term "had not been seen in the Japanese sources, official or private, until 1801, and even then only as the translation of a Dutch-German expression" (7). Lee's assertion is that *sakoku* should be replaced with the term *kaikin* (maritime ban), as the latter term was used in Tokugawa documents and "conveys more accurately the official aim" of the *bakufu* (7).

¹⁴ According to Tony Ronald, "a permanent trading factory in Tsushima ... and ceramics manufactory in Pusan, Korea" evinces the presence of extensive trade between the Tsushima domain and Korea (7). Trade with Ryuku and China was undertaken by the Satsuma domain (Wang 70).

¹⁵ Bird explains that the "condensed milk with the 'Eagle' brand," "lemon sugar," "cognac in French bottles," "Smith's essence of coffee," and "some semi-transparent soap" she bought from local vendors all turned out to be counterfeit items sold at unjustly high prices (230).

¹⁶ Tea-house waitresses, along with geishas, were popular figures among travelers and others versed in *Japonisme*, as it was customary for "famous courtesans and teahouse waitresses to appear subjects of *ukiyoe*...[and] of commercially available souvenir photographs" (Kawaguchi 97).

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