

A. On Reviewing

From Graham Law “Reviewing in relation to consumption.”
The Oxford Companion to the Book, ed Suarez & Woudhuysen (OUP, 2010)

In Britain at least, until around the mid-18th century critical responses to recently published works typically appeared in pamphlet form. While such occasional reactions showed the engagement of the medium of print in public debate, they did not constitute a systematic regulation of the audience for books. Although earlier review periodicals had tended to offer little more than a listing of new titles available, Ralph Griffiths’s Whiggish *Monthly Review* (1749-1844) and Tobias Smollett’s Tory *Critical Review* (1756-1817) saw it as their task to respond in detail not just to more traditional scholarly treatises but also to emergent literary forms like the novel. Their success was facilitated by the concurrent rapid expansion of the London publishing market, which encouraged a more regular process of critical intervention in patterns of book consumption. Still mediated through periodical publications, in its essentials this mechanism still operates today.

However, given that the reviewing journals were commonly owned by book publishers, and that anonymity remained the norm until at least the second half of the 19th century, lack of independence in the process long remained a bone of contention. When the practice of reviewing was still a new phenomenon, there were common complaints that, obsessed with flaws and faults, ‘answerers’, as they were commonly designated, were too ready to flaunt their own wit at the author’s expense. More deep-rooted problems, however, were the practices of ‘puffing’ volumes from the house issuing the review or by the editor’s friends, and of ‘damning’ works from commercial rivals or by ideological opponents. Thus the creation of new review journals was frequently justified by the need for greater objectivity.

B. On the Reviewer

Dr Alfred Hudson Guernsey (1824–1902), editor of *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* from the early 1850s to 1869, who continued to write regular articles and reviews for the magazine up to the late 1870s. He contributed over 150 pieces in all, including the following articles on Japan:

[John Bull in Japan](#). *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, vol. 21, issue 123 (August 1860). [Review of Oliphant’s *Narrative of Lord Elgin’s Mission to China and Japan*.]

[Pictures of the Japanese](#). *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, vol. 27, issue 162 to vol. 28, issue 164 (November 1863 – January 1864). [Review of Alcock’s *Empire of the Tycoon*.]

See: <<http://www.harpers.org/subjects/AlfredHGuernsey>>. He was also the author of the following Harper books, mainly deriving from journalism in Harper periodicals

Alfred H. Guernsey & Henry M. Alden *Harper’s pictorial history of the Great Rebellion*. 1866.

Alfred H. Guernsey. *The world’s opportunities and how to use them: A view of the industrial progress of our country* ... 1884

C. On the author of the Book Reviewed**William Elliot Griffis (1843-1928)**

In 1868 the Emperor Meiji in the Charter Oath declaration called on the Japanese to seek knowledge from around the world. Many young scholars went abroad and New Brunswick was probably second only to London in attracting Japanese students. Both as a student at Rutgers College (graduating in 1869) and as a teacher at the local Grammar School, William Elliot Griffis (1843-1928) met and was profoundly influenced by the large influx of Japanese students in New Brunswick between 1866 and 1870. As a result of these contacts and through the intermediary of Guido Verbeck - a pioneer missionary in Japan - Griffis signed a contract in 1870 to teach science in Fukui.

Griffis was one of the first *oyatoi gaikokujin*, or foreign employees of the Japanese government. After nearly a year in Fukui working at the behest of Matsudaira Shungaku, the forward-looking leader of the domain of Echizen, Griffis was called to Tokyo to help establish the first official schools along western lines. From 1872 to 1874 he taught at the Kaisei Gekko, the forerunner of the present Tokyo University and travelled widely as a freelance worker, meeting missionaries, educators and other Yatoi as well as with the elite of the Meiji government. Griffis maintained a series of detailed journals recording his experiences and also retained his correspondence and papers relating to his teaching in Japan. In 1872 he was joined by his sister, Margaret Clark Griffis, who obtained a position teaching in a newly-formed school for girls (the Tokyo Government Girl's school, later to become the Peeresses' School).

After returning to the United States in 1874, Griffis entered a seminary and took orders as a Christian minister, combining his religious calling with a career writing and lecturing on Japan and related subjects. His 1876 volume *The Mikado's Empire* was for decades the authoritative reference in the West on Japanese culture and history and Griffis was regarded at America's foremost interpreter of Japanese culture. He also published important works on Korea, such as *Korea: the Hermit Nation* in 1882. In 1926 he returned to Japan to receive the Order of the Rising Sun. He died in 1928.

(http://www.adam-matthew-publications.co.uk/collections_az/jtwe-2/description.aspx)

Major works on Japan

The Mikado's Empire (1876)

Life of Matthew Calbraith Perry (1887)

The Religion of Japan (1895)

Verbeck of Japan (1900)

The Japanese Nation in Evolution (1907)

The Mikado: Institution and Person (1915)

The William Elliot Griffis Collection

Alexander Library, Rutgers University

<http://www.ceth.rutgers.edu/projects/Griffis/project.htm>

Adam Matthew Publications Ltd

JAPAN THROUGH WESTERN EYES: Manuscript Records of Traders, Travellers, Missionaries and Diplomats

Part 2: The William Elliot Griffis Collection from Rutgers University Library - Journals & Student Essays (6 reels of 35mm silver-halide positive microfilm)

Part 2 covers both Griffis's own Journals, 1859-1928, and a series of essays written by Griffis's students at Kaisei Gekko. There are 31 Journals in total. The first seven cover his involvement in the Civil War and his own educational experiences. Volume 8 records his journey to Japan via Omaha and San Francisco and also includes important records of the classes that he taught in Japan, those attending, their comments and contributions. There are also notes on Japanese subjects such as historic sites, legends and religion. Volumes 9-12 also cover his experiences in Japan and are a hybrid between diaries (recording his travels, meetings, classes and reading) and commonplace books (storing nuggets of information that he has gleaned on subjects as diverse as the tea ceremony, necrology, sugar-milling and *yatoi*). The Student Essays are one of the highlights of the collection. The 319 essays were written in English for Griffis by his students at the Kaisei Gekko in Tokyo and date from 1872 to 1874. They are organised by topic in 20 sub-series and cover:

- Ainos
- Art
- Autobiography
- Burial customs
- Children's play
- Cultural miscellany
- Dreams
- Fairy tales and other stories
- Fans
- Foreigners (first impressions of)
- Geography
- Historical styles
- Household superstitions
- Journal entries
- Kakke (beri-beri)
- Marriage
- Money
- Shop signs, street shows and characters
- Sin
- Theatre



William Elliot Griffis with his pupils at the Kaisei Gekko



Margaret Clark Griffis with her pupils at the Tokyo Government Girl's School

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