

Exile and subjectivity: words and images in the writings of Sadakichi Hartmann

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Writing an introduction to a collection of his poems in 1916, the Japanese-German-American poet and leading early critic of art and photography, Sadakichi Hartmann (1867-1944), declared in his opening sentence that 'I will drop the mask and tell you the secret of my verses'. It would be easy to dismiss this statement as conventional throwaway rhetoric, but Hartmann's words reflect a pervasive self-consciousness about identity and selfhood throughout his career and life. He makes sure to emphasise at the very start of his brief forward that there is a mask to be encountered, and it is only once he has ensured that this disguise is installed as a concrete image in his reader's mind that he promises to do away with it. In this, Hartmann's anxiety about his place in the world and about his own subjectivity is of a piece with much of his other writing and with significant aspects of his behaviour. Hartmann seems sensitive to the possibility that his collection will be rebuffed or denigrated, and he associates this threat with a potent sense of his own difference. 'It is the vanity of the alien', he writes about his poetry, 'to show his mastery over a language that was neither his father's nor his mother's', and again, and with redoubled stress on the interiority of this feeling, 'no doubt my sense of sound alliteration is foreign, unconsciously Oriental'.¹

The American son of a Japanese mother and a German father, Hartmann invites us to view him from perspectives of exile and plurality. His mother died soon after he was born on Deshima, the artificial island in the harbour at Nagasaki to which foreigners were then confined, and he was brought up initially in Germany and then, from the age of 13 or 14, in the United States where he lived at first with relatives in Philadelphia. Apart from trips to Europe during the 1890s and 1900s, Hartmann spent the remainder of his life in the United States, gaining citizenship in 1883 and establishing a career, first in belles-lettres as a self-consciously 'decadent' dramatist and author in the 1890s, and then, rapidly, in art criticism. As a critic he had a major influence as an early advocate for photography, which he viewed as an art form with its own protocols and potentialities.² He was well-known enough to

¹ Sadakichi Hartmann, 'Instead of a Preface', *My Rubaiyat*, 3rd revised edition, San Francisco: G Bruno, 1916, 5.

² His advocacy for 'straight' photography as a member of the Stieglitz circle in the 1900s is a central element in Hartmann's importance. See Jane Colhoun Weaver, 'Introduction', in Jane Colhoun Weaver, ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann, Critical Modernist: Collected Art Writings*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, 1-48, and Jane Colhoun Weaver, 'Sadakichi Hartmann: Herald of Modernism in American Art', PhD diss., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1986. See also Lauren Kroiz, *Creative Composites: Modernism, Race, and the Stieglitz Circle*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012, Chapter 1.

be invited by Alfred Stieglitz to write for *Camera Notes* in 1898 and for *Camera Work* from 1903. As a contributor to Stieglitz's journals, Hartmann became a leading figure in the assessment of photography as an art form and an eloquent proponent of 'straight' photography. His *A History of American Art* appeared in 1902 and books on photography, *Composition in Portraiture* and *Landscape and Figure Composition*, in 1909 and 1910 respectively.³

The period up to 1911 saw Hartmann at the height of his critical powers and influence, although often, and puzzlingly, he wrote on photography using the pseudonym Sidney Allan. During these years he promulgated his views via extensive nationwide lecture tours as well as prolific print publication, and, despite a sometimes-rocky relationship with Stieglitz, his place was firmly at the centre of American photographic debate and practice. After 1911, however, Hartmann withdrew from this role, at least partly as a consequence of a final falling out with Stieglitz after the founding of the Photo-Secession.⁴ Instead, he took on other parts to play, as the 'King' of bohemian Greenwich Village, as an anarchist fellow-traveller, and as the co-founder with Emma Goldman (among others) of the journal *Mother Earth*, as well as, finally, during a long decline an alcoholic and Hollywood hanger-on, and later still an isolated near-hermit living in a shack on the Morongo Indian Reservation near Banning, California.⁵ One of very few Japanese-Americans not to be interned during the 1939-45 war, Hartmann was nonetheless subjected to close scrutiny and even harassment by the FBI from the US entry into the war until his death aged 77 in 1944.⁶

Hartmann's contemporary and posthumous reputations have not been well served by the unhelpful colouring conferred by this chequered history and his often-startling personal qualities. His personality and physical presence regularly struck contemporary observers as unusual and frankly exorbitant. 'A grotesque etched in flesh by the drunken Goya of Heaven', said the critic Benjamin de Casseres of him in 1926.⁷ To the actor John Barrymore whose hard-drinking circle

³ For a recent account of Hartmann and American art, see Yinshi Lerman-Tan, 'Sadakichi Hartmann's American Art: Citizenship, Asian America, and Critical Resistance', *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art* 7, no 1 (spring 2021): doi.org/10.24926/24716839.11521

⁴ See the account in Kroiz, *Creative Composites*, Chapter 1.

⁵ See Weaver in Weaver, ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann*, 10-11.

⁶ The most substantial biographical information on Hartmann appears in Harry W. Lawton and George Knox, 'Editors' Introduction', in Harry W. Lawton and George Knox, eds, *The Valiant Knights of Daguerre: Selected Critical Essays on Photography and Profiles of Photographic Pioneers by Sadakichi Hartmann*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978, 1-31, and Weaver in Weaver, ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann*. There is also a helpful account by Marjorie A. Walter in the entry 'Sadakichi Hartmann' in American National Biography Online: <http://www.anb.org/articles/17/17-00381.html> (accessed 4 April 2016). For Hartmann's own account of his biography, see Sadakichi Hartmann Papers (MS 068), box 1. Special Collections and University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

⁷ Cited in George Knox, 'Introduction', in *The Life and Times of Sadakichi Hartmann, 1867-1944*, exhib. cat., University Library and the Riverside Press-Enterprise Co, University of California: Riverside, 1970,1.

Hartmann joined during his Hollywood years, he appeared 'a living freak presumably sired by Mephistoteles out of *Madame Butterfly*'.⁸ Barrymore's drinking crony, the writer Gene Fowler, whose 1954 memoir *Minutes of the Last Meeting* has largely been responsible for the persistent idea of Hartmann as an eccentric charlatan, repeatedly describes him as a physical and mental oddity, a mendacious alcoholic, a cadger and a thief. 'A lunatic who lived off the cuff', says Fowler, and, referencing Hartmann's ascetic appearance and droll intelligence, adds 'he looked like a forgotten potato and had the astringent wit of an unfrocked prior



Figure 1 J. C. (Julius Cesar) Strauss, *Sadakichi Hartmann on a Pedestal*, c. 1905. University of California Riverside Special Collections, Sadakichi Hartmann Papers, 'Sadakichi Hartmann Photographs', Box 39a. [photo: University of California Riverside Special Collections]

of the neo-Gothic age'.⁹ Hartmann's peculiar and unconventional dancing (which can be seen on YouTube) and angular thinness added to the impression of a brittle and edgy eccentricity, as did his actorly self-absorption.¹⁰ When asked to name the 'most beautiful words in the English language', Hartmann supposedly replied that 'there are only two ... neither of them precisely English. The words most beautiful to me are Sadakichi Hartmann. I never tire of hearing them'.¹¹ This image of Hartmann as posturing jackanapes – or, as he said himself, 'Jack-of-All-Thought'¹² – is given visual form in some of the many photographs of him, among them J. C. (Julius Cesar) Strauss' 1905 composition which poses Hartmann with mock heroic cockiness on top of an immense pedestal. [Fig. 1] It is an image of a man given over to swaggering pretence; amusing, highly coloured as a personality, but self-deceiving and perhaps vacuous. He was, for many of his contemporary commentators, perennially incongruous, ludicrous, weird and outlandish. If he also sometimes seemed courageous and inspiring to Fowler and others, it is because

⁸ Gene Fowler, *Minutes of the Last Meeting*, Viking Press: New York, 1954, 7. Fowler is quoting Barrymore directly.

⁹ Fowler, *Minutes of the Last Meeting*, 7.

¹⁰ The origins of Hartmann's dancing remain unclear and it is likely that its exoticism was a contrived part of his Barrymore-era persona. For an example, see, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phrXd2YJTAs>

¹¹ Fowler, *Minutes of the Last Meeting*, 98.

¹² Sadakichi Hartmann, *White Chrysanthemums: Literary Fragments and Pronouncements*, ed. George Knox and Harry Lawton, Herder and Herder: New York, 1971, 36.

'none of us had met such a human paradox, except among the pages of Cervantes and Rabelais'.¹³

The louche and brittle decadent makes for good copy and is consequently hard to resist.¹⁴ But this Hartmann-as-caricature encourages us to attend to the personality as much as to the work, or it does worse and allows us to miss the work entirely.¹⁵ The dancing, jesting, quaffing version of Hartmann also leads us away from darker elements in contemporaries' reactions. When Fowler artfully portrays Hartmann declaring that his two favourite words in the language were those of his own name, 'neither precisely English' we are face to face with everyday racism. Fowler noted elsewhere that 'this skinny, prancing, cynical, yet beauty-loving wraith was half Japanese and half German' and that heritage plays for him into Hartmann's general oddity so forcefully that it dominates the account Fowler offers of him.¹⁶ That he was subjected throughout his life to casual racism seems certain. 'I personally never think of myself as a German or Asiatic', Hartmann wrote, 'others do it for me'.¹⁷ Fowler divulges that Hartmann's schoolmates in Germany 'taunted him for his Japanese ancestry'.¹⁸ In 1926 Benjamin de Casseres' view of him as 'a grinning obscene gargoyle on the Temple of American Letters' culminated in the following list: 'superman-bum. Half God, half Hooligan; all artist. Anarch, sadist, satyr. A fusion of Jap and German, the ghastly experiment of an Occidental on the person of an Oriental'.¹⁹

As Hartmann aged this identification of him as racially suspect seems to have intensified, particularly as his status became shakier after his decision to end his career as critic and commentator around 1911. The later episodes of his life, which saw him move from New York to California, and which involved his time as anarchist, bohemian, and court fool to Barrymore's circle, saw Hartmann's self exposed in a raw way it does not seem to have been in his earlier career as a critic. This loss in authority, whether the result of some internal flaw or compulsion or of external circumstances, left him vulnerable to mockery and neglect, as well as to a gradual fading away of awareness of his successful past in the minds of those who encountered him. The culmination is arguably the period of harassment Hartmann experienced during the war by the FBI and other agencies newly sceptical of his Americanness and preoccupied with the presence of aliens supposedly susceptible to enemy interests on US soil.

¹³ Fowler, *Minutes of the Last Meeting*, 9.

¹⁴ For a brief but insightful discussion of Hartmann and caricature, see Lisa Lintz Messinger, 'The Critic Sadakichi Hartmann as the Subject of a Caricature by Marius de Zayas', *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, vol 48, no. 2013, 239-242.

¹⁵ An argument made at length in Knox, 'Introduction', in *The Life and Times of Sadakichi Hartmann*, 1-11.

¹⁶ Fowler, *Minutes of the Last Meeting*, 6-7.

¹⁷ Sadakichi Hartmann, 'Races and the Melting Pot', in Knox and Lawton, eds, *White Chrysanthemums*, 115.

¹⁸ Fowler, *Minutes of the Last Meeting*, 53.

¹⁹ Cited in Knox in *The Life and Times of Sadakichi Hartmann, 1867-1944*, 1.

What might it have meant to Hartmann in such a context that he felt himself 'alien' and marked by 'strangeness'?²⁰ In the forward to his 1916 *My Rubaiyat* I quoted at the start, he speaks of himself as 'foreign, unconsciously Oriental', and declares English was a 'language that was neither his father's nor his mother's', so that writing in that tongue must have been profoundly entwined with his understanding of his own identity.²¹ It is the confession – or rather the declaration – of his assumption of his new language that constitutes the dropping of 'the mask' and revelation of his 'secret'. Hartmann's involvement with his linguistic heritage has not been closely examined. Unsurprisingly, he seems to have known little Japanese, but he was a native speaker of German, which was the language of his childhood. His English was acquired as an adolescent and it became the medium in which he lived by far the larger part of his life. His contemporaries do not seem to have remarked on his language, and his writings testify to an entirely native fluency in his adopted language. Although Hartmann was writing for a German language periodical, the *New Yorker Staats Zeitung*, around 1900, his thought and expression was overwhelmingly formed in English. He was capable of sophisticated and even intentionally abstruse registers in his elective tongue, as 'Cyanogen Seas', the title of a poem in his 1898 collection of Symbolist verse, *Naked Ghosts*, demonstrates. That he became a linguistically inventive poet at all underlines, what the forward to *My Rubaiyat* explicitly states, that his investment in mastering English as a medium was profound.

The effect of losing a language or of moving between languages can be formative. The place and status of the self in its social context and in relation to culture is centrally defined by the linguistic medium of perception and expression of the world.²² Hartmann may well have felt that the bestowal of Japanese was his birth right and had been withheld, and that in the process some heritage central to the self had been denied. Feelings of loss, the displacement of an unrealised inner core of being into an absence, nostalgia for the formative language that remains unknown or inaccessible, may flow from the forced abandonment of a maternal language. Certainly the engine of Hartmann's recovery of his Japanese self was not purely the fashion for all things Japanese that gripped Boston and the East Coast in the 1880s. Hartmann has been identified as the first to introduce Japanese haiku forms into English poetry and, according to Lawton and Knox, was 'writing haiku and tanka' in English 'as early as 1898'.²³ His Japanese identity was not only Hartmann's stock-in-trade, nor only the expression of his 'alienness', it was also a

²⁰ Lerman-Tan's argument is that 'it was a political act for him to make himself arbiter [of American art] during periods when his citizenship and Americanness were contested', 'Sadakichi Hartmann's American Art', p.12.

²¹ Sadakichi Hartmann, 'Instead of a Preface', *My Rubaiyat*, 5.

²² For an extended exploration and discussion of this position, see George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.

²³ Harry Lawton and George Knox, 'Introduction' in Lawton and Knox, eds, *White Chrysanthemums*, xxv. See, Sadakichi Hartmann, *Tanka and Haiku: Japanese Rhythms*, San Francisco: Author's Edition, 1916.

bewildered core to his self and a complex, distracted, resource that powered his career and life.

I will look in greater detail at Hartmann's language, as well as at the book on Japanese art he published in 1904, later in the context of his art criticism. Here I want to pursue what I have been presenting as the instability surrounding Hartmann's identity. Scholars have noted an insecure quality to Hartmann's selfhood. 'Hartmann's entire life seems to have been an impassioned search for identity', writes the literary critic George Knox.²⁴ His shifts of selfhood were often extreme. Hartmann himself listed the dizzying options in religion alone inherited from his immediate ancestors, not only a free-thinking father, but also a stepmother who 'was a Catholic', 'one of my aunts ... a French Jewess', and 'my mother presumably ... a Buddhist'.²⁵ The author of a recent PhD thesis is able to treat Hartmann as one amongst a number of Japanese-Americans whose lives and work were marked by their status as 'subjects estranged both from the country of origin (Japan) and the country where they lived and worked (the US)'.²⁶ To Fowler, he was protean, 'this eerie Jack-of-all-arts' who had been thought to be everything from 'a startling cad' to someone who 'might sneak in one day as something of a prodigy', but who meanwhile appeared 'a cunning fellow who would lift your watch'.²⁷ Hartmann's decision to abandon his successful East Coast career as a critic and writer remains in some ways mysterious, unless we can take him at his word and attribute it to boredom and restlessness. As a response to a disagreement with Stieglitz over the nature of straight photography it seems excessive, even if we allow Hartmann a sense of exclusion from the inner circle.²⁸ There is a sense of compulsion and decisions driven by impulses beyond the conscious self in his persistent fluid migration into new and often problematic forms. 'More and more, he took to the open road', write Lawton and Knox of this period of this life.²⁹ His contemporaries were well aware of this quality, Fowler acknowledging that, despite the 'tongue-in-cheek deference' of the Barrymore circle, 'our magnificent charlatan actually had been many things in many places'.³⁰ Hartmann himself sardonically insisted that the meaning of his Japanese forename was 'fortunate if constant', implying he knew he never would be.³¹ Only Gertrude Stein, who stated that

²⁴ Knox in *The Life and Times of Sadakichi Hartmann*, 5.

²⁵ Cited in Knox in *The Life and Times of Sadakichi Hartmann*, 5.

²⁶ Andrew Way Leong, 'Impossible Diplomacies: Japanese-American Literature from 1884 to 1938', PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2012, 1.

²⁷ Fowler, *Minutes of the Last Meeting*, 7; 11.

²⁸ See Kroiz, *Creative Composites*, 42-43.

²⁹ Lawton and Knox, 'Introduction' in Lawton and Knox, eds, *White Chrysanthemums*, xxi.

³⁰ Fowler, *Minutes of the Last Meeting*, 8, 9.

³¹ Sadakichi Hartmann, 'Sadakichi's Autobiography', in Hartmann, *White Chrysanthemums*, 23.

'Sadakichi is singular, never plural', offered another, and characteristically oppositional, judgement.³²

In one of the few extended discussions of Hartmann, the art historian Lauren Kroiz has recently argued that we should understand the character of his espousal of straight photography in the context of debates around immigration and assimilation then current in the United States. Kroiz argues against the established view of photography as an art as apolitical, laying stress on Hartmann's consciousness of his own Japanese and German heritage and on the intense interest in immigration and cultural pluralism she discerns at the time. She is certain that 'his personal experience of racial difference helped to shape his aesthetic arguments'. Hartmann's 'model of medium specificity ... created ... a modernist aesthetics uniquely attuned to modernity's political and cultural questions about languages, races, and nations' and thus, for him, 'representing the new urban immigrant – whether legally, socially, or aesthetically – became a marker of the success of straight photography'.³³ More recently, Lerman-Tan has related Hartmann's 'modernist aesthetics' and his 'critical defiance' to his experience as an Asian American.³⁴

I want here to make a different argument. In an effort to account to his readers in *Camera Work* and elsewhere for the new art he was promoting, Hartmann laid systematic stress on the subjectivity of both artists and spectators. 'With every human being a new world is born which did not exist before he saw it,' he wrote in 1904, a world that 'will never exist again when death closes his eyes'. Hartmann associated the abandonment of mimesis and the legacy of Renaissance painting with this acceptance of a fluid and subjective world, a viewpoint reinforced by his lifelong rejection of established religion. 'At the point where imitation fails, personality asserts itself. If the artist only realized this and used this discovery as a starting point for new exploration of his own self', he speculated, creativity would flourish.³⁵ In what follows I consider the subjectivity that featured so fundamentally in Hartmann's aesthetic theory as it emerged in the early twentieth century in relation to the experience of his own exiled strangeness, and the fluidity and intensity of his self-fashioning, as well as its excessive or outrageous character. I go further, to read these relationships in the context of the fragile connections between word and image. The Symbolist aesthetic Hartmann elaborated in his work as a critic and historian of painting and photography brought with it a consciousness of the suspect and depleted power of words and of their capacity to reflect the world and experience not through exactitude but through suggestion and imprecision instead. Hartmann the poet worked with that quality of perception in the early part of his career, and the consequences for the potential of language to conjure the world, and of the visual to do the same, provides a further theme in his oeuvre that

³² Cited in Guiyou Huang, ed., *Asian-American Poets: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook*, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002, 129. There is no reference, but the phrase also appears in Fowler, *Minutes of the Last Meeting*, 10.

³³ Kroiz, *Creative Composites*, 15; 14.

³⁴ See Lerman-Tan, 'Sadakichi Hartmann's American Art'.

³⁵ Cited in Weaver in Weaver, ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann*, 211.

is also coloured by the fluctuating sense of exile and 'strangeness', by 'the vanity of the alien ... to show his mastery'.³⁶

Writing in 1898, Hartmann was concise about the aims of art criticism. 'It is the art critic's duty to enter an artist's individuality, to discover his intentions', he wrote, 'intentions of which the artist himself is perhaps unconscious [and] to judge how far he has realized them ...'.³⁷ This emphasis on the interiority of the artist is repeated throughout Hartmann's writings and is matched by a sense of the subjectivity of the interpreter or critic. He demands and expects of art objects that they 'reflect actual mentality',³⁸ but also believes that 'the best criticism is, after all, nothing but an individual, carefully considered estimate of a man of taste'.³⁹ Linking the two things, a perceptive commentator in 1906 thought that Hartman 'seems to have pondered deeply on Zola's epithet "art is a fragment of nature as seen through a temperament," and likewise Anatole France's "criticism is the adventure of one's soul among masterpieces"'.⁴⁰

There is nothing very unusual about these views for an aesthetically-inclined American of Hartmann's time, except perhaps the sheer persistence with which he held them. A number of scholars have explored at length the rise of such subjectivist aesthetics in late nineteenth-century America. Sarah Burns has studied 'the high valuation assigned to subjective and individual artistic vision' in the Gilded Age as part of 'a pronounced shift from rationalist to physiological and psychological theories of perception'.⁴¹ Burns shows not only that the attribution of significance to individual understanding was widespread in the culture, but that it was fundamental to views of perception, which was understood as an interpretative act of the perceiving mind working on the inchoate raw materials of the world. She quotes a contemporary commentator who stated 'the mind ... is a superb artist, a real creator of the picture each one has of the outside world. ... We do not see the world as it is, but each person sees it according to his own interpretation'.⁴² As Burns argues, 'artistic sight' therefore became 'something embodied in physiological and psychological mechanisms and processes'.⁴³ For his part, Hartmann is credibly

³⁶ Hartmann, 'Instead of a Preface', *My Rubaiyat*, 5.

³⁷ Hartman (1898) cited in Walter, 'Sadakichi Hartmann'.

³⁸ Sadakichi Hartmann, 'What Remains' (1911), in Lawton and Knox, eds, *The Valiant Knights of Daguerre*, 151.

³⁹ Sadakichi Hartmann, 'Random Thoughts on Criticism' (1900), in Lawton and Knox, eds, *The Valiant Knights of Daguerre*, 68.

⁴⁰ Vance Thompson, 'Sadakichi Hartmann: Art Critic', *Paris Herald*, September 1906, in: http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/g_l/hartmann/portraits.htm (accessed 5 April 2016).

⁴¹ Sarah Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America*, Yale University Press: New Haven, 1996, 129. See also, Kathleen Pyne, *Art and the Higher Life: Painting and Evolutionary Thought in Late Nineteenth-Century America*, University of Texas Press: Austin, 1996, and T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1983.

⁴² Cited in Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist*, 130.

⁴³ Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist*, 132.

reported to have said that 'my whole make-up is mental. I am not capable of a pure emotion or a pure physical sensation. It is all drowned in mental considerations'.⁴⁴

This reading of the situation has been further focussed in order to deal specifically with Hartmann's art criticism. The art historian Rachel Ziady DeLue links Hartmann with the widespread interest in degeneracy and medical diagnosis as method at the end of the nineteenth century, and has argued that the diagnosis of the work of art as formed by the pathologies of its creator is central to Hartmann's aesthetic. For Hartmann, she writes, painting and photography diagnosed or expressed the physical or psychological character of the artist. As a result, since 'what is recorded is not the world as we know it to be, but the person seeing and knowing that world, by way of the transcription of that seeing and knowing', for Hartmann, 'a painting is not only a picture of the world as viewed by one person but a portrait of that person, of the individual who created it'. It is, according to DeLue, a document that says as much about who did the seeing as it does about what is perceived'.⁴⁵

These ideas partly derive from Hartmann's interest in Symbolism and Symbolist aesthetics. As a young man, he undertook a series of European trips during which he met prominent figures in literature and the arts, including Franz Liszt, Algernon Swinburne, the Rossettis, and Stéphane Mallarmé, as well as painters like Claude Monet and James McNeill Whistler. In between these episodes, Hartmann lived for periods in Boston and New York, where he set himself up as a writer and lecturer, and his introduction to Mallarmé and the Parisian art world came partly during a brief stint as a foreign correspondent for *McClure's Magazine* in 1892-93 and partly through the agency of the francophone Symbolist American poet Stuart Merrill. Returning to the United States in 1893, Hartmann began his career as a poet, which led to the Symbolist verse of *Naked Ghosts* in 1898, founded a journal, *The Art Critic* (1893), which lasted for three issues before the scandal consequent on his erotic Symbolist free-verse play, *Christ: A Dramatic Poem in Three Acts* (1893), led to Hartmann's bankruptcy and the journal's closure.⁴⁶ Hartmann continued to produce Symbolist verse and began to write about contemporary American art, adapting his Symbolist ideas to an account of the 'suggestive' character of painting by artists like James McNeill Whistler, Childe Hassam, John Twachtman and Thomas Dewing. He began a second journal, *Art News*, in 1897. Quite how Hartmann regarded the European world he encountered on his early trips is uncertain. His 1893 account of attending one of Mallarmé's salons has several mildly facetious moments that suggest a definite reserve, as when he calls Mallarmé 'an intellectual man of fashion par excellence. ... He utters any amount of mysterious and harmonious words and his listeners, already a little bemused, as it were by the

⁴⁴ Cited in Fowler, *Minutes of the Last Meeting*, 29.

⁴⁵ Rachael Ziady DeLue, 'Diagnosing Pictures: Sadakichi Hartmann and the Science of Seeing, circa 1900', *American Art*, 21:2, June 2007, 42-69, 60.

⁴⁶ The impact of *Christ* was sufficient to see the majority of copies burnt by the New England Watch and Ward Society and Hartmann incarcerated, briefly, in Boston. Hartmann followed the play with *Buddha* (1897) and subsequently further poetic dramas dealing with Confucius, Mohammed and Moses.

hot punch with which they are served, leave him with the impression that they have received incomprehensible revelations'.⁴⁷ Despite the slyness of this tone, perhaps purely conventional in the context of a piece of ephemeral journalism, Hartmann was evidently fascinated by Mallarmé and his poetic thought. He continued to correspond with Mallarmé after he left Paris and the aesthetic of Symbolism proved a powerful and long-lasting influence on him, as poet and commentator on the visual arts his work was saturated with an awareness of Symbolism and with a Symbolist sensibility.

Hartmann's aesthetics from this perspective are thus not much out of the regular run of such things in his time and place. The man who F. D. Marsh hailed as 'My Dear Symbolist' in 1894 found the potential for a critical approach in the investigation of sensibility in works of art as a quality of the work itself, of its creator, and of the critic who reads and comprehends it.⁴⁸ This is a tenacious principle in Hartmann's art writing, whether criticising Childe Hassam in 1898 for being overly preoccupied with atmosphere so that 'the expression of his own personality [is] often ... entirely lost in it', or praising post-Whistlerian American art in 1910 for being 'emphatically individualistic', so that 'it aims at attaining the maximum of personal intensity'.⁴⁹ In seeking these qualities, Hartmann sought as well art that chimed with his Symbolist inheritance. Mallarmé's injunction to himself to 'paint, not the thing, but the effect it produces' expressed the criteria that defined Hartmann's approach to many of his contemporaries.⁵⁰

In an article of 1897 Hartmann reported on a visit to Albert Pinkham Ryder's studio, the notorious disorder of which made him 'involuntarily ... think of a dump in which street urchins might search for hidden treasures'.⁵¹ Once inside, Hartmann encountered in Ryder's 'half-finished picture', 'a fairyland of imaginative landscapes ... peopled by beings that seem to be all poetic fancy and soul' (259). These misty and quixotic fictions provoked Hartmann to state his motives, disguised in a blizzard of commas and sub-clauses: 'I, having a peculiar mania for searching in every expression of art, and life as well, for its most individual, perhaps innermost essence, tried in vain to form an estimate' (260). 'I anxiously lay in wait for an opportunity to enter Ryder's individuality; to find a key to all its treasures' (260). Hartmann casts around, rehearsing his views on Ryder as a 'chiaroscurist'

⁴⁷ Sadakichi Hartmann, 'A Tuesday Evening at Stéphane Mallarmé's', *The Art Critic*, 1: 1, November 1893, cited in Weaver, ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann*, 64. Note that Hartmann dedicated his short 1898 volume of poems, *Naked Ghosts*, to Mallarmé 'with every sentiment of regard and respect', cited in Leong, 'Impossible Diplomacies', 128.

⁴⁸ Cited in Knox in *The Life and Times of Sadakichi Hartmann*, 5.

⁴⁹ Sadakichi Hartmann, [On Childe Hassam], *The Criterion* (1898), in Weaver, ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann*, 300; Sadakichi Hartmann, 'Selections from *The Whistler Book*', in Weaver, ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann*, 323.

⁵⁰ 'Peindre, non la chose, mais l'effet qu'elle produit'. Stéphane Mallarmé, *Correspondance (1862-1871)*, ed. Henri Mondor, Paris: Gallimard, 1959, 137.

⁵¹ Sadakichi Hartmann, 'A Visit to A. P. Ryder' (1897), in Weaver, ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann*, 259. Hereafter, page numbers from preceding publications are given in parentheses in the text.

(261) or questioning his claims to be a colourist, until 'I suddenly saw from a corner a life size portrait gazing at me':

The first glance told me it was a man in United States uniform; after that I only saw the face: the tightened lips, *the eyes*, it was as if a soul were bursting from them, and then it seemed to me as if Ryder, his soul was steadily gazing at me. This portrait immediately gave me a keener insight into his artistic character than any other picture. Everything was sacrificed to express the radiance of the innermost, the most subtle and most intense expression of a human soul. (262)

In keeping with his sense of the role of his own interiority in such criticism, Hartmann attributes this reading 'perhaps' to 'my impulsive nature' (262).

Hartmann applied the same criteria to photography as to painting. Fred Holland Day's photographic portraiture is praised because 'one feels at once that the artist has photographed ... with his heart', and because, in an uncharacteristic plunge into jargon, 'the portrait this conceived becomes a plastic psychological synthesis of the person represented'.⁵² A visit to the studio of Edward Steichen incites Hartmann to launch another assertion of his credo. Studio visits are valuable because they are 'the only way to get at a man's individuality. And art criticism is to me nothing but a peculiar mania for searching in every expression of art, and life as well, for its most individual, perhaps innermost, essence.'⁵³ Hartmann is concerned with Steichen 'to judge the artist's individuality', to see how 'he reveals himself' (203). He concludes that 'in art the method of expression matters naught ... every effort, no matter in what medium, may become a work of art provided it manifests with utmost sincerity and intensity the emotions of a man face to face with nature and life' (205).

This interpretation of the role of media in expression brings us to Hartmann's aesthetics of exile. Mallarmé's poetic undertaking brought with it a demand that language should be remade, not only to ensure that it was 'the effect' rather than 'the thing' that was delineated, but also because language is conceived of as labile, an actor with its own individuality and place in the processes of creation and representation. Language is not the reflection of the world, it is itself a dense, impacted and asserted medium that colours the world as it describes it. This was the way in which the question seems to have presented itself to Hartmann, if we can judge by his writings. The self, the individual who perceives and offers an account of the mental process of his perceptions is for him equivalent to his understanding of language; both are media, necessary and even co-equal with the work. 'He has created a world of his own, but one based on actual things, translated into dreams',

⁵² Sadakichi Hartmann, 'F. Holland Day: A Decorative Photographer' (1900), in Lawton and Knox, eds, *The Valiant Knights of Daguerre*, 187.

⁵³ Sadakichi Hartmann, 'Edward Steichen: A Visit to Steichen's Studio' (1903), in Lawton and Knox, eds, *The Valiant Knights of Daguerre*, 202.

he writes of Steichen.⁵⁴ Steichen 'is a poet of rare depth and significance, who expresses his dreams ... by surface decoration' (204).

The media of possible expression are varied, encompassing language, all the visual elements of design and composition, and the self, but all 'translate' the world of 'actual things' into another and parallel world. It is important to note that such a vision introduces a problem by opening up a distance between reality and representation in a way well known in the history of modernism.⁵⁵ The thickness of representational forms offers an image of separation, of 'strangeness' and of the 'alien' that Hartmann seems to have found resonant, and which rhymed for him with his own chronic or periodic bouts of internal and social disjunction. The



Figure 2 Albert Pinkham Ryder, *The Flying Dutchman*, 1887, oil on canvas mounted on fibreboard, 36.1 x 43.8 cm. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of John Gellatly, acc. no. 1929.6.95. [photo: Smithsonian American Art Museum (Digital image accessed 4 August 2016)]

estrangement of the world and the medium, the distance asserted by the passage of the world through the sensibility of both artist and spectator, and the gap between self and social, racial and cultural, context all seem to have worked for Hartmann as collections of equivalents that sporadically interfere with and stand for each other. Take, for instance, the penultimate closing paragraph of Hartmann's short piece on Ryder, which takes its point of departure from Ryder's *The Flying Dutchman* of 1887. [Fig. 2] Hartmann works for a stirring conclusion to sum up and drive home his view of Ryder and in doing so reaches for the resources of language. Here is the paragraph in its entirety:

⁵⁴ Hartmann, 'Edward Steichen', in Lawton and Knox, eds, *The Valiant Knights of Daguerre*, 203.

⁵⁵ On this well-worn question see, for useful recent discussions, Claire Colebrook, 'Incorporeal Modernism', in Paul Ardoin, S. E. Gontarski and Laci Mattison, eds, *Understanding Deleuze, Understanding Modernism*, Bloomsbury: London, 2014, 223-244; Rebecca Sanchez, *Deafening Modernism: Embodied Language and Visual Poetics in American Literature*, New York University Press: New York, 2015.

And Vanderdecken's world weary phantom ship [that is, *The Flying Dutchman*], as Ryder conceives it, drifting on the tempestuous sea of time, with its colossal troughs bedizened with the lurid glamor of a goblin sun – and struggling in the left distance on a mighty wave, *upwards!* in an atmosphere laden with Good Friday gloom and glory: this upward movement is genius, pure and mighty, that will live for centuries to come (if no varnish slides occur).⁵⁶

There are a number of questions here to do, partly, with how far we might judge this admittedly vivid linguistic excursion to be successful, but mainly with what Hartmann thinks he is actually doing. In the first place, this prose is distinct from most of Hartmann's writing in his art criticism. Generally, Hartmann speaks directly to the reader in the voice of a journalist whose purpose is to entertain and instruct, even if he reserves authority to himself. 'Philadelphia can be proud of possessing Thomas Eakins', he might begin a piece, or 'nearly all the young artists who have spent several years studying in Paris have a hard fight for bread and beans (often without butter) before them on their return to America'.⁵⁷ In the paragraph I have quoted, however, we are in another and self-consciously elevated linguistic realm. It is also imprecise. It is hard to associate 'colossal' with the word 'troughs', for instance, since troughs are depressions and any colossus upright. If Hartmann might have thought it sounded good, it is difficult for the reader to picture the metaphor. The same can be said of the unfocussed 'goblin sun' and even the unusual and deliberately archaizing verb 'bedizened'. The purpose here seems to be to raise the reader's perception of the level of sensibility at work in this account by offering a distinct linguistic episode as its equivalent. It is the same register that appears briefly earlier in the article to evoke what Hartmann presents as Ryder's single-minded expression of 'the radiance of the innermost, the most subtle and most intense expression of a human soul', as Hartmann attributes 'the enchantment I felt on that evening' to 'the gaslight's hectic glare' (262). In this concluding paragraph Wagner's opera, the story on which *The Flying Dutchman* is based, and its location in a mythologised past are mobilised to assert Hartmann's responsiveness – 'this medieval appearance indicates no limitative, but, on the contrary, a creative faculty', he says of Ryder (262). The final parenthesis, with its reference to Ryder's habitual incorporation of varnish into the surface of his paintings, brings the reader back down to earth by means of a conventional rhetorical descent into facetiousness, a common journalistic device of the time of which Hartmann was fond.

In the context of Hartmann's relationship to both exile and identity, this shift between linguistic registers operates as an image of the overlaid distances between linguistic or visual forms and the world described. What Hartmann characterises as Ryder's 'grandeur of thought and composition' and capacity to 'flood a picture with sensuous, bewitching poetry' (263), are functions not only of Ryder's painting but also of the sensibility of the critic who looks at and interprets them. The thickness of

⁵⁶ Hartmann, 'A Visit to A. P. Ryder', in Weaver, ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann*, 263.

⁵⁷ Sadakichi Hartmann, [On Thomas Eakins] (1915), in Weaver, ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann*, 264; Sadakichi Hartmann, 'Boston Artists' (1908), in Weaver, ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann*, 296.

Hartmann's language, its stiff, even hysterical character guarantees his sensibility, despite its ultimate lack of success. The exhaustive sign of responsiveness and feeling is the very thing that works to distance it both from the object and from the critic's self.

This leads to the difficulty at the centre of Hartmann's aesthetic. The further from the work that Hartmann's language finds itself, the more it answers to his need to establish the relationship with the object as one of equals, in which the sensibility of the critic is as important as the meaningfulness of the work. Two visions of the world, each dependent on the state of the author's 'soul' or sensibility are pushed into motion here and need to be convincingly signalled to the reader. In the work of art, facture, the subject to a degree, or the elusive forms of personality that Hartmann strives to pin down, operate to take up this function, although there is a prevailing tendency for these things to blend into, and find themselves substituted by, the 'visibility' of character itself, as when the photographer Strauss, who is 'always triumphantly himself', is admired because 'he works with the true intensity of an artist', so that, as a result, 'his work is visible'.⁵⁸ In the critical voice, it is the insertion of writing as a clearly wrought interpretation of the subject that asserts the sensibility at work. 'Criticism grows dumb. ... It is a masterpiece', writes Hartmann slyly of Winslow Homer's *All's Well* of 1896 [Fig. 3, now known as *The Lookout – 'All's Well'*], before giving his reader a brisk but forceful ekphrasis, 'the ship's bell, a lifted hand and a rugged face – stern and weather beaten like the bronzen bell'.⁵⁹ ('Bronzen' is another of those suggestively romantic-sounding words, although it may also be a rare interference from Hartmann's German) The result is that the greater the distortion of the work, the more successfully the aesthetics are implemented. 'I', says Hartmann of himself, am 'a literary man'.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Sadakichi Hartmann, 'J. C. Strauss: The Man behind the Gun' (1906), in Lawton and Knox, eds, *The Valiant Knights of Daguerre*, 238.

⁵⁹ Sadakichi Hartmann, [On Winslow Homer] (1897), in Weaver, ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann*, 271.

⁶⁰ Sadakichi Hartmann, 'Alfred Stieglitz: An Art Critic's Estimate' (1898), in Lawton and Knox, eds, *The Valiant Knights of Daguerre*, 164.



Figure 3 Winslow Homer, *The Lookout – 'All's Well'*, 1896, oil on canvas, 101.28 x 76.52 cm. Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Warren Collection—William Wilkins Warren Fund, acc. no. 99.23. [photo: commons.wikimedia.org (Accessed 19 September 2016)]

Hartmann's late nineteenth-century view of the self as a medium through which the world is construed therefore pushes his understanding of knowledge and interpretation in both art and our response to it towards a model in which mediation is central. This is not merely theoretical; it also affects the ways in which matter itself appears in Hartmann's writing and aesthetics. Writing in 1900 on the photographer Frank Eugene's fondness for 'all sorts of furious manipulations on the plates', Hartmann mounts an argument around questions of individuality in the art work and photography's capacity to reflect that quality through selection, surface and texture.⁶¹ Hartmann observes that photography is unsuited as a medium to the types of handling and facture that characterise painting, drawing and other media that link the executant directly to the surface of the work. He sees this as a problem, at least potentially: 'the camera is only too accurate. It exaggerates at times absolutely unnecessary details' (125-126), and therefore encourages practitioners to neglect the opportunity for 'Whistlerian effects', which might reveal 'poetry and mystery, by handling some parts with breadth and others here and there with charming and refined details' (126). 'Who has not grown tired of the everlasting monotony of the general appearance of [photographic] prints?' (127). Painters, on the other hand, can readily use 'texture' in this sense by manipulating facture to express individuality, so that 'nearly all the great painters of our age have developed a style of their own, which in a sense reflects their personality and is recognizable by the connoisseur at the first glance' (126-127).

Eugene, in contrast, has risen to the heights of painters such as 'Raffaelli ... Sargent ... Lenbach, Menzel' by his 'furious manipulations' (127). 'Each of his prints

⁶¹ Sadakichi Hartmann, 'Color and Texture in Photography' (1900), in Weaver, ed., *Sadakichi Hartmann*, 127.

shows how the most insignificant splash, thumbmark or jumble of over-sketched lines often explains, suggests, and interprets nature far more vividly and clearly than anything else could possibly do' (127). This is 'a sort of language', an 'accent' in which 'even the most transient hesitation or trembling of the retoucher's hand is at once registered. In a word, his daubs and lines are vital, and as the eye sees them, it reads the varying thoughts and moods of the artist' (127). Hartmann, as one might expect, frets a little about whether this sort of thing is a neglect of the natural characteristics of photography. But in the end, he endorses it strongly: 'individuality alone gives any art its value for this age or for the ages to come' (128).

Elsewhere, Hartmann attributes the emergence of the experimental facture of Impressionism to a response to the competition offered by the advent of photography. If the impact of the photograph has been for him to encourage painters to reproduce the world as seen through photographic realism, the elaborate surface manipulations of Impressionist paintings have emerged to assert the independence of painting and its capacity to transmit the artist's individual response to the world.⁶² Hartmann's aesthetics, including but not solely his influential and significant arguments for photography as a fine art, fundamentally revolve around interlinked ideas about identity, selfhood and the medium of expression. In his mature criticism, written from the late 1890s to the 1910s when he abandoned his role as interpreter, these ideas form a focussed and effective aesthetic lens through which he gauges and interprets a broad variety of work and issues. Throughout, expressive, individual vision is observable for him not only in successful painting and photography but also in the demonstrated sensibility of the critic who looks at and interprets such works. The moments of analysis in Hartmann's prose, the movement between registers and its ability to match an 'accent' to the work of art are what guarantee his sensibility. But this means that the most fundamental and defining sign of responsiveness and understanding is the very thing that works to distance the critical act both from the object and the critic's self. Hartmann's relationship to exile and identity is central to this situation.

⁶² Sadakichi Hartmann, 'Unphotographic Paint: The Texture of Impressionism' (1909), in Lawton and Knox, eds, *The Valiant Knights of Daguerre*, 135-141.



Figure 4 Unknown photographer, *Sadakichi Hartmann in Japanese costume, Hotel Vendome, Boston, 1889*. University of California Riverside Special Collections, Sadakichi Hartmann Papers, 'Sadakichi Hartmann Photographs', Box 39a. [photo: University of California Riverside Special Collections]

These themes and complexities appear early in Hartmann's work, and are connected to his sense of himself as in some sense estranged from his contexts in US society. In the 1880s, and in the context of a fashion for all things Japanese on the East Coast, Hartmann exploited his inheritance, dressing in Japanese costume to lecture [Fig. 4] and abandoning, permanently as it turned out, his first given name, Carl, in favour of his second, Sadakichi.⁶³ In 1904 he published a book on *Japanese Art* that he conceived as an attempt to 'popularize the subject'.⁶⁴ As elsewhere in his thought and writing at this time, Hartmann sees individuality as a key to aesthetic success. He acknowledges the influence of China on the formation of Japanese art and culture, but repudiates the idea that the Japanese might be seen under its influence as 'only borrowers and copyists'. 'If this were true, if there had been no first individuality, waiting to apprehend and restate the foreign influences, no mere change of atmosphere would have galvanized into life a new culture and a new art' (16). The narrative is one of the fading of foreign influence and continuous growth of 'the qualities of the national character' (16). Hartmann continues to attribute the character of all phases of Japanese art to the outcropping of an essential individuality. The Japanese have a 'predilection for symbols' (32); 'their works, virile and melodramatic as they are at times, are full of grace and beauty and seem the natural manifestation of serene, contented, and happy minds' (55); kakemonos 'are self-contained expressions' (46).

This emphasis has wider implications than simply the statement of some core characteristic requiring expression. Hartmann argues that Japanese art's 'object is not to execute a perfect imitation of reality (only bad works of art do that) or a poetic resemblance of life (as our best painters produce), but merely a commentary

⁶³ Kroiz, *Creative Composites*, 15.

⁶⁴ Sadakichi Hartmann, *Japanese Art*, L. C. Page: Boston, 1904, v.

on some pictorial vision, which sets the mind to think and dream' (84-85). And the development of Japanese painting is said to be fundamentally organised by the means of expression:

They have painted a crow sitting on a snow-covered fir branch, with the full moon behind, a thousand times; but every painter who has handled the subject has tried to lend it a new individuality. Only the subject remains the same. Treatment and conception are invariably changed with the personality of the artist. They have realised, by a never tiring study of variation, that a beautiful idea always remains a beautiful idea (86-87).

The extended readings of Hokusai and others Hartmann offers depend on evocations of their personalities and interests. 'He was all of one piece in the subtle and complicated mechanism of his genius, admirably constituted to receive the most different sensations' (153). 'He was the contemporary of some mighty names, yet there scarcely was to be found among them all a spirit more thoroughly original' (153). By the same token, Hartmann argues against the western adoption of Japanese art. 'it seems to me hopelessly illogical; only a talented native, who sees things as the Japanese see them, and to whom the suggestive touch has almost become a racial trait, could still create something original along those lines. ... adoption is utterly impossible' (173).

In the final chapters of the book, Hartmann develops his ideas about the specificity of Japanese art into a critique of Western materialism and will to power.

Ah, ye ancient ascetics, gentle dreamers ... who renounced all personal desire ... with what a smile of disdainful pity would you regard the Western race. ... They do not believe that the world is a dream, these materialists. They rejoice in their strength, and their will obtains gratification. ... What would you say of these ships, loaded with the world's goods, of these trains which devour the distance, and if it were of any consequence to change one's place to another? But, above all, what would you say of the meagre philosophy. ... This, at least, is certain. You would make no attempt to enlighten them. You would leave them to their busy goings and comings, to their pride of action; and, slowly, with half-closed eyes, you would return with delight to your solitary dreams, to your tranquillizing contemplation of the eternal and motionless (214-215).

He bemoans the fact that in modern times 'the artist, forced to work as quickly and cheaply as possible, cannot bring his individuality into play' (273). There is 'less and less suggestion of individuality' (275). Thus 'it will be best for Japan to hold fast to her own ideals of Asiatic tradition', because 'it is a service which she owes to humanity. She is the last custodian of ancient Oriental culture. She alone has the advantage of seeing through the materialistic shams which Western civilizations delude themselves, and of appropriating only such material as may help to rekindle her native flame' (276).

These ideas are not unique to Hartmann by any means, but his willingness to deploy them structurally in an early book suggests the centrality of the position he adopts towards his twin cultures. Even if this is largely a fantasy on his part, it

articulates a resistance to the force of western culture and a sense of the potentiality of that of Japan.⁶⁵ His interest, in other words, is in the aesthetic and moral impact Japan can make on the nature of the west, and the shape of his argument plays to that major interest. Hartmann consciously emphasised his Japanese heritage when he was working to make his name. Lauren Kroiz's intriguing argument, which associates Hartmann's version of straight photography with US debates about assimilation and cultural pluralism notwithstanding, the 'strangeness' and 'secrecy' to which he occasionally referred seem deliberate uses of his heritage. Here, also, they are justified and the depths of this tradition to which he only remotely or at second-hand belongs (having left Japan while still an infant), or which was his by reason of his appearance alone when he was amongst white Americans, are plumbed and brought forward. That is true not only in this book, but in several works on Japan and its culture, or which are indebted to Japan, from *Japanese Art to Tanka and Haiku: Japanese Rhythms* (1916).

Hartmann's sense of himself as alien and strange is repeatedly given form, through his successive deracinations and remakings, his fluidity and inventiveness intellectually and as a self, and his identity as Japanese and the representative of a world to which he did not, in reality, immediately and intimately belong. Japan is a major instance of this for him, but it is reflected and deployed as well in his aesthetics of language and meaning as I have traced them here. I have been offering an argument that sees Hartmann's sense of alienness and exile as not only the consequence of his background and how contemporaries responded to it, but as a function of the complicated relationship he envisaged between subjectivity and the critic's necessary medium of language. In the central circuit formed for Hartmann by the artwork, the critical observer, and the medium of language, all three of the terms are mediated. Both the artwork as expression of the artist's sensibility and the critic as the interpreter through the lens of his own sensibility are just as heavily facilitated as language in their relationship to the world. Hartmann's aesthetics are built out of this complex triad, with the consequence, as I have noted, that the fundamental sign of responsiveness and understanding is the very thing that works to distance the critical act both from the object and from the critic's self. Into the gap Hartmann's alienness inserts itself. This alienness is not, I have also been arguing, only an expression of his sense of racial or cultural difference, which, however powerful at times, is not for Hartmann principally a matter of the ineradicable and definitive. In the 1900s, rather, Hartmann's is in an important sense an alienness expressed through language, built on the capacity of the critic to engage the work and of the artist to create forms that satisfy both the self and the world. That is partly what Hartmann meant in 1916 when he wrote that 'I will drop the mask and tell you the secret of my verses', and that is what he meant when he spoke of 'the vanity of the alien'.

⁶⁵ Hartmann repeated this view elsewhere. See his strictures on 'the onslaught of white barbarians' in 'Races and the Melting Pot', in Knox and Lawton, eds, *White Chrysanthemums*, 117.

David Peters Corbett

Exile and subjectivity: words and images in the
writings of Sadakichi Hartmann

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*This text was written in 2016 for a collection which has not materialised and is being published now with revisions to bring it up to date but with the argument unchanged.



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